Guide to the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 Collection 1892-1930
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Descriptive Summary

Identifier        ICU.SPCL.EXPO1893
Title             World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. Collection
Date              1892-1930
Size              19.5 linear feet (18 boxes)
Repository        Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center
                   University of Chicago Library
                   1100 East 57th Street
                   Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract          The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 Collection gathers together a range of materials produced during and after the fair. Held in Chicago’s Jackson Park, the World’s Columbian Exposition was organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in America and both the nation’s and “civilization’s progress” since then. The Collection’s materials cover the years 1892 to 1930 (bulk 1892-1894) and contain a noteworthy gathering of photographs, illustrations and newspaper articles on the fair. Users will also find tickets, event programs, guides and memorabilia.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research. Photographs by C. D. Arnold and E. R. Walker have been digitized and are available as part of the University of Chicago Photographic Archive.

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The University of Chicago Library appreciates hearing from anyone who may have information about any of the images in this collection.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Historical Note
Following the successes of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and the 1879 Universal Exposition in Paris, calls were made in the 1880s to organize a world’s fair to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ voyage to American in 1892. Congress selected Chicago as the host city on February 25, 1890 and President William Harrison approved the resolution in April. As part of bidding to host the World’s Columbian Exposition, planners in Chicago secured $5 million in pledges from 30,000 parties who then became stockholders in the corporation later established to finance the fair. After Chicago was chosen to host, the board and officers of the stock corporation joined with the World’s Columbian Commission, a body of members appointed by President William Harrison, to organize, build and administer the fair.

The organizers had grand ambitions, aspiring to put on the “fairest fair of all” and outshine the 1889 Paris Exposition, then considered the greatest fair of the century. To realize those aims, they selected renowned landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmstead to be chief architect. His plan of the fairgrounds transformed Jackson Park (a 600-acre tract of land) by diverting water from Lake Michigan to fill a dredged system of lagoons, islands and waterways that mimicked the canals of Venice. The Chicagoan Daniel H. Burnham was named chief of construction, and it was he who selected and oversaw the architects, engineers and craftsman need to build the more than 200 buildings that were erected for the fair. The fourteen Great Buildings, most of which surrounded Wooded Island and Grand Basin, were designed by various architectural firms across the U.S. One of these architects was Henry Ives Cobb, who designed the Fisheries Building but also several of the original buildings on the University of Chicago campus (Foster Hall appears in one of the collection’s photographs of the Ferris Wheel). The Manufactures and Liberal Arts Buildings was the largest structure on the fairgrounds, encompassing 1.3 million square feet or 31.5 acres.

Burnham and the organizers held a national contest to solicit ides for an attraction that would surpass the Eiffel Tower of the Paris Exposition. Initially deemed too ambitious, George Ferris’ proposal for an enormous revolving wheel that could carry 40 passengers was eventually selected and proved an immense sensation. In fact, overall attendance of the fair exceeded expectations, ultimately totaling 27.5 million visitors. The Exposition was open to the public from March 1
to October 30, 1893 and admission cost 50 cents for adults and children. Various attractions within the Exposition or on the Midway Plaisance had special admission fees, typically 25 or 50 cents. Examples include: Esquimaux (Eskimo) Village, Cairo Village, Dahomey Village, Ferris Wheel, Japanese Tea House, and Old Vienna. The Convent La Rabida was a replica of the Franciscan monastery where Christopher Columbus stayed before being granted an audience with Queen Isabella of Spain.

In accordance with plans made beforehand to identify financing sources, most of the Great Buildings were torn down and their steel sold for scrap metal. Although many were built in classical styles that suggested stone edifices, none of the buildings were made to endure, typically having facades made of “staff,” a hardened mixture of plaster, cement and hemp. Buildings whose raw materials would not be resold were burned in planned and accidental fires in early 1894. The only surviving building that is still on the fairgrounds is the Fine Arts Palace (now the Museum of Science and Industry). Three other structures survive but have been relocated from Chicago. They are the Maine Building (now in Poland Springs, Maine), the Dutch House (Brookline, Massachusetts), and the Norway Building (Blue Mounds, Wisconsin). The tragic fire that razed the Cold Storage Building and is depicted in one of the collection’s photographs occurred on July 13, 1893.

Scope Note

The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 Collection ranges from 1892 to 1930, with the bulk spanning 1892-1894. Items in the collection are arranged in six series according to material type: Administrative Records (Series I); Ephemera (Series II); Souvenir Literature (Series III); Memorabilia (Series IV); Subsequent Writings (Series V); and Photographs (Series VI). Material in all series are arranged alphabetically.

Series I contains records pertaining to logistics, planning and putting on the Exposition, including congress auxiliary documents.

Series II is divided into three subseries. Subseries 1 gathers together ephemera related to attendance of events and the fair itself. Ticket stubs may be found here along with programs, invitations and a map of the fairgrounds. Subseries 2 contains clippings from, and in some cases full issues of, newspaper and magazine articles that narrate or depict visits to exhibits and buildings. Some of the magazine clippings on exhibits in Box 3 include depictions of how non-Western cultures and peoples were portrayed at the fair. Subseries 3 also has descriptions of buildings and exhibits but they are all captured through a form of visual media, such as prints or illustrations. The “White City as It Was” Artfolio is a published collection of pictures with short narrative descriptions.

Series III houses items that were intended to be souvenirs or that pertain to the sale of souvenirs.
Items that are commemorative artifacts, coins and ornaments will be found in Series IV.

Series V has material that was generated subsequent to the fair and is a recollection or a reporting on the fate of certain structures.

Lastly, Series VI contains the Collection’s photographs. Of note here are two subseries dedicated to the fair scenes and buildings captured by the official Exposition photographer, C.D. Arnold, and Chicago photographer, E.R. Walker. The photographs by Arnold and Walker have been digitized and are available as part of the University of Chicago Photographic Archive.

Related Resources

Photographs by C. D. Arnold have been digitized and are available as part of the University of Chicago Photographic Archive.

Photographs by E. R. Walker have been digitized and are available as part of the University of Chicago Photographic Archive.

Albert, Allen D., Reports on World’s Fairs

Buzzell, Edgar A. Collection

Cliff, Melissa. Collection

Green, Arnold. Collection

Lindblad, Andrew. Collection

Mueller, Ian. Collection

Scammon, Ariana E. Collection

Chicago Collections Consortium “1893 World’s Fair” Collection

Subject Headings

- Arnold, C. D. (Charles Dudley), 1844-1927
- Nast, Thomas, 1840-1902
- Swift, Harold Higgins, 1885-1962
- Walker, E. R.
- World’s Columbian Exposition (1893: Chicago, Ill.)
- Chicago (Ill.) -- Exhibitions
INVENTORY

Series I: Administrative Records

Box 1
Folder 1
  Committee on Grounds and Buildings, Report, 1893
Box 1
Folder 2
  Congress auxiliary pamphlets, 1893
Box 1
Folder 3
  Exhibitor invoices, undated
Box 1
Folder 4
  Friday Club Auxiliary, Columbian Bazaar Catalogue, 1892
Box 1
Folder 5
  Stock certificate and note to stockholders, 1892-1904
Box 2
Folder 1
  Customs label for shipment from Germany, undated
Box 2
Folder 2
  Floor plan drawings of Manufactures and Liberal Arts buildings

Series II: Ephemera

Subseries 1: Ceremonies, Event Programs, Visitor Guides

Box 3
Folder 1
  Event programs and daily bulletins, 1893
Box 3
Folder 2
  French coal mines brochure, 1893
Box 3
Folder 3
  Invitations to banquets and ceremonies, Comte de Balincourt, General of the French Pavilion, 1893 [1/2]
Box 3
Folder 4
  Invitations to banquets and ceremonies, Comte de Balincourt, General of the French Pavilion, 1893 [2/2]
Box 3
Folder 5
  Invitations to ceremonies and receptions, Ms. Marion Talbot, 1893
Folder 6
Invitations to and programs from ceremonies, Mr. and Mrs. Martin J. Russell, 1892-1893 [1/2]

Box 3
Folder 7
Invitations to and programs from ceremonies, Mr. and Mrs. Martin J. Russell, 1892-1893 [2/2]

Box 3
Folder 8
World’s Columbian Exposition. The Javanese Theatre, Java Village, Midway Plaisance, World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893: Containing Also a Short Description of Java, the People, Languages, Customs, Food, Products, Etc. Chicago: Java Chicago Exhibition Syndicate, 1893
View digitized documents. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/expo1893-0001-003

Box 3
Folder 9
“Notebook for Visitors to the World’s Fair” with handwritten notes by unidentified fairgoer, undated

Box 3
Folder 10
Official guidebook with map, 1893

Box 3
Folder 11
Official program, New York Columbian Celebration, 1892

Box 3
Folder 12
Tickets and passes, 1893

Box 3
Folder 13
“While We Are Honoring Columbus,” Song of the Fellowship Club, undated

Subseries 2: Periodical Articles and Illustrations

Box 3
Folder 14
Clippings and fragments, undated

Box 3
Folder 15
Foreign language news articles, 1893

Box 3
Folder 16
Facsimile of Queen Isabella’s Will, 1893

Box 3
Folder 17
Illustrations of exhibits and grounds, magazine clippings, undated [1/3]

Box 3
Folder 18
Illustrations of exhibits and grounds, magazine clippings, undated [2/3]

Box 3
Folder 19
Illustrations of exhibits and grounds, magazine clippings, undated [3/3]

Box 3
Folder 20
Pages from a scrapbook of the “Exposition Sketches” column in the Standard (Chicago), 1893

Box 4
Folder 1
Chicago Daily Tribune commemorative illustration, October 21, 1892

Box 4
Folder 2
Daily Inter Ocean (Chicago), articles on past fairs from 1851 and on Congress auxiliaries, November 1, 1893

Box 4
Folder 3
Daily Inter Ocean Supplement (Chicago), cartoon by Thomas Nast, October 22, 1892

Box 4
Folder 4

Box 4
Folder 5
Printed photograph from a magazine of several exposition buildings, circa 1893

Box 4
Folder 6
The Standard (Chicago), full issue including the “Exposition Sketches” column, July 13, 1893

Box 4
Folder 7
The Standard (Chicago), clippings of the “Exposition Sketches” column, August to November 1893 [1/2]

Box 4
Folder 8
The Standard (Chicago), clippings of the “Exposition Sketches” column, August to November 1893 [2/2]

Box 5
Folder 1
Newspaper issues reporting on “Chicago Day” at the Exposition, Chicago Heard and Chicago Dispatch, October 9, 1893

Box 6
Scrapbook of World’s Columbian Exposition. (Codex Manuscripts MS1369)

Subseries 3: Visual Media of Grounds and Exhibits

Box 7
Folder 1
“Chicago Tribune Art Supplements,” prints of fair scenes and grounds, 1893 [1/3]
Box 7
Folder 2
“Chicago Tribune Art Supplements,” prints of fair scenes and grounds, 1893 [2/3]
Box 7
Folder 3
“Chicago Tribune Art Supplements,” prints of fair scenes and grounds, 1893 [3/3]
Box 7
Folder 4
Prints of paintings of Exposition site and structures, 1891-1894
Box 7
Folder 5
Youth’s Companion (Boston), “World’s Fair Number,” 1893
Box 7
Folder 6
World’s Columbian Exposition Illustrated, first and second pages, April 1893
Box 8
Folder 1
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, front matter and overview, 1894
Box 8
Folder 2
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 1, 1894
Box 8
Folder 3
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 2, 1894
Box 8
Folder 4
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 3, 1894
Box 8
Folder 5
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 4, 1894
Box 8
Folder 6
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 5, 1894
Box 8
Folder 7
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 6, 1894
Box 8
Folder 8
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 7, 1894
Box 8
Folder 9
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 9, 1894
Box 8
Folder 10
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 10, 1894
Box 8
Folder 11
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 11, 1894
Box 8
Folder 12
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 12, 1894
Box 8
Folder 13
“The White City as It Was” Artfolio, part 17, 1894
Box 9
Folder 1
Official postcard, undated
Box 9
Folder 2
Rand McNally “Columbian Album containing Photographic Views,” part 9, 1894
Box 9
Folder 3
Rand McNally “Columbian Album containing Photographic Views,” part 10, 1894
Box 9
Folder 4
Rand McNally “Columbian Album containing Photographic Views,” part 11, 1894
Box 9
Folder 5
“World’s Fair through a Camera: Snapshots by an Artist,” undated

Series III: Souvenir Literature
Box 9
Folder 6
C. Graham, “The World’s Fair in Watercolors, undated
Box 9
Folder 7
H. Liebes and Co. Souvenir Catalogue, 1893-1894
Box 9
Folder 8
Martin’s World’s Fair Album-Atlas and Family Souvenir, undated
Box 9
Folder 9
Souvenir booklet sponsored by Heath and Milligan Manufacturing, undated

Series IV: Memorabilia
Box 9
Folder 10
Columbian half dollar coin, 1893
Box 10
Commemorative shaving blade by H. Boker & Co., undated
Series V: Subsequent Writings

Box 11
Folder 1
Clippings on the Fine Arts Building and demolition of a tower on the Midway, circa 1930

Box 11
Folder 2
Recollections of the Exposition and the University of Chicago by Harold Swift and Nathaniel Butler, 1923

Series VI: Photographs

The photographs by Arnold and Walker have been digitized and are available as part of the University of Chicago Photographic Archive.

Subseries 1: Single Prints and Bound Albums

Box 12
“The German Building” by William Federbusch, 1908

Box 13
Photo Album of Exposition photographs by E. R. Walker, 1893

Box 14
Photo Album of unofficial Exposition photographs by Gardiner, undated

Box 15
Photo Album of Ocean Crossing and Visit to the Fair and U.S. Destinations, undated.
(Codex Manuscripts, MS1457)

Subseries 2: C.D. Arnold

Box 16
Folder 1
Administration Building

Box 16
Folder 2
Art Building

Box 16
Folder 3
Arts Building from Wooded Island

Box 16
Folder 4
The Café de Marine

Box 16
Folder 5
Dedication Ceremony inside Manufacturers Building, October 22, 1892

Box 16
Folder 6
Electricity Building

Box 16
Folder 7
Fire at the Cold Storage Building

Box 16
Folder 8
Horticultural Building Dome, from Asian Garden

Box 16
Folder 9
Interior Women's Building

Box 16
Folder 10
In the Esquimaux Village [1/2]

Box 16
Folder 11
In the Esquimaux Village [2/2]

Box 16
Folder 12
Japanese Ho-o-den

Box 16
Folder 13
Japanese Tea Garden [1/3]

Box 16
Folder 14
Japanese Tea Garden [2/3]

Box 16
Folder 15
Japanese Tea Garden [3/3]

Box 16
Folder 16
Japanese Boat

Box 16
Folder 17
Java Village, on the Midway

Box 16
Folder 18
Lagoon, Looking South

Box 16
Folder 19
Lagoon and West Side Manufactures Building

Box 16
Folder 20
Liberal Arts Building from Wooded Island

Box 16
Folder 21
Loggia, Women's Building

Box 16
Folder 22
Looking West from Café de Marine
Box 16
Folder 23
  Looking West on Grand Basin
Box 16
Folder 24
  Looking West on South Side of Grand Basin
Box 16
Folder 25
  Machinery Hall
Box 16
Folder 26
  Manufactures Building
Box 16
Folder 27
  Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building
Box 16
Folder 28
  Mines and Mining Building
Box 16
Folder 29
  North West from Liberal Arts Building
Box 16
Folder 30
  South End Manufactures Building
Box 16
Folder 31
  South Entrance Fisheries Building
Box 16
Folder 32
  South West from Roof of Liberal Arts Building
Box 16
Folder 33
  West from Roof of Liberal Arts Building
Box 16
Folder 34
  West View of Manufactures Building
Box 17
Folder 1
  Boone and Crockett Club House [1/3]
Box 17
Folder 2
  Boone and Crockett Club House [2/3]
Box 17
Folder 3
  Boone and Crockett Club House [3/3]
Folder 4
  California State Building
Box 17
Folder 5
  A Caravel
Box 17
Folder 6
  Cliff Dwellers
Box 17
Folder 7
  Columbian Fountain and Machinery Hall [1/2]
Box 17
Folder 8
  Columbian Fountain and Machinery Hall [2/2]
Box 17
Folder 9
  Columbian Fountain
Box 17
Folder 10
  Convent of La Rabida
Box 17
Folder 11
  Detail of the Columbian Fountain
Box 17
Folder 12
  Egyptian Temple, on the Midway (with Foster and Kent Halls in the background)
Box 17
Folder 13
  Farmer's Boy Statue
Box 17
Folder 14
  German Village, on the Midway [1/4]
Box 17
Folder 15
  German Village, on the Midway [2/4]
Box 17
Folder 16
  German Village, on the Midway [3/4]
Box 17
Folder 17
  German Village, on the Midway [4/4]
Box 17
Folder 18
  German Gates, in the Manufactures Building
Box 17
Folder 19
A Gondola
Box 17
Folder 20
  Group on Colonnade
Box 17
Folder 21
  Guatemala Building
Box 17
Folder 22
  India Building
Box 17
Folder 23
  Looking North from the Colonnade [1/2]
Box 17
Folder 24
  Looking North from the Colonnade [2/2]
Box 17
Folder 25
  Naval Exhibit
Box 17
Folder 26
  Norway Building
Box 17
Folder 27
  Old Vienna, on the Midway
Box 17
Folder 28
  The Peristyle and Arch
Box 17
Folder 29
  The Peristyle and Arch, Looking Northeast
Box 17
Folder 30
  Statue of the Republic
Box 17
Folder 31
  Under the Ferris Wheel
Box 17
Folder 32
  Virginia State Building (replica of Mount Vernon)

Subseries 3: E.R. Walker
Box 18
Folder 1
  Administration Building
Box 18
Folder 2
Administration Building, looking from Wooded Island
Box 18
Folder 3
Agricultural Building, entrance
Box 18
Folder 4
Agricultural Building, from Grand Basin
Box 18
Folder 5
Arts Building, entrance on North Pond
Box 18
Folder 6
Arts Building, looking West on North Pond
Box 18
Folder 7
Columbia Fountain
Box 18
Folder 8
Columbus Statue
Box 18
Folder 9
Convent La Rabida
Box 18
Folder 10
Court of Honor, looking East to Peristyle
Box 18
Folder 11
Court of Honor, looking West to Administration
Box 18
Folder 12
Cowboy (or Rancher) Sculpture
Box 18
Folder 13
East Façade of Agriculture Building from South Inlet Peninsula
Box 18
Folder 14
The Ferris Wheel, looking East down the Midway
Box 18
Folder 15
Fisheries Building
Box 18
Folder 16
Horticultural Building
Box 18
Folder 17
Illinois State Building
Box 18
Folder 18
  Looking West from the Upper Promenade of the Administration Building
Box 18
Folder 19
  Machinery Hall
Box 18
Folder 20
  Manufactures Building, from Lake Michigan
Box 18
Folder 21
  Moose Sculptures
Box 18
Folder 22
  Native American Sculpture
Box 18
Folder 23
  Old Vienna Square, on the Midway
Box 18
Folder 24
  Painting of Well-to-Do Fairgoers Traveling to or from the Exposition
Box 18
Folder 25
  The Peristyle
Box 18
Folder 26
  South Canal and Obelisk
Box 18
Folder 27
  Statue of a Bull on South Canal, looking North
Box 18
Folder 28
  Statue of the Republic
Box 18
Folder 29
  Unknown Painting or Mural
Box 18
Folder 30
  Woman’s Building