# Performance and Spectatorship in United States International Expositions, 1876-1893

by

Robert Davis

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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**Abstract**

**Performance and Spectatorship in United States International Expositions, 1876-1893**

by

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Between 1876 and 1893, nearly forty million visitors attended International Expositions, or world's fairs, in the United States. At each fair, planners, guidebook authors, and boosters attempted to teach spectators "ways of seeing" that instilled intellectual, economic, and cultural ideas of American superiority. This dissertation examines how United States audiences experienced three world's fairs in the late-nineteenth-century: the Centennial Exhibition (Philadelphia, 1876), the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition (New Orleans, 1884-1885), and the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893). By comparing official discourse with audience response, this project considers how fairgoers can be said to have embodied, or performed, concepts such as "America" and "Civilization." While scholars have studied expositions as hegemonic spectacles, this dissertation examines how individuals wielded increasing agency throughout the Gilded Age.

In the first chapter, I survey guidebooks, publicity materials, and architecture to establish how fair officials attempted to frame the exposition experience as an educational duty. By acting as an orderly spectator, fairgoers were promised they would contribute to the continual evolution of United States society. In the following two chapters, I highlight the tension between

educational and entertaining displays in major exposition halls. Even while officials strove to present uplifting exhibits, fairgoers were captivated by entertaining, performative displays. I look at how expositions affected the theatre cultures of their host cities, even while they were being shaped by an increasingly pervasive theatrical sensibility. The final chapter provides an account of first-person responses and experiences, paying particular attention to how tourists constructed their itineraries and engaged official rhetoric. This project argues for the necessity of a democratized approach to thinking about fairs from the perspective of the tourist rather than the planner. By looking at international expositions within a framework informed by audience studies, geographical theory, and visual culture, I open up space for historians to consider fairs as subjective, personal spaces, rather than strictly coercive cultural forces.

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# Introduction

## Seeing World's Fairs

Between 1876 and 1893, an estimated thirty-seven million visitors attended International Expositions, or world's fairs, in the United States.[1] At each fair, states, nations, and corporations presented a range of displays to advertise their history and potential. Historians have used international expositions as windows into discussions of Gilded Age ideology, but audience experience has been curiously neglected. This dissertation will open up new territory in the field by using theories of space and tourist practice to place the fairgoer in the center of inquiry. While fairs are remembered for lavish material displays that included fine art, historical artifacts, commercial products, and natural resources, they also offered a variety of performative encounters that have received scant critical attention. Beyond often-discussed displays of ethnographic "living villages," fairgoers interacted with workers, scientists, farmers, and schoolteachers, to name only a few examples. I will look at how exposition audiences engaged with environments and performers at three International Expositions: the Centennial Exhibition (Philadelphia, 1876), World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (New Orleans, 1884-1885), and World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893). In particular, I am interested in how fairgoing engaged ideas of American cultural progress and historical destiny.

Although the international exposition was a prominent form of cultural production at the turn of the twentieth century, the first United States exhibition, the New York

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[1] See Appendix, Table 1 for an analysis of fair-by-fair estimated attendances.

Crystal Palace in 1853, was a notorious failure.[2] Modeled on the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, London, the New York fair was largely regional, despite being officially named the "Exposition of Industry of all Nations." It struggled financially until it was destroyed by a fire that may have proved more spectacular than the event itself.[3] By contrast, the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, with heightened patriotic rhetoric and promise of spectacle, became a national tourist destination. Subsequent United States expositions, such as the New Orleans Industrial and Cotton Exposition, emulated the Philadelphia Centennial in their massive design and progressive discourse. Receiving only a moderate share of visitors, the New Orleans exposition has largely been overlooked in the literature, but it provides a useful bridge between the Centennial and Columbian expositions.[4] My study will end with the often-studied Columbian Exposition of 1893, which set a new standard for organization, education, and entertainment that would transform the American cultural landscape.

In *The Production of Space*, Henry Lefebvre begins with the premise "that (social) space is a (social) product." Space, he argues, is not a pre-existing container, but

[2] For the enduring effect on mass culture of world's fairs at the turn of the century, see Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[3] The management of the New York Crystal Palace was disastrous despite being run by P.T. Barnum for a brief period. See Rosemarie K. Bank, *Theatre Culture in America, 1825-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[4] There were other fairs and expositions during the period that I am not treating, as they were regional in scope or otherwise highly specialized. These include the International Cotton Exposition (Atlanta, 1881), the American Exhibition of the Products, Arts and Manufactures of Foreign Nations (Boston, 1883), the Tertio-Millenial Celebration and Exposition (Santa Fe, 1883), and the Southern Exposition (Louisville, 1883-c1887). While significant events, neither fair was intended for as wide an audience as the three included in this study. For example, out of the omitted fairs, the Southern Exposition had the highest estimated paid attendance (770,000), while the expositions I am including had an estimated range of 1,158,840 to 21,477,000.

a continuously created and revised intersection of practices and representations. Even the smallest society "produces a space, its own space."[5] This project contrasts official publications, such as committee reports, published articles, and speeches, with individual accounts, such as diaries, letters, and scrapbooks, to examine how spaces were produced by fair officials and how they were used by audiences. Exposition planners designed heavily symbolic spaces by incorporating representations of American accomplishment into the visual culture and physical plans of the fairs. They created powerful prompts encouraging tourists to place themselves at a superior position in a social and cultural evolutionary hierarchy. I will look at fairgoers as performers, acting within and against the produced space of each exposition. Regarding fairgoing as what geographers David Crouch and Luke Desforges call "practical ontology" or "knowing-as-doing," I will connect practice, ideology, and subject formation.[6] Fairgoers revised not only the spaces of international expositions, but refigured, or reinterpreted, both themselves and the contemporary concepts of historical progress that expositions advertised.

One was not expected to view expositions passively, as one might at a highbrow art gallery, but to be immersed, and, ultimately, to be changed. In an influential essay of 1891, "The Museums of the Future," G. Brown Goode, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian National Museum, affirmed that "to *see* is to know" was a truism for the age.[7] World's fairs, which Goode dubbed "World's Universities," were opportunities for

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[5] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 30-31.

[6] David Crouch and Luke Desforges, "The Sensuous in the Tourist Encounter: Introduction: The Power of the Body in Tourist Studies," *Tourist Studies* 3, no.5 (2003): 5-22.

[7] G. Brown Goode, "The Museum of the Future," in *Report of the National Museum, 1888-1889* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 427,

designers and organizers to plan environments and visual displays that would position spectators, or "sight-seers" in the contemporary jargon, as subjects at the pinnacle of a historical process of social evolution. With so much at stake, planners, guidebook authors, and others devoted considerable effort to teaching spectators "ways of seeing" the fairs. How spectators moved through the space dictated what they saw, and what they saw dictated how they interpreted the fairgoing experience. By extension, that experience shaped how they defined American cultural and social progress.

**Expositions as Evolutionary Engines**

In the postbellum United States, theorists applied the concept of evolution to explain a general pattern to organic existence across a range of disciplines beyond the natural sciences that included traditional fields like physiology, economics, and history, as well as emergent disciplines like anthropology, archaeology, sociology, and experimental biology. Historian Daniel Bender calls evolution a "public science" in the United States, as it formed a common discourse in intellectual and popular circles. Rather than be confined to lecture halls, he writes that evolution was conspicuous enough to be employed as much by academics as "a host of social reformers and social activists, and by a range of artists and writers."[8] In other words, evolution was not a singular

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emphasis in the original. Goode was active in both museum and exposition circles, holding prominent places in curatorial and planning positions at the Centennial and Columbian Expositions. It is useful to note that fairgoers (my term) were most frequently called "sight-seers" rather than "tourists."

[8] Daniel Bender, *American Abyss: Savagery and Civilization in the Age of Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 7. See also Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002), which provides an in-depth overview of how evolutionary theory permeated popular culture throughout the nineteenth century.

theory, but a way of thinking about life and society. While the term "evolution" proved to be continually chimeric, it was generally used to describe a network of theories, concepts, and assumptions about the development of life, providing reference points that were adopted or refigured in discussions ranging from immigration to etiquette or fossil development to marriage rituals.[9] World's fairs displays not only offered object lessons in evolutionary theories, but offered embodied lessons in the social evolution of the United States.

Theories of evolution—biological, cultural, and social—had a rich history before Charles Darwin published the *Origin of Species* in 1859. Philosopher Stephen Toulmin notes that "evolutionary speculations about historical and social change were a commonplace before Darwin had even begun his work on speciation," especially in linguistics and sociology.[10] By and large, Americans accepted the concept of social evolution before they embraced Darwinian theories of biological evolution, largely through the work of philosopher Herbert Spencer.[11] Although American naturalists were stand-offish to Darwin's theories until the mid-1870s, they embraced Spencer, who, in "Progress: Its Laws and Causes," published two years before *Origin of Species*, claimed that "Progress" (the word "evolution" would not come into vogue for decades) was visible in all areas of human life:

> The advance from the simple to the complex, through a process of successive differentiations, is seen alike in the earliest changes of the Universe to which we

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[9] See Peter J. Bowler, "The Changing Meaning of 'Evolution,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 1 (January-March 1975): 95-114.

[10] Stephen Toulmin, "Interlude: Evolution and the Human Sciences," in *Herbert Spencer: Critical Assessments*, Edited by John Offer, volume 2 of 3 (London: Routledge 2000), 90-119.

[11] See Bender, "American Abyss," 6-7, 20-21, for Spencer's status as popular figure in the United States.

> can reason our way back, and in the earliest changes which we can inductively establish; it is seen in the geologic and climatic evolution of the Earth, and of every single organism on its surface; it is seen in the evolution of Humanity, whether contemplated in the civilized individual, or in the aggregation of races; it is seen in the evolution of Society in respect both of its political and economical organization; and it is seen in the evolution of all those endless concrete and abstract products of human activity which constitute the environment of our daily life.[12]

Defining progress as a passage from the simple and homogenous to complex and heterogeneous, Spencer sought a "Synthetic philosophy" that would define universal laws of progress. Applied to societies, Spencer's theory implies that Western civilizations had been acquiring increasing complexity and purpose throughout history, and ostensibly will continue to do so. In Spencer's work, Western society progressed from a more simple state, but that it was continuing to progress. In *Social Statistics*, Spencer, citing the inherent trait of "human perfectibility," counts progress to be "not an accident, but a necessity." Assuring his readers that civilization is "a part of nature," he argues that history provides us with a record of progressive adaptation like a flower developing from a bud until the logical result of "completeness."[13] His notion of human progress was always collaborative, or social. His "Theory of Population," admonishes members of

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[12] Herbert Spencer, "Progress: Its Law and Cause," *Westminster Review* 47 (April 1857): 464-65. Although the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia elected Darwin a correspondent in 1860, his reception in scientific communities was lackluster. A *New York Times* article at the 1860 meeting of the American Association of Advancement of Science was in the minority when it expressed outrage that the Association did not discuss Darwin, which, to the writer threatened "to check all advance" by not "to treat the subject with the enlightenment and candor which it merits" and "Daring questions are not daringly questioned by silently ignored." See Ronald L. Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 24, and "The Advance of Science" *New York Times*, 6 August 1860, 4. As a matter of fact, many proponents of social evolution, such as Lewis Henry Morgan, who I will discuss in chapter one, may never have accepted Darwin's theories at all.

[13] Herbert Spencer, *Social Statistics, or, The Conditions Essential to Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed,* (London: John Chapman, 1851), 31-32.

society from farmer to chemist, to keep up with the latest technological advances for the good of the whole.[14] If the right efforts were met, then social evolution was nearly a foregone conclusion.[15]

Although many of Spencer's ideas have been discredited in the twentieth century, he found ready champions in figures including popular science writer and editor Edward Youmans, geologist John Wesley Powell, Yale sociologist William Graham Sumner, and philosopher John Fiske among others, who gave his ideas a public audience. Youmans would establish *Popular Science Monthly* in order to provide a forum for Spencer's newest writings. Spencer's works went through multiple editions in the United States. In "Naturalism in American Literature," Malcolm Cowley states that authorized editions of Spencer's work sold 368,755 copies between 1860 and 1903.[16]

With Darwin's *Origin of Species*, theories of social evolution not so much changed shape as took on higher stakes. One of the lynchpins—and most controversial aspects—of Darwinian evolution, the concept of natural selection, which Darwin defined as the principle "by which each slight variation [of a trait], if useful, is preserved."[17]

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[14] See Herbert Spencer, "A Theory of Population, Deduced from the General Law of Animal Fertility," *Westminster Review* 48 (April 1852): 468-501.

[15] The term "Social Darwinism" has been applied to a number of the writers that I discuss, but the term is anachronistic and misleading. Not used until the late 1870s in Europe, and not common in America until the twentieth century, the term was canonized by Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944). While many nineteenth-century philosophers, scholars, and scientists discussed evolution, and even used Darwinian language, a large number would not claim affinity with key points of Darwin's theories.

[16] Malcolm Cowley, "Naturalism in American Literature" *Evolutionary Thought in America*, edited by Stow Persons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 302. The number for pirated editions or selections from journals has not been figured into the number.

[17] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859), 61.

Having limited resources, species that have best adapted to their environment will survive, which will result in other species' extinction. Progress was no longer assured, but random. A few years later, Spencer called this "Survival of the Fittest," a phrase that Darwin himself eventually preferred.[18] Natural Selection made the progression from simple to complex organisms, or primitive to advanced societies, no longer a matter of historical destiny, but part of a global struggle. Some theorists feared that Western civilization could lose in the race to survive. Like many others, Spencer went from being an utopian thinker to believing in society as struggle. Concepts of "degeneration," or "dissolution," as Spencer articulated it, took on importance in evolutionary circles and beyond.

*Origin of Species* precipitated a shift in evolutionary thinking that gave rise to two parallel divides in social thought: one, could Western society stagnate or was progress a foregone conclusion; and, two, was the best way to progress to the next stage through altruism, as Spencer had originally thought, or through competition and conquest? Questions permeated the discourse of expositions in the period: should societies be shown as cooperative and getting along? Or should they grade each other to discover which could be considered superior? Would more primitive cultures be destroyed through contact with civilized cultures, or would they thrive?

In the decades following the Civil War in America, these questions infiltrated every forum for social thought. The 1870s marked a turning point when theories derived

[18] See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864), 444-45. In the fifth edition of *Origin*, Darwin notes that Spencer's phrase is both more accurate and useful of a description, see Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1869), 72.

from Darwin and Spencer became more or less mainstream.[19] By 1876, social scientists largely agreed that human societies were not fixed at a stage of development but developed unevenly, as species did; thus some (i.e., white, Western) evolved to a high state of civilization, while others (i.e., non-white, foreign) remained at levels of lower development.

In the human sciences, anthropologists and members of related fields were developing a model of social and cultural development that would remain dominant into the 1890s. Anthropologist Edward Tylor created a unilineal three-stage model by placing societies in grades along a continuum from savage to barbaric to civilized. Casting a scientific eye to the task, Tylor wrote that:

> Civilization actually existing among mankind in different grades, we are enabled to estimate and compare it by positive examples. The educated world of Europe and American practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to cultured life.[20]

Following Tylor, scientists from the human sciences generated a vast amount of activity in measuring and assessing societies in this manner. Tylor used industrial arts, intellectual achievement, religion, social organization, and morality as his comparisons. In the United States, Lewis Henry Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity in the Human Family*, for example, derived from the same from a fifteen-step ascending list of marriage types, with "Promiscuous intercourse" as the lowest form of family corresponding to the lowest race of savage, with developments in family organization

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[19] See Numbers, "Darwinism," 1.

[20] Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*, 2 volumes (London: John Murray, 1871), 1:26.

corresponding to rungs on an evolutionary ladder through "Barbarian Family" and on to the "Civilized Family."[21] Morgan (often called "The Tylor of American ethnology") would go on to write his masterwork *Ancient Society or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization* in 1877, which relied on technological development as a standard to determine various "culture-grades" between savage, barbarian, and civilized, which he refined by dividing each into Older, Middle, and Upper states.[22] By aligning technology, social organization, and culture to determine the state of a society, postbellum scientists created a scale by which spectacles of others could be graded, an effort that became part and parcel of world's fair designs. By including copious displays of the advanced industrial technology, expositions were set up to be grand theatres of progress celebrating America's "civilized" status.

Evolutionary theory is no stranger to histories of World's Fairs. In *All the World's a Fair*, Robert Rydell links the ubiquitous fair rhetoric's *mythos* of "progress" with evolutionary theory, noting that expositions were crucial to the popularization of evolutionary ideas about race.[23] Although this was less overt in 1876, "evolution, ethnology, and popular amusements interlocked as active agents [of hegemony]" by 1893.[24] The discourse of evolution and progress was ingrained in official exposition documents, setting up fairs as stages to "teach" American progress to mass audiences through copious displays of goods and peoples.

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[21] Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1870).
[22] Morgan, "Ancient Society," 10-18.
[23] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), 4-5.
[24] Ibid., 4, 41.

Indeed, from 1876 to 1893, representations of "the savage" became more visible in expositions.[25] At the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and the New Orleans World's Cotton and Industrial Centennial Expositions, exhibits of so-called savage peoples were almost exclusively confined to Native American exhibits from the Department of the Interior.[26] By contrast, both sides of the civilized/savage paradigm were central to the physical design of the Columbian Exposition. Planners divided the grounds into two discrete zones: the "White City," a park-like conglomeration of classical exhibition halls devoted to the "best" of American and European civilization, and the Midway Plaisance, a mile-long anachronistic jumble of commercial amusements, including living villages and picturesque reconstructions of Near Eastern cities. One literary critic called the Midway "a sliding scale of humanity."[27] Displays devoted to German and Irish villages (largely workshops and restaurants) were nearest to the White City, one step farther away were Middle Eastern and Asian exhibits (typically ethnic theatres, bazaars, and cafes), and finally, at the furthest location from the neoclassical center of the fair, were exhibits of Africa and Native America (crude villages with natives on display). Exposition space was intended to be used as an embodied lesson in social evolution: one could quite literally walk from Savage to Civilized.

Scholars of world's fairs commonly assert that expositions were coercive institutions heavily laden with propaganda. This formed the content and experience of world's fairs to the degree that Loren Kruger notes that interpreting world's fairs as a

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[25] See, for example, Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896–1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[26] However, there was plenty of "savage" performance, often more on the level of Dime Museum shows, outside of the fair walls, which I will discuss in the third section.

[27] Denton Snider, *World's Fair Studies* (Chicago: Sigma Publishing Company, 1895), 237.

"staged contrast between 'savagery' and 'civilization' as the spectacular reinforcement of white supremacist notions and practices has become something of a critical commonplace."[28] Historians Alan Trachtenberg and Robert Rydell pioneered modern world's fair studies by criticizing fair planners and supporters for advocating an elitist and racist ideology.[29] For example, Rydell cites the copious displays of material goods at the 1876 Centennial as evidence reinforcing class-based prejudice by "equating material gain with human dignity," implying that other peoples and classes with less goods deserve less respect. On a broader scale, Rydell connects images of evolution at the 1893 Columbian Exposition to derogatory attitudes toward "primitive" Africans and African-American.[30] Such attempts to critique representations at the fairs have proved foundational to the field, but are limited in their preoccupation with what cultural geographers Michael Haldrup and Jonas Larsen call the "sign-value" of touristic places, or, what the sights at the fairs "mean." Instead, Haldrup and Larsen advocate including the "use-value" of places, or, how fairs are used.[31] This project will look at both the sign and use values of the fairs by considering how a variety of agents, such as guidebook publishers, exposition designers, companies with displays, and theatre producers competed to guide how audience performed their roles as sight-seers by "doing" the fairs in particular ways.

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[28] Loren Kruger, "'White Cities,' 'Diamond Zulus,' and the 'African Contribution to Human Advancement': African Modernities and the World's Fairs," *TDR: The Drama Review* 51, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 20.

[29] See Robert W. Rydell, "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: Racist Underpinnings of a Utopian Artifact," *Journal of American Culture* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 253–275, and Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

[30] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 19, 56-57.

[31] Michael Haldrup and Jonas Larsen, "Material Cultures of Tourism," *Leisure Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 2006): 275-89.

**Theorizing Audience Practice**

Recent scholarship has combined an interest in both "sign-value" and "use-value" by considering how "doing" expositions engages larger cultural and social forces. In particular, I use Alison Griffiths and Tony Bennett, who have contributed valuable scholarship on nineteenth-century museum and exposition design. Since most of the displays I will look at involve human beings, I also turn to Scott Magelssen's criticism of living history museum practice. Although his subject is contemporary, Magelssen provides a solid framework to approaching the relationship of institutions to audience through the medium of performance. Magelssen's work reveals how a museum's "curatorial machinery" can mobilize theatricalized performance to define concepts such as America, history, and identity.

Employing theories of film and visuality, Griffiths contextualizes exhibition planning in the increasing public role of science and art in the late nineteenth century. "The central challenge," she writes of museum curatorship, "lay in striking the proper balance between popular appeal and scientific rigor," a process begun with the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park.[32] Geographers Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes theorize this divide as being a tension between the "*objectification* of the world as a knowable space and a subjective *experience* of the world as a place of difference."[33] While their work lacks historical perspective, Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference* and *Shivers Down Your*

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[32] Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xxiii, 4.

[33] Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes, "Introduction: Traveling Paradoxes," in *Travels in Paradox: Remapping Tourism*, edited by Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 12, emphasis in the original.

*Spine* provide rich insight into institutional struggles to reconcile education and entertainment in late-nineteenth-century museum design. Museums, she observes, became increasingly immersive in this period, allowing for more interactive and performative experiences.

While Griffiths concentrates on science museums, her work acknowledges that world's fairs offer similar—and necessary—opportunities for study.[34] Expositions were dedicated to educational purposes, but they were also for-profit corporations whose investors were highly cognizant of the need to entertain in order to attract the millions of visitors required to make a profit. The generation and control of leisure practices took on significant dimensions at international expositions.

In *Birth of a Museum*, Tony Bennett examines how what he terms the "exhibitionary complex" or collaborations between museums, amusement parks, and expositions, shaped the public sphere in nineteenth-century Britain.[35] Particularly concerned with the production of cultural experiences, Bennett argues that museum design and display was part of wider projects regulating social behavior. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, museum designers both taught evolution and controlled public space by corralling people through what he terms "organized walking."[36] By creating paths through displays that were arranged in linear progressions from the ancient

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[34] See Alison Griffiths, *Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 2. In this study of immersivity and interactivity across a range of media, including nineteenth-century panoramas, science museums, medieval cathedrals, and IMAX films, Griffiths points out that World's Fairs would need to be studied to complement a full study of the concepts she engages.

[35] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995). See also Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73-102.

[36] Ibid., 10.

past to contemporary era, museums allowed spectators to see exhibits from a position of "achieved humanity," in other words, from a place at the pinnacle of historical and evolutionary development, a key concept for my work. In Bennett's model, the visitor's progress through a museum to view choreographed arrangements of "props" in cases becomes a performance that configures the spectator's subject position as occupying the destination point of a progressive, civilizing process.

Although I use many of Bennett's concepts, his study is overconfident that museum design determined the viewer's experience.[37] He acknowledges that his subject does not encompass audience response, which "raises different questions" that are beyond the scope of his book.[38] His subsequent work has taken steps in this direction, but it remains preoccupied with constructions of gaze, thus doing little to differentiate between types of audience response or activity. No matter how controlling the museum design, I argue that the spectator is always an active agent who has the potential to complicate a museum's mechanisms of social and ideological control.

Magelssen readily admits that he favors curatorial strategies over audience experience, but his work allows for a greater range of individual agency than Bennett or Griffiths. Studying a range of living history museums such as Colonial Williamsburg and Plimoth Plantation, where actors inhabit reconstructed settings, Magelssen opens a way

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[37] Bennett's influence can be seen, for example, in Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), especially Chapter 6, "The Exhibitionary Complex in Philadelphia," 175-226.

[38] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 10. Bennett has dealt with audience response more in subsequent work, although he still approaches the subject through the point of view of the producers of cultural spaces. See "Civic Seeing: Museums and the Organization of Vision," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 263-81; and *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004).

to discuss the relationship between producer, performer, and audience in the type of performative encounters that one might find in Living Villages or Machinery Hall.[39] Comparing performative encounters to static displays, Magelssen notes that embodied practices are more potent "power plays" in shaping audience experience.[40] In this context, performance at museums and expositions can be read as "historiographic operations," that is, they do not represent history, but *make* history.[41]

Magelssen faults twentieth-century museums that restrict visitor interpretation by presenting evolutionary narratives of history.[42] For example, he discusses a staged slave auction in Colonial Williamsburg that offered only a circumscribed version of such an event, effectively advertising the "progress" our culture has made since the nineteenth century.[43] In presenting a narrow version of history, one which positions spectators as "achieved humanity," museums can define "America" for the spectator in much the same manner as exposition displays did a century earlier.[44] It would seem the spectator is at

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[39] Magelssen's more recent work has looked at other varieties of performed encounters, but I am mostly following his work on sites affiliated with traditional museums. See, for example, "Rehearsing the 'Warrior Ethos': 'Theatre Immersion' and the Simulation of Theatres of War," *TDR: The Drama Review* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 47-72, for his experiences in three simulated Iraqi villages in the US desert that are used for military training. The types of interaction between performer and spectator/participant are far more immersive than what I am studying.

[40] Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2007), xii. Also, Scott Magelssen, "Making History in the Second Person: Post-Touristic Considerations for Living Historical Interpretation," *Theatre Journal* 58, no. 2 (May 2006): 303. Magelssen borrows the term "power play" from Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 3.

[41] Magelssen, *Living History Museums*, xii; Magelssen, "Making History," 294.

[42] Magelssen, *Living History Museums*, 16; Magelssen, "Making History," 291.

[43] Ibid., 295-97.

[44] Magelssen takes a constructivist approach to such concepts. He notes in *Living History Museums* that "The concepts of 'America' and an 'American past' have never

the mercy of institutions; however, Magelssen's approach suggests that audience imagination might not be as tightly controlled as Griffiths or Bennett allow.

In *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals*, sociologist Richard Butsch uses performance as a metaphor to read audience behavior as a social struggle at the juncture between seeing and doing: "An audience is a situated role that people temporarily perform, and in their performance people produce representations of audiences. Also, the role is situated in institutions of entertainment, news, and media that construct subject positions for audiences and, in so doing, represent audiences."[45] By situating the spectator within social processes, Butsch denaturalizes the idea of audiences as passive spectators. Instead, being in an audience is a fundamentally social—and political—act. The acts of seeing and walking that Griffiths and Bennett observe can be read as performed roles. In a century when images of crowds were dominated by fears of mobs and rioting, the sheer number of spectators at large-scale events like expositions generated concentrated efforts to render fairgoing an orderly practice.[46] The dynamic that representations of audience produce performances connects mimesis with performance in a way that is central to how I theorize fairgoing. A mix of media and institutional forces sought to represent audiences as safe and docile, thus encouraging spectators to perform an orderly, harmonious audience. However, while considerable effort was applied to representing fairgoing as "achieved humanity," in Bennett's phrase, fairgoer performance rarely followed suit.

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been stable" (57). Authenticity (of meaning, of history), he argues, is a socially constructed concepts (xiii).

[45] Richard Butsch, *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).

[46] The major work in this period was Gustave Le Bon, *La Psychologie des Foules* (1895), first translated into English in 1896 as *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*.

For example, a popular lithograph depicting Machinery Hall in 1876 (**Figure 1**) represents fairgoing as a dignified, genteel activity. Expositions were intended to be— and advertised as— safe, orderly events where spectators would seamlessly move through the space, absorbing edifying lessons. In practice, many Americans encountered chaos and frustration. At the Centennial Exhibition, the opening festivities were widely reported as an event where all foreigner visitors, in the words of a *New York Times* special correspondent, were "treated with the utmost respect."[47] However, a week later, the same reporter admits that foreigners "were followed by large crowds of idle boys and men, who hooted and shouted at them as if they had been animals of a strange species."[48] Crime, too, was visible in surprising places, as the Centennial saw a rash of thefts from Near Eastern exhibitors, prompting the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to worry that "there is great reason to fear that the American people, rich and poor alike, have become victims to a kleptomaniac epidemic, which develops itself in an exceedingly violent form whenever they approach the Moorish Villa or the Turkish Bazaar."[49] In addition, many diaries, which I will discuss in detail in chapter four, are dominated by complaints of fatigue and confusion.

To use the fairgoer as an active agent within this matrix of institutional forces, I am borrowing concepts from Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, which offers suggestions for studying individuals' ("users") everyday actions ("tactics") as disrupting stronger, institutional forces ("strategies").[50] Rather than be reduced to the

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[47] "The Nation's Centennial," *New York Times*, 12 May 1876, 1.
[48] "The Great Exhibition," *New York Times*, 23 May 1876, 4.
[49] Philadelphia Inquirer "Are the American People Thieves?" 23 October 1876, 4.
[50] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

role of "consumer," de Certeau's analysis of individual activity shows how an individual's consumption is also "producing." For example, in a famous chapter on city walking, de Certeau argues that the street walker chooses routes, shortcuts, and personalizes ways of moving through the city, often moving against the expectations of urban planners.[51]

Although de Certeau's theory is valuable in laying out ways to rethink the agency of the individual, his work is preoccupied with expressing tactics as resistant rather than as productive forces. More recently, Marla Carlson, in "Ways to Walk New York after 9/11," connects practices of space to wider political realities. Carlson borrows elements of de Certeau's methodology to compare official appropriations of "Ground Zero" to individual practices of suffering. While formal commemorations were employed to dominate the large-scale political stage by a Mayor and President, Carlson tracks local performances that healed individuals and created communities. Through theatre and mourning in the spaces of New York, individuals created alternative meanings to historical events and contemporary experience.[52]

If audience activity can be a kind of "historiographic operation," then, like the performances Carlson talks about, the practice of space has the potential to revise or redefine the meanings associated with those spaces. By looking at individual fairgoer action in relation to the intentions of fair planners, I suggest that the spectators at

[51] Ibid., 97-102. While fairs are more planned that cities, the example is apt. The 1893 Columbian Exposition, for example, was conceived of as an ideal city.

[52] Marla Carlson, "Ways to Walk New York after 9/11," in *Performance and the City*, ed. D.J. Hopkins, Shelley Orr, and Kim Solga (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 15-32.

expositions refigured the expositions' presentation of evolution by their practice of space, interaction with working displays, and performances of self.

**Applying Practices of Space: Official vs. Lay Geographies**

One way to look at audience engagement with powerful institutions and media is by studying how fairgoers moved through space and encountered performances as the construction of a "lay geography." Loosely defined, lay geographies refer to the way that tourists make their own sense of space, as opposed to the prompts of the tourist industry (which was emergent in the late nineteenth century) and other cultural mediators.[53] Having already planned and visualized particular experiences, tourists select from a variety of ways to "do" sites. As every tourist's intentions and expectations vary, individuals can be said to invent geographies through lived practice.[54] Then, as now, guidebooks and brochures often promised particular experiences that rarely defined the "tourist encounter." Crouch, et al., writing on the efficacy of studying lay geographies, argue that "the world of the tourist is not prefigured, but figured and refigured in the process of being a tourist."[55] Since expositions were planned as spaces to be used, how fairgoers acted within the space influenced subsequent designs. If fairs were designed to embody evolutionary concepts, fairgoer tactics revised how officials produced evolutionary theory.

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[53] Scott Lash and John Urry, *Economies of Signs and Space* (London: Sage, 1994).

[54] Stephen Williams, *Tourism Geography* (London: Routledge, 1998), 173-74.

[55] David Crouch, Lars Aronsson, and Lage Wahlström, "Tourist Encounters," *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 3 (December 2001): 254-55.

The geographies of expositions created representations of evolutionary paradigms that served as symbolic and literal boundaries on audience performance. This is clearest in the ways that the White City and Midway Plaisance were spatially represented to fairgoers at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. For example, the popular souvenir map by Rand, McNally, a major guidebook publisher and stockholder in the fair, in **Figure 2** shows the grounds of the White City in minute detail. The Midway is barely noticeable except for the Ferris Wheel. By representing the White City as an organized, richly detailed space in contrast to the Midway, which is little more than a footnote, the makers of the map encourage the user to seek out the areas of the fair that are associated with white, Western achievement. Representations like these urged fairgoers (or those who purchased these material from afar) to use and remember the "civilized" White City, and all it symbolized, as far more worthy of interest than the Midway.

Although the Midway was originally organized in ways that suggest agreement with the above spatial representation, its history demonstrates that institutions within expositions were often in conflict. Officially placed under the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology ("Department M"), the Midway was initially to be adjunct to the scientific Anthropology Building. Together, both sites were conscripted under the singular imperative to, in the words of one ethnologist, "show the advancement of evolution of man."[56] When it became clear that Harvard museologist Frederick Ward Putnam, the overseer of Department M, could not administer an area of popular amusements, the exposition board gave control to entrepreneur Sol Bloom. Bloom managed a thriving enterprise that met the demands of consumers, not planners.

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[56] Harlan Ingersoll Smith, "Man and His Words: the Anthropology Building at the World's Columbian Exposition," *American Antiquarian* 15 (March 1893): 115-17.

Attractions included camel and balloon rides, animal shows, dancing girls, ethnic theatres, exotic bazaars, themed restaurants, and African villages. Perhaps unsurprisingly, lay geographies suggest patterns nearly the reverse of the civilized fantasy abstractly represented by the Rand, McNally map. On the most basic level, the Midway was visited much more than, for example, the Hall of Anthropology. Beyond accounts and reports that cite the Midway as a chief tourist attraction, maps included in guidebooks (**Figure 3**), which were meant for use rather than memory, treat the Midway as of equal interest to the White City. By comparing the intentions of the organizers with the fair's use, we can see how exposition planning created an official vision of space that lay geographies substantially reinvented and revised.

Since the 1970s, tourism theory has been divided between two main approaches. For Dean MacCannell in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, tourism is a middle-class quest for so-called authentic sites. However, MacCannell's subjects, jaded by industrialized society, are only allowed a "staged authenticity," often without discerning the illusion.[57] On the other hand, John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* advocates for a different species of tourist: the "post-tourist." In Urry's postmodern framework, tourists are self-aware agents enjoying "tourist games," or, the play of the real and counterfeit.[58] While all visitors to international expositions cannot be said to entirely fall into either one of the two categories, MacCannell and Urry map out key poles that shape

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[57] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

[58] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990). Urry's postmodern critique is hardly specific to the twentieth century. See James Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), for a solid case that antebellum museum visitors enjoyed the interplay or real and fake with exhibits such as the Feejee Mermaid and Joice Heth

a key question to this dissertation: to what extent were my subjects expecting authenticity or delighting in the "tourist game?" For example, official fair literature frames exposition displays as stable and fixed sites of meaning. On the one hand, fairgoers clearly took joy in knowing that the landscapes they toured were fake; on the other, they repeatedly described touring expositions in virtual terms, thus visiting the Columbian Exposition's Street in Cairo exhibit became "going to Egypt."[59] Ning Wang provides an insight into paradoxes of pursuing authenticity that drives this project: "in seeking authenticity, tourists merely play a *role* of authenticity-seekers. In effect the performance of the role of authenticity-seeking ends up as the disappearance of authenticity."[60] As institutions worked to define visitor experience, this question of fairgoer expectations has critical consequences for the construction of lay geographies, tactics, and subject formation.

During the period covered, expositions formed the backbone of a rapidly consolidating tourist industry and emergent disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and sociology. Caught between these two poles, exposition producers struggled to offer uplifting messages, even the increasingly conceded ground to popular entertainment venues. Although commercial amusements were banned from exposition grounds in 1876, they were incorporated—and celebrated—by 1893. As more Americans attended expositions throughout the period, their power as consumers created demands that planners rushed to meet. Fairs increasingly departed from tightly controlled uplifting

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[59] See "Summer 1893, Brooklyn to Chicago," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum.

[60] Ning Wang, "Itineraries an the Tourist Experience," in *Travels in Paradox: Remapping Tourism*, ed. Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 76.

messages to offering varieties of high, low, and middlebrow experiences. Ultimately, fairgoers, rather than elites, wielded increasing agency and influence throughout the Gilded Age.

**Who is the Fairgoer?**

While investigating fairgoer activity, I was continually frustrated by how little data exists on who actually attended expositions between 1876 and 1893. Expositions kept track of tickets sold, but their records do not distinguish between workers and repeat visitors, nor they offer demographic analysis. As a result, there is a distinct absence of hard data on the composition of attendants, leaving the researcher with scant material to consider. While few have addressed the question head-on, world's fairs are generally assumed to be largely attended by white, middle-class individuals; however, as I show, there are distinct cracks in that image, suggesting that expositions held a wider appeal than has been generally considered.[61]

Histories of leisure in the United States point to the late nineteenth century as a period when individuals began accruing available time and money for vacations. In *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements*, David Nasaw aligns the rise in leisure activities and a "vacation habit" to the growth of a office worker-driven middle class.[62] There is no doubt that this segment of the popular was courted by exposition

[61] See Manon Niquette and William Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 22, no. 11 (1997). <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/977/883>, for a discussion of the variety of ethnic, geographical, and class backgrounds of fairgoers, but this is only cursory.

[62] David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 2-5, 62-63.

officials; however, there is clear evidence that each fair was attended by male and female members of many nations, classes, and ethnicities.[63]

Workers perhaps faced the greatest struggle in attending the fairs, as it was often inaccessible and expensive. Despite fluctuating wages, admission remained at fifty cents at each fair between 1876 and 1893.[64] Trying to determine who could afford this price is difficult, as wages could vary greatly depending on industry, region, race, and gender. Generally speaking, according to one economic study, skilled laborers might make over two dollars a day while semi-skilled would make close to a dollar in 1889.[65] Add to that the price of admission for a family member, food onsite, and transportation, and attending an exposition for a day was an expensive proposition.

In addition to a price barrier for workers, expositions were more often than not closed on Sundays in observance of the Sabbath, the one day that many had free from work. The Philadelphia Centennial was completely closed on Sunday, while the New Orleans exposition gates were open, but no machines ran. Some factories organized trips for its workers, but these appear to be exceptions rather than the rule. It was only after a protracted legal and public relations battle that the Chicago exposition started opening its

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[63] It is no coincidence that expositions were typically open from May to October, coinciding with peak vacation periods. The New Orleans Exposition was open December to June, hoping to attract Northerners to the warm Winter climate of the deep South.

[64] According to the website, www.measuringworth.com/uscompare, which uses several indexes to calculate historical currency changes, fifty cents in 1876, 1885, and 1893 was equivalent to somewhere between ten and thirteen 2013 dollars. <http://measuringworth.com/m/calculators/uscompare/result.php?year_source=1893&amount=.50&year_result=2013>.

[65] Stanley Lebergott, “Wage Trends, 1800-1900” in Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century, a Report of the National Bureau of Economic Research (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 462.

gates for Sundays on May 28, 1893, almost one month after opening.[66] The Sunday before, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reports that forty thousand workers appeared outside the gates, hoping to get a look inside the fair despite its closure. If this crowd was representative of working-class interest, one can assume that a significant number of working class Americans visited the fair after its first Sunday opening.[67]

Although expositions took place in major cities, American from across the country traveled to take part. One often finds, for example, notices in far-away rural papers noting when a local embarked for an exposition or returned. Rail companies often offered exposition-discounted rates, which fueled travel from outside the region; however, the New Orleans exposition board did not broker many special rates, which resulted in most tourists being from the South. Visitors from the country consistently appear, not always flatteringly, in fair humor, suggesting that they were present in sufficient volumes to be ready sources of humor.

Between 1876 and 1893, official exposition schedules accommodated more public festivities with special "days" for different groups and states. These events openly courted residents from various states and allowed space for African-Americans, women, and other groups to visit the fair in large numbers, effectively making the fair their own for a day. Often including parades or congresses, the special days lured travelers to make

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[66] See "Arguing Both Sides: Opponents of Sunday Opening in Strong Array" *Daily Inter Ocean*, 13 Jan 1893, 5, "Both Sides Heard: Sunday Opening Suit Comes Up in United States Court" *Daily Inter Ocean*, 1 June 1893, 2, and Wilbur F. Crafts, "The Sunday Opening of the Fair," *Harper's Weekly* 10 June 1893, 555. Some states, like Iowa, which had strict Sabbath laws, closed their exhibits on Sundays.

[67] "Forty Thousand Outside the Gate," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 May 1893, 1. This group, "the largest ever debarred from the grounds," were reportedly so eager to glimpse inside that they poked the knots out of the wooden fence surrounding the exposition to look inside. In chapter four, I will look at the experience of workers both onsite and visiting expositions.

a trip they may not have scheduled, as well as provide an official space of celebration for specific groups of Americans.

A general look at the photographic record shows that the fair seems to have been attended largely by white, middle-class men and women, but this evidence may say more about who could afford a camera at the time than who was actually there. The illustrated press, hardly an objective source, but more pervasive throughout the period, has depictions of a vast range of types and ethnicities, suggesting that while white, middle-class Americans may have been among the majority of fairgoers, it is evident that there was no single "type" of fairgoer, and that visitors came from a range of locations and backgrounds.[68]

**Chapter Breakdown**

Rather than organize my chapters as case studies of each exposition, I track topics in performance, evolution, and spectatorship in these three key world's fairs. I break down my approach into four thematic chapters: "Cultivating the Spectator, or How to See the Fairs," largely about how designers and guidebooks encouraged audiences to see fair space; "Performing Industry," which covers how performances of machines constituted the civilized side of the civilized/savage paradigm; "The Theatre Cultures of United States International Expositions," which examines how leisure activities at expositions complicated that paradigm; and "Performing and Representing Audiences: Official Texts and Lived Experiences," which brings all these topics to bear by looking at how audiences played their roles as spectators. Each chapter provides a historical

[68] As I discuss in chapter one, guide in foreign languages or targeted for different classes are more common in 1893 than 1876.

overview of fair spaces and the touristic practices they engender, as well as fairgoer tactics. Although expositions had strong central leaderships, many agents (organizers, nations, corporations, boosters, etc.) made contributions, making a search for a fundamental "message" in each one reductive at best. By putting the fairs into conversation in each chapter, I interpret expositions as multifaceted events rather than singular productions.

The first chapter, "Cultivating the Spectator, or How to See the Fairs," looks at how fair officials encouraged tourists to "do" the fairs in ways that promoted education, thus contributing to the evolutionary advancement of United States society. This chapter teases out the "official" geography of the expositions or establish exposition "strategies," in de Certeau's phrase, based on evolutionary paradigms. I look at the agents that struggled to define the spectator while competing to "teach" how to see the fairs, namely designers and guidebooks. In *Designing the Centennial*, Bruno Giberti provides an excellent base for this analysis, with his examination of the design process for the Main Building of the Centennial Exhibition. He pays particular attention to how the board had use-value in mind while awarding contracts. Since there is no similar work for either the World's Industrial and Cotton or Columbian Exposition, I looks at overall plans (i.e., White City vs. Midway) and main exhibition halls (i.e., did they attempt to tightly control a visitor's progress or provide a promenade?) to establish "official geographies."

Contemporaries widely acknowledged that no one could see an entire exposition, so fairgoers relied on a variety of guides and guidebooks to aid in navigating the overwhelming sensory fields of the fairs. Many guidebooks are extant and offer a heretofore unstudied look at how publishing companies encouraged Americans to see

these spaces. During the period covered, guidebooks changed in their shape and approach, diversifying in detail, use, and price, as well as scope and purpose, as they responded to the needs of tourists and producers. Although guidebooks (and guides) were often in alignment with the official messages of the fairs, this neglected area of study gives a closer look at how fairgoers were expected to use the fairs by offering itineraries, lists, background information, and advice.[69]

The period following the Civil War witnessed a succession of financial booms and panics. The nation underwent an accelerated process of industrialization, resulting in increased transportation, availability of goods, and urban migrations. A gulf widened between laboring classes and skilled work, creating an emergent body of "white collar" jobs that afforded its members access to a broader material culture.[70] International expositions provided big draws for a class of Americans that increasingly sought to define itself by leisure rather than labor. By offering safe, domesticated visions of potentially horrendous changes, expositions promoted a practice of leisure geared towards self-improvement.

A great deal of good work has been done highlighting how fairs centered around American encounters with foreign peoples at expositions.[71] Instead, my second chapter,

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[69] Work on guidebooks at expositions has been haphazard at best, with no concentrated attention being paid to their development or to a critical reading of what touristic practices they encouraged. Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town: the Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1850-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) provides some insightful, but incidental, discussion of fair guidebooks as part of a larger analysis of the development of urban guidebooks during the period.

[70] Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age, 1865-1905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 61, 71.

[71] See, for example, Meg Armstrong, "'A Jumble of Foreignness': The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions," *Cultural Critique* 23 (Winter

"Performing Industry," looks at a subject closer to Gilded Age Americans: performances of and with industrial machines. Although machines were heralded as engines of progress, they were also dangerous aspects of a new industrialism. Alan Trachtenberg devotes a chapter to looking at which Americans saw machines as "Promethean" or "Demonic." In his reading of the Gilded Age as a "quest for order," he argues that by the turn of the century, mechanization had become an unstoppable force, a process that, he notes, relied on encounters within exposition grounds.[72]

Each exposition featured a Machinery Hall (and often an annex), each fair began with engines being turned on by dignitaries, and working machines remained major draws throughout the period.[73] Performances were increasingly geared towards showing off technological progress by rendering industrial machines, which were typically loud and unsafe, as harmless appendages of human will. For example, the Bickford Sewing Machine Company hired a blind man (or perhaps an operator acting the role of "blind" man) to operate a their product, displaying for the audience the safety and easiness of their technological invention. [74]

Throughout the period, exposition spectacles of functioning machines operated by workers became increasingly more theatricalized, with costumes, sets, and even scripts.

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1992-1993): 199-250, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[72] See Trachtenberg, "Incorporation of Culture," 38-69.

[73] The Centennial opened with President Grant and Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil turning on the Corliss Engine, the New Orleans Exposition opened with President Chester Arthur telegraphing a speech and ordering the electric generator turned on (it was months late or he presumably would have been there in person), and the Columbian Exposition began with President Grover Cleveland turning the switch on the power plant.

[74] This was advertised on the trade card for the Bickford Sewing Machine display in Machinery Hall at the 1876 Centennial. Machinery Hall Scrapbook, Centennial Exhibition Records, 1876-1879, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Currently, a discussion by Loren Kruger dealing with a demonstration of diamond mining in the Columbian Exposition Mining Hall is the only scholarship concerned with the performance of work. Unfortunately, it forms only a minor part of her piece.[75] While anthropology exhibits clearly showed the progression of society, as Bennett observes, machine performance was a far more vital—and popular—tool for engendering in audiences the identity of "achieved humanity."

I will compare Midway Plaisance inhabitants enacting their domestic life with workers in the Machinery Hall. The Midway worker represents "primitive" life while the White City workers operate advanced machinery. In one, work is simple and common; in the other, complex and exalted. Witnessing contrasting encounters like this positioned millions of spectators at the juncture between savage and civilized, ancient and modern, seeing and being: watching "simpler" peoples was seeing a performance of savagery. If fairs advertised that we were dominant over savages, then it was just as important is that we were dominant over machines. Machines, not high culture, proclaimed American progress to audiences.

Machinery Halls worked to naturalize and domesticate industrial technology. This process relied on performative encounters (i.e., seeing a blind man, a woman, or a child operate a machine), which increasingly employed theatrical techniques to attract the spectators. By all accounts, Machinery Halls were acknowledged as temples of progress. I hope to look at whether or not fairgoers treated it with the reverence that historians suggest. For example, "Keeping Watch on the Waltham Watch Company's Operators" (**Figure 4**), shows a fairgoer flirting with a female worker while his wife looks on

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[75] Kruger, "Diamond Zulus," analyzes an image of a display of the process of extracting and cleaning diamonds by South Africans.

disapprovingly. Performances of machines are an excellent point to begin asking the question—developed in the next chapter—did tourists come to the expositions to learn, or to be entertained?

My third chapter, "The Theatre Cultures of International Expositions," examines what role amusements played in the practice of leisure at—and around—expositions. Even though exposition planners attempted to organize amusements to strictly police popular amusements, this history of fair entertainments challenge the notion (or perhaps "myth") that expositions were serious places that eventually—and reluctantly—admitted amusements into the confines of the Midway Plaisance in 1893. While planned zones were regulated strongly throughout the period, exhibitors used popular forms of entertainment in their displays. For example, much has been made of living villages in 1893, but both previous fairs had encampments, model hunter's cabins, and similar displays that added a performative spectacle to the fairgoing experience.[76] Rosemarie K. Bank's focus on the "theatre culture" of the Columbian Exposition suggests that there is ample material available for study in looking at extra-fair entertainments like Buffalo Bill's "Wild West." Unfortunately, almost no research has been undertaken regarding theatrical productions associated with the fairs. Guidebooks typically included information on entertainment in the host cities, which audiences clearly attended in high numbers. The Wild West show, in fact, was also present in New Orleans. When it rained throughout most of the run, William Cody turned his operation into a melodramatic theatre company and proceeded to play for sold-out audiences. In response to increasing

[76] Additionally, the discussion of the Turkish towel weaver above suggests that ethnographic performance was by no means limited to the Midway. Loren Kruger's chief example of Zulu performance at the Columbian Exposition is from the Mining Exhibit in the White City.

fairgoer demand for urban entertainment, theatrical producers like the Kiralfy Brothers sought to put sights and themes from expositions on the stages of host cities.

Although there is scant theatre scholarship on fairs, thinking about these events as staged productions for audiences provides a unique view of the people who made the expositions work. Studying exposition performance has been a productive way to reveal new relationships between producers and performers. Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes write of tourism as a "performative enactment of the subject-object binary"; in other words, exposition planners crafted experiences positioning the tourist as a subject gazing on curated objects. In the constructed halls and landscapes of world's fairs, the world was made to be seen and consumed by fairgoers. However, "that performativity means that such a binary is always vulnerable to disruptive reflection."[77] Expositions continually produced and reified messages of American progress and potential, but did so in a space of intense contact with a broad public. The fourth chapter, "Performing and Representing Audiences: Official Texts and Lived Experiences," examines how the scripts that expositions offered were created and where they broke down and allowed fairgoers to craft their own meanings and experiences.

For example, Patricia Morton uses displays of ethnographic "exotic" others to demonstrate how authenticity was staged. She points out that central to living villages was the fact that the natives were "expurgated of European habits, clothing, and technology; as if they were in fact occupying authentic reproductions of indigenous buildings in a pre-colonial pastoral."[78] In this light, seeing such a performance of

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[77] Minca and Oakes, "Traveling Paradoxes," 11.

[78] Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (MIT University Press, 2000), 207. Although the book

ethnicity reifies an evolutionary model in which the spectator is an autonomous subject observing an objectified and unchanging picture of the world. In practice, Morton's description was more fragile than it may appear: the inhabitants of the villages mixed liberally with fairgoers and adopted Western clothing, machines, and trinkets into their exhibits, often with the sanction of administrators. Many realized the value of their own objectification and began charging money for posed photographs to the "Kodak Fiends" who stalked the Chicago Midway.

The culture of sight-seeing that expositions fostered created a hyper-awareness, bordering on the theatrical, which made spectators self-conscious that they too were on display. An article in *The Century Illustrated Magazine* reporting from the New Orleans exposition is typical when its author states: "The visitors themselves are as well worth seeing as the show. To sit on a bench on one of the broad aisles of the main building…and observe the passing throng, is to my mind the best part of the sight-seeing at the fair."[79] Exposition spaces were, as Mona Domosh writes on promenading in postbellum New York, "highly scripted arenas for social display" where fairgoers performed their class by observing public codes of behavior and display.[80] Rather than read being in a crowd as an exercise in "civil inattention" (whereby we create a contract of knowingly ignoring others in public space), I read being in the crowd as a site of self-

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focuses on the 1931 exposition, the same model applies to the living villages, which began to be fully integrated exhibits in Paris 1889 and Chicago 1893.

[79] Eugene V. Smalley, "The New Orleans Exposition," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 30, no. 2 (June 1885): 185-99. For a study of the relationship of the illustrated press and viewers enforcing social norms of viewing, largely at the Columbian Exposition, see Niquette and Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair."

[80] Mona Domosh, "'Gorgeous Incongruities': Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 2 (June, 1998): 209-26.

performance where fairgoers put their own acts of seeing on view to profess their membership in a "civilized" community.[81] Viewing became a way to define one's own class, making spectatorship a key mode of social encounter and distinction.

This chapter looks at who was represented in the spaces of fairs, as well as how fairgoers performed their roles as spectators. It puts official scripts, such as the ones offered by guidebooks, against evidence culled from first-person archival sources to try and determine how the "lay geographies" of fairgoing changed between 1876 and 1893. Ultimately, how audiences performed their roles within such powerful institutional and media networks is the proof of how American came to understand evolution through practice.

This dissertation seeks to redirect historical conversations about world's fairs away from a focus on how expositions were produced to how they were received. Historians seldom doubt that nineteenth-century expositions were highly significant events, but it is time to look at how official messages were missed, mixed, and outright ignored. Only after looking at the fairs from the "ground up" perspective of the fairgoer, can we see the impact fairs had on lives of its audience. Such an analysis affords us an opportunity to put individual voices in conversation with large-scale cultural forces.

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[81] For more on "civil inattention," see Erving Goffman *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959) and, more recently, Stefan Hirschauer, "On Doing Being a Stranger: the Practical Constitution of Civil Inattention," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 35.1 (2005): 43-67.

## 1.
## Cultivating the Spectator, or, How to See the Fairs

The introduction to the Rand, McNally 1885 *Guide to New Orleans* looks backward over the nineteenth century, claiming that in the previous fifty years "greater progress has been made in agriculture, science, art and manufactures, than in all the centuries that preceded them since the dark ages."[1] Echoing typical exposition rhetoric, the author praises how life and labor have been made more pleasant and productive by technological innovations; however, this encomium only prepares the ground for a sharp criticism of those who have turned a blind eye to material change: The individual who studies not…and ignores valuable improvements constantly going on about him day by day…who gives himself and his family no pleasure or recreation, or, if so, only of the lowest source, he it is who gets left in the race for competence and comfort.[2] This quote reveals what was in 1885 an emergent way of thinking that linked leisure and evolutionary theory. In this discourse, an ideal American should use both work and recreation for self-improvement. World's fairs provided large-scale opportunities to fulfill such a mission. The guidebook stresses that the "multitudes who will this winter visit New Orleans, will come back refreshed and enlightened from what they have seen and learned." They "will return with minds glowing with wonder and replete with facts"

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[1] This was a typical belief of the period. Compare the text to the World's Columbian Exposition Director General, George Davis, writing: "The world's progress since the middle of the nineteenth century has distanced all that has gone before, and the last four decades…have witnessed greater strides than all the previous years of the Columbian epoch [from 1492 to 1892] combined," see George Davis, "The World's Columbian Exposition," *North American Review*, March 1892, 308.

[2] Rand, McNally, and Company, *A Guide to New Orleans and the Principal Cities in the South* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1885), 7.

about the Darwinian "struggle for life."[3] Between 1876 and 1893, rhetoric connecting leisure and national progress would become commonplace in questions of social policy and scientific discourse. The Rand, McNally guide is only one of many voices that cast visiting the New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (1884-85) as an occasion, even a duty: to ignore the exposition was to be left out of the "race" of national progress.

This chapter will look at how fair designers, organizers, planners, and boosters—whom I rather ungraciously lump together as "fair officials"—encouraged visitors to "do" expositions in supposedly appropriate ways. I will first connect how leisure activities were framed by evolutionary theories. This is especially important because current studies of leisure in the nineteenth century, especially of theatre, have emphasized conceptions of respectability and public morality as primary agents of cultural change, while neglecting the scientific logic behind contemporary social theories and leisure practices.[4] By placing evolutionary thought at the foundation of late-nineteenth-century social theory, it is clear that the stakes for planning expositions concerned whether or not fairs would advance the nation—and race—by providing technical, moral, and artistic education to the masses. After connecting evolution and leisure, I will examine how officials at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (1876), New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (1884-85), and the Chicago World's

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[3] Ibid., 8.

[4] For example, scholars ascribe shifts in audience behavior and taste to an emergent culture of respectability in the second half of the nineteenth century. See particularly Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: from Stage to Television, 1750-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Bruce A. McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

Columbian Exposition (1893) struggled to design exposition spaces to present a rational, orderly vision of progress. I will conclude by looking at how guidebooks encouraged the spectator to embody civilization by how they were to tour the fairs. Recently, scholars such as Bruno Giberti and Alison Griffiths have contributed valuable work showing how exposition design and display strategies taught visitors "ways of seeing" expositions.[5] This chapter will build on their work by comparing guidebooks, architecture, and primary sources to look at how these officials prompted fairgoers to play a role in national progress.

**Evolution and Leisure**

The period covered by this dissertation marks a key point when evolutionary theories expanded into popular discourse. At midcentury, evolution was largely discussed in academic fields related to natural history, such as biology, zoology, and geology; the second half of the nineteenth century saw evolutionary thought branch out into anthropology, sociology, and history. Eventually, it became part of popular and political discussions of social reform, immigration, and, in the twentieth century, eugenics.[6] By 1893, the language of evolution was common enough that a doctor could casually write to a female friend in Oswego, N.Y. that Patrick Eugene Prendergast, who had recently assassinated Chicago's mayor, should be executed because "in cases of this

[5] In particular, see Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), and Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002).

[6] There are many good sources tracing evolutionary thought in the United States and Europe. Notable among them are: Numbers, "Darwinism," and Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945, Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

nature we might with benefit to the human race, promote the action of the evolutionary principle of the 'survival of the fittest' by removing a few [of] the 'unfit.'"[7]

In the fall of 1882, supporters of Herbert Spencer brought the philosopher across the Atlantic for a public tour that, according to Daniel Bender made Spencer a "popular hero" and "marked the growing importance of evolutionary thought within and beyond the academy."[8] Among the two hundred guests at Spencer's farewell banquet at Delmonico's in New York were top scientists, publishers, politicians, and clergymen, including intellectual luminaries Henry Ward Beecher, Charles A. Dana, William Appleton, and William Graham Sumner. Spencer's tour, conducted in the same year as Darwin's death, helped paved the way for his entrance into the academy with the development of the discipline of sociology. More pressing here are Spencer's remarks on the evolutionary position of America, which the *New York Times* respectfully calls "Herbert Spencer's gentle reproof."[9]

Once the dinner had been finished, a series of toasts occupied the party until late in the evening. First among these was Spencer's farewell speech, in which he assessed the state of the America through the lens of his theories of social progress. He praised the country for its accomplishments, then settled in for a critical assessment of the imbalance between industry and leisure in the United States. Picking up on a theme developed in

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[7] Leonard E. Schoch to Miss Anna W. Mahaney, 7 November 1893, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum. Prendergast assassinated Mayor Harrison days before the close of the Columbian Exposition. His sensational trial, which was largely a fight over whether he was insane, continued until July 1894.

[8] Daniel Bender, *American Abyss: Savagery and Civilization in the Age of Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 7. See also Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002), which provides an in-depth overview of how evolutionary theory permeated popular culture throughout the nineteenth century.

[9] *New York Times*, "Philosophy at Dinner," 10 November 1882, 5.

his earlier work, Spencer noted that once a society progresses from stages of militancy to peace, "the duty to work has taken the place of the duty to fight." mostly likely a reference to the industrial booms following the tumultuous Civil War.[10] However, Spencer charged that Americans have gone too far, exhibiting a dangerous and "exclusive devotion to work." "Life," he noted, "is not for learning, nor is life for working, but learning and working are for life." Industry is a means to an end, but he charges that Americans by and large saw work as an end in itself. Spencer warned of the danger to the physique, mental faculties, and offspring of Americans if they remain "slave[s] of accumulation" at the expense of leisure. He cautioned that Americans needed "a revised ideal of life," with "a better adjustment of labor and enjoyment." Spencer concluded with a "homily" preaching that Americans had "too much of 'the gospel of work.' It is time to preach the gospel of relaxation." Spencer's American disciple Edward Youmans reported that Spencer "has showed us, as no man ever before showed, what power of work comes out of the pleasure of cultivated amusements."[11]

Spencer was not alone in admonishing societies to cultivate leisure. Evolutionary theory runs throughout nineteenth-century discussions of morals and entertainment.[12] As

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Edward Livingston Youmans, *Herbert Spencer on the Americans and the Americans on Herbert Spencer* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), 7. These include "concerts, operas, theatres, billiards, salmon-fishing, yachting, city rambles, and country excursions."

[12] See, for example, Richard A. Proctor's *Light Science for Leisure Hours* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1886). This popular science book has a chapter entitled "Conduct and Duty" that opens with the statement that "In our own time the analysis of ethical considerations has been more fully developed than in any preceding age…chiefly because of the progress of the doctrine of evolution has thrown new light on the subject" (232). Proctor goes on to argue that Spencer and others engaged in studying biological evolution play a key role in joining public morality and social evolution.

early as 1851, Spencer had avowed a belief in the inevitability of progress towards "human perfectibility." If societies followed proper morals based on social cooperation, altruism would unlock humanity's inherent capabilities.[13] Spencer would later reverse himself, arguing for a more competitive vision of human endeavor, but the philosophical link between public morals and evolution was picked up in a more emphatic and scientific frame by Alfred Russell Wallace, co-founder with Darwin of the theory of evolution. Although Wallace and Darwin came across revolutionary scientific ideas at the same time, Wallace differed with Darwin on key points, one being the role that intellect played in humanity's origin. While Darwin posited that humanity developed from primates through gradual physiological changes, Wallace believed that such changes could take apes only as far as the threshold of humanity. From there, it was the development of intellect and morality that had sparked the creation of the human species. In "The Origin of Human Races, and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of 'Natural Selection,'" Wallace advances the idea that man was not only created, but continues to adapt through intellectual, rather than physical, qualities. As long as humanity increased their mental faculties, whether through work or recreation, the species would continue to evolve. This emphasis on the mind as an agent of evolutionary change opened the door for leisure activities to be considered as an actor in humanity's development.[14] In the United States, researchers would attempt to ground Wallace's

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[13] Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics: or, The Conditions Essential to Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed* (London: John Chapman, 1851), 31-32.

[14] Alfred R. Wallace "The Origin of Human Races, and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of 'Natural Selection,'" *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 2 (1864): clviii-clxxxvii. Although Darwin did not pit the mental and physical at such odds, his first work on human evolution took morality as a key ingredient of progress, seeing "the struggle between our higher and lower impulses will be [in human

theories in—albeit subsequently discredited—practical research. Anthropologists such as Henry Bates linked cultural change with cranial capacity. To Bates, leisure time provided opportunities for individuals to increase their brain development and accelerate their own evolutionary development.[15]

Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics* (1872), which has been called "a seminal work in the application of Darwinism to politics," likewise affirms that moral, rather than material, forces instigate social advancement.[16] Bagehot goes farther than Wallace and defines cultivation as an acquired characteristic. He writes, "the descendants of cultivated parents will have, by born nervous organization, a greater aptitude for cultivation than the descendants of such as are not cultivated."[17] Thus, the more cultured individuals and societies will have an advantage for survival over those that are not. Cultivation is "a continuous force which binds age to age, which enables each to begin with some improvement." A history of civilization is "not a set of detached dots, but a line of colour, surely enhancing shade by shade."[18] Bagehot aligns cultivation of intellect and moral with class, as not all members of a so-called civilized society would be civilized; the lower classes that lack morals would not be quite as evolved.[19] Following

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evolution as it develops] less severe, and virtue will be triumphant," See *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871), 192.

[15] See Henry Bates, "Discontinuities in Nature's Methods," *American Anthropologist* o.s. 1, no. 2 (April 1888): 135-46. This was by no means an isolated view. See Frank Baker, "Ascent of Man," *American Anthropologist* o.s. 3, no. 4 (October 1890): 297-320.

[16] Hawkins, "Social Darwinism," 68, and Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics, or, Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of "Natural Selection" and "Inheritance" to Political Society* (London: Henry S. King, 1872), 10-11.

[17] Ibid., 8.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 185.

this logic, it becomes imperative for a society to have more cultivated individuals in order to survive and progress.

If higher morals and culture could advance societies, so could lower morality and culture corrupt societies. Many of the intellectual and social elite were concerned about the evolutionary implications of unsavory entertainments. Leisure, improperly enjoyed, was feared to lead to dissolution or social degradation.[20] In a scathing attack on Wallace's "Origin," English essayist W.R. Gregg faulted Wallace chiefly for leaving out the possibility of degeneration, or, that a society could devolve to lower stages of order. Gregg saw the contemporary situation as a pitched battle where "in our complicated modern communities a race is being run between moral and mental enlightenment and the deterioration of the physical constitution through the defeasance of the law of natural selection;—and on the issues of that race the destines of humanity depend."[21] A key text of the period was French sociologist Gustave Le Bon's field-changing *The Crowd* (*La Psychologie des Foules*, 1895), translated into English in 1896. Le Bon argued that groups of people, under the wrong conditions, could degenerate into a crowd, which he likened to a temporary barbarian society. On the other hand, "a civilization involved fixed rules, discipline…an elevated degree of culture—all of them conditions that crowds…have shown themselves incapable of realizing."[22] Thus, it is possible that fair audiences could become crowds under the wrong conditions and devolve, at least temporarily, to a lower stage of evolution.

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[20] See Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, 114, 147.

[21] W.R. Gregg, "On the Failure of 'Natural Selection' in the Case of Man," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, September 1868, 363.

[22] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1896), xviii.

Although theorists feared the specter of social degeneration, American thinkers tended to think that degrees of cultivation could be raised through practice.[23] Henry Bates argued that the cultural and physical would develop in tandem. As evolution brought a society from the brute stages of militancy to industry, resulting in increased amounts of leisure, that society, by using leisure to develop ethical reasoning in its members, could attain a higher state of social order.[24] In other words, as with Spencer's "reproof" and Bagehot's cultivation, individual spectators could attain higher levels of culture by using leisure wisely, thus ensuring that the society as a whole would progress as it should. Alison Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference* connects the plans for individual spectator experience and national status by looking at how museum officials desired "to furnish the museum visitor with a uniquely civilizing experience that would bolster the quality of the nation's citizenry."[25] Applying the same ideas to international expositions, it is clear that fair officials not only preached evolutionary ideas in their organizing documents, but planned expositions to be engines to help Americans progress by striking a productive balance between work and leisure.[26]

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[23] One aspect that is not very apparent about evolutionary theory at the time is how many conflicts ran through the field. There was no single theory that every commentator subscribed to, or even dominated, Most scientists attempted to synthesize a vast flora of ideas that were constantly changing. One major debate in the social sciences was whether or not societies were fixed at levels of development on the savage to civilized spectrum, an idea that extended to discussions of gender and class (i.e., whether Eliza Doolittle could become a society lady).

[24] Bates, "Discontinuities," 144.

[25] Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, 5.

[26] The connections between museum and international exposition management, design, and philosophy were very close in the period. See Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73-102.

Fair planners, organizers, and designers sold expositions as instigators of social evolution. The Philadelphia Centennial Committee on Classification described the fair's system to organize displays as one "based on the idea of evolution or derivation of manufactured products from the crude materials of the earth."[27] The congressional act creating the Centennial Board of Finance noted that it was intended to show "promote and control the exhibition of the natural resource and their development, and the nations' progress in arts which benefit mankind."[28] In 1865, John Lubbock's *Pre-historic Times* argued that you could arrange artifacts chronologically from Paleolithic to Neolithic and see an evolutionary progression.[29] Likewise, the classification system was based on the idea that a display ranging from simple to complex and past to present could show how American progress has increased civilization for the benefit of humanity in the hundred years that it was a nation.[30] Writing in *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated*, J.S. Ingram echoes Spenserian language when he impresses upon the reader that "Progress is the law of life, and Exhibitions, at once the outcome and forebears of that very progress, have experienced its influence and have in turn reacted on it."[31]

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[27] United States Centennial Commission, "Report on the Classification," in *Journal of the Proceedings of the United States Centennial Commission at Philadelphia. Fifth Session: May 1874*, 35.

[28] J.L. Smith, *International Exhibition, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, 1876: Acts of Congress, Rules and Regulations, Description of the Buildings* (Philadelphia: United States Centennial Commission, 1875), 11.

[29] See John Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), . Lubbock coined the term "Paleolithic"

[30] In Smith, *International Exhibition*, 17, see the United States Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish's letter to foreign ministers announcing the exhibition: "display of the results of Art and Industry of all nations as will serve to illustrate the great advances attained, and the successes achieved, in the interest of Progress and Civilization during the century which will have then closed."

[31] J.S. Ingram, *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1876), 21.

In both New Orleans and Chicago, it was common for organizers and supporters to place the expositions as key junctures in an evolutionary narrative. Herbert Fairall, author and Iowa State Commissioner to the New Orleans exposition, begins his history of world exhibitions with the Garden of Eden, replete with "a beautiful park" and "departments of horticulture and women's work."[32] He continues to trace the exhibitionary impulse through "barbarous" civilizations like Rome, until "civilization shed its benign influence over the nations" of Europe, giving rise to small-scale fairs and exhibitions. Finally, such fairs had such a "salutary effect upon the moral as well as industrial condition of people," the need for grand international exhibitions generated modern world's fairs.[33] After some advances and false starts, Fairall ends his progressive narrative at an exalted point, with the New Orleans exposition occupying "the crowning achievement of the age—mind's greatest conquest over matter."[34] Using a similar, albeit less sweeping, structure, the Director General of the Columbian Exposition defined the fair in opposition to the state of civilization in 1492, which the exposition was created to commemorate. In 1492, he writes, "government by the people was an idea that did not even enter the human mind. The nations had scarcely begun to emerge from the darkness and barbarism of the middle ages; dense ignorance was the marked characteristic of the masses of the people," eventually showing how the present era was more evolved and enlightened.[35]

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[32] Herbert S. Fairall, *The World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition New Orleans, 1884-1885* (Iowa City: Republican Publishing Company, 1885), 9. He likens God to a "Director General," the title of the head of the New Orleans exposition board.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 12.

[35] George R. Davis "The World's Columbian Exposition" *North American Review* 154, no. 424 (March 1892), 305.

By 1893, the official discourse of evolution had permeated many levels of official fair literature. The congressional act authorizing the Columbian Exposition charged it with producing an exhibition that showed "the progress of civilization in the New World."[36] In a similar vein, the opening sentence of the official history *The Book of the Fair* states that the fair's purpose was to be the greatest "among monuments marking the progress of civilization throughout the ages."[37] In a similar sense, President Harrison's telegram officially opening the New Orleans Exposition by describing it as presenting the "gathered trophies of civilization" to represent the progress of American civilization from barbarous stages of history. Exposition rhetoric does not stop at displaying progress. It was common to believe that expositions would be engines of evolution. Fairall is rather utopian, but by no means unusual, when he writes that "these exhibitions have become important factors in the industrial records of the world, and by the rapid diffusion of knowledge they are the means of civilizing and enlightening the whole earth."[38] In this rhetoric of progress, the present age was sitting atop the apex of complex society (an assertion taken almost *a priori* at the time), and expositions were cast as instigators of further social evolution.

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[36] HR Act 8393, 51st Congress, 1st Session (1890). The Act goes on to detail elements such as the organization, funding, and awarding of prizes for the exposition.

[37] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, As Viewed Through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893* (Chicago and San Francisco: The Bancroft Company, 1893), 1. The impulse to write history within an evolutionary narrative was strong enough that Bancroft documents the history of the conception and construction of the fair in a chapter entitled "The Evolution of the Fair."

[38] Fairall, *World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition*, 20.

**Framing Audiences: Practicing "Good" and "Bad" Spectatorship**

One was not expected to view expositions passively, but to be immersed and, ultimately, changed. In an influential essay of 1891, "The Museums of the Future," G. Brown Goode, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian National Museum, affirmed that "to *see* is to know" was a truism for the age.[39] World's fairs, dubbed "World's Universities," were opportunities for designers and organizers to plan environments and visual displays that would position spectators, or "sight-seers" in the contemporary jargon, as subjects at the pinnacle of a long, historical process of social evolution. With so much at stake, planners, designers, and guidebook authors devoted considerable effort to teaching spectators "ways of seeing" the fairs. How spectators moved through the space dictated what they saw, and what they saw dictated how they interpreted the fairgoing experience. By extension, that experience shaped how they defined American cultural and social evolution.

According to Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum*, nineteenth-century museums and related institutions like expositions, parks, and zoos attempted to teach spectators how to behave in conformity with elite notions of decorum. Throughout the galleries of museums or halls of expositions, visitors' senses were directed away from "low" entertainment towards supposedly enlightened ideals to "lift" up the visitor's level of culture. In this "exhibitionary complex," a museum became a "performative environment in which new forms of conduct and behavior could be shaped and

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[39] G. Brown Goode, "The Museum of the Future," in *Report of the National Museum, 1888-1889* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 427. Emphasis in the original. Goode was active in both museum and exposition circles, holding prominent places in curatorial and planning positions at all three expositions of the period.

practiced."[40] By corralling viewers through planned spaces that emphasized learning and restricted unruly behavior, these institutions attempted to cultivate docile "minds on legs." Ultimately, the nineteenth century saw the museum and exposition as "an exemplary space in which the rough and raucous might learn to civilize themselves by modeling their conduct on the middle-class codes of behaviour to which museum attendance would expose them."[41] Official exposition sources sought to create a like-minded audience. Writing in the 1893 *Official Guide of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition*, John J. Flinn, the most prolific of Columbian guidebook authors, is clear what he expects from the reader, as "it is presumed at the outset that the great majority of visitors are those who seek to enlighten themselves regarding the progress which the world has made in the arts, sciences and industries. To him…a liberal education is assured."[42] In short, the ideal fairgoer was disciplined, rational, and in pursuit of education.

In the press, spectators conformed to consistent types: the "good" spectator, usually male, is often depicted with one of more recurring attributes: holding a guidebook in hand, demonstrating knowledge of exhibits, wearing good clothes, and demonstrating knowledge of exhibits to women. The bad spectator is consistently likened to country folk, with poor dress, coarse features, and gaping mouths, lost in brutish amazement. For example, artist and popular ethnographer George Catlin's treatise *Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life* attempted to diagnose civilization's ills to

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[40] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 33.

[41] Ibid., 28.

[42] John J. Flinn, *Official Guide to the Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: The Columbian Guide Company, 1893), 17.

segments of the population who had acquired the unnatural habit of mouth breathing. At one point, he uses a working class audience watching a Punch and Judy show, mouths agape with glee, as a key example.[43] Bennett notes that intellectual curiosity and gross wonder "played a significant role in articulating the distinction between the elite and the vulgar as a distinction of visual practice and sensory comportment."[44] Representations of spectatorship in the illustrated press in particular encouraged fairgoers to conform to "good" spectatorship and avoid being likened to the unsophisticated tourists who were depicted as laughable rubes.

Both types of spectators are depicted in "Lost in Wonder" (**Figure 5**) from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Historian Joy Kasson analyzes this image in *Marble Queens and Captives* to show how fairgoers' performance of their own sightseeing was related to class structures and social power. Kasson contrasts the well-dressed man with the country folk on the right. The gentleman on the left gestures authoritatively to the exhibit, while the other figures, neck craned, mouths open, and hands in their pockets, ignorantly gape at the display.[45] Whatever is on view, it must be interesting, as a sign,

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[43] George Catlin, *Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life* (London: N. Trübner and Company, 1869), 85. Tracing everything to mouth breathing may seem quixotic at best, but the book was enormously popular, and Catlin was well respected. By 1875, it had already gone into six editions and would be reprinted regularly into the 1890s.

[44] Tony Bennett, "Civic Seeing: Museums and the Organization of Vision," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, edited by Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 274. There is ample evidence to suggest that people-watching was a recognized part of fairgoing. See Eugene V. Smalley, "The New Orleans Exposition," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, June 1885, 194: "The visitors themselves are as well worth seeing as the show. To sit on a bench on one of the broad aisles of the main building…and observe the passing throng, is to my mind the best part of the sight-seeing at the fair."

[45] Joy Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 38-39. Kasson also

restraining bar, and Centennial guard are keeping people at a distance. The informed, discoursing spectator demonstrates his power not only over the knowledge on display, but over the poor spectators, who can only respond with wonder.

Such depictions of visitors from the country is part of a prevalent iconic tradition of portraying rural inhabitants with what Sarah Burns calls "amused condescension."[46] Although American discourse valued the high moral stature of the farmer, Burns surveys art, drama, and other sources to show that "nineteenth-century prose, poetry, plays, and pictures firmly established this type as rustic oddity or clown," often pictured to convey a "low spectacle of rustic manners."[47] This process is evident in depictions of country folk in the illustrated press between 1876 and 1893, likening spectatorship and public manners to geographical origin. Burns concludes that seeing "hicks" are portrayed as "dirty and dull" by urban dwellers was part of the process of "the subordination of the country and agriculture to the expanding powerful world of the city and capitalism," or, the very progress defined in the "Centennial Mirror" that fair officials considered the industrial evolution of the United States.[48]

The intended civilizing effects of a fair are made clear in a haughty illustration from *Harper's Bazar*, "An Event in the Village" (**Figure 6**). While visiting an exposition was an easy thing for those living in the host cities, touring from afar could be a major endeavor. Local newspapers around the country would often note in their social pages when prominent residents left for and returned from expositions. In the left frame, the

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observes that they are coded as poor. She notes one man who seems to be carrying everything he owns in a valise.

[46] Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 135.

[47] Ibid., 122.

[48] Ibid., 135. See below for a discussion of the "Centennial Mirror."

man in the image is leaving the village in drab garb. Only the schoolhouse children seem interested, possibly as a diversion from their lessons. When the man returns, he arrives in the village's center, with the whole citizenry as an audience. All signs in the image suggest that he has evolved to a higher level of culture: he wears better clothes, a hat, an elaborate mustache, and is stoic in the face of so much interest. He has become an exposition display himself. Depicted shaking hands with the nearest villager, he has perhaps returned to civilize his own people.[49]

Another image from *Harper's Weekly*, "Gratifying Two Senses" (**Figure 8**) trades on similar types showing a country couple committing the double social *faux pas* of eating in the art gallery, as well as the intellectual mistake of looking at the paintings as entertainment, as if in a lowbrow theatre. Circulated in the popular press, images such as these added a level of social pressure to the task of being able to perform one's role as a sophisticated, rather than ignorant, spectator. Through official rhetoric, guidebook language, and images like these, fairgoers were prompted to play an essential role in social progress by performing their role of good spectators. To do this, fairgoers throughout the period between 1876 and 1893 were expected to approach expositions as sites to advance their knowledge of the world, or else be considered unrefined bumpkins.

While news reports, advertising, and the illustrated press helped shape expectations of how to see expositions, fair officials looked to fair design and guidebooks to teach spectators to see and "do" expositions. In the next section, I will consider how

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[49] This "before" and "after" comparison had been a major trope in depicting the progress of "lower" peoples and it continued throughout the period. See "The Fair as an Educator," *World's Fair Puck*, 11 September 1893, 218 (**Figure 7**), which show an African chief coming to the fair's Midway in full tribal garb, but returning in a neat, European-style suit, his headdress and spear traded for a hat and cane.

the large-scale designs of exposition grounds and main buildings were intended to represent microcosms of an evolved world. By placing the fairgoer in an orderly space embedded with a sense of evolutionary progress and achievement, fair planners hoped to construct expositions as civilizing missions. After treating designs, I will examine how guidebooks prompted the spectator to navigate this dense space, while encouraging practices that might cultivate a higher moral and cultural sensibility in fairgoers.

**Designing Expositions**

In "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors," Geographers Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman identify three ways that geographers write about space: as text, arena, and performance. This tripartite model will serve as a useful structure to construct a multi-tiered approach to analyzing the position of the individual in fair space. Dwyer and Alderman conceive of space as a process continually being reshaped by people and society. They focus specifically on how memorials shape landscapes, and, by extension, cultural memories.[50] Key to this approach is an acknowledgement that both overt and concealed struggles over interpreting spaces are linked to conflicts between official expectations and individual performances.[51] While chapter four will look at space as an arena for representation and environment for performance, this chapter looks at how fair officials designed space with specific texts in mind.

[50] Although world's fairs were temporary, thinking about them as memorials harmonizes with Dwyer and Alderman's methodology: both memorials and expositions were intended to commemorate significant events, to create a vision of history, and to forge a collective sense of place.

[51] Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors," *GeoJournal* 73, no. 3 (2008): 174.

Dwyer and Alderman emphasize critical interpretations of the space; however, they carefully note that there is never a single version of what they call a "spacetext." Instead, a spacetext has many authors: each person who enters a space is a contributor, creating a text. For example, I will discuss how Columbian Exposition officials encouraged fairgoers to read the Midway Plaisance as a diversionary afterpiece to the White City's serious exhibition halls. By following this script, victors created a spacetext that confirmed the importance of civilized culture and the duty to take it seriously as a means to advance the society. However, when fairgoers ignore this serious/White City vs. diversion/Midway, it offers another reading of the exposition as a site that fails to privilege learning over amusement. Thus, a space like the Columbian Exposition is "an odd sort of book in which each page reflects the handiwork of many authors."[52] In this vein, space is a palimpsest, a document that contains a multitude of voices and visions. Despite officials' extensive efforts at using space as a text to craft evolutionary narratives, fairgoers toured expositions in ways that agreed, paralleled, and sometimes ran contrary to those messages.

The second approach that Dwyer and Alderman take, which I will consider in chapter four, is looking at space as an "arena" where social groups battle over their representations within a particular space. The categories of text and arena lend themselves naturally to thinking about space as a container or thing. Clearly, these concepts are evident in how fair officials planned the spaces. However, the third category, that of space as performance, factors in human participation and contingency, seeing space as a site of performance. Here, "landscapes serve as a stage, literally and

[52] Ibid., 171.

figuratively" for performances of pageants, historical representations, tour guides, public dramas, rituals, and festivals."[53] People's actions touring fairs are "performances" that have a critical potential to make or subvert official scripts. Space, then, is constituted through its use. Dwyer and Alderman see performance as a powerful tool to confirm or deny official scripts, as people's use of space is in dialogue with larger, official sources.[54] Like memorials, expositions were "symbolic conduits not only for expressing a version of history but casting legitimacy on it as well."[55] Although fair officials offered an evolutionary history favoring White, Western accomplishment, there were, in fact, many other stories to be told.[56]

Between 1876 and 1893 expositions were built on sites where designers constructed wholly new landscapes and buildings bounded by gates—and walls or fences—for the express purpose of temporary display. The symbolic resonance of a sculpted and planned world that could be completely crafted gave the organizers unparalleled influence to frame visitor experience. In *Wondrous Difference*, Griffiths explores how late-nineteenth-century museum officials faced period's "central challenge" of "striking the proper balance between popular appeal and scientific rigor."[57] There is no doubt that exposition supporters hoped for a "higher" experience capable of cultivating spectators through dispensing knowledge. Bruno Giberti writes of how the plan and classification system of the Centennial Exhibition was designed to be an object lesson writ large, "a kind of text, as a clear and unambiguous representation of

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[53] Dwyer and Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes," 173.
[54] Ibid., 174-76.
[55] Ibid., 167.
[56] I will go into greater detail in fairgoer performance in chapter four.
[57] Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*, xxiii, 44-45.

knowledge."[58] The same impulse to align space with educational rhetoric echoed throughout the period. In an often-cited 1891 paper, Smithsonian assistant secretary, G. Brown Goode urged the final Columbian plan to show "the steps of progress of civilization…to be, in fact, an *illustrated encyclopaedia of civilization*."[59] However, expositions were not documents to be read, but events to be used, prompting, in each iteration, unexpected compromises between the desire to educate and the need to entertain.

This section will look at how large-scale designs of exposition space embodied this opposition between knowledge and use. While the 1876 Centennial Exhibition officials emphasized the educational aspect of exposition space to the point of unwieldiness, the 1884-85 New Orleans planners sought to attract visitors with descriptions of the natural beauty and relaxing atmosphere of the fair grounds. The 1893 Columbian Exposition achieved the most successful balance by realizing this tension in its spatial division between the White City and the Midway Plaisance. All three expositions not only offered object lessons of evolutionary progress, but provided audiences with opportunities to embody, or perform, progress by how they physically navigated space.

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[58] Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 17.

[59] G. Brown Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification For the World's Columbian Exposition* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 354, emphasis in the original. See "Centennial Gossip," *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, 23 August 1876, 2, which likens the Centennial Exhibition to "a pocket edition of the great world."

**Centennial Design, 1876**

Situated within Philadelphia's nearly three-thousand-acre Fairmount Park, the Centennial Exhibition retained much the look of a park or garden. Sixteen thousand feet of a nine-foot tall board fence marked the site out from the surrounding landscape.[60] Joseph M. Wilson, architect of the Main Building, wrote of the intended effect of taking in the Exhibition from nearby George's Hill (**Figure 9**), a favored place for viewing the grounds:

> As we turn and look back towards the Main Building, we are treated to one of the most beautiful sights it has ever been our fortune to witness. We are on a slightly rising slope, and the whole extent of the Main Building and Machinery Hall — come into view. The Main Building is one blaze of light, of flaming fire, from end to end, owing to the reflections on the glass of the rays from the departing sun. It is a grand illumination. In the foreground the fountain has ceased to play, and the now quiet lake, a bright gem in its green setting, reflects every line and flash. The dome of Memorial Hall looks up over the trees — Restless, happy crowds are flitting from point to point, and the whole looks like a fairy-land, an incantation scene, something that we wish would never pass away.[61]

The tendency to view expositions as fairy-lands, or dream cities—as the Columbian Exposition was frequently called—would continue through the period. Designers of each exposition would include multiple means for spectators to gain panoramic views of the grounds. At the Centennial, the intramural railway took the spectator on a tour of the grounds in a matter of minutes. That a railroad, a key aspect of civilization in the 1870s, could enable one to see the entire fair in a few minutes, enabled the spectator to physically experience the movement of historical progress without leaving the

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[60] Ingram, *Centennial*, 106.

[61] Joseph Wilson, *The Great Exhibitions of the World* (New York: A.W. Lovering, 1880), cliv.

passenger's seat.[62] The New Orleans exposition included an electric railway running between the main and government buildings, while the Columbian Exposition had a moving sidewalk between the Peristyle and dock, and an elevated railway touring the grounds. In each exposition, buildings included elevators and observation towers designed to give spectators the chance to enjoy vistas of the expositions themselves.[63]

Designers actively sought to present expositions as places set off from daily life where industry and technology exist in harmony.[64] In reality, they struggled to balance this pastoral ideal with the desire to construct an ordered, legible experience of industrial progress for the fairgoer (**Figure 10**). While the Main building is the center of the image, a great deal of attention is given to the grounds as a promenade. The image presents the fair as a pastoral landscape despite its proximity to a major Northeastern city. In reality, there was not this much open space on the Centennial grounds Less than fairy-land, Centennial Exhibition designers imitated European "grand manner" planning, often associated with French urbanism, to create what Giberti calls "combination of the formal

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[62] See Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 114-18, and Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States,1850-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 162, which discusses the importance of riding the railway before descending into the crowds as a way to get a legible picture of the expositions as a whole.

[63] In practice, these elevators were often short of the ideal. At the Centennial, one had to pay a fee to ride the steam elevator. In New Orleans, see "The Cotton Centennial at New Orleans," *American Architect and Building News* 17, no. 485 (April 1885), 172, which claims that that only one or two out of the twenty available elevators actually worked, noting that "the rush of spectators to the galleries never having been so great as the management looked forward to."

[64] See Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). Marx explores this tension between industrialization and nature across the nineteenth century. Although, his exploration is largely limited to literature, his argument is readily applicable to expositions and the culture at large.

and the picturesque."[65] According to Jeffrey Howe, critical opinion of Centennial architecture and planning was split on the question of its rampant eclecticism. No single style was enforced by Centennial planners, as one would be at the Columbian Exposition. The main buildings incorporated elements of neoclassical, Gothic, and Islamic architecture, often blending multiple styles within a single structure. Many considered the exposition's architecture a "triumph," typical of a dynamic era that was rapidly assimilating foreign art forms.[66] Others, such as Richard Morris Hunt, the first American graduate of the French École des Beaux-Arts, which would have considerable influence on the Columbian Exposition, critiqued the exhibition buildings for what he considered their gaudy excesses, including "a certain insane desire" for height.[67] Indeed, the exhibition's Main Building was the largest man-made structure in the world in 1876. Its glass and steel frame was over 1,880 feet long, seventy-five feet high, and covered roughly twenty acres, or six football fields.[68] Regardless, in a period where historians note that theories of biological evolution were implicated in architectural critique, the conspicuous eclecticism itself conveyed a sense of evolutionary progress, as white Americans performed their power over foreign and ancient cultures by successfully blending their architectures.[69]

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[65] Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 76.

[66] See Jeffrey Howe, "A 'Monster Edifice': Ambivalence, Appropriation, and the Forging of Cultural Identity at the Centennial Exhibition," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 126, no. 4 (October 2002): 635-50.

[67] Ibid., 639, 640.

[68] For contemporary details of the building materials and plans, see George T. Ferris, *Gems of the Centennial Exhibition* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1877), 4-5. New York's Metropolitan of Art and all of Bryant Park (the site of the New York Public Library's main building) would have fit inside.

[69] See Martin A. Berger, *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), especially Chapter 3: "Museum

Howe no doubt invokes the fair officials' wishes when he notes that the effect of rampant eclecticism added to the feeling that the Exhibition was "above all a spectacle, and its architecture, theatrical, inviting the viewer to participate through imagination in the full panoply of architectural history."[70] However, one questions whether the lay fairgoer would have much of a sense of the many traditions assimilated in the fair's buildings. By and large, fairgoer accounts focus on the conditions of visiting or the contents of the halls. One visitor, Philadelphia schoolteacher Anna Baker, who visited the fair more than ten times, wrote a small account of each visit in her diary. Her voice provides insight into how regular visitors may have encountered the exhibition design. Although Baker's accounts have not appeared in any history of the fair, they paint an intimate picture of one woman's engagement with the landscape of the fair not as one who understands Western superiority, but who finds it beautiful and impenetrable. On 19 May, Baker's first visit was full of excitement, but she reports that despite taking only a "general view of things," specific departments were unnavigable. She was "too much bewildered to obtain any clear ideas…It is all immensity and mystery and marvels."[71] Several visits later, on 22 July, she drove to a hill that was regularly recommended as the ideal place from which to view the entirety of the fair grounds. She reports that "Lizze, Geo and I had a pleasant ride to the Park. having a fine view of the Centennial grounds from George's Hill. It is a little city with its mansions and halls and streets and

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Architecture and The Imperialism of Whiteness," 81-122. Also, Howe notes that "a sense of evolutionary progress, entitlement, and even cultural confidence is reflected in the freedom of choice embodied in the exhibition architecture" (634-35).

[70] Howe, "Monster Edifice," 642. He goes on to note that "the temporary nature of the buildings reinforced the sense of theatricality and fantasy."

[71] Anna Keyser Baker, Diary 1874-76, Diaries and Letterbooks Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

foundations and such a foreign air. Has some oriental brought over Aladdin's Lamp?" On her ninth visit on 13 September, Baker comes to the conclusion that "this little world of wonder I can view only in its general effect, having no power to study its details. It is a very Tantalus to me." This educated and repeated fairgoer is only able to understand the fair as an exotic, unknowable object rather a text describing Western superiority.

While the Centennial officials hoped for an orderly, legible plan, Giberti's *Designing the Centennial* establishes that the organizers ended up shifting their goals considerably to please fairgoers.[72] Officials had devoted considerable effort to planning the Main Building for what Giberti terms an Enlightenment, "Cartesian" space, where seeing directly translated to knowing and the spectator's "disembodied gaze" took in, and understood, the whole space.[73] For example, space was initially allocated based on having as many long, uninterrupted vistas as possible, enabling the ideal spectator to encompass as much information as possible in his gaze.[74] However, by privileging their desire to impart knowledge, officials underestimated how much exposition halls were physical environments. The Main Building alone had twenty acres of floorspace and included eleven miles of walkways for thirteen thousand, seven-hundred and twenty exhibitors, putting the spectator in the middle of a vast, highly cluttered visual field (**Figure 11**). Giberti rightly concludes that "the average person's experience appears to have been a superficial one. The mass of displays remained opaque and impervious to

[72] According to Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 70-71, 82, this was in part because upon installation, the visual field of the Centennial was too complex to be easily navigated, as well as because of budgetary constraints put in place by the financial panic of 1873.

[73] Ibid., 99-100.

[74] Ibid., 97.

the gaze."[75] The visual record offers copious examples like Figures 10 and 11, which present the Centennial as a legible space, but this official "Cartesian" rational plan was rendered irrational by its sheer size and scope.

**New Orleans Design, 1884-1885**

While the Centennial relied on its architecture to impress spectators, New Orleans was celebrated for its landscape design.[76] Located six miles from the city's business district on the site of a former swamp and sugar plantation, now Audubon Park, the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition was intended to be a pastoral landscape removed from the bustle of the city. Compared to the Centennial's roughly two-hundred and fifty buildings on two hundred and eighty-five acres, the New Orleans exposition had just fifteen buildings on two hundred and thirty-five acres.

Fair officials, headed by Director General Major Edward A. Burke, intended for the fair to be both a tempting vacation destination and an advertisement for the post-reconstruction "New South."[77] The plan of the fair, which includes copious displays of natural beauty, such as an oft-remarked row of live oaks, invoked a nostalgic view of antebellum society at harmony with contemporary industrial progress.[78] One fair

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[75] Ibid., 104.

[76] This was due in part to the relative paucity of funds available to the exposition board, but the officials also hoped that accentuating New Orleans natural beauty might sell the exposition as an ideal getaway for Northerners during the cold winter months.

[77] The "New South" movement, championed by Atlanta *Constitution* editor Henry Grady, sought to generate new investment in former Confederate states in the belief that industrialization would cure the South's social and economic woes. On the "New South" and world's fairs, see Rydell, *All the World's a Fair,* 73-104.

[78] Ethel Sara Goodstein, "The Image of a Southern City: Architecture, Culture, and Sense of Place in New Orleans, 1884-1984" (PhD Dissertation. University of Michigan, 1997), 34.

supporter wrote that a visitor encountering the grounds might "gaze bewildered as though the hand of the magician had touched the landscape."[79] The Rand, McNally map of the grounds shows an asymmetrical park-like arrangement (**Figure 12**). The United States and Main Buildings are the larger weights, but hardly center the design. If, as with the Centennial, the grounds expressed a symbolic picture of the world writ large, the inclusion of separate Women's and Colored Person's Pavilions, missing at the Philadelphia Centennial, advocated a universalist message central to the New South ideology. Fair officials were eager to show the evolutionary "progress morally and intellectually of the colored people."[80] However much attention the Colored Person's and Women's Buildings gained, they were treated largely as curiosities. The bulk of the design effort and resulting commentary revolved around the enormous Main Building.

Like its counterpart in Philadelphia, the New Orleans Main Building was the largest extant structure in the world at the time of its construction. Built in imitation of the Louvre, the Renaissance-styled building was 1,378 by 905 feet, with a roof of continuous glass.[81] Two entire Lincoln Center campuses could fit inside its perimeter, which covered more than thirty-three acres. In a dissertation on New Orleans architecture, Ethel Goodstein describes how boosters intently hoped that "the main building might be read as a Versailles on the Mississippi."[82] In his history of the exposition, Herbert Fairall portrays the intended effect of entering the main building as one of being arrested by a "wonderfully beautiful" scene of flags, decorations, and

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[79] "World's Exposition," *Daily Picayune*, 17 December 1884, 1.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Miki Pfeffer, "New Orleans," in *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*, edited by John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2008), 80-81.

[82] Goodstein, "Image," 35.

exhibits offering themselves to the eye. Fairall assures the reader that "no pen can describe the scene within the main building…Looking down the broad aisles of across the vistas of space, it was one continuous display of natural resources" that offered themselves to be identified and understood by the spectator.[83] Another supporter writing for a photography trade journal sold its long, clear vistas: "From one side or corner of the building to its opposite, the interior, showing all the phases of industrial activity, is seen. There are no partitions, and the lofty pillars, wide apart, supporting the roof structure, present no impediment to one's vision."[84] However, the demands of the officials and the scant available resources left architects with little room for creativity. According to an architectural trade journal, skilled architects "naturally stood out of the competition, knowing how perfectly useless it would be to attempt to gain any architectural effect" with the available resources.[85] In part, this caused the main building to include the Machinery Department, Agricultural Department, and the eleven thousand seat Music Hall. The result was hardly clear and calm, but confusing and noisy. The *American Architect and Building News* compares passing from the façade to the interior as a trip backstage at a grand theatre, where the marvelous stage set's beautiful masonry disappears "and is replaced by dirty canvas and very small scantlings."[86]

Goodstein compares how officials attempted to balance the exposition's picturesque landscape with its halls to show off Western industrial progress (See **Figure 13**). She concludes that in fact the two were out of step with each other, largely due to a

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[83] Ibid., 29-30.

[84] "The World's Fair in New Orleans," *Photographic Times and American Photographer* 14, no. 46 (October 1884): 545.

[85] *American Architect and Building News* (April 1885), 171.

[86] Ibid.

lack of skill among planners and architects. Goodstein describes contemporary architectural opinion by saying that “the Cotton Centennial’s site plan juxtaposed picturesque landscapes against rigorless disposition of buildings that defied the creation of dominant vistas of sceneographic views so typical of nineteenth-century fairs.”[87] In this confusion, “the long, low structures set in rich green lawns among live oaks far outstripped the architectural impression of each discreet Cotton Centennial buildings,” which resembled railroad sheds more than meaningful structures.[88]

While Giberti shows how Centennial designers eventually offered various viewing stations, places of relaxation, and visual cues for fairgoers, the New Orleans buildings were mere containers for exhibits. Goodstein sums up the building plan as “a product of Victorian eclecticism, surface effect, and immense, but anonymous interiors” poorly designed to guide the eye.[89] Even a positive article from the *Century Illustrated Magazine* points out the plainness of the exposition buildings, where “the rigid economy applied to their construction is apparent in the cheapness of the material, the lack of ornamentation, and the bareness of walls and pillars.”[90] The writer continues to discuss the lack of cohesion of the vast interior of the Main Building:

> The aisles have been kept absolutely free, and extend unbroken from end to end of the building, except in the machinery space, where the group of engines obstructs them, and in the center of the edifice, where the gigantic music hall is a distinct architectural feature. As all are of the same width, there is no main aisle. This detracts from the general effect.[91]

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[87] Goodstein, “Image,” 35.
[88] Ibid., 36.
[89] Ibid, 36, 38.
[90] Smalley, “The New Orleans Exposition,” 8.
[91] Ibid., 10.

The aisles were small, there were few vistas, there were no fountains or seating areas, and the displays were packed together in what could only be described as a manner prone to induce claustrophobia.[92] Add to this the din from working machinery in the same building, and the experience could hardly be easy to navigate, or pleasant.

Touring the park was hardly as relaxing as intended or advertised.[93] The Southern Winter weather delivered warm temperatures, but heavy rains plagued the exposition. A newspaper account attempting to sell the positives of the exposition even feels obliged to mention that "a man disposed to look at the unfinished condition of things here—the wet, muddy roads; the pools of water standing everywhere, some of the filthy streets and disagreeable odors in many of them" would certain find cause for complaint.[94] A Chicago *Tribune* reporter described the grounds as a cross between a "swamp and graveyard."[95] A mechanic known only as "Ed," operating a machine for an unknown company, wrote letters home to "my darling Annie." While one might expect him to be reporting about the energetic hustle and bustle getting the exposition opened and the optimistic view that the newspapers purported, his experience of the grounds is

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[92] *American Architect and Building News* (April 1885): 172.

[93] Watson, Thomas D., "Staging 'The Crowning Achievement of the Age': Major Edward A. Burke, New Orleans and the Cotton Centennial Exhibition," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 229-57. Watson's careful comparison of public and private documents shows how Burke fraudulently generated advanced publicity describing the grounds as having been meticulously designed and paved, even as it was, in the words of one report, "a vast sheet of ploughed up mud!" (255). Prone to fraud, Burke would later abscond with state funds to Honduras to live the rest of his life in exile.

[94] "The New Orleans Show, An Akron Visitor Thinks it Far From a Failure," *Summit County Beacon*, 28 January 1885, 3.

[95] Quoted in Thomas D. Watson, "Staging the 'Crowning Achievement of the Age': Major Edward A. Burke, New Orleans, and the Cotton Centennial Exposition, Part II," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 25, no. 4 (Autumn, 1984): 347.

dominated by the ill weather and discomfort. He complains to no end about the wet weather, the constant rain, and the lack of provision of the exposition design to accommodate the downpours. Perhaps to underscore his own inability to cope, he assures Annie, "you don't know anything about mud up north."[96]

In an article, Meg Armstrong places the designs of both the Philadelphia and New Orleans expositions firmly in line with the trend started with the London 1851 Crystal Palace to house exhibits in a large, central structure, which represented the world itself. Although the 1876 and 1884-85 expositions possessed expansive grounds and numerous buildings, each monumental main building was "the symbolic center of the fair" (**Figure 14**). Inside, the world was intended to be ordered and put in position, with America occupying a central place among nations.[97] Most New Orleans commentators and visitors opined over the picturesque row of live oaks, but the fair's intended focus was the thirty-three Main Building and machinery annex, marred as it was by ineffective planning and lack of funds. Eight years later, the Columbian Exposition provided a departure from this scheme. By blending the industrial and pastoral in a neoclassical guise, balancing entertainment and education by presenting industry as a fine art, the Columbian Exposition set a new standard for exposition design.

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[96] Ed to "My own Darling Annie," 19 December 1884, World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Collection, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[97] Meg Armstrong, "'A Jumble of Foreignness': The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions," *Cultural Critique* 23 (Winter 1992-1993): 226, and Burton Benedict, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1983), 13.

**Columbian Exposition, 1893**

While the Centennial and World's Industrial and Cotton Expositions were anchored to a strong, central building, the designers of the Columbian Exposition took a more expansive approach. More than four hundred buildings occupied over six hundred acres of grounds. Unlike the previous expositions, whose architectural styles were left to individual architects, the Columbian Exposition's Director of Works, Daniel Burnham, imposed a strict regime of architectural order that aligned evolutionary ideas, high taste, and European style.

Representations of the "civilized" and "savage" had become more visible in expositions between 1876 and 1893. At the Philadelphia and New Orleans expositions, exhibits of so-called savage peoples were almost exclusively confined to Native American exhibits from the Smithsonian. By contrast, the civilized/savage construct was central to the physical design of the Columbian Exposition. Planners divided the grounds into two discrete zones: the "White City," a conglomeration of classical exhibition halls devoted to the "best" of American and European civilization, and the Midway Plaisance, a mile-long anachronistic jumble of commercial amusements, including living villages and picturesque reconstructions of Near Eastern cities (**Figure 15**). One literary critic called the Midway "a sliding scale of humanity."[98] Displays devoted to German and Irish villages (largely workshops and restaurants) were nearest to the White City, one step farther away were Middle Eastern and Asian exhibits (typically ethnic theatres, bazaars, and cafes), and finally, at the furthest location from the center of the fair, were concessions from Africa (largely crude villages with natives on display). Exposition

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[98] Denton Snider, *World's Fair Studies* (Chicago: Sigma Publishing Company, 1895), 237.

space was intended to be used as an embodied lesson in social evolution: one could quite literally walk from Savage to Civilized.

At the heart of the White City was the Court of Honor, which contemporary historian Robert Rydell has aptly called a "neoclassical wonderland."[99] The major Halls of the Exposition were gathered around a central pool, the Grand Basin, presenting the fairgoer with carefully planned vistas that incorporated Greek and Roman motifs including marble fountains, a Peristyle, and the sixty-five-foot tall Grecian Statue of the Republic (**Figures 16, 17**).[100] Henry Adams, writing in his autobiography, was not alone when he marveled that the builders had seemingly "leaped directly from Corinth and Syracuse and Venice, over the heads of London and New York, to impose classical standards on plastic Chicago."[101]

To build this vista, Burnham eschewed his burgeoning native "Chicago School" of architecture for architects trained in the European Beaux-Arts school. The grand buildings of the White City were built by applying staff, an inexpensive plaster, around wooden frames, and uniformly painted white, conforming to the period's idea of a pristine classical style.[102] This strategy allowed Burnham and his architects to build a miniature city that appeared to be cast in marble in a relatively short span of time. Artist

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[99] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 39.

[100] As a sculptural touchstone of the exposition, the Statue of the Republic was one of the largest free-standing pieces in the country. Weighing thirty-five tons and made from gilded plaster, the figure was given additional height by being mounted on a thirty-five foot pedestal. According to the Rand, McNally, and Co., *A Week at the Fair* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1893), 128, four people could easily fit into one of its hands .

[101] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), 340.

[102] To maintain this pristine whiteness, burning coal was banned at the exposition. According to Flinn's *Official Guide*, thirty thousand tons of this mixture of powdered gypsum, alumina, glycerin, and dextrin was used in constructing the White City (37).

and author Frank Millet opined that the use of staff enabled the builders to run on "an architectural spree…of a magnitude never before attempted," leaving them, "free to erect temples, colonnades, towers, and domes of surpassing beauty and noble proportions."[103] The result gave a unified stone-like appearance intended to overwhelm the viewer with spectacular vistas unlike anything in the contemporary American city.

Writers tended to associate the classicism of the Court of Honor with uplifting emotions. Journalist and future founder of *Life Magazine* J.A. Mitchell describes the view of the Court of Honor as one that evokes awe by inviting the spectator to compare modern America with antiquity, "No words can give a just idea of the magnificence and restful beauty of this gigantic achievement. Rome and Greece were of marble and built for a more serious purpose. This is a city for a single summer. As such it is a complete and glorious triumph."[104] In Mitchell's description, this display of American ingenuity and technological skill in mastering past architectural styles should seamlessly give rise to nationalistic feeling, "The American who steps for the first time upon the borders of the Grand Basin, and looks upon the scene before him without a tingle of pride and pleasure is not of the stuff he should be."[105] Although it had taken New Orleans engineers ten months to construct the Main Building alone, Burnham's crews built the entire Columbian Exposition in just over two years. Viewers could marvel at the ability of American industry to master architectural styles of the past. In Mitchell's view,

[103] F.D. Millett, "The Designers of the Fair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, November 1892, 878. Millet was also chief architect Daniel Burnham's Director of Color.

[104] J.A. Mitchell, "Types and People at the Fair," *Scribner's Magazine*, August 1893, 189.

[105] Ibid.

experiencing personal triumph while seeing the Court was akin to a confirmation of America's high state of civilization.

The sheer scale of the building enterprise was an opportunity to set a new standard for design in America. Burnham hand-picked architects who would design neoclassical, Renaissance, and Baroque buildings in emulation of European high culture. Architectural historian Barbara Rubin argues that Burnham's plan to emulate European high style was a successful attempt to change the course of American design and refine "good taste" in monumental architecture.[106] Burnham hoped that the White City would act as a catalyst to "inspire a reversion to the pure ideal of the ancients" and change the course of American architecture and city planning.[107]

Burnham's classical scheme was not without controversy. Chicago architect Louis Sullivan, whose brick Transportation Building was the sole major hall not gleaming white, charged that Burnham's preoccupation with classicism set the field back at least fifty years. Writing in his memoirs, Sullivan went on to compare the White City to a "virus of culture, snobbish and alien to the land." Posing more than a stylistic threat, it had gone as far as to pollute the "fervid democracy, daring, enterprise, and progress" of the United States.[108] *The Nation*'s correspondent agreed, speculating that the Court of Honor might "mark the beginning of an outbreak of white classicality over the land," leading the nation into an era of bad taste.[109]

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[106] Barbara Rubin, "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 3 (September 1979): 333-34.

[107] Daniel Burnham, "Last Words about the World's Fair," *Architectural Record* 3, no.3 (January-March 1894): 292.

[108] Louis Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea* (New York: Dover, 1924), 324-25.

[109] "The Columbian Exposition," *Nation*, 24 August 1893, 133.

Fair space was constructed around an evolutionary paradigm separating the White City (European civilization) and the Midway (foreign, exotic cultures), a division that is key to understanding the fair. Joy Kasson writes that "the White City also propounded a theory of history" where "the United States emerged as the heir of all the ages, the pinnacle of a glorious Western heritage."[110] With its classical halls containing collections of modern inventions, the White City represented a direct connection between antiquity and modernity. As I will show in the discussion on guidebooks, officials marshaled a variety of efforts to ensure that fairgoers paid attention to the educational aspects of the exposition. However, there were also plenty of opportunities for relaxation. Notably, visitors were encouraged to experience the Court of Honor from a gondola ride and the Wooded Island spanning a lagoon. Even concessions were folded into the classical paradigm, as one could step out of the Music Hall and buy chocolates in a reconstruction of the Temple of Vesta from Rome. If the White City was associated with civilized sentiment and the Midway with the savage, the Rand, McNally Company's souvenir map of the exposition shows how officials intended for the fairgoer to remember the balance between education and pleasure (**Figure 2**).[111] In the foreground, the White City is revealed in considerable detail. The Midway, the main recreational area of the grounds, is barely visible in the background, recognizable only by the Ferris Wheel on the horizon. Although fair spaces between 1876 and 1893 changed from being anchored to central buildings to park-like grounds with an adjacent entertainment zone, fair spacetexts consistently offered rational, legible scripts for fairgoers. The plans of each were

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[110] Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 97.

[111] Not only did Rand, McNally profit greatly from the sale of its numerous guides at the exposition, it was a stockholder and investor in the exposition.

designed to embody evolutionary progress: by ordering the world into legible classification schemes, exposition officials offered narratives emphasizing the contemporary period's superiority to the past. In the next section, I will look at how guidebooks aided in the effort to influence how expositions were used and remembered, as well as some of the ways that fairgoers responded, often in contradiction to official prompts.

## Guidebooks Overview

Guidebooks were successful at fairs because they were needed, since the vast grounds of each exposition were confusing to most fairgoers. The visual field of any one hall was often hopelessly cluttered. "A Fair Warning" from *World's Fair Puck* (**Figures 18**) humorously confirms what was accepted as the impossibility of trying to rapidly take in an exposition without assistance. "How to See Everything in a Day" (**Figure 19**), an often-cited image from *Harper's Weekly* at the Centennial entitled rests at the center of an assortment of humorous images of fairgoing that pokes fun at fair and fairgoer alike. The figure has sprouted eyes, Argus-like, all over his body and now can see the multitude of sights to be encountered. In the other, a man who has been wheeled through the Columbian Exposition dreams of everything he has seen, undifferentiated and swarming through his mind, the image representing recognizable types and sights from the fair that reference particular exhibits and concessions. In order to make sense of the fair, visitors relied on an increasing supply of diverse guides to tell them what to see, where to go, and, at times, what to think about their experiences. Potential tourists often bought books, purchasable in bookshops and from agents around the country, in advance to plan

their visit, used them to navigate the grounds for anything ranging from what exhibit to see to where to eat, and kept them as souvenirs to memorialize their experience.

Guidebooks are frequently referenced or alluded to in fairgoer accounts, suggesting that every person, or every party, was carrying a guide or had consulted one before visiting the fair; however, there has been no systematic study of guides to date. Almost every historian uses guidebooks as sources for what was on display, but few have taken a critical look at them as sources. The most cogent discussion of the relationship between guidebooks, their producers, and audiences is James Gilbert's *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition*, which tracks how many guidebooks merely copied press releases from the fair's Department of Publicity and Propaganda.[112] Although Gilbert largely treats the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, many of his points are true of previous fairs. Even as early as 1876, most guidebook publishers, in the attempt to be on sale before the fair opened, would compile information based on a fair's official advertising.[113] Indeed, the Columbian Exposition's publicity department commissioned a lavishly illustrated series of lithographed watercolors by A. Zeese and Company that appear in nearly all advance publications about the fair.

Between 1876 and 1893, guidebooks attempted to exert greater control over viewer experience. While trying to present expositions as legible pictures of national

[112] James Burkhart Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009), 46-52.

[113] See D.J. Kenny, *Illustrated Guide to Cincinnati and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Company, 1893), which attempts to lend his guidebook added legitimacy by proudly noting that the introduction was written solely for the guide by the Exposition's Second Vice-President. This is a pervasive practice throughout the period. Guides often included speeches and organizing documents from the expositions boards, or chapters exclusively written by board members. See Trumbull White and William Igleheart, *The World's Columbian Exhibition, Chicago 1893* (Boston: John K. Hastings, 1893).

progress, guidebooks arranged specific itineraries, selected what the reader should look at, and told the reader how to interpret the displays on hand. However, even while guidebooks became more ingrained in the fairgoing experience, they lost a singular voice, as publishers had to adapt to meet the needs of an audience that was diversifying along class, gender, national, and ethnic lines. Between 1876 and 1893, guidebook publishers released editions in a wider range of volumes of varying sizes, prices, and languages. As a result, more guidebooks catered to the particular needs and interests of these groups, allowing visitors to shape their own experiences through what guide—or guides—they purchased.

Overall, I have consulted sixteen guides from the 1876 Centennial, eight from the 1884-85 Industrial and Cotton Exposition, and twenty-nine from the Columbian Exposition. These books fall into three general categories: guides published before the fair opened, which have the most basic information; guides published during the run of the fair, which tend to have the most complete information; and texts published as histories or souvenirs of the expositions, which tend to have the most thorough information possible.

While souvenir books are often the most thorough sources of information on individual displays, I have focused this chapter's analysis on texts intended to be on location, or in preparation for the fairs. Fairgoers would gain their information about fairs from a variety of sources, only one of which was guidebooks. Newspapers, magazines, trade journals, trade booklets, and other publications would offer information and critical views on any exposition. While this dissertation will use many of these as sources, I am privileging guidebooks because they were the most commonly interactive

source of media that a fairgoer encountered in the exposition experience. People might scrapbook articles from weekly papers about expositions, but they carried and consulted guidebooks, which places them at the heart of the fairgoer experience.[114]

**Mapping Changes in Guidebooks, 1876-1885**

The influence of exposition guidebooks was felt beyond fair walls. Catherine Cocks's *Doing the Town* puts world's fairs at the center of the emerging Gilded Age tourist industry. As occasions for mass tourism, expositions played a major role in creating an industry for what Cocks calls "pleasure travel." In the 1870s, she notes, guides—published largely by railroads and tourist organizations—were brief and factual. However, by the 1890s, an emerging guidebook industry was already noticeable by the fact that travel publications treated tourists as a special class. To Cocks, the guides for the 1876 and 1893 exhibitions set new precedents. Exposition guidebooks in 1876 imitated urban guidebooks, but the situation was reversed by 1893, when city guidebooks

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[114] The guides discussed here by no means represent every published book. I have attempted to assemble a representative range of uses, audiences, and types of books. Many guides went through multiple editions during the course of a fair, and I have compared only particular editions when there were drastic changes between them. When possible, I have relied on others who have taken on this task. I have consulted a wide sampling of the official and unofficial books, paying special attention to how many versions were offered, as well as their size, content, and what illustrations are used. In particular, I have examined how guidebooks ask to be inserted in the fairgoing experience. Who was the intended audience? Does the book have spaces for notes? Is the book fair-specific, or is the fair part of a guide to the city or region? Who published it? There can be a great difference between content and attitude, depending on whether the book is the product of the exposition board, a major publishing house, a railroad, or a literary publisher. Could one purchase it only at the fair, or in advance? Does it discuss entertainment outside of the fair grounds? Does it offer agendas for the visitor? How does it frame viewing the experience? Even, as Gilbert points out, many books repeat the same information, often verbatim, that does not mean that they do not offer contrasting frames for the fairgoing experience.

"began to write about real cities as if they were expositions."[115] By adopting the evolutionary rhetoric prominent in exposition guidebooks, urban guides began changing the way Americans saw their own landscape. As exposition guides described fairs as documents of evolutionary development, their urban counterparts were encouraging tourists to see cities as "exhibits of the nation's history and progress."[116]

The most visible change in guidebook publishing between 1876 and 1893 is in the increase in the sheer volume of available texts. Not only had printing become cheaper and easier, but Chicago firms, anticipating a boom in sales, had begun publishing well in advance of the Columbian Exposition.[117] As readerships grew, guidebooks publishers targeted specific audiences rather than publish general guides, as had been the case in the 1870s. Both the Centennial Exhibition and the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition, for example, had only a single official guidebook and directory, while the Columbian Exposition board published a directory and a series of five official guides (**Figure 20**) Throughout the period, prices remained fairly constant: a cheap pocket guide cost around twenty-five cents, and an in-depth guide was usually fifty cents (the cost of admission to any fair). Souvenir books were anywhere from $1.50 to $3.50, depending on binding and

[115] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 163.
[116] Ibid., 161.
[117] James Burkhart Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 57-58. Lipkowski points out that Chicago was also a regional center of publishing in the early 1890s (ii). The Columbian Exposition's Department of Publicity and Promotion even put out an *Official Guide to Grounds and Buildings of the World's Columbian Exposition During Construction* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1892).

length.[118] Although prices remained roughly the same, the number of illustrations, maps, diagrams, and original reporting dramatically increased.

Comparing the Centennial, New Orleans, and Columbian guidebooks reveals a dramatic change in methods of presenting information and interacting with the reader. Centennial and New Orleans guidebooks have a bare bones feel. Their most popular organizational scheme was to present the fair as a series of buildings, with background and information on each structure. There were sparse attempts to describe the displays of the major halls, as most guides stretched to include the city and its events as well.[119] The Centennial Board put most of their effort into the Official Exposition catalog, a massive, four-volume set of tomes that listed the exhibits in each building by type. Intended to be used as a finding aid, the catalog was unwieldy and nearly obsolete by its date of publication.[120] New Orleans guides had sparser information, by virtue of the fact that they were mostly from much wider guides, tourist companies, or railroads.[121] By 1893, guidebooks covered a wide range of languages, interests, organizational schemes, and

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[118] The Columbian Exposition also had numerous view books, such as *The World's Fair Through a Camera* (St. Louis: Woodward & Tiernan, 1893), and *A Portfolio of Midway Types* (Chicago: American Engraving Co., 1893). Although I will look at these for evidence of the reception of the fair, I do not include them as guidebooks, as they were largely for souvenir purposes.

[119] For example, of the guidebooks I have consulted, nine out of eleven (81%) Centennial books, including the Official Exhibition Guide, have sections devoted to touring Philadelphia. Likewise, seven out of eight guides of the New Orleans Exposition, including the official guide, are part of wider urban or regional guides (87.5%), while only fifteen out of twenty-six guides for the Columbian Exposition include Chicago (57%, not including Directories, souvenir books, or various editions of official guides, which all tend to be exclusively about the fair).

[120] See Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 27-31, on the catalog's attempt to be a "permanent fair" and finding aid to the exposition, and its failure.

[121] Perhaps the relative paucity of the Exposition itself led to a lack of energy from the publicity department. At any rate, there are far fewer extant guides from this exposition.

fairgoer tastes.[122] Additionally, Columbian guidebooks were more content-oriented, selecting important displays to consider and offering itineraries for the visitor to follow. These became key tools in how fairgoers prepared for expositions, were widely available across the country, and received reviews in newspapers and journals.[123] Publishers were putting out multiple ranges of their information designated by viewer use (**Figure 21**).

## Controlling the Fairgoer

As guidebooks became more specialized between 1876 and 1893, they acquired a more active role in framing the fairgoing experience. While fair organizers could strictly shape how civilization and savagery was represented through divides like the White City and Midway, authors, publishers, and organizations sought larger shares of control over how fairgoers encountered space. A brief comparison in how major guides, both official and unofficial, suggested fairgoers tour the Main Buildings of the expositions reveals the breadth of information, preparation, and intent to direct the visitor's gaze. The official *Visitor's Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia* devotes one page to the Main Building. It reads like a catalog, informing the reader of the dimensions and the official numbers and classes of exhibits, i.e., "Department I. – Mining and Metallurgy, Classes 100-109. Minerals, Ores, Stone, Mining Products," etc. It then tells the reader

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[122] While the official Centennial Guide boasted that it was available in "all languages," multiple Columbian Guides had editions in foreign languages, as well as those for specific industries and interest groups. The official *Visitor's Guide* was available in English, French, German, and Spanish, presumably indicating the most likely countries of origin of foreign visitors. Foreign English-language presses also published guides to the Columbian Exposition (*The International Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition*), and other Columbian guides include ones like the *World's Fair Guide for Office Men* catered to specific industries.

[123] See Gilbert, *Perfect Cities*, 55-56, on their availability and role in preparing the visitor.

where the entrances are located, where the good views are on balconies, and how to find the remaining exhibits in the building. There is no mention of refreshment or recommendation of specific exhibits to see.[124] While much of the official guide was printed before the exhibition opened, unofficial volumes, such as the *Herald Guidebook and Directory to the Centennial Exhibition*, had more practical information for the visitor. The *Herald* guide proclaims itself superior because useful and based on actual experience of the fair, and advises the reader that "after you have invested in one of the numerous trashy guides, and exhausted your patience," you should consult the *Herald*. It readily acknowledges that once visitors are inside the main building a catalog will not help keep them from feeling "all at sea." It does not tell the reader what they must visit, but provides a list of the building's contents, with a descriptive sentence or two about each nation's exhibit.[125]

New Orleans guides offer approaches similar to the official Philadelphia guide, although with sparser content. The Official Guide and the Official Directory were largely used for promotional purposes, and included large numbers of paid advertisements. They offer little information, much of which is incorrect. However, one well-circulated book, *The Practical Common Sense Guide Book*, initiated a new approach to guiding spectators. Promising on the cover to make "one Certain of Seeing the Best Things" and providing an "IMMENSE SAVING OF TIME," this guide provides step by step, motion by motion,

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[124] Centennial Board of Finance, *Visitor's Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: JJ Lippincott and Company, 1876), 18.

[125] Charles M. Gilmore, *Herald Guidebook and Directory to the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Herald, 1876), 4-7.

directions to a fairgoer.[126] The book begins with an extensive index, allowing a visitor to select a department to explore before relinquishing control of the fair experience to the guide. For example, the text on the Main Building begins with basic facts of the structure, then informs the viewer how to view the hall, as "I have thought it best, except when especially directed, for visitors to view the exhibit on one side of the aisle only at a time." The fairgoer is then directed to mark the guide in a particular manner and given a path to view the hall.[127] What follows is a series of coordinates (based on a system devised by the author), titles of exhibits, and instructions. For example, one group of entries reads:

> U.U, 54, Mosler, Bahmann & Co., Fire and Burglar-proof Safes, in rear.
> U.U, 54 and 55, Kendall's Manufacturing Co., Soapine.
> U. and U.U 55 and 56, Cincinnati Safe and Lock Co.
> Turn around and view exhibits on opposite side of aisle.[128]

The same method is repeated throughout the book, with some suggestions for the visitor, but largely the volume is a literally step-by-step walkthrough of the exposition. No subsequent guide adopted this method, with the Columbian guides offering far more direction and guidance than the previous fairs.

Although the Columbian Exposition had no central building, I will look at how guides approached the fair's largest structure, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building. At 1,687 by 787 feet, this building covered more than thirty-one acres, making

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[126] Daniel Perkins, *The Practical Common Sense Guide Book Through the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition at New Orleans* (Harrisburg, PA: Lane S. Hart, 1885), emphasis in the original.

[127] Ibid., 47.

[128] Ibid., 49. Perkins occasionally offers commentary such as "excellent display, and should be examined."

it the largest building in the world at that moment.[129] At the Columbian Exposition, the official guides were once again the most basic. The *Official Guide to the Columbian Exposition*, containing information written in advance, probably distilled from exhibitor applications, describes the building's size and cost. It details where the entrances and galleries are located, the architectural style, and how it was constructed. There is an overview of a few pavilions, but the book does not provide information about individual exhibits nor any recommendations.[130] The *Authentic Visitor's Guide*, which advertises that it was "compiled from official sources," has one page, largely marveling at the building as a "architectural wonder of the planet."[131] It describes the building's size and provides general information on what types of exhibits are present. By comparison, the commercial hand-held *Nut-Shell Guide*'s fifteen pages on the building provide general information on the exterior as well as some commentary on its sculpture. It includes a map with a key and a brief description of the building's main sections, pointing out some of the more famous exhibits.[132]

Of available guides, the Rand, McNally *A Week at the Fair* offers the most in-depth coverage of exposition sites. The more information that is offered, the greater is the guide's attempt to control the spectator's movement. It opens with hyperbolic descriptions of the building's size: it was four times larger than the Roman Coliseum, the 1889 French Exposition main building could be put inside, with the Eiffel Tower laid flat,

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[129] Chaim M. Rosenberg, *America at the Fair: Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 87.

[130] Flinn, *Official Guide*, 93-103.

[131] Richard J. Murphy, *Authentic Visitor's Guide to the Columbian Exposition and Chicago* (Chicago: Union News Company, 1893), 20-21.

[132] *Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition in a Nut-Shell* (Chicago: The Information Company, 1893).

six baseball games could be played inside, the whole standing army of Russia could be mobilized inside, and so forth.[133] It goes on to include information about the building's dedication, its sculpture, and provides a detailed map of the interior. It directs the reader down specific aisles, point out displays to look at, at times singling out individual pieces, such as the British "Shakespeare Centerpiece" porcelain vase, with allegorical figures and many of Shakespeare heroines.[134] The guide predictably spends most time on the United States exhibits, and then highly recommends that the fairgoer take a fifty-cent elevator ride to the roof, as "no one can do justice to the Exposition, or get an adequate idea of the great Liberal Arts Building, unless he takes a trip in these elevators," where one can "survey the spectacle" of the building.[135] Outside is a panoramic view that "never before has been accorded to mortals."[136] The volume is lavishly illustrated, with at least two images per page.

Comparing the 1876 and 1893 official guides' attitudes to informed, "good" spectators versus wandering tourists interested only in casual observation, reveals escalating anxieties that fair officials held about visitors' subjectivity as they physically toured expositions. The 1876 *Visitor's Guide* begins its discussion on the fair with a page of advice in which fairgoers are told to first take a leisurely ride on the intramural railway, then begin by walking the main avenues before entering a building, then make a tour of the exhibition, returning only later to places of particular interest.[137] In 1893, however, guidebooks sound a steady chorus condemning the *flaneur*. John J. Flinn,

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[133] Rand, McNally, and Co., *Week at the Fair*, 132.
[134] Ibid., 139.
[135] Ibid., 144.
[136] Ibid., 145.
[137] *Visitor's Guide*, 10.

writing in the *Official Guide*, scorns those who "travel aimlessly over the grounds" with no "purpose beyond that of a mere curiosity hunter."[138] As evolutionary theories began to characterize the struggle for existence as more fierce, so too did the rhetoric of appropriate spectatorship acquire higher stakes.

Supporters of the educational value of the Columbian Exposition had a strict hierarchy of the most appropriate ways to enter the fair grounds. Of the exposition's nineteen entrances, coming by water was considered the most beneficial, as it guaranteed a panoramic view of the White City, while officials feared entering via the Midway would destroy the experience of the exposition as a whole. Writing in an official history, early urban design theorist Charles Robinson paints a rapturous response to the view offered by approaching the court from the vantage point of a boat:

> The whole beauty of the Exposition broke upon the newcomer...Beauty surrounded him and fairly shouted at him whichever way he turned. "See, am I not beautiful?" cried the shore on the left, where rose the Agriculture Building with its graceful Diana and the distant Machinery Hall…"Thou may'st look at all my beauty of form and proportion," each building said, " but thou may'st not touch"…One…stood still, awed, hushed, exhilarated, in the midst of beauty...He felt the limits of his own personality slipping away, extending widely, boundlessly, until the whole scene was in his own soul…All one's Americanism surged over him then.[139]

At fifteen cents for a ticket, this view was the property of those who could afford to pay three times the rate for street cars to reach the exposition.[140] Robinson expressed typical anxiety over the effect of entering the fair at "less civilized" locations: "If one came by

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[138] Flinn, *Official Guide*, 17.

[139] Charles Robinson, "The Fair as Spectacle," in *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, 4 Volumes, edited by Rossiter Johnson (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 1:494-95.

[140] Steamboats offered return tickets for twenty-five cents, or half the cost of admission to the Exposition. Street car fares were five cents. One could also enter via local and express rail, rates for which varied. See Rand, McNally, and Co., *Week at the Fair*, 38-39.

the Midway, the Fair itself would thenceforth seem but…a fanciful dessert…which alas! was too often not resisted."[141] Likewise, J.A. Mitchell lambasted the fairgoer who lingered at the Midway as shiftless, ignorant, or, in plainly evolutionary terms, "an undeserving barbarian who has made up his mind to prefer the wrong thing."[142]

Guidebooks from 1876 and 1884-85 pay little heed to prioritizing entrances and itineraries. Of the Centennial Exhibition's thirteen entrances, visitors were often advised to enter through the main gate, due only to its proximity to the more impressive structures. New Orleans Exposition guides recommended taking a steamer from the city to the fair grounds, notably for its picturesque view of the harbor, not of the exposition itself. James Zacharie, author of the official New Orleans guide, suggested entering through the main entrance, as it affords a view of an orange tree and fountain-lined avenue culminating the in main building.[143]

Once inside the fair gates, visitors had options for how they would tour the grounds. As with how they entered, spending more money would guarantee a more leisurely, and possibly more informed, experience. In addition to an elevated railway, the Columbian Exposition visitor could take rides on the waterways connecting the main buildings of the White City via omnibus boat, express boat, and, more leisurely, gondola.[144] Each exposition offered rolling wheeled chairs for hire, with attendants who could double as guides. Table 1 shows their varying costs. One hour in a chair would

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[141] Ibid., 494.

[142] Mitchell, "Types and People at the Fair," 47-48.

[143] James S. Zacharie, *New Orleans Guide* (New Orleans: New Orleans News Company, 1885), 2.

[144] A gondola ride round trip from one landing to another was fifty cents, equal to admission to the exposition, or five times the amount of the elevated railway, which toured the entire grounds.

cost more than admission to the exposition as a whole. Rolling chairs were often recommended either as ways to take in the exposition in a relaxed manner, separated from swarms of foot traffic, or as a break from the rigorous work of fairgoing, especially for women.[145] Guidebooks from 1876 and 1884-85 wanted the visitor to first leisurely take in a wide picture of the whole expositions and then tour what struck their interest. Officials and guides for the Columbian Exposition readily admitted the impossibility of getting an overall view of the fair and set about strategically offering itineraries to take the in fair bit by bit.

**Table 1: Rolling Chairs**

| Exposition | Hourly Rate, with Guide | Daily Rate, With Guide | Hourly Rate, Without Guide |
|---|---|---|---|
| Centennial Exhibition (1876) | $0.60 | $4.50 | $1.00/Three Hours |
| World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial (1884-85) | $0.60 | N/A | $0.40 |
| World's Columbian Exposition (1893) | $0.75 | $6.00 | $0.40 |
| Sedan Chair (Turkish Village, Midway Plaisance, 1893) | $0.75<br>$0.40/half hour<br>$0.25/quarter hour | N/A | N/A |

**Itineraries**

Reviewers such as "Ethelwold," the author of an article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, cited a typical problem facing the visitor to the Columbian Exposition, "so grand, so inspiring and so exquisite are the buildings, independent of all exhibits, that many

[145] See the Centennial *Visitor's Guide*, 10, where the author recommends beginning the excursion with a chair as one of its four-point plans of advice to visitors. Flinn, *Official Guide*, 21, notes that chairs "afford great comfort to invalids, to tired people, to elderly persons, and to ladies."

weeks might well be employed in alone studying their magnificent architecture. How can I, then, having spent but one brief week in this wonderland, do justice to the largest and most splendid exposition of the world's history?"[146] Fortunately, he notes, he was given a copy of *How to See the Fair*, which had daily itineraries for visitors with limited time. He bases the success of his visit and review on the little book, noting that "I feel much indebted to this little book, for without the systematic method it suggested I should probably have seen less of the exposition than I did."[147]

Writing on guidebook itineraries as "scripts" for tourists to follow, creating a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end, geographer Ning Wang sees tourists as "performers who make their own stories with the itinerary unfolding across space and time."[148] Here, controlling how a visitor tours an exposition is equivalent to the narrative of their tourist experience. While guides and related literature offer a series of conformist "musts" to the tourist (you "must" see the Grand Basin, you "must" visit the Golden Doorway), Wang points out that individuals encounter space in a variety of highly individual ways.[149] This section seeks to show how these scripts were created and where fairgoers' performances diverged from official narratives, which will be further explored in chapter four.

In addition to providing information, Columbian guidebook itineraries show a determined effort to police the divide between the Midway and White City. Available on

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[146] Ethelwold, "An Arabian Night's Dream," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 November 1893, 13.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ning Wang, "Itineraries and the Tourist Experience," in *Travels in Paradox: Remapping Tourism*, ed. Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 73.

[149] Ibid., 74.

site and from booksellers all over the country, these books provided potential fairgoers with suggested itineraries to best absorb the lessons of the exposition. Although they differed between a seven-day (Rand, McNally's *A Week at the Fair*), six-day (the Information Company's *Nut-Shell Guide*), ten-day (Columbian Guide Company's *Official Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition*), or one-to-twelve-day program (the White City Publishing Company's *The Best Things to See and How to Find Them*), they shared a common structural feature: touring the Midway Plaisance was organized as a diversionary afterpiece once the so-called serious work of the White City has been finished.[150] The bulk of description and commentary in guidebooks and official reports is devoted to the halls and promenades of the White City, while the Midway often appears last; however, the Midway's attendance was disproportionate to its marginal representation.

**Fairgoer Itineraries: The White City versus the Midway Plaisance**

In researching the Columbian Exposition, I have consulted a number of diaries and letters by visiting men, women, and children. Some, such as Charles Andrew Heath, managed an exhibit at the fair and visited the grounds over one hundred times, while others, such as teenager John Lunneen, only spent a few days touring the exposition. Although the authors made reference to consulting guidebooks, not one followed prescribed guidebook itineraries. Even among those that may have started with the intentions to follows their guidebooks, no one has left direct evidence that they toured the

[150] *The Best Things* guide is an exception. The Midway appears in the fourth day of the six-day plan; however, the book's remaining itineraries do not include the Midway, deeming it worthwhile only as a pause between the more rigorous work of touring main buildings.

fair within prescribed routes. In both cases mentioned above, the author visited the Midway Plaisance in the middle of touring the White City rather than save it for a diversionary conclusion. Although Lunneen was only at the Exposition for three days, he visited sites on the Plaisance each day, despite its extra admission fee.[151] Heath, whose visits were divided between checking up on his exhibit and touring the fair, regularly frequented the Midway and admired it in his diary.[152] One investigation of diaries and itineraries shows that the guidebooks' strict White City/Midway divide was largely ignored by fairgoers.[153] As the space of the Exposition was designed to embody the differences between civilization and savagery, tourists can be said to have ignored the evolutionary implications of the fair design and guidebook prompts for them to perform civilization through their practices as fairgoers.

The fame (or infamy) of the *Danse du Ventre*, commonly known as the "hoochee-coochee," is a good example of how sites deemed less serious and civilized garnered fairgoer attention. Although the *danse* was shown at the theatre in the Street of Cairo, scantily clad dancing girls appeared at several Midway concessions. The gyrations of dancers such as Farida Mazar Spyropoulos, known as "Little Egypt," excited controversy after morality crusader Anthony Comstock sought to have the dance banned. Despite its clear offense to some moralities, it proved a massive success, drawing curious visitors in droves to the Midway. A *World's Fair Puck* cartoon (**Figure 21**), "Human Natur'," pokes fun at the popularity of such exhibits despite their lack of moral depth. The man in

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[151] Lunneen Notebook, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum.

[152] Charles Andrews Heath Papers, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Newberry Library.

[153] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 7, concludes that by and large tourists did not follow guidebook itineraries in any genre during the period.

the first frame is trying more “civilized” entertainment at the Turkish theatre, but finds that no one is buying in the second frame; however, when he promises dancing girls, men flock to the theatre.[154]

By contrasting the White City as *the* main site to tour and the Midway as a relaxing conclusion to visiting the fair, guidebooks suggest that the White City is for learning and the Midway a pleasant distraction. In fact, this distinction seems to have been rarely picked up on by fairgoers and some officials. Ella Lane Bowes, an official judge for the Anthropology Building, offers evidence that reads fair history against the grain. Refashioning the official construct of educational space at the Exposition, Bowes’s unpublished report singles out the Midway as a unique learning opportunity for even the serious student of ethnography.[155] Compared to the object-based displays of the White City, Bowes elevates the Midway as a learning tool, because it provided a space for performances of rituals and ways of life. Rather than reserve the White City as a locus of learning, evidence suggests that many fairgoers used the Midway Plaisance as a place of leisure, exploration, *and* knowledge-gathering.

The next chapter will look at how fair officials prompted spectators to read evolution in industrial displays. As evolutionary theorists measured a society’s progress by its degree of industrialization, Machinery Halls were temples of civilization meant to impress the spectator with their power. At the same time, these halls were popular

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[154] *Puck* was a popular humor magazine that was first published in German in 1876. The first English-language addition was published a year later, and it remained steadily popular into the twentieth century. The magazine had a separate building on the Columbian Exposition grounds and published twenty-six special issues during the run of the fair on site.

[155] Ella Lane Bowes, “Ancient Religions, Games, and Folk-Lore,” Bound Manuscript, Chicago 1893, Chicago History Museum, 9ff.

performative environments, where costumed workers demonstrated working machines on makeshift stages for fairgoers. Little has been written about performance within these "Palaces of Mechanic Arts," as they were known, and I will examine how working displays balanced the need to entertain and instruct the fairgoer. Finally, I will ask to what degree audiences responded to the performances as theatricalized exhibits or as documents of progress.

## 2.
## Performing Industry

The Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition's Machinery Hall was a vast structure containing models as well as working machinery, including printing presses, looms, steam boilers, and metal-working devices, to name a few.[1] A visiting teacher wrote that "it seems that every manufacturing industry is represented here, from the making of a pin or carpet tack to the weaving of the finest silk, or the most costly carpet; from the making of the finest movable type to the printing of newspapers and pictures."[2] Marveling at the universal scope of operations in Machinery Halls had not changed by 1893. Marian Shaw, a journalist for the North Dakota paper *The Argus*, wrote that "the corridors of Machinery Hall display everything in the way of mechanic art that the genius of man has devised."[3] These impressive halls, often referred to as "palaces," showed off American industry to the masses with impressive displays of industrial power; however, they were also intense zones of competition. Exhibitors here were salesmen, striving to make a profit with their machines and products. To attract buyers, they often manufactured souvenirs, presented museum-style exhibits, and staged performances. At the New Orleans Exposition, management felt that the central displays were not gaining enough

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[1] Among the working exhibits were steam engines, a small-scale watch factory, an ammonia compressor for refrigeration, and machines for wood-bending and barrel-making.

[2] David Bailey, *"Eastward Ho!" or, Leaves from the Diary of a Centennial Pilgrim* (Highland Country, OH: David Bailey, 1877), 59. Covering almost thirteen acres of floor space, the Philadelphia Machinery Hall was more than twice as big as St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

[3] Marian Shaw, *World's Fair Notes: A Woman Journalist Views Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1992), 32.

attention, so they granted concessions throughout the hall for costumed "fakirs" to sell "pretended products of [foreign] countries" throughout the aisles.[4]

Exhibitors, whether of large generators or thimble makers, had clearly demarcated enclosures, a display for the Willimantic Linen Company in 1876 (**Figure 23**). Although each exhibitor had to apply in advance and follow a series of strict rules about what they could exhibit, they were largely free to plan their own displays and methods of presentation, which often included some type of performance. While the display at the Willimantic Company's booth may have merely shown the company's products, Lyall's Positive Motion Looms hired "operatives" to perform their work for spectators (**Figure 24**). In a similar vein, the Rand, McNally Columbian Exposition guide, *A Week at the Fair*, informs us that at the Crown Pen Company: The seats in the workshop are arranged amphitheatrically, so that every operation of the workmen is in plain view of the spectators, who gather in large numbers to watch...where the crude materials are so rapidly transformed into finished products.[5] Sources show the effort that Crown put into planning such a display. The *World's Columbian Exposition Illustrated* reports that twenty men were employed making the pens, while several female attendants sold them and answered questions from the audience. This theatrical strategy of exhibiting work proved successful for the company, with the article reporting that hundreds of pens were

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[4] "The Cotton Centennial at New Orleans" *American Architect and Building News* 17, no. 485 (April 1885): 171. See also Thomas D. Watson, "Staging the 'Crowning Achievement of the Age': Major Edward A. Burke, New Orleans, and the Cotton Centennial Exposition, Part II," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1984): 357. Although some complained of the crassness of the "pseudo-Oriental" wares being sold, the board was receiving fifteen percent of all sales and ignored all complaints.

[5] Rand, McNally, and Co., *A Week at the Fair* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1893), 96.

purchased daily. Apparently, the company could not manufacture enough at the exposition to keep up with demand and had to get stock from their factories.[6] After the fair closed, a trade magazine notes that the display at the Exposition not only sold a tremendous number of pens, but prompted the company to expand its manufacturing capabilities as it enjoyed a new-found stature through the country based on its exposition success.[7]

Although Machinery Hall displays became increasingly theatrical between 1876 and 1893, performances in these halls have largely been left out of the historical record, even as many machines were working and staffed by operatives who often wore costumes and followed scripts.[8] Demonstrations such as these represented a sanitized fantasy of work to fairgoers, rather than the real life on a factory floor, a fact sometimes alienating for the workers. Workers at the Exposition's Transportation Hall nearly struck because they were not allowed to smoke and drink beer.[9] Regardless, these displays remained popular. The *World's Columbian Exposition Illustrated* article reports on the Crown workshop that "it has been almost impossible to get near enough to the space occupied by the exhibit in order to obtain a good view of the work…owing to the great

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[6] "Crown Pen Company's Exhibit," *World's Columbian Exposition Illustrated*, August 1893, 251.

[7] "Crown Fountain Pen," *American Stationer*, 4 January 1894, 49. In addition, the company had two smaller displays in the Manufactures Building.

[8] The notable exception is Loren Kruger, "'White Cities,' 'Diamond Zulus,' and the 'African Contribution to Human Advancement' African Modernities and the World's Fairs," *TDR* 51, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 19-45. Kruger rightly shows how performance in the Mining Building could trouble the savage/civilized binary, but her interest in such performances in 1893 is limited. It is worth noting that there were performances of industrial technology and labor in other halls at each exposition. I am largely focusing on the Machinery Halls because they represent the most centralized demonstration of machines at each fair, and were the sites where fairgoers expected to see technology.

[9] Daniel Burnham, *The Final Official Report of the Director of Works of the World's Columbian Exposition* Reprinted (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 7:52.

crowds of people which have constantly surged around desiring to witness the work and purchase a pen as a souvenir."[10] In other exhibits, these same strategies were incredibly popular.

One visitor, Adelaide Evenden, a teacher residing in Chicago, kept a diary of her numerous visits to the fair, which began before opening and continued after it closed. Writing about her fifth visit since the exposition had opened, she observes a typical frustration with Machinery Hall: "We tried to 'do' (a word very commonly used at the Fair) two aisles. Many of the machines were unintelligible to us consequently uninteresting." However, "when the machinery was in motion and especially at work, we were much entertained and instructed."[11] In particular, she points out the Willimantic exhibit, which I discuss in detail below, whose looms, she says, "were a marvel to us" because "it seemed to me it much have taken more than a human mind to have invented such wonderful machinery." On her seventh visit, she went back to Machinery to watch looms and the winding of thread, probably at the Willimantic exhibit. In other halls, the working exhibits drew enthusiastic audiences. A scrapbook from a Brooklyn visitor included a picture of the workers at the Tiffany's exhibit in the Mining Building with a handwritten caption, "always a crowd when the men were working."[12] Other voices agreed; Evenden also noted, "Tiffany's was so crowded that I shall be obliged to go again to see all there was."[13]

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[10] "Crown Pen Company's Exhibit," 251.

[11] Adelaide L. Evenden, Diary 1890-1895, Manuscript Collection, Chicago History Museum, 18 June 1893.

[12] "Summer 1893, Brooklyn to Chicago," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum.

[13] Evenden, "Diary," 24 June 1893.

This chapter looks at how performances with—and of—machines worked to ease tensions in the United States concerning the changing economy. While Americans were deeply ambivalent about industrial technology, expositions presented tame machines that were instrumental to the public good and the evolutionary destiny of the human race. At the same time, working machines were popular attractions, and I will look at how their displays were increasingly theatrical between 1876 and 1893. Focusing on looms, I will show how expositions positioned sewing as being synonymous with "civilizing," especially as when comparing the performances of labor in Machinery Halls and in the 1893 Javanese Village. In conclusion, I will complicate this binary opposition between "civilized" machinery and "savage" manual labor by looking at labor from the perspective of exposition workers, arguing that the period's labor unrest was never far from a fairgoer's experience.

**Prometheans vs. Demons**

The period in United States history following the Civil War witnesses an accelerated process of industrialization, resulting in increased transportation resources, communication mediums, availability of goods, and urban migrations.[14] In *The Machine in the Garden*, Leo Marx calls attention to the drastic scale of these changes for most Americans by pointing out that "within the lifetime of a single generation, a rustic and in large part wild landscape was transformed into the site of the world's most productive

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[14] This process had begun at least a century previously, but this period marked a major change in American life and manufacturing. Old industries were giving way to new ones, as mills and plantations were being replaced by factories and wooden machinery by iron.

industrial machine."[15] At the center of this process was the development of the American System of manufacturing, which relied on two elements: a supply of interchangeable parts and increasing mechanization.[16] In *The Machine in America*, Carroll Pursell traces how the American System resulted in the "transfer of skills from workers to machines."[17] As mechanization increased, factories replaced workshops as semi-skilled work took the place of artisanal labor. In some cases, this process was frequently repeated, as some industries were replacing their equipment with new models every few years.[18] Factories became more industrialized as they became more machine-driven, centralized, and specialized. Industrial technology was at the center of a changing economy, as technological innovations provided new ways to exploit natural resources, organize workers, and regulate the daily lives of millions.

Industrial machinery enjoyed a privileged position at local and international expositions. Each fair featured a Machinery Hall (and often an annex), each formally

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[15] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 343. The manufacturing labor force in 1850 was represented by one million and two hundred thousand wage earners. By 1870, this had increased to two million, four hundred and seven thousand (a 94% increase), and by 1890, it was four million, three hundred and ninety thousand wage earners (a 128% increase from 1870 and a 376% increase from 1850). See Susan B. Carter, "The Labor Force, by Industry: 1800–1960," Table Ba814-830 in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition,* edited by Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, Alan L. Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[16] Known as "armory practice" because it began in early century Department of War armories, this method increased throughout the century, eventually being replaced by more advanced systems of mass productions like Henry Ford's assembly line in 1913. See David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

[17] Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology*, Second Edition, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 87.

[18] Gary Cross and Rick Szostak, *Technology and American Society: A History*. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2005), 116-17.

began with engines being turned on by dignitaries, and working machines remained draws throughout the period.[19] These halls defined American progress. To the Rand, McNally guide, it represented nothing short of "the culmination of human progress in the direction of mechanic art, and of invention in an economic direction."[20] Although these halls celebrated technological innovation, they masked a deep ambivalence in the period. Machines were heralded as engines of progress by making labor more efficient and producing more goods, but they also caused spectacular disasters and brought a host of complaints, ranging from wrecking the labor market to dulling the American worker's intellect.[21] For most of the late nineteenth century, Americans remained unresolved on the benefits versus the harms of machinery. Even as John Greenleaf Whittier's "Centennial Hymn," which was sung by a choir of one thousand at the opening ceremonies of the Centennial Exhibition, gives thanks "For art and labor met in truce,/For beauty made the bride of use," the author confessed in a private letter, "I don't expect to visit Philadelphia. The very thought of that Ezekiel's vision of machinery and the nightmare confusion of the world's curiosity shop appalls me, and I shall not venture myself amidst it."[22] Alan Trachtenberg devotes a chapter of his *Incorporation of America* to looking at debates about whether or not machines were "Promethean" or

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[19] The Centennial opened with President Grant and Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil turning on the Corliss Engine; the New Orleans Exposition opened with President Chester Arthur telegraphing a speech and ordering the electric generator turned on (it was months late or he presumably would have been there in person); and the Columbian Exposition began with President Grover Cleveland turning the switch on the power plant.

[20] Rand, McNally, *A Week at the Fair*, 90.

[21] See "Mind, Muscle, and Machinery," *Scientific American*, 29 June 1878, 400.

[22] John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, edited by William Rossetti (London: Ward, Lock, and Company, 1880), 431. John Greenleaf Whittier, "Letter to Annie Adams Fields, 1876," in *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, edited by Samuel T. Pickard (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), 613.

"Demonic." In his reading of the Gilded Age as a "quest for order," he argues that by the turn of the century, mechanization had become ubiquitous in American life. The public's process from skepticism to acceptance arguably relied on encounters between fairgoers and exhibits within fair grounds.[23]

Industrialization and machinery did not lack for supporters in an age notoriously lacking in regulation. One such figure was Carroll Wright, chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, whose 1882 "The Factory System as an Element in Civilization" set out to demonstrate how advances in manufacturing gives "science a guide for the practical application of the doctrines of evolution."[24] To Wright, the industrial innovations of the previous twenty years had spread "wonderful influences" over humanity, making the present period one of the most remarkable eras since antiquity.[25] The factory system "has changed the conditions of masses of people; it has become an active element in the processes of civilization, and has changed the character of legislation and of National policy everywhere." He addresses topical social questions directly: "Is this great, powerful, and growing system a power for good or for evil? Does it mean the elevation of the race or its retrogression?"[26] As an answer, he simply concludes that the factory system "has been and is the most important element in promoting civilization." Anyone who thinks otherwise, his essay implies, would be better off living in the eighteenth century.[27]

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[23] See Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 38-69.

[24] Carroll D. Wright, "The Factory System as an Element in Civilization," *Journal of Social Science* 15 (December 1882): 101.

[25] Ibid., 107.

[26] Ibid., 108.

[27] Ibid., 109.

Scientists of all types allied industrialization and evolution. As early as 1852, Herbert Spencer's Malthusian "Theory of Population" equated industry with progress. As the division of labor, or the society's "co-ordination of actions," became more sophisticated, the society advanced to higher degrees of order.[28] In the 1870s, technology would be key to ethnographers' passion of classification and ranking of societies. Edward Tylor was not alone in ranking technology as one of the key aspects to judge a society's "rough scale of civilization."[29]

Part of what fairgoers expected to see was the latest in new technologies and American inventions. In Philadelphia, there were many such "firsts" among new engines, generators, rock crushing machines, Otis elevators, new compressors for refrigerators, and so forth, but the most famous demonstration was Alexander Graham Bell's introduction of the first telephone. In Chicago, notable displays included "clasp lockers" (now known as zippers), cracker jacks, and the first Ferris Wheel, among hundreds of smaller inventions, devices, and techniques. Americans equated these inventions with proof of progress. The official orator for Idaho Day at the New Orleans exposition employed a typical rhetoric by equating his territory's progress with the presence of machinery, as "the whir and clatter of machinery are heard in countless wild glens and gulches where, five or ten short years ago, the savage war whoop woke the echoes, and the wolf howled undisturbed. The wilderness resounds with the voices of

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[28] Herbert Spencer, "A Theory of Population, Deduced from the General Law of Animal Fertility," *Westminster Review* 57 (1852): 422. See also 499, where he places the responsibility on the individual farmer to keep up with technological trends for the good of the society as a whole.

[29] See Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*, 2 volumes (London: John Murray, 1871), 1:24.

civilization."[30] It is perhaps no surprise that the popular stage pageant *America*, playing at the Chicago Auditorium throughout most of 1893, opened its final act with a "Grand Ballet of Historical Inventions," with dancers costumed as notable inventions throughout United States history, such as Morse's Electric Telegraph, Electric Light, Bell's Telephone, and McCormick's Reaper.[31]

Expositions celebrated the advances that machinery had made in American life. One clear example of this is the "Centennial Mirror" (**Figure 25**), an oleograph published in 1876. The visual concept of the poster is clear: one side, labeled "1776," contains images of daily life in 1776, while the other side, "1876," contains images depicting the same activities a hundred years later. In each case, the shift in a century demonstrates improvements in American life, usually due to advances in technology. For example, in the middle frames, a father is teaching his child, who is struggling to read because of the dim candlelight. In the corresponding frame, a father effortlessly reads with his child in the warm glow of a lamp. On the bottom row, a 1776 sailing ship is moving along with its pennants slack with the wind, while the 1876 steamboat is easing through the waters, its pennants almost horizontal. Next to these, one man and an 1876 threshing Machine replace six men threshing wheat. Similar oppositions are composed throughout the image, ranging from woodworking to sewing, covered wagons to railways, and if the implied message that technology improves life is not clear, the livestock on the extreme left appear restless and scrawny, while the livestock on the right are calm and well-fed.

[30] Quoted in Herbert S. Fairall, *The World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition New Orleans, 1884-1885* (Iowa City: Republican Publishing Company, 1885), 324.

[31] I will discuss Kiralfy's *America* extensively in the next chapter.

On the surface, facts seem to confirm the argument proposed by the "Centennial Mirror." In 1894, a joint session of Congress commissioned a study comparing the effects of older, hand-made systems of manufacturing with newer, machine-based systems. While the report is inconclusive in its final details, it shows an uncomplicated picture of progress. Led by Carroll Wright, now the U.S. Commissioner of Labor, the report noted how far technology had driven the production of material goods as "the truth is that scarcely an article that is now in use is the exact counterpart of the one serving the same purpose forty or fifty years ago."[32] The report, the product of a four-year study, analyzes the manufacturing of a wide range of goods and materials to compare the effect on supply, labor force, and wages between manual and machine methods of production. The results are dramatic, as, for example, the study finds that for every one hundred and four common red bricks (8x4x2.5 inches), made with the "primitive" hand-made method, workers using the "modern method" of machines produced one thousand bricks.[33]

These technologies were on show in Machinery Halls, with articles like bricks, watches, and nails being manufactured in front of watchful audiences, often out of raw materials. Machinery Hall displays provided many Americans, especially of the non-laboring classes, with the opportunity to look behind the curtain of American manufacturing, making the fairs of the period, as Trachtenberg notes, "pedagogies, teaching the prominence of machines as instruments of a distinctly American progress."[34] They projected absolute confidence and power; however, the machine-driven economy

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[32] United States Bureau of Labor, "Hand and Machine Labor," in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899).

[33] Ibid., 137.

[34] Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 41.

was convulsing throughout the period. The 1876 Centennial was quickly followed by a six-week national railway strike in 1877, which was eventually put down in no small part by federal troops. A depression gripped the country between 1882 and 1885, and the Panic of 1893 threatened to derail the Columbian Exposition, which was quickly followed by the tumultuous national Pullman Strike of 1894. Industrial progress had a visible dark side that haunted each exposition's vision of national progress as embodied in machines.

Essayist and grandson of John Quincy Adams, Charles F. Adams wrote that the railroad, one of the most conspicuously growing industries of the period, was "the most tremendous and far-reaching engine of social change which has ever either blessed or cursed mankind."[35] As many industries were forming, the nation experienced a sea-change in its economic structure. From the end of the Civil War to 1900, historians estimate that roughly eighty-seven percent of private wealth in the United States belonged to the richest fifth of the population.[36] Wages, a relatively new concept in the second half of the nineteenth century, were volatile throughout the period. A voice of concern over industrialization, J. Shield Nicholson, points out in *The Effect of Machinery on Wages*, that the greatest evil of Machinery "lies in the fluctuation and precariousness of wages, the inevitable result of a system of large industries," a factor that Wright

[35] Charles F. Adams, "The Railroad System" in *Chapters of Eerie and Other Essays* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1871), 335.

[36] Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age, 1865-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 100. It should be noted that this was the same period as Jacob Riis's groundbreaking *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), a sensationalistic work of photojournalism revealing slum life in New York.

dismissed as insignificant in 1882.[37] As new technologies saved labor, increasing numbers of workers were either put out of work or entered into "wage slavery," spending their days feeding a machine or engaged in a menial task, barely able to garner a living wage, and often less.

**Taming the Machine: The Corliss Engine, 1876**

In response to fears over the changing industrial economy, fair officials cast machines as tame servants of human will. Just after the generators had been started at the opening ceremonies of the New Orleans Exposition, Louisiana Governor S.D. McEnery applauded the power of the machines to ensure that "this Exposition marks a new epoch in the history of this country, and we may say in the history of the world."[38] Comparing the generators to docile horses, he points out how easily they are manipulated: "and these mighty engines, this vast amount of complicated machinery, is harnessed ready to do the bidding of Master Lindsay, and it needs but his child's feeble touch to start it in fierce energy."[39] However, even such celebratory language was tinged with fear of machines' destructive potential. Referring to the Exposition's Machinery, McEnery applauds how the machinery's power will work to create world peace:

> Its terrible energy shaking the very earth on which it rests…its effects will be felt in far-off lands, directing the hand in its cunning, guiding the eye in its skill, stimulating the energies of labor, inspiring the inventor with new hopes of reward, elevating science and the appreciation of science, demonstrating the supreme wisdom of peace and the superlative folly of war, sowing what honors may be

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[37] J. Shield Nicholson, *The Effect of Machinery on Wages* (London: Swan Sonnenschen and Company, 1892), vii. Nicholson was by no means radical. He concludes that worker's should advance their lot by imitating their bosses.

[38] Quoted in Fairall, *World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition*, 20.

[39] Quoted in Ibid., 21. "Master Lindsay" was Director-General Burke's teenage son.

> earned and won in the field of history, arousing the young to eager toil and lofty enterprise, rebuking idleness in all its forms, honoring diligence in all useful callings, and in teaching the nations how they may profit most by the world of their hands and heads.[40]

McEnery's fondness for hyperbole is typical of exposition oratory, which includes outsized optimism and self-congratulation. What is notable is that the primary agent of McEnery's utopian ideas rests on a "fierce" and "terrible" energy, which, if directed poorly, would certainly have equal destructive potential.

Throughout the period, words like "terrible" and "grim" and "awful" remain entrenched in the lexicon of those congratulating machinery. Supplying steam power to most of the machines at the Philadelphia Exhibition was the towering Corliss Engine, one of the major draws of the entire Exhibition. This seven hundred ton engine rose forty-five feet in the air and could produce fourteen hundred horsepower. Even as the New York *Herald* observed the opening day crowd cheering the Corliss Engine and reported that "strong men were moved to tears of joy," it also deems the engine "the awful thing."[41] William Dean Howells likened the engine to a hulking giant that "rises loftily in the centre of the huge structure, an athlete of steel and iron," and compared it to a *djinn* from the Arabian Nights, easily capable of crushing its operator.[42]

An unnamed writer for the *Georgia Weekly Telegraph* also characterizes the Corliss Engine as distinctly human by dwelling on "its capacious lungs, its powerful muscles, its delicate and sensitive nerves." Rather than concentrate on its destructive potential, however, he speculates that industrial revolution may become industrial

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[40] Ibid., 22.

[41] "The Exhibition," *New York Herald*, 11 May 1876, 6.

[42] William Dean Howells, "A Sennight of the Centennial," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1876, 96.

evolution, as perhaps "this mammoth power is endowed with more than ordinary intelligence." He asks, "Why not give to the metals and materials of this vast power the same progressive principle from its crude ores that Darwin gives to the animal creation from the mamal [sic] and molusk [sic] germs?" Unable to argue otherwise, the writer concludes, "the idea seems quite as plausible, and from extended observation in the mechanical world, much more readily comprehended by the ordinary intellect." Even as the author hails machines as capable of transferring the "primeval curse" of Adam from "man's 'brow' to the mechanical creation," he remains distinctly uncomfortable with the course of industrialization.[43]

Commentators at other expositions shared a similar awareness of the potential violence of machinery. Mary Ashley Townsend's official "Centennial Poem," read in the opening ceremonies of the New Orleans Exposition, depicts the machines that may operate at the whim of humans as a kind of mythic beast:

> The sobbing engines set their psalms to him ["man's power"]—
> The metals, mastered by the lightest whim,
> He with a single finger can control;
> Till cold machines, waked from their slumbers grim,
> So human seem, they only lack a soul.[44]

Such a powerful device, which can be roused by the "lightest control," has the potential to quickly run out of control. This trend to personify machinery as something akin to a "part animal—part machine—part god," as John Kasson puts it in *Civilizing the Machine*, continued through the Columbian Exposition, but it did not erase the fear of destructive

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[43] "The Centennial," *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, 7 November 1876, 3.
[44] Mary Ashley Townsend, *The World's Cotton Centennial Exposition Poem* (New Orleans: L. Graham and Sons, 1885), 4.

machines on bodies, communities, or economies.[45] Marian Shaw wrote that "entering the building the whirr of wheels and the roar of machinery assails our ears. We stand in awe before these mighty engines that seem endowed with life and intelligence."[46] In fact, "mighty engines" such as these often malfunctioned or were mishandled, prompting what John Fabian Witt calls an "industrial-accident crisis" in the late nineteenth century.[47] Between 1877 and 1910, it is estimated that twenty-five to fifty thousand workers were killed in accidents and between three hundred thousand and one and a half million were seriously injured.[48] In the same month as the Centennial Exhibition's opening, the *Trenton State Gazette* reported that a sixteen-year-old worker at the Union Hill Silk Mills, fell into the machine he had been "feeding," and, as a result, "the flesh was stripped from both legs, and one of his arms was broken many times. He cannot live."[49] By contrast, representations of domesticated, living machinery create a history of industrial progress safe and free of harm.

Depictions of sentient machines like Shaw and Townsend's ignore the presence of workers, who, in many cases, gave their lives and limbs to their operation.[50] The Corliss Engine at the Centennial is a key example of how performance worked for this end. Spectators who gathered to see it being turned on at the opening of each day and again at

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[45] John Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976), 162.

[46] Marian Shaw, *World's Fair Notes*, 31.

[47] John Fabian Witt, *The Accidental Republic: Crippled Workingmen, Destitute Widows, and the Remaking of American Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5.

[48] Michael K. Rosenow, "Injuries to All: The rituals of Dying and the Politics of Death Among United States Workers, 1877—1910" (PhD Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009), 17.

[49] "State News," *Trenton State Gazette*, 25 May 1876, 2.

[50] See David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

midday witnessed a serene spectacle carefully orchestrated to mask the dangerous and complex work of operating such a vast machine. The near seventy-five miles of shafts and belts that took power to other machines at the Exhibition were mostly buried underground.[51] Fairgoers did not see the workers who stoked the engine's boilers with coal, and the engine's release of steam was pumped directly into a "Hydraulic Annex," where it was released into a plume of cool, rushing water.[52] In all this coordinated effort, audiences only saw a lone operator, who was typically seen ostensibly reading a newspaper while the machine spun. Occasionally, he would get up, conspicuously oil parts of the machine, and return to his leisure.

Similar performances at the Centennial offered reassuring representations of humans and machines working harmoniously. At the exhibit of the Pyramid Pin Company, for example, a "little girl" operated a machine that could stick 180,000 pins in papers per day, in part to advertise its safety.[53] The Bickford Sewing Machine Company hired a blind (or perhaps, a "blind" man) to operate their product, displaying for the audience the safety and easiness of their technological invention.[54] Examples of machines and operators such as these exist throughout the fairs. The most concentrated examples of operators and machines working together to stage technology as

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[51] Chaim M. Rosenberg, *America at the Fair: Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 38. Likewise, the New Orleans Exposition put the boilers and repair shop for the fair's engines in a detached building.

[52] Adam Goodheart, "The Machine of the Myth," *Design Quarterly* 155 (Spring 1992): 28.

[53] James McCabe, *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1876), 447.

[54] This was advertised on the trade card for the Bickford Sewing Machine display in Machinery Hall at the 1876 Centennial Exposition. Machinery Hall Scrapbook, Centennial Exhibition Records, 1876-1879, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

domesticating agents of progress are the copious displays of sewing machines and looms.[55] Present at U.S. fairs since the New York Crystal Palace in 1853, these were one of the most visible classes of machines at expositions and were almost always shown in operation. Looking at how sewing machines were operated, advertised, and talked about provides an intriguing case study of how machines, performance, labor, and evolution converged at the world's fairs.

**Sewing and Civilizing**

After the Corliss Engine, Howells's first impression of Machinery Hall was "the sense of too many sewing machines."[56] Although it was not as grand a device as the railroad or electric light, few inventions in the nineteenth century affected the daily lives of Americans like the sewing machine.[57] In August 1860, *Godey's Lady's Book* printed a chart listing the amount of time needed to make garments by hand versus by machine. According to these calculations, a "gentlemen's shirt" took fourteen hours and twenty-six

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[55] Examples include nail-making machine. See Andrew Burgess, "The World's Fair 1893: a Partial Review of the Columbian Exhibition," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, 285. Burgess observes that a machine making one thousand nails per minute gave them away to eager crowds. He also notes that "it was claimed that one man could operate 5 machines." See Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, As Viewed Through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893* (Chicago and San Francisco: The Bancroft Company, 1893), 315, which describes a traveling crane that could "haul a weight of from ten to fourteen tons, swing its load aloft, and raise or lower it, all without jar, and with scarcely a tremor. Its motions are readily guided by a single workman, or even by an intelligent boy." According to Wright, "Factory System," 104, the power loom "closed the catalogue of machines necessary for the inauguration of the era of mechanical supremacy."

[56] Howells, "Sennight," 96.

[57] See Uri M. Kupferschmidt, "Social History of the Sewing Machine in the Middle East," *Die Welt des Islams* n.s. 44, no. 2 (2004): 196-97, on the global importance of sewing machines in the period.

minutes to make by hand and just one hour and sixteen minutes by machine.[58] The promise of such saved labor was greeted with optimism. In another issue, this "Queen of Inventions" was hailed as an evolutionary tool for humanity: "What philanthropy failed to accomplish, what religion, poetry, eloquence, and reason had sought in vain, has been produced by—THE SEWING MACHINE."[59] The author prophesied that it would advance the whole world: "the Sewing Machine will, after a time, effectually banish ragged and unclad humanity from every class." And more than clothe people, women who currently worked with "vacant minds" would use their extra time to improve their minds and souls.[60] Capitalizing on this enthusiasm, the Singer Sewing Machine Company, the most successful company in the nineteenth century, deemed its product "The Great Civilizer" for taking its technology to offices around the world.

One author who shared the civilizing utopian dreams of both *Godey*'s and the Singer Company, was John Scott who wrote, in *Genius Rewarded, the Story of the Sewing Machine*, that:

> On every sea are floating the Singer machines; along every road pressed by the foot of civilized man, this tireless ally of the world's great sisterhood is going upon its errand
> of helpfulness…thus American machines, American brains, and American money are bringing the women of the whole world into one universal kinship and sisterhood.[61]

For the Columbian Exposition, Singer advertised their uplifting role in foreign countries by issuing a set of thirty-six souvenir trade cards entitled "Costumes of All Nations."

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[58] Sara Hale, "Editor's Table," *Godey's Lady's Book*, August 1860, 173.

[59] Sara Hale, "Queen of Inventions," *Godey's Lady's Book*, July 1860, 77, emphasis in the original.

[60] Ibid.

[61] John Scott, *Genius Rewarded, the Story of the Sewing Machine* (New York, John J. Caulon, 1880), 34. Hardly an impartial source, Scott was a biographer and attorney for George Ross McKenzie, head of the Singer Company.

The front of each card depicted one to three people in native dress standing or sitting beside a sewing machine in a particular country, such as China, Zululand, Albania. The verso of each card read like typical reference works on ethnography, providing information on the climate and language of the area, as well as focusing on the races of people depicted. The card for Algeria (**Figure 26**) reads: "Even on this far off coast of Africa the civilizing influence of our 'Singer' is felt, and our Agent has supplied the native as well as French inhabitants with thousands of Singer Machines."[62] In many images, at least one figure has changed their native dress for Western-style clothes. With all the world supposedly on display in the surrounding fair, the Singer Cards represented a miniature visual exposition with a clear implication: Singer sewing machines brought civilization to the world.

The Centennial Exhibition's Machinery Hall reserved a half-mile for sewing machines and looms. Although there was not as much space in New Orleans, the Columbian Exposition had more than seventy exhibits devoted to textile production, with many exhibitors producing goods on-site for spectators.[63] Often set up as in **Figure 23**, these workshops were stages upon which a performance of calm, productive technology

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[62] See Wisconsin Historical Society Singer Advertising Card Collection (http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/feature/singer). A card in their collection representing India from another series (not pictured) observes that India is "now rapidly becoming civilized under British rule" (WHi-57879).

[63] Although the fair's Secretary, Richard Nixon, claimed the Machinery Department would lift Southerners from their "struggle for existence" to learn about "the higher phases of intellectual and mechanical power as applied to the every-day wants of life," it was generally underwhelming to visitors. See Richard Nixon, "The World's Exposition at New Orleans," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, December 1884, 312. A manufacturing trade journal reported that the exhibits were so disorganized that they appeared to be "apparently just placed where they happen to be unloaded," whereas the fairgoer "looks in vain for something remarkable." See "The New Orleans Exhibition," *Manufacturer and Builder* 17, no. 5 (May 1885): 99.

was enacted. Women sat in rows at machines or presses dressed in respectable clothes, representing sewing work as a proper occupation or domestic hobby. Indeed, demonstrations of sewing would be so popular that the Singer Company had its own separate building at the Centennial. According to the *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, this twenty thousand dollar building showed examples of all sorts of work that could be done with Singer machines, as well as displaying sixty-one machines, all in operation for fairgoers to watch.[64] The Singer Company's New Orleans display was limited to a portion of the Machinery Department, but its Columbian Exposition exhibits, which cost a reportedly eight hundred thousand dollars, consisted of domestic machines in two floors of the Manufactures Building, commercial machines in Machinery Hall (which included the largest sewing machine in the world), and leather-working machines in the Shoe and Leather Building. All were working and all, according to the *World's Columbian Exposition Illustrated*, drew large crowds daily.[65]

Exhibitors offered fairgoers multiple ways to interact with the demonstrations as a way to entertain and attract buyers. At the Centennial, a fairgoer visiting a suspenders loom, could, for a price, purchase a pair of personalized suspenders with their name on them and watch the process.[66] Singer operatives regularly offered customers who purchased a machine a free half-hour instructional class.[67] Hubert Howe Bancroft's *The Book of the Fair* noted that at the Columbian Exposition's Machinery Hall, you could see

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[64]McCabe, *Illustrated History*, 632, 634.

[65] "Singer Sewing Machine Company's Exhibit," *World's Columbian Exposition Illustrated*, November 1893, 238. See also, Rosenberg, *America at the Fair*, 99.

[66] McCabe, *Illustrated History*, 446. For fifty cents, one could have a letter printed on a typewriter, which had recently been developed in its modern form.

[67] Elizabeth M. Bacon, "Marketing Sewing Machines in the Post-Civil War Years," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 20, no. 3 (June 1946): 92.

"operatives of the better class" at work who, even while working, "are always ready to answer questions or to offer brief explanation."[68] Shielded from viewing dangerous (or overly boring) work, fairgoers experienced only a personalized, friendly side of labor.

Andrew H. Burgess, an engineer who supervised the winding of large electric motors for the Western Electric Company at the Columbian Exposition, wrote an in-depth critical review, or amateur guidebook, of the whole exposition, paying special attention to Machinery Hall. Although he visited the fair some thirty times, his testimony is not included in standard histories of the fair.[69] His notes are particularly valuable because they not only give detailed descriptions of exhibits that guidebooks lack, but he also describes audience responses, a factor that guides and even most diarists leave out of their reporting.

According to Burgess, one of the most interesting exhibits in the textile section was that of the Willimantic Linen Company, "the greatest thread makers in the U.S," who had a modest showing in 1876 (**See Figure 23**). Although the Willimantic Company had a large display at the New Orleans Exposition, it had only included motionless machines and models of manufacture.[70] Here was another story. Among the several operating Willimantic machines was one for packaging spools of cotton thread that Burgess

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[68] Bancroft, *Book of the Fair*, 232.

[69] Burgess provides a month-by-month breakdown of his visits to the fair: eight visits in May, six in June, seven in July, none in August (his entry is marked "On a vacation"), three in September, and six on October. "The World's Fair, 1893" Chicago Historical Museum, World's Columbian Exposition Collection. Whether Burgess intended to publish his writings are unclear. His tone is formal throughout, frequently referring to himself in the third person. He gave it the title "Thirty Visits to the Fair," but no record of its private or public publication exists.

[70] See the pamphlet, probably given to fairgoers, "Descriptive of the Willimantic Spool Cotton Exhibit at the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition at New Orleans, 1885," World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Collection, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

declared "a marvel of innovative genious [sic]." In particular, he was struck by how it did "perfect work" putting tags on the spools, noting that "this was performed much faster than anyone could count."[71] In her diary, Adelaide Evenden responded to other Willimantic machines with similar language, noting that "the [Willimantic] looms were a marvel to us…It seemed to me it must have taken more than a human mind to have invented such wonderful machinery.[72] At this spool labeling machine, Burgess reports that "a skilled lady attendant was in charge and found time to answer questions." She probably was the source of his information that one could gauge how popular Willimantic thread was by the fact that the company used five thousand cords of wood to make the spools each year.[73]

While Evenden did not reflect on the social nature of technology in her diary, Burgess is clear that exhibits such as this formed convincing arguments of the beneficial part that machines played in the national economy. Fixated on the fair's display, he does not see any downside to industrial progress. He nears his conclusion on the Willimantic display by observing that the daily wages of the employees have doubled in the past twenty-five years, even as the cost of the product has dropped by at least a half. "It is an interesting fact in political economy," he notes, "and of course must be due to machinery and the great quantities produced." These figures are most likely given by "courteous attendants [who] gave many interesting facts and figures concerning this celebrated company."[74] If Machinery Halls could demonstrate that industrialization was good for the whole nation, then comparisons between labor in Machinery Halls with examples of

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[71] Burgess, "Partial Review," 285.
[72] Evenden, "Diary," 18 June 1893.
[73] Burgess, "Partial Review," 285.
[74] Ibid., 286.

"primitive" manual labor prompted fairgoers to celebrate progress without dwelling on its defects.

**Comparisons: Primitive to Modern, Savage to Civilized, Displayed to Performed**

In reading the reactions of visitors such as Burgess and Evenden to displays like those of the Willimantic Company, it is easy to interpret their responses as being shaped merely by the machines' power or speed. Indeed, one marvels when Burgess reels off the fact—most likely provided by an attendant or a brochure—that the company's mills produce enough cotton that, if unwound in one strand, it "would reach from here to the moon and back 17 times in a year."[75] One can easily see how he believes that machines will herald a more evolved future; however, as I discussed in Chapter One, exposition displays were designed and organized in ways to prompt these responses.

Many museum and fair officials worked to make museums agents of progress by how they displayed cultural, technological, and historical artifacts. One example is the work of naturalist and Smithsonian secretary George Brown Goode, who was at the center of developing connections between museums and fairs of the period.[76] Although Goode began as an assistant for the Smithsonian at the Philadelphia Exhibition, he was Smithsonian representative at the New Orleans fair, and his later position in charge of the U.S. National Museum made him prominent enough to be invited to propose a system of

[75] Ibid.

[76] For an overview of the development of private and public museums in the period, see Randolph Starn, "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (February 2005): 68-98.

classification for the Columbian Exposition.[77] In an 1889 talk, "The Museums of the Future," Goode looked beyond the present to a time when museums "should be much more than a house full of specimens in glass cases. It should be a house full of ideas, arranged with tine strictest attention to system."[78] As demonstrated in his fair installations, this system, Robert Rydell points out, is based on establishing a hierarchy and contrast between "savage" and "civilized" objects and people. Goode's talk sees this design strategy leading to greater public education and advancement. Drawing a contrast to museums of the past, he continues, "the museum of to-day is no longer a chance assemblage of curiosities, but rather a series of objects selected with reference to…their possibilities for public enlightenment. The museum of the future may be made one of the chief agencies of the higher civilization."[79] Here, Goode proposes that if museums can better teach the public how civilization emerged from savagery, it can bring humanity to higher levels of cultivation.

While Goode was primarily concerned with classification, late nineteenth-century museum and exposition designers often organized display space with such evolutionary principles in mind. In *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*, historian

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[77] See Robert Rydell, "World Fairs and Museums," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, edited by Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 135-51. Rydell notes that 1876 was turning point for the Smithsonian, as it began to transition from a research-based institution to an exhibitionary one. Subsequently, the Smithsonian and world's fairs "developed a symbiotic relationship over the years," with the former offering assistance in exchange for getting material for its own exhibits (137). We probably owe placards at contemporary museums to Goode, who pioneered their use in 1876 (139).

[78] George Brown Goode, "Museum-History and Museums of History," in *A Memorial of George Brown Goode, Together With a Selection of the His Papers on Museum and on the History of Science in America* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 72. This paper was originally read for the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C. in December, 1888.

[79] Ibid.

Steven Conn shows how museum officials—many of whom also worked on world's fairs—urged institutions to create "metanarratives of evolutionary progress" by arranging displays of objects along paths from supposedly simple (i.e. "primitive") to complex ("civilized").[80] Tony Bennett's *Birth of the Museum* describes how visitors were often physically placed on this chronological path in what he calls "organized walking." As they walked through the museum, spectators traversed a "culture ladder" from savage objects to increasingly complex objects, until reaching modern civilization.[81] Thus, the museum's "narrative machinery" embodied evolutionary theory, while spectators, by looking and absorbing these lessons—and crucially, conforming to a public etiquette of looking (as opposed to gawking)—performed their inclusion in this category. Although Bennett largely focuses on British museums, this dynamic of laying out displays towards a goal of modern, evolved, or, "achieved humanity" was in evidence at each exposition from scientific displays to commercial exhibits.[82]

One of the earliest acts of the Philadelphia Centennial Commission had been to study previous European fairs. One standard of judgment had been to critique how other fairs had represented "the evolution idea," which was directly involved in planning the

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[80] Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1998), 5, 85-95. Examples of the cross-over between museums and expositions include Frederic Ward Putnam, who, as director of Harvard's Peabody Museum, was appointed to head the Anthropology exhibits at the Columbian Exposition, the collections from which later formed the Chicago Field Museum. Entrepreneur and naturalist Henry Augustus Ward (no relation) helped establish several natural science museums, as well as organize or provide displays for all three expositions.

[81] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 7.

[82] In places like Augustus Pitt Rivers's museum in Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, the contemporary period was always located at the apex of cultural development.

arrangement of classification of exhibits across the departments.[83] Robert Rydell details how the Smithsonian exhibits represented Native Americans as "an antithesis to the forces of progress" by showing the chronological development of all traditional handicrafts, without differentiating region or tribe.[84] Herbert Fairall pays particular attention to describing the New Orleans Japanese Exhibit's products of manual labor, as he points out the country's supposed less-civilized state by stressing that "very little machinery is used" in Japan.[85] At the Columbian Exposition, "Department M," known as the Ethnography Department, focused a great deal on labor. Its full title was "Ethnology, Archaeology, Progress of Labor and Inventions," with exhibits such as a group of "Objects illustrating "Generally the Progress of the Amelioration of the Conditions of Life and Labor" that included separate classes of exhibits for

> Class 954. The evolution of the dwelling and its furniture.
> Class 955. The evolution of the plow and other implements of the farm and garden.
> Class 956. The evolution of tools.
> Class 957. Labor-saving machines and their effects.[86]

By walking through the exhibit, a fairgoer would embody a passage from savage to civilized, beginning the exhibits with models of primitive huts and eventually arriving at modern dwellings. In each case of the "Life and Labor" group, the display began with

[83] Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 24.

[84] See Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 23-27, and Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, 95-96. In addition, the Department of the Interior's exhibit at the Centennial presented a homogenous view of Native American diversity by grouping numerous tribes' artifacts together with little distinction. See Christina Welch, "Savagery on show: The Popular Visual Representation of Native American Peoples and their Lifeways at the World's Fairs (1851–1904) and in Buffalo Bill's Wild West (1884–1904)," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 9, no. 4 (November 2011): 339.

[85] Fairall, *World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition*, 394.

[86] Department of Publicity and Promotion, *World's Columbian Exposition Official Catalogue* (Chicago: W.B. Conkey and Co., 1893), 12:76.

primitive equipment and progressed to modern technology, forming a convincing case to many that the modern period was superior.

Not restricted to scientific displays, commercial concessioners employed similar "narrative machinery" for advertising their goods.[87] Many would exhibit a product alongside artifacts from its history, starting in a familiar linear progression tracing ancient versions to the latest in modern technology. A typical example at the Centennial Exhibition was the Howe Company, a sewing machine manufacturer, which emphasized its new model by a displaying old models, beginning with the company's simplest early efforts and continuing to the present.[88] By 1893, this strategy had become more prevalent. In Machinery Hall, the William Deering and Company harvesting machinery display included a series of eight scale models and eighteen machines representing the history of its industry. At the start of the line of models was an unidentified machine from 100 CE supposedly used by Gauls. Following evolutionary strategies of presentation, the display moves chronologically from Gaul to the present-day Spaulding Automatic Packing, Self-sizing Binder.[89] The Rand, McNally guide fawns over the modern machines, applauding the automatic twin-binder, which has "dispensed with the labor of the two manual binders." Although it was out of date by 1893, the guide cites the evolutionary importance of this technology for opening up "a new era in the

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[87] See Bennett, "Civic Seeing," 178-79.

[88] J.S. Ingram, *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1876), 158.

[89] Rand, McNally, and Co., *A Week at the Fair* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company Publishers, 1893), 6.

advancement of a dominant race."[90] Here, as in the Anthropology Building, fairgoers were prompted to experience modern machinery as the pinnacle of civilized progress.

As museums, like most every aspect of American life, began to be professionalized and centralized in the postbellum period, they were largely conceived with what Steven Conn describes as an "object-based epistemology," where objects, often enclosed in glass cases, speak for themselves.[91] We could add to Conn's paradigm that exhibits in fairs, while continuing to emphasize the contrast between savage and civilized, or simple to complex, drew increasing contrasts through performance. For example, Bancroft pays special attention to an underwear knitting company's dual performance: on one side of the display, an operator worked a knitting machine that was "producing yard after yard of fabric, which, with but slight manipulation, is transformed into garments." Next to this device were two manual crank-operated machines "of primitive fashion" that were unable to keep pace.[92] In a similar vein, Bancroft points out a curious bit of theatre in an unnamed display. Here, a modern Jacquard towel loom was set up next to a manual loom operated by a Turk, who, "in orthodox native costume, bends over his task, and with true oriental deliberation swings forward his beam." Bancroft points out that such an automated loom can produce several hundred towels per day, while the Turk lags far behind.[93]

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[90] Ibid., 127.

[91] Conn goes on to show how this principle fell out of favor in the early twentieth century, parallel with the growing importance of research universities.

[92] Bancroft, *Book of the Fair*, 322. Contemporary observers frequently did not differentiate between hand-made and "primitive" objects, using the two words interchangeably.

[93] Ibid., 320. There is no reason to suspect that this was an actual Turk. Bancroft notes that automated towel looms make as much as several hundred towels in a day at the fair.

**On the Midway**

On the Midway Plaisance, Burgess observed—and talked to—foreign residents such as the men and women in the Javanese Village, as they were engaged in various manual tasks such as weaving and embroidery. This enclosed space was a reconstructed habitat from a locality in Java, housing indigenous peoples and constructed from native materials. Part of the Dutch Settlement exhibit, which covered two hundred thousand square feet and included eighty dwellings, the Java Village had nearly eighty residents who lived full-time at the fair. During fair hours, they would sit outside their huts and demonstrate their daily activities to visitors. Inside the village was a theatre, where daily performances were given to general acclaim. Although Burgess did not draw an explicit connection between the manual work in the Midway and the industrial labor on view in Machinery Hall, exhibitors and commentators frequently invoked the contrast between the two as proof of the advancement state of contemporary Western civilization.

Taken as a whole, the Columbian Exposition contained more performance and more displays that contrasted modern and antiquated technology than previous fairs, but the Midway Plaisance also gave fairgoers the chance to connect historical and contemporary modes of production within the heavily coded savage/civilized framework provided by the White City and Midway divide. Fairgoers were tempted to note such differences between the two zones. In the Javanese village, according to one article, many Javanese "go smiling about the daily tasks in the streets of the Javanese Village…embroider, wind skeins of bright-colored cottons on their fantastic reels, paint

intricate designs on pieces of native cloth," among other tasks.[94] The *Official Catalogue of the Midway* invokes the language of ethnography to encourage fairgoers to look at the village as if it were an accurate, museum-like display where "the village gives an exact representation of a native village as found in the Preanger Regencies, West Java…On the balconies in front of the houses the natives works as if they were in Java."[95] Ella Lane Bowes, author of the unpublished "Ancient Religions, Games, and Folk-Lore," which praised the Midway for its scientific value, notes that "on the porches of their neat little dwellings of the simplest construction, they pursued the daily occupations of their customary home life in its minutest detail," which included weaving, dyeing, and drawing.[96] A free pamphlet, published by the Java Chicago Exhibition Syndicate, functioned like a museum guide, directing the viewer's gaze towards the different huts, which had corresponding numbers to those in the guide to show in what buildings one could see what daily activity. For example, house number 29 was the smithy, no. 18 housed a woman making embroideries and slippers, no. 17 had a wood carver, no. 9 showed a shop where tea and coffee were ground and sold.[97] Fairgoers took them as authentic ethnological exhibits, with one history noting that "to the student of ethnology,

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[94] "Glimpse Into Java: Queer Little People to be Seen in the Bamboo Village," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 July 1893, 25. Note that the Javanese's looms were of particular interest to spectators. See "An Exhibit From Java," *New York Tribune*, 2 April 1893, 7, which points out their looms being unpacked as they arrived in San Francisco in advance of the fair.

[95] *Official Catalogue of Exhibits on the Midway Plaisance, World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: W.B. Conkey and Co., 1893), 18. The guide cost only five cents.

[96] Ella Lane Bowes, "Ancient Religions, Games, and Folk-Lore," Bound Manuscript, Chicago 1893, Chicago History Museum, 13-14.

[97] "The Java Village Midway Plaisance. World's Columbian Exposition," American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/rbpebib:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28rbpe+01803700%29%29>.

such an exhibit as that of the Java Village was a thousandfold more important than all the engines in Machinery Hall."[98] To other fairgoers, the same appears to have served to emphasize the contrast between primitive and advanced societies.

Although fairgoers often took living villages as documents of exotic foreigners, historians have denaturalized human displays by pointing out their racist overtones and inherent theatricality. Before the Columbian Exposition, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett shows how museums and theatres mutually profited from human displays in places such as Barnum's Lecture Room, as "museums used theatrical crafts of scene painting for exhibits and staged performances in their lecture rooms, while theatres used the subjects presented in museums." Museums drew visitors by presenting ethnographic subjects, while theatres gained a degree of respectability by adopting a scientific stance.[99] In "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," Coco Fusco provides a partial list of ethnographic displays, tracing the practice back to the late early modern period with Columbus bringing an Arawak to the Spanish Court in 1493. Her list includes famous examples like the "Hottentot Venus" (Saartje Benjamin) in 1800-1815, and George Caitlin's tour with "Red Indians" to England, continuing into the early 1990s.[100]

Alison Griffiths brings the science and racial attitudes that motivated exposition displays into conversation, concluding that:

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[98] *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, 4 volumes, edited by Rossiter Johnson (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 2:340.

[99] See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, )34. See also See Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002.

[100] Coco Fusco, "The Other Intercultural Performance," in *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 41-43. For a discussion of displays such as Caitlin's, see Goodhall, *Performance and Evolution*, 80-111.

> Supported by popular scientific theories of evolution, ethnographic amusements at world's fairs buttressed white supremacy in their narratives and iconography; embodying racist attitudes toward cultural difference, imperial interests, and national progress in every aspect of their construction, ethnographic villages provided fairgoers with tangible and seemingly irrefutable evidence of the racial inferiority of non-Western people.[101]

By making non-Western peoples the subject of spectacle rather than spectator, expositions—like museums and theatres had previously—positioned others as inherently inferior. In an period where the United States was engaging expanding overseas to engage in colonial projects, the racism inherent in living village displays could take on a dark political dimension. The forty-seven acre Philippine Village at the St. Louis 1904 Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition, for example, which was staged during the aftermath of the Philippine-American War (1898-1902), presented Phillipinos as savages needing American control.

Staged displays such as the Java Village constituted the public face of the developing field of anthropology. In a period where many had read about anthropology, Griffiths points out that the Columbian Exposition "offered the first public encounters not only with exotic strangers from the far ends of the earth but with the popular face of the merging discipline of anthropology."[102] Here, tourists were positioned to encounter others in "safety zones," spaces where they could be in close physical proximity to

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[101] Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 59. While this is certainly true of the intent behind establishing ethnographic villages as well as the majority of their reception, chapters three and four will discuss some examples where the peoples on display gained more subjectivity than was officially granted them.

[102] Ibid., 48.

objects of display without the threat of actual contact or responsibility.[103] Such displays became naturalized and an expected part of world's fairs, to the extent that James E. Sullivan, head of the Department of Physical Culture at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, organized an "Anthropology Days" festival following the 1904 Olympics where members of the fair's living villages competed with Olympic medalists.[104]

**Figure 27** shows a line of spectators observing a typical bamboo hut from the Java Village. Its residents stand out front, taking a break from their work to pose for the camera. The number above the door, 21, corresponds with the pamphlet, which lists it as the "home of a woman who weaves cloth with a most crude form of loom," which is visible on the porch.[105] At least twenty huts like this were on view for fairgoers, who, according to the picture, could get close enough to conduct a thorough examination of the Javanese at work.

Judging by how fairgoers discussed the Javanese dress and work, it seems that visitors were preoccupied with noting the contrasts between the way the "natives" and Americans conducted their daily lives. Writing of her second visit to the fair, Adelaide Evenden recalled that "we found the Javanese very interesting," and focused on the supposedly more savage appearance of these "rather small dark people, with a scarcity of clothes, especially among the women."[106] Observers fixated on external signs of the

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[103] Ellen Strain, "Exotic Bodies, Distant Landscapes: Touristic Viewing and Popularized Anthropology in the Nineteenth Century," *Wide Angle* 18, no. 2 (April 1996): 85.

[104] See Susan Brownell, ed., *The 1904 Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: Sport, Race, and American Imperialism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). Also, Strain, "Exotic Bodies," 85, notes that Dahomeans in Paris in the 1880s raced (or were made to race) against Parisian porters carrying sacks.

[105] "The Java Village Midway Plaisance," 1.

[106] Evenden, "Dairy," 24 May.

Javanese's less-evolved state, often in connection to their labor. Catharine Cole, a prominent journalist for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, foregrounded the fact that when Javanese men and women sewed, they always sat on the floor, rather than on furniture.[107] The most complete diarist was Elizabeth Gookin, who was particularly interested by these "curious copper colored little people" and how they lived. After observing the village's primitive-looking bamboo thatched houses, she dwelled on the residents' painstakingly slow methods of work: "outside they were weaving a kind of fine cotton in plaid of light coloring. And on small hand looms – one woman was slowly painting geometrical pattern on cotton cloth some were building hats of straw."[108] As a whole, the attitude that most fairgoers seemed to hold was that the exhibit was a faithful representation of a real village in Java.

One visitor who seems to have bought wholeheartedly into the contrast between manual/savage with machine/civilized labor reported a telling anecdote in *Six Months at the World's Fair*. The author, known only as "Mrs. Mark Stevens," enjoyed what happened when "a native tailor learned to use an American sewing machine." Mrs. Stevens remains firmly established in her "civilized" position, noting that the tailor "was in great glee over the machine which accomplished in a day what had taken him a week to do by hand. He said: 'Me go home, takeey machliney,' spreading his arms in every direction, giving us to understand he would do all the sewing on the island, ending his

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[107] Catharine Cole, "Catharine Cole's Columbian Correspondence," *Daily Picayune*, 22 August 1893, 3.

[108] Diary of Elizabeth A. Gookin, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Gookin Family Papers, Newberry Library, 11 July 1893. This was Gookin's ninth visit to the fair. She was in her early thirties at the time.

speech by saying: 'Bug'um monly,' meaning big money."[109] Such a description, at least based on a real interaction (probably), supports two major aspects of the way "civilized" Westerners looked a foreign races, namely that the "primitive" Javanese were comfortable with their less advanced state, and that civilized technology could immensely transform or uplift their people if introduced back home.

As comfortable as Stevens was in her superiority, gently mocking the Javanese tailor, she was not aware that she was watching a staged moment with a Javanese performing his own apparent simplicity daily. The pamphlet distributed to visitors directs the viewer that a fixture of the village is "In house No. 25 a native tailor shows that the natives appreciate the American sewing machine."[110] The Javanese were by no means oblivious to their circumstances. Repeated commentators dwell on their supposed simple-mindedness, innocence, courtesy, and eagerness to acknowledge the superiority of Americans, often referring to them as "little brownies," largely due to their diminutive stature. One article said of the Javanese women that "while they are pretty and courteous, and clever in all sorts of Javanese ways, the women haven't discovered how to use their brains." Literally, "they haven't any memories."[111] They, like Burgess's "skilled lady attendant" in Machinery Hall would often answer questions about their

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[109] Mrs. Mark Stevens, *Six Months at the World's Fair* (Detroit: Detroit Free Press, 1893), 90.

[110] "The Java Village Midway Plaisance," 2. It should be noted that many post-fair books, such as the popular *Adventures of Uncle Jeremiah and Family at the Great Fair*, were based entirely on guidebooks and articles. See James Burkhart Gilbert, *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009), 49-50. Although this is possible, it is unlikely, as Mrs. Stevens also printed a thirty-four page pamphlet "A Lecture on What You Missed in Not Visiting The World's Fair" (1895). However, if she did write exclusively from guides, it is equally telling that she selects this fact to put in such prominence in her work.

[111] "Glimpse Into Java," 25.

lives, methods, and impressions of Chicago for eager visitors. While the enclosure's theatre was a major attraction, the village itself cost ten cents to enter, suggesting that the villagers knew they were on display.[112] The Javanese's performances of their daily lives were highly successful, remaining a popular concession throughout the fair. And part of the reason that many remember them as savage was that they knew how to play their role well in the grand narrative of American progress.

**Workers and Labor Unrest**

Many fairgoers saw the Columbian Exposition as a dream city created technological wizardry rather than human labor.[113] Among them was newspaper writer Theodore Dreiser, who poetically suggested that "some brooding spirit of beauty" had but "waved a magic wand quite as might have Prospero in The Tempest or Queen Mab in Romeo and Juliet, and lo, this fairyland, this dream out of the Periclean Age of Athens."[114] In reality, the Columbian Exposition was the largest employer in the Chicago area, and one of the largest in the entire country. Its construction workforce can be estimated to have been sixteen thousand people at any one time, and roughly twenty-five

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[112] The theatre's admission was 25 cents, half the price of a ticket to the White City. It should also be noted that this was not the first Javanese model village at an exposition. There had been examples at the Amsterdam exhibition in 1883 and the Paris exhibition in 1889. See Raymond Corbey, "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930," *Cultural Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (August 1993): 338-69, and Patrick Young, "From the Eiffel Tower to the Javanese Dancer: Envisioning Cultural Globalization at the 1889 Paris Exhibition," *History Teacher* 41, no. 3 (May 2008): 339-62.

[113] It is perhaps no surprise that L. Frank Baum most likely based his Emerald City of Oz on the White City, based on his numerous visits to the fair while he lived there. William Wallace Denslow, who illustrated *Wizard of Oz*, had worked for the *Chicago Herald* providing images of the Exposition.

[114] Theodore Dreiser, *Newspaper Days* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 309. Dreiser worked as a journalist for many years before his first novel, *Sister Carrie*, was released in 1900.

thousand over the course of the exposition.[115] For all the performances of stability and prosperity that the fairs presented, the actual relationship between labor and management was far more volatile. While big businesses like banks and railroads were struggling during the Panic of 1893, the economy was on the verge of a major bust. Although only between three and four percent were unemployed in 1892, the numbers jumped to an eight to twelve percent unemployment rate in 1893.[116] Little has been written on the history of working class individuals who either worked for, or attended expositions. This section will complicate the placid vision of labor that fairs offered. I will suggest that workers and worker cultures were plausibly on the mind of any potential fairgoer.

In addition to the famous strikes throughout the period like the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 and the Pullman Strike of 1894, localized labor actions were never far from the news.[117] Walls did not protect expositions from the same problems that plagued the rest of the nation. Among the strikes and protests within fair between 1876 and 1893 were a waiter's strike in Philadelphia that resulted in violent conflict with the Centennial Guard, a streetcar strike in New Orleans that threatened to derail the opening weeks of

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[115] David Silkenat, "Workers in the White City: Working Class Culture at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 104, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 268. These figures include the two-year construction of the exposition's grounds and buildings.

[116] See David Whitten, "Depression of 1893," EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whitten.panic.1893>. Yearly unemployment figures are difficult to track in the period, as they were not kept until the 1920s. However, the numbers jump to between twelve and nineteen percent unemployed in 1894. Interestingly, the high range of the 1893 figures probably closely matches the number of Americans who visited the Columbian Exposition.

[117] Other major labor events during the period include the Great Southwest Railroad Strike (1886), which involved over two hundred thousand workers, The Haymarket Affair (1886), and The Homestead Strike (1892), where steel workers engaged in pitched battles with Pinkerton security agents and state militia before failing to end a lockout.

the fair, as well as more than two dozen strikes by workers during the Columbian Exposition.[118] Expositions may have offered idealized vision of technology that made work peaceful and effortless, but this section suggests that many fairgoers would have encountered such performances with a sense that labor strife was an ongoing struggle.

It is useful to first note that the boundaries of what defined "working class" were fluid in the period. This is well-illustrated by an episode in Walter Wyckoff's 1898 *The Workers: An Experiment in Reality*. A graduate of Princeton, Wyckoff traveled across the country to observe labor from a worker's perspective. After hunting around Chicago for months in search employment, he found a job as an unskilled laborer on am exposition road crew during the months before the opening. He describes events leading to a newfound class-consciousness of a fellow worker, a master carpenter, whom he calls "Mr. Ford." The carpenter, a respected member of his community in a small town in Ohio, had gone to the Exposition seeking work, but only found a lowly position as a "hand."[119] Over the course of a few weeks, as the two attended labor meetings together (taking place just outside fair walls), Ford experiences an awakening to the plight of the contemporary worker. Outraged at the greed of corporations, he pledges to join a union.[120]

Once hired, Wyckoff was pleased that the work was guaranteed and profitable. The workers were provided with ample food—albeit of poor quality—and lodging. He enjoyed working in the open air, although he registered some unease by the fact that the workers building the fair were guarded by sentries, who made sure they stayed inside the

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[118] Silkenat, "Workers in the White City," 283.

[119] Walter A. Wyckoff, *The Workers: An Experiment in Reality* (New York: Scribner's, 1898), 278.

[120] Ibid., 286.

gates, except on Sundays.[121] Eventually, Wyckoff departed the Exposition before it opened, and headed for Denver, Colorado.

Of the many who traveled to Chicago in search of employment at the exposition, many others initially responded positively their employment. Poet James Weldon Johnson was one of a small group of African-American students from Atlanta University, who traveled to the exposition with pre-arranged employment as rolling chair guides.[122] In his letters to his school's newspaper, Johnson is full of praise for the working conditions that he encountered. He is struck by the lack of racial discrimination that he experienced from fellow workers and the overall beauty of the exposition site itself.[123] Unfortunately, Johnson arrived before the fair opened and his additional letter did not discuss his experience with crowds, but one wonders if he had as pleasant an experience. J.A. Mitchell notes how sharp the contrast often was between the polite, educated attendants and the public, as:

> There is sometimes a contrast in manner sand education between the occupant of the chair and the man behind that is not in favor of the former. When one sees what is evidently a citizen with far more money than brains, and without the faintest appreciation of the beauties that encompass him, wheeled about at seventy-five cents an hour by a youth so far his superior than any comparison is impossible, it causes one to realize that Fortune is indeed an irresponsible flirt, who is never so happy as when doing the wrong thing.[124]

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[121] Ibid., 247-48. Silkenat suggests this was to keep them from mingling with labor unions, which were constantly agitating around the fair since the exposition was looking to hire non-union labor.

[122] See Daniel Burnham, *The Final Official Report of the Director of Works of the World's Columbian Exposition* Reprinted (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 3.37, which states that college students were actively sought to be hired as guides, with two thousand students hired during the fair. Johnson was one of seventy-five students from African American students hired.

[123] James Weldon Johnson, "Atlanta University Boys at the World's Fair," *Bulletin of Atlanta University*, 45 (1893): 6.

[124] J.A. Mitchell, "Types and People at the Fair," *Scribner's Magazine*, August 1893, 191.

According to the final report of the Exposition, Rolling Chair operators were paid $1 per day plus 10% of commissions, which amounted to an estimated $7 per week. However, in the latter part of August, the Rolling Chair Company, which held an exclusive contract on chair rentals, cut wages to seventy-five cents per week. According to the report, this "aroused some dissatisfaction among the college students" and "about two hundred remained with the company" out of two thousand.[125]

Despite the swelling unemployment in Chicago at the time, having workers leave the job in protest was not uncommon. The Report of the Janitor's Department noted without hesitation that the grueling work was "the cheapest labor employed by the Exposition." The Janitors, who were all African-American, had been hired to sweep floors and wash windows, but, as the Exposition opening grew close, were transferred to the heaviest manual labor. The Report notes that "the pay was $1.50 a day and the conditions were always discouraging." It is unsurprising that "the majority of them [Janitors] were capable of something better, who stayed only until they found such to do, when they promptly resigned."[126] Employment at other expositions could be precarious. The Centennial Exhibition's private police force, the Centennial Guard, was drastically reduced in the Summer of 1876 during a period of low attendance, and, according to one article, "economy is now the order of the day, in all departments."[127]

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[125] Burnham, "Final Report, 3.37. It is unknown whether or not Johnson remained past this point.

[126] Burnham, "Final Report," 7.39. In March, before the opening, the Exposition employed 410 janitors, but by the end of May, after the opening, they were employing 1,017.

[127] "The International Exhibition and Other Matters," *Lowell Daily Citizen*, 28 July 1876, 1.

Sometimes, dissatisfaction among fair workers turned into direct actions. In an April 1893 article entitled "Columbian Guards Quit," the *Daily Inter Ocean* issued the strong warning that the much-touted Columbian Guard was "disintegrating" over issues of low pay and unfair promotion.[128] At one stroke, one hundred and thirty-five workers resigned, with many more threatening to quit. After the opening, the Guard, like other forces that engaged strikers across the country, was often engaged in putting down labor disputes. For example, in May, maintenance workers, who were not allowed in because their passes had expired passes, charged the gates only to be suppressed with physical violence.[129] However, they were not always so successful. In another instance, the Guard was easily vanquished by protesting waiters, who assaulted them by throwing plates, bowls, and saucers, forcing the guard to flee.[130] Anecdotes like these show that labor tensions were as high within the expositions as in the country as a whole.

Since the New Orleans Exposition was situated outside of the city, most visitors relied on street cars to get to the grounds. On 27 December, only a few days after opening, the eight thousand people who reportedly visited the fair nearly panicked on hearing rumors of a street car strike. While some fairgoers left early, there was an afternoon rush for the cars just as the strike was beginning so that only a few cars

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[128] "Columbian Guards Quit" *Daily Inter Ocean*, 24 April 1983, 2. See also "World's Fair Doings," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 16 February 1893, 5, on hiring practices. In this case, the sons of army officers were being hired and promoted above older men who had sonority, despite the younger men at times being barely out of high school. The April article suggests that they were looking for ways to get paid while seeing the fair.

[129] "Trouble at the Gate, *Daily Inter Ocean*, 20 May 1893, 1.

[130] "Were Easily Vanquished," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 25 June 1893, 6.

remained in operation.[131] Faced with cars packed beyond capacity, fairgoers were reportedly paying wagon drivers outrageous sums to get back to the city and a captain of a grain barge ferried some six hundred passengers back to the city.[132]

The strike nearly shut down the Exposition for two full days at a critical time in its opening month. Although the *Times-Democrat*, the paper that Director-General Burke owned, warned citizens that the strike would bring economic ruin to the city, strikers were remarkably effective at halting non-union attempts to run the cars.[133] Visitors and exhibitors, to say the least, were hardly pleased. One worker at a machine exhibit in the fair complained that visitors, stranded in town, were "mad as hornets." For himself, "Ed" complained that the exposition board "have spent millions of dollars on the buildings and grounds and have not done the first thing to facilitate travel, or to look to good public accommodations."[134] Unable to restore order, the street car companies offered concessions and ended the strike on 29 December.[135]

With each Exposition occurring in close proximity to economic depressions, prospective workers flocked to the host cities in search of employment. In each case, officials tried to keep too many unemployed laborers away by issuing warnings in the paper against those seeking employment. For example, department store magnate John Wannamaker wrote to regional newspapers requesting that editors warn anyone "who

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[131] Drivers were striking for an alleged "breach of faith" by the owners of the line, which included grievances such as the "15-hour" a day of work not being heeded to. See "The Car Drivers Strike," *Daily Picayune*, 28 December 1884,

[132] See Watson, "Crowning Achievement, Part II," 355.

[133] *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, December 28, 29, 1884.

[134] Ed to "My own Darling Annie," 29 December 1884, World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Collection, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[135] See Watson, "Crowning Achievement, Part II," 355-56.

may be thinking of coming to Philadelphia to find that, that they had better *not come*. The city is flooded with men from all parts of the country."[136] In November 1884, the *New Orleans Time-Picayune* warned job seekers to stay away, as New Orleans could already "furnish an unemployed army sufficiently numerous to run a good sized metropolis."[137] In 1893, papers across the country were likewise declaring the Chicago labor market glutted.[138]

High unemployment signaled more than a weak economy, but the possibility of social dissolution. Many debated whether society would progress if less successful individuals were helped, or if they should be left to their own devices. Yale sociologist and Spencer disciple William Graham Sumner's 1893 *What Do Social Classes Owe Each Other?* harshly answered that "one man, in a free state, cannot claim help from, and cannot be charged to give help to, another."[139] By contrast, Wyckoff voiced another popular sympathy for much of unemployed workers. Wyckoff said that unemployment,

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[136] See "Employment Scarce in Philadelphia," *Easton Gazette*, 25 March 1876, 3, emphasis in the original. See also, "Scenes in Philadelphia," *Wheeling Register*, 26 July 1876, 2, which describes the "large numbers of workingmen out of employment" in the city. The author estimates that one quarter of able-bodied workers in the city are unemployed. Reportedly, men were reportedly voluntarily going to houses of correction for the promise of food and board.

[137] "A Word to Those Seeking Employment Here," *Daily Picayune*, 29 November 1884, 4. This article was also picked up by other papers, such as the *Baltimore Sun*, where it was reprinted as "A Word to Those Seeking Employment in New Orleans," in a supplement to the issue on 2 December 1884, 1. See also "Current Notes," *Boston Evening Journal*, 8 December 1884, 2.

[138] See, for example, in North Dakota: "Labor Outlook Gloomy," *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, 2 April 1893, 1, "Do Not Go to Chicago for Employment," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 May 1893, 1, "Fair Work for Women: 10,000 Applicants for Employment Already Filed in Chicago," *Macon Telegraph*, 11 April 1893, 7.

[139] William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe Each Other* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1893), 27. Sumner argued that helping weaker individuals would lead to social degeneration, making him a leader in what would later be deemed "Social Darwinism." Sumner was a featured speaker at Spencer's farewell banquet that I discussed in chapter one.

of which he had bitter first-hand experience, was "a chaotic maelstrom…which in every industrial city seethes with infinite menace to society."[140] Wyckoff expressed sympathy for those that could not get work because they weren't skilled or cunning enough, as "civilization is hard on such men who suffer chiefly due to their incapacity for the struggle for existence."[141] Debates such as these circulated throughout the period, and it is likely that many fairgoers would have been encountering performances of labor with these questions in mind.

In Chicago, unemployment reached a peak level in 1893, especially during late August, the time of the International Congress on Labor, which began on 28 August and continued through Labor Day. Browsing newspapers, one is struck by how often news of the exposition is competing with reports of protests, demonstrations, and threats of strikes. On 21 August, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on a "small meeting" of two thousand unemployed foreign workers who peacefully drafted resolutions.[142] The next day, protests continued, as the *Tribune* applauded a supposedly spontaneous protest of four hundred unemployed workers at the lake front who remained non-violent and orderly.[143] On the same day, a contrasting riot in "Packingtown" also ran in the news. After workmen for the day were hired, police told the large crowd to disperse, leading to a violent confrontation between unemployed workers and police.[144] Fairgoer Elizabeth Gookin's diary records encountering one of these parades in her entry for her seventeenth visit. With condemning language registering her fear of the strikers, she records that, as

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[140] Wyckoff, "The Workers," 251.

[141] Ibid., 252.

[142] "Unemployed Foreigners Resolve," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 August 1893, 2.

[143] "We Want Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 August 1893, 1.

[144] "Blood in the Yards," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 August 1893, 1.

she and a male friend started for the exposition, "we saw a large procession of unemployed men. Some 6000 or more—who were just starting to parade the streets headed by a brass band—A bad, rough looking set of men—and I saw an elements of danger. They should not be allowed to gather in such numbers. They became riotous later…but we suppressed by the police."[145] Protests increased after the Labor Congress had begun. On 31 August, the *Tribune* condemns an armed "unruly mob" of six thousand agitating for work, which it blames largely on Italians. The same day, it covered a rally whose attendance of twenty-five thousand was reportedly large enough to keep hundreds from accessing the viaducts on their way to the world's fair. Applauding the crowd's good behavior, the *Tribune* notes that "all classes" were present, as many of the fashionable set were watching with interest from hotel balconies.[146] The plight of the unemployed may not have a critical mass, but it was plainly visible to all members of society.

**Conclusion: Evolution, Machines, and Consequences**

As a concluding statement, I would like to focus on one fairgoer's response to the White City/Midway divide, because it brings together ideas of evolution, manufacturing, and the consequences of industrial progress. J.B. Parke, writing for the *Idaho Daily Statesman* in September 1893, after a long tour of the exposition, began an article with the observation that "evolution is the keyword of today's philosophy and here is the place to study it." Following the contrasts I have been discussing, Parke pursues his subject

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[145] Elizabeth A. Gookin, "Diary," 17 August.

[146] "Riot Clubbed Out," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 August 1893, 1, and "Labor's Real Voice," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 August 1893, 1.

along the same lines, tracing the evolution of clothing from the grass skirts worn by the Dahomey "cannibals" on the Midway to the looms in Machinery Hall. Like many visitors, Parke is astounded by the contrast between the crude materials exhibited in the Midway and the almost unimaginable productivity of machines. He exemplifies the promethean/demonic ambiguous stance by interpreting the fact that the fair's machines can manufacture items almost faster than one can think as "a prophecy that only the rude and uncultured nations will do hard work."[147]

Parke turns to the moral implications of machinery and the process of civilization. With a humorous touch, he warns that production is not enough to guarantee evolution, as "according to Darwin, it took 20,000 generations for the monkey to make a man of himself, a man can make a monkey of himself in twenty minutes on three fingers of Chicago whisky." His article takes a unique turn in likening the machines at the fair to slaves. The Columbian Exposition has proved a convincing lesson in the ability of machines to transform society. Like many enthusiasts, he claims that if they had been around in 1840, slavery would have been instantly rendered obsolete. He sees in them a promise where in the future, "folks will just stand around and watch the machines" work. However, here, Parke takes a more sober look at reality, one in which he finds the rhetoric of civilization lacking. In a quote worth considering in full, Parke concludes his article by celebrating these "slaves of light and fire, soulless, bloodless, nerveless, feeding only on the condensed sunshine of the carboniferous age and wearing out in our service without a groan or a wound to any man's conscious. And yet there is want and there are riots and there are said to be 500,000 people suffering for lack of work. Why?"

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[147] J.B. Parke, "Eighty Million Slaves," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 10 September 1893, 4.

Although the Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Chicago expositions offered visions of technology as an agent and proof of evolution, none were capable of answering Parke's question. Although expositions appear to historians to hold a monolithic voice, the worlds within and without their walls remained in conflict throughout the period. In the next chapter, I will look at how the fairs infiltrated the culture of their host cities, even as they were influenced by popular culture.

## 3.
## The Theatre Cultures of United States International Expositions

Exposition and theatres shared numerous points of contact in the period between Reconstruction and the turn of the century. Fair officials, boosters, newspapers, and fairgoers commonly conceived of expositions as grand spectacles, often borrowing theatrical metaphors such as "The Great Show," "Our Show," or "The Big Show" to describe their pride and enthusiasm. While expositions were growing larger and more theatrical, the United States theatre experienced a similar rise in spectacular entertainments like *The Black Crook* (1866), burlesques like Lydia Thompson's *Ixion* (1868), and Broadway extravaganzas like Victorien Sardou's *Cleopatra* (1890).[1] Thomas Postlewait's "The Hieroglyphic Stage" charts the rise of grand spectacles and pageants as a major form of entertainment in late-nineteenth-century United States.[2] In particular, Postlewait includes expositions in his narrative, as both fairs and theatrical spectacles catered to audiences that were developing tastes for huge casts, exotic scenes, and dazzling technology. Although Postlewait positions fairs and theatres in what Tony

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[1] On *Ixion* and *Black Crook* as seminal productions in American entertainment, see Robert Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). For a production history of *Black Crook* in New York, see Leigh George Odom, "The Black Crook at Niblo's Garden," *Drama Review* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 21-40. Sardou's *Cleopatra* toured in its original version with Sarah Bernhardt and in its U.S. version with Fanny Davenport. Both were playing in New York in 1891, and Davenport brought her version to Chicago in 1893.

[2] Thomas Postlewait, "The Hieroglyphic Stage: American Theatre and Society, Post-Civil War to1945" in *Cambridge History of American Theatre: Volume 2: 1870-1945*, edited by Don Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 107-95. Postlewait notes that theatrical and exposition spectacles shared fundamental design qualities, albeit in a general way, i.e. "the whole principle of a world fair is to overwhelm the eye with the cornucopia of the material world (and to demonstrate just how wonderful the host country is on the stage of the world). Building after building at each fair put on display thousands of wonders and enticements for the eye (even more curiosities than Barnum had offered)" (170).

Bennett termed the "exhibitionary complex" of department stores, museums, and the urban environment, he is primarily concerned with using spectacle to draw connections between seemingly disparate forms of entertainment.[3] Taking Postlewait's work as a broad starting point, this chapter will look for wider conversations between theatrical entertainment and international expositions in their content and reception. This chapter will argue that expositions should not be studied as isolated cultural events, but that fairgoers visited host cities with expectations that included a broad range of local theatres, museums, and related entertainments.

Looking at the relationship between performances inside and outside expositions between 1876 and 1893, I consider how themes and sights from expositions were represented on stage and how performative displays permeated fairs. I counter the bulk of scholarship on world's fair amusements, which argues that popular entertainment was forcibly excluded from exposition grounds until the Chicago Midway reconciled commercial and educational interests.[4] According to this narrative, the Centennial, which historian David Nasaw characterizes as a strictly amusement-free, "remarkably solemn occasion" is read in opposition to a "Shantytown" of popular showplaces just

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[3] Ibid., 160-61.

[4] For example, Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), 34, claims that "the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition was the first American fair where "designers found a way to incorporate popular amusements into the ideological framework of the fair." Focusing exclusively on ethnographic displays, Nancy J. Parezo and Don D. Fowler, *Anthropology Goes to the Fair: the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 5-6, reads the "Centennial City" as a precursor of the Chicago Midway, pointing out its displays of exotic peoples in the dime museum as an important link between the two zones.

outside the gates.[5] As the century progressed, scholars like Nasaw argue that popular entertainment slowly encroached on sanctified fair space. Thus, after the Paris 1889 *Exposition Universelle*, which had "fully integrated" amusements with a machinery hall existing alongside, a roller coaster, the Eiffel Tower, and a reproduction of the Bastille, the trajectory of popular culture in world's fairs changed. According to Nasaw, "the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and subsequent American world's fairs would take a position halfway between Philadelphia, which banned amusements, and Paris, which fully integrated them on the fairgrounds." The fair directors in Chicago were the first to arrive at a solution "to include an entertainment 'district' on the exposition site but segregate it in a 'midway' geographically distinct from the rest of the fairgrounds."[6]

By insisting on the neat, ideological categories separating the serious from the recreational, historians have turned a blind eye to how flexible such barriers actually were. While the standard historical narrative sees "lowbrow" entertainment as being only reluctantly incorporated into "highbrow" expositions, I will show that a broad range of performances was always part of exposition culture. This chapter seeks to revise histories of amusement zones by acknowledging that the cultures of expositions were porous, shaping the theatre culture of host cities even while being shaped by a pervasive theatrical sensibility.

Between 1876 and 1893, theatrical productions in host cities became progressively integral to the experience of visitors who toured expositions. In 1876, only

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[5] David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 66.

[6] Ibid, 67. After Chicago, world's fair amusement sections expanded enormously. See 68-69 and 72-74 especially.

a handful of plays in Philadelphia theatres touched on themes related to the exposition, but by 1893, Chicago producers eagerly courted fairgoers by offering mass spectacles that were often taken for extensions of the Columbian Exposition. Meanwhile, expositions themselves staged increasingly theatrical exhibits, whether it is on the pleasurable Chicago Midway or in the serious-minded Machinery Hall. Fairgoers saw both the exposition on stage and the stage in the exposition.

The chapter surveys advertisements, playbills, guidebooks, and reviews to construct a representative look at what local theatres were producing during exposition seasons. While famous actors such as Edwin Booth and James O'Neill flocked to the cities to play their standard roles, I will focus on how spectacular entertainments, an emergent theatrical form in 1876, grew into a widespread entertainment by 1893. As expositions grew in size and scope, theatrical spectacles likewise increased in scale. I will begin by looking at theatrical productions in host cities, where my main examples include the Kiralfy Brothers' *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Philadelphia and New Orleans), "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" (New Orleans and Chicago), and Imre Kiralfy's *America* (Chicago). Following that, I look at how fair officials attempted to regulate space to exclude commercial entertainments as a way to define fairs as educational and civilized, and, concluding with the example of the Chicago Midway Plaisance, I will show how fairgoer interests and demands for entertainment revised the neat savage/civilized divide.

**Around the World in Eighty Days**

Between the end of the Civil War and the Columbian Exposition, the American theatre underwent vast changes that made it one of the largest booming industries in the country.[7] Postlewait likens theatre, broadly defined to include minstrelsy, vaudeville, circuses, and amusement parks, as occupying the center of leisure practices in U.S. cities. Indeed, the theatre experienced a number of wide-ranging structural changes, such as the development of vaudeville circuits, formation of combination companies, touring international stars, Wild West shows, the three-ring circus, electric lighting, advanced stage machinery, and grand spectacular entertainments.[8] Postlewait shows that many figures were important in both exposition entertainments and theatrical spectacles, most notably the Kiralfy Brothers and Steele Mackaye. This section builds on his suggestions, but ties the connections tighter between spectacular entertainments and world's fairs. Postlewait is right in identifying individuals who were involved in both exposition and theatres, but I argue that individuals such as Kiralfy and Buffalo Bill relied on the influx of audiences that exhibitions promised in order to make the transformation to national stars, and thus work to transform the landscape of entertainment in the United States.

In 1876, Philadelphia theatres attempted to capture the influx of visitors largely by presenting audience-pleasing plays. With the exception of Henry J. Byron's *Our Boys*, which ran at the Chestnut Theatre for the duration of the Centennial season, the

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[7] According to Matthew Sobek, "New Statistics on the U.S. Labor Force, 1850–1990," *Historical Methods* 34 (2001): 71–87, 500 men in the United States identified as being in the acting profession in 1850 and 175,000 men and women identified themselves as actors in 1900.

[8] Postlewait, "Hieroglyphic Stage,"107, and see also John Frick, "A Changing Theatre: New York and Beyond," in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre* 2:196-232.

theatres had a succession of short engagements throughout the summer and fall.[9] Meanwhile, the ever-entrepreneurial Kiralfy Brothers cannily sought to capitalize on the taste for spectacle that fairs offered by bringing their latest hit, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, to Philadelphia for the Centennial season.

Imre and Bolossy Kiralfy were accomplished Hungarian folk dancers who traveled to New York to dance in George L. Fox's *Hiccory Diccory Dock* at the Olympic Theatre in 1869. The brothers remained in the city and traded dancing for choreography and production. After their 1873 revival of the blockbuster *Black Crook* ran for over one hundred nights, the brothers were successful producers. They further honed their entrepreneurial acumen, creating large-scale touring shows throughout the 1880s.[10] Kiralfy historian Barbara Barker describes their style of spectacle as being more than size for its own sake, but marshaling all the elements of theatre:

> Aimed at stirring adulation and conveying splendor, these productions went beyond merely visual theatre to exceed any reasonable human proportion. For the specific purpose of glorification, their appeal was based on scale, size, and quantity, with extravagant costumes, elaborate changing scenery, marching

[9] *Our Boys* ran 26 June to 18 November, 1876. For example, George Rignold's version of *Henry V*, with a cast of over four hundred, opened the same day as the exposition, but closed soon after. See "Amusements," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 May 1876, 2. Lighter entertainment prevailed throughout the summer, with an emphasis on variety shows, minstrelsy, and circuses. Notably, Edward Sothern appeared briefly at the Walnut Street Theatre, alternating between *David Garrick* and *Dundreary* (which was either a version of *Our American Cousin*, in which he created the role of Lord Dundreary, or one of its numerous spin-offs). See "Amusements," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 June 1876, 4. As the fall season began, bigger names came to Philadelphia, including Mrs. John Drew and Fanny Davenport (who would bring her *Cleopatra* to Chicago in 1893) at the Arch Street Theatre, and Dion Boucicault, with an extended engagement at the Walnut Street Theatre. See "Amusements," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 September 1876, 3.

[10] See Barbara Barker, "Imre Kiralfy's Patriotic Spectacles: 'Columbus, and the Discovery of America' (1892-1893) and 'America' (1893)," *Dance Chronicle* 17, no. 2 (1994): 151-53 for an overview of their early career.

> armies of supernumeraries, choirs of singers, and actors who mimed the drama, as well as European-trained corps de ballet and soloist.[11]

Just as expositions enlisted spectacle to overwhelm the spectator, Kiralfy productions traded on visual excess in their scale, costumes, scenery, and vast numbers of extras on stage.[12]

In advance of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, the Kiralfy Brothers built a new theatre and garden on Broad Street opposite the distinguished Academy of Music, constructed in "Moorish style."[13] They named it "Kiralfy's Alhambra Palace," with the express purpose of using it to revive their 1875 hit, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, based on the 1873 Jules Verne novel (**Figure 27**). Billed as "the spectacular masterpiece of the present century," *Around the World* uses Phileas Fogg's journey as a pretext to present exotic sights like a live elephant, a sinking boat, a flying balloon, and over one hundred ballet dancers in a variety of locations, including Calcutta, Borneo, and Egypt. The piece played at the Alhambra throughout the exhibition, and as late as October 3, ads were warning eager ticket buyers that it was sold out two weeks in advance.[14] A *Philadelphia Inquirer* article about how to tour the fair brought the Kiralfy production to mind while offering advice on how to see the exposition. Subtitled "Around the World in Eighty Days, or Around the Grounds in Twenty-Eight Minutes," the article suggests that

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[11] Ibid., 150.

[12] Ibid. Postlewait, "Hieroglyphic Stage," 127-30, provides an overview of their career, focusing on their "ballet" *Excelsior* (1883), "a celebration of the technological progress of humankind," which featured the first steam engine and incandescent electric light bulb on stage.

[13] According to advertisements, admission was fifty cents for unreserved seats, equal to the cost of admission to the Exposition. See "Amusements," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 September 1876. The theatre also contained a garden and outdoor restaurant, where concerts were frequently given.

[14] *New York Herald*, 3 November 1876. This is surely an exaggeration, but probably not a large one.

to get a similar experience to Fogg, one should take the short railcar ride around the grounds, where the whole world and its peoples were on display.[15]

*Around the World* closed with the fair in November, and the Alhambra soon reopened after the fair with the "Lyric Fairy Spectacle" *Azurne, or, a Voyage to the Earth*. Receipts were poor, and the brothers quickly sold the Alhambra building. They returned to touring shows, including *The Black Crook* and *Around the World*, both of which would be brought to New Orleans during the 1884-85 exposition.

In contrast to Philadelphia eight years earlier, the New Orleans theatre community positioned itself to be a part of the life of the fair. More theatres were listed in guidebooks, and several offered special exposition "season" packages. Again, the Kiralfy Brothers figured prominently. Since the Centennial, the Kiralfy Brothers had been building an empire of touring productions. Rather than become attached to New Orleans, they brought a rapid-fire succession of large-scale spectacles to the city. Many theatres in New Orleans reported success during the exposition, but the Kiralfy Brothers had a string of successes. They opened at the St. Charles with *Around the World in Eighty Days* (7 December), which was quickly followed by *The Black Crook*, and, finally, *Sieba and the Seven Ravens* (opened 4 January), with the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* consistently reporting capacity crowds throughout each performance.

New Orleans theatergoers seemed in awe of their visiting entertainment more than the local theatre. The *Daily Picayune* called *Sieba* "the grandest thing New Orleans has seen in a long time."[16] More telling is that the critics saw both the exotic Kiralfy productions (and Buffalo Bill's "Wild West") as included in the exposition experience,

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[15] "The World's Fair," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 May 1876.
[16] *Daily Picayune*, 14 January 1885.

regularly making comments such as the *Daily Picayune*'s, "*Around the World in Eighty Days* is regarded by strangers as part of the exposition."[17] While this connection linking spectacular entertainments to expositions was only taking hold in 1884, it would be explicit in 1893, when both Chicago's exposition and its theatres would unite in a mission to impress visitors with the grandeur of their artistic and technological achievements.

After the Kiralfy Brothers dissolved their partnership in the 1880s, Bolossy struggled, while Imre had a hit with *Nero*, for which he built a special theatre on New York's Staten Island. Although thousands attended the show in 1887, the most important visitor was perhaps P.T. Barnum, who, nearing the end of his life, was co-producing Barnum and Bailey's Circus. Barnum asked Kiralfy to adapt *Nero* to accompany the circus on a European tour. Following *Nero*'s success, Kiralfy wrote a spectacle for performance in Chicago in 1892 and 1893, entitled *Columbus and the Discovery of America*. *Columbus*, presented in a circus format, told the story of the discovery of America in a year celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of his voyage.[18] It was produced in New York, and again in Chicago, but left before the Exposition, as Bailey feared that the fair would compete with the circus's audience.[19] Kiralfy, however, remained and put on a new show, *America*, which would become a featured production of the exposition season. Even by Kiralfy's standards, *America* was a tremendous undertaking. With a cast in the hundreds, the pageant was so large that the *Times* could confidently state that "it is safe to say that no such spectacle was ever attempted in this

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[17] *Daily Picayune*, 17 December 1884.

[18] Imre Kiralfy, *Imre Kiralfy's Columbus and the Discovery of America* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Courier Company, 1892).

[19] Barker, "Patriotic Spectacles," 153.

country."[20] Told in a prologue and three acts, *America* follows allegorical figures Progress and Perseverance as they move from the "discovery" of America to the present day. Along the way, there are grand ballets that fused allegory and history, including Columbus's Triumphant Return to Spain, Washington Crossing the Delaware, Peace and the Triumph of Liberty, a Grand Ballet of Arts and Sciences, and the Close of the War of Secession.[21]

This celebratory pageant of America's progress echoed the triumphalist messages of the exposition, with Kiralfy assuring his readers in the program that "I have selected only such subjects as have absolutely lent aid to the Progress, Civilization, Liberty, and Arts and Sciences of America, and such as uphold the dignity of the country."[22] Performed in the Auditorium, the largest theatre of the city and a source of civic pride, the production was the subject of frequent articles in local newspapers and was featured in official guidebooks for the fair.[23] However, *America* not only shared the celebratory rhetoric of the exposition, but put the fair on stage. The finale was a *pièce de résistance* of staging as well as an homage to the exposition itself. The location of the ballet shifted to the fair's Administration Building, where a "Congregation of Nations, and Grand

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[20] *New York Times*, 24 April 1893. Barker, "Patriotic Spectacles," 167, estimates that there were at times two hundred dancers on stage at once based on the prompt script.

[21] "Imre Kiralfy's Grand Historical Spectacle, *America* Auditorium Theatre, 1893," Program, World's Columbian Exposition Ephemera Collection, Box 2, Folder 17, Chicago Public Library. According to the program, Columbus' triumph, which is at the conclusion of the prologue, included seven hundred dancers.

[22] Ibid., 8.

[23] Upon its completion in 1889, the Auditorium, designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, was the tallest building in Chicago and the largest in the United States. Seating 4,300, it was intended to be home for Grand Opera in Chicago. The building itself also included over one hundred offices and a large hotel. For more on the prestige that the Auditorium offered, see Mark Clague, "The Industrial Evolution of the Arts: Chicago's Auditorium Building (1889-) as Cultural Machine," *Opera Quarterly* 22, no. 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 2006): 477-511.

Cortege of the States and Territories of the Union" (including the Queen of Asia, the African Queen, and representations of the countries present at the fair), was greeted by the Goddess of Chicago and welcomed to the Columbian Exposition. According to the script, in this "ALLEGORY OF THE COLUMBIAN WORLD'S FAIR...All representatives from all parts of the globe pay HOMAGE TO AMERICAN GENIUS."[24]

*America* opened in April 1893, inaugurating what the *New York Times* refers to as "the world's fair period in Chicago theatricals."[25] In June, a *Times* article claimed *America* was "at the summit of its growth," but the spectacle enjoyed a seven-month run.[26] Originally intending to close the production in September, the producers extended it into the winter season. Afterwards, it was condensed to a touring piece, when it headed for the Northeast, playing at venues such as the Metropolitan Opera House to rave reviews. Afterwards, Kiralfy produced fewer spectacles, but world's fairs seem to have been on his mind, as he was one of the organizers and designers of the Franco-British Exhibition (1908) in a West London district now named "The White City" after the fair.[27]

If there had been any concern before 1893 that large-scale entertainments would be eclipsed by world's fairs, Kiralfy's *America* confirmed that spectacular entertainments were part of, not in competition with, exposition cultures. As expositions swelled in size and ambition, so did the spectacles of the Kiralfy Brothers, whose careers paralleled the growth of world's fairs as a form of cultural production. The next section looks at how

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[24] Imre Kiralfy, *America*, World's Columbian Exposition Ephemera Collection, Box 2, Folder 17, Chicago Public Library, page 36.

[25] *New York Times*, 29 October, 1893. Throughout the exposition, the *Times* regularly devoted a column to report on Chicago Theatre under "Chicago Playhouses."

[26] *New York Times*, 4 June, 1893, and Barker, "Patriotic Spectacles," 173.

[27] Kiralfy was one of the early planners of the exhibition and, along with his sons, designed the site's "Court of Honor."

Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" further blurred the lines between theatre and fair in both New Orleans and Chicago.

**Buffalo Bill's "Wild West"**

Kiralfy productions, by using mechanical technology and donning narratives emphasizing American greatness, played directly into exposition cultures, whereas "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" occupied the borders of exposition, entertainment, and frontier cultures. A scout, soldier, and hunter, William F. Cody had authentic experience of frontier life, but he was also one of the most successful entertainers of his time. Although Cody is best known for his Wild West shows, he began his entertainment career as a melodrama actor, first appearing in Ned Buntline's *Scouts of the Prairie* (1872).[28] In 1883, Cody formed the first "Wild West," a variety entertainment that featured horse races, shooting displays, Native American war dances, and staged skirmishes.[29]

A sample bill from December 23, 1884 represents this early form of the show with eleven unconnected acts:

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[28] For an overview of Cody's stage career see Sandra K. Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). While Sagala provides an in-depth look at Bill's stage career, she overlooks his dramatic engagements in New Orleans, which are not even listed in her appendix of his performance dates. For Cody's career in context with frontier melodrama, see Roger Hall, *Performing the American Frontier, 1870-1906* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For Ned Buntline's storied career from agitator during the Astor Place Riots to dime novelist to playwright, see Peter Buckley, "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860" (Ph.D. Dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984).

[29] William E. Deahl, Jr., "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in New Orleans," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1975): 291-92.

1. A quarter-mile race between Mexican, cowboy, and Indian riders
2. The Pony Express
3. The Attack on the Deadwood Stagecoach
4. A hundred yard contest between an Indian on foot against a horse
5. Young Indians riding little burros
6. Master Johnny Baker-demonstrating his skill and marksmanship by hitting stationary glass balls while holding his rifle in a variety of positions
7. The shooting skills of Captain Bogardus and his four sons
8. The Appearance of Buffalo Bill, Himself
9. Major Frank North and the Pawnee Indians in Scalp and War Dances
10. Cowboy's Frolic featuring Buck Taylor, the King of the Cowboys
11. The Attack on the Settler's Cabin[30]

While much of the performance was centered on feats of skill, events like the "Attack on the Settler's Cabin" and "Attack on the Deadwood Stagecoach" were fully-staged battles. In some cases, especially during the Columbian Exposition, Cody was known to use Indians who had fought at the battles being depicted.

By the end of the century, Cody would have made himself a household name, bringing his "Wild West" across the country and through Europe, but at the time of the New Orleans fair, he was still a struggling showman hoping to capitalize on the exposition's crowds. New Orleans visitors appeared eager to make the streetcar trip to see Cody's show; however, Cody's fortunes suffered the same setbacks as the fair itself. The streetcar operators' strike limited the audiences he could attract, and weather forced him to cancel numerous shows. The Wild West was intended to be staged outdoors every day in Oakland Park, but its opening was delayed due to rain, which turned the performance area into a muddy soup.[31] One historian counted that performances were canceled forty-four times during its exposition season, a heavy burden for a show of this

[30] Ibid., 290-92.

[31] In fact, mud was a constant complaint of visitors to the exposition, especially in its early days.

scale.[32] Not content to count his losses, Cody turned to the theatre. Starting in early January, his company took an engagement at the St. Charles Theatre. Cody opened with the melodrama *The Prairie Waif* on 18 January, 1885, and performed alternatively with his Wild West show through the winter, reportedly to full houses. In the play, Cody repeatedly rescues an innocent girl from villainous Indians and unscrupulous Mormons, while finding opportunities to display trick shooting and stage Native dances.[33] Reviews suggest that spectators saw the theatre and the "Wild West" as more than diversion, but as part of the civilizing mission of the fair. One reporter commented that the "Wild West" "is education, instruction, and amusement…Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show is an exposition in itself."[34] Cody's recourse to the theatre enabled his troupe to survive the financial disaster of the winter weather. When he left New Orleans in April, he was an unqualified success, infused with cash and poised to expand the show on an even larger scale.

Between 1885 and 1893, the Kiralfy Brothers had parted ways, while Buffalo Bill had become an international sensation. In June to October of 1885, Cody toured with Lakota chief Tatanka-Iyotanka, better known as Sitting Bull, who had figured prominently in the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn. The following year, Cody employed the help of innovative producer and director Steele Mackaye to transform his show into *The Drama of Civilization*. While *Drama* incorporated the riding, shooting, and acts from the "Wild West," it crafted them into a narrative that followed the development of the American frontier in a series of "Epochs," beginning in the "Primeval Forest" and

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[32] Deahl, "Buffalo Bill in New Orleans," 289.
[33] See Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage*, 147-65.
[34] *Daily Picayune*, 17 December 1884 and 18 December 1884.

ending in a "Mining Camp."[35] The expanding frontier served as a backdrop to tell the story of the evolution of American society from wilderness to site of industry.[36] Between 1887 and 1892, the Wild West had toured Europe where Cody played for eager publics of all classes across the continent, including the Roman theatres, Windsor Castle, and Mount Vesuvius.[37] These tours, which honed the "Wild West" show's publicity and production departments, brought to Chicago a polished show with a narrative that paralleled the exposition's.

With the Columbian Exposition being the largest world's fair to date, the Chicago theatrical community was eager to attract the anticipated millions who were expected to visit in the summer of 1893. Although major stars such as Henry Irving and Ellen Terry took up residence to play through their repertory, it was the big spectacles such as *America* and the "Wild West" that enjoyed lasting success. Nate Salsbury, Cody's business partner, originally wanted to install the show on the Chicago Midway, but had to settle for a spot just outside the fair gates. Here, the "Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World" set up camp for the season. The show, which incorporated elements from the *Drama of Civilization* without a strict narrative, included reenactments of historic events, notably the Battle of Little Big Horn, which had occurred during the 1876

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[35] See Christopher Kent, "Spectacular History as an Ocular Discipline," *Wide Angle* 18, no. 3 (July 1996): 1-21, and J.A. Sokalski, *Pictorial Illusionism: The Theatre of Steele MacKaye* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007), 147-78.

[36] On the relationship between Cody's sensibilities and Darwinian theories of evolution, see Rosemarie K. Bank, "'Show Indians'/Showing Indians: Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and American Anthropology," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 26, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 152-54.

[37] See Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

exposition, and played to an estimated six million spectators during the exposition.[38] Cody was, in the words of a *New York Times* review, "coining money near the fair grounds" by presenting a spectacular show with melodramatic elements that claimed to have real historical significance.[39]

Before Chicago, Cody's performances were the only places that fairgoers would have seen living Native Americans. Although artifacts had been on display at the Centennial Exhibition, there had been no live demonstrations of native culture.[40] A planned "Indian Encampment" had been canceled at a late date.[41] The "Wild West" show deserves to be considered as working to shape the boundaries between "civilized" and "savage" by putting Native American and white frontier culture on stage, inviting comparisons from the audience. It is tempting to read Bill's shows as advocating for a view of white cultural supremacy and civilization, as things such as battles and "savage" ambushes on "civilized" settler communities, but the truth may not be so clear.[42]

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[38] Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 120.

[39] Ibid., 112, 120 and *New York Times*, 13 August 1893. An anecdote at the time said that there were fairgoers who mistook the Wild West for the Exposition entrance and, after seeing the show, came away satisfied with the fair. See Don Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 374.

[40] See Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002), which shows how performance and anthropology often went hand in hand, especially with regard to Native Americans.

[41] As late as February 1876, newspapers were reporting that an encampment of thirty families was ready to be installed at the foot of George's Hill. Some guidebooks, such as *Magee's Illustrated Guide of Philadelphia and the Centennial Exhibition*, include information on the camp. See Robert Trennert, "A Grand Failure: The Centennial Indian Exhibition of 1876," *Prologue* 6, no. 2 (Summer, 1974): 118-29.

[42] See for example, Christina Welch, "Savagery on Show: the Popular Visual Representation of Native American Peoples and Their Lifeways at the World's Fairs (1851-1904) and in Buffalo Bill's Wild West (1884-1904)," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 9, no.4 (November 2011): 337-52. Welch follows majority opinion in reading the "Wild West" as a uniformly racist spectacle, claiming that the show "deliberately

Although the Wild West operated within a culture of racist stereotypes, Cody and his show arguably troubled the boundaries between savage and civilized. In "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition," Rosemarie K. Bank compares how inhabitants of the Midway living villages were regarded versus the "show Indians" in Cody's troupe. Although Cody's performers had to play in patriotic American narratives that celebrated white triumph over Native Americans, Bank cites numerous "show tolerant" histories that claim Cody treated Native and white performers as being equal in many ways.[43] In fact, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had urged Cody to hold the pay of Amerindians in escrow, a mandate that he patently refused to comply with.[44] Performers on the Midway, who were subject to the authority of the Exposition board, had much less autonomy. For example, prominent Lakotas performed war dances daily at a Midway reconstruction of Sitting Bull's cabin, but had no control over the content of their dances.[45] The dwellers of the Esquimau Village fared far worse. A newspaper story relating a lawsuit brought against the owners of the concession, positioned just outside the entrance to the State Buildings, charged that many living in the camp were held as slaves.[46]

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fostered cross-cultural misunderstandings" advocating the inferiority of Native Americans (344). See also Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 96-97, where he argues that New Orleans and Chicago Wild West shows exemplified the racist lessons of ethnological exhibits.

[43] Rosemarie K. Bank, "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition," *Theatre Journal* 54, no.4 (December 2002): 604. In fact, Cody recruited native prisoners of war, who could tour with him instead of serving prison time. See Bank, "Show Indians," 155. While traveling with the "Wild West" was presumably better than prison, this strategy surely saved Cody on recruitment and salaries.

[44] Bank, "Show Indians," 151.

[45] There was also a version of the cabin in the North Dakota State Building.

[46] "World's Fair Doings," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 13 March 1893, 7. Although some were apparently forcibly kept within the walls of their camp, others claimed that if they

Putting the of representation of others at world's fairs in a global context, Margaret Werry argues that it is impossible to remove such performances from a "politics of representation" that supported projects of colonialism and deterritorialization.[47] In representing others as evolutionary interior, as I have suggested in chapter two, fairs and related entertainments naturalized white superiority and the resulting control over the bodies and environments of so-called natives.[48] Although Cody's "show Indians" were not foreign others, as Werry analyzes, her work provides a useful framework for considering peoples on show. The "Wild West" gave space for Native Americans to perform versions of traditional rituals and activities, but it also offered an entertainment experience that heroized the triumph of U.S. military forces over native resistance. The years between 1876 and 1893 included a number of conflicts between U.S. and native forces, including the Black Hills War (1876-1877), the Ghost Dance movement, which resulted in the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890), and frequent skirmishes, which lasted well into the twentieth century. However accurate Cody's presentation of native culture and humane his treatment of performers, his show circulated images of dangerous—and defeated—natives to millions of viewers.

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left, management took away their day's wages. Other complaints include lack of clean drinking water, being forced to wear thick seal-skin coats in hot weather, and lack of access to waste disposal, especially with regard to the dog pen area. This last point is intriguing. Guidebooks and visitors often scoffed at how bad the area smelled, using the stench as proof of the Esquimaux's inferior state, when a good deal of that smell could be due to the managers of the concession's unwillingness to clean out the area.

[47] Margaret Werry "'The Greatest Show on Earth': Political Spectacle, Spectacular Politics, and the American Pacific," *Theatre Journal* 57, no. 3 (October 2005): 355.

[48] It is worth remembering that many performers in the world's fairs had been touring in similar concessions for several years, at least since the 1889 exposition in Paris.

Fairgoers and the press were eager to compare their culture to that of Native Americans. A telling example is a journalist's account of a meeting between Cody and Lakota chief Gall during the New Orleans exposition, after the latter had seen the Kiralfy Brothers' production of *The Black Crook*.[49] The reporter, receiving a second-hand translation of the conversation, casts Gall as a savage by emphasizing his supposed lack of sophistication as a theatre spectator. The article suggests that Chief Gall was primarily concerned with the dancing girls, but not as "civilized" American audiences were. Instead, the chief reportedly marveled at the stage technology, refusing to believe that the scantily clad girls were anything but real devils.[50] Here, knowingly being able to distinguish between seeing theatrical illusion and reality is used as a point of distinction between the civilized spectator and the savage Indian.[51] Although the reporter uses Gall's appearance at the theatre to fit his—and his reader's—own expectations of savages cultures, Cody treated the Chief as a guest of honor both at his show and in his tent, where Gall enjoyed a feast.[52]

Bank calls attention to the fact that the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other "progressive" institutions were urging Native Americans to assimilate by converting to

[49] "Sioux Chief Gall," *Daily Picayune*, 5 January 1885, 8.

[50] Gall, a Lakota Chief who led a large force in the Battle of Little Bighorn, and who had been a close ally of Sitting Bull's into the 1880s, was hardly a naïve individual. It should be noted that the reporter never interviewed him individually, and the chief is not given the opportunity to speak for himself.

[51] In ethnographic circles, theatre was often seen as a sign of civilization. One midcentury explorer praised a Amazonian village as having a "good society" based on the evidence of it having three churches, and, significantly, a theatre, where the inhabitants performed "light Portoguese [sic] plays." See Henry Walter Bates, *The Naturalist on the River Amazons* (London: John Murray, 1863), 93.

[52] Interestingly, the author of the article related an exchange between Cody and Gall where Cody gives Gall professional advice on how to cope with being stared at in public as a celebrity, suggesting that Cody treated Gall as closer to an equal than the savage that the author depicts.

Christianity, cutting their hair, and attending special schools—several of which were on display at world's fairs—to facilitate this process; by contrast, Cody's Wild West gave Native Americans a public space to wear traditional clothes and practice sacred rituals.[53] At a time when the frontier had been officially closed, Cody's show kept Native Americans in public view, and Bank suggests that the theatricalized battles could be read as staging contests between native and white culture, making the frontier a place of "shared history and memory, a jointly occupied arena in which competing claims for authenticity could be presented and evaluated."[54] The Columbian Exposition, through its Indian School and Anthropology display, offered domesticating visions of Native Americans, but Bank calls attention to the sheer number of alternative ways there were to see Indians at the exposition, at the Wild West, as visiting dignitaries, as performers at the prominent folk-lore congress, and on the Midway. While the Bureau of Indian Affairs and exposition officials sought to show harmless, assimilated Indians, the demands of commercial culture disrupted and overwhelmed these peaceful visions, for something more exotic, garish, and, possibly, authentic.[55]

**Inside/Outside, from "Shantyville" to Midway**

The plans of fair officials to divide the Columbian Exposition into two heavily coded high and low spaces, as I discussed in chapter one, was part of a clearly defined

[53] Bank, "Show Indians," 152.

[54] Ibid., 150. See also Bank, "Representing History," 603, 605.

[55] Bank, "Show Indians," 155. See also Richard A. Trennert, Jr., "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904," *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no.3 (Summer 1987): 203-20, where he argues that although exhibits of Indian Schools promoted the virtues of assimilation (or "Americanization" in contemporary parlance), they actually created public interest in traditional customs.

cultural agenda. James Gilbert's "Fin de Siècle: A Contest of Cultures" argues that exposition officials attempted to impose an uplifting, non-commercial idea of culture on fairgoers as well as the largely immigrant population of Chicago, which had been developing its own leisure practices.[56] Although New Orleans planners seemingly welcomed commercial entertainment, Philadelphia exhibition officials strove unsuccessfully to exclude popular entertainment from within the fair walls. In both Philadelphia and Chicago, officials segregated educational spaces from leisure zones; however, in both cases, these boundaries broke down, and the high/low, amusement/serious, commercial/educational barriers also contained a sizable degree of slippage and connections that fairgoers were aware of and pursued.

In surveying how fair officials responded to the supposed dangers of commercial entertainment, historians frequently begin with the "Centennial City," a swath of hastily constructed hotels, saloons, restaurants, and theatrical showplaces located just outside the Centennial Exhibition gates. This area, also known as "Shantyville" or "Dinkeytown," is likened to a proto-Midway of cheap entertainments that were rejected by exposition officials (see **Figure 29**). Although the "Centennial City" included a major transportation hub and several fine hotels, historians have defined the site by its most garish entertainments, often citing a condescending description of the area from *Harper's Weekly* that describes it as "a row of wooden buildings used for variety shows, concert halls, liquor saloons, and the like. Here in rival establishments were the 'learned pig,' the gigantic fat woman, the two-legged horse, the five-legged cow, the mysterious ghost, and

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[56] James Burkhart Gilbert, "Fin de Siècle: A Contest of Cultures," *History Today* 42, no. 7 (July 1992): 33-9. Gilbert also traces contemporary ideas of culture to Matthew Arnold's 1875 edition of *Culture and Anarchy*, which defines culture as "the best which has been thought and said in the world."

any number of other curiosities for the edification or amusement of the passing stranger."[57] The picture here is of a confusing—and confused—jumble of cheap sideshows lurking just outside the exposition and feeding, vampire-like, on fairgoers when more respectable venues were closed.

In contrast to *Harper's* portrait, other sources reveal a range of concessions along Elm Avenue. James McCabe's *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* spends more time on sites such as the "Pennsylvania Oil Well," a functioning scale model oil well.[58] Rather than appeal to low tastes, the well is hardly different in tone from one of the forty exhibitors in the Mining Machinery and Drills section in Machinery Hall.[59] The commercial display of the Pennsylvania Oil Well was in the same area as a dime museum, ice cream parlor, variety hall, panorama, and several fancy hotels, suggesting that the "Centennial City" was not merely a conglomerate of coarse entertainments, but a vibrant cultural zone, elements of which could be found in performances throughout the exposition grounds.

Despite the rhetorical difference between the exhibition and this "Shantyville," the experiences available in both offered astonishing similarities.[60] Although the exhibition's Machinery Hall was considered "an educator of the masses," it, like Shantyville, was more of a zone of mixed use than historians have acknowledged. Among the so-called serious exhibits was a busy performance culture that defies the

[57] "The Centennial," *Harper's Weekly*, 30 September 1876, 802.

[58] James McCabe, *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1876), 304-5.

[59] *International Exhibition, 1876 Official Catalogue*, volume 4 of 5 (Philadelphia: John R. Nagle and Company, 1876), 17-18.

[60] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 35, discusses the Shantyville as being "diametrically opposed" to the civilizing mission of the exposition.

neatness of the official line between popular entertainment and education, showing that one could find flamboyant showmanship and theatricality as much outside the gates as in the hallowed halls of machinery. Along one aisle of the U.S. section was a display in particular: Reuben McChesney, known as the "Mohawk Dutchman," operated his saw with the flair of the fairground. According to the trade journal *Wood-Worker*, McChesney "was recognized as the most expert band sawyer of his time."[61] He patented several saws and methods for cutting wood that had won him prizes in trade fairs. However innovative McChesney's patents, his performance style would be long remembered by those who saw him in operation. Costumed largely in clothes made of wood, McChesney demonstrated the accuracy and sharpness of his saw to what was reportedly thronging crowds.[62] A later article recounts McChesney's standard act as progressing from making four miniature chairs that could balance on a pencil to his trimming his nails on the running saw.[63] He reportedly "drew crowds with his tricks with the band saw, sometimes pretending to lose fingers in accidental amputations. He had no trouble selling the toy furniture and other articles he created."[64] Despite the massive

[61] "'Mohawk Dutchman' Band Saw Guide," *The Wood-Worker*, November 1900, 41.

[62] On McChesney's crowds and costume, see *Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition* (New York: Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 1877), 268. His costume includes a hat, necklace, glasses, a red white and blue belt, and bracelets inlaid with jewels, all made from sawn wood.

[63] See Reuben McChesney, "Some Remarkable Band-Saw Work," *The Manufacturer and Builder*, November 1887, 260, and *Popular Mechanics*, July 1976, 78.

[64] Edo McCullough, *World's Fair Midways, an Affectionate Account of American Amusement Areas from the Crystal Palace to the Crystal Ball* (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), 32-33.

machines on display, *Frank Leslie's Historical Register* comments that McChesney was "one of the greatest attractions of Machinery Hall."[65]

What is striking about McChesney is not that he performed in the serious halls of the fair, but where he performed. McChesney's booth (pictured in **Figure 30**) was not segregated from other machinery, but located among a designated area for scroll saw and wood-jointing machines, and was listed as including "Process shown," a gloss on what was a common performative practice across the Centennial grounds.[66] Performance was a major medium for other "civilizing" exhibitors. For example, the "Kindergarten Cottage" offered a model kindergarten where spectators sat in bleachers to observe teachers in action (see **Figure 31**). In the "Hunter's Camp," several costumed hunters lived in makeshift cabins, demonstrating how frontiersmen slept and ate in the wild.[67] Lowbrow theatre was also present on the grounds: visitors dining in the "Restaurant of the South" could find what clearly resembles a minstrel show: "an 'old Plantation Darky Band'" playing and "illustrat[ing] Southern plantation scenes."[68] Acts like these reveal an exposition dependent upon—rather than opposed to—popular entertainment and performance. After 1876, the frequency and scale of such performative encounters would increase dramatically.

While popular amusements were officially shunned within the Centennial Exhibition's walls, the New Orleans fair directors encouraged commercial entertainment on or near fair grounds. In Philadelphia, two played throughout the Centennial: "Paris by

[65] *Frank Leslie's Historical Register*, 268.
[66] *Official Catalogue*, vol. 3, 20.
[67] See McCabe, *Illustrated History*, 329.
[68] Centennial Board of Finance, *Visitor's Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J.J. Lippincott and Company, 1876), 19.

Night" was being shown at the Coliseum next to Kiralfy's Alhambra on Broad Street, while "The Siege of Paris" was being presented in an identical building in the "Centennial City" (visible in **Figure 29**), neither of which was discussed in official literature.[69] At the New Orleans Exposition, which was perhaps too far geographically from the city's entertainment district to find competition, official sources include suggestions for visitors to visit a panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg that was on display just outside of the Exposition's gates. Hardly resistant to commercial culture, the exposition management felt that the central displays were not gaining enough attention, so they granted concessions throughout the hall for garishly costumed "fakirs" to sell "pretended products of [foreign] countries" throughout the aisles.[70]

Elements of some performances could be found both inside and outside fair walls. For example, in 1893, a considerable exhibit in the Woman's Building was devoted to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[71] At the same time, productions of the extremely popular stage production toured Chicago, notably with Australian aborigine Peter Jackson in the title role, and Uncle Tom's "actual" cabin was on view at

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[69] See McCabe, *Illustrated History*, 77, 302, for descriptions. For reviews of both panoramas, see "The Coliseum," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 August 1876, 3, and "Amusements, Music, Etc.," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 July 1876, 3.

[70] "The Cotton Centennial at New Orleans," *American Architect and Building News* 17, no. 485 (April 1885): 171. See also Thomas D. Watson, "Staging the 'Crowning Achievement of the Age': Major Edward A. Burke, New Orleans, and the Cotton Centennial Exposition, Part II," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1984): 341-66. Although some complained of the crassness of the "pseudo-Oriental" wares being sold, the board was receiving fifteen percent of all sales and ignored all complaints.

[71] See Barbara Hochman, "'Uncle Tom's Cabin' at the World's Columbian Exposition," *Libraries & Culture* 41, no.1 (Winter 2006): 82-108.

the Libby Civil War Museum, a Confederate prison from Virginia that had been transplanted to Chicago a few years before.[72]

The physical barriers between inside and outside the fair could hardly contain the cultural cross-connections available to fairgoers, who, while attending the fair, would pass by them, take part in them, hear, and see them. One 1893 author characterizes the area just "on the land side of the Fair" as similar to the Shantyville that haunted the Centennial, with "the usual assemblage of cheap shows, lemonade vendors, and the like, which line the unsightly fence [of the fair] and make up what a friend has dubbed the Sideway Unpleasant."[73] A satiric illustration from *World's Fair Puck*, "The Ideal American Sabbath" (**Figure 32**), illustrates the variety of performances and entertainments outside and inside the fair. In the image, a representative example of types from the Midway marvel at the sheer variety of types of entertainments available just outside the gates. The illustration satirizes the controversial battles between the Exposition board and Protestant community over Sunday closings at the Exposition to honor the Sabbath. Visible are Buffalo Bill in the middleground on the left, and theatre, dime museum, concert saloons, and various fairground-type entertainments. Here, the people of Chicago spend their day of rest engaged in much more dubious entertainment than was thought to be located on the Midway. For the fairgoer who lived in or traveled

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[72] For the stage production, see "Music and Drama," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 May 1893, 4. For the Libby exhibit, which included cotton supposedly harvested from the LeGree plantation, see Rand, McNally, and Co., *Handbook of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, and Co., 1893), 18, and "Sunday in Chicago," *Lowell Daily Courier*, 15 August 1893, 7, which mentions the museum's panoramas. The latter article also discusses *America*'s popularity.

[73] Will H. Low, "Artist's Impressions of the World's Fair III," *Scribner's Magazine* (October 1893), 506. See also Gilbert, "Fin de Siècle," 7.

to a fair, it seems, entertainment, serious or not, took priority over the educational mission of world's fairs.

### Fairgoer Practices: Museums and Reception

Although fine art and historical museums were emergent institutions between 1876 and 1893, the term museum most regularly denoted dime museums and middle class showplaces like Barnum's American Museum or Moses Kimball's Boston Museum, where visitors would see a mix of sideshow entertainment, historical artifacts, and respectable theatre or lectures. In all three cities, museums such as Wood's in Philadelphia and Chicago and Robinson's Dime Museum in New Orleans offered a mix of respectable and dubious entertainment to increasing popularity. Fairgoer itineraries and diaries suggest that many attended both exposition and dime museum with equal interest. For example, fifteen-year-old John Lunneen kept a detailed record of everything that he saw in a short visit to the Columbian Exposition. His notebooks do not distinguish sights inside the fair and Wood's Museums or the Wild West show outside the fair. On a Monday Lunneen visited various State Buildings within the Fair and on Tuesday, saw the opera *Ali Baba*, and went to Wood's Museum, where he saw "a woman 8ft 4in tall. A black bear. An Indian woman and baby. A young fawn. Aztec Indian mumies[sic]. Large snakes. Invisible lady. Wax figures" before returning to the fair the next morning.[74] A scrapbook of the World's Fair, "Summer 1893, Brooklyn to Chicago," includes several mentions of Kiralfy's *America* that reveal how seamlessly one person thought of the production and the fair experience. First, a printed synopsis of *America*

[74] Lunneen Notebook, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, 9 October 1893.

appears in the scrapbook among images of the White City, when the creator purchased the ticket, probably the 18th or 19th of July. Later, probably on the 29th of July, when the creator attended the production, two views, one of the outside of the Auditorium, the other a drawing of the stage from a balcony, "What we looked down from," are among the images depicting the state buildings and city sights.[75] Images of *America* occupy scrapbook spaces associated with both the White City and urban Chicago. No other attractions in the exposition are repeated in the scrapbook, suggesting the creator thought the production important enough that it was part of both the fair and the touring experience. For Florence Dymond, the daughter of prominent Louisiana planter John Dymond, the educational mission of the fair was hardly the sole attraction of the fair experience. She sent a series of letters home to her father from the Columbian Exposition that are full of detail of her trip, but pays much more attention to her social engagements and her experience touring the city, especially its theatres, than to the fair itself.[76]

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[75] "Summer 1893, Brooklyn to Chicago," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum.

[76] Florence Dymond to John Dymond, 22 August 1893, Dymond Family Papers, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection. Additionally, the Eleanor P. Thompson Collection, Louisiana Research Collection at Tulane University, has items from Thompson's visits to the fair. Along with typical materials such as exhibitor brochures, there is also a guide to the panorama of the Battle of Sedan and a number of cartes de visite of freaks from Burnett and Prescott's Museum. Although she probably possessed a wider sample of materials that did not make it into the collection, the appearance of a mix of fair material and external entertainments suggests that she approached the exposition and the city's entertainments as part of the same experience, rather than a strictly bifurcated one.

Although fair officials sought to reinforce the civilizing nature of expositions by controlling the boundaries of exposition spaces, the demand for entertainment and commerce permeated fair spaces. Officials attempted to regulate commercial and elite culture within fair walls, but fairgoers hardly followed suit as a unanimous whole. Members sought out similar experiences outside of the exposition gates, just as exhibits within the fairs showed off a theatrical flair. The final section of this chapter revisits the firmest boundary discussed in this project, the rhetorical division between the "civilized" White City and "savage" Midway in Chicago. As I have pointed out in Chapter One, fair officials attempted to associate touring the White City with a serious, educational purpose, thus casting the Midway as a site of dubious—and dangerous—entertainment. In particular, I look at the scandal surrounding performances of the *danse du ventre* at theatres in the Columbian Exposition to see how fairgoer interest in midway challenged the cultural orthodoxy laid out by planners and officials.

**Father and Son: from Concert Hall Feud to Nightclub Sensation**

As part of their civilizing mission, world's fairs exhibited nearly constant performances of fine arts. Each fair featured a music hall that provided frequent concerts or incidental music. Events associated with the exposition in the cities and on the grounds, such as parades and meetings, augmented the performances found at the fair. There is as of yet no study dedicated to these associated entertainments, but they were nearly constant.[77] For example, just outside of the Philadelphia Exhibition gates (but

[77] See Centennial Board of Finance, *Visitor's Guide*, 7-9 for a program of special events and parades at the Centennial, and Rand, McNally, and Co., *A Week at the Fair* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1893), 14-15 , which has a list of congresses

witnessed by people perched on the top of fair buildings) was a "Centennial Tournament," in which fifteen knights representing fourteen states rode across a course to try to pass their six-foot long spears into small metal rings.[78] One of the most publicized events in New Orleans just after the closing of the exposition was the "International and Inter-State Competitive Drill between representatives of the citizen soldiery of the World at New Orleans," which had been intended for the opening but was delayed due to lack of funds. From 12 to 15 May there were nearly constant concerts by military bands, one as large as 110 pieces, and publicly displayed drills, which were evaluated by a panel of military judges.[79] On the Chicago Midway, there were regular parades and staged events like wedding processions, while states celebrated special days at regular intervals throughout the run of the exposition.[80] In Chicago, one of the most representative

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and conferences during the Columbian Exposition. James Burkhart Gilbert, *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009), looks at congresses and related events as part of fairgoer experience at the 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

[78] J.S. Ingram, *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1876), 634-35. These were the thirteen original states, one representing the Union, and one representing the Centennial. Delaware won.

[79] Official Programme of the New Orleans Exposition Drill, World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Collection, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[80] In one particularly interesting event, all Midway concessions were invited to participate in the parade for Illinois Day at the Fair. Two diarists that I have consulted were present, each noting the immense crowds across the grounds. Gookin was particularly excited to see the "parade of the strange people of the 'Plaisance.'" See Elizabeth A. Gookin, "Diary," 24 August 1893, Newberry Library, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Gookin Family Papers. Adelaide Evenden and her party had brought camp stools to watch from in front of the Women's Building. She did not remark on the main celebration itself, but was most impressed by the parade of concessions from the Midway: "The procession of foreigners from Midway Plaisance went past containing a motley crowd Turks, Bedouins, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, South Sea Islanders Samoans, Dahomayans, Nubians, Egyptians, Arabs, Irish, Laplanders etc etc. Some rode donkeys, some horses, others camels and many walked. It was a very

examples of the closeness of the commercial and the non-commercial, elite art is featured in what has been termed the "Great Chicago Piano War."

Leading up to the opening of the Columbian Exposition, board officials made a seemingly insignificant decision in creating rules for how piano exhibitors would be judged for official world's fair medals that led to a public scandal and tension between Chicago and New York businesses. Rather than use a panel of qualified judges to award the medals, as was the custom, the exposition decided that the medals would be awarded by a sole judge, Dr. Florence Ziegfeld, head of the Chicago Musical College. Fearing that his judgment would be prejudiced, Eastern exhibitors, such as industry leaders Steinway and Chickering, refused to exhibit their pianos at the exposition.[81] Insults were publicly traded between New York and Chicago, resulting in Chicago manufacturers joining together as a body, the "Loyal Exhibitors," to pressure the exposition board to ban all non-exhibiting (i.e. East coast) pianos from the daily recitals and symphonic concerts in either of the exposition's two concert halls. Caught up in this was pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski, one of the most popular performers of his day, then in his second season in the United States. Paderewski had been asked to play a concert on opening day of the exposition, to which he agreed, putting off a trip to Europe. At a time when the country was in the grips of "Paddymania," Paderewski's insistence that he would play his usual Steinway caused local outrage in Chicago. The Loyal Exhibitors protested, and for a

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amusing sight." See Adelaide L. Evenden, Diary 1890-1895, Manuscript Collection, Chicago History Museum, 24 August 1893.

[81] The reaction of Eastern exhibitors was not without merit. W.W. Kimball, head of one of the largest piano manufacturers in Chicago, was on the board of Ziegfeld's school.

while, won concessions from the board, but in the end, Paderewski played a Steinway, although to resounding disapproval from local voices.[82]

While Dr. Ziegfeld was caught up in the scandal judging pianos in the White City, he had intended to capitalize on the influx of visitors to the Exposition by offering a mix of classical music and variety performance at his newly opened Trocadero nightclub. With his venture failing, Ziegfeld gave his son, future impresario and *Follies* producer, Florenz Ziegfeld, the opportunity to recruit acts to revitalize the club's flagging audiences. Ziegfeld., Jr. scouted for talent and found what he wanted in Eugen Sandow, an Austrian bodybuilder who rose to fame in Europe by displaying his muscled physique and physical strength.[83] After purchasing Sandow's contract from Maurice Grau, Ziegfeld brought Sandow to Chicago to demonstrate his "muscle display performances" at the Trocadero during the exposition season.[84] Previously, Sandow's act had largely

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[82] See Paul Hume and Ruth Hume, "The Great Chicago Piano War," *American Heritage Magazine* 21, no.6 (October 1970): 16-21 for an overview of the events. See also "Not to Show Pianos: Steinway & Co. Withdraw Their Application for Space," *Chicago Tribune*, 12 February 1893, 7; "Loyal to the Fair: Chicago Music Trade Association Pledges its Support," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 February 1893, 1; "His Piano is Barred: Why Paderewski May Not Play at World's Fair Concerts," *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1893, 1; "That Piano Trouble: National Commission Now Orders It Investigated," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 27 April 1893, 1; "All Sides are Heard: Factions in the World's Fair Music Fight Speak Out," *Chicago Tribune*, 14 May 1893, 3. Tensions did not apparently die down after the event, with reports of bribery in the awarding of medals, see "Alleged Bribery at the Fair: More Trouble Among Piano Manufactures," *New York Times*, 24 August 1893, 5. Interestingly, Paderewski's piano was placed in the main Steinway showroom in Chicago, where it reportedly drew crowds daily.

[83] For an overview of Sandow's career, see David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994). On his career with Ziegfeld in particular, see Josh Buck, "Sandow: No Folly with Ziegfeld's First Glorification," *Iron Game History* 5, no. 1 (May 1998): 29-33. Arnold Schwarzenegger, another Austrian bodybuilder who found celebrity in the United States, has often cited Sandow as his inspiration.

[84] Grau, who had managed international stars such as Tommaso Salvini, was himself from a theatrical family. His father, Jacob Grau, had brought Ristori over for her

consisted of lifting barbells and showing his muscles. Ziegfeld stripped Sandow from a leotard to small shorts and adding feats such as Sandow breaking out of chains. Although the act is reminiscent of dime museums, Sandow was not purely for a lowbrow audience. On opening night, following the performance, Ziegfeld offered that if anyone would donate three hundred dollars to charity, they could go backstage and feel Sandow's muscles in private. Among the volunteers was the extremely respectable Mrs. George Pullman, wife of the railroad magnate, and Mrs. Potter Palmer, administrator of the Women's Building.[85]

Sandow would go on to publish his own bodybuilding magazine and liken himself to Heracles, often appearing in a lion skin and assuming poses of nude classical statues, only covered in a fig leaf (images of which circulated widely).[86] The erotics of Sandow's performance are evident in a short film made with Edison studios in 1894, which depicts him scantily-clad, engaging in a variety of poses to show off his toned physique.[87] While society women were delightedly fondling Sandow's muscles in the theatre, another "abdominal performance" was gaining notoriety in the Chicago Midway, the *danse du ventre*, otherwise known as the "hootchy-coochy" or "belly dance." The "cooch dance," which became the most-remembered and mythologized scandal of the exposition, and,

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first tour and catapulted her into stardom. See Marvin Carlson, *The Italian Shakespearians: Performances by Ristori, Salvini, and Rossi in England and America* (Washington, DC: Folger Books, 1985), for more information on the Grau's.

[85] Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*, 60.

[86] See Bryan E. Burns, "Classicizing Bodies in the Male Photographic Tradition," in *Companion to Classical Receptions*, edited by Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011): 440-51.

[87] A video is available online via the Library of Congress, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWM2ixqua3Y.

possibly, of the period, was a popular performance that threatened to completely unseat the high/low, educated/amusement dyads constructed by fair officials.

### Dismantling the *Danse*

The Midway Plaisance was originally put under the direction of Frederick Ward Putnam, curator of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography and Harvard University. Although it was intended to be an ethnographic adjunct to Department "M," the exposition board ceded control over the Midway to entrepreneur Sol Bloom when it was obvious that Putnam could not manage both a scientific museum and entertainment district. Bloom, who had already contracted the 1889 Paris exposition's Algerian Village for a tour of the United States, transformed the ethnological Midway into a mixed zone of entertainments and curiosities.[88] On a given day of the exposition, one could ride in a captive balloon or a Ferris wheel car, watch a beauty pageant, a wild animal show, as well as attend performances in the Turkish, Algerian, Chinese, and Javanese theatres.[89] Theatres in the Midway have received scant attention from scholars, but offer a unique way to study how fair officials envisioned indigenous performance.[90] While theatres were tightly regulated with licenses and contracts, fairgoers displayed an avid appetite for

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[88] Bloom was also a composer and author. He published a guidebook on the exposition and, according to his autobiography, wrote the original music for the *Danse du Ventre*. Bloom went on to move to New York, which he represented in Congress from 1922-1949. He supposedly made significant contributions to the drafting of the United Nations' charter.

[89] This is only a sample of the entertainment available on the Midway, which also included moving pictures, and magic tricks, such as those offered by nineteen year-old Harry Houdini, who played in the fair for a month before moving "up" to Kohl and Middleton's Dime Museum in Chicago.

[90] The best survey of Midway theatres is Gertrude M. Scott, "*Village Performance:* Villages at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, 1893" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1991).

shows and dances that exhibited both scientific and sensationalistic qualities, especially the *danse du ventre*.

Bloom brought in concessions like the "Street in Cairo," which he had contracted to tour after seeing it at the 1889 Paris *Exposition Universelle*. This replica of a "typical" Cairo city street included a café, a restaurant, donkey rides, a mosque, a reconstruction of an ancient temple, workshops, street performers, and the "Egyptian Theatre," which demonstrated various dances, including the now-infamous *danse du ventre*. As the most popular ethnographic exhibit in Chicago, the Street in Cairo is often exclusively associated with the *danse*; however, versions of the *danse du ventre* could be found in nearly every theatre on the Midway.[91] Despite the controversy that erupted during the fair, evidence suggests that the Egyptian Theatre's version was barely affected, much less censured. Reportage from the time is fairly difficult to parse, and we may not be able to pinpoint what kind of version was played in what theatre, but it is likely that the scandal concerning the *danse* originated in the Iranian exhibit, the Persian Palace of Eros, where French music hall dancers performed for a largely male clientele in an upstairs café.[92]

In "Danse du Ventre: A Fresh Appraisal," Leona Wood and Anthony Shay trace an authentic origin for the dance to Morocco, from which it spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa in different versions before being orientalized in Western culture.[93]

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[91] Popular in Paris, the *danse* had launched a craze throughout Paris in 1889, making its way on to the stage in Sarah Bernhardt's production of Victorien Sardou's blockbuster *Cleopatra*, with dancers introducing a banquet in Cleopatra's court. See "Bernhardt's New Role: The Triumph She Had in Sardou's 'Cleopatra,'" *New York Times*, 9 November 1890.

[92] See Scott, "Village Performance," 192. See also Hamid Akbari and Azar Khounani, *Iranians in Chicagoland* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 9, 16.

[93] Leona Wood and Anthony Shay, "Danse du Ventre: A Fresh Appraisal," *Dance Research Journal* 8, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1976): 18.

The dance, which had many variations across the Arab world, was an improvisational form, relying largely on the movement of abdominal muscles in ways that could range from being decorative to libidinous. Evidence suggests that fair officials viewed the *danse* as an authentic ethnographic demonstration. Although many scholars err in locating the dance's entry point in America at the Midway, it had, in fact, been circulating since at least the late 1870s.[94] At the Philadelphia Centennial, dancers in the Tunisian Café presented the *danse* as a "Scarf Dance" (**Figure 33**), to no controversy.[95] By 1893, the *danse* was a known aspect of eastern orientalized cultures and, despite the apparent antipathy that the exposition board would later feel towards the dance, the contracts with Midway concession stipulate theatres like that in the Street in Cairo were required to perform it.[96] On the Midway, the *danse* did not occupy the whole bill of any theatre, but contributed to a regular repertory of performances. For example, the Turkish

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[94] For example, Anne Rasmussen, "'An Evening in the Orient': The Middle Eastern Nightclub in America," in *Belly Dance: Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy*, edited by Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers 2005), 177, refers to the Columbian Exposition as the place of the dance's "premier performance."

[95] *Frank Leslie's Historical Register*, 119. In contrast to segregated Midway, the Tunisian Café was just north of Machinery Hall across Fountain Avenue, one of the main streets of the exposition.

[96] "Street in Cairo," *Concession Agreements*, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum. The contract gave the Street in Cairo "the exclusive right to produce the Egyptian dance, commonly known as the 'danse du ventre,' Egyptian snake charmers, Egyptian fortune tellers, Egyptian conjurers, and Egyptian musical and theatrical performances, and exhibit Egyptian collections and sell photographs, pictures and paintings of Egyptian scenes and subjects, and also to produce in said street, daily, a Wedding Procession and Mouled [celebration of Mohammed's birthday]" (2). Although the rights to the danse were hardly exclusive to the Cairo exhibit, it appears to have been required by the board: "The said party of the second part agrees and promises that one of the features of the entertainment shall be the 'danse du ventre' performed by the Egyptian dancing girls, and that their manner of dress and apparel shall be of a nature and character approved by the said party of the first part" (4).

theatre had a magician, wrestling, mock battles, juggling, as well as a number of dances, only one of which was the *danse du ventre*.[97]

Over time, the performance of the *danse* has largely been attributed to one dancer, Farida Mazar, also known as “Little Egypt,” performing in the Egyptian Theatre; however, historians cannot say for sure whether such a person even existed at the time of the exposition. Dance scholar Donna Carlton reported that after looking through microfilm, newspapers, photographs, souvenirs, and other world’s fair records, she found no contemporary references for the dancer’s presence in Chicago.[98] Surveying the photographic record of dancers at each concession on the Midway, Scott finds that the woman depicted in the picture was not at any of the main theatres, but, if she was present at all, was possibly found in a smaller venue on the Midway like the Eiffel Tower Café. Most likely, “Little Egypt” was a stage name used to advertise the dance when it traveled to New York in 1894.[99]

The *danse* and its dancers have taken on a mythic stature representing the exotic and erotic. In fact, the identity of many dancers on the Midway was often fluid, as most were not at all from their supposed native cities. As far back as the Centennial, it had been repeatedly rumored that the Turks and North Africans at the exposition were in fact Germans.[100] In Chicago, one wonders if the majority of dancers were in fact from the

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[97] For an account of a performance that goes wrong, with a bystander being struck by a sword demonstration, see “Pierced by a Turkish Blade,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 October 1893, 2.

[98] Donna Carlton, *Looking For Little Egypt* (Bloomington, IN: IDD Books, 1994), 1-2.

[99] Scott, “Village Performance,” 208-9.

[100] Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the author noted that “it has been doubted that the trousered and turbanned attendants [at the Turkish Café] were genuine Turks.” See “Characteristics of the International Fair,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1876, 732.

Middle East or Africa at all. The Newberry Library in Chicago has the contract and performance review of Christina Olson, a twelve-year old Chicago ballet student who was hired to perform "native" dances at the Turkish theatre.[101] Although there is no particular dance mentioned in her contract or review, it is entirely possible that she performed the *danse*, as it was often performed by young girls. It does not appear that spectators cared very much about the authenticity of the dancers. The *Magic City*, a photographic souvenir book for the exposition, gives an example of a dancer, an "Odalisque from the Seraglio," with a caption that read, "she was heralded by the Algerian Concessionaire as an Odalisque, fresh from the Seraglio, and the Sultan's favorite. This was rhetorical, even if not true, so she was accepted as a beauty and invested with a mystery that made her a very interesting personage."[102] If the caption-writer is expressing a common perception at the fair, it is clear that the dancer's identity was hardly important, but audiences were interested to see the dances as a narrative about life in the east.

In providing an overview of published responses to the *danse*, Scott notes that reception was split: many found the dance admirable, while others found it revolting.[103] At the Algerian Theatre, Teresa Dean found the audience reaction to the "full blast" dancers as interesting as the performance, observing that while the dancers' "gyrations are not exactly in accordance with our ideas of what is most graceful and refines," the

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[101] Scott, "Village Performance," 188; Teresa Dean, *White City Chips* (Chicago: Warren Publishing Company, 1895), 156.

[102] James W. Buell, *Magic City: A Massive Portfolio of Original Photographic Views of the Great World's Fair and its Treasures of Art, Including a Vivid Representation of the Famous Midway Plaisance* (St. Louis, MO: Historical Publishing Company, 1894), unpaginated.

[103] Scott, "Village Performance," 188.

audience "cannot understand whether they ought to be shocked or entertained."[104] Despite approval or disapproval, it was a massive success. In the caption for the photograph, "A Performance in the Egyptian Theatre," the writer for *Magic City* condemns the *danse* but acknowledges its allure:

> An attraction which usually entertained fair-sized audiences continuously from 10am until 10pm…The dance [sic] du ventre…is a suggestively lascivious contorting of the abdominal muscles, which is extremely ungraceful and almost shockingly disgusting. Curiosity prompted many to view the performance, but very few remained more than five minutes before this was fully satisfied.[105]

This mixed response did not escalate into controversy until the National Association of Dancing Masters of America publicly raised objections to the dance found in the Algerian Theatre, finding it "depraved," "immoral," and a modified "orgy."[106] The Association, in town for its annual meeting, brought the dance to wider attention. Scott rightly singles out the fact that their attacks were motivated less by moral sensibilities than by an attempt to endow their own association with legitimacy and heighten the perception of dance as a fine art.[107] In short, they did not want to be associated with the same profession as the women in the Plaisance and so campaigned to have it shut down. Following their complaint, local clergy raised their voices in favor of regulating Midway dances. Supporters of the fair as a civilizing institution worried that if fairgoers preferred the Midway, they were electing to spend time with savage cultures over civilized ones, yet, the exposition board knew that the Midway concessions were incredibly profitable,

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[104] Dean, "White City Chips," 9. Andrew Burgess, "The World's Fair 1893: a Partial Review of the Columbian Exhibition," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, 236, noted that the Algerian style of dress, or lack thereof, was "somewhat revolting generally."

[105] Buell, *Magic City*.

[106] "Banned by Dancing Masters," *New York Times*, 22 July 1893, 1.

[107] Scott, "Village Performance," 196ff.

and, perhaps, provided authentic representations of foreign cultures. Audiences in the theatres that showed the *danse* were not solely from the working class, but were drawn from all types of fairgoer, regardless of class, race, or gender. The people who were protesting Steinways in the fair's music halls were the same ones watching—and appreciating—the *danse*. Without getting directly involved, the exposition first turned over the matter to the Board of Lady Managers.

Upon investigating the *danse*, the Board of Lady Managers had what one journalist called a "sudden spasm of morality" and called for it to be stopped; however, in private they went to the theatre, enjoyed it, and came out denouncing the impropriety of the dance.[108] One Midway manager complained about the Lady Managers that:

> If my place is indecent, why do these Lady Managers come here in parties one, two, three—yes, six times—and sit sometimes three hours to see my girls dance?...They stand on tip-toe to see every motion of my lovely dancers. They clap their hands. They laugh and look sly at one another. They do. Then they go out, and when they get to the entrance of my theatre they put into their looks disgust and outraged modesty. They do.[109]

Although Debbas may be overstating his case, Mrs. Potter Palmer, head of the Board of Lady Managers, had reportedly claimed that everyone had been there, until she had to retract the statement.[110]

Teresa Dean, writing for the *Daily Inter Ocean*, went against the grain, observing that the reason behind the controversy was not morality, but culture, as she reflected that "the American idea is not quite up to the science of seeing the flesh dance a jig—hence

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[108] "Want Midway Dances Stopped," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 August 1893, 1.

[109] "Mr. Debbas and the Lady Managers," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 August 1893, 4.

[110] "Mrs. Palmer Misrepresented," *New York Times*, 6 December 1893, 3. This is the same Mrs. Palmer who had paid three hundred dollars to fondle Sandow's muscles in private.

the great cry against some of the Midway Plaisance theatres." Echoing Palmer's retracted statement, she gives out what was clearly the case: "there's a great fuss, but everybody goes just the same. As one of another party of women said as we took our seats in the "Cairo" theatre: "We all come, sooner or later."[111]

Regardless of the reasons behind the controversy, the Exposition Board commissioned an investigation of the dances on the Midway and closed the Persian Theatre upon finding that its contract did not mention the *danse*. Several days later, the concession obtained a permit and reopened. The effects of the controversy and the notoriousness of the dance had a predictable feature: it increased traffic to the Midway, especially to see the now-infamous dances. According to Dean, the barker in front of the Persian Palace incorporated the scandal into his routine, shouting: "Come right in. This is the theater that was closed because the girls were all arrested. This is the Persian theatre where the dancing was stopped."[112] Scott notes that the *danse* was suddenly to be found across the Plaisance, including such unlikely places as in front of the diorama of the destruction of Pompeii.[113]

The *World's Fair Puck*, "Human Natur'" image (**Figure 22**) is a useful gauge of the dance's popular appeal on the Midway. In the top right, a Turk attempts to first lure fairgoers by showing a "moral show" based on the bible, but winds up with no income. When he adjusts the bill, advertising shows displaying "Life in a Harem!" along with a depiction of a scantily clad woman, fairgoers (here men of all types) are climbing over each other to get inside. While the officials publicly discussed all sights within the

[111] Teresa Dean, "Profit in Chairs," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 21 June 1893, 6.
[112] Dean, "White City Chips," 302.
[113] Scott, "Village Performance," 200.

exposition as being a "moral show," the Midway theatre's eastern dances showed clearly what had been evident as early as the 1876 Shantyville: that fairgoers' desires to consume cultural performances far outpaced that to regulate cultural meaning. To meet fairgoers' demands for entertainment, theatres were quick to cater to popular taste, and expositions were more than willing to disrupt their own ideological discourse.

**Conclusion**

Exposition officials intended the physical walls separating fairs and the outside world to take on a symbolic dimension. To them, fairs were autonomous zones of intellectual and moral instruction; however, fair borders could not escape the influence of the broader theatrical culture of the host cities. During the Centennial Exhibition, a fairgoer would find performative entertainments in themed restaurants, simulated environments, and working displays from looms to the model kindergarten. The 1884-1885 New Orleans Exposition staged its fakirs in the Main Hall as well as invited panoramas and entertainments to reside just outside the fair gates. In 1893, there were entertainments related to the exposition in all quarters of the city, from sightseeing to theatre to the Wild West. Gradually, the theatres of host cities responded by producing fair-themed entertainments with exotic displays, further blurring the line between what was inside and what was outside of the exposition. In Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Chicago, fairgoers pursued concerts, zoos, and heritage sights in the host cities with a zeal nearly equal to their desire to see expositions. The next chapter will look closer at these patterns and trends to examine fairgoer itineraries and geographies of each exposition. It will look at key aspects of the social world of expositions such as identity

and order, as well as looking at how fairgoers performed their roles tourists. As fairgoers were self-consciously performing the role of tourist, the final chapter will examine how their actions engaged and revised official prompts and spaces.

## 4.
## Performing and Representing Fairgoers: Official Texts and Lived Experiences

### Space and Performance

While chapter one established how official sources such as guidebooks prompted fairgoers to tour the fairs in "civilized" ways, this chapter focuses on the tensions between official discourse and fairgoer practice, what Michel De Certeau likened to the "strategies" of institutional forces versus the "tactics" of individuals' everyday actions.[1] Rather than be reduced to the role of "consumer," De Certeau's analysis of individual activity shows how consuming is also "producing." For example, in a famous chapter on city walking, De Certeau argues that the street walker chooses routes, shortcuts, and personalizes ways of moving through the city, often moving against the expectations of urban planners.[2] Although I do not read every tactic as an act of resistance, this chapter follows De Certeau's lead by drawing on recent work in cultural geography that looks at how the bodily acts of people invest space with meaning. By foregrounding the role of fairgoing in shaping meaning, I liken tourism to performance. Indeed, the "performative turn" in geography opens up numerous possibilities to investigate how ordinary visitors interacted with the discourse-laden space of fairs.

Geographers Peter Dirksmeier and Ilse Helbrecht claim that individual practice is vital to the study of social constructions of space. Their work puts performance at the intersection of lived experience and discourse, as an individual's "action is not merely to be considered practical and script following" but also "takes on a symbolic, public

[1] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
[2] Ibid., 97-102.

dimension."[3] In other words, fairgoing is an embodied practice where the visitor is an actor who constantly negotiates the symbolic scripts of a space through his or her physical activity. Performance becomes "a reflection of practice and reformulation," as the performer simultaneously engages the material and discursive elements of a space. An individual's practice of space is both personal and social, capable of revising or affirming larger narratives inherent in that space. Fairs summoned what Edward Said termed "imaginative geographies" on a powerful scale: they were artificial landscapes organized around ideas of American superiority, conflating the contemporary with classical presences that evoked dream-like spaces of beauty and technology.[4] Spaces such as the White City's Grand Basin presented powerful theories of history and civilization (See **Figure 17**). By observing the so-called proper sights, a rational, orderly spectator would confirm those theories. Mary Antisdel, who was part of a group of women that Mrs. Palmer, head of the Board of Lady Managers, asked to entertain foreign visitors, wrote in her notebook a description of the Court of Honor that clearly expresses the confluence between architecture, history and evolution at the exposition that organizers hoped would be read by the public:

> As you go in to the building, you see nothing but this huge beautifully decorated dome…The lower part of the building is decorated with scenes showing main his primitive conditions and surroundings, higher up we see him as he gave control over the forces of nature by machinery and the like and the dome soaring above

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[3] Peter Dirksmeier and Ilse Helbrecht, "Time, Non-representational Theory and the 'Performative Turn'—Towards a New Methodology in Qualitative Social Research," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 2 (May 2008). <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/385>.

[4] See Steven Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship" *Social and Cultural Geography* 5, no. 3 (September 2004): 347-55.

> all, gives the idea of aspiration and sublimity, the whole suggesting man in his threefold parts, body, intellect and soul.[5]

However, fairgoers did not always conform to such inspiring interpretations. When visitors read different meanings in the space or acted in divergent ways, these lofty narratives were revised. This chapter will look for such patterns of deviation between official scripts and fairgoer practice, suggesting that expositions histories should incorporate individual agency into the construction of these cultural events.

**Dwyer and Alderman's Model of Space, Revisited**

In chapter one, I examined how fair officials designed spaces as texts that embodied official messages of Western superiority. In this chapter, I will consider the second and third aspects of Dwyer and Alderman's spatial model: space as arena and as performance. In space and an "arena," social groups battle over their representations within a particular space. Such struggle for visibility and control over representation has historically been key to wider struggles over the nature of history and identity, as "historical representation is not only a product of social power but also a tool or resource for achieving it."[6] This chapter provides an overview of how fair boards allocated buildings to different ethnic groups, how big their pavilions were, and how they were represented inside grand halls. By looking at how marginalized groups fought for representation, and how fairgoers performed within expositions, this chapter argues that

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[5] Mary F. Antisdel Notebook, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, 16. Mary's father, Albert Antisdel, was the daughter of the Vice President and General Manager of American Express, the main carrier of express cargo from New York to Chicago. See Peter Z. Grossman, *American Express: The People Who Built the Great Financial Empire* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1987), 101-2 for Amexco's profits in the exposition.

[6] Antisdel, Notebook, 16.

fairs mapped broader tensions and struggles in the society rather than served as monolithic arguments.

## Arenas of Representation

Fairs were epoch-making events, and countries, manufacturers, and ethnic groups were eager to display their culture, products, or history. To be included in the official space and its resulting literature was both symbolic and practical: it equaled having a voice in the national conversation, and it had implications for who visited and worked at the fairs. Diaries, letters, and reports consistently show that fairgoers sought out buildings that they identified with, especially along lines of race, geography, gender, and occupation.[7] From as early as the planning stage, buildings and pavilions at expositions were staging grounds for battles over identity and agency to claim a share of American progress and civilization.

This section provides an overview of contests over representation in buildings within the fair sites between officials and women and African-Americans, two groups whose outspoken advocates for equal rights turned to exposition buildings as key sites confirming their belonging to the American public.[8]

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[7] See Mabel O. Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 16. A women's building, for example, would be staffed and run by women, which would increase the female presence in the fair and related share in the national symbolic stage.

[8] Although there were pavilions from countries around the world, I focus on women and African-Americans as their battles were conducted more fully in the public sphere. There is growing literature on non-Western exhibits and visitors to the expositions that merits further study. See, for example, "Hamid Akbari and Azar Khounani, *Iranians in Chicagoland* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005); Jennifer Pitman, "China's Presence at the Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 10, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2002-2003): 35-73; Umar F. Abd-Allah, *A*

*The Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition*

The Centennial Exhibition claimed the first Women's Building at a world's fair; however, any group of women had to create a space of their own through official channels and direct action. According to Mary Francis Cordato, in the oft-cited "Towards a New Century Women and the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876," the Women's Building played a key role in advocating for gender equality; however, the story of its planning was one of struggle and uncertainty.[9] Plans for a Women's display had auspicious beginnings: in 1873, the all-male Centennial Board of Finance appointed a Women's Centennial Executive Committee. Headed by Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, a great granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin, the Committee was largely responsible for raising funds for the Centennial at large, a task that they excelled at, contributing nearly $95,000.[10] In exchange, women were to get a pavilion in the main building. In June 1875, the Women's Committee was informed that space in the main building had already been allocated and the Committee would have to raise funds to pay for their own building if they wanted exhibit space.[11] Despite this unexpected setback, the Women's Committee

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*Muslim in Victorian America : The Life of Alexander Russell Webb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). When applicable, I have made use of these visitors, but for the sake of space, I am being selective towards two prominent groups.

[9] Mary Francis Cordato, "Towards a New Century: Women and the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (1983): 114.

[10] Gillespie was also the daughter of a former Secretary of the Treasury, William Duane, whose clashes with President Andrew Jackson led him to being removed from office after nearly four months. On the fundraising, see Denise E. Pilato, *The Retrieval of a Legacy: Nineteenth-Century American Women Inventors* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 145.

[11] Cordato, "Towards a New Century," 116-17.

raised more than $30,000, enough to ensure adequate space to house displays of art, inventions, history, and handicrafts of women's work.[12]

The exhibits of the Women's Pavilion were designed to contradict "the notion of women as submissive, nurturing, and completely non-productive" members of society and place them "in the mainstream of late nineteenth-century American progress."[13] Although a man designed the structure, all of the exhibits were produced by women, ranging from needlework to inventions such as a skirt supporters for corsets, a life raft for steamboats, and farming equipment.[14] Here, the Women's Committee advocated for an equal but separate status. In an act that demonstrated women's position, the Empress of Brazil officially opened the Pavilion by starting its six-horsepower engine, which ran a small collection of looms, sewing machines, and a printing press, just as the Emperor had opened the fair by turning on the massive Corliss Engine.[15]

During the fair, the steam engines provided an opportunity for a popular performance. Clad in Sunday dress, engineer Emma Allison shocked, delighted, and surprised visitors by operating the steam room by herself.[16] Just as the Women's

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[12] Shaped like a cross with two main halls measuring 208 x 208 feet, the building covered just over an acre. Perhaps displaying the women's role in the Centennial's lack of political commitment, "Women's Day" was scheduled to coincide with Election Day, November 7, with the thought that women could celebrate while the men were away at the polls.

[13] Cordato, *Towards a New Century*, 118, 124. See also Pilato, "Retrieval of a Legacy," 142.

[14] See Autumn Stanley, *Mothers and Daughters of Invention: Notes for a Revised History of Technology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

[15] At the time that the Empress dedicated the Women's Pavilion, the Emperor was separately touring the grounds.

[16] Of her appearance, the *Philadelphia Times* notes that "she is by no means a soot-begrimed and oil-covered Amazon, but on the contrary, of neat and cleanly appearance and a highly educated and refined young lady. Of the brunette type, medium height, well-formed, strong and active, possessing a gentle disposition...Her dress is neat,

Committee advocated that women could soften the hardness of the modern struggle for survival, so could Allison, a polite, respectable figure, keep what one newspaper referred to as "her iron pet" working and clean, while disparaging male engineers for having untidy steam rooms. While some expressed dismay that a woman could do such work, Allison reportedly replied that it was easier than being a nursemaid and less tiring than bending over a stove.[17] Although one critic feared that she would blow the building to atoms because she would have "lost herself in some interesting novel when she ought to have been watching the steam gauge," her demonstration was an often-commented on success.[18]

Although the Women's Committee was eager to show women as productive members of society, it shied away from issuing radical positions such as suffrage. Instead, their exhibits overwhelmingly represented women in the domestic sphere.[19] The Pavilion printed its own eight-page weekly newspaper, *The New Century*, and several

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and of grayish linen, prettily braided in black." "The Show Ledger: A Woman in an Engineer's Role," *Philadelphia Times*, 2 June 1876. It is unclear whether or not Allison received formal training as an engineer, but many sources describe her as one.

[17] "The Centennial Exposition: The Woman's Pavilion," *Scientific American*, 24 June 1876, 401.

[18] "What One Woman Is Doing," *The New Century for Woman*, 3 June 1876, 26. For examples of positive reviews, see "The Great Exhibition: What Women Have Done for It," *New York Times*, 4 June 1876, 1, and "The Centennial Exhibition: The Woman's Pavilion," *Manufacturer and Builder*, July 1876, 148. After the exhibition, Allison reportedly left to found a literary magazine in San Francisco. Although that does not seem to have succeeded, a San Francisco correspondent with the same name gained some fame when she went for a ride in a hot air balloon with a Professor Colgrove on 4 July 1879. Upon ascent, Colgrove panicked and began hurling sandbags from the balloon, making it rise higher, which only distressed the poor man further, causing him to hurl more weight from the balloon. Finally, when he realized letting air from the balloon would cause it to sink, he let it all out in one go and the pair crashed into the bay with minor injuries and a lot of press. Inexplicably, Colgrove tried again in October to ascend, this time in gale-force winds. He and the manager of Woodward's Gardens both died in the crash.

[19] Cordato, *Towards a New Century*, 124.

pamphlets, but none advocated suffrage nor did the space allow for direct representation of suffragette organizations, which had to open parlors in Philadelphia to find space for discussing radical platforms.[20] The Women's Committee did not allow black women exhibiting space, despite their having worked to raise money for the building's construction. Furthermore, the Women's Committee denied Susan B. Anthony and her cohort from inclusion in the exposition's official centennial celebrations on July 4, 1876. At the ceremony, after the Declaration of Independence was read, Anthony occupied the stage and read the "Declaration of Rights for Women" while activists handed out copies of the document.

Unlike women, black male Americans were enfranchised, but their struggles for representation during the period were more desperate. Black leaders advocated for space in congress and in print, but were unable to secure a separate pavilion or enclosure on the grounds.[21] Despite the fact that the black workforce in Philadelphia faced seventy percent unemployment, black Americans were largely excluded from the work force that built the exhibition.[22] Denied official representation, one of the most visible battles over

[20] More radical periodicals, such as *Women's Journal*, criticized the Pavilion's focus on domesticity, see Pilato, "Retrieval of a Legacy," 152-53.

[21] Philip S. Foner, "Black Participation in the Centennial of 1876," *Phylon* 39, no. 4 (1978): 284-85.

[22] Wilson, *Negro Building*, 27-28. Eventually, some black workers were employed as waiters and messengers in the Memorial Hall. Black women were invited to be on a subcommittee of the Women's Committee, but only to raise funds. See Foner, "Black Participation," 287-88. As a matter of fact, Frederick Douglass, who was invited to sit at the podium for opening ceremonies was initially barred by police officers. See "No Nigger Need Apply," *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 May 1876, 2, for a scathing critique of the racism of the exhibition's policies. For the work of African-American artists, and Edmonia Lewis in particular, see Joy Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), and Charmaine Nelson, *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century*

representation of African-American history was in the work of an Austrian-Italian sculptor, Francesco Pezzicar, whose bronze "Abolition of Slavery in the United States," also known as "The Freed Slave," drew praise and derision. Exhibited in Memorial Hall, the piece depicted a former slave holding the Emancipation Proclamation aloft and broken chains at his feet. Its bold display shocked some critics. Writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*, William Dean Howells commented that the statue depicted "a most offensively Frenchy negro, who has broken his chain, and spreading both his arms and legs abroad is rioting in a declamation of something (I should say) from Victor Hugo; one longs to clap him back into hopeless bondage."[23] David Bailey, author of *Eastward Ho!*, a colloquial account of the exposition, described it as tastelessly representing "a very ugly negro, with his hands, from which the manacles have just fallen, thrown above his head, seeming to be in great exultation."[24] Elsewhere in the art building, Bailey gives a sense of what would commonly be thought of as an appropriate depiction of emancipation, replete with decorous allegorical triumphal figures: "the best painting we saw from Brazil, was on exhibition at the Campbell Press Building, west of Machinery Hall. It is a work in commemoration of 'The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil.' In the background are two

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*America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). At the time, Philadelphia had the largest urban popular of black Americans outside of the South.

[23] William Dean Howells, "A Sennight at the Centennial," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1876, 93.

[24] David Bailey, *Eastward Ho! Or Leaves from the Diary of a Centennial Pilgrim* (Highland Country, OH: David Bailey, 1877). Bailey goes on to relate a story of how the actor John T. Raymond, known for playing Colonel Sellers in Mark Twain's stage version of *The Gilded Age*, "was standing near this statue one day, when a countryman came up and asked him what it was. "The Greek Slave," said he without hesitation. "Is that so?" said the man. "Well now, I heerd that was purty; but I swan, I don't see that it is; but then it's a fact, it do look more nateral like than them marble cuttins they have around here." The man was satisfied. If that was the Greek Slave, which everybody thinks so pretty, it must be pretty" (48).

figures, representing Justice and Charity." In the painting, Justice is sheathing her sword upon completion of her work and Charity is placing money in the hands of a meek freed slave.[25]

There exist no statistics of how many people from any class or ethnic group visited the exposition. Despite this lack of representation and negative press, references in the press and in visitors' account suggest that many black Americans visited the fair. There was at least a presence sizable enough that some authors turned to ridiculing black visitors. Sol Eytinge, a contributor to *Harper's Weekly's* popular "Blackville" sketches depict black visitors as the epitome of bad spectators (**Figure 34**).[26] In a similar vein to the country folk in "Lost in Wonder" (**Figure 5**), this family treats the exposition—whose official mission is uplifting—as little more than a party. In *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*, Joshua Brown draws attention to an engraving of Pezzicar's sculpture and its black visitors (**Figure 35**). Contrasted to the Eytinge image, this wood engraving is notable in that it depicts black fairgoers as rational, educated individuals and families, much like the informed fairgoer in "Lost in Wonder" from chapter one. The men are pointing out details, and the women are showing the interested children. While many voices deride this painting, Leslie's image can be considered "powerful statement of dignity and equality" by showing that it is a legitimate item of cultural education, and is being used as such.[27]

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[25] Ibid., 55.

[26] See Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 82-83, for commentary on the "Blackville" and similar images. Such images would be constant representations during the exposition.

[27] Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, And the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 130.

*New Orleans Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition*

In the arena of representation New Orleans had an expanded Woman's section and the first "Colored Person's" pavilion.[28] As in Philadelphia, black women were not allowed representation in the Woman's Building; their contributions were reserved expressly for the Colored Person's exhibits. While the women's section was received well, it was marked by an early controversy, as the all-male board appointed Bostonian and "Battle Hymn of the Republic" author Julia Ward Howe as President of the Women's Department. Southern women were understandably skeptical of Howe's ability to represent New Orleans, especially after Howe appointed Northern associates to fill out the department's board. Rife with sectional confrontation, the women's department was marked by battles between New Orleans women, who felt unfairly marginalized, the male board, who wanted to show the "New South" as a place of reconciliation, and Howe, who seemed oblivious to local tensions.

In November 1884, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* bluntly noted that "the principal topic of conversation among the ladies of New Orleans for the past few weeks" had been Howe's appointment, of which "expressions of disappointment and disapproval are general and growing stronger" from local women.[29] Journalist Catherine Cole (real name Martha Field) openly criticized Exposition Secretary Richard Nixon for the decision. He replied that the board chose Howe because they needed a woman of national reputation, with executive ability, wealth, and whom all classes and sections of

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[28] The New Orleans exposition had fewer, but larger buildings. Both departments were pavilions or sections within the U.S. Government Building.

[29] "What the Ladies are Saying," *Daily Picayune*, 2 November 1884, 4.

the country respected. Cole, who called Howe "a writer of rather dull and prosy books," proclaimed that Southern women "feel that the reasons assigned therefore are unjust to the representative women of the South." Neverless, she promised that they would "be glad to vent their innate, inborn graciousness of hospitality upon her, and to honor her for all she is."[30] Despite such repeated declarations, relations between Howe and local women remained full of "broils and turmoils" throughout her tenure in the city.[31]

Opened in March, halfway through the fair's season, the Women's Pavilion, like its Philadelphia predecessor, exhibited women-created books, crafts, and inventions, largely of a domestic nature. Organized by states, its 710x40 square foot exhibit space was located on the West gallery of the U.S. Government Building, along with the Smithsonian, Patent Office, and Colored Person's exhibits.[32] Author Herbert Fairall claimed that here "woman shines resplendent," hailing its majesty.[33] Others were less impressed. Eugene Smalley, writing for the *Century Illustrated Magazine*, depicts the Pavilion as a useful place to relax, as "no great intellectual effort or physical exertion is needed…In fact, the mind is rather benumbed at the view of the patient labor expended to produce pretty effects."[34] In his judgment, the entire enterprise was poorly conceived.

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[30] "Woman's World and Work, " *Daily Picayune*, 2 November 1884, 7.

[31] See Miki Pfeffer, "An Enlarging Influence: Women of New Orleans, Julia Ward Howe, and the Women's Department at the Cotton Centennial Exposition, 1884-1885" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of New Orleans, 2011), 208-9, and especially 213-234, which details the tensions that Howe faced as she became embroiled in regional politics, exasperated by the exposition's continual financial difficulties. While she made many successful public speeches, locals criticized her leadership as arrogant, autocratic, and secretive, especially when appointing officials.

[32] This was almost half the space of the Philadelphia Women's Building.

[33] Herbert S. Fairall, *The World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition New Orleans, 1884-1885* (Iowa City: Republican Publishing Company, 1885), 361.

[34] Eugene V. Smalley, "In and Out of the New Orleans Exposition, Second Paper," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, June 1885, 188.

To Smalley, any "critical observer" would find that the Women's Department "is wholly and of necessity inadequate to present a view of the attainments of women in the industries and arts, and their share in carrying forward the world's civilization" by separating women's work from men's.[35]

The Colored Person's Exhibit was unique for being the first of its kind, but offered meager displays. Located on the North Gallery of the U.S. Government Building, its covered a mere four thousand square feet.[36] Housing agricultural and manufacturing products, along with a small selection of fine art, the exhibit emerged from an urban culture that can be considered ahead of its time in integrating black and white in the late-nineteenth-century South.[37] Despite being the first of its kind, the department was, as Mabel Wilson notes, "a small gesture of recognition" that ultimately did little to change white southerners' views of black participation in society, as its precedence did not aid African-American civic leaders in securing space for the 1887 Piedmont Exposition in Atlanta. Smalley expressed conventional skepticism when he declared that "it would be more correct to call it the Somewhat Colored Department" as the representatives that he noticed were rarely the "achievements of the pure-blooded negro."[38] Smalley invokes familiar racial logic with evolutionary theories, noting that is plainly evident that black Americans are progressing because "they inherit from slavery one great blessing—the

[35] Ibid., 189

[36] Four thousand square feet is a little smaller than the playing area on two tennis courts.

[37] See Dale A. Somers, "Black and White in New Orleans: A Study in Urban Race Relations, 1865-1900," *The Journal for Southern History* 40, no. 1 (Feb 1974): 19-42.

[38] Smalley, "In and Out," 192-93.

habit of industry; and this is their salvation."[39] Of the creative and inventive displays in the department, Smalley notes that "as to the higher attainments of civilization, whatever they exhibit…is plainly traceable either to contact with the white race or to the admixture of white blood."[40] With this logic, Smalley dismissed the achievements on display as being the product of racial uplift and subsume the Colored Department into a model of white civilization as an evolutionary tool for other ethnic groups.

By contrast, the illustrations for Smalley's articles by E.W. Kemble, who illustrated the 1884 first edition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, show a more complicated story by depicting black fairgoers as legitimate tourists or outsiders, especially in two images: "The Liberty Bell" (**Figure 36**) and "On Dixie's Line" (**Figure 37**). The former shows an old ex-slave showing the Liberty Bell to his grandchildren, who watch appreciably.[41] In it, all show the restraint of the expert man in "Lost in Wonder" (**Figure 5**), except the baby, who is reaching towards the bell with both arms outstretched, perhaps symbolizing the youngest generation's eagerness for freedom. The pen and ink "On Dixie's Line," by contrast, shows an African-American boy seated on his shoeshine box as if it were a theatre seat, gazing at the lush exposition grounds through its perimeter fence, perhaps emphasizing his distance from being able to be a part of the exposition and emphasizing that it was not for everyone, but only those that could afford it. Here, the contemporary status of black Americans is sketched out with one foot steeped in slavery and poverty and one in the promise of the coming years.

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[39] Ibid., 193-94.
[40] Ibid., 194.
[41] Ibid., 198.

*Chicago World's Columbian Exposition*

Although the New Orleans Exposition offered at least apparent parity between women and black Americans by providing official space, the experience of the two groups was sharply contrasted at the Columbian Exposition. At its inception, President Harrison created a 208-member Board of National Commissioners, the exposition's official governing body, with an adjunct Board of Lady Managers, but allowed for no presence of racial minorities.[42] The powerful and vocal Lady Managers created a highly successful Women's Building, but there was no official black American pavilion or space on the fair grounds.

The Chicago Women's Building stood apart from its predecessors in both its organizational complexity and public visibility; however, the all-male Exposition Board retained final approval of the women's work. Boston architect Sophia Hayden won an all-female competition to design the building (judged by a board of male architects), the first women's space built by a woman at a United States exposition. At 74,884 square feet on the ground floor, the building had two upper galleries, one for exhibit space and one for offices.[43] The building's decoration and sculpture were executed by women, and, in addition to the usual collection of domestic products and handicrafts, the building housed inventions and a large library of female authors.[44] Through the process of

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[42] See Anna R. Paddon and Sally Turner, "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Illinois Historical Journal* 88, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 19-20.

[43] The ground floor space alone was roughly one and a half times as big as the Philadelphia Women's Pavilion.

[44] On inventions, see Pilato, "Retrieval of a Legacy," 179. On the library, see Sarah Wadsworth and Wayne A. Wiegand, *Right Here I See My Own Books: The Woman's Building Library at the World's Columbian Exposition* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), and a special issue, "The Woman's Building

designing, decoration, and organization of the Women's Building and its sponsored events, the Columbian women demanded—and achieved—a visible place in the public sphere.[45]

The Lady Managers allocated space to represent a wider range of subjects than in Philadelphia and New Orleans, especially in the Women's Congresses, where issues from across the political spectrum were discussed.[46] For example, the "World's Congress of Representative Women" was held over a full week in May 1893. With eighty-one meetings, five hundred women spoke to an estimated combined audience of 150,000.[47] While the Lady Managers emphasized separate spheres, many women were beginning to seek "self-support," or, economic freedom from being wives and mothers, a fact that is borne out by the increased numbers of women organizing and touring the exposition without men.[48] Subsequent fairs would nearly all have a Women's Building, as well as wider discussions of suffrage, equality, and independence.[49] Although there was a

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Library of the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893" *Libraries and Culture* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2006).

[45] See Duncan R. Jamieson, "Women's Rights at the World's Fair, 1893," *Illinois Quarterly* 37 (December 1974): 6-7.

[46] This was the same society woman who so eagerly volunteered to feel bodybuilder Eugene Sandow's muscles backstage after his debut. Jeanne Madeline Weimann, *The Fair Women* (Chicago: Academy Press, 1981) remains the fullest account of women organizers of the Columbian Exposition.

[47] See Nancy Cott, *No Small Courage: a History of Women in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 353–411. See also, May Wright Sewall, ed., "The World's Congress of Representative Women" (Chicago: Rand, McNally, and Company, 1894).

[48] See Sylvia Hunt, "'Throw Aside the Veil of Helplessness': A Southern Feminist at the 1893 World's Fair," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 100, no.1 (July 1996): 55-57, 60-61, on Congresses and the range of topics discussed, as well as directions in women's rights in the early 1890s.

[49] Mary Pepchinski, "Woman's Buildings at European and American World's Fairs, 1893-1939," in *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's*

distinct increase in representation, African-American women still had little to no place in the Board's leadership or exhibits.[50]

Despite progress in gaining public platforms since the New Orleans exposition, black Americans were not granted a building on the Columbian Exposition grounds. In fact, black Americans were excluded from the on-site work crews, the two thousand strong internal police force, and its medical staff. The only jobs available were those of janitors and rolling chair attendants.[51] Although absent from official space, Anna Paddon and Sally Turner argue that African Americans "were represented in some significant, although isolated, ways."[52] Likewise, Mabel Wilson argues that African Americans "presented their own cultural advances in various venues across the grounds."[53] These include paintings by black artists, black speakers and associated Congresses, and, most visibly, the presence of Frederick Douglass, who, as an official with the Haiti Exhibit, was the only officially appointed black representative at the fair. Despite being denied space, activists formed communities and organizations that, in their struggle against exposition officials, would lay the groundwork for future successes.

Most representations of black Americans within the exposition were nostalgic depictions of the antebellum South, such as the old slaves who sold miniature cotton

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*Fairs*, edited by T.J. Boisseau and Abigail M. Markwyn (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 188.

[50] Paddon and Turner, "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," 24-27.

[51] Ibid., 22.

[52] Ibid., 23. Wilson, *Negro Building*, 51 has a slightly more optimistic view of black participation, listing the paintings and speakers at congresses during the fair; however, it should be noted that these events were marginal to the functioning of the actual fair.

[53] Paddon and Turner, "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," 51.

bales in the Agricultural Building, turbaned "mammies" in the Louisiana Building's "Creole Kitchen," and, most famously, Nancy Green, who performed as "Aunt Jemima," cooking for, and bantering with, fairgoers to popularize the pancake mix.[54] The performers in the Dahomey Village on the Midway were particularly well-known subjects of fairgoer gawking, presented as savages who regularly practiced cannibalism.[55] Few images of the enclosure remain, but an amateur photographer's image shows the popular focus on African savagery that made the Village a sensationalistic draw (**Figure 38**).

Before and during the fair, African American organizations protested the fair's administration. The most visible pamphlet was *The Reason Why the Colored American is not in the Columbian Exposition*. Published by activist Ida B. Wells, with contributions from Frederick Douglass and others, this text led the charge to protest the white board's refusal to allow black representation on the grounds. In the preface, Douglass likened the White City to a "White Sepulcher," charging that the Exposition organizers were only interested in non-white representation on the Midway to show "barbaric rites" and "African savages brought here to play the monkey" such as the inhabitant of the Dahomey Village.[56] Wells connected racial violence, Jim Crow laws, and political exploitation to exclusion from the highly symbolic public space of the fair.[57] Wells urged

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[54] Ibid., "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," 29.

[55] See *The Chicago Times Portfolio of the Midway Types* (Chicago: American Engraving Company, 1893). The accompany text to their picture (Figure 27) notes that "Though they were representatives of Cannibal tribes they restrained their appetites for human flesh while at the Exposition."

[56] Ida Wells, et al, *The Reason Why the Colored American is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, Reprint, edited by Robert W. Rydell, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 4.

[57] See Wilson, *Negro Building*, 1, for an overview.

a boycott of the fair; however, that was not practical, and she suggested that black visitors at least avoid the more overtly racist exhibits.[58]

After some controversy, the directors conceded to allow an "Afro-American Jubilee Day," also known as "Colored American Day," at the Fair on August 25th. Again, Wells and others encouraged a boycott.[59] Others sought to use the Day to display nobler representations of Black Americans and show that they were rational, orderly spectators who were just as middle class as everyone else.[60] While the proceedings were intended to present the public with images of black Americans as "good" spectators deserving public recognition, much of the contemporary press used the event to indulge in an excess unflattering caricatures.[61]

Despite limited official representation, black Americans were visible as both workers and fairgoers, with some places of equality on the grounds. The Nursery in the Children's Building (funded by the Board of Lady Managers) was racially integrated, black associations met on fair grounds, and eateries were unsegregated.[62] In public space, the races were mixing more liberally in Chicago than other places in the country. Diarist Elizabeth Gookin, who attended the exposition twenty-nine times, noted on an August afternoon that, while having coffee at the Wellington counter, she "met there a

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[58] Ibid., 33.

[59] "Asked to Stay Away," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 28 June 2893, 7

[60] Wilson, *Negro Building*, 32.

[61] See Manon Niquette and William Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions" *Canadian Journal of Communication* 22, no. 1 (January 1997). <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/977/883>, where the authors note that overall 68% of World's Fair cartoons were about Africans and African-Americans. In particular, "the African Americans tend to be association with…the Dahomey exhibit," equating most black visitors with so-called savages.

[62] "Colored Men Meet," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 27 June 1893, 13.

Southern Lady who was very indignant that a colored man should be allowed to eat with white people."[63] Regardless of meager representation of African-Americans, the World's Columbian Exposition was used as a focal point for resistance, resulting in new nurturing organizations and communities, which, while they did not gain organized acceptance here, would become more prominent in subsequent years.[64]

**Performance**

I have looked at how fair officials framed the fairs as educational institutions and prompted fairgoers to respond through how they toured expositions, encouraging them to behave in accordance with their messages. In this section, I will look at how fairgoer practice can be likened to performance that engages the conceptual framework encoded into fair space. Treating museums and fairs as sites of performance has a productive literature. In *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett considers a museum or fair to be a "performative environment to shape new forms of conduct," instilling middle-class social values of order and decorum in a wide public.[65] Here, I look at how fairgoers diverged from this coercive plan and I will look for patterns in their spatial performances. I consider how people created their own "lay," as opposed to "official," geography, refashioning and reinterpreting space. By examining how fairgoers negotiated the

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[63] Diary of Elizabeth A. Gookin, Gookin Family Papers, Newberry Library, 10 August 1893. Elizabeth was a mother and approximately twenty-nine years old at the time of the fair.

[64] Paddon and Turner, "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," 34-36. See also Christopher Robert Reed, *"All the World is Here!": The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 101-120, for an overview of notable Black visitors and people involved with the fair.

[65] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 33.

prompts, symbols, and discourse that framed exposition space, we can see performance of fairgoing rewriting exposition texts. In this section, I focus on the fair's emphasis on order, the importance of tourism as a social experience, how fairgoer itineraries different from those suggested by officials, and the reception of the fair through amateur photography. Although we cannot attain a perfect knowledge of how fairgoers responded to expositions, this approach provides a necessary counterpoint to established histories by exploring the lived experience of expositions.

*Order*

In chapter one, I have shown that fair officials prompted visitors to perform roles as civilized tourists by favoring rational engagement with exhibits over practices like gawking. Exposition literature stressed decorous, informed viewing as the proper way to "do" an exposition. Central to this project was an effort to advertise fairs as orderly environments that would create harmonious crowds. A reporter for the *New York Times* gives a placid picture of the exposition that echoes exactly what officials hoped visitors would make of their experience by noting that the Philadelphia Centennial, "as a show alone, as a well-arranged, picturesque spectacle of beauty, life, and the best of human workmanship, with pleasing grounds, exquisite music, abundant room to move in, and the glorious sky of June above, without the slightest friction or disorder below, it has never been surpassed."[66] The author depicts a peaceful environment ready to provide the educational experience, a "study." One writer in an official Columbian Exposition history wrote "there was no symbol of control, for no control was needed" and the

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[66] "The Centennial as a Study," *New York Times*, 4 June 1876, 6.

orderly crowd was "itself an Exposition of the progress and the social status of an educated and free people, moving amid such scenes of beauty and such treasuries of information."[67] However, there are numerous examples that suggest that the experience of fair grounds was often chaotic and overwhelming for the spectators, causing them to spend considerable effort navigating their own way through space as they interpreted the fair's intended texts.

Even while exposition officials repeatedly promised order and respect for peoples of all nations, exhibition fairgoers could prove unruly, with activities ranging from the obnoxious to the criminal. Each fair widely published accounts of how their systems of policing and detection would deter crime and criminals, and promise unperturbed, safe fairgoing, because, as John Bonfield, the chief of the Columbian Exposition's Secret Service, wrote "the experience of authorities at every universal exhibition showed that such affairs invariably attract an international gathering of dangerous classes of society."[68] An unsourced newspaper article from collected in a scrapbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania notes that the Philadelphia exposition intended to have more than 600 uniformed policemen and guards attending the grounds.[69] In the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, officials proudly stated the exposition would have 300 private policemen on the grounds, with more in reserve, along with an improved system of call boxes across the grounds. Especially significant is that they planned to borrow detectives

[67] Selim H. Peabody, "The Educational and Moral Value of the Exposition," in Rossiter Johnson (Ed.), *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898), 4:495.

[68] R.W. M'Claughry and John Bonfield, "Police Protection at the World's Fair," *North American Review* 156, no.439 (June, 1893): 714.

[69] From an unknown newspaper, "New World's Fair," 10 May 1876, collected in the Annie Britton Scrapbook, Centennial Exhibition Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

from other cities to help identity any migrating criminals.[70] Chicago officials did the same, reassuring people with the size of the two thousand strong "Columbian Guard," its system of communication, and its collaboration with other police forces.[71] Both present the security force as a professional, industrialized machine, an exhibit in itself.[72] However, it is unclear as to whether the actual forces demonstrated the professionalism of the rhetoric. Numerous Philadelphia articles complained at their lack of skill, with one even suggesting that many officers are "unfit" and former criminals.[73] And although the Columbian Guard uniforms were dashing, making it into numerous photographs, guard E. Harry Carpenter, who recorded his work experience in a diary, had an entirely different experience. A farmer from nearby Carroll County, Carpenter had no experience policing, and does not mention any colleagues that had. His depiction of shift and station assignments, structuring, and functioning of the guard comes off the page as chaotic and confused. Although the guards seem to function in his account fairly well, his diary repeatedly notes incidents where he reports to duty only to be sent home, or someone is accidentally not assigned to replace him, and similar errors.[74]

Reliable crime statistics are hard to find, but the prominent presence of police forces suggest that crime was a conscious danger. For example, one Philadelphia

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[70] "World's Exposition," *Daily Picayune*, 4 December 1884, 8.

[71] The number includes police, guards, and firefighters. See M'Claughry and Bonfield, "Police Protection." The authors stress that the Columbian Guard's forces will receive the most current training in systems of identification and policing. The main requirements for hiring seem to be physical condition and good character.

[72] Indeed, the Columbian Guard was often talked-about and depicted in the press.

[73] See "Letters from Centennial," *Daily Critic*, 27 May 1876, 3, and "The Exposition," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 July 1876, 2.

[74] There was a sizable squad of plainclothes inspectors, who regularly checked on the guards and, in many cases, proceeded to conduct on-site exams of their duties. At least once, Carpenter mentions a colleague caught sleeping on duty.

newspaper noted that "frequent complaint is made of losses by theft at the Centennial" and the author David Bailey warned that "the pickpockets were on the alert at all times" both at the exposition and in the city. In a streetcar en route, he noted that "one of our fellow boarders, a lady operative at one of the main Sewing Machine Pavilions in Machinery Hall, lost a fine gold watch one day, but the thief was taken in the act."[75] Some thieves stole from the exhibits, often from the foreign exhibits.[76] According to one source, there were so many cases of shoplifting in Philadelphia's Moorish bazaar that the article "Are the American People Thieves?" can only answer that they must not be, dubiously reasoning that the Moorish workers, who at home "make a business of killing Christian women and children" must be perpetrating a vast fraud on Americans.[77] However, other sources note the prevalence of onsite thefts, with the Centennial Commission's Director-General's report blaming most thefts on "visitors known as 'Centennial souvenir kleptomaniacs.'"[78] Crime at the Columbian Exposition was prevalent enough that when E. Harry Carpenter turned a purse he found in to the Lost and Found bureau, he was suspected removing the eight dollars of cash that it contained.[79] The official report of the Commandant of the Guard for the Columbian Exposition

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[75] Bailey, *Eastward Ho*, 58.

[76] "The Centennial Exhibition," *Baltimore Sun*, 26 July 1876, 1. The Annie Britton Scrapbook has a clipping entitled "Centennial Thief Arrested," from 9 March 1877 that notes, "William Rock was arrested to-day, charged w/ having stolen nearly 15,000 fans, screens and other fancy article from the Japanese Bazaar on the Centennial Grounds. At the close of the Exhibit the Japanese merchants employed Rock to remove their exhibits…instead he took them home."

[77] "Are the American People Thieves?" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 October 1876, 4.

[78] United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition, 1876. Report of the Director General* (Washington: Government printing Office, 1880), 1:682. The volume also notes that thefts were perpetrated by workers at the Exhibition.

[79] Diary of E. Harry Carpenter, Special Collections, Washington State University Holland Library, 13.

reveals a mixture of expected, mundane, tragic, and bizarre reported statistics (See **Table 2**).[80]

Even though one newspaper noted that "Never was there a better opportunity to study humanity in its most diversified forms than in this city now. It is a pocket edition of the great world," not every fairgoer seemed to take this educational approach.[81] It is well-documented that boys often harangued foreigners at the fair.[82] Bad behavior, it seems, was not just confined to boys, as one paper notes the "rudeness of the American woman at the centennial," especially "their propensities for staring at foreign exhibitors clad in their national costume."[83] Another paper generally observes that in the art gallery "the desire to break the rules is so strong" that pictures and statues were defaced or vandalized.[84]

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[80] Daniel Burnham, *The Final Official Report of the Director of Works of the World's Columbian Exposition* Reprinted (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989): 7:30. The full list of incidents, which is at least three times as long as the selection above, includes violations such as number of reports of stolen passes (31), shadowing suspicious persons (539), larcenies reported (308), as well as more colorful incidents such as Pinkerton men assaulting visitors in the Tiffany's exhibit (1), and Prize fights in the Livestock Pavilion (1).

[81] "Centennial Gossip," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 23 August 1876, 2.

[82] Bailey, *Eastward Ho!*, 62, notes that, at the hydraulic annex, "Here, too, are several blowing machines, where the boys are always playing tricks on unsuspecting spectators. A gentleman would pause before one of these machines, when, to his surprise, a gust of wind would send his silk hat flying among the machinery; ladies' veils and handkerchiefs would be treated in the same way." See also Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 14n10, for harassing of foreigners, which was apparently strong enough to make some choose Western dress to avoid the more violent forms of curiosity.

[83] "Centennial Notes," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 11 October 1876, 4.

[84] "Letter from Centennial," *The Daily Critic*, 27 May 1876, 3.

**Table 2: Selected Summary of Incident Reports, Columbian Exposition**

| Violation | Counts |
|---|---|
| Persons taken into custody for petty pilfering and put off grounds on paying for goods taken | 421 |
| Arrests | 954 |
| Convictions | 438 |
| Acquittals | 94 |
| Escapes | 1 |
| Number of reports on children lost | 30 |
| Number of reports on children returned to parents | 20 |
| Number of reports of shadowy, suspicious persons | 539 |
| Number of reports of persons getting over fence into grounds | 408 |
| Number of reports of Zulu acting improperly | 1 |
| Number of reports of finding fetus on grounds | 1 |
| Number of reports of employees killed | 5 |
| Number of reports of ex-convicts on grounds | 135 |
| Number of reports of patrol wagons colliding with ambulance | 2 |
| Number of reports to attempt to gain admission with fraudulent passes | 33 |
| Number of reports of Kodak's without permit | 30 |
| Number of reports of taking photographs without permit | 37 |
| Number of reports of attempt to pass counterfeit coin | 10 |
| Value of property reported stolen (owners' estimates) | $23,113.96 |
| Value of stolen property recovered and restored to owners | $16,693.42 |

While vandalism and hooliganism was not the norm, such repeated instances suggest that fairgoers were conscious that their visits were social experiences. Part of sightseeing would be navigating crowds, with the potential annoyances that could result. Time and again, first-hand accounts complain about the throngs of visitors that made fairgoing unpleasant, whether it is at public transportation, popular exhibits, or on special celebrations. Whether they played positive or negative roles, people were an intrinsic part of the fair experience.

**Sociability**

Studies of expositions tend to conceptualize the fairgoer as a detached individual, neglecting the role of socializing and the sociability of going to the fairs. Recent work in

museum studies has shown that contemporary visitors tend to attend museums with at least one other person, and the first-hand accounts that I have consulted bear this out, at least on an anecdotal level.[85] Florence Dymond, a native of New Orleans, wrote home from the Columbian Expositions, largely with details of where she stayed and who—not what—she saw, suggesting that we should take sociability into account.[86] Visitors often sent postcards, guidebooks, and memorabilia to those who could not attend, and many created scrapbooks to be shared at later events out of their experience. Furthermore, a study of contemporary world's fairs shows that people's memories are shaped more by their social interactions at the fair than the displays themselves.[87]

Historians have considered the social dimension of exposition tourism, but their efforts have largely been production-centric, looking at how expositions, as Bennett puts it, functioned as institutional "reformatory of manners" to "civilize" lower classes.[88] On the contrary, the social experience of expositions was key to visitor experience. Evidence suggests that visitors to museums or related sites experienced the space differently depending on their company, whether or not they were with a family, alone, or with a

[85] See Niquette and Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair," for the relevant bibliography. Touring with others is true throughout all of the expositions covered here. Anna Baker Keyser, for example, is always in company of at least one relative, and had her son or grandson's birthday at the Philadelphia Centennial. Many write of taking relatives or meeting friends from home. If a visitor was alone, or broke off from one partner, they would often seek out their home state building, presumably with an eye to meeting fellow residents.

[86] Florence Dymond to John Dymond , 21 August 1893, Dymond Family Papers, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[87] David Anderson, "Visitors' Long-Term Memories of World Expositions," *Curator* 46, no. 4 (October 2003): 401-20.

[88] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 28.

friend or partner.[89] These are modern studies, but they consistently evoke a picture of museum attendance that is fundamentally social. The historical evidence bears out this approach. For example, despite working as a Guard, E. Harry Carpenter writes frequently of meeting acquaintances in his off hours to tour the fair, as well as sending guides and maps to his parents in advance of their visit.[90] Previously, I have looked at the opposition between education and entertainment, focusing much of my analysis at putting these in conversation; however, the fairgoer experience is also about where people meet, where they walk, and where they eat. This last point is especially important, as most diaries that I have consulted make consistent reference to where and with whom the author is having tea, coffee, or lunch.

In “Meet Me at the Fair,” Manon Niquette and William Buxton employ the concept of “reflexibility” to argue that any fairgoer would have been hyper-conscious of others as part of their experience. They suggest that fairgoing was an entirely public act, one that we can read as a performance of sightseeing. Since “people must process [information] in front of each other,” fairgoers were keen to conspicuously demonstrate their knowledge and hide their ignorance to their companions and other spectators.[91] Even solitary fairgoers, they argue, were aware of being watched.

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[89] For a well-known example using modern urban aquariums, see, K.A. Hensel, K. A., “A New Look at Our Largest Audience: Ethnographic Analysis of the Family Unit,” *Proceedings of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums* (Wheeling, WV: American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, 1982): 261-67.

[90] E. Happy Carpenter’s parents visited from 12 June to 17 June, and he particularly writes about touring with others on 4 July and 6 October.

[91] Niquette and Buxton, “Meet Me at the Fair.”

According to Niquette and Buxton, the social experience of fairgoing was "based on a politics of differentiation."[92] As the Columbian Exposition brought people with a mix of classes and backgrounds together, the authors stress that differentiating between—and performing for—these heterogeneous groups was at the heart of fair tourism. To that end, they draw up four types of social interactions at the exposition: between peoples of different nations, different sexes, different classes, and different states. Throughout each interaction, Niquette and Buxton stress that those who saw themselves as middle class were occupied with distinguishing themselves, largely through ridicule and humor. The derision of country "rubes" gawking in chapter one's "Lost in Wonder," was here writ large. Humor was a chief way of enforcing good fairgoing behavior, making people conscious not to fall into one of these category of otherness. For example, a joke from the Columbian Exposition's own issue of *World's Fair Puck*, pokes fun at country visitors to the Midway by imagining their conversation after a performance of the *danse du ventre*:

> THE *DANSE DU VENTRE* IN ARKANSAS EYES
> COL. BLUEGRASS—Well what did you think of the Turkish dancing?
> CAPT. SHAKELY (of the lowlands, Arkansas)—I didn't see it. The girl got up to give a hoedown but jest as she started she got an awful attack of the ager. And the dern fools just stood and saw the poor gal shiver, and didn't even offer her so much as a quinine pill.[93]

While Sunday dress was expected, humorous magazines, especially *Puck*, ridicule lower classes and other ethnicities when they adopt similar dress.[94] The most ridiculed, Niquette and Buxton note, was directed at African-Americans. Their work shows that

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[92] Ibid.
[93] *World's Fair Puck*, 4 September 1893, 208.
[94] Niquette and Buxton, "Meet Me at the Fair."

while official discourse showed the fair to be a harmonious experience, part of the fair experience centered around being aware of presenting oneself to the public gaze, making expositions sites of anxieties and discomfort as classes, geographies, and ethnicities came together in fair space.

**Lay Geographies**

Cultural geographers argue that the body makes space by moving through space, perceiving, and interacting with objects and people. That space is particular to the individuals who use it and, when looked at from a wider perspective, becomes what has been called a "lay geography." Thus, the tourist creates his or her own sense of the tourist site. Here, "space is a medium through which the tourist negotiates his or her world, tourism signs and contexts, and may construct her or his own distinctive meanings."[95] The concept of lay geographies gets at how a tourist may negotiate the meaning of a site through their performance, providing a way to think about how a tourist's actions within a space have the power to create new meanings within official scripts. "Official geographies" stress itineraries that cast pleasure-seeking as an afterthought. By conforming to such scripts, such as in the plans laid out in various guidebooks, visitors would embody order and civilization. While I suggested that fairgoers did not always comply, here I will look more closely at their lay geography, or, what fairgoers did and how they consciously pursued pleasure and sociability at the fairs.

In their attempt to instill a hearty work ethic in fairgoers, official voices condemned people who wandered among the grounds, but other writers openly advocated

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[95] David Crouch, Lars Aronsson, and Lage Wahlström, "Tourist Encounters," *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 3 (December 2001): 254.

for the fairgoer to spend their time idly. Promenading, people-watching, and idling were acknowledged pleasures—and attractions—of expositions. William Dean Howells, hardly critical of expositions, advocated approaching the Philadelphia exposition by first "wandering aimlessly" over the grounds, which was sure to result in "the agreeable surprise of arriving at something altogether different" than what one expects.[96] Writing for *Century Illustrated Magazine* in 1885, Eugene Smalley offers a model of passive observation rather than diligent pursuit of knowledge in New Orleans, "the visitors themselves are as well worth seeing as the show. To sit on a bench on one of the broad aisles of the Main Building, or better still beneath the spreading arms of the great live-oaks on the grounds, and observe the passing throng, is to my mind the best part of the sight-seeing at the fair."[97]

Eight years later, Smalley advocates taking in the main exhibits of the Columbian Exposition, he recommends that the tourist spend a significant amount of time wandering over grounds, "for you will have purchased the right to idle, and only its purchasers know the whole of the charm of idling." That way, the fairgoer should be sure to enjoy "both sides of the Fair, its instructive side and its mere pleasure-giving side."[98]

Smalley sees touring the fair as individual expression and exploration: that "each of you has special tastes, special curiosities," so fairgoers should either tour with like-minded companions or take breaks to pursue individual interests.[99] Much as Spencer preached against the "gospel of work," Smalley is in favor of a blend of education and

[96] Howells, "A Sennight at the Centennial," 93.
[97] Eugene V. Smalley, "In and Out," 194.
[98] Eugene V. Smalley, "At the Fair" *Century Illustrated Magazine,* May 1893, 6.
[99] Ibid., 6-7.

amusement.[100] Likening a fairgoer to a "human Kodak," he says one cannot be content investigating one section of the fair, but must explore, observe, and absorb.[101] In his approach, performance is raised above text. He favors personal experiences of space over textual guidebook itineraries and representations of space.

From the evidence I have gathered, Smalley's approach appears truer to what people experienced. Although official sources continuously recommended touring with an eye towards education by ignoring "cheap" entertainments, a look at the itineraries that diarists and letter-writers recorded creates definite patterns that suggest fairgoers either did not notice, did not follow, or otherwise resisted this binary. Overall, I have consulted more than twenty-five primary sources or collections. Although this is an admittedly small sample of the millions who attended expositions in the period, it is enough to suggest that tourists often thought of the fairgoing in different ways than they were prompted and to suggest that the lay geographies of the fair rarely conformed to official sources. What follows are representative examples from my sampling, each illustrating a different approach to the distinction between official and lay geographies:

As a foreign visitor to the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, Gilbert Hartley provides an example of a tourist who comes for education and ends with pleasure.[102] Hartley, a broom maker from Ontario (and later a prison guard), traveled to the Centennial Exhibition and New York City within the space of a couple of weeks in late August along with an unnamed companion. Hartley's small, six inch leather-bound diary was probably

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[100] Livingston Youmans, *Herbert Spencer on the Americans and the Americans on Herbert Spencer* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), 7.

[101] Smalley, "At the Fair," 13.

[102] Gilbert Hartley, Diary of a Trip to Centennial, Centennial Exhibition Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania,.

meant to be carried with him to make notes while touring. It provides a detailed account of his itinerary, as well as reflections on all phases of his trip. Hartley appears to have begun the exposition to cultivate his private interests, notably firearms and artillery. From the start, Hartley's account is ready with superlatives such as "the view has surpassed all my expectations. And when the sun rose it was like magic."[103] However, during the exposition he regularly struggles with the heat, which sent him to Horticultural Hall to cool off, and with fatigue.[104] When he finally reached the Canadian section of Agricultural Hall, he notes "I did not stop long in this department for the reason that I was tired out with seeing," as the "arduous work of sight-seeing" got the better of his desire to take in more exhibits.[105] By contrast, a day trip to Cape May, New Jersey seems far more interesting to him for the opportunity to bathe in the ocean. Hartley's diary shows familiar themes among fairgoers with an interest for education: fatigue, being overwhelmed, and a mix of pleasurable excursions alongside more "educational" ones.

Retired Philadelphia schoolteacher Anna Keyser Baker, who I discussed in chapter one, attended the Centennial on at least ten occasions, sometimes for only a few hours. At times, she wanted to see an exhibit, while at others, she visited for purely social or personal reasons, such as to try coffee in the Turkish Café or have her grandson's birthday party on the grounds. Her sense of space was highly individual, as she aimed to either get overall impressions or looked for personal uses for her and her family.

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[103] Ibid., 26 August 1876.

[104] Ibid., on Horticultural Hall: "this is a delightful place so cool and such a relief from the other buildings."

[105] Ibid.

Like Hartley, Baker complained of the heat on a number of occasions. Being overwhelmed by the weather and crowds would be a constant refrain in all three expositions. For example, Charles Hollingsworth, a newspaper reporter covering the opening, complained in a miniature diary about the seemingly endless rain, and noted that it was so busy that the grounds were "not comfortable to move around."[106] Likewise, Henry Adams wrote in a letter to Charles Milnes Gaskell, "For my soul I hate and contemn these big shows – it is bigger, noisier, more crowded…than any of its predecessors…the crowd there was appalling."[107] Another Boston elite, Elizabeth Parsons Channing sarcastically touched on the enthusiasm of crowds, wishing to address them with "Peace, you busy trampers, you eager gazers, the world will go on, and you will prosper, even if you do not see 'That 'ere Bytter women,' the Helicon vase, the Milton Shield, or the watch minute enough to form the end of a pencil case."[108] While her snobbery is evident throughout, Channing's choices of sites are revealing, as are her putting together the "Butter Woman" in the Women's Building (Caroline Shawk's butter sculpture "Dreaming Iolanthe") and pieces from the Main Building, along with a spectacular watch.[109] It seems that what she really found annoying was that the crowd seemed to display an inability to distinguish between the entertaining and elevated

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[106] Charles Hollingsworth, Diary, Centennial Exhibition Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[107] Henry Adams, *The Letters of Henry Adams*, Edited by J.C. Levenson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2:292.

[108] Elizabeth Parsons Channing, *Autobiography and Diary of Elizabeth Parsons Channing: Gleanings of a Thoughtful Life* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1907), 35. The entry is dated 20 October 1876.

[109] Butter sculptures were (and still are) very popular at expositions. See Pamela H. Simpson, *Corn Palaces and Butter Queens: a History of Crop Art and Dairy Sculpture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). The Milton Shield, for example, is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and copies exist in fine art museums across the world, as well as the White House.

exhibits.  Such testimony suggests that fairgoers largely ignored the distinction between the high and low that was a staple of exposition rhetoric.

Columbian Exposition sources, which are the most complete, show a striking divergence from the planned itinerary and rhetoric against pleasure-seeking of officials and authors.  The source that I collected which bears the closest resemblance to the itineraries discussed in chapter one is an anonymous fifty-four-page diary, probably from a teenager from the Northeast who visited the fair in September 1893, entitled "Vacation Days."  Just as guidebooks offered programs to visit that focused on the White City and held the Midway until the end, so the author's diary begins with the White City, fair buildings, and ends with state buildings and the Midway.  In the middle of this plan, which closely follows the Rand, McNally *A Week at the Fair*, the author includes a detailed section with a description of visiting Buffalo Bill's "Wild West."[110]  In fact, there is as much content devoted to the Wild West as to the White City, which is described as "fairy land in the evening."[111]  For this fairgoer, it appears that the entertainments associated with the fair were hardly separate from the educational mission.

The diary of twenty-nine year old Chicago-area mother Elizabeth A. Gookin recorded the movements of a middle-class fairgoer that lived in Chicago and toured the Columbian Exposition numerous times during its season.[112]  Gookin visited the fair regularly at the start of the season.  On August 2, three months after its opening, she recorded her twelfth visit.  She spent most of her time socializing and meeting officials

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[110] "Vacation Days," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago Public Library, 4-5.
[111] Ibid., 3.
[112] Gookin, Diary.

for lunch or tea, she also spent considerable time punctuating her visits to the White City with trips to the Midway, taking in all of the Plaisance exhibits more than once. To Gookin, the fair was a source of pleasure and socializing. Hardly any mention is made of what she may have learned from the fair, but she dutifully recorded what she enjoyed and tasted; that is, until she stops attending because "the great crowds of people make sight seeing unpleasant now at the fair."[113]

In "Visiting the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in July 1893: A Personal View," historian Marvin Nathan reproduces and contextualizes a single letter by an "ordinary" fairgoer, Annie Finette Lynch, who visited the fair in July with a small party of a friend and one or two aunts. The letter, one in a series of reports to her younger sister who remained in Philadelphia, suggests this fairgoer possessed a matter-of-fact sensibility quite alien to official fair literature, which stresses wonder, hyperbole, and uplift. Annie recounts touring main buildings of the fair, but she hardly mentions the grand architecture or technological inventions. Likewise, her letters ignore majestic scenery. Her itinerary through state buildings and minor halls suggests she preferred small buildings to classical vistas. In fact, Annie appears more interested in shopping and experiencing other cultures, namely the café of the East Indian Exhibit, where she is delighted to have tea in a foreign-styled environment. While planners wanted Americans to identify with classicism and modernity, Nathan concludes that visitors like Annie used the fair primarily as an opportunity for new and pleasurable experiences. Nathan

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[113] Ibid., 17 October, 1893. That was her 23rd visit to the fair.

speculates that the grand buildings “were of far less interest to the massed millions of fairgoers than to the small number of self-proclaimed ‘illuminati.’”[114]

Although Annie Finch, Elizabeth Gookin, and others do not necessarily complete the profile of a “typical” fairgoer, their experience, and the experiences of others, suggests lay geographies that are at odds with official texts. Taken as a whole, the geographies that individuals created at fairs appear to be more casual than the high-stakes venture that official publications suggest. Visitors used the fair as a context for social meetings, rather than individual absorption of knowledge. Entertainment, as demonstrated in “Vacation Days” and elsewhere, was at a premium, and even the more educational exhibits succeeded best when they had an entertaining aspect to them. Attending the fair was clearly not a smooth, undisturbed experience for visitors, as attested to by the large amounts of complaints about the heat, crime, and crowds. While fairs trusted that visitors would easily interpret the evolutionary ideas inherent in fair design within a placid environment, it seems that the actual experience was both more personal, as fairgoers had an eye to meeting friends and family, as well as more impersonal, as they struggled with the vast crowds and weather that attended the expositions. While patterns of individual reception suggest ways that the fairgoer experience was at odds with the prescribed texts, the next section will look at how some people directly resisted and reacted against the rules of the fair by looking at the conflict between official and amateur photography, which serves as a good example of a forum in which representation and performance came together to challenge official texts.

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[114] Marvin Nathan, “Visiting the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in July 1893: A Personal View,” *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 81, 88.

**Amateur Versus Official Photography**

The board of the Columbian Exposition was unique for the degree too which it strictly controlled the licensing, sale, and production of images of the fair. The official views tend to be of people-less magnificent vistas, accentuating the idea of the fair as a serene temple to progress and beauty, as in **Figures 16-17**. By contrast, individual fairgoers had a difficult time creating images that reflected their personal tastes and interests. In particular, amateur photographers were hard-pressed to practice their emerging craft because of a rigid set of restrictions governing the practice of photography on fair grounds. Despite these constraints, amateur photography was, in the words of photographic historian Julie K. Brown, "more adept at representing the ephemeral event that was the Exposition" than the mass-produced official, government, or commercial images.[115] A brief look at some of the protests and strategies that amateurs employed to make their own images in the face of inflexible rules shows how individual fairgoers could consume the fairs while practicing a craft in opposition to the monopolizing plans of fair managers.

A visitor to the Exposition could acquire images of the fair in several ways: through the official view books on sale, through commercial photography, through renting a newly invented model of portable Kodak cameras, or by photographing the grounds oneself. The latter two options were popular, but restrictive. To rent a Kodak, one had to pay two dollars (four times the admission to the fair itself) plus a ten-dollar

[115] Julie K. Brown, *Contesting Images: Photography and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 93. This remains the most complete work on amateur photography at the Columbian Exposition.

deposit. Although many amateurs flocked to the exposition to use their own cameras, they were faced with a two-dollar entry fee and were required to use only one, often inconvenient, entrance gate. They could not bring cameras larger than 4x5 or, more significantly, tripods. In other words, amateurs could not get the highly detailed shots that they sought due to restrictions in camera size, equipment, and exposure time. By setting limiting standards, the exposition management discouraged those who would consume and subsequently display their own visions of the fair.

Amateur photography associations responded with a loud protest. The *American Amateur Photographer* reported that "the number of grievances of exhibitors and others on file in the Director-General's office against this department is astonishing."[116] Matters over the inclusion of tripods, which granted time for longer exposures and careful framing, came to a head when the *Scientific American* was denied a permit. The journal countered by refusing to cover the fair and was reluctantly allowed an exemption. Amateurs, on the other hand, had to resort to other tactics. One correspondent wrote that several times he placed a board over a sawhorse to gain a steady base for taking pictures.[117] To get desired exposures and circumvent the Exposition's rules, the *American Amateur Photographer* advocated the tactic of renting a folding chair at ten cents a day and clamping a camera on its back as a stand-in tripod.[118]

Journals such as *Photo Beacon*, *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, *American Amateur Photographer*, and even *Cosmopolitan* provided forums for amateur

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[116] "Photography at the World's Fair," *American Amateur Photographer* 5 (September, 1893): 367.

[117] "The World's Fair License System," *American Amateur Photographer* 5 (February, 1893): 77.

[118] "Photography at the World's Fair," 370. See also "Notes from the World's Columbian Exposition," *Scientific American*, 12 August 1893, 99.

photographers to discuss picture-taking at the Exposition. Articles such as the "Hand-Camera Guide to the World's Fair" provided schedules and itineraries for photographers to follow to get ideal shots.[119] Replete with a program that kept the best views along with times of day and time to travel between them, these constitute an amateur-authored guide to the fair. Although amateurs produced similar vistas of the White City that official views published, they also produced different records of the Midway, which photographer Carl Koerner advocated would provide "far more interesting souvenirs than photographs of the Exhibition buildings."[120] "A Donkey Boy" (**Figure 39**) and an untitled amateur cyanotype (**Figure 40**) contrast the "Type" photographs with an image that betrays the difficulty of working on the bustling Midway. "A Donkey Boy" is a picturesque studio photo, a predominant genre of photographing of Midway inhabitants where the subject was viewed as emblematic of an ethnic type. The amateur photo captures a moment where an unnamed photographer attempted to take his own "type" photograph of sedan chair carriers—and most likely paid them to pose—but the image is ruined as an unnamed fairgoer steps into frame as a picture is taken. The candid nature of another amateur photograph (**Figure 41**) provides a glimpse at what thrills "respectable" women may have found on the Midway. Amateur photographers provide only one example of fairgoers who favored entertaining, spectacular displays rather than the "civilized" ones by searching the Midway for images of the often-chaotic life and activity

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[119] F. Dundas Todd, "Hand-Camera Guide to the World's Fair," *American Amateur Photographer* 5 (April, 1893): 166-67, reprinted from the *Photo Beacon*.

[120] Carl C. Koerner, Jr. "Snap Shooting at the Great Fair. Interesting Experiences of an Amateur with a Hand-Camera at the World's Columbian Exposition," *American Amateur Photographer* 5 (August, 1893): 296.

of the Plaisance instead of the grand classical vistas offered by official photographs and viewbooks.

**Conclusion**

Exposition officials constructed sites that attempted to teach spectators to be "civilized" by attending appropriate spaces and learning ways of seeing displays at the expositions. One way of identifying as highly evolved was to compare the most recent developments in technology and culture to the goods and peoples on display from supposedly savage societies. Although this rhetoric was prevalent in the literature of the Centennial Exhibition, it was embodied in the design of the Columbian Exposition in the division between the White City and Midway Plaisance. Between 1876 and 1893, rules and regulations for visiting world's fairs became more restrictive, with guidebooks taking a more forceful role in directing a viewer's attention and interpretation. While this process of centralization, or what Alan Trachtenberg called the Gilded Age's "quest for order," continued in the elite circles of fair officials, individual visitors responded with a wide variety of practices, at times resisting or violating official rules and interpretations of fair visions.[121] Through their diaries, letters, and photographs, fairgoers repeatedly show themselves intrigued by the theatricality and pleasure of less "evolved" spaces. Rather than look to the fair as an encyclopedia to learn about the world, fairgoers seemed ready to cast off some of their "civilized" mantle to seek immersive experiences that would expand their own boundaries.

[121] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

Since Robert Rydell's *All the World's a Fair* and Alan Trachtenberg's *Incorporation of Culture*, World's Fair Studies has been preoccupied with deciphering exposition ideologies, but this dissertation provides a much-needed counterpoint by asking: what was the lived experience of the fair like? Rather than the hegemonic engines of an elite culture, as Rydell and Trachtenberg have suggested, fairs were bursting at the seams with variety. There was not one way that fairgoers interpreted the texts of expositions, rather they saw them as offering multiple experiences. We should therefore constitute our histories not only from the official sources, but from personal experiences of its attendees. Even though the civilized/savage divide, which historians tend to read as justifying imperialist policies, was repeatedly emphasized through fair literature, organization, and design, its message was often used for other purposes. For example, Charles Andrew Heath, who managed a booth for his company, the Continental Seed Company, at the Columbian Exposition, came to a more egalitarian interpretation of the exposition based on his 100-plus visits, as noted in his diary:

> The year that is past has been the most memorable one of my life. I can not ever tell the wonderful amazement and profit and blessing that has come to me by living in Chicago and being permitted to frequently visit the Worlds' Fair and Columbian Exposition. The many lessons it taught me I could never tell but to sum it all up in as few words as possible I would say the Exposition and its auxiliary Congresses with the Parliament of Religions tell me that *we* (the peoples of the earth) *are all brothers*…We all have one father and he has given to one people more talents than another only to bring the other up to a level with itself…there is a growing and increasing sentiment in the children of men that all warfare should cease.[122]

[122] Charles Andrews Heath Papers, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Newberry Library.

Although there is a streak of looking at the world through the "white man's burden," a pervasive concept at the time, Heath envisions a world of peace, free exchange, and harmony, rather than one of conquest and the survival of the fittest.

If performance is "the art of producing the now," this work has looked at how individuals have produced the "now" in their fairgoing. In the face of thinking about such monumental mass events as expositions, with their imposing architecture and symbolism, it is important to consider the human dimension of lived experience on their walls, otherwise historians merely replicate official rhetoric.[123] The irony is that for all that these fairs represented the grandest ideals of Western civilization, hailing Greece and Rome, they were in fact fragile shells, made of wood and plaster. It is time to inscribe these edifices within a contingence based on the "now"-ness of human experience.

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[123] Writing of late-nineteenth-century expositions, James Gilbert convincingly demonstrates how contemporary historians, perhaps seduced by the grandeur of expositions, have replicated official rhetoric, even in their very critical histories. See James Burkhart Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 37-68.

## Conclusion
## Space, Excavation, and Experience

The builders of expositions strove to produce inspiring visions to the public, and their influence was felt in American architecture and city planning. The Columbian Exposition's White City influenced a generation of planners in the "City Beautiful" movement to emulate Daniel Burnham's classical vistas in major American cities.[1] Burnham himself went on to work on the redesign and plan of colonial Manila and Baguio (a planned summer capital), which relied on grafting a classical vision on the existing city.[2] Imre Kiralfy moved to London, where he designed the 140-acre Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 in a strict classical style near Shepherd's Bush. Also known as the "Great White City," the exhibition later had the first Olympic Stadium built on its site and today holds the BBC Television Centre.[3] While many architects went on to reshape the U.S. urban landscape, this conclusion surveys what happened to the fair spaces after the fairs closed. Visitors marveled at exposition spaces as fairylands, dream cities, and magic lamps. Their responses seem to imbue the sites of fairs with an ethereal quality that made them seem more like the stuff of dreams than reality, but cities, boards, and publics struggled to incorporate post-fair structures back into their cities.

Following the close of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, members of the Philadelphia business elite wanted to retain the site to hold a permanent exposition. After

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[1] Barbara Rubin, "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 3 (September 1979), 339-61.

[2] David Eric Brody, "Building Empire: Architecture and American Imperialism in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 2 (June 2001): 123-45, and Thomas S Hines, "The Imperial Façade: Daniel H. Burnham and American Architectural Planning in the Philippines," *Pacific Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (February 1972): 33-53.

[3] Barbara Barker, "Imre Kiralfy's Patriotic Spectacles: 'Columbus, and the Discovery of America' (1892-1893) and 'America' (1893)," *Dance Chronicle* 17, no. 2 (1994): 176.

buying the Main Building for $250,000, the enterprise came into financial trouble almost immediately. It closed in 1879 and was demolished in 1881.[4] Memorial Hall, the fair's art gallery, had a slightly longer afterlife as the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. As the museum grew, the school moved to Broad Street in Philadelphia, and the museum moved its collection to the newly built Philadelphia Museum of Art on Ben Franklin Parkway, where it remains today. The vacant Memorial Hall was abandoned for a time and went through several uses before becoming home to the Please Touch Museum in 2005. Although the physical structures had little impact on the urban landscape, Bruno Giberti connects the rise of the department stores like Wannamaker's in Philadelphia with the exhibition through architecture and design, suggesting that the fair's major influence was not felt in high culture museums, but in commercial displays and shopping habits.[5]

As in Philadelphia, investors in New Orleans attempted to retain some of the fair's structures to house a semi-permanent exhibition. The North, Central, and South American Exposition was opened from November 10, 1885 to March 31, 1886, containing a much-pared down version of the 1884-1885 exposition, but was met with sparse attendance.[6] Papers in the New Orleans Public Library point to a small, but vigorous effort to construct a fair on a steamship entitled "Great Eastern Exposition,"

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[4] Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 182-90, has the most thorough account of this venture to date.

[5] Ibid., 204-25.

[6] See The North, Central, and South American Exposition Collection, The Historic New Orleans Collection, MSS 215. See also, Lydia Strawn, *The North, Central, and South American Exposition, New Orleans* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1886), which was a guide published by the Illinois Central Railroad.

which was meant to travel to and dock in various ports during the year.[7] The efforts to continue expositions in Philadelphia and New Orleans failed, in no small part due to the fact that they presented exhibits devoid of the social or festive contexts of fairs. It was not just the sights that people came to the cities to see, but the opportunity to take part in a rare experience.

Without the discursive bookends of the open exposition—and a working guard to protect it—the Columbian Exposition became a kind of wild place after its closing, rewritten and reinscribed by the people whom the fair rejected. The closing ceremonies of the Columbian Exposition were canceled after Mayor Carter Henry Harrison was assassinated by Patrick Eugene Prendergast in his home only two days before the ceremonies. Chicago seemed to be in mourning for both its popular mayor and its successful exposition. Adelaide Evenden concluded her diary with the emotional entry, "When H. and I looked over last upon the beautiful buildings and the grand basin October 31st, we turned away too unutterably saddened for words and with tears rising to our eyes. Farewell—."[8] Officially, the fair quietly closed and began renovations to become a parkland. In stark contrast to the myth of order that the fair attempted to impart, the closing of the fair was nearly riotous. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that nearly ten thousand "relic hunting vandals" stormed the grounds soon after closing in search of souvenirs of the exposition, which included "bits of glass, pieces of staff, sticks, tin cans,

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[7] See William James Hammond Papers, New Orleans Public Library, Special Collections. This scheme may seem far-fetched, but a similar effort was planned for the Columbian Exposition with a floating theatre and museum. See William B. Felts, *The Scheme of Queen Isabella's Theatre: A Private Enterprise for the Columbian Exposition* (Russell Springs, Kan., Hupp & Beckell, 1891).

[8] Adelaide L. Evenden Diary, 1890-1895, Manuscript Collection, Chicago History Museum.

and bottles."[9] When the Guard rushed to secure and defend White City buildings, the crowd descended on the unprotected Midway. As tourists were drawn to the "savage" exhibits on the Midway during the exposition, so too were relic-hunters in their hunt for mementos. By the end of the day, the Java Village was nearly dismantled as the remaining guards were ineffective or unwilling to prevent the crowd from taking parts of the Asian exhibit.[10]

While the White City buildings languished, numerous homeless men and women sought out shelter during the winter of 1894. In many cases, canned or dried food could be salvaged from displays. For a period of time, the remains of the White City functioned as a homeless community, containing what the *Chicago Daily Tribune* described as "tramp nests."[11] Though their fires consumed some structures, there does not seem to be a consistent effort to evict them. That a space designed to showcase the grandest achievements of Western civilization was later claimed by hundreds of people as shelter is emblematic of the historical moment: as industrial technology was creating impressive wonders, it was also displacing vast groups of people who could only live in its shadows.

The Columbian Exposition had lasting ties to academic and intellectual institutions. The Palace of Fine Arts was turned into the Field Museum, and the University of Chicago, which had begun construction towards the end of the fair, was

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[9] Rebecca S. Graff, "Dream City, Plaster City: Worlds' Fairs and the Gilding of American Material Culture," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 16, no. 4 (December 2012): 706, and "Vandals at the Fair," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 January 1894, 11. According to the *Tribune*, the riotous mob included a high number of women and girls.

[10] "Jackson Park Fire," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 January 1894, 2.

[11] "Tramps Set Fires," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 Feb 1894, 1, and "Tramps at the Fair," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 February 1894, 1.

built on the southern border of the Midway, but the rest of the fair's buildings were largely consumed by a series of fires throughout 1894. In the wake of labor unrest with the Pullman Strike of 1894, arsonists probably set fire to a number of exposition structures throughout the year. In July, the biggest fire took most of the buildings with it and attracted a crowd of nearly ten thousand who came to watch the White City burn to the ground.[12]

Following the fair, the Midway entertainments circulated widely. Much of the Cairo Street exhibit traveled to New York, where reformers like Anthony Comstock launched a new assault to ban the *Danse du Ventre*, which ended up being more successful than in Chicago.[13] Perhaps the most successful legacy of the Columbian Exposition was the establishment of a Midway, which would became a staple of later world's fairs. Most notably, the demand was so great for entertainment in the 1901 Buffalo Pan-American Exposition, that a second Midway outside the fair was constructed. One of the partners in 1901 was Frederic Thompson, who would go on to design Luna Park in Coney Island.[14]

During the late nineteenth century, world's fairs were risky enterprises. The Philadelphia Centennial was the first international exposition in the U.S., and the New Orleans exposition's monetary failure cast doubt on whether or not such endeavors could be profitable; however, the Columbian Exposition proved to investors and the public that fairs could be highly profitable and culturally significant. Fair planners learned that incorporating entertaining performances and exhibits into the narrative of serious

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[12] White City Burned," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 July 1894, 7.

[13] See "Midway Dancers Guilty and Fined," *New York Herald*, 7 December 1893, 7, and "Gotham Shocked," *Boston Daily Globe*, 5 December 1893, 7.

[14] See Nasaw, *Going Out*, 69-71.

fairgoing was key to this effort. While the Philadelphia board attempted to restrict entertainment, the period between 1876 and 1893 contains a significant shift in the balance between education and amusement, as expositions sought to attract larger audiences by offering a multi-faceted fairgoing experience. This is a trend beginning perhaps with the popularity of the "Centennial City" just outside of fair walls. Exposition planners responded by bringing entertainment zones within the borders of the fairs, whether by adding "fakirs" in New Orleans or the Midway in Chicago. There is an interesting tension here: fair planning was becoming grander and more centralized during the period, but at the same time, fairs offered more subjective experiences to fairgoers. Displays became more immersive and self-directed, there were more auxiliary meetings and congresses for interest groups, and more guides catered to specific groups. Despite strict divisions among races, classes, and genders, expositions were also places where millions of people came together from across racial, class, geographical, and gender divides and shared in the same sites and experiences. As early forms of mass culture, expositions offered hegemonic visions that were continually frustrated by the variety of audience taste and desire.

**Reflections on Excavating the Past**

In 2007 and 2008, a team of archaeologists and students excavated sections of Chicago's Jackson Park that contained key buildings of the site of the Columbian Exposition. Focusing on the remains of the Ohio Building, archaeologist and participant Rebecca Graff writes that the team was often a tourist attraction in its own right. Following the popularity of Erik Larson's 2003 bestseller, *The Devil in the White City*,

which tells a parallel story of the construction and running of the fair with the exploits of the "first" American serial killer, H.H. Holmes, Graff reports that tourists were frequently drawn to the work site. Onlookers repeatedly asked the crews questions such as: "Have you read *The Devil in the White City*? You have? And have you found any dead bodies yet?"[15] Graff's experience of investigating tourist history while being inadvertently on stage performing archaeology for fans of a bestselling book suggests that the practice of tourism is one of consuming multiple visions. The Jackson Park visitor who is at the site because of an interest in the Larson book encounters a space in modern Chicago, looking for traces of a century-old exposition, while interpreting the site through the text of a popular hybrid fiction/history book. Both tourist and archaeologist perform roles that all mediate between event, space, and history.[16]

In *Requiem for a Nun*, William Faulkner famously wrote that "the past is never dead. It's not even past."[17] History is always being encoded into space and embodied in performance. Between 1876 and 1893, fair officials produced sites and sights to create powerful "historiographic operations" that placed Western achievement as occupying the pinnacle of civilization. Designers, planners, and supporters organized scripts and designed spaces that were "curatorial machines" to teach fairgoers how to "do" each exposition with the moral duty of self-education and improvement. That fairgoers often

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[15] Rebecca S. Graff, "Being Toured While Digging Tourism: Excavating the Familiar at Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition," International Journal of Historical Archaeology 15, no. 2 (June 2011): 222-35. See also Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003).

[16] Jackson Park holds a number of tourist sites in its own right, including the Museum of Science and Industry, in what was the Exposition's Palace of Fine Arts, and the "Obama Bike Tour."

[17] William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York: Random House, 1951), 73.

acted contrary to this message is not a signal that they were negligent, but that they, as tourists and consumers, did not approach the world and social evolution as if in a museum. They were not prepared to look at the exposition as an encyclopedia or object lesson, but were instead offering to engage it with all of their senses and create their own senses of space, time, and history. The past, it seems, is never dead; it is constantly performed.

## Appendix 1
## General Information Table

The following table includes the basic information about the official size, length, and income of each exposition. Unless otherwise specified, information is taken from Sources are taken from *The Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., Inc., 2008), 414, and David J. Bertuca, Donald K. Hartman, and Susan M. Neumeister, *The World's Columbian Exposition: A Centennial Bibliographic Guide* (Westport, C.N.: Greenwood Press, 1996).

| Exposition | Open/Close | Paid Attendance | Size (acres) | Tickets | Profit/Loss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Centennial Exhibition** | May 10, 1876-November 10, 1876 | 9,789,392 | 285 | 50 cents | +750,000 |
| **World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition** | December 16, 1884-June 1, 1885 | 1,158,840 | 249 | 50 cents, children arms free, others full price; Sunday: 25 cents | -470,000 |
| **World's Columbian Exposition** | May 1, 1893-October 30, 1893 | 21,477,000[18] | 686 | 50 cents/25 cents for children[19] | +$1,400,000 |

[18] This figure is generally reported as being closer to 27,000,000, which may equal the total paid and free tickets issued. James Gilbert notes that about seven million of that number were employees attending and more coming from repeat visits. See James Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 14. He puts the number of individual ticket buyers at "considerably less than half" of the 27,000,000 figure (James Burkhart Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 121. Rebecca S. Graff, "The Vanishing City: Time, Tourism, and the Archaeology of Event at Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2011), 5, estimates more like 12-15 million. With the total American popular being near sixty-three million, she notes that this is still a significant percentage of the American population, not to mention those others who did not attend but read about it in papers, perused friends' souvenirs and scrapbooks.

[19] 1,253,938 of this figure were children.

## Appendix 2
## Manuscript Source Tables

The following three tables include a breakdown of the manuscript sources that I consulted, organized by type of source, occupation of author, origin, and gender.

### Table 2: 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition Manuscript Sources

| Name | Type | Class or Occupation/Age (if known) | Location | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annie Britton | Scrapbook | Unknown | From New Jersey | F |
| Anna Keyser Baker | Diary | Retired Schoolteacher | Philadelphia | F |
| Thomas Archer | Scrapbook | Official Commissioner from the United Kingdom | United Kingdom | M |
| Gilbert Hartley | Diary | Broom Maker/ Twenty-Six | Hamilton, Ontario | M |
| Charles Hollingsworth | Diary | Newspaper Writer | Philadelphia | M |
| David Bailey | Book | Teacher | Ohio | M |
| Henry Adams | Letter | Elite/Thirty-Eight | Boston | M |
| Elizabeth Parsons Channing | Diary (published) | Elite /Fifty-Eight | Boston | F |
| Frank J. Thomas | Diary | Unknown/Seventeen | New York State | M |

### Table 3: 1884-1885 New Orleans Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Manuscript Sources

| Name | Type | Class or Occupation/Age (if known) | Location | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Ed" | Letters | Machine operator | Northern | M |
| Eleanor P. Thompson | Various | Probably elite/ Thirty-One | New Orleans | F |

### Table 4: 1893 World's Columbian Exposition Manuscript Sources

| Name | Type | Class or Occupation/Age (if known) | Location | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unknown (Title: "Vacation Days") | Diary | Unknown/Teenager | Northeast | Unknown |
| John Lunneen | Notebook/ Diary | Unknown/Teenager | Regional | M |
| Adelaide Evenden | Diary | Teacher/Unknown | Chicago | F |
| Mary F. Antisdel | Notebook | Elite/Twenty-Four | Chicago | F |
| Mary E. Chase | Diary | Unknown | Unknown | F |
| Elizabeth A. Gookin | Diary | Unknown, probably Elite/Twenty-Nine | Chicago | F |
| Unknown ("Summer 1893: Brooklyn to Chicago) | Scrapbook | Unknown | New York | Unknown |
| Robbins Family Scrapbook | Scrapbook | Elite/Unknown | Chicago | Unknown |
| Miss Fanny Johnston | Scrapbook | Compiled by Mother and/or Daughter | Unknown | F |
| Hebert de Long | Scrapbook | Middling (Clerk)/Unknown | Chicago | M |
| Florence Dymond | Letter | Elite/Twenty | New Orleans | F |
| Charles Andrew Heath | Diary | Upper to Middle | Chicago | M |
| Andrew H. Burgess | Diary/Review MS. | Engineer/Unknown | Worked at fair, from Eastern U.S. | M |

# FIGURES

**Figure 1: Thomas Hunter, "Machinery Hall, Galerie Des Machines," Free Library of Philadelphia, Centennial Portfolio.**

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, CHICAGO, 1893.

**Figure 2: "Bird's Eye View of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893," Rand, McNally, and Co., Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.**

**Figure 3: "Standard Guide Map, World's Columbian Exposition," Rand, McNally, and Co., Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.**

**Figure 4: Thomas Worth, "A Watch on the Waltham Company's Watch Operators," in Bricktop, *Going to the Centennial: A Guy to the Exhibition* (New York: Collin and Small), 1876, 25.**

LOST IN WONDER.

**Figure 5: Unidentified Artist, "Lost in Wonder," Supplement to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 1 April 1876, 72.**

AN EVENT IN THE VILLAGE—GOING TO THE CENTENNIAL.

AN EVENT IN THE VILLAGE—RETURN FROM THE CENTENNIAL.

**Figure 6: Frank Bellew, "An Event in the Village," *Harper's Bazar*, 15 July 1876, 464.**

*Published once a week at*
*PUCK BUILDING, World's Fair Grounds, Chicago.*

*For sale by all Newsdealers throughout the country at 10 cents per copy.*
*Subscription for entire term (26 weeks), $2.50, payable in advance.*

*Keppler & Schwarzmann, Publishers and Proprietors.*

*Monday, September 11, 1893.—No. 19.*

## REMARKS.

EVERY DOG has his day.

*

This is usually pleasant for the Dog and edifying to the world at large.

*

And so at the Fair. The National Dogs, the State Dogs, the Professional Dogs, the Commercial Dogs and many other Dogs with one kind of association or another have had their respective days and have proudly wagged their tails; and the Public has patted them on the head, and said: "Good Dog!"

*

But there are some Dogs that one would suppose would slink off to some retired corner, when they felt their day coming on, and have it there in quietness and seclusion.

*

For instance, it is a little difficult for one who has not been through the same experiences to see exactly what the Keeley Dog, whose day occurs next Friday, has to be so proud of.

*

At the same time, Keeley Day opens up some interesting possibilities in the matter of "days," that would prolong the Fair indefinitely, if the Directors should feel it incumbent on them to give each one an equal show.

*

The Law still regards drunkenness as a misdemeanor. In the eyes of the Law, therefore, a Keeley "graduate"—we believe that is the correct technical term — is on the same plane as any other offender who has been cured of his evil propensities by outside influences rather than through the exercise of personal determination and self-control. Accordingly, if a Keeley Day is in order, why not days for the "graduates" of our Workhouses, Reformatories and other similar institutions? In addition, Canada, South America and Central America could furnish contingents of Defaulting Bank Officials, Unfaithful Trustees, and Absconding County Treasurers, who have lost all taste for the practices that led to their emigration, and who would doubtless be glad of a day at the World's Fair.

*

But if, on the other hand, in line with many eminent authorities, we regard an insatiable appetite for alcohol as a disease, then the Keeley "graduate" falls naturally into the same category as any one who has been permanently cured of any disagreeable ailment. And what ailment is agreeable?

*

From this point of view everybody could have a day. Most us of could have a large and varied assortment of days. Think of the crowds that Whooping-cough Day would attract, and of the numbers that would stop over for Measles Day, Mumps Day, Scarlet Fever Day and Chicken-pox Day! This list could be greatly extended, but enough has been said to show the peculiar interest that would be excited in the World's Fair by carrying out to its logical conclusion the precedent established by Keeley Day.

*

Of course, the idea that the Directors of the World's Columbian Exposition would sanction a "day" that was intended merely as an advertisement for a proprietary medicine, however beneficial in its effects, is out of the question. For in that case we should expect to see a day for every pill, powder and potion that has ever been compounded for suffering humanity. And Beecham, Brandreth, Carter, Hood, and a thousand others, could raise their standards in the Court of Honor, and gather around them every man, woman and child who has ever invested a shilling's worth of silver for a guinea's worth of cure.

---

THE ROLLING chair gathers no moss-backs — they walk.

IT CAN never be said that a messenger-boy was touched to the quick.

---

*Take home a copy of*
PUCK WORLD'S FAIR SOUVENIR.
Price 50 cents.

---

THE FAIR AS AN EDUCATOR.

CHIEF NAMBI PAMBA'S ARRIVAL ON MIDWAY PLAISANCE, 1893.

HIS ARRIVAL HOME, ONE YEAR LATER.

Figure 7: Unidentified Artist, "The Fair as an Educator," *World's Fair Puck*, no. 19, 11 September 1893, 218. "The Fair as Educator" was a frequent title for illustrations depicting foreigners at the fair. See, for example, "The Fair as an Educator," *Puck*, no. 855, 26 July 1893, 366, depicting a Turk, whose concession was nearby the German Village, rushing home with a growler of beer.

**Figure 8: Unidentified Artist, "The Centennial—Random Shots by Our Special Artist,"** ***Harper's Weekly*****, 16 September 1876, 761. "Gratifying Two Senses" occupies the bottom central space in this satirical look at fairgoing.**

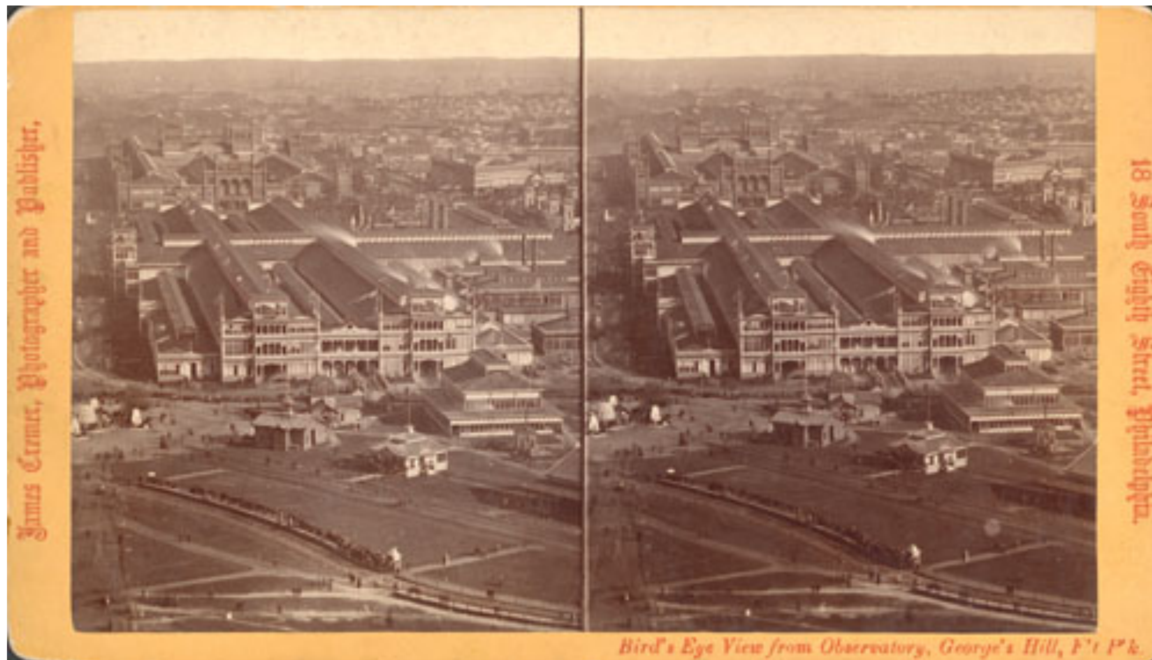
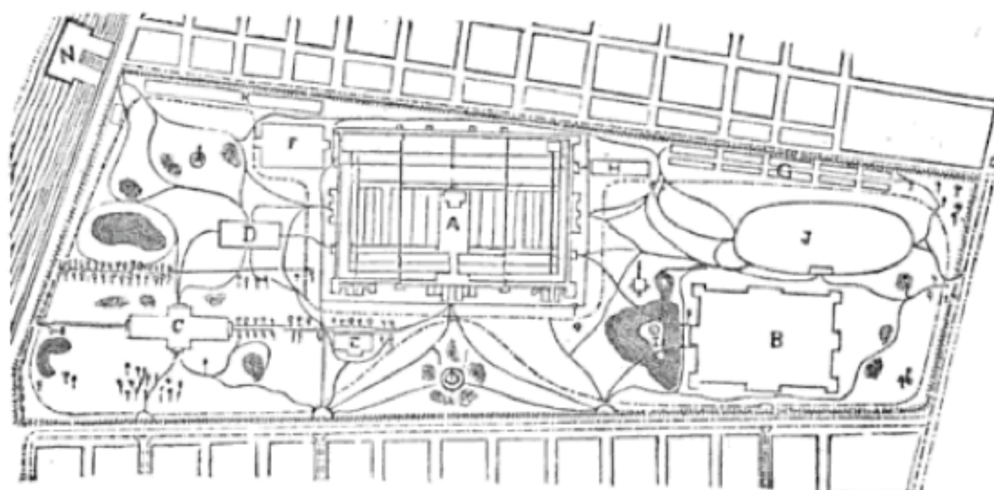



**Figure 9: James Cremer, "Bird's Eye View from Observatory, George's Hill," Stereograph, Free Library of Philadelphia.**

**Figure 10: Thomas Hunter, "Main Building, Palais de L'Industrie," Free Library of Philadelphia, Centennial Portfolio. While the Main building is the center of the image, a great deal of attention is given to the grounds as a promenade. In reality, there was not this much open space on the Centennial grounds (see Figure 14).**

**Figure 11: Centennial Photographic Company, "Brazilian Court in Main Building," Architect Frank Furness, Free Library of Philadelphia, c021502. Photographs rarely had visitors in the frame, as exposure times of cameras rendered them blurry, thus contributing to an idealized, orderly vision of the fair. One must imagine a popular space like this rather cramped.**



*THE GROUND PLAN.*

(*Scale 1,430 feet to the inch*).

**A—Main Building.**
**B—United States and States Exhibits.**
**C—Horticultural Hall.**
**D—Mexican Exhibits, right Main Building.**
**E—Art Gallery, front Main Building.**
**F—Furniture Exhibit.**
**G—Live Stock Arena, and Quarters in rear.**
H—Wagon Shed.
I—Grand Fountain, 120 feet high.
J—Race Course.
K—Mexican Headquarters.
L—Machinery Extension.
N—Exposition Wharfboat.
O—Exposition Pumping Works.

**Figure 12: Plan of the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition, from Herbert S. Fairall, *The World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition New Orleans, 1884-1885* (Iowa City: Republican Publishing Company, 1885), 427.**

**Figure 13: J.S. Rivers, "The World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, New Orleans," The Historic New Orleans Collection. In this advanced publicity lithograph poster for the exposition, the buildings are even more in focus compared to Centennial lithographs such as Figures 1 and 10.**

Figure 14: "Centennial Grounds and Exposition Buildings," National Gallery of Art. See Figure 7. Although the grounds are expansive, the Main and Machinery Buildings are clearly the primary focus of the plan.

Figure 15: Unidentified Photographer, "Turkish Village—Midway Plaisance." (See Chapter Three).

**Figure 16: The MacMonnies Fountain in the Grand Basin. C.D. Arnold, "Court of Honor," World's Columbian Exposition Photographs by C.D. Arnold, 1891-1894, Art Institute of Chicago.**

**Figure 17: Unidentified Photographer, "Grand Basin with Golden Statue," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, ICHi-17533.**

**Figure 18: "A Fair Warning,"** ***World's Fair Puck*****, no. 6, 66-67. Chicago History Museum.**

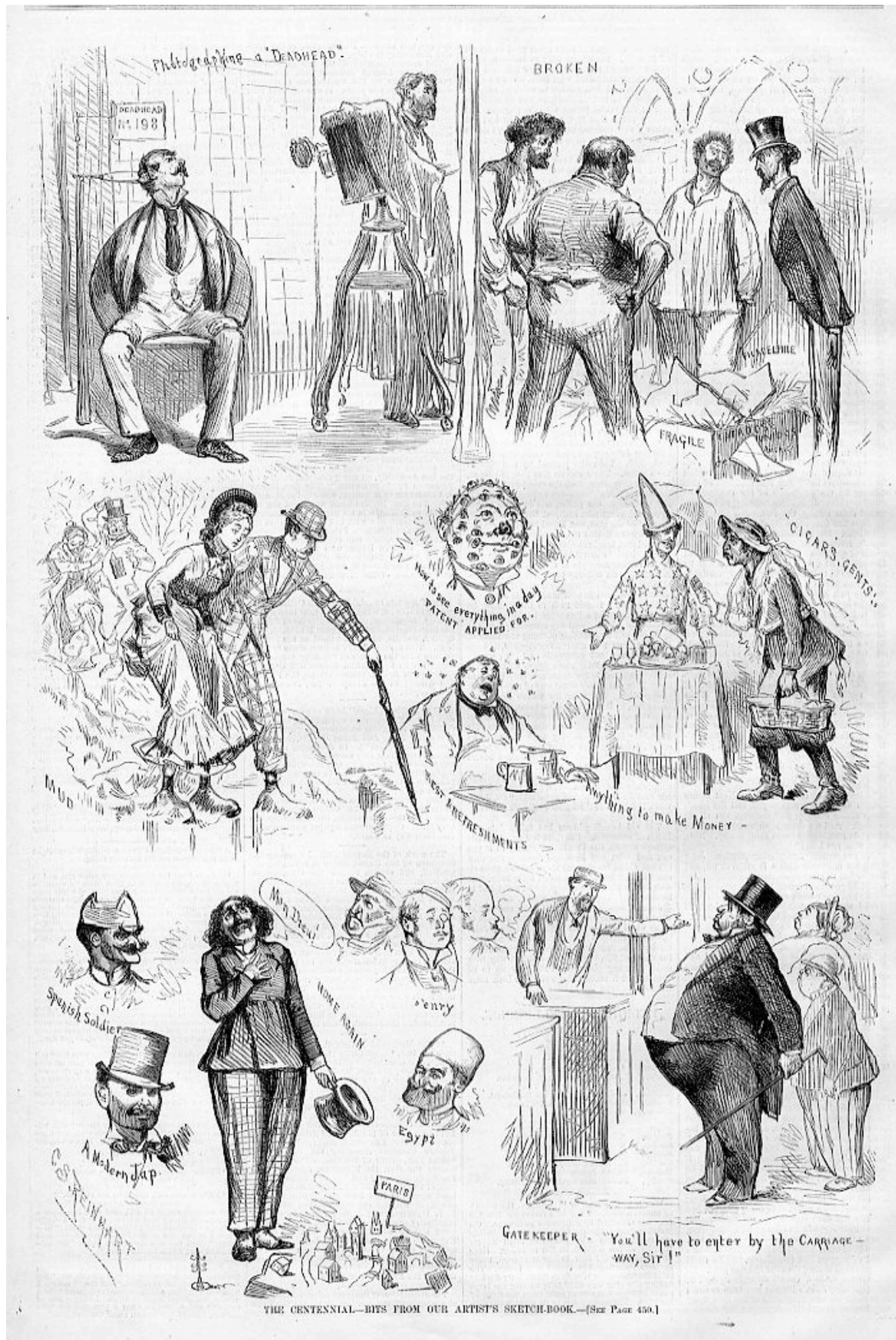



**Figure 19: C.S. Reinhart, "The Centennial," *Harper's Weekly*, 3 June 1876, representing the bewildering array of happenings at the fair.**

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CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A.

**Figure 20: Advertisement from John J. Flinn, *Official Guide to the Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: The Columbian Guide Company, 1893).**

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**Figure 21: From Rand, McNally, and Co., *A Week at the Fair* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1893). Even a major house like Rand, McNally sold "Butcher Boy" guides, i.e. cheap paper guides available in the same places as dime fiction.**

**Figure 22: Frederick Burr Opper, "Human Natur'," *World's Fair Puck*, no. 9, July 1893, back cover.**

**Figure 23: Centennial Photographic Company, “Willimantic Linen Company—Winding Machine,” Free Library of Philadelphia, c041339.**

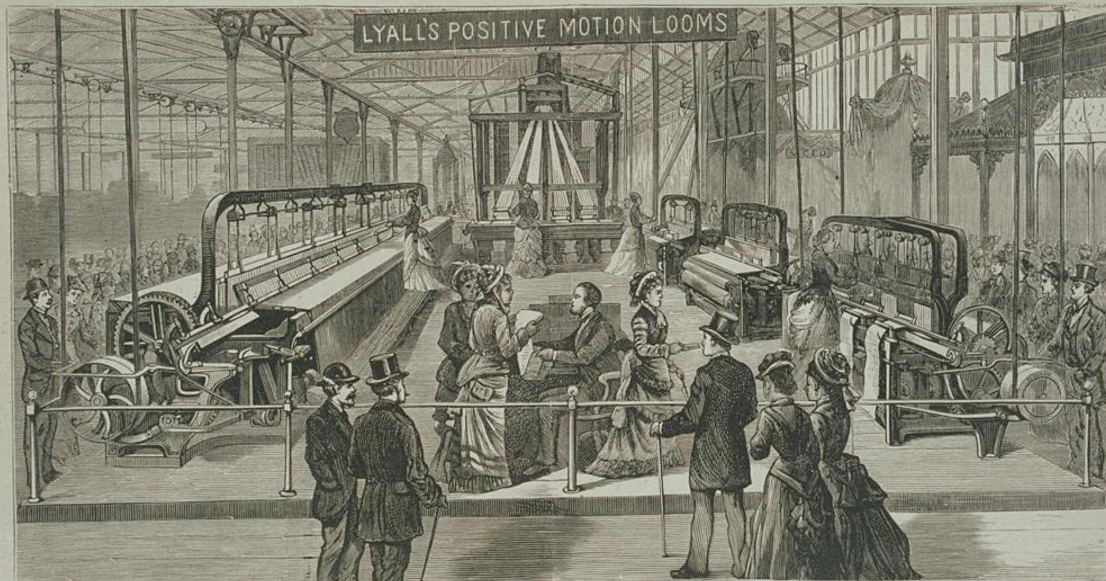



**Figure 24: Unidentified Artist, "Lyall's Positive Motion Looms, in Machinery Hall," *Frank Leslie's Historical Register*, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America (Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University). Note how the workers are separated by a barrier and raised stage.**

**Figure 25: American Oleograph Company, "Centennial Mirror," 1876, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Collection.**

**Figure 26: J. Ollman Lithographic Company, "Singer Advertising Card--Algeria," 1892, Singer Manufacturing Company Records, Wisconsin Historical Society, WHi-57274.**

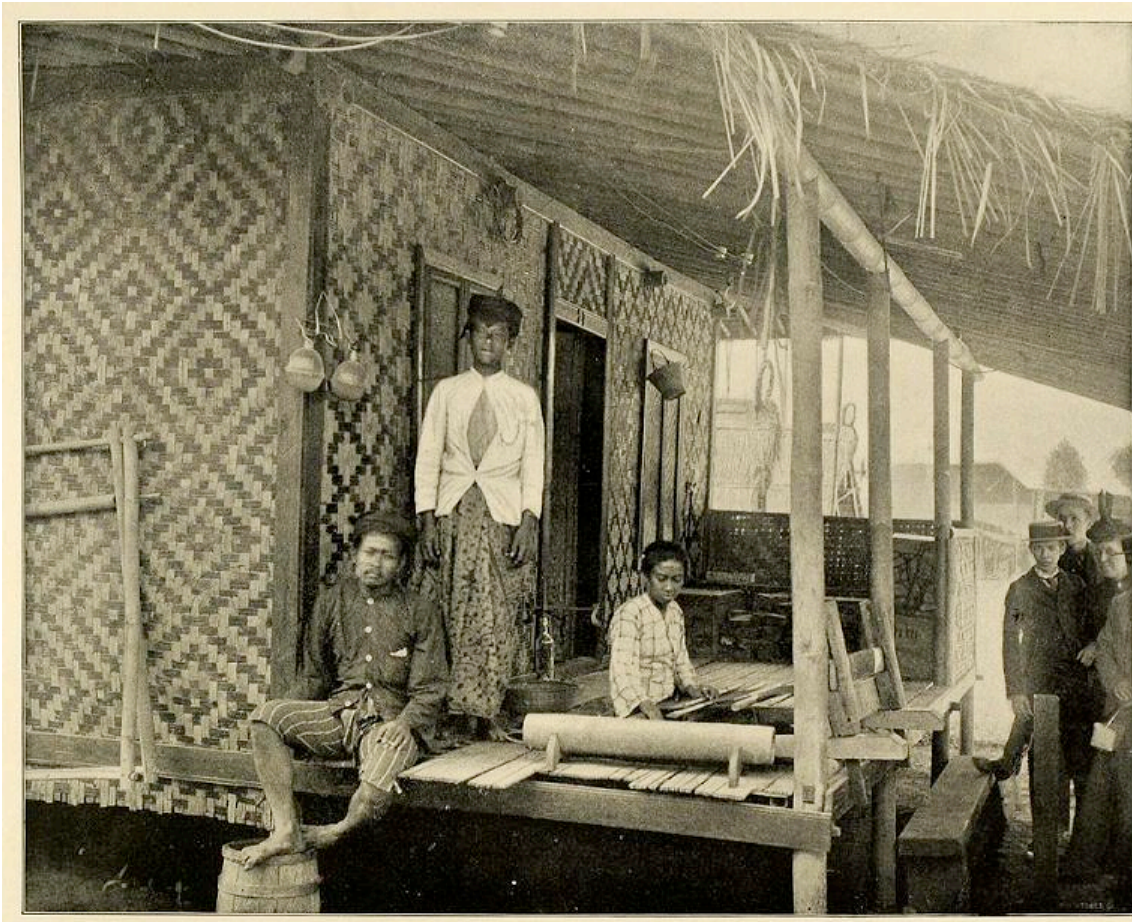


**Figure 27: W.B. Conkey Company, "Javanese House Builders."**

**Figure 28: Lithograph poster showing a typical act finale with exotic locations and large choruses. Forbes Company, "Kiralfy Bros. 'Around the World'," Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.**

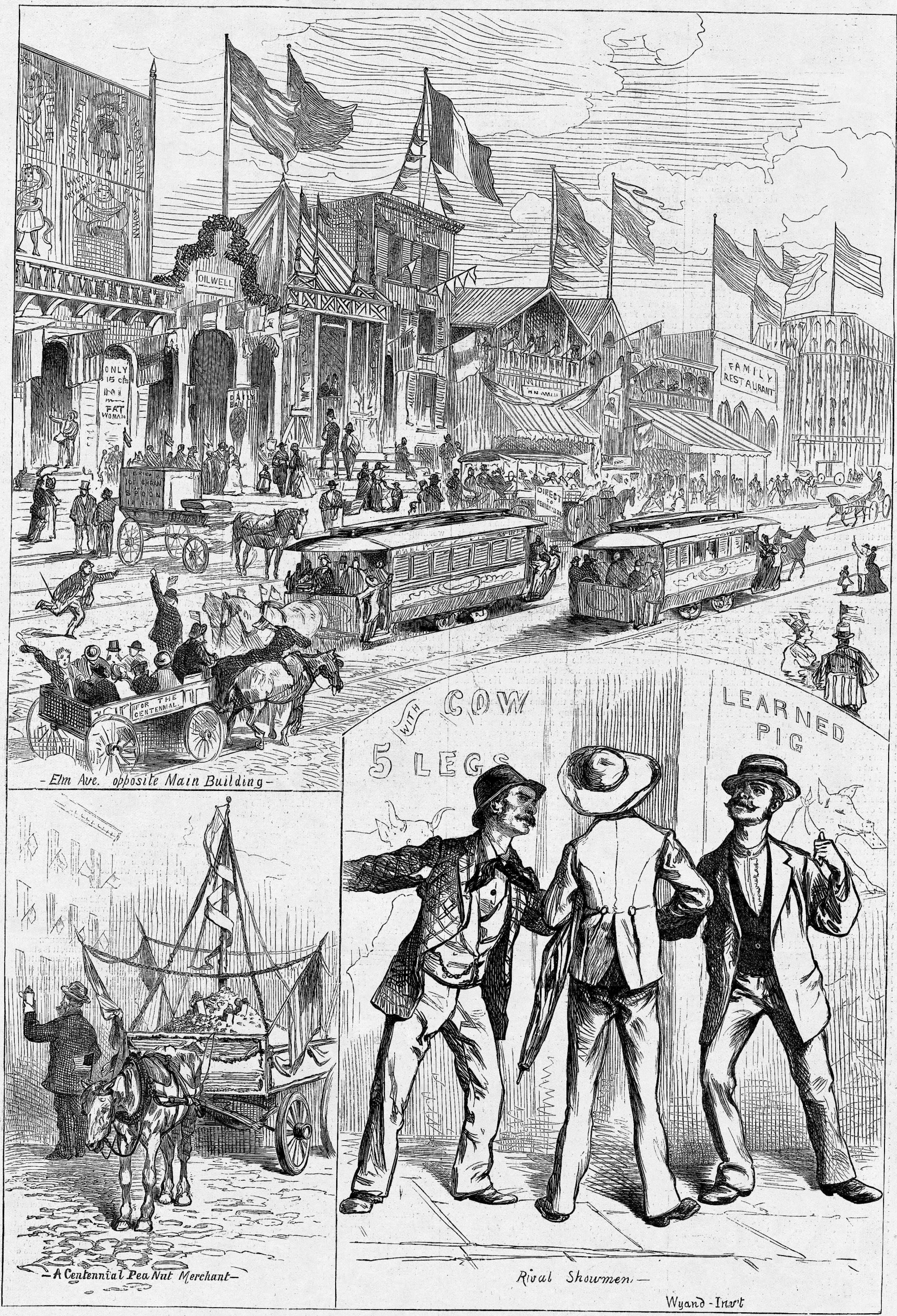
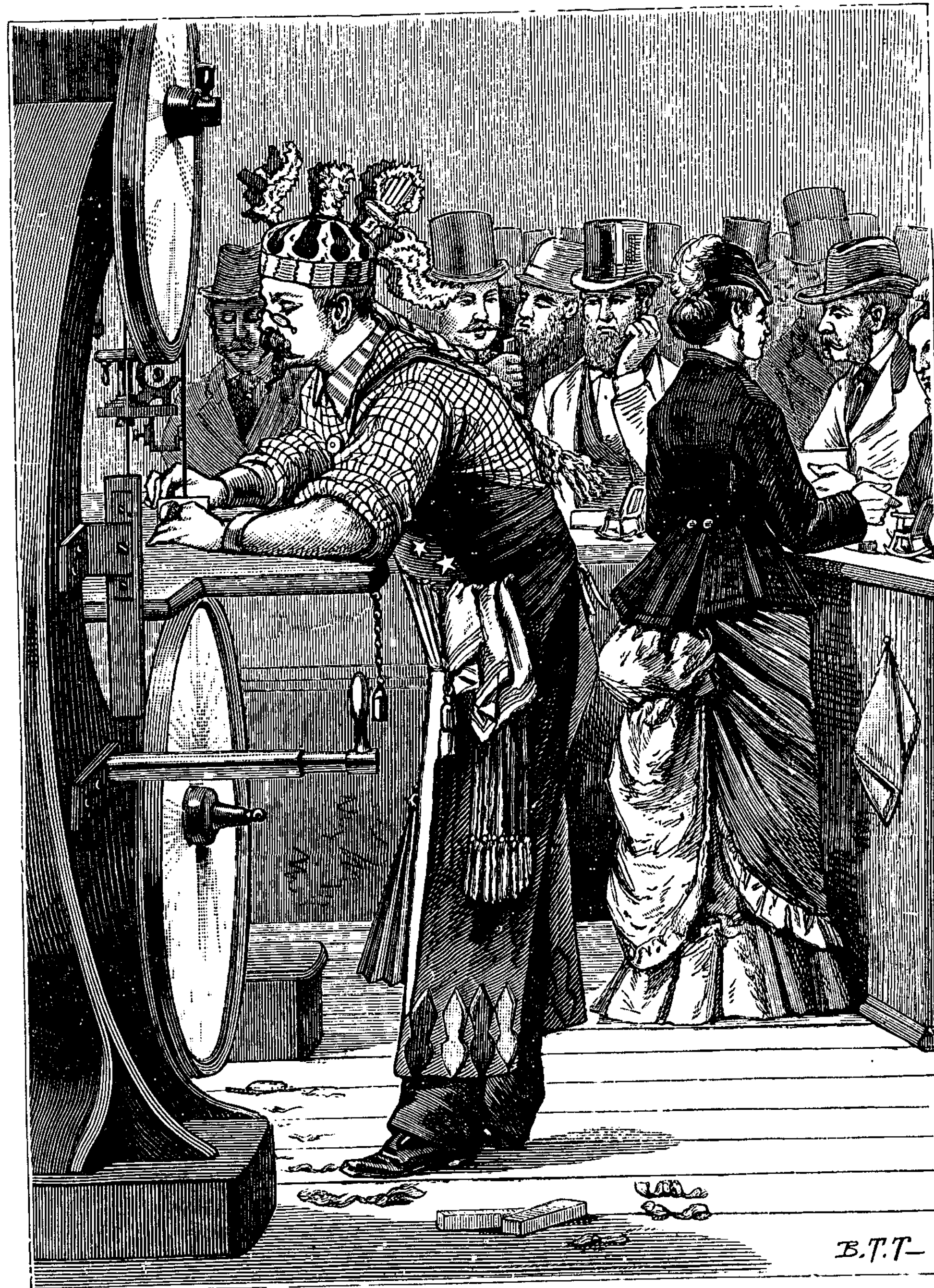



**Figure 29: D.E. Wyand, "The Centennial—Outside Shows, Elm Avenue, Destroyed by Fire, September 9," *Harper's Weekly*, 30 September 1876, 800.**




THE "MOHAWK DUTCHMAN" WOOD-SAWYER, IN MACHINERY HALL.

**Figure 30: B.T.T., "The 'Mohawk Dutchman' Wood-Sawyer, in Machinery Hall," *Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the Centennial Exhibition*, 209, showing McChesney's at work in his booth. Contemporary *cartes de visite* depict him in similar costume.**

Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, 20007591_1

**Figure 31: John Hyde, "The Instruction of Children in the Kindergarten Cottage, Under The Auspices of the Women's Department,"** ***Frank Leslie's Historical Register*****, 118. Note the seated spectators and those watching from the window, as if in a theatre.**

**Figure 32: William A. Rogers, "The Ideal American Sabbath," *World's Fair Puck*, no. 5, 5 June 1893, 54-55, Chicago History Museum, ICHi-62318.**

ened on the 1st of May and closed on the 15th of Octo-r, the time occupied being two weeks less than that lotted to our own. The official catalogue of the London xhibition was not ready, in a perfect edition, until the 0th of April, notwithstanding 10,000 catalogues, properly ade up and stitched, were delivered at the Building on e morning of the 1st of May, together with two copies, egantly bound in morocco, with gilt edges, and lined ith silk, for presentation to Her Majesty the Queen and nary Exhibition and social gathering, while famine and pestilence were confidently expected as the inevitable consequence of the assembling of such vast multitudes in one city. Quite the reverse of all this lugubrious condition was, however, the case. London exhibited a wonderful degree of order and good-humored accommodation for the crowds, and power to provide for their wants. While the general health of the metropolis is said to have been good beyond the usual average, it was found that it was police were entirely unaided by soldiery, and simply managed, through the necessary increase and discipline of their own numbers, to keep the peace of the city. Enormous excursion trains daily poured in their thousands and tens of thousands without disturbing the unanimity of the residents. It was said that, throughout the season, there was more unrestrained and genuine fellowship and less formality and customary ceremonial than had ever been known in English society. It was like an assembling for a gigantic

SCENE IN A TUNISIAN CAFE—THE SCARF DANCE.

Prince Albert. This official catalogue consisted of 320 pages, and was sold for one shilling. Translations in French and German were also sold at two shillings and sixpence each. At the opening there were about 25,000 persons present in the Building. Throughout the whole period of the great Exhibition the state of the metropolis occasioned wonder and admiration on the part of all who visited it. Previous to the opening there had been predictions made that confusion, disorder and demoralization, even actual revolution, would result from this extraordi- not even necessary for any special steps to be taken on the part of the authorities for the housing of guests. Such were the hospitalities exercised, the contrivances made, and the extensive arrangements due to private enterprise, that these, taken in conjunction with the shortness of the visits and the rapidity of the succession of guests, enabled the city to comprehend within her limits a very large assemblage of visitors, in addition to her own formidable population, then numbering 2,500,000.

In conducting order in the public thoroughfares the picnic, where all felt at liberty to roam at will, and all were disposed to yield something to the novelty of the occasion. Country parties actually picnicked in the open air, crowds having brought provisions in large baskets. Numbers of the working people received holidays, and through the generosity, and at the expense, of their employers, visited the Exhibition. Eight hundred agricultural laborers, in their peasant's attire and decorated with rosettes of colored ribbons, assembled from districts in Surrey and Sussex, and went to London by special train, conducted by their

**Figure 33: Unidentified Artist, "Scene in a Tunisian Café—The Scarf Dance," *Frank Leslie's Historical Register*, 119.**

**Figure 34: Sol Eytinge, Jr., "The Centennial—Visit of the 'Small Breed' Family,"** ***Harper's Weekly*****, 4 November 1876, 904.**

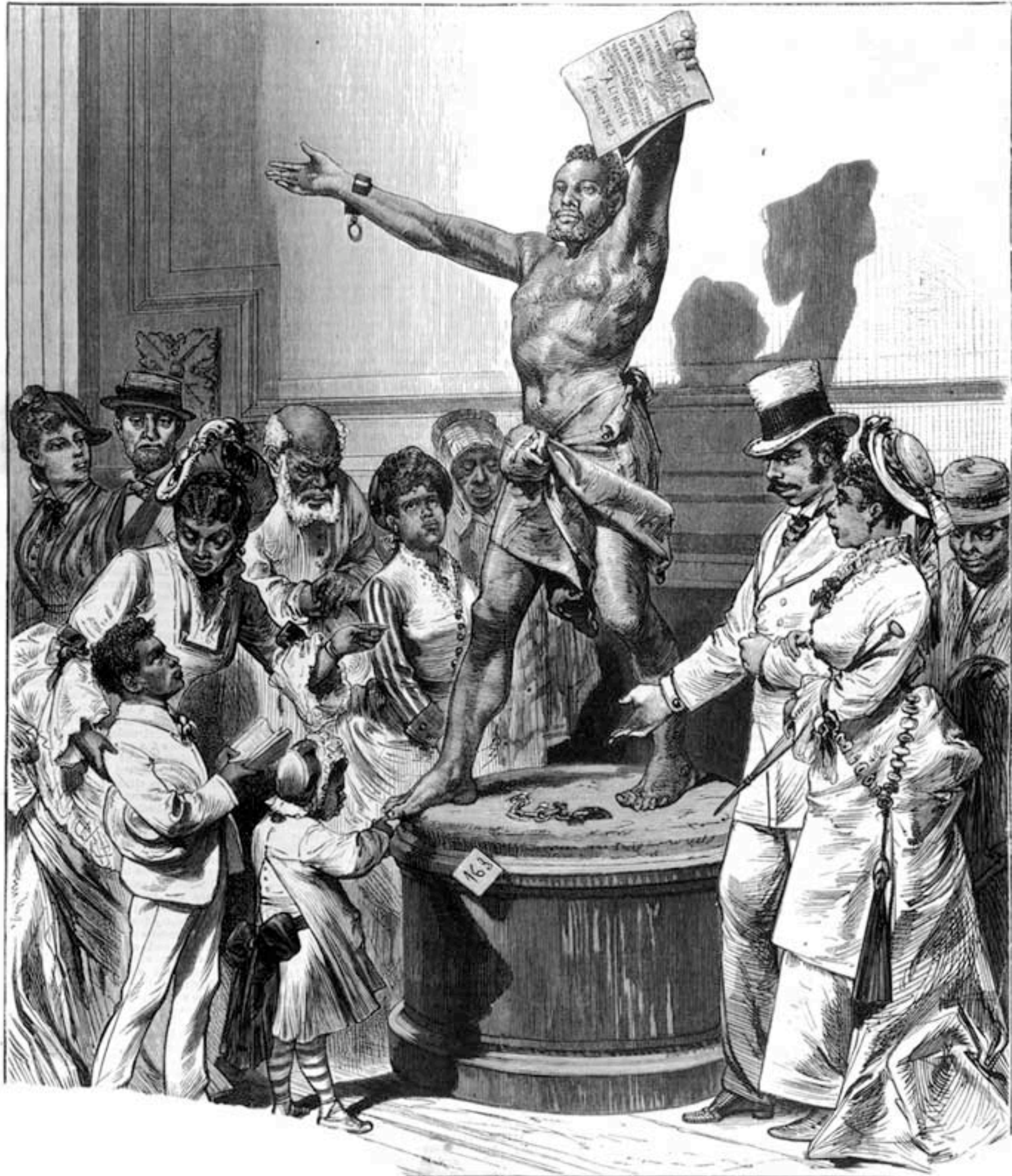



**Figure 35: Fernando Miranda, “The Centennial Exposition--The statue of ‘The Freed Slave’ in Memorial Hall,” *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, August 5, 1876.**

THE LIBERTY BELL.

**Figure 36: E.W. Kemble, "The Liberty Bell," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, June 1885, 118.**

Figure 37: E.W. Kemble, "On Dixie's Line," Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

**Figure 38: Anonymous Photograph on the Dahomey Village enclosure, Chicago History Museum, World's Columbian Exposition Collection, ICHi-26924.**

A Donkey Boy, Street of Cairo,

Will be remembered by all who cantered up and down the street on a donkey's back.

**Figure 39: Unidentified Photographer, "A Donkey Boy, Street of Cairo," *Chicago Times Portfolio of Midway Types* (Chicago: American Engraving Company, 1893). This genre of studio picture of workers from the Midway Plaisance proved to be enormously popular.**

**Figure 39: Amateur cyanotype of a man walking into the frame as the unidentified photographer attempts to photograph sedan chair carriers. World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, ICHi-23706.**

**Figure 40: Unidentified Photographer, "Samoan Village on the Midway Plaisance," World's Columbian Exposition Collection, Chicago History Museum, ICHi-25237.**

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Eleanor P. Thompson Collection. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

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