Louisiana Purchase Exposition Encyclopedia Article

Louisiana Purchase Exposition

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Louisiana Purchase Exposition

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also called the World's Fair, was held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904 to celebrate the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. From the April 30 opening day ceremonies to the final day on December 1, twenty million people attended the daily programs of events and viewed American icons, such as Geronimo, at the world's largest fair at that time. The fair emphasized American prowess in technology, industry, and military leadership. Electricity used to illuminate the Hall of Festivals, Colon-nade of States, Palaces of Electricity and Education, and Machinery Hall cost $2 million. Of the exhibits, the Great Floral Clock with a 74-foot minute hand was the centerpiece and other exhibits included Abraham Lincoln's private railway coach and a 265-foot-high Ferris wheel.

The grandness of the fair has had a lasting effect on America and the fair site has been used to stage other important events. The 1904 Olympics were held on the fair site. Years later, the movie, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, starring Judy Garland, romantically depicted the fair. The 1904 World's Fair Society, established in 1986, published the monthly *World's Fair Bulletin* and proposed staging a 2004 World's Fair in St. Louis. The Missouri Historical Society displayed a World's Fair exhibit near the fairgrounds where people excavated collectibles from landfill rubble.

Further Reading:

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Breitbart, Eric. *A World on Display: Photographs from the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904.* Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1997.