Pedro Cook

1893 Columbian Exposition

Figure 1 is a partial map of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. This is a good way for visitors of the fair to be able to know where to find the different exhibits they want to attend. The planners would have sent a map like this to the other countries of the world in order for them to see what the layout of the fair would look like, how they could find the exhibits, what exhibits would be at the fair, and in order to draw attention and people to the fair. I chose the map to show sort of an aerial view of the what the fair looked like, in order to give a better visual.

Figure 2 is the beautiful Administration building, which is very recognizable with it’s gold dome. It consisted of a 55,000 square foot gold-domed building which was designed by Richard M. Hunt of New York. It served it’s purpose as the headquarters of the chief officers of the Exposition. It was also the primary introduction to the main architectural theme of the 14 prominent buildings of the Exposition, known as the Beaux-Arts style. Burnham and Root wanted to create a uniform and unique architectural style for the main buildings of the fair and they incorporated their Beaux-Arts training into the structures. The main buildings had a uniform cornice height, they were geometrically logical, covered in the same material (white staff), and produced an identical but somehow unique gathering of buildings. Burnham and Root wanted to the show the American value of innovation and excellent architectural skills.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/tour.html>

Figure 3 is the Ferris Wheel. George Ferris was the mastermind behind this invention. It consisted of a revolving wheel 250 feet in diameter and 36 cars that could hold 60 people. “The wheel would propel 2,160 people at a time three hundred feet into the sky over Jackson Park, a bit higher than the crown of the now six-year-old Statue of Liberty, (pg.185 Larson).” This piece of the fair was one of the main things that made the Columbian Exposition better than the Paris Exposition because of its new sensation that topped Eiffel’s Tower. Not only was it an amazing sight to look at, it also gave the “rider” a new experience to feel themselves being lifted into the air and be able to see the fair all around them. The planners wanted something built that would show their value of bigger is better, competition, and innovation. Burnham wanted a feature to show America could practice modern engineering and create original, magnificent architectural features, and the Ferris Wheel did exactly that. (pgs. 156,185 Larson).

Figure 4 is the Transportation Building. This building was built by the Chicago architectural firm Adler & Sullivan. Daniel Burnham had told Sullivan that instead of the old method of having two entrances, he should instead create one central feature that would impress the fairgoers. As it turned out, that one magnificent entrance was the talk of the fair. There were many exhibits in the building from around the world such as, Japan, Russia, England, and a few others besides the United States. Some of the exhibits included American cars, locomotives, and a vast amount of railway appliances. The builders wanted to show the value of innovation with the exhibits in this building and they had what I listed in the previous sentence, as well as, the “Railways of the World” from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

<http://www.domu.com/chicago/history-map/columbian-exposition-transportation-building>

Figure 5 is a view of what the fair became famous for, it’s beautiful and attractive appearance as a dream “White City”. It was popularized as the White City because of the blue from the sky and the lake made the massive, towering white buildings look even brighter due to the clear blue sky and the reflection of sunlight from the lake and park’s water features onto the buildings. The White City was a complete opposite of the Black City, Chicago, as the fair’s builders wanted the White City to depict the values of both them and Chicago. It was supposed to show the values of having a clean city, pure water, sanitation, clean buildings, and to be free from crime, garbage, ash, and the rotten smells of slaughterhouses. The builders had planned for this city to be an example of what a city ought to be and what it ought to look like. (pg. 197,247 Larson). The value that the builders wanted the fair, or White City, to display was cultural parity. America wanted to show the world that it was finally equal to such powers as those in Europe. Another value that they wanted to show was unity and a utopian society. Poor, corrupted government, filth and garbage, disease and poverty were nowhere to be seen in the White City, which was appealing to the masses.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/reactions.html>

Figure 6 is a view of what it looked like to walk along the Midway Plaisance. The Midway was a “pleasure garden” that stretched over a mile, from Jackson Park to Washington Park. It was to be “an exotic realm of unusual sights, sounds, and scents, (pg. 160 Larson).”It included attractions such as belly dancers, camels, a hydrogen balloon that took people into the sky, mirrors, optical illusions, wax museum, authentic villages from around the world, and of course the crown jewel, the Ferris Wheel. (pg. 267 Larson) The planners of the fair wanted to give the American people what they wanted, and that is the value of learning but, also, the desire to be amused, and to have fun. The Plaisance offered the tourists a getaway from the “high culture” of the White City and allowed them to enjoy themselves, experience new sights, sounds, smells, and have fun learning about new things. The planners wanted the value of education to be exercised through the use of the Plaisance, and they believed that through everything along the Plaisance they could achieve this value. Although the Plaisance did not exploit what the education that they had intended, it did give the American people, and other tourists, the amusement they wanted and a form of education by seeing what was out there in the world.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/reactions.html>

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