

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, April 4, 2016

**Major World's Fairs of the Past:** In my father's early years, going to a World's Fair was about the most important activity possible. He attended five of them of which I am aware, starting with Buffalo in 1901 and ending with New York in 1939.

Although there had been earlier attempts, the first real World's Fair was the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 (later referred to as the Crystal Palace Exhibition). Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, was largely credited for the success of this venture that enjoyed worldwide visitation. Both the Prince and the Queen were 32 years of age at the time. Albert, a strict disciplinarian especially as it applied to his children, including the future King Edward VII, died in 1861 at the age of 42.

The United States celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. President U. S. Grant opened the festivities. Many of the exhibits were operated by a huge steam engine invented by George H. Corliss, and it was the first time Americans became excited about antiques, as reproductions from circa 1776 were on sale. Three-month-old Mary Shallcross, my mother's eldest sister, was carried to the fair on a pillow by her parents.

The Paris International Exposition of 1889, for which the Eiffel Tower was erected, was another very important one. Two small bronze statues, "Winged Victory" and "The Boy on the Farm," cast for sale at this Paris event, are on display in the front hall of Auburn Heights. They were gifts from Jacob Painter Jr. of Pittsburgh, who enjoyed attending the Yorklyn trapshooting tournaments in the 1920s and '30s.

The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 was long remembered. One of the buildings, Machinery Hall, is still used by Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. The Encyclopaedia Britannica's description of this major world event with its numerous line drawing illustrations was outstanding. The advances in the use of electricity were everywhere. To imitate the success of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, George Ferris built a huge wheel over 250 feet in diameter, carrying 1,440 people in 36 baskets for viewing the fairgrounds and the city from above. It was the largest of the thousands of Ferris wheels built since, its axle alone weighing 46 tons! Eight-year-old Clarence Marshall was at the Yorklyn railroad station one day when the afternoon train arrived from Wilmington. Howard and Lizzie Mitchell of Woodside Farm (he was Lizzie Marshall's brother) were on that train, returning from Chicago and eager to tell all who would listen about their extraordinary experience.

In 1901, my father and his brother, Warren, were on their way to the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo when their train stopped about 10 miles short of its destination. For a long time, no one knew why the delay, but word soon reached the train that President McKinley had been shot.

In 1904, my father, his cousin Henry Mitchell, and another friend traveled by train to St. Louis to visit the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The huge Ferris wheel from Chicago 11 years earlier had been re-erected for the St. Louis fair. The illuminations after dark were outstanding. New American inventions, including many from Thomas A. Edison, were everywhere. In his later years, my father would often relate details of this trip.

San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915. It was located on the Bay side on mostly flat land devastated by the San Francisco fire of 1906. A wealthy mechanically talented young man from Oakland named Louis MacDermot thought he had a contract to build a 15-inch gauge railroad to be the main transportation around the fairgrounds and was constructing about five scale-model steam locomotives to pull the trains. At very high personal expense, all was about ready to go when the fair authorities changed their minds. He was allowed to have a small railroad as an attraction, but it was not the major means of transport on the grounds. One of these Pacific-type locomotives is on display at the California Railroad Museum in Sacramento.

In 1926, Philadelphia staged a Sesquicentennial Exposition celebrating 150 years of American independence. My father was there one day just before the fair opened. A man was firing up a brand new 15-inch-gauge Cagney locomotive for use around the grounds. The Cagney firm had built thousands of these “park engines,” and although parts would be available for some time, 1926 was about the end of Cagney locomotive production. Our Cagney in the museum was built in 1905.

At age 10, I attended my first World’s Fair at the 1934 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. This was the second year of the two-year event. About the time we reached Chicago in our 1932 Packard Model 904, I came down with Trench Mouth and spent the first three days in our hotel room. However, I do remember the Buick exhibit at the fair. There were about two dozen scale-model Buicks about two inches long. Some were ‘33 models, and some were ‘34 models. When the ‘33s came to a rough place in the road, they bounced up and down; when the ‘34s reached the same place, they glided over with no bouncing. “Knee action” (individual front wheel suspension) made the difference. On our way home, we stopped at the Packard factory in Detroit, and my dad bought a ‘34 “left-over” Packard Twelve limousine, that replaced the big Straight Eight ‘32. Both had front axles.

Finally, we went to the New York World’s Fair on the last weekend in 1939 (the fair was open again in 1940). I remember loudspeakers blaring “Down Mexico Way,” a popular song of those days. Eastman Kodak had an exhibit of huge Kodachrome transparencies displayed around an entry hall, quite impressive. The Howard Johnson Restaurant on the grounds at Flushing Meadows was the largest of that chain ever built. The Pennsylvania Railroad had a huge S-1 four-cylinder steam locomotive with Torpedo styling on display with the driving wheels turning slowly in place. To my knowledge, there was only one S-1 built. Designed as a heavy duty high-speed locomotive, the 6-4-4-6 solid-frame configuration must have proved too cumbersome for the grades and curves of the Alleghenies.