

## Consuming Culture:

How fairgoers gained cultural awareness and understanding through food at the Pan American Exhibition (1901) and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904)

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## **Abstract**

The world fairs in America at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were some of the most elaborate exhibitions to have ever existed. With the precedent set at the Chicago Columbian Exchange Exposition in 1893, people came from around the world to see what these expos had to offer, from technological innovations never before imagined to architectural wonders. But underneath the flashy displays and government sanctioned buildings lay a network of people constantly participating in the consumption of cultures from around the world, most commonly through food. The Pan American Exposition (1901) and the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition (1904) fairgrounds provided a safe space where people of different ethnicity and class could experience other cultures in a non-threatening way, from eating something new to watching how other people interact with food. Through food experiences, people were able to internalize little pieces of other cultures, making them their own and increase their desire to experience to learn about other peoples of the world long after the fair was over. Evidence to support these claims includes personal accounts, magazine and newspaper articles, cookbooks, menus, photos, maps, and other souvenirs.

## **Introduction**

The sun begins to rise on a cool morning in the middle of September in Buffalo, New York. Thousands of people have traveled from as little as a few miles to as many as a few thousand to take part in one of the greatest events to occur in the year 1901: The Pan-American Exhibition. In a few short hours this area will be hustling and bustling with people. A train screeches to a stop nearby and a sea of sleepy passengers jump out, exhausted from the overnight journey. They sluggishly begin the walk to the entrance gates, miraculously gaining a jolt of energy with every step they take. Their pace quickens as the magnificent buildings ahead of them begin to take shape in the morning light.

Eventually the entrance gates open and a wave of people hurry inside, planning out their days by mulling over fairground maps. People jet off in different directions. One family decides to start their day in the Agriculture Building, observing some of the newest inventions in farm technology. Another chooses to head over to the Midway and check out the Streets of Mexico. The grounds get busier and louder as the day goes on. Though the majority of guests are Americans, languages from other countries around the world can be heard. People walk briskly

from one exhibit to another, trying to take in as much as they possibly can in a single day while maintaining enough energy to stay long enough to see the spectacular light show that unfolds every night.

About halfway through the day, when the sun makes it to the very center of the sky, the excitement of the morning begins to fade and people seek shaded benches or grassy areas where they can stop and give their feet a rest. It is at this moment when hunger begins to set in. Stomachs grumble and people turn to fairground maps to decide what to have for lunch. The dining opportunities are almost endless and visitors began to ask themselves a series of questions. Do I want to have a quick meal or do I want to sit down and be waited on? Can I get a substantial meal out of the free samples being distributed right now? Do I want to try something new and eat at a foreign restaurant on the Midway?

It is certain that each visitor to the fair did not answer these questions in the exact same way. People made their own eating decisions depending on socioeconomic status, the amount of days spent at the fair, how adventurous they may be, and the proximity of dining options. But more important than an individual's decision on where to eat was the fact that each and every guest at the fair faced this dilemma at some point in time during their visit. Due to the enormity of the fair, most people had to prioritize which exhibits they wanted to see, making the fair experience unique to every visitor that walked through the main gates. However, food can be seen as the one common experience that every single fairgoer had to deal with at least once a day (and usually at least two or three times). Walking around was exhausting and many people found themselves hungrier than usual, such as visitor Agnes Boclon from Camden, NY. She wrote a letter from the fair to her family stating, "You know how I was going to save on my eating, well just tell Mama that I am hungry all the time. For breakfast I had a large piece of hamburger steak

and about the amount of potatoes that Alice usually takes, and bread, cake, fried cake, coffee and grapes. I eat like a pig - am hungry all the time.”<sup>1</sup> Food was an essential part of a fairgoers experience—whether he or she acknowledged it was or not.

Food was everywhere at the fair. People were constantly interacting with it, often times in ways that didn’t even involve the physical action of eating food. Concession stand workers constantly yelled at passersby, trying to convince them to purchase whichever product they were selling. Demonstrations showed how coffee is made and baking demos showcased some of the newest cooking products and ingredients. “Living Villages” displayed native tribes from around the world living their lives the way they may at home, which included their own eating rituals. It is obvious that food took on a greater purpose at the fair than simply a means to satiate hunger.

What greater purpose might that be? Though much has not been written specifically about the experience of food at the world expos or the history of food in general, most historians and food writers agree that food does have a deeper meaning. Lucy M. Long, author of *Culinary Tourism* said, “I know from my own experiences that food seems to provide us with a sense of the ‘realness’ of things. Because of food’s commonality to all cultures, it allows us to experience the diversity within that commonality, providing us with groundedness from which we can embark on adventures into otherness.”<sup>2</sup> This quote is incredibly relevant to the food situation that existed at the fair. One of the only constants that existed between cultures represented at the fair—whether they were ethnic or socioeconomic in nature—was that each group of people had some sort of distinguished food culture or signature food flavors. Richard Sterling, author of *The Adventure of Food* presented this idea prior to Long, stating, “roving gastronomies and voracious

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<sup>1</sup> Agnes Boclun to Avra, October 11, 1901, “Doing the Pan” <http://panam1901.org/documents/panamletter.html> [accessed April 20, 2012].

<sup>2</sup> Lucy M. Long, Introduction to *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 15.

travelers discover the world and its people through the medium of its universal constant: food... While on the great open road to Anywhere, all but the dullest palate can experience the fearsome need, the roaring passion, the lust, to consume the world. And in consuming it, to make it our own. To consume and assimilate the physical is, of course, to make us one with it.”<sup>3</sup> According to Sterling, an individual can consume another culture, internalize it, and become “one” with it. Because of the diversity and foreignness of food offered at the world fair, this becoming “one” with another culture through food was consistently occurring throughout the fairgrounds.

It is also important to understand Long’s concept of *culinary tourism*. She defines *culinary tourism* as “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other— participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own.”<sup>4</sup> Due to the variety of food available, the world exhibitions presented a perfect opportunity for people to embark on a culinary tourism adventure. In a single day they could view native people at the Indian Congress, listen to some German music over a German meal at Alt Nurnberg, be served tea at Fair Japan, and watch a number of food demonstrations in the agriculture or liberal arts buildings. Though these people may not have realized they were intentionally participating in another culture’s food habits at all these junctures, they were embarking on a culinary journey throughout their entire day.

Sometimes food was the only way in which a visitor was able to understand another culture. Richard Sterling also said, “Sometimes it’s difficult to travel. You don’t speak the

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Sterling, Introduction to *The Adventure of Food*, ed. Richard Sterling (San Francisco, CA: Travelers’ Tale Inc., 1999), Xv.

<sup>4</sup> Lucy M. Long, “Culinary Tourism” in *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 21.

language; the art museum leaves you confused; the popular resorts shouldn't be; the natives are restless. But gastronomic travel is accessible and satisfying to all who are willing to taste not only food and drink, but life as well.”<sup>5</sup> For American citizens, the fair was unique in that it eliminated all of these other fears about traveling or experiencing another culture and allowed them to focus on the less threatening parts of understanding another culture through the consumption of food. This also worked in the opposite way, as foreign people, especially natives, were provided with unique opportunities to get to know one another and Americans through various food festivities.

Ironically, there has been little to no historical literature written about the immense importance of food at either of these world expositions. Whereas today's food-related television programming focuses heavily on experiencing other cultures through food, very little exists on how people used to indulge in culinary tourism prior to the invention of television, the popularity of international travel, or the Internet. Historians have failed to understand the world fairs at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represent culinary tourism in its finest and truest form, as this was often the first time fairgoers encountered food very different from what they normally ate at home. Instead historians touch on other aspects of the history of food, which are helpful in understanding the importance of studying food but also fail to give due credit to the role the world exhibitions played in spreading the consumption of other cultures through food.

One of the most extensive histories of food is the almost 800-page book by Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat titled *A History of Food*. The first edition was published over 20 years ago and the book covers food history from pre-historic times to present day, tracking how food habits correlate with different stages of civilization. Toussaint-Samat argues that food is the culprit for

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Sterling, Introduction to *The Adventure of Food*, ed. Richard Sterling (San Francisco, CA: Travelers' Tale Inc., 1999), Xvi.

why things happen in the world, as hunger is a need humans must satisfy every day of their lives. It touches on many different theories about food and identifies several key culinary movements and events, though it almost entirely evades the impact expositions had on food history. However, Toussaint-Samat does touch on the cultural significance of food, claiming, “Invaders or emigrants have always brought their dietary customs with them, as if sentimentally importing a little soil from their native land.”<sup>6</sup> Though food habits certainly spread through “invaders” and “emigrants,” the exposition provided a different scenario. People were willingly (with few exceptions) coming together to share their customs, including their food habits, which Toussaint-Samat seems to forget entirely.

Other food histories focus on how varying food habits are reflective of cultural differences. In Civitello’s *Cuisine and Culture: A History of Food and People*, she argues, “identity—religious, ethnic, national—is intensely bound up with food.”<sup>7</sup> The claims in her book are rooted in the importance of these cultural differences. Instead of identifying food as a constant between cultures like Long and Sterling do, she says “there is no one food that is consumed by everyone on earth.”<sup>8</sup> This approach is an important contribution to food history, but it fails to recognize that food in a much broader sense is also a constant between cultures. The importance of this constant at the world fair is what this paper attempts to highlight.

While many food histories deal with cultural differences in food specifically related to race, it is also important to understand the differences in food between different classes. In *Food: The History of Taste*, Paul Freedman says, “the European Middle Ages had an elaborate

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<sup>6</sup> Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, Introduction to *A History of Food*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2009), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture: A History of Food and People* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2011), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Civitello, 1.

code of what foods were appropriate for what sorts of people.”<sup>9</sup> Though these elaborate codes did not exist in America at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were still some unspoken rules regarding where people of particular class should dine and what foods were acceptable for them to eat. Freedman does not mention how class differences played out through food at world expos. Though some of the organizers of the fair may have created various dining options with specific classes in mind, it could also be argued that the fair provided an opportunity for people to break the unspoken class rules and eat whatever they pleased. This paper hopes to expand on Freedman’s theory and offer an instance where differing class cultures could be surpassed through food.

It is also important to understand what types of documents historians are looking at in order to make their assumptions about different cultures. In *The Recipe Reader: Narratives, Contexts, Traditions*, Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster compile a number of essays that deal with recipes and cookbooks and how they can offer commentaries about society. This approach is helpful in the analysis of the types of people who were attending American world expositions at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the fair in 1904, because Sarah Tyson Rorer’s cookbook is one of the best surviving culinary documents. Floyd and Forster mention that “cultures supposedly foreign to us are continually called up for our consumption in recipes” in their introduction, which is incredibly relevant in analyzing Rorer’s cookbook.<sup>10</sup> Her cookbook is lacking in many of today’s well-known spices and flavors, suggesting that cookery in America in the early 1900s had yet to be predominately influenced by foreign cultures. This is important

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<sup>9</sup> Paul H. Freedman, Introduction to *Food: The History of Taste* (London, UK: Thames & Hudson 2007), 15.

<sup>10</sup> Janet Floyd and Lauren Forster, “The Recipe in its Cultural Context” in *The Recipe Reader: Narratives, Contexts, Traditions*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company 2003), 1.



because it reinforces the idea that any of the world expositions at this time were often the first time Americans were being exposed to foods from cultures around the world.

With the unique and never before seen situation that arose during the world expositions at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is interesting that there has not been very much written on these cultural exchanges. The lack of academia on the food exchange occurring at these events is even more astonishing. However, there are some brief mentions of food in various historical texts. A book about the Columbian Exchange Exposition in Chicago in 1983 features an article by Mary Steffek Blaske called “A Culinary Carnival,” In the article, Blaske briefly references the impact of food, stating, “Food at the fair was the basic, international language in which everyone could be fluent. It served to awaken ideas of national and international bonds in a manner every person could understand and it was, perhaps, the perfect learning tool precisely because it came as naturally as swallowing.” (check bibliography for this source)<sup>11</sup> Though her observations about food are accurate and allude to the cultural learning that was going on, she only skims the surface of the importance of this cultural exchange.

A more extensive look at world fair food history is Pamela Vaccaro’s *Beyond the Ice Cream Cone*, which focuses solely on food at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Vaccaro delves into the many different representations of food and drink throughout the fair, but fails to go in depth about the deeper cultural exchange occurring. This paper hopes to expand on her evidence and interpret it in a meaningful manner that does not just focus on the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition but can also be applied to others, namely the Pan American Exposition.

This paper hopes to fill the void that currently exists in food and world fair history and assert there was a deeper and incredibly significant cultural exchange happening through food at

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Steffek Blaske, “A Culinary Carnival,” in *World’s Fair*, Summer 1982.

the Pan American Exhibition and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Each and every visitor to the fair encountered food throughout his or her day in one way or another. It was through these encounters that people were exposed to other cultures and in turn gained a cultural awareness for another type or group of people. Exposure to food occurred in three main ways: eating food from another culture, observing how food was used in a demonstration or a “living” exhibit, and having a dining experience outside one’s socioeconomic class. Though there were limitations to these experiences, such as the popularity of boxed lunches and racist overtones throughout the fair, evidence suggests that the majority of fairgoers encountered food in at least one of these three main ways, changing their perceptions of another culture, even if only temporarily. In order to understand how people interacted with food at the expo, it is important to understand the origins of the world fairs, who planned them, who attended them, and what food options were available.

### **Origins of the World Fair**

The first official world’s fair occurred in London in 1851 and was a huge success. People from all over the world came to participate in the event, which set the stage for the popularity and abundance of world fairs over the next one hundred years. Arguably one of the most successful and most famous fairs in the United States to this day was the Columbian Exchange Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Known as the “White City,” people from all over the world came to see the spectacles offered at this incredibly popular American exposition. The success of this fair would be taken into account when planning many of the subsequent fairs in America over the next few decades, such as the Pan American Exhibition (1901) and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904).

Although they were less famous than their Chicago predecessor, both fairs were incredibly popular and attracted a large audience. For example, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition drew in approximately 20 million people during the 7 months it was in operation and encompassed over 1,500 buildings across over 1,300 acres of land.<sup>12</sup> Over 187 thousand people came through the entrance gates on its opening day, April 30, 1904.<sup>13</sup> The world fairs were hotspots for tourists from all over the world and were often open for extended periods of time, usually spanning at least 6 months. Some visitors would try to see as much of the fair in a single day while others would spend many days looking at the newest inventions, checking out the architecture, meeting people from around the world and observing other cultures. Exhibits included various art and architectural wonders, government buildings, “living” villages featuring different types of foreign peoples in their “natural habitats”, restaurants, live demonstrations, souvenir shops, concession stands, and sometimes various carnival-like rides and activities.

It is important to remember that the two world fairs examined in this paper occurred during the height of the industrial revolution and imperialism. Countries around the world, specifically America and Western European countries, were constantly trying to prove they were the best and brightest. This could be done in two ways at the exposition: having an elaborate fair on your home turf or developing an intricate exhibit at one of the many other fairs around the world. Additionally, many Western European and American fairs incorporated a number of “living village” exhibits in which they depicted “non-white” native peoples. These people often came from newly acquired territories of the host country. The depiction of white, western culture in contrast to the “barbarian,” native culture has been the focus of many world fair

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<sup>12</sup> Pamela J. Vaccaro, *Beyond the Ice Cream Cone: The Whole Scoop on Food at the 1904 World's Fair*, (St. Louis, MO: Enid Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Vaccaro, 1.

historians. One of the most prominent of these historians is Robert Rydell. His book, *All the World's a Fair*, has been used as the foundation for other histories of world expositions come and gone. The book deals heavily with the idea that the expositions in America between 1876 and 1916 attempted to promote America as the greatest nation on earth through imperialistic measures.<sup>14</sup> For many years, this theory was regarded as the most accurate. However, in recent years people have challenged this opinion.

The first book to compile a complete overview of all exhibitions to date was Erik Mattie's *World's Fairs*, which provides a comprehensive guidebook to each individual fair.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the book focuses solely on innovation and architecture, with little mention of other components of the exhibitions. However, Mattie provided an important and new theory in the field of world fair history. He claims world expos in the late half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were held in order to create both free trade and peace around the world. This theory is important because it is incredibly different from Rydell's theory about world fairs and imperialism. Whereas Rydell would argue that the fairs were a means by which America could assert its authority and power, Mattie would argue that the fair was trying to promote world peace. It is likely that both of these theories contributed to the development and popularity of world expos around the globe, but Mattie's theory is incredibly important because it opened the doors for further analysis of how the fair may have created a more peaceful and culturally aware global society.

Taking Mattie's theory a step further and challenging Rydell, Lisa Munro introduces an entirely different perspective in *Investigating World's Fairs: an Historiography*. In this essay,

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Rydell, *All The World's A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1917* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Erik Mattie, *World's Fairs*, (New York City, NY: Princeton Architectural Press 1998).

Munro suggests that although fairs may have been created to promote imperialism, there was an entire population of everyday people who were having a much different fair experience. In her essay she claims Robert Rydell's historiography on the fair "focused nearly exclusively on values of upper-class citizens and their efforts to inculcate these ideas into the lives of the fair-going public."<sup>16</sup> Munro suggests that while the upper-class citizens were attempting to imprint their values on the public, the public was having a very different fair experience that Rydell failed to acknowledge. She suggests that it is possible that this attempt ultimately backfired, as the everyday fairgoers may have failed to recognize upper class values or misinterpreted them all together. Instead, she believes the general public experienced the fair in such a way that they attained a greater level of cultural consciousness, something the upper class had not accounted for.

This paper hopes to expand on Munro's idea, suggesting the fair-going public definitely attained a greater level of cultural consciousness at the fair, particularly through exposure to different kinds of food. Prior to world expositions, there were not any other ways for Americans to be exposed to foreign cultures and peoples. Television did not exist, photography was only just becoming popularized, and it certainly was not possible to try the foods that came from these mysterious lands. However, the world fairs generated *exposure*. This exposure came in many different forms, from doing something "cultural" at an exhibit to meeting people from other cultures, to trying a new kind of food. It was this idea of exposure other history books have failed to explore.

### **Organization of the Fair**

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<sup>16</sup> Lisa Munro, "Investigating World's Fairs: an Historiography," *Studies In Latin American Popular Culture* vol. 28 [January 2010]: 83. *America: History & Life*, EBSCOhost. <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxyau.wrlc.org/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=107&sid=be2a7b3b-625b-419590a52fa5c31a191b%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=ahl&AN=53896322> [accessed April 22, 2012].

As stated in the previous section, the Pan-American Exhibition in 1901 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904 were monumental in the sense that they were meant to be the epitome of all things American. At the turn of the century, America was just claiming its title as the world's superpower. Hot off the industrial revolution train, America was beginning to prove itself as a country to be looked at in awe. It is obvious that fair organizers wanted to promote these sentiments far and wide throughout the exposition.

Vaccaro said, "the 1904 World's Fair was to stand in a tradition of exploration, expansion, and conviviality," which was also true of the 1901 expo.<sup>17</sup> The Pan American Exposition was created to celebrate relations between the Americas (and showcase the U.S.'s dominance) and the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition was created in celebration of the Louisiana Purchase, which roughly doubled the size of the existing United States. Therefore, everything that made up either fair had to contribute to the overarching theme of American superiority and power. Enter the fair organizers: wealthy, white businessmen who had the money to fund an event of this epic proportion. Obviously, most men were eager to get involved because of the common belief that an event of this caliber would generate a lot of income for the major players. Thus it is not a surprise to learn that many historians and anthropologists believe, "for most, especially the entrepreneurs in charge of the profit-generating capacity of the exhibits, anthropology was a peripheral player in the self-aggrandizement of 'the American way.'"<sup>18</sup> What this essentially means is that although anthropology inherently became a part of the creation and organization of world expositions, profit making was more important to the organizers.

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<sup>17</sup> Vaccaro 13.

<sup>18</sup> Regna Darnell and Stephen O. Murray, Series Editors' Introduction to *Anthropology goes to the fair: the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition* by Nancy J Parezo & Don D Fowler (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press: 2007), xi.

The authors of *Anthropology Goes to the Fair: the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, identify seven major objectives the organizers set for the 1904 fair which were: “first, to promote the city of St. Louis and demonstrate its urbanity and economic clout, especially compared to hated Midwestern rival Chicago; second, to make money for stockholders and stimulate regional economic development; third, to demonstrate the superiority of middle-class American democracy, capitalism, and culture; fourth, to celebrate American industrial, commercial, and technological progress; fifth, to directly or indirectly support U.S. foreign policies, especially the nation’s recent foray into international imperialism and colonization with the acquisition of Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands; and sixth, to shape the future using education as a tool for directed, purposeful, progressive change. Finally, the entire exposition was designed to celebrate the perceived inevitability of the March of Progress and the unqualified fitness of the white American “race” to lead that march.”<sup>19</sup> Though all of these assertions are significant, the most telling motivation is the final one (which sums up the others), that the white American “race” would lead the March of Progress. It is obvious that reflecting Americans and other Westerners as the superior race was the main goal of the fair organizers, which will be discussed later on as a limitation to cultural exploration. However, just because the organizers had the ultimate goal of portraying America in this light did not necessarily mean this was the one message all Americans took away from the expo. Nor did it mean all stakeholders had this goal in mind.

That isn’t to say that all fair organizers or stakeholders did not have good intentions in participating and organizing the fair. One of the best examples of this relates to the Streets of Mexico exhibit on The Midway at the Pan American Exhibition. In a Buffalo Courier-Express article from June 17, 1951, Margaret Fess profiles Donald C. Sweet, owner of the Streets of

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<sup>19</sup> Nancy J Parezo & Don D Fowler, *Anthropology goes to the fair: the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press: 2007), 2.

Mexico exhibit. In the article she references how Sweet took it upon himself to make the exhibit as authentic as possible; “Through Buchanan, President Diaz of Mexico became interested and helped in selecting prominent bull fighters, singers and musicians as headliners. McGarvie journeyed to Mexico where he made arrangements to "import" peons, lace-makers, silver workers, cooks, cowboys, basket and pottery makers, Indians, Aztecs, cliff dwellers, bulls and even donkeys. Horses for the vaqueros (cowboys) were supplied by Bill Cody.”<sup>20</sup> Sweet wanted to make his exhibit as true to Mexican culture as possible, “importing” actual workers from Mexico. Sweet also attempted to keep true to the Mexican food culture and “details of Mexican life were painstakingly carried out from the eating places which sold tortillas and enchiladas to the Mexican women who made lace with stitches so fine they could scarcely be seen with the naked eye.”<sup>21</sup> It is obvious he went to great lengths to ensure he was being authentic.

However, it is important to take this account of Sweet with a grain of salt for two very important reasons. First and foremost, at the end of the day his actions were motivated by money. He never would have taken an interest in developing an exhibit for the fair if he did not had some monetary interest. Which brings us to the second point. If money was his main motivation, it is difficult to tell whether or not he wanted to make his exhibit more authentic because of the cultural benefits or because he hoped it would bring in more money in the long run. Regardless, the anecdote of Sweet’s life and devotion to the Streets of Mexico attest to the fact that it was possible that some stakeholders did have a deeper appreciation for the cultures they were presenting at the world fair.

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<sup>20</sup> Margaret Fess, “Exposition Extravaganza Had Authentic Background,” *Buffalo Courier-Express* June 17, 1951, In “Doing the Pan,” Panam1901.org/documents/midway/donaldsweet.html [accessed April 22, 2012].

<sup>21</sup> Fess, [accessed April 22, 2012].



With the exception of Sweet, stakeholders were most often set on presenting America in the best way possible, asserting its dominance over the other countries of the world, and making as much money off their exhibits as possible. But were these motivations translated to the larger fair-going public? It is important to remember that the motivations for why the fair was planned did not directly correlate with the experiences that the everyday people who visited the fair took away from it. The expo was often more than just an idealistic way in which to represent your country and other countries around the world. There was a human element that seems to be left out of history books. In order to understand this difference in perception, it is important to fully understand what kinds of people came to the fair.

### **Who was at the fair?**

An international event with the size, scale, and grandeur of the Pan American Exposition or the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition was bound to attract people from all around the world. As previously stated, over 20 million people attended the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and this number does not even include the hundred thousands of workers throughout the exhibit. People of different ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds came together to take part in one of the most fascinating events of the year.

In an article for *The Outlook*, Lillian W. Betts writes, “Every section of our own country is represented, while the foreigners, especially Spanish Americans and Cubans are constantly evident.”<sup>22</sup> Because the Pan American Exhibition was meant to glorify the coming together of the Americas, it is obvious why Spanish Americans and Cubans may be some of the larger ethnic groups to come to Buffalo. This is similar to why so many Indian tribes were displayed at the

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<sup>22</sup> Lillian W. Betts, “People at the Pan-American,” *THE OUTLOOK*, September 14, 1901, [panam.org/documents/betts\\_human\\_nature.html](http://panam.org/documents/betts_human_nature.html) [accessed April 11, 2012].

Louisiana Purchase Exposition, because it was supposed to celebrate the acquiring of new territories thanks to the Louisiana Purchase.

There was also diversity in socioeconomic status at the fair. The extreme costs of getting there, finding a place to stay, eating, and paying for various exhibits would lead many to believe that the majority of fairgoers would come from the upper class or upper-middle class. However, Betts also wrote, “whatever may be said of previous Expositions, this is the Exposition of the people. Here and there are evidences of wealth; but the mass of the visitors to the Pan-American are the people who work with hands and head to earn their daily bread.”<sup>23</sup> This observation is critical for two main reasons. First, it shows the fair was such a monumental event because people who had barely enough money to feed their family still wanted to save up to attend. Secondly, it suggests there was a very different fair experience going on than what the fair organizers had intended.

That is not to say that the wealthy class did not have a presence. Nor does it suggest being able to fully enjoy the fair was easy, as many exhibits cost an unheard of amount of money. Katherine Glover, a fair attendee, suggested to future fairgoers, “be sure to scrape up all the money you can possibly lay your hands on, and a little more, then still a little more; and having learned the art of shaving a dollar and a half Exposition appetite down to a fifty-cent lunch, I should say you are in excellent trim for thorough enjoyment of the great Fair.”<sup>24</sup> This quote emphasizes the importance of saving money for less wealthy individuals. However, it also shows that the wealthier people were able to enjoy the fair more thoroughly. Fortunately, the fair accounted for these socioeconomic differences and ensured that food and attractions would be offered at varying price points. After all, not many people could afford to spend \$5 at the fair

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<sup>23</sup> Betts.

<sup>24</sup> Vaccaro 6

per day, the equivalent of spending \$100 dollars by today's standards.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, these suggestions show that although there was a clear advantage for the upper class in the options they had—both in their food choices and beyond—there was also a large amount of middle class people going through the fair gates on a budget, trying to make the most out of their fair experience without having to spend their life savings.

Regardless of the ethnic or socioeconomic differences of fairgoers, it is important to understand that there was also one universal commonality between all of them: they were inherently adventurous and curious. These people were all at the fair to try and see new things and have the experience of a lifetime. In *The Outlook* article Betts wrote, “all [fairgoers] are alert, all students, all learners. Every minute is an opportunity to see, to learn, to enjoy.”<sup>26</sup> This speaks to the idea that people were there because they all wanted to learn something new.

This interest in the different objects, inventions, and food the exhibits had to offer extended to other people at the fair too. In the *Official Pan American Art Hand Book 1901*, Edward S. Martin said, “please remember that when you get inside the gates you are part of the show and should take due pride in doing it credit.”<sup>27</sup> This speaks to how attendees became exhibits the moment they walked through the main entrance gates. The fair was one of the first times in which people could consistently interact with people from around the world. Therefore, the people they were walking around and speaking with were just as interesting as the exhibits around them.

Not only did visitors have to be adventurous, they also had to be incredibly open and tolerant to mingling with people of different classes and different races and different countries on

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<sup>25</sup> Vaccaro 6

<sup>26</sup> Betts.

<sup>27</sup> Edward S. Martin, “A Short Sermon for Sight-Seers” from the *Official Pan American Art Hand Book 1901*, In “Doing the Pan,” [panam1901.org/documents/sightseersadvice.html](http://panam1901.org/documents/sightseersadvice.html) [accessed April 11, 2012].

a regular basis. Mary Bronson Hartt, a fairgoer herself, discussed the type of people that went to exhibitions by stating, “Exposition crowds, however, are serenely unconcerned over the prospect of a future without novelty. The present is full of fresh sensations and that is quite enough for them. They plunge into the riot of nonsense with unthinking glee. They slip shrieking down the fearful dips of the Scenic Railway in company with Navajo Indians with yellow sun-rays painted round their eyes, and dark, sombreroed Mexicans, and low-browed, straight-haired Eskimos. They lunch in Spanish, dine in German, and take their evening coffee in select ‘Toorkish.’ They give free lessons in “American ” to splendid turbaned Moors.”<sup>28</sup> This passage speaks to the constant cultural exchange that visitors were partaking in on many levels. In addition to speaking to the constant interaction between people, it also specifically mentions how they did this through different types of food or dining experiences, which is incredibly relevant to the point this paper is trying to make. Therefore, it is important to look at the different kinds of food that were available for purchase or consumption at the fair.

### **What food was available at the fair?**

The food for sale at the fair was just as diverse as its exhibit counterparts. A map of the Pan American Exhibition shows a visual representation of the different types of eating establishments throughout the fairgrounds (see appendix A and B). In an article in *The Delineator Magazine*, N Hudson Moore wrote “there are ample provisions for obtaining refreshments on the grounds. Two large restaurants are placed at the entrances of the Midway and the Stadium; there is still another in the Midway, one in the Electric Tower, and light meals are served in the pergolas and on the Esplanade. In the German Village, and in the Mexican and Italian restaurants, food is served according to the custom of each country. There are also

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<sup>28</sup> Mary Bronson Hartt, “The Play-Side of the Fair,” *Everybody’s Magazine*, in “Doing the Pan,” [panam1901.org/documents/playside.htm](http://panam1901.org/documents/playside.htm) [accessed April 11, 2012].

numerous lunch counters where food may be very cheaply obtained, so that every palate and every purse may be suited.”<sup>29</sup> Articles like this one were helpful to people who planned on coming to the fair, allowing them to make a plan before arriving so they could try to save time and money. This article also speaks to the ethnic and socioeconomic variety that was apparent in the food offered.

Choosing when, where, and what you wanted to eat for a meal or a snack at the fair was like choosing what to make for dinner on any given night; the possibilities seemed to be almost endless. Not only was the food diverse in its ingredients, it was also diverse in its presentation, packaging, and delivery. Concession stands, free samples, lunch counters, homemade lunches, fast food, ethnic restaurants, and fine-dining establishments were the day-to-day decisions that people had to make.

Fortunately the fair organizers had assumed that people from many different social classes would be in attendance, emphasizing the need to have food available at all price points. Ironically the first indication they needed to have more eating establishments came during the construction phase, when they realized more than 200,000 workers had to be fed on a daily basis.<sup>30</sup> For a long period of time, fair workers would bring their lunches (this trend continues to exist throughout the duration of the fair). However, the women working in the Administration Building formally complained because their one-hour lunch break was not long enough to go downtown, get something to eat, and come back. So the fair organizers were forced to commission the building of a restaurant near the Administration building, called the

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<sup>29</sup> N Hudson Moore, “The Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo-Second Article,” *The Delineator Magazine*, August 1901, in “Doing the Pan,” [panam1901.org/documents/delineator\\_august01.htm](http://panam1901.org/documents/delineator_august01.htm) [accessed April 11, 2012].

<sup>30</sup> Vaccaro, 16.

Administration Restaurant.<sup>31</sup> This restaurant was built by Charles Marchiatti and provided a good lunch alternative to the women who didn't want to walk far for lunch. However, some class distinctions were still set in place, as there were two separate seating areas, one for those who wanted the fine dining experience and one for those who wanted something they could afford.

As more middle-class restaurants were developed, the desire to create fine dining establishments was still apparent. An article in the *Pan American Herald* emphasized the importance of the availability of fine dining establishments and the standards they are to be held to at the expo. According to the Herald, "The restaurants will be good. That will be insisted upon. The service must be above criticism. There will be various restaurants and various charges but each one must be as good as possible. If the charge for a meal is 50 cents the guest will be satisfied that he is getting as good a fifty cent as he can get in any restaurant or hotel in the land. If the meal is a dollar it must be correspondingly better. The intention is to make arrangements for a first class service and to see to it that the visitor gets just a little bit better treatment than he expected. There will be a number of restaurants; the principal one being the Grand Restaurant in the Stadium Building, in all probability."<sup>32</sup> Obviously the culinary standards for the institutions at the fair were incredibly important.

It was even more important for fair organizers to accommodate the very wealthy. "There will be at least one of very high class; higher than any restaurant in the United States in all probability for it may be located 120 feet above the ground in the Electric Tower. That one, or some other one selected, will be conducted in a manner that would be creditable to the Iroquois

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<sup>31</sup> Vaccaro, 16.

<sup>32</sup> "\$2,000,000: Director of Concessions Hopes to Secure That Amount," *The Pan American Herald*, June 1900, in "Doing the Pan," [panam1901.org/midway/index.htm](http://panam1901.org/midway/index.htm), [accessed April 26, 2012], 8.

Hotel or to the Waldorf Astoria, to Sherry's or Delmonico's or in fact to any hotel or restaurant in the world. The service will be perfect, the viands the richest, and the cooks and waiters the best that money can secure. Naturally the prices will be higher than in the others, though they will not be startling. [They] will correspond to the prices that prevail in any hotel of first rank. There will be everything on the card and while a man can get a meal in there for a reasonable rate the chef will also be of sufficient experience to serve a \$20 or a \$50 or a \$100 luncheon for anybody who wishes to bring a couple of friends in for a gastronomic revelry."<sup>33</sup> Catering to the elite was obviously incredibly important. Each fair had its fair share of celebrities, government officials, wealthy elites, and sometimes even Presidents. Therefore it was important the fair had quality restaurants that would appease the tastes of these dignitaries.

### **Food as a way to experience other cultures**

Taking these circumstances into account, it is obvious that a cultural exchange was constantly occurring at the fair. One of the most obvious and effective ways it was done was through food. Fairgoers had the opportunity to gain cultural understanding through food in three main ways: the physical act of eating a dish that is originally from another country, the ability to perceive food being used in some sort of demonstration or exhibit, and the ability to have an alternative dining experience that may not necessarily correspond to a fair visitor's socio-economic status. It was almost guaranteed that a visitor would encounter food in one of these three ways, deepening their understanding of other cultures and people in general.

### **American food prior to the Pan American Exhibition**

It is important to understand the American culinary landscape prior to the establishment of these particular world expos in order to understand why the food opportunities provided at the

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<sup>33</sup> "\$2,000,000: Director of Concessions Hopes to Secure That Amount," 8.

fair were so significant and unique to American diners. At this time, most meals were had inside the home and were usually held as private occasions, in which the diners all knew each other and were not subject to dining with people they did not know. Cuisine varied depending on region of the country, wealth of the diners, and where their roots lay or how long they had been living in America. For example, it was likely that Germans in Pennsylvania and their neighbors had German influences while people in New York had Jewish or Italian influences. But these differences were mostly kept inside the home.

Restaurants were established but the existence of small, cheap eateries was very minimal. The majority of dining establishments catered to the upper class and was largely French in nature prior to the Pan American Exhibition. Historian Levenstein wrote, “the ascendancy of French cooking is evident in many menus that survive from the upper and upper-middle-class hotels of the post-war era. In the late 1860s and early 1870s they tended to be mainly English/American in their offerings and language, with only an occasional French touch. By the mid- and late-1870s, however, a wholesale invasion of French terms and French dishes was under way.”<sup>34</sup> Obviously French food was just starting to make its way into American food culture, but was roughly limited to the elite. The enormous amount of German immigrants also affected the food offered at restaurants at this time, but again the numbers of restaurants were very few.

Cookbooks reflected the minimal foreign influences seen in restaurants. Sarah Tyson Rorer’s *World’s Fair Souvenir Cookbook* was available for purchase at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The cookbook featured a smattering of recipes with small references to French and German cuisine. Aside from these brief mentions (which usually come from the title of the dish), there is relatively no foreign influence and the majority of recipes feature rather bland

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<sup>34</sup> Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 15.



flavors, using salt as the only seasoning.<sup>35</sup> This cookbook was targeted towards the middle class woman, meaning the recipes in it were relatively simple and traditional, like the cooking habits of the time. This is significant because it shows the drastic contrast between the foods offered at the world expo in comparison to what Americans were eating at home.

### **Experiencing Western Culture**

Whereas French food had become the “norm” in both the realm of fine dining and the idea of what “foreign food” may be to Americans, other Western European food was less popular. Throughout the United States, the occasional German or Italian restaurant would pop up, usually based on the influx of immigration to these areas. But these foods were not admired in the same regard as French cuisine. As Ray says, “Sometimes aesthetic evaluations of food have nothing to do with the nature of the food or the skill involved in producing it. The Italian misfortune—at least in American eyes—may have been that Italian-Americans were poor and derided, and hence their food was dismissed for those reasons, rather than for any objective evaluation of their cuisine. When American Italians climbed out of the ghetto and into sports arenas, corporate offices, governors’ mansions, city halls and movie studios, Italian food was reassessed in the American imagination.”<sup>36</sup> These may have been popular beliefs about Italian food and food from other European cultures at the time, but the fair provided a stage in which people could consume these foods on a more regular basis.

Germany was a key player in many expos on American soil and was always able to sell customers not just on their food, but the overall experience of Germany. In a September 1901 article from *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Robert Grant wrote, “one of the most liberally patronized

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<sup>35</sup> Sarah Tyson Rorer, *World’s Fair Souvenir Cookbook*, (Mrs. S.T. Rorer: 1904).

<sup>36</sup> Krishnendu Ray, “Ethnic Succession and the New American Restaurant Cuisine” in *The Restaurants Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat*, ed. by David Beriss and David Sutton (Oxford: Gerry Mars, 2007), 101.

features of the Midway was ‘Alt Nurnberg,’ a picturesque reproduction of a street in Nurnberg, at the end of which one finds a restaurant, partly in the open air and partly under cover, where one can take luncheon or dine acceptably and listen to a spirited German band.”<sup>37</sup> This quote is important for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, it suggests that the restaurant was one of the driving factors behind why a person may choose to visit the Alt Nurnberg exhibit. Second, it mentions how diners can eat lunch or dinner on-site and have the pleasure of listening to a German band. In this way, people were consuming the culture both indirectly and directly through their food. By choosing to order and eat something from the menu, guests were partaking in having a deeper understanding of German culture. Additionally, simply by choosing to sit in a German restaurant, they were able to absorb the other aspects of the culture that were not directly related to food. The aesthetic appeal of the restaurant and the street on which it was situated gave the observer a better understanding of what Germany may really be like, and the German music, which was most likely accompanied by people donning traditional German attire, allowed visitors to open their ears to some music they may have never heard before. In this scenario, the restaurant was the medium through which culture was experienced, both through the sense of taste as well as through site and sound.

Personal interactions with the food and wait staff at these foreign restaurants also provided a way for visitors to understand other cultures. Thomas Fleming, author of *Around the Pan with Uncle Hank*, highlights these interactions through a fictional character named Uncle Hank. Uncle Hank is a hick from the South, which makes his interactions with different exhibits and peoples extra interesting. In one such encounter he decides to have a meal in the Alt Nurnburg exhibit. On the Midway, Alt Nurnburg was one of the busiest restaurants and served a

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Grant, “Notes on the Pan-American Exposition” *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, September 1901, in “Doing the Pan,” [panam1901.org/documents/cosmoarticle.html](http://panam1901.org/documents/cosmoarticle.html) [accessed April 11, 2012].

variety of German foods still famous today, such as sausages and sauerkraut. Though Uncle Hank may have encountered some German food in the past, it is likely he did not have many interactions with German people. Through the character of Uncle Hank, Fleming writes, “it is a peculiarity of German waiters to make you wait. The hungrier you are the longer they make you wait.”<sup>38</sup> Uncle Hank observes how various patrons at this German restaurant would ask for a number of food items throughout their meal and would always be told that their steak was cooking or their champagne was chilling on ice. At the end of this encounter, he claims, “the diners were the waiters in a German restaurant,” making a pun of the word “waiters” because the people in the restaurant had to wait so long for the food and any type of service requested.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Uncle Hank’s overall experience of German restaurants and his future association with the Germans as a whole would relate back to this very experience. Uncle Hank would forever associate Germans with the words “wait” and “poor service,” but prior to this experience he probably had very little to associate with Germans. Therefore, these dining experiences were key in helping Americans understand people from around the world.

### **Experiencing New”er” Cultures**

The Columbian Exchange Exposition in Chicago in 1893 was very telling of the popularity of foreign food, which is likely why so much of it was displayed at the subsequent Pan American and Louisiana Purchase expos. One of the biggest success stories coming out of Chicago dealt with the San Antonio Chili Stand, where “many visitors encountered chili—a creation of the Mexican American borderlands—for the first time, setting off a nationwide

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas Fleming, *Around the Pan with Uncle Hank*, (New York, NY: The Nut Shell Publishing Company, 1901), 128.

<sup>39</sup> Fleming, 128.

interest in the dish.”<sup>40</sup> This dish had already been incredibly popular in San Antonio due to its popularity at food carts. The woman who manned these carts were called “chili queens” and “the gaily dressed ladies served up pungent chili con carne brewing in cauldrons heated over mesquite or charcoal fires...they also sold tortillas, tamales, coffee, and cinnamon-scented *atole*, a popular Mexican drink.”<sup>41</sup> The fair provided the platform for these foods to be introduced to America and the rest of the world on a much larger scale, casting their significance and popularity farther than it had ever been before. The expo in 1893 had opened the United States to the idea of experiencing new food cultures and subsequent expositions would reinforce those ideals.

The Pan American and Louisiana Purchase expos featured exhibits from places that many people had never encountered. Various native tribes from the United States and the Philippines, African tribes, Mexican people, and the Japanese are only a few examples. Uncle Hank’s first encounter with food from brand new cultures occurs on the Streets of Mexico. As Uncle Hank “gazed in at the window of the restaurant, the dulcet tones of the mandolin orchestra caught his fancy, and he decided that he must enter, which he did, and after strolling about and critically examining the peculiar architecture of the adobe houses and the odd garb of the Mexican dudes and peons, as well as the beautiful señoritas, he was attracted to the restaurant, as he was rather hungry, and the hot tamales and other highly spiced food smelled appetizing.”<sup>42</sup> This passage illustrates how food experiences were not only affected by the food itself, but also the culture. The passage would suggest that his final decision to eat something from this exhibit was because of the food, but there were numerous other aspects that led Uncle Hank to make this decision.

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<sup>40</sup> Megan J Elias, *Food In the United States*, (Denver, CO: Greenwood Press ABC CLIO, June 2009), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Joel Denker, “Papaya and Plantain: Latin Cooking in America” in *The World on a Plate*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003), 135.

<sup>42</sup> Fleming, 27-8.

The music, the architecture, and the excitement of a new culture drew Uncle Hank to the Streets of Mexico too.

This section of *Around the Pan* also offers insight into how different some of the flavors found at certain exhibits were and emphasizes the American people's unfamiliarity with foreign foods from countries as near as Mexico. After sitting down and being handed a menu, Uncle Hank's naïveté about Mexican food and culture is exposed. When he chooses his meal, he finds himself at fault because he cannot comprehend the majority of food items on the menu. "In glancing over the list of edibles, he discovered the word 'beans'; that was enough for him, so pointing his finger at the word he told the waitress to bring him some."<sup>43</sup> The fact that Uncle Hank had limited knowledge about Mexican food, so much so that he could only recognize the word bean, likely mirrors the extent of knowledge the rest of the American population had at this time. With so much international influence on the cuisine at the fair and in a time where international restaurants were not very popular (outside of organized European immigrant communities) the beans incident is probably one of many that occurred during the fair. Bringing this back to the idea of exposure, this incident illustrates how simple exposure to foreign menu items, like the ingredients that accompanied the beans, could have drastically changed how certain people perceived other cultures.

Fleming continues to expose Uncle Hank's naïveté towards Mexican food and culture based on Hank's reaction when he tastes what he orders at the Streets of Mexico. When the plate of food is set down on the table he finds himself staring at a dish that looked unlike any plate of beans he ever had before. Uncle Hank decides to try it, "but the first mouthful caused him to open wide his capacious mouth and emit a yell that caused a salvo of laughter from the other

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<sup>43</sup> Fleming, 28.

diners in the restaurant.”<sup>44</sup> It turned out that the dish he ordered was concocted by blending together many hot spices and was prepared very differently from the beans he was used to eating. What is incredibly telling about this experience is that by having the ability to try food that came from Mexico, he now had an association with the country. The next time he thought of food that came from there, what we today would call Mexican food, he would immediately be brought back to this very instance. The ability to experience other non-food related aspects of other cultures would also help to build his perception of Mexico, but the experience of consuming food had an extra edge to it. It allowed him to experience the country through another sense—that of taste—one that is incredibly strong for many people. Therefore, Hank may not have understood that his experiences were affecting the way he perceived other countries, but the ability to try foreign food and supplement it with other cultural experiences distinct to a certain area of the world lead to the creation of a greater understanding of the world and its peoples.

Experiencing another culture’s food traditions did not always translate into the consumption of a large meal. Similar to the Streets of Mexico, the Fair Japan exhibit was seen at both expositions and gave visitors an insight into one of Japan’s most respected food and dining cultures: serving tea. At the Fair Japan, “a visitor could pay an additional \$0.10 for a cup of tea in the tea house served by a Japanese woman colorfully costumed as a Geisha.”<sup>45</sup> Though the tea was Japanese, the presentation of the tea was more important than the consumption of the tea itself. People were able to understand Japan and Japanese culture simply by partaking in this Japanese tradition that exposed them to the honor behind the tea ceremony, the art and architecture of Japan, and traditional Japanese garb through the Geishas.

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<sup>44</sup> Fleming, 28-9.

<sup>45</sup> Susan J. Eck, “‘Fair Japan’ Design and Layout,” in “Doing the Pan,” [panam1901.org/midway/fair\\_japan/fair\\_japan\\_design.htm](http://panam1901.org/midway/fair_japan/fair_japan_design.htm) [accessed April 29, 2012].

Even more foreign to the American public at the time were the native tribes from the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Though the main focus of these exhibits was to depict these “barbaric” people in their “natural habitats” (which is why they were called living exhibits), there were some instances of food being sold on-site. In some cases, the food sold had little to do with the peoples who were selling it. The Indian School and Indian Congress trained Native Americans to cook “American food” and allowed visitors to sit and eat various teas and cakes on site. Though the food often had some sort of native flair, much of the food served in the Indian school was altered to appeal to the mostly white audience. Many fairgoers were hesitant to eat from these exhibits, skeptical about how the food may taste. After trying the coffee at the Indian school, one man said to his wife, “I shall have to send you to Chilocco to learn to make coffee.”<sup>46</sup> Another woman was skeptical of the crullers, and “closed her eyes and bit into it as though the next moment might be her last. Then an expression of exquisite joy came over her benevolent countenance. ‘My’ she gasped, ‘they are just like mine; they are better than mine.’”<sup>47</sup> These stories illustrate how people had false perceptions about the abilities of some of these “lesser” people. However, their perceptions changed as they learned more about them and they walked away having a greater respect for these foreigners.

One of the few restaurants to come out of one of these living exhibits was the African Village Pavilion in “Darkest Africa.” An article from the *Buffalo Commercial* dated July 10, 1901, states “The savory odor of African stew drove the visitors out of the African village pavilion, yesterday, to where the cooks were busy at the open fire preparing their dinners. The people crowded around the huts and seemed very much amused at the sight of a big Ogowe warrior, sitting on the ground in front of his fire, skimming the stew with as much care as a

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<sup>46</sup> Parezo and Fowler, 147.

<sup>47</sup> Parezo and Fowler, 147.

cooking school graduate. The stew is made by boiling round steak and fresh fish together. A cupful of tomatoes and one onion chopped fine are added to the boiling meat, with a tablespoon of curry and a generous dash of red pepper. The whole is thickened with flour. It makes a very appetizing dish.”<sup>48</sup> This passage is interesting for a number of reasons. First, the word “savory” in modern terms is usually used in a positive way. However, because spices were so limited in America at the time, the term “savory” may give way to the idea that the odor being emitted was incredibly spicy and therefore unappealing to the general public. Second, the lengthy description of how the Ogowee warrior cooks up the stew is important because it allows visitors to identify with this African culture. While most parts of the exhibit were meant to show Americans how vastly different (and better) their culture was in comparison to the African tribes, this event makes the differences seem smaller. All of the ingredients and the methods by which the stew was created did not seem quite as foreign for those people who were able to withstand the smell. Having the opportunity to eat this food and watch it prepared was definitely a way for Americans to have a deeper understanding of other cultures.

### **Food usage in demonstrations and living exhibits**

Although food often made the biggest impact through being eaten, its influence did not stop there. Used in various demonstrations, as spectacle, and living exhibits, food was also used as a way to get people to understand a process, buy a certain product, or visit a certain exhibit. Food could make demonstrations more meaningful or be used in outrageous ways that would call attention to something that may have gone ignored or unseen.

### **Food in demonstrations**

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<sup>48</sup> *Buffalo Commercial*. July 10, 1901, in “Doing the Pan.”  
<http://library.buffalo.edu/exhibits/panam/food/culture.html#africa> [accessed April 29, 2012].



One of the most attractive parts of the fair was that most exhibits provided some type of live demonstration that showcased a particular product. Unfortunately, there are not many documents that specifically mention what certain exhibits did or how people perceived them. However, pictures and trading cards provide a lot of information, as they attest to the fact that these types of demonstrations were seen throughout the fair. Some countries had their own buildings separate from their “villages” that displayed food products from that region, such as Mexico and Chile, which can be seen in pictures. This is important because it allowed customers to know what kinds of food came from these areas. Additionally, many of the company exhibits handed out trade cards that accompanied a sample of their product. Overall, it is known that food existed in these areas of the fairgrounds but was not always specifically mentioned in personal accounts by people who visited the fair. However, there were some instances in which visitors mentioned some exhibits that displayed food.

Some exhibits used food as a way to better understand a particular career. Similar to the way “astronaut food” is available for purchase in space museums today, the navy used food to allow visitors to understand the life of someone in the navy better. N Hudson Moore wrote, “we may see how well the enlisted sailors live; there are samples of their food from raisins and prunes for plumduff to salt pork and hard tack.”<sup>49</sup> By consuming these types of food and understanding that this might have been something the men in the navy ate on a consistent basis, it was easier to comprehend what life might be like for a navy soldier. This is a perfect example of how food can provide a greater understanding by watching a particular ritual or viewing an object, because eating food is internalized which makes it more personal.

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<sup>49</sup> Moore.

Often times one of the best ways to attract fairgoers to a particular exhibit would be through the development of large models made entirely out of food. Food sculptures were incredibly popular throughout the world fairs during this time period. In a letter from an unknown person on a Wednesday in 1901, the visitor wrote, the “Minnesota building contained model of capitol made of butter. The largest model ever made of butter and in the largest glass refrigerator ever made. Took 14,000 lbs of butter. Contained dairy products and fancy work.”<sup>50</sup> The obvious excitement of this exhibit is not the subject of the sculpture but the fact that it was entirely crafted out of butter. The letter from this unknown person was rather short, meaning that of all the exhibits to be seen at the fair, this one was the one that stood out to this person more than any other. This shows how exhibits that may have been ignored could use food to generate more visitors.

### **Food and living exhibits**

As previously discussed, there was little opportunity for fairgoers to taste the foods of the native peoples living in the living exhibits, with the exception of the people in “Darkest Africa” at the Pan American. Even the food served at the Indian School and Indian Congress was very “American” in nature. This was likely due to the fact that the food in these villages would seem so unappetizing to visitors that the restaurants would make little to no money. But the differences in culture that these exhibits displayed were the reasons why they were so popular. In her *Outlook* article Betts mentions why these exhibits were so attractive: “Both Cuba and the Philippines are centers of vital interest, and careful examination. However, disastrous and shocking war and its consequent horrors are to our people, one inevitable result follows—a

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Unknown person, Wednesday 1901, in “Doing the Pan,” [http://panam1901.org/documents/letter\\_wednesday.html](http://panam1901.org/documents/letter_wednesday.html) [accessed April 11, 2012].

broadening of knowledge, of sympathy, of interest in and for other peoples.”<sup>51</sup> People wanted to see what made these people so different and displays at the world fair provided this opportunity.

Another aspect that may have called attention specifically to the Philippine Exhibit was the first line in a pamphlet about the exhibit as a whole. The first sentence in this document reads, “about the time the World’s Fair City is waking at early morning, one hundred bare-limbed Igorot often sacrifice and eat a dog on the Philippine reservation.”<sup>52</sup> If Americans are still disgusted by the idea of eating dog in today’s society, it is likely that people over 100 years ago were just as alarmed if not more. However, the absurdity and unfamiliarity of eating a dog was one of the main factors that drove people to the Igorot exhibit. If fairgoers were lucky enough to witness this ritual, it may have disgusted them but it also likely opened their minds to the culture and allowed them to gain a deeper understanding and association for these people.

More common than learning about the food habits of native tribes was the fact that Americans were able to dispel false beliefs about the rituals in which these people partook. Many patrons were surprised to see how similar these people on display were to themselves. Thomas Fleming addresses this through Uncle Hank, noting, “one old lady expressed great astonishment when she was informed that the Eskimo did not lunch on candles, as she observed one eating a hearty meal, consisting of Boston baked beans, a bowl of hot coffee and a large slice of pumpkin pie.”<sup>53</sup> It seemed so strange for fairgoers to see these types of people consuming food much like the kind Americans would sit down and eat around a huge table at dinnertime.

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<sup>51</sup> Betts

<sup>52</sup> Alfred C Newell, “The Philippine Exposition,” (St. Louis, MO: 1904). [http://www.worldcat.org/title/philippine-exposition-worlds-fair-st-louis-1904-40-different-tribes-6-philippine-villages-70000-exhibits-130-buildings-725-native-soldiers/oclc/779701216&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/philippine-exposition-worlds-fair-st-louis-1904-40-different-tribes-6-philippine-villages-70000-exhibits-130-buildings-725-native-soldiers/oclc/779701216&referer=brief_results), [accessed April 29, 2012].

<sup>53</sup> Fleming, 226.

Although this likely was not a common meal for an Eskimo, it also illustrated how other foreign people began to adapt to American food traditions.

### **Other cultures become Americanized**

It is important to note that while the fair prompted Americans and Western Europeans to adopt food from different cultures all around the world, other cultures also began to adopt American traditions. Although there wasn't as high of a chance that these traditions would be brought home, many villages and exhibits belonging to another country would eat what the Americans ate on a regular basis and participate in American holiday traditions.. One of the most telling examples of the adaptation of an American food tradition is through Thanksgiving. Some of the ethnic exhibits, like Fair Japan served a traditional Thanksgiving meal to the public on Thanksgiving day for approximately \$1.<sup>54</sup> Although the decision to serve a Thanksgiving meal may have been in an effort to still make money on the Thanksgiving holiday, it is important to note that these people transformed their food traditions to fit an American tradition for a single day. This is somewhat representative of America on a much smaller scale, as America is the epitome of cultures from around the world adapting customs and traditions from one another and fusing them to create a culture that can be deemed strictly American.

A more interesting example of Thanksgiving tradition at the fair is seen through the Thanksgiving Day celebration held at the Indian School. At this event, many native peoples including “the Apaches, Pueblos, Navajos, and Kickapoo’s from North America, and the Patagonians, Ainus, and Pigmies from the foreign nations,” in addition to other foreigners were invited to participate.<sup>55</sup> The children of these tribes were invited to the Thanksgiving event at the

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<sup>54</sup> Vaccaro, 142.

<sup>55</sup> Vaccaro, 142.

Model Playground at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition and over 326 children attended.<sup>56</sup> This was important in the sense that it brought people from many nations together to celebrate a very American holiday.

In a way, the Thanksgiving event both highlighted and overcame the cultural differences between all the children who were invited. In order to attend the dinner, the children had to prove that they could sit and eat with good behavior and had to be under the age of 15.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, the eating manners of the children were far more similar than the stages they were at in their life at age 15. One child, a Pygmy named Lomo fit the age requirements but “already had two wives and a number of children himself,” which was not common in America or many other cultures of the world.<sup>58</sup> It was also interesting to see how the different children reacted to the food served at the dinner. After they were asked whether or not they liked their meals of turkey, ham, and ice cream, the resounding answer was “Yes.”<sup>59</sup> But the most peculiar reactions came from the consumption of ice cream. While some children were delighted by it, others were horrified. For example, the children of the Moros thought the dish was “impossible” and too cold, running to the sun to warm up. Their reaction is obviously a product of the environment they came from and the food they were used to eating at home. The Thanksgiving event is a perfect example of how children were able to learn about American culture as well as the cultures from all of the other people who worked at the fair. It was not always about Americans learning about foreign places, but about foreign people learning about each other and American culture as well.

### **Alternative Dining Experiences**

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<sup>56</sup> Vaccaro, 142.

<sup>57</sup> Vaccaro, 143.

<sup>58</sup> Vaccaro, 143.

<sup>59</sup> Vaccaro, 145.

For many, one of the most compelling parts of the fair was that it allowed you to be whoever you wanted to be. The middle class was a huge portion of the visitors that poured through the fair gates and once inside they had the choice to spend lots of money and enjoy a fine dining eating establishment or they could choose to eat from the various concession stands all day long. Robert Grant's *Cosmopolitan Magazine* article mentions this opportunity by stating, "the center of diversion, of course, is the Midway, which even in its name is directly reminiscent of Chicago, and which is the same old grotesque but alluring combination of circus, ethnological bazaar and variety-show. At an ordinary circus, even the mature are apt to eat popcorn and drink pink lemonade as a rebuff to their own solemnity, and to a greater degree in this modern annex to a serious exhibition we are all of us led by easy-going curiosity, or a lighthearted spirit of fun, to poke our twenty five cent or ten cent bits through the aperture in the cashier's cage in response to the fetching eloquence of successive showmen."<sup>60</sup> This passage speaks to the various opportunities presented to visitors at the expositions. Some people had lots of money to spend and chose to buy food and attend exhibits that may be more popular to middle or lower class people and some middle class people would save enough money to have an experience they may have never had before.

Regardless of what people chose to see or where to eat, class distinctions at the fair were obvious and prevalent throughout. The most obvious example of class distinction at the Fair comes from the examination of various menus from restaurants on the Fairgrounds. Menu pricing varied from anywhere around 10 cents to upwards of \$2, which was considered to be a very expensive meal for the time period. One of the most moderately priced restaurants at the Pan American Exposition was the German-owned Pabst restaurant. Hot meat plates from the

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<sup>60</sup> Grant

Pabst ranged from 40 cents to \$1.50, with beer and alcohol prices also set in the same price range.<sup>61</sup> It was restaurants like the Pabst that welcomed middle class customers.

Prior to arriving at the fair, many visitors were forewarned about exuberant prices. Many popular publications featured blurbs or articles about how to save money for the fair, where to eat the best meals for less, and what prices to expect. Mary Bronson Hartt wrote an article that she hoped would help her readers pick and choose fair food wisely, in an attempt to avoid overspending. She said that for people “careless of expense it is easy to be happy” and encouraged them to go to nicer restaurants including the American Inn, Alt Nurnberg and The Tower.<sup>62</sup> She also encouraged various Pan-Am patrons to attend the Rice Kitchen and restaurants near the Fair Japan and the Philippine Village for more affordable dining. A restaurant guide was also printed in the June 1904 issue of the *World’s Fair Bulletin*, which contained various guides to restaurants that fit certain price ranges. The three categories included “Meals at 10 and 20 cents,” “Meals at Moderate Price,” and meals at “One of the ‘Swellest’ restaurants.”<sup>63</sup> These articles not only prepped people for future visits to the fair but also highlighted the different class distinctions both at the fair and in society at the time.

Uncle Hank even had an encounter with the incredibly high prices that existed throughout the exposition. The Bailey Catering Company controlled many of the restaurant concessions prices at the Pan American Exposition and it was at one of their dining establishments that Uncle Hank realizes how expensive fair prices really are. In the restaurant he orders a cup of coffee for ten cents and while the waitress turns to get his cup of coffee, he pulls out an entire apple pie purchased in downtown Buffalo, outside the fairgrounds. He then remarks, “Ten cents for a fine

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<sup>61</sup> Menu of the Pabst Restaurant, *Courtesy of Sue Eck*, <http://library.buffalo.edu/exhibits/panam/food/pabstmenu.html> [accessed April 11, 2012].

<sup>62</sup> Hartt .

<sup>63</sup> Vaccaro, 53.

pie like thet down in Buffaler agin Ten Cents fer a skimpy little piece here.”<sup>64</sup> Though this behavior is obviously fictional, as people do not tend to randomly carry large pies in their bags, it is telling of how much higher prices were inside the fairgrounds than they were just outside, in downtown Buffalo.

The massive amounts of eating options available at either of these world fairs speaks to the diversity of people who came through the doors everyday. There were enough wealthy people as there were working and middle class, as all of the food options that would be equivalent to these classes were available. However, the fair also provided something that these people had not been privilege to before. Wealthy people could partake in the eating traditions of the middle class, purchasing the “fad” food at any concession stand or stopping for a quick bite at some of the landmark restaurants. On the other hand, lower class people could also save up their money and treat themselves to a nicer meal than what was available to them at home. It is this opportunity that allowed people to experience the culture of a class different than their own specifically through food, which is a very class conscious subject.

### **Samples-The Great Equalizer**

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that people were not eating within their social class was the craze surrounding free samples throughout the fairgrounds. Samples were prevalent at the fair for a number of reasons. For companies, the fair could be used as a marketing tool to increase brand awareness and convert fair visitors into future purchasers. Many companies would choose to distribute a sample of their product in addition to a small recipe book that would provide fairgoers with recipes they could make in the future that required the product. An August issue of the *New England Grocer* speaks to the popularity of this

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<sup>64</sup> Fleming, 73.



marketing ploy and stated “exhibitors...are distributing literature by the carload daily in the shape of advertising cards, dainty booklets and folders.”<sup>65</sup> Other villages, buildings, and tents would pass out free samples in an attempt to gain more traffic in their respective areas and encourage people to view their exhibits. Free samples became such an important part of the fair that an *Express* article dated 27 July 1901 talked about how many eating establishments on Appetite Avenue and Hungry Alley decided to discontinue the sale of food around noon and again just prior to 6pm because so many patrons had decided to eat elsewhere by getting free samples. People were so desperate to eat samples that they “made two or three rounds of the two aisles to make a really full meal.”<sup>66</sup> It was relatively easy to make a meal out of samples if one tried hard enough.

But there was more to samples than the fact they were free. In a September 1901 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, Lavinia Hart wrote an article called “The Exhibit of Human Nature,” which focused on the observations of people eating food at the Pan American Exposition in 1901. Hart notes, “all types of women were huddled together, rich and poor, aesthetic and commonplace...to get free biscuits made from the ‘finest baking powder on earth.’”<sup>67</sup> This article suggests that these women were attracted to the ‘finest baking powder on earth’ rather than the fact that they were able to try something for free. Keeping up with the newest products could attest to your social standing back at home, so it is obvious why women may have been keen on getting their hands on something that was deemed “the finest on earth.”

Other factors also contributed to the popularity of samples. They were so popular that Fleming even mentions them in *Around the Pan with Uncle Hank*. At the Pan-American

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<sup>65</sup> Vaccaro 76

<sup>66</sup> “With So Much Free Food Available, Restaurateurs Were Not Happy,” *Express* July 27, 1901. <http://library.buffalo.edu/exhibits/panam/food/personal.html> [accessed April 29, 2012].

<sup>67</sup> Lavinia Hart, “The Exhibit of Human Nature,” *Cosmopolitan* XXXI, no. 5, September 1901, <http://library.buffalo.edu/exhibits/panam/food/personal.html> [accessed April 11, 2012], 3-4.

Exhibition, the Liberal Arts building was the place to be during the lunch hour, when free samples were at their prime. Uncle Hank strolled through the building in search of the best free samples, including oatmeal from Quaker Oats, griddle cakes from Aunt Jemima, and malted milk from Horlick's Malted Milk.<sup>68</sup> This is likely the route that many other fairgoers took and speaks to how someone could be sufficiently full after one walk through. Fleming makes a point to show that Uncle Hank's reasons for sampling were not due to his desire to save money but due to a more important issue. He writes, "Uncle Hank's inherent curiosity induced him to investigate, with the result that he soon became as eager as the others to secure the free samples."<sup>69</sup> As previously mentioned, the inherent curiosity of many fairgoers was often the motivation behind their actions. People wanted to experience something new and because samples often allowed visitors to try some of the latest and greatest food inventions, this desire applied perfectly to the distribution and consumption of samples as well.

### **Cultural Exchange Limitations- The Boxed Lunch**

Throughout *Around the Pan with Uncle Hank*, Thomas Fleming provides lots of insight into the unique cultural exchange opportunity that the fair presented. He especially recognizes the importance of food at the fair by stating "man grows on what he feeds."<sup>70</sup> Similar yet different to today's concept of "you are what you eat," Fleming is referring to the mental part of the body rather than physical part. Fleming notes "a pleasure trip in which the 'inner man' was satisfactorily entertained is always pleasantly remembered, and a sight-seeing journey is doubly satisfying if, at the end of the day's jaunt, a well-cooked repast is at hand."<sup>71</sup> He believes that

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<sup>68</sup> Fleming, 91.

<sup>69</sup> Fleming, 91.

<sup>70</sup> Fleming, 72.

<sup>71</sup> Fleming, 72.

food can make an experience even better and more memorable, which is likely why Uncle Hank has so many food memories in the book.

But what about the people who were somehow able to escape all the previously mentioned interactions with food? Though it would have been almost impossible to avoid every interaction, it is likely that not everyone was willing or able to afford a meal in which they could explore a culture foreign to them. The most compelling evidence that people were able to avoid these interactions is through the popularity of the boxed lunch.

The expo, especially the Pan American, was known as the fair of the people, meaning there were a lot of working class attendees who did not have enough money to buy food at the fair. Instead, they would bring a boxed lunch often consisting of a sandwich, a piece of fruit, other snacks, or a drink. These lunches could be made at home and placed in a shoebox or be purchased just outside the exposition grounds for much cheaper than any food found inside. Their popularity was so widespread that Fleming takes note of them in his book, saying “a very noticeable feature of the crowds going into the Exposition was the almost universal custom of carrying lunch boxes.”<sup>72</sup> Calling the boxed lunch a “universal custom” emphasizes how popular the trend really was. Although there were still many people ordering inside (because the fair was making money) it is important to analyze the popularity of this trend.

Many sources reference the large amount of people who brought boxed lunches into the fair on a daily basis. In a question to the editor of the evening news, one Buffalo resident asked, “Will you kindly tell me through "Everybody's Column" whether visitors will be allowed to take lunches with them when they visit the Exposition grounds this summer. I understand that the prices at the restaurants on the grounds will be pretty high, and one would not like to come home

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<sup>72</sup> Fleming 72

for lunch and then have to pay to go in again in the afternoon.”<sup>73</sup> The response to the question was, “The Pan-American people will have no way of preventing you from carrying your lunch. The restaurants, however, are not high in their rate now, whether they may be later on.”<sup>74</sup> The newspaper would not have chosen to answer this question if they did not feel it was incredibly important for the public to know. It emphasizes the importance and popularity of the boxed lunch for people attending the fair who wanted to save money.

However, the popularity of the boxed lunch does not necessarily mean that people were no longer prone to experiencing other cultures through food. In a way, the popularity of the boxed lunch became a cultural exploration on its own. Due to its popularity, many visitors found themselves in a pinch looking for a place to eat their lunches in peace. Dining had previously been a relatively private experience, so eating in an open area with a large crowd was not every person’s cup of tea. Betts’ article in *The Outlook* documents the actions of three women at the fair, looking for a place to eat their lunch: “They look as though one more step were impossible. Each carries a box neatly wrapped and tied. They sit down in the shade of the beautiful electric building. Even to sit down in the shade is so grateful that they look at one another in enthusiastic silence. The crowds pass and repass. Soon every seat near them is taken. All about people are eating, children are being fed, the popcorn boy is shouting his wares. The three saints from the unknown land of Quiet look at each other, at the untied boxes in their laps, unconcerned lunchers all about them. There is no use, they never can eat so publicly. The tallest, the thinnest, the most rigid of the three speaks. One flash of unspoken admiration from either side into her face; the three rise, turn the bench around, and, facing the building, with their backs to this stream of life,

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<sup>73</sup> C.F. Buffalo to Editor, Evening News, May 13, 1901, in “Doing the Pan,” Panam1901.org/visiting/food/food.htm, [accessed April 29, 2012].

<sup>74</sup> C.F. Buffalo

they eat their lunches, happily forgetful of the public.”<sup>75</sup> Although this account may provide a better example of how people were able to avoid the act of eating publicly and interacting with others, there is obviously mention of the fact that others were happily eating in public. This would suggest that this event encouraged people to experience eating in public and interacting with those near them, who were more likely than not of a different socioeconomic status or ethnicity.

### **Cultural Limitations-Racism**

The most obvious and overarching limitation of cultural awareness and understanding at the fair was the rampant racism throughout the exhibits. As previously discussed, the original motivations for the creation of fairs of this size and stature was to emphasize that America was an upcoming superpower in the world. In addition to showcasing all of the wonderful inventions and architecture that came out of America at this time, another way to showcase America’s power was to contrast the civilized, Western, American society to the “barbaric” tribal people from other parts of the world (most of which were recently acquired territories).

One of the most apparent examples of America contrasting itself to the people living in its newly acquired foreign territories was through the Igorot people. As previously stated, the Igorot’s were known to sacrifice and eat a dog each morning as part of their morning ritual. At the same time but about two hundred yards away from this ritual “a bugle sounds reveille, and four hundred well-trained soldiers in the blue of the United States Army hustle from their tents.”<sup>76</sup> Known as the Philippine Scouts, they “stand at attention beneath an American flag, while a Philippine band plays an American air. All of these people live on the same island in the Philippines. The Igorot represent the wildest race of savages, the scouts stand for the results of

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<sup>75</sup> Betts.

<sup>76</sup> Newell.

American rule—extremes of the social order in the islands.”<sup>77</sup> This account was written during the time of the fair and illustrates America’s attempt to “sell” visitors on American culture by contrasting it to the “savage” cultures of some of the tribes shown at the fair. It is obvious that Americans would favor the Americanized ritual over one that involved the killing and eating of a dog.

Racism was also apparent in describing people from less savage ethnic villages, like the Streets of Mexico. *Around the Pan with Uncle Hank* is full of illustrations in which ethnic people are depicted in racist manners. Throughout the passage about Uncle Hank’s Streets of Mexico experience are pictures of Mexicans with very racist overtones, one that illustrates a Mexican band member depicted as a monkey. These illustrations were likely not unique to this book, as America was still a very white society at the time.

An entire paper could be devoted to describing various racist aspects of the fair, but what is important to understand with regard to this paper is that racism limited the ability of visitors to fully appreciate and understand foreign cultures. Although food served as a first step in overcoming cultural differences, the racist overtones and pressure from the rest of the society often limited those cultural experiences and often inhibited people from shedding the racist beliefs that they had likely grown up with.

## **Conclusion**

The world fairs at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were unique and innovative. There had never before been an event that successfully attracted people from all over the world and incorporated many different cultures into one giant festival. Though the reasons for its creation may have been to promote America, the fair opened the door for people to experience the rest of

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<sup>77</sup> Newell.

the world without having to travel around it. The coming together of people from different ethnicities and socioeconomic status in addition to the numerous villages that dotted the fair grounds provided the perfect opportunity for fairgoers to consume other cultures in a non-threatening way.

As illustrated throughout this paper, food was often the easiest way to participate in cultural consumption. In the same way that people need sleep and water in order to survive, food is equally as important. But unlike sleep and water, food takes many different tastes, forms, textures, and flavors from country to country and so do the habits and traditions surrounding it. These differences are what distinguish cultures, even to this day, and the fair provided the perfect opportunity to see all of these differences in a single location.

Unfortunately, these expositions were not permanent structures and the buildings that had taken many months to construct could be torn down and destroyed in a matter of minutes. The ability to “taste” the world vanished as well because most cities in America at the time had very few restaurants that exhibited such a wide variety of tastes. People went back to their towns and ate the local fare and cooked various recipes similar to the ones featured in Sarah Tyson Rorer’s cookbook (with very little foreign influence). Resorting back to these old ways begs the question, did the fair have any influence over the development of the American food culture and landscape in future years?

Most research suggests that immigration and the increasing popularity of international travel led to the development of the food culture that exists in America today, but it would be a shame to completely eradicate the fair’s influence. The fair was unique in the sense that there really was never anything like it before its existence, and there really has not been anything similar to it since. Though immigration likely has had a larger influence on the food culture in

the USA (immigrants tended to be more permanent than fairs after they arrived), the fair cannot be forgotten.

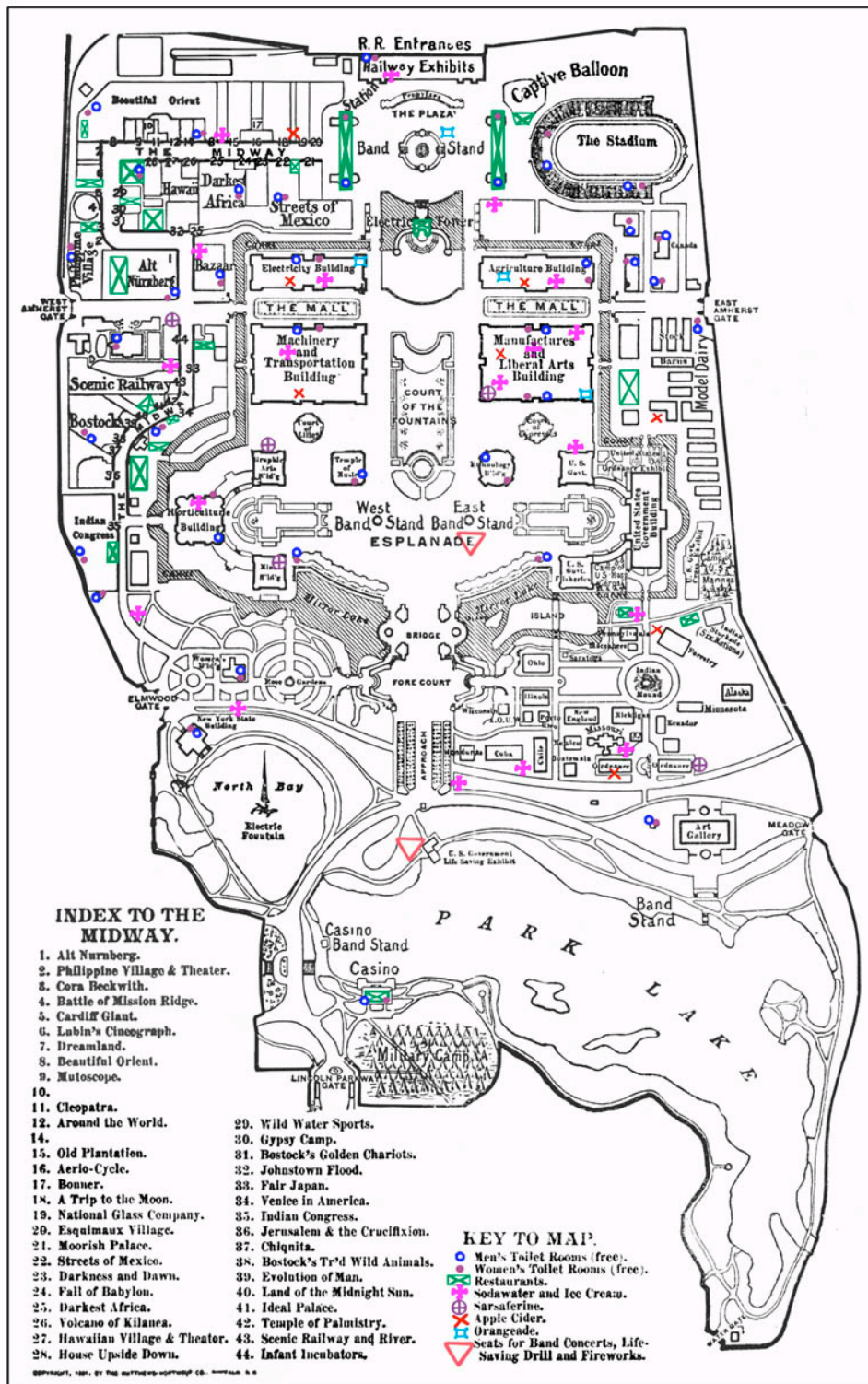
Maybe the question is less about how food at these fairs shaped American food culture in the future and more about its ability to allow people to understand other cultures and people in a less threatening way. Prior to this time, other cultures could be considered scary, most likely because people had absolutely no knowledge about them. This was mentioned in the fact that many visitors were surprised to see that the “barbaric” people were not much different than themselves. It is this cultural understanding that is so significant, because it shows how in a time of imperialism people were still able to expand their minds and accept other cultures and other people.

It is likely that experiencing food at the fair opened the door to the rest of the world for many of the fair visitors. Inherently curious, food gave them an easy way to taste small portions of another culture, and as Richard Sterling puts it, to make it their own. By making other cultures their own, the desire to travel and experience more grew, suggesting that the exposure to food also had an affect on the popularity of foreign travel over the last 100 years. Overall, food had a profound affect on the people at the expositions, fueling their curiosities and allowing them to identify with other cultures in ways they had never been able to before.

## **Appendix-**

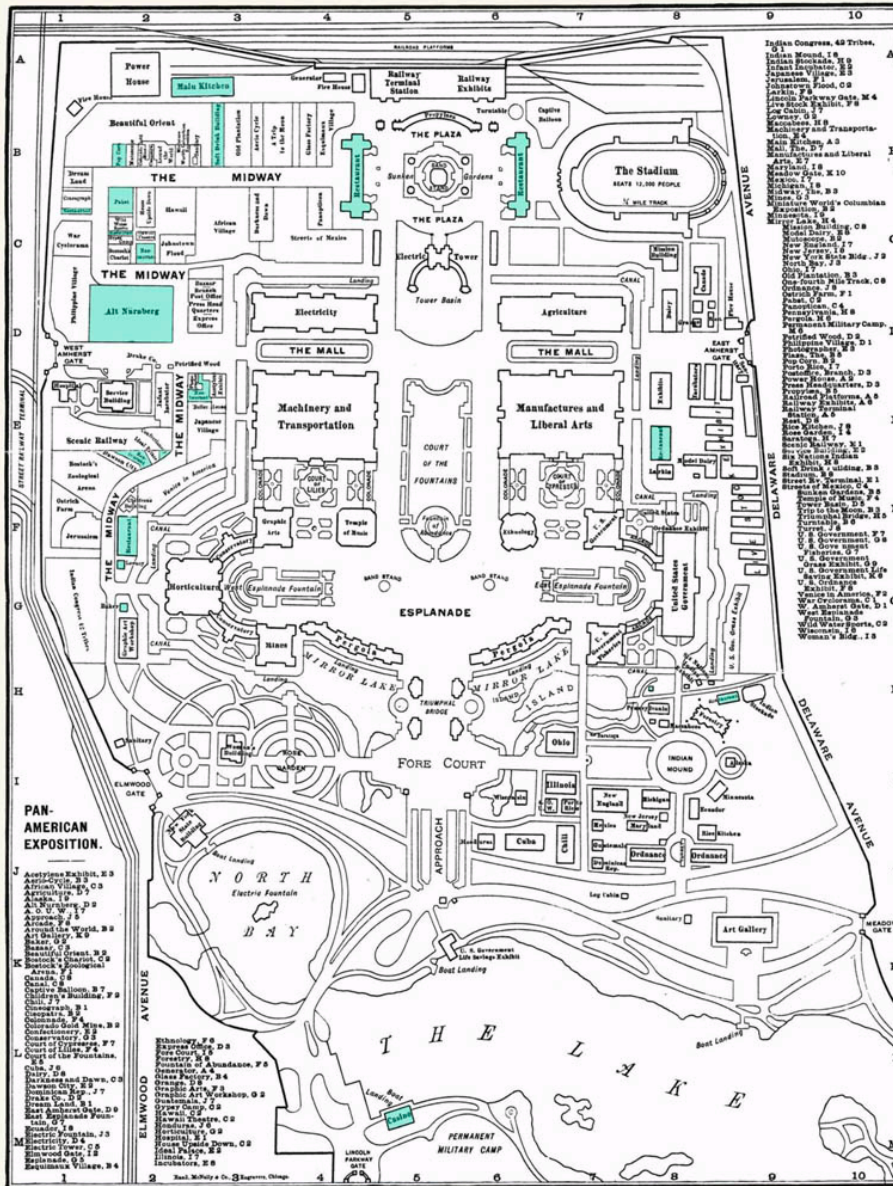
### **A. Softdrink Vendors, Restaurants and Toilets Located on the Exposition Grounds**





## B. Major Restaurants on the Exposition Grounds

## Major Restaurants on the Exposition Grounds



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