



## 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition Walking Tour, University of Washington, Seattle

*Come celebrate the centennial of the A-Y-P Exposition by exploring the legacy of Seattle's first World's Fair on the University of Washington campus. With historic maps and photographs as your guides, you can experience traces of what made the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition such a cherished and magical fair.*

Opened to the public on June 1, 1909, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was a magical celebration of the natural splendor and wealth of the Pacific Northwest as well as a new era of commercial and industrial expansion. By November 1909, the Expo had closed its gates for the last time, but its legacy lives on in two important ways. Not only did it establish Seattle as the Northwest's pre-eminent metropolis, it also laid the framework for future development of the University of Washington campus.

The A-Y-P Exposition was sited on 250 acres of University property. John Charles (J.C.) Olmsted, the step-son of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., of Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, was employed in October 1906 and given less than three years to execute a plan for the Exposition. Two important design considerations included aligning the roads for the fairgrounds with the city grid and laying out the buildings in a manner that would later serve the University. However, these practical concerns were not as important as creating a memorable fair that would celebrate the Pacific Northwest's landscape and the city of Seattle's aspirations. Olmsted organized the fair using a series of axes that led to views of nearby lakes and distant mountain ranges. Rainier Vista, the most famous element in the A-Y-P Exposition landscape, was the central organizing feature; it remains so today.

While most of the University land had been logged prior to 1906, several groves of firs remained, and Olmsted used this to his advantage. Over two million plants were used in the landscape, many of which were collected and propagated onsite. As Olmsted declared, "The University of Washington will inherit [the] work when the exposition's moon shall have waxed and waned, and will then...possess the most beautiful campus of any university in America." (*Seattle Times*, May 30, 1909)

Despite significant changes over the last century, the spirit of Olmsted's design for the A-Y-P continues to inform the experience of the University of Washington campus. Traces such as primary spatial relationships, buildings, and vegetation remain. But the story of the A-Y-P can also be told by those elements that we can no longer see. Come see for yourself what the nearly four million visitors experienced 100 years ago as they strolled through the Main Gate into Seattle's first World's Fair.



Looking south toward Rainier Vista from the U.S. Government Building, A-Y-P Exposition, 1909. (UWSpecialCollections AYP347)

### Acknowledgements:

- This project was generously funded by a 4Culture grant.
- All photos were used with permission from the University of Washington Special Collections (UWSC) and the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI).
- Walking tour was prepared by Karen Kennedy, University of Washington MLA, 2009.



### Major Archival Sources:

- Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition Collection, Special Collections, University of Washington
- John C. Olmsted to Sophia Olmsted, Correspondence, LOEB, Harvard University
- Olmsted Associates Papers, Library of Congress
- Olmsted Brothers Records, Special Collections, U. Washington
- Olmsted Papers, Olmsted Archives, National Park Service

### Related Publications Funded by 4Culture:

(All published in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Summer 2009).

- Chalana, M. "Where Gaiety is the Reigning Deity: The Pay Streak at the AYP Exposition."
- Merlino, K. "Classicizing the Wilderness: Washington State's Forestry Building at the AYP Exposition of 1909."
- Ochsner, J. "Geometry and Geology: Rainier Vista from the AYP to the University of Washington."
- Sprague, T. "Lighted Fair is Magic Landscape: The AYP at Night."
- Way, T. "How Art assists Nature: The Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in Context."



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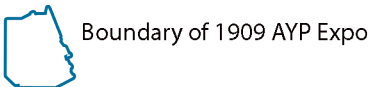
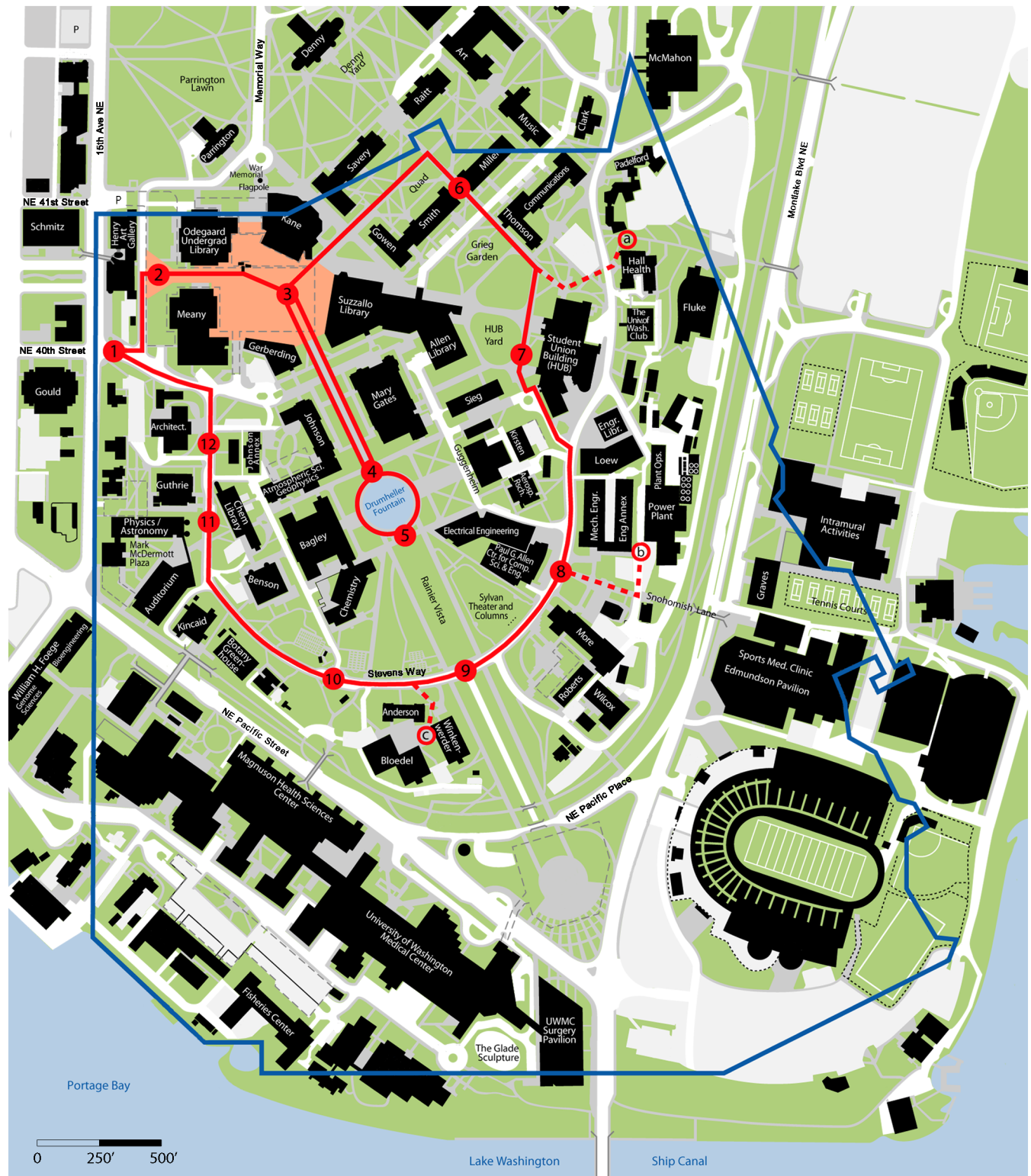
The tour begins & ends at the NE 40th St & 15th Ave NE campus entrance. Parking is available on the surrounding streets as well as in the Central Parking Garage, the entrance to which is on 15th Ave NE & NE 41st St. Frequent Metro bus service is also available to the area. More information available at the UW Visitors Center, 206-543-9198, or [uwvic@u.washington.edu](mailto:uwvic@u.washington.edu).

TOUR STOPS: (locations refer to names during the A-Y-P)

- 1 Main Gate & Puget Plaza
- 2 Auditorium & North Pay Streak
- 3 U.S. Government Building & Cascade Court
- 4 Rainier, Union & Washington Vistas
- 5 Geyser Basin
- 6 Dome Circle
- 7 Nome Circle
- 8 Washington Circle
- 9 Rainier Avenue & South Gate
- 10 Union Circle
- 11 Klondike Circle & South Pay Streak
- 12 Fine Arts Building & Women's Building

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS:

- a Natural Amphitheater & Hoo Hoo House
- b Foundry, Power Plant, & East Gate
- c Japan Building & Forestry Exhibit Remnant



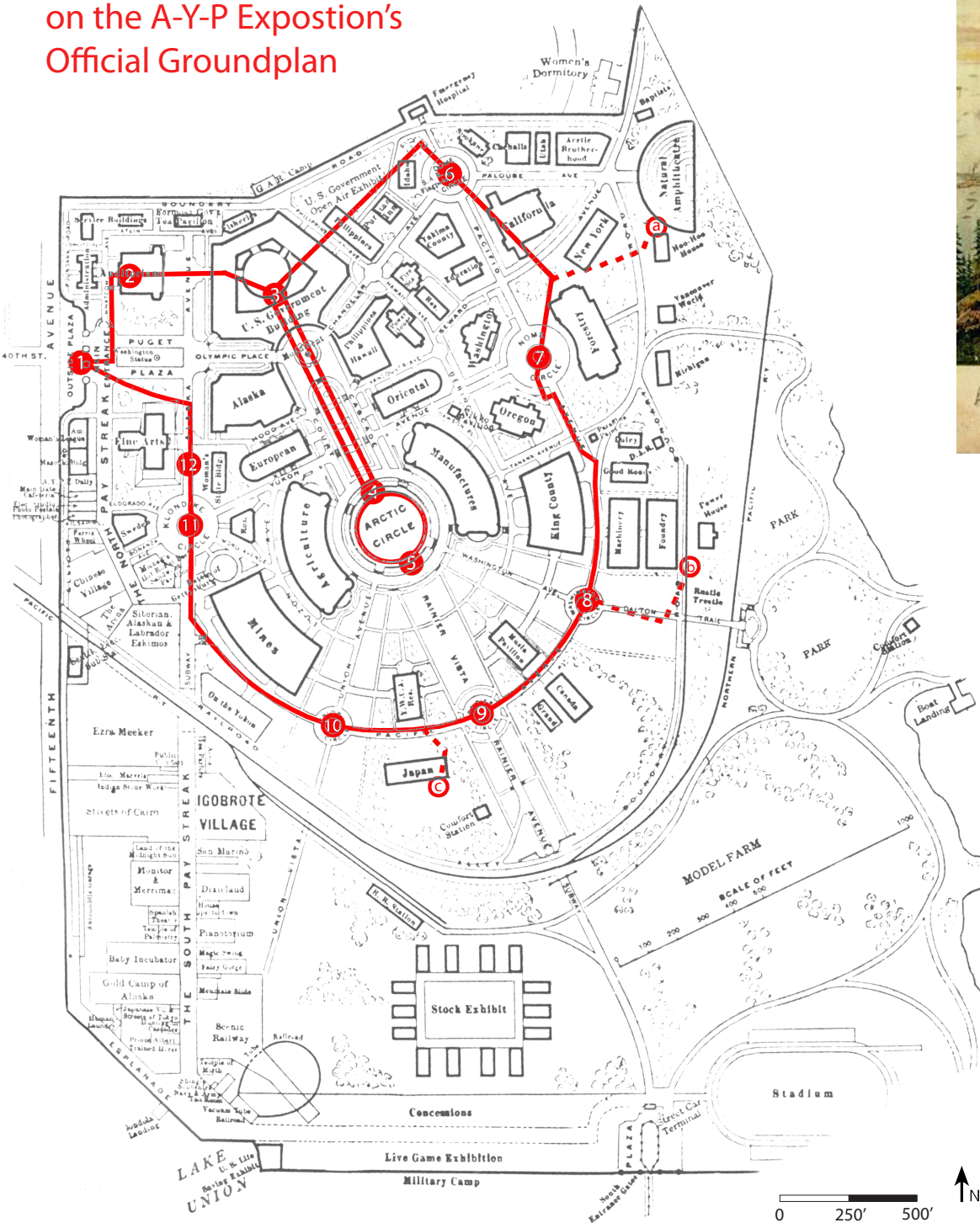
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Lake Washington

Ship Canal



# Overlay of the tour route on the A-Y-P Exposition's Official Groundplan



(UW Special Collection AYP462)

"The magnificent views of Mt. Rainier and other mountains and of Lake Union will...be by far the greatest features of the exposition and will be vividly remembered by most visitors when the best efforts of architects and landscape gardeners have been forgotten." (J.C. Olmsted, *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, November 1906)



(MOHAI 1980.7158.2.16)



## Stop 1: Main Gate & Puget Plaza



Looking east toward the Main Gate.  
(Mohai 1974.5868.8)

The three grand arches of the Main Gate, located at the intersection of NE 40th Street & 15th Ave NE, welcomed fairgoers into the A-Y-P Exposition. The College Inn, which can be seen in the picture to the left, was built in 1909 to

accommodate out of town visitors and continues to serve the same purpose today. Once through the gates, Puget Plaza, with the George Washington statue in the middle and 12,000 salmon-colored geraniums flanking each side, opened before them and led due east to the Alaska Monument which marked the northern terminus of Rainier Vista. This 40th Street entrance remains heavily used today, providing primary motorized access to campus.



Aerial view looking north at 15th Ave NE. (UWSC AYP1019)

In the above picture, the A-Y-P Expo Administration Building, now the site of the Henry Art Gallery, is just above the Main Gate; the Auditorium, which was renamed Meany Hall after the Expo ended, is on the right. The path leading north up the stairs between the two was known as Whatcom Avenue during the A-Y-P; a similar path now leads to Red Square. You will take this to Stop 2.

## Stop 2: Auditorium & North Pay Streak

The George Washington statue which now leads to Red Square was commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution for the A-Y-P Exposition and was sculpted by artist Lorenzo Taft. It has since been moved twice and now sits 200' to the north of its original location in Puget Plaza.

S-SW of the statue stands the second Meany Hall. The original was built as the Auditorium for the A-Y-P and was used for such purposes by the University until it suffered earthquake damage and was demolished in 1965. The new Meany Hall, roughly the same size as the original, is located 125' to the southeast.



Looking south across Puget Plaza at the north gateway to Pay Streak. The backside of the Fine Arts Building, now Architecture Hall, is visible on the left. (MOHAI 2002.48.481)

Just south of the Main Gate and Puget Plaza was the northern entrance to Pay Streak, the "amusement quarters" of the Exposition. Stretching all the way to Lake Union's Portage Bay, fairgoers spent both considerable time and money on Pay Streak amusements that ranged from exotic to exhilarating, bizarre to burlesque. Popular concessions on the North Pay Streak included the Chinese Village, the Ferris Wheel, Michel's Hot Roast Beef Sandwich Pavilion, and the Eskimo Village.



North Pay Streak. (UWSC AYP600)

## Stop 3: U.S. Govt Building & Cascade Court



Clearing the site for the U.S. Govt. Building. (UWSC AYP489)



Constructing the U.S. Govt. Building. (UWSC AYP498)

One of the most prominent buildings of the A-Y-P Exposition was the U.S. Government Building that anchored the northern terminus of Rainier Vista and Cascade Court. It is now the site of Red Square. The Cascades, a 500' spillway descending from the U.S. Government Building to Geyser Basin, flowed at a rate of 8,000 gallons of water/minute and was lit with 1500 lights. Although Cascade Court has since been replaced with asphalt, its slope and width remain, and Rainier Vista will always be one of the University of Washington campus's most cherished features.



Cascade Court looking north. (UWSC AYP216)



Looking south from the U.S. Government Building toward Cascade Court, Geyser Basin & Mount Rainier. (UWSC AYP347)

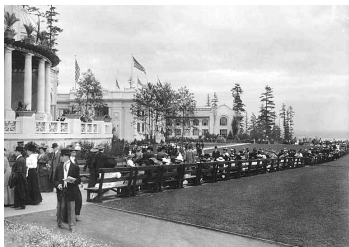


## Stop 4: Rainier, Union & Washington Vistas



Northeast view of Rainier Vista. (MOHAI 1980.7158.2.16)

While it may seem obvious that the primary axis of the A-Y-P grounds would be aligned with Mt. Rainier, at 14410' tall, there was no precedent in the Olmsted or other American world's fair legacies for doing so. Olmsted's decision to focus on distant views of Nature defined not only the University of Washington campus, but regional landscape architecture for the next century. In addition to Rainier Vista, two secondary axes, Union and Washington, radiated out at 40 degree angles from the intersections of Rainier Avenue and the center of Geyser Basin. Only a few buildings were sited between Union and Washington Avenues, ensuring that the Douglas Fir-framed vistas were prominent. "The magnificent views of Mt. Rainier and other mountains and of Lake Union will...be by far the greatest features of the exposition and will be vividly remembered by most visitors when the best efforts of architects and landscape gardeners have been forgotten." (J.C. Olmsted, *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, November 1906).



The W-SW view down the Washington axis toward the Washington Circle and the lake beyond. All three axes were lined with benches, formal flower beds, and broad panels of grass. (UWSC AYP1030)

## Stop 5: Geyser Basin

Geyser Basin, 200' in diameter and illuminated by 1000 water-proof lights, spouted water 100' into the air. It was modeled after Yellowstone's Old Faithful Geyser which Olmsted had witnessed on a visit in 1908.



View across Geyser Basin toward Cascade Court. (UWSC AYP244)

Geyser Basin served as both the physical and social centerpiece of the fair. Visible in the picture below are both the inner and outer walkways circling the pond, separated by a swatch of brightly colored flowers, the latter lined with benches and potted ornamental trees. Geyser Basin was rebuilt in 1961 for the University's Centennial Celebration, and is now known as Drumheller Fountain; it remains a favorite meeting spot on campus.



Looking west across Geyser Basin. (UWSC AYP222)

## Stop 6: Dome Circle



Looking northwest across Dome Circle to Denny Hall. (UWSC AYP218)

Dome Circle, the northernmost circle of the fair, was surrounded by six state, county and city-funded buildings including Spokane, Utah, Yakima County, and California. The Circle was sited on what is now the Arts Quad with its exact location between Smith and Miller Halls. While Denny Hall, visible in the upper right of the above picture, was not used for the A-Y-P, its location on higher ground afforded visitors frequent views of it throughout the fairgrounds.



The installation of the flagpole in Dome Circle. (UWSC AYP490)

In the center of the Circle sat a 186' flagpole; cut from Eagle Gorge in King County, it was the world's tallest flagpole at the time. It remained on campus for several years after the A-Y-P.



**Optional Excursion A:  
Natural Amphitheater & Hoo Hoo House**



*Opening day in the Natural Amphitheater. (UWSC AYP985)*

Opening day ceremonies of the A-Y-P were held at the Natural Amphitheater on June 1, 1909. Olmsted chose this site for a gathering space as the steep slope to the west of the railroad already existed and very little modification was needed to create the form. From the stands, fairgoers enjoyed views of Lake Washington and the large fir trees of the wooded Park.



*The Hoo-Hoo House. (UWSC AYP445)*

The Hoo-Hoo House was built by the Hoo-Hoo, a lumberman's fraternity, and was open only to Hoo-Hoo members and lumbermen during the exposition. The building was best known for the two large cat statues in front which had green electric eyes that lit up at night. The House was used as the University Faculty Club until its demolition in 1959; Hall Health now occupies the site.

**Stop 7: Nome Circle**

Nome Circle was enclosed by only three buildings. On the west side, stood two state buildings, Washington and Oregon which, put together, were smaller than the enormous Forestry Building they faced on the east side. Nome Circle is now occupied by the Husky Union Building (HUB) Yard.



*Looking south across Nome Circle with the Forestry Building on the left, the Oregon Building on the right. (UWSC AYP335)*

The Forestry Building, advertised as the largest log structure ever built at the time, was sited in a prominent location at the termination of Yukon Avenue, where the HUB now stands. Constructed of 1.5 million board feet of native fir and cedar from Snohomish County, some 6' in diameter and 54' long, it celebrated the abundance of the region's timber resources. The building remained a tourist attraction and was used as a museum until declared unsafe in 1921. As the bark was very intentionally left on the logs and proper measures were not taken to preserve the timbers, dry rot and insect infestation quickly set in. It was demolished in 1930.



*Forestry Building. (UWSC AYP036)*

**Stop 8: Washington Circle**



*Looking southeast toward Washington Vista. (UWSC AYP993)*

Washington Vista, one of many grand axes, directed fairgoers' gazes to the fir-framed views of Lake Washington. The photo above, taken from the west side of Geysers Basin, shows the Manufactures Building on the left, the Music Pavilion on the right, and Washington Circle at the end of the thoroughfare between the two. While the vista has since been interrupted by new engineering buildings, an edge path continues to define the axis. Dalton Trail led fairgoers over the Northern Pacific Railroad and down to the East Gate where they could depart by boat. It is now called Snohomish Lane and connects main campus to the UW sports complex.



*View south from Washington Circle to the Canada Building with the domed Grand Trunk Railroad Building to its right. (UWSC AYP073)*



**Optional Excursion B:  
Foundry, Power Plant & East Gate**



Power House #1. (UWSC 20276z)

Power House #1 was located on the Northern Pacific Railroad line (now the Burke Gilman Trail), the tracks of which can be seen running through the middle of the photograph on the left. As the A-Y-P demanded considerable power, coal-fired steam plants were built on site.

Power was supplied throughout the grounds via 18" redwood pipes, and the brick chimney towered 100' in the air. One of the very few buildings that still remain on campus, the Foundry is now the Engineering Annex. The University continues to use steam power, and the locations of the power house and chimney remain.



A-Y-P's East Gate on Lake Washington.

(UWSC AYP362)

In addition to the streetcar or private automobile via Lake Washington Boulevard, fairgoers also arrived by boat. Visitors passed under the East Gate and meandered through the Natural Park to meet up with Dalton Trail (now Snohomish Lane) which led them up and over the railroad and into Washington Circle. This area has since been filled and is now occupied by the Nordstrom Tennis Center.

**Stop 9: Rainier Avenue & South Gate**

Rainier Avenue and Rainier Vista served to divide the A-Y-P fairgrounds into two approximately equal sections. The majority of the Expo buildings were located north of Rainier Circle while the southern grounds were left much more open. The east-west pathway seen in the photo below is now Stevens Way. Olmsted designed it to follow the same curve of the Northern Pacific Railroad, now the Burke Gilman Trail, located 500' south.



Looking south across Rainier Circle.

(MOHAI 1990.73.132)

Rainier Avenue led S-SE from the Circle under the concrete railroad overpass, which remains today, to the South Gate. The slope and stone retaining walls remain unchanged as does the clay drainage system that lines each side of the road. This route will once again be heavily used by pedestrians when the lightrail station and underground train arrive on campus around 2016.



UWSC LEE063

Fairgoers headed to & from the South Gate.

(UWSC LEE063)

**Optional Excursion C:  
Japan Building & Forestry Exhibit Remnant**



The Japan Building as seen from Pacific Avenue.

(UWSC AYP982)

The Japan Building opened directly on to Pacific Avenue, now Stevens Way. Anderson Hall, one of three College of Forest Resources buildings on south campus, now occupies the exact site.

During the A-Y-P Exposition, the Forestry Building contained several exhibits that celebrated the promise of the region's timber industry. The cross-section of timber seen in the photograph below was roughly 400 years old when it was cut; it has since been moved and is on display outside of the western entrance to Winkenwerder Hall. A second cross-section is displayed just inside the door.



One of the many exhibits in the Forestry Building at the A-Y-P. (UWSC AYP312)



The official A-Y-P logo was also on display in the Forestry Building. (UWSC AYP032)



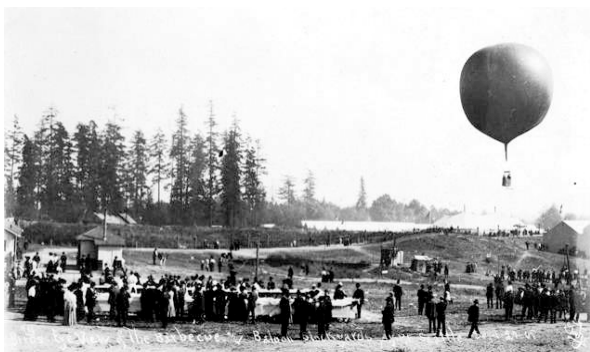
## Stop 10: Union Circle



The southern terminus of Union Vista.

(UWSC AYP128)

In addition to South Pay Streak, the United States Life Saving Exhibit and the gondola landing, both visible in the above photograph, were also located on the southern terminus of the Union Vista. The University of Washington Fisheries Center is now in this location.



Looking south from Union Circle toward the balloon landing and Stockyards. (MOHAI 1995.38.37.231)

Union Avenue also lead to the balloon landing grounds and Stockyards. In the photo above, Rainier Avenue is located just on the other side of the tall row of firs. The site is now occupied by the University of Washington Medical Center.

## Stop 11: Klondike Circle & South Pay Streak

Klondike Circle gracefully joined together several strong axes- Yukon Avenue, Alaska Avenue and both North and South Pay Streaks. In the photo below, crowds gathered for the unveiling of James J. Hill's bronze bust. The builder of the Great Northern Railroad, Hill delivered the opening day address on June 1, 1909. His statue is now located on Stevens Way, just north of More Hall. Several concessions on the Pay Streak, named for streaks of gold or other valuable ore found during the Alaska Gold Rush, are visible; from left to right are the Eskimo Village, Michel's Hot Roast Beef Sandwich Pavilion, the Chinese Village, and the Swedish Building.



Looking south across Klondike Circle.

(Mohai 1990.73.125)

South of the Circle, the Northern Pacific Railroad crossed over the Pay Streak and separated North from South. The overpass, seen in the picture below, was decorated with totem poles and is now used for the Burke Gilman Trail. Just south of the overpass,



Railroad overpass. (UWSC AYP631)

popular South Pay Streak concessions greeted fairgoers, including Igorrote Village, Dixieland, the Baby Incubator, the Vacuum Tube Railroad, and the Streets of Cairo.

## Stop 12: Fine Arts Bldg & Women's Bldg



The Fine Arts Building, now Architectural Hall.

(UWSC AYP1096)

Several buildings were slated to remain for University use after the A-Y-P, but the Fine Arts Building, (now Architecture Hall) and the Washington State Women's Building (now Cunningham Hall) are two of the very few that still exist. The Fine Arts building was used by the Chemistry Department, then remodeled in 1937 for the Physiology and Architecture Departments. It was given its current name in 1950 and completed its most recent remodel in 2008. During the fair, the Women's Building was used as a gathering space for women fighting for suffrage, and an exhibition space for women's arts. Renamed in 1983 after Imogen Cunningham, the American women photographer and UW graduate, Cunningham Hall will be moved to Parrington Yard.



The Women's Building, now Cunningham Hall. (MOHAI 1990.73.178)