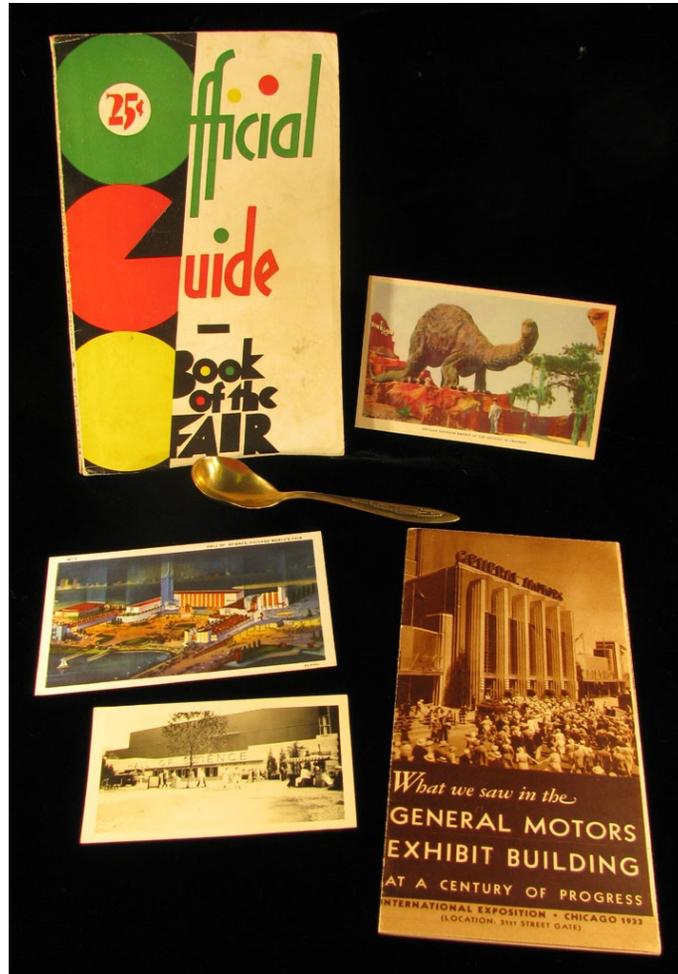


Donation of the Month

1933 Chicago World's Fair Souvenirs



From Top Left: Official Guide Book of the Fair, 1975.13.117, donated by Eunice Baker, Souvenir spoon, 1994.44.1, donated by Margaret Youngberg, Sinclair Dinosaur postcard, 1993.32.42, donated by the Reagan family, General Motors brochure, 1975.13.63, donated by Eunice Baker, Photograph of Hall of Science, 2007.68.90, donated by Elsa Juhre Schmitz, Hall of Science postcard, 1993.32.45, donated by the Reagan family.

From 1933 to 1934, Chicago celebrated its centennial by hosting a World's Fair and naming it A Century of Progress International Exposition. The overall theme centered around science and technology and exhibits highlighted innovations from automobiles, airships, and streamlined trains to modern home conveniences and scientific discoveries. The Exposition officially opened on May 27, 1933 and originally closed on November 12, 1933; however, it was extended for another year and reopened from May through October of 1934.

These objects are just a few of the souvenirs available from the Exposition. The Official Guide Book of the Fair shows the influence of the bright colors that were used throughout the fair; buildings were painted vibrant colors and illuminated at night to enhance them. An advertisement inside the front cover of the guide book shows a glowing orange, yellow, blue, and purple entrance to the Firestone Factory and Exhibit Building and tempts visitors with its "Pylons of brilliant glowing color." The guide book gives the

history of the fair and describes in detail the buildings and exhibitions as well as special events taking place.

Collectors attending the fair could take home this gold-plated souvenir spoon, engraved with a tower, the title of the exposition "A Century of Progress" and "Official; 1933 Chicago." Other souvenirs that were available included pins, trays, cigarette cases, coins, bookmarks, and charms.

Postcards were another popular souvenir and showed scenes and buildings from the fair; this postcard shows the Sinclair Refining Company's attempt to recreate the earth's surface 100 million years earlier along with a Brontosaurus (Apatosaurus). The dinosaur was registered as the company's trademark in 1932 and is now a very recognizable green symbol.

Many companies put out promotional material to advertise their products on exhibit at the fair. This General Motors brochure titled "What we saw in the General Motors Exhibit Building at A Century of Progress" shows off the exhibit building design but the foldout spread features the "modern advancements" in automobiles as well as household appliances like Frigidaires.

The Hall of Science was one of the most recognizable buildings at the exposition with its Art Deco style and housed exhibits on mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, geology, astronomy, and medicine. This postcard shows a sweeping view of the buildings as well as the bright colors used in the design. The photograph, taken by a Rogers woman who attended the fair, shows a close-up view of an entrance to the Hall of Science.

For More Information:

Official Guide Book of the Fair, published by A Century of Progress, Administration Building, Chicago, 1933.

"What We Saw in the General Motors Exhibit Building At a Century of Progress," brochure, 1933.

A Century of Progress, Chicago Historical Society, <http://www.chicagohs.org/history/century.html>, 1999.

Century of Progress, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century_of_Progress

A History with Confidence, Sinclair Oil Corporation, http://www.sinclairoil.com/about_sinclair.htm