

America's Heritage

The Fair That Launched The 20th Century

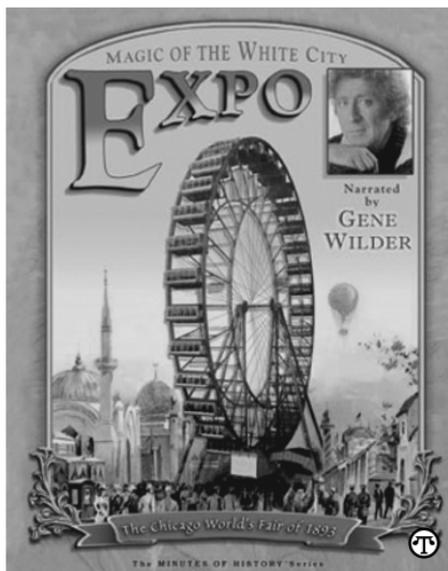
(NAPSA)—It was a showplace for startling new technologies, an exhibition of the best of 19th century high culture and a decidedly low-brow entertainment event along its Midway. It was Chicago's great Columbian Exposition, an event historians say introduced America to the 20th century.

Fair-goers marveled at electric lights, refrigeration, long-distance telephones and a primitive motion picture. They were in awe of the giant, 26-story high, first-ever Ferris wheel. They were impressed by the renowned classical exhibition halls—"The White City"—designed by more than a dozen of the country's greatest architects. They relaxed by plazas and lakes planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, co-creator of New York's Central Park.

Though electric lighting was not unknown at the time of the fair, the scale of its use was staggering, as both George Westinghouse and Thomas Edison helped plan it. The World's Fair generated and used three times as much electricity as the rest of Chicago at the time. Visitors rode on an overhead electric railway and navigated the lakes in battery-powered boats—both novelties in those days.

Fair-goers also indulged in the noisy carnival-like amusements of the Midway—which was both huge and hugely popular. Altogether, this World's Fair was one of the most successful ever. Open only six months, it drew 28 million admissions.

L. Frank Baum, the writer of



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the "Wizard of Oz" books, got his inspiration for the Emerald City there. The lovely Japanese pavilion inspired a young Frank Lloyd Wright. Another deeply impressed visitor was the father of Walt Disney—whose Disneyland and Disney World are considered today's successors to much that was new at the 1893 World's Fair.

Now the amazing Chicago World's Fair is being brought back to life in a stunning new documentary called "Expo—Magic of the White City," narrated by actor Gene Wilder. It's available at Borders, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy and others as well as online retailers. For more information, visit www.ColumbianExpo.com. "Expo" is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America.