



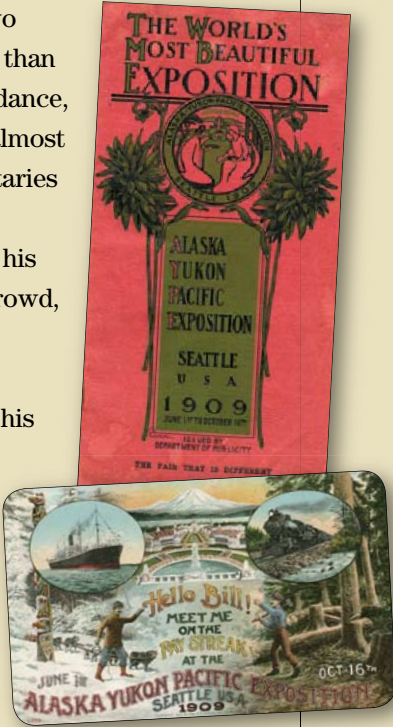
ALASKA-YUKON-PACIFIC EXPOSITION BREAKING GROUND FOR A NEW ERA



LEFT: The A-Y-P Exposition helped shape the University of Washington campus by providing landscaping and construction to the then-new school grounds. University of Washington Libraries Special Collections

BELOW: Many advertisements and souvenirs were made for the fair, such as this postcard and bright red brochure. University of Washington Libraries Special Collections

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on June 1, 1907, exactly two years before opening day. More than 15,000 Seattleites were in attendance, and they were very excited — almost too excited. After various dignitaries dug up clods of earth, someone called out to let a native son do his share. A man came out of the crowd, grabbed the gold-painted pick, broke ground, and darted back into the crowd with the pick as his souvenir. As officials tried to get it back, someone else swiped the gilded shovel.



At this point all hell broke loose. The crowd surged forward, filling its pockets and purses with clumps of soil. From there, people lunged toward the grandstand, grabbing for bunting and ribbons. One woman scrambled up the side and ripped off handfuls of small flags, tossing them to her children below. The stage was picked clean, save for the large flags that would later fly at the fair.

When the A-Y-P Exposition opened in 1909, crowds were better-behaved, although still enthusiastic. All told, more than three million people attended the exposition, making it the first world's fair to ever turn a profit.

Seattle, meanwhile, continued to grow. In the 10 years following the landmark year of 1907, city residents welcomed a collection of new parks designed by the Olmsted brothers, voted for the creation of the Port of Seattle, saw the construction and completion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, took to the skies with Bill Boeing, and climbed to new heights with the opening of the Smith Tower — then the tallest building in the country west of Ohio.

ABOVE LEFT: The A-Y-P Exposition's official symbol was an art nouveau variation on a classical tableau: the three graces. Seattle's graces represent the directions of her ambition: East, North, and West. At the center, the North cups a pile of golden nuggets in her hands. To her right side, the Asian East holds a trans-Pacific steamer. To her left, the Occidental West holds a railroad engine. University of Washington Libraries Special Collections



ABOVE: The Alaska Building, one of the exposition's centerpieces, showcased the wealth and resources of the territory to the north. University of Washington Libraries Special Collections

RIGHT: Special commemorative days were held throughout the exposition. This ticket is for Seattle Day, one of the most well-attended days of the entire fair.

BELOW: Souvenir hunters swiped many of the flags and bunting seen here as soon as A-Y-P groundbreaking ceremonies were completed. University of Washington Special Collections)

Flushed with pride over the growth of their city, Seattle boosters determined that hosting a world's fair would be the best way to show off the region's wealth, resources, and advantages. Promoters planned on opening the exposition in 1907 to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the Klondike Gold Rush but discovered that this would conflict with the plans of Jamestown, Virginia, for its own summer-long tercentenary exhibition.

The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was rescheduled for 1909, which gave planners two more years to raise funds, gather participants, prepare exhibits, and lay out the fairgrounds. A 260-acre portion of the University of Washington campus was chosen for the site due to its proximity to downtown and its breathtaking views of the Cascades, the Olympics, and Lake Washington. The University would also gain some new buildings and landscaped grounds — a bonus that greatly outweighed complaints that liquor would not be allowed at the fair, since it was prohibited on campus.

