



# WEBFOOTER EXTRA

## January 2023

### REMEMBERING SEATTLE'S A-Y-P EXPO



Lithographed multi-view advertising postcard for the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle Washington from June 1 to October 16, 1909. Published by Edwin Mitchell. Postmarked August 3, 1909 in Seattle.

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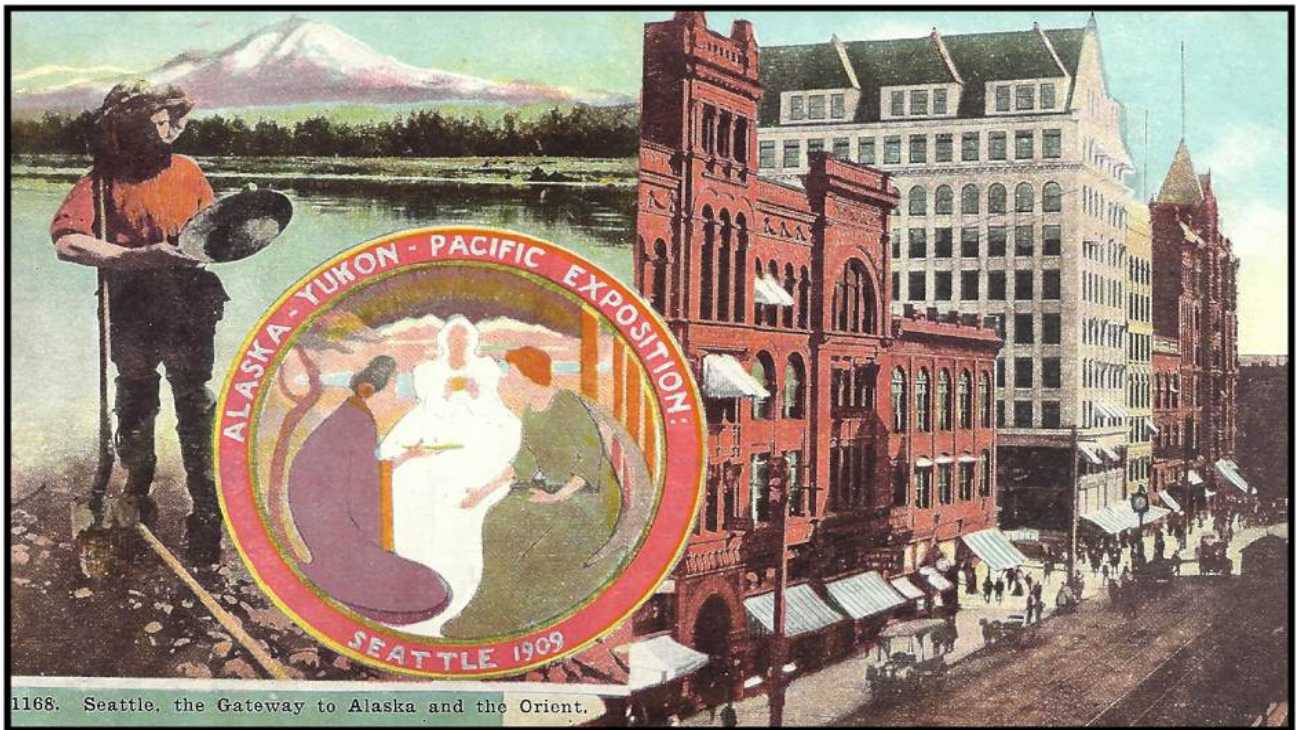
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# REMEMBERING SEATTLE'S A-Y-P EXPO



Lithographed multi-view advertising postcard for the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle Washington. Published by Edwin Mitchell. Postmarked August 3, 1909 in Seattle. Seattle, the Gateway to Alaska and the Orient.

Seattle's first world's fair, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (acronym A-Y-P or A-Y-P-E), was held in Seattle beginning on June 1, 1909 to publicize the development of the Pacific Northwest. It was originally planned for 1907 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Klondike Gold Rush, but the organizers learned of the Jamestown Exposition which was being held that same year, so the AYP was rescheduled to 1909. The fairgrounds became part of the campus of the University of Washington. By the time the fair closed on October 16, 1909, more than 3,700,000 people had visited.

Godfrey Chealander of Seattle proposed the idea for holding a world's fair in Seattle. He was the Grand Secretary of the *Arctic Brotherhood*, and he was involved in the Alaska Territory exhibit at the 1905 *Lewis and Clark Exposition* in Portland, Oregon. Originally, he pitched to William Sheffield of the *Alaska Club* and James A. Wood, city editor of the *Seattle Times* the idea of a permanent exhibit in Seattle about Alaska. This merged with Wood's desire for an exposition to rival Portland's Lewis and Clark Expo.





Lithographed postcard view of the Welcome Arch for the A-Y-P Expo on Second Avenue at Marion Street in Seattle. Published by Robert A. Reid. Postmark not legible.

The group soon gained the backing of *Times* publisher Alden J. Blethen—remarkably, for the time, without gaining the opposition of the rival *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Among other early proponents of the exposition was John Edward Chilberg, one of a line of prominent Seattle merchants in the Chilberg family, who was president of the *Alaska Club*, and was then given the title of president of the Exposition.

Edmond S. Meany proposed that the exposition be held on the then largely forested campus of the University of Washington, which in 1905 had exactly three buildings and little deliberate landscaping. At the time, this was considered rather far from the center of town, but Meany eventually sold the others involved on the idea that the forested campus could, itself, be an attraction for out-of-town visitors and that the trolley ride from downtown would not be an obstacle to attendance. Of course, he was also highly aware of what the landscaping and structures could do for the campus.

The state legislature endorsed the fair, with the proviso that it would produce at least four permanent buildings, and that any state monetary contribution would be focused mainly on those buildings. King County (the county in which Seattle is located) stepped up with \$300,000 for a forestry exhibit—the largest log cabin ever built—and \$78,000 for other exhibits.





Real photo postcard view of The Eskimo Village and Pacific exhibits “On-the-Pay-Streak” by Gamble at the A-Y-P Expo in Seattle Washington in 1909. Postally unused.

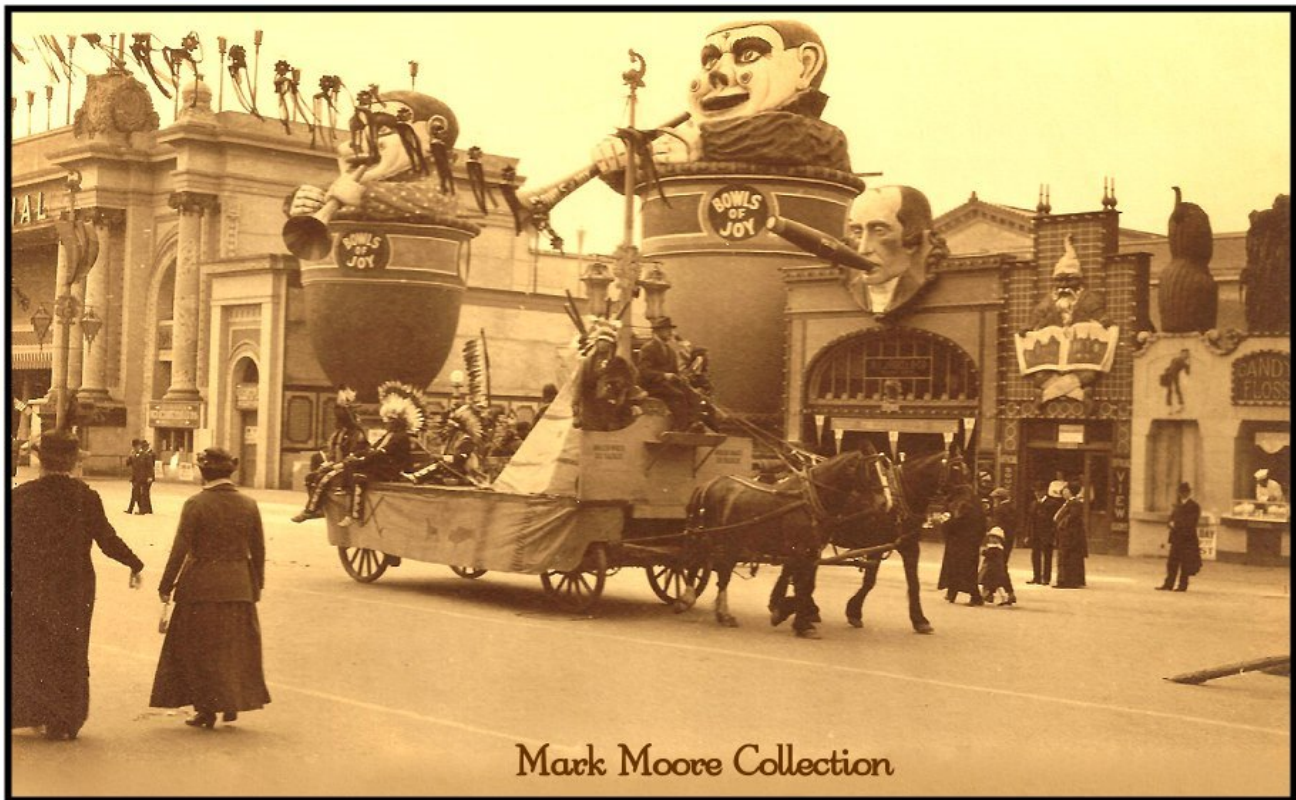
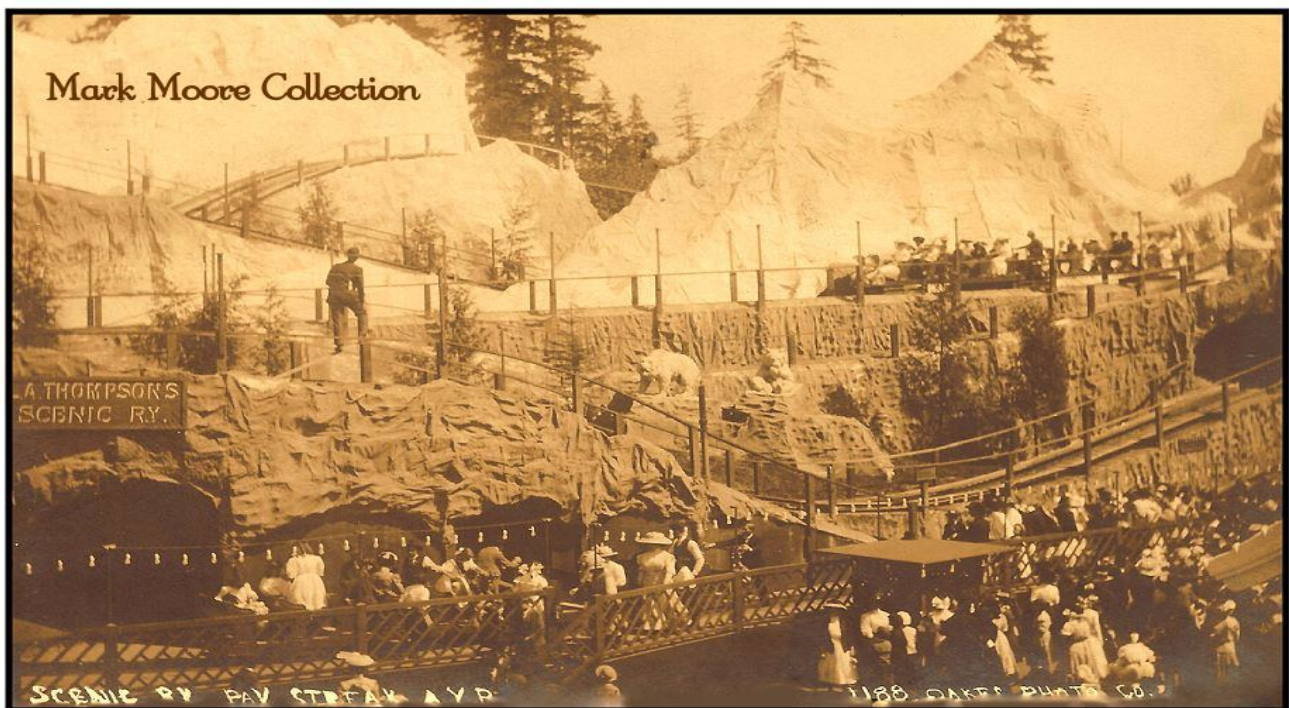


Photo view of amusements on the Pay Streak at the A-Y-P Expo in Seattle, Washington in 1909.





Real photo postcard view of Rainier Vista at the A-Y-P Expo in Seattle Washington in 1909 by Oakes Photo Co. Postmarked July 1, 1909 in Seattle.



Real photo postcard view of the L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway on Pay Streak at the A-Y-P Expo in Seattle Washington in 1909 by Oakes Photo Co. Postmarked July 10, 1909 in Seattle.

Because the original Klondike gold strikes had been in Canada, the concept soon evolved to an "Alaska-Yukon Exposition." Later, at the behest of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the "Pacific" theme was also added to emphasize the Oriental trade. The Exposition became known as the "A-Y-P."

Although the fair almost certainly could have been ready for 1907, it was postponed so as not to conflict with the Jamestown Exposition. This turned out to be good fortune for Seattle, because 1907 proved to be a bad year for the economy. If the exposition had been held that year it almost certainly would have been a financial failure, rather than the success it was in 1909.

The Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, were selected to plan the Exposition; the firm was already involved in planning parks and parkways for the City of Seattle. John C. Olmsted visited Seattle in October 1906 and saw the dominant form of Mount Rainier toward the southeast. He selected the mountain as the focus of the primary axis of the Exposition. This axis later became the Rainier Vista of the University of Washington campus.

The principal landscape architect for the fair was the Olmsted firm's James Frederick Dawson. His design centered on a long pool with a series of short waterfalls along Rainier Vista. John Galen Howard's firm, Howard and Galloway, based in San Francisco, was chosen as supervising architects for the Exposition buildings. They designed several buildings and supervised construction of those designed by other architects.

Two foreign countries, Japan and Canada, built two buildings there, and their presence was enough to validate the "Pacific" theme along with the US territory of Hawaii and the Philippines, recently ceded to the US by Spain. Other foreign countries were represented on a smaller scale. The very popular King County exhibit included a scale model of the coal mine at nearby Newcastle, Washington and dioramas of several Seattle scenes, the originals of which were only a trolley ride away. The Woman's Building emphasized the role of women in pioneering the American West and in current charity work. The Pay Streak was Seattle's answer to Chicago's Midway and featured games of chance and amusements. There was also a reenactment of the American Civil War naval Battle of Hampton Roads (the Battle of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack*).

Because the Exposition buildings were built with non-union labor, various unions protested against the exposition in actions ranging from pamphleteering to boycotts. The Central Labor Council organized a protest march outside the grounds on Labor Day.



The *Seattle Socialist* editorialized that the Exposition was, "a great fantastic monument to the brutal avarice of the capitalist class." A month-old orphaned boy named Ernest was raffled away as a prize. Although a winning ticket was drawn, nobody claimed the prize. The ultimate destiny of the child was still being investigated in 2009.

Other human exhibits included displays presenting Igorot people from the Philippines as dog-eating, primitive people; the "Alaskan Siberians — Eskimos"; and a Chinese village depicting opium dens and recounting the recent Boxer Rebellion. The Igorot exhibit spawned a letter of protest to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* signed by over 100 Filipino merchant marines, although some local resident Filipinos responded to the letter by defending the exhibit.

Premature babies were also displayed in French physician Alexandre Lion's incubators, decades before such systems were commonplace in hospitals. This display was not unique to the A-Y-P Exposition; babies had been displayed in incubators since the 1896 Berlin Exposition (and Seattle itself had seen at least two such exhibits before the A-Y-P Exposition). Given the robustness of the infants seen in photographs, there is some question as to whether these infants actually required extra care or if they were simply used for profit.

Although most of the Exposition's buildings were designed as temporary structures, intended to last only for the duration of the fair, some were more permanent, like the Fine Arts Palace.



Lithographed postcard of the AYP logo by Edwin Mitchell. Postally unused.

Postcards and photos from the Mark Moore Collection.



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at the Oregon Stamp Society**

**March 18, 2023  
10AM-4PM  
4828 NE 33rd Ave.  
Portland, Oregon**

**Members will be offering postal history for sale.  
The public is welcome.**

**Contact: Steve King - 503-620-6879 - skvk47@gmail.com**