A large, ornate scroll graphic with intricate floral and vine patterns at the ends, framing the central text.

FIELD TRIP

Kountze Park and Neighborhood

Walk the site of the Grand Court with a map and images from the Trans-Miss (in lesson plan folder)

The Durham Museum

View the Trans-Mississippi and Early Omaha Exhibits

Video Preview of The Durham's Exhibit

<https://www.cspan.org/program/american-history-tv/>

[1898-trans-mississippi-and-international-exposition/403487](https://www.cspan.org/program/american-history-tv/1898-trans-mississippi-and-international-exposition/403487)

Walking Tour of Kountze Park

Former grounds of Trans-Mississippi Exposition Grand Court

Five sites considered for Trans-Mississippi Exposition

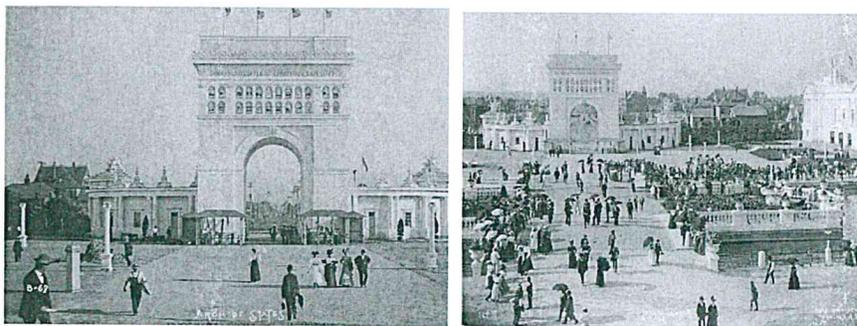
- Riverview Park (now Henry Doorly Zoo)
- Elmwood Park – Fairgrounds (where Ak-Sar-Ben is today)
- Miller Park
- East Omaha Site (Carter Lake, Iowa)
- Hanscom Park

On Feb. 10, 1896 voted unanimously for Miller Park. Freeman Kirkendall, head of the building and grounds committee felt the site was too far from the city (4 miles). The event depended on the people from Omaha to attend. It must be near the center of the population. He quietly worked to find another site and on March 13, 1896 presented his idea to use the old fairground site.

From 24th Street to the River Bluff east of Sherman Avenue (now 16th Street). Pinkney to Ames Avenue. The tract could be acquired in 1887 and 1888 for the expense of paying property taxes. Before becoming the Trans-Mississippi site, the land was corn fields and the old fairgrounds site.

Herman Kountz offered an additional 11 acres to the site (the Kountze Farm) at a cost of \$15,000 of which he would donate \$5,000 back. The 11 acres, known as the Kountze Track would be deeded to the City of Omaha after the event to become known as Kountze Park. The Kountze Track was where the Expo's Grand Court was located, 19th to 21st Street. The Board voted unanimously to approve. The Board would get use of the property in 1887, 1898 and 1899.

Map of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition created by Kira Gale and Leonard Owen
Architect in Chief for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was Thomas Kimball with the firm Walker & Kimball of Boston and Omaha



A. Entrance the Arch of States - 20th and Pinkney

- Grand Entrance at 20th (now Florence Boulevard) and Pinkney Streets.

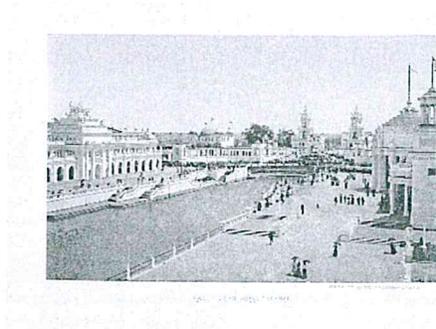
- The Main Ticket Office.
- Showed the coats-of-arms of the Trans-Mississippi states in colors.

Walk to the East (turn right)



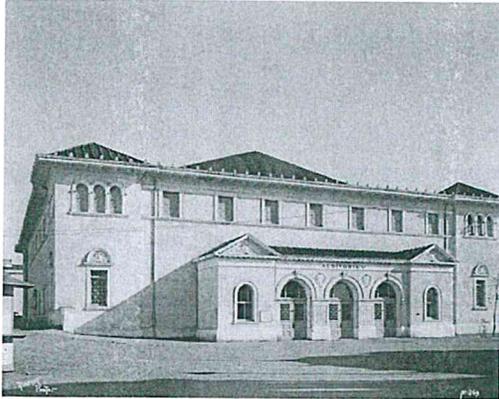
B. Liberal Arts Building designed by Fisher & Laurie, Omaha - 19th and Pinkney

- Exhibits included a graphophone that produced songs, music and speeches.
- Amateur photography.
- An incubator hatched little chicks
- Swedish firm turned out fine embroidery from its embroidery machine.
- Artificial limbs. A legless man with a new artificial limb rode a bicycle, performed feats on roller skates and in other ways proved to the observer the perfection reached by the makers of these articles.



C. Mines and Mining - Building designed by J. J. Humphreys, Denver - 17th and Pinkney

- Showed the mineral resources of the western United States including gold, silver, coal and building stone.
- Impressive display of gold from Alaska and Washington.
- Alaska brought a petroleum display.
- A smelting company in Omaha showed silver bars worth \$40,000.
- New Mexico showed rare turquoise.
- Gemstones like rubies and garnets were shown.



D. Auditorium designed by Fisher & Laurie, Omaha – 16th Street and just south of Pinkney

- Just off the Grand Court. This is where the Congresses (today's Conventions) met for meetings and speeches.



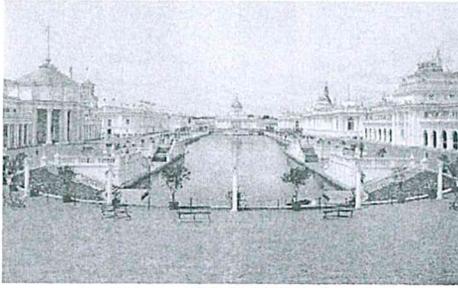
E. Bluff Tract

- Point out area east of 16th Street (former Sherman Avenue). This would have been the Bluff Tract.

On the South End You Would Have Seen:

- Bluff Tract included an open plaza for speakers and performances) was located between 16th Street (Sherman Avenue) and the railroad tracks from Binney to Sprague Street. Horticulture Building, (3 on map), featured fresh fruit, vegetables and plants
- Nine states created buildings (2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15).
- Horticulture Building designed by Charles F. Beindorff, Omaha
- Nebraska Building designed by John McDonald, Omaha

Head North on 16th Street. Stop at Evans Street look East.



View looking east from 16th and Evans Street in 1898

On the North End of Bluffs Tract – The East Midway and Concessions

- Moorish Village containing Moorish Palace, Dancing Girls and Moorish Café
- Bohemian Inn
- Streets of Cairo
- Log Cabin Bean House-Restaurant
- Temple of Palmistry
- Onyx Soda Fountain – Largest Soda Fountain in the World
- Roast Beef Restaurant
- Japanese Tea Garden
- German Village
- Hot Waffles Restaurant
- The Big Rock – Devils Dance inside
- Old English Fair
- Flying Lady
- Mirror Maze
- The Zancigs-Mind Reading
- Mammoth Whale

Head North to (16th and Pratt)



F. Girls and Boys – 16th and Pratt Streets

- Women’s Bureau in charge of creating.
- Schoolchildren donated money to help build it.
- Contained activities for children.
- Educational exhibits for parents and teachers.
- Daycare
- School Exhibits
- Restaurant with family-friendly food

Walk West

G. Rinehart Photo Studio



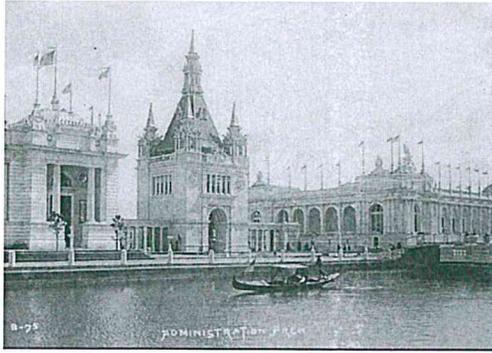
H. Machinery and Electricity Building designed by Dwight Perkins, Chicago – 17th and Pratt Streets

- Eyeglass lens maker
- Electrical illuminations
- Self-Lifting Elevator
- X-rays
- Winchester Arms Company – rifles, shotguns and ammunition.
- Miniature Train
- Looms weaving rugs.



I. Manufacturers Building designed by S.S. Beman of Chicago - Pratt Street between 19th and 20th Street

- Sewing machines turned out ready-made clothing
- Twine made from prairie grass
- A packing house demonstrated refrigeration
- Saddles and harnesses were made on site.
- Wallpaper samples.
- Manual training taking place in the schools.



J. The Administration Arch, a building used as the headquarters for the Exposition officials – 20th and Pratt Streets

To the North of the Administration Arch – The West Midway and Concessions

Shooting the Chutes

Soda Water

Fall of Babylon

Flemish Restaurant

Glass Blowers

Chiquita-Cuban Living Doll

Bayliss Moving Pictures – Edison's Wargraph

Hagenback's Animal Show

Chinese Village

Gaiety Theater-Heaven&Hell/California Gold Mining Tunnel

Haunted Swing

Scenic Theater – United States & Spain/Labyrinth

Schlitz Pavillion

Fruit Stand

Ice Cream Pavillion

Arbego Club

Streets of All Nations

Old Plantation

Cyclorama (Battle between Monitor and Merrimac)

X-Ray Illusions, Persian Dancing Girls, Ostrich Farm, Hawaiian Theater, Shooting Gallery,

Rolling the Roll, Barrel Rolling Ride

Pabst Pavillion-Vaudeville

Wild West Show

Scenic Railway

Dragons Head-Idols of Art

Giant See Saw

Miniature Railway on the West End of the West Midway

Indian Congress

Stock Exhibit

Continue walking west toward 22nd Street.



K. Agriculture - Cass Gilbert of St. Paul Architect - Pratt Street between 20th and 21st Street

Nebraska Millers' Association had an expert demonstrating the quality of bread and pastry made with Nebraska flour. Food products.

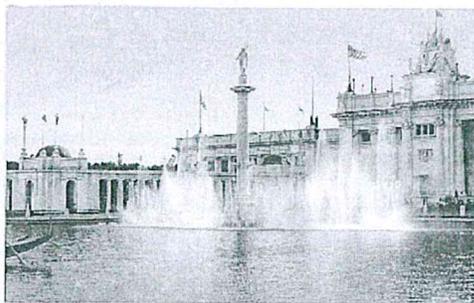
Tobacco growers showing how they made twine and rope from their leaves.

Turn Left on 22nd Street. Walk south to Evans Street.

L. U.S Government - On 22nd and Evans Street (Between Pratt and Pinkney)



- Funded and organized by the U.S. Government. Featured many departments including:
- U.S. Mint that pressed a special souvenir coin with the "ideal Western women's" image on one side.
- Pictures and autographs of each of the U.S. Presidents
- Books from the Library of Congress.
- Models of U.S. Ships
- Special Trans-Mississippi stamps from the U.S. Post Office.



M. Fountain of Neptune – East of 22nd and Evans about ½ a block.
Illuminated with colored lights.

Go south to Pinkney Street, turn east (left)



View of Government Building and Neptune - Pinkney between 22nd and 21st



N. Fine Arts Building Designed by Eames & Young of St. Louis – 21st and Pinkney

- Two separate structures connected with a pergola.
- Electric illumination inside.
- Contained 1800 pieces of art in all forms gathered from museum and private collections.

End back at 22nd and Pinkney. Read Trans-Mississippi Marker and plaque if time.

...MAP OF...
THE
TRANS-MISSISSIPPI and INTERNATIONAL
Exposition.

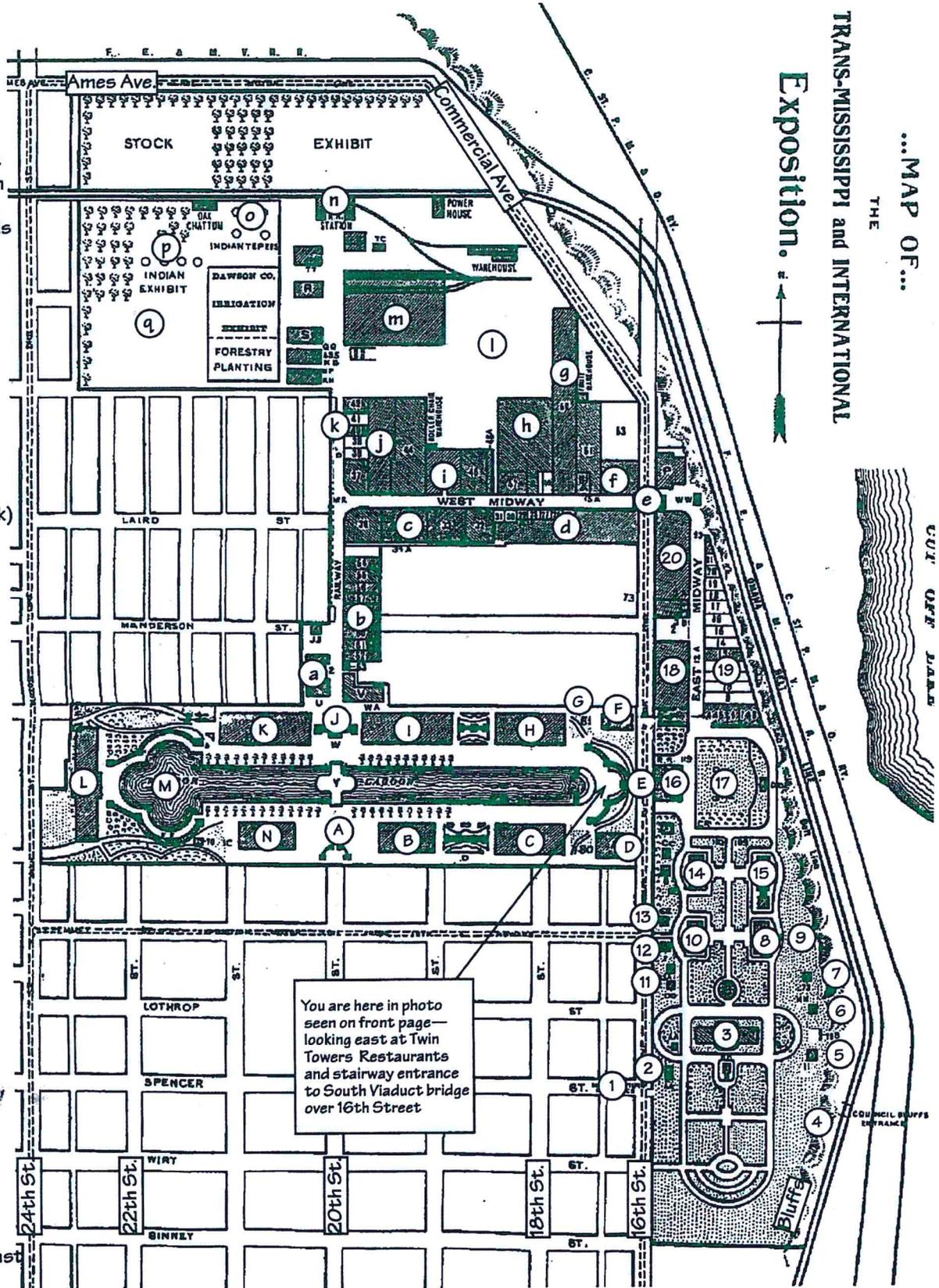
NORTH END

- a. Hospital, Press Building
- b. Baby Incubator; Food Court
- c. Heaven & Hell; U.S. vs Spain
Haunted Swing; Dog Show;
Chinese Village; Wild Animals
- d. Shooting the Chutes
- e. North Viaduct
- f. Giant See-Saw
- g. Scenic Railway
- h. Wild West Show of Omaha
and Pabst Building
- i. Cyclorama
- j. Street of All Nations,
Schlitz Building, ice cream
- k. Union Pacific Miniature
Railway
- l. Infantry Parade Grounds
(former Omaha Driving Park)
- m. Transportation & Agricultural
Implements Building
- n. Missouri Pacific
Railroad Station
- o. Indian Tipi Camp
- p. Indian Exhibit
- q. Sham Battle Grounds

GRAND COURT

- A. Arch of States Entrance
- B. Liberal Arts Building
- C. Mines & Mining Building
- D. Auditorium Building
- E. South Viaduct
- F. Girls & Boys Building
- G. Rinehart Photo Studio
- H. Machinery &
Electricity Building
- I. Manufacturers Building
- J. Administration Building
- K. Agricultural Building
- L. U.S. Government Building
- M. Fountain of Neptune
- N. Fine Arts Building

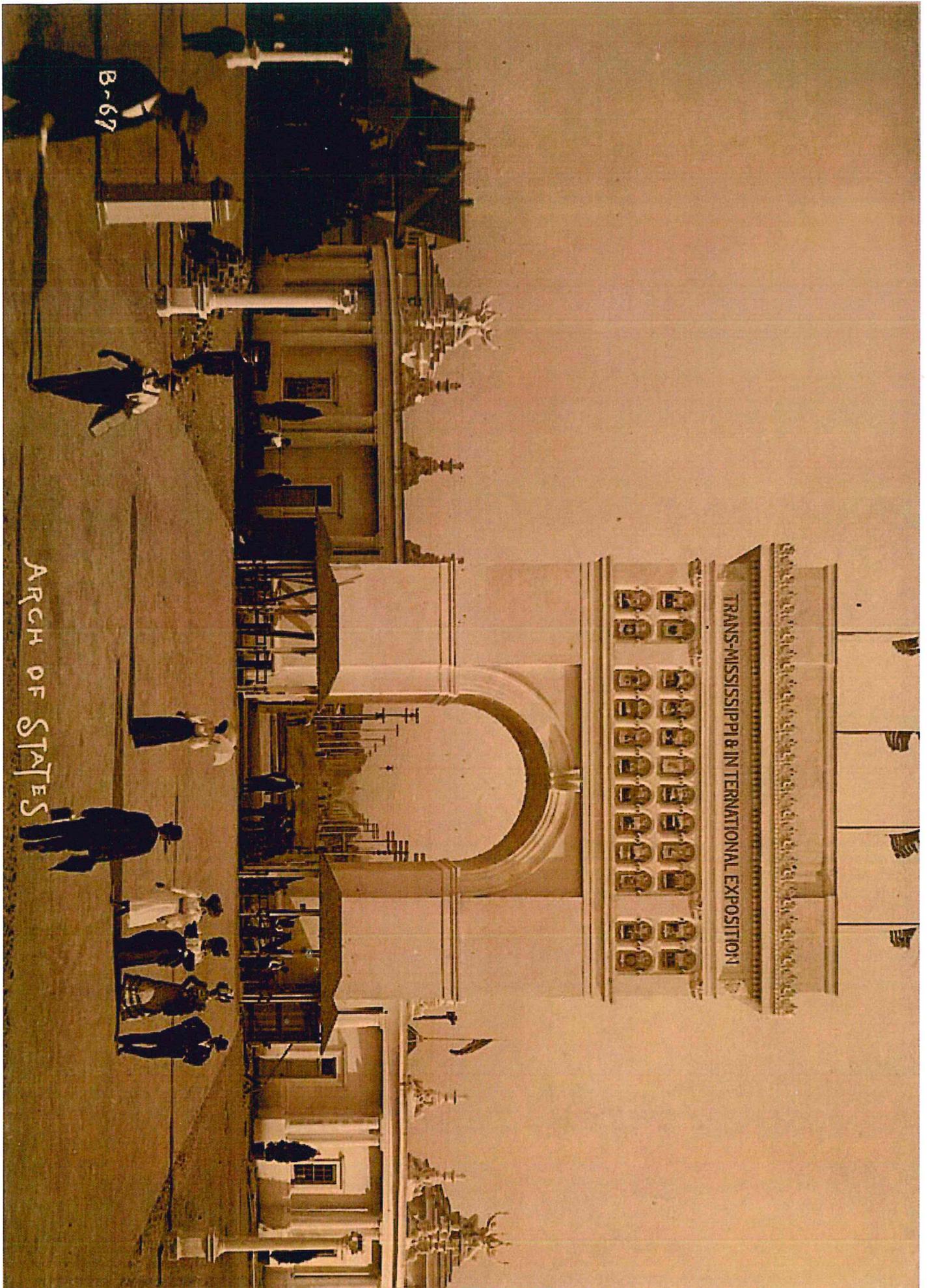
Grand Court Boundaries:
Pratt Street—North
Pinkney Street—South
Sherman Ave. (16th St.)—East
24th Street—West



BLUFFS TRACT—EAST END

- 1. Horticulture Entrance
- 2. Georgia Building
- 3. Horticulture Building
- 4. Council Bluffs RR Entrance
- 5. New York Building
- 6. Kansas Building
- 7. Minnesota Building
- 8. Nebraska Building
- 9. Nebraska Sod House
- 10. Iowa Building
- 11. Chinese Village & Exhibit
- 12. Montana Building
- 13. Pottawattamie Co. Wig Wam
- 14. Wisconsin Building
- 15. Illinois Building
- 16. Band Stand
- 17. Grand Plaza
- 18. Moorish Village
Dancing Girls
- 19. Japanese Tea Garden,
German Village
- 20. Streets of Cairo

based on a map
produced for
Leonard Owen



TRANS-MISSISSIPPI & INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

ARCH OF STATES

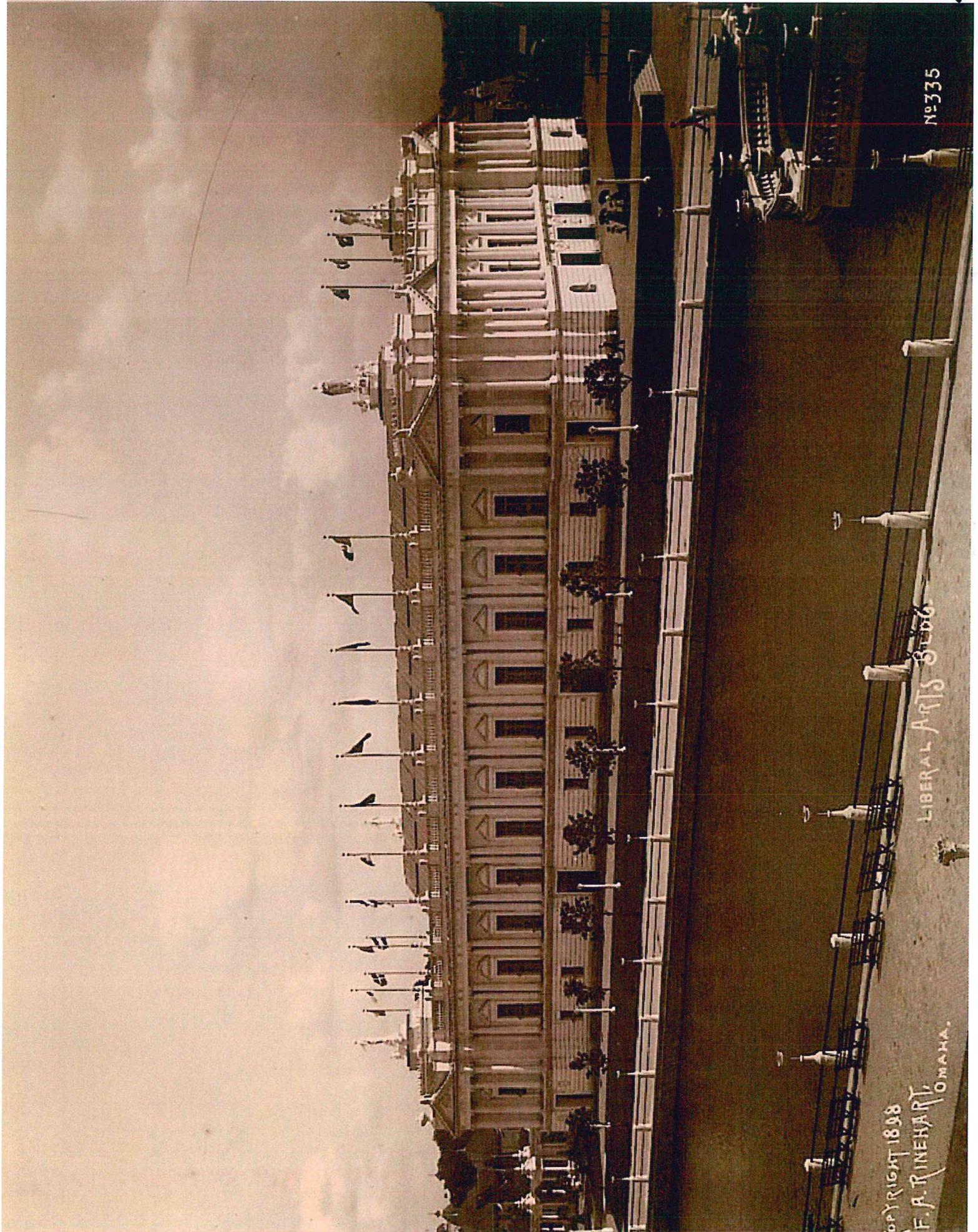
B-67



FORRIENT 1898
F. R. FIKENHART, OMAHA.
PHOTO.

ARCH OF STATES

№ 437



COPYRIGHT 1898
F. A. RINEHART
OMAHA.

LIBERAL ARTS STUDIO

No 335



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EAST END OF GRAND COURT



B-31

- M. & M. BLDG -



PINEAPPLE PHOTO.

N^o 1269

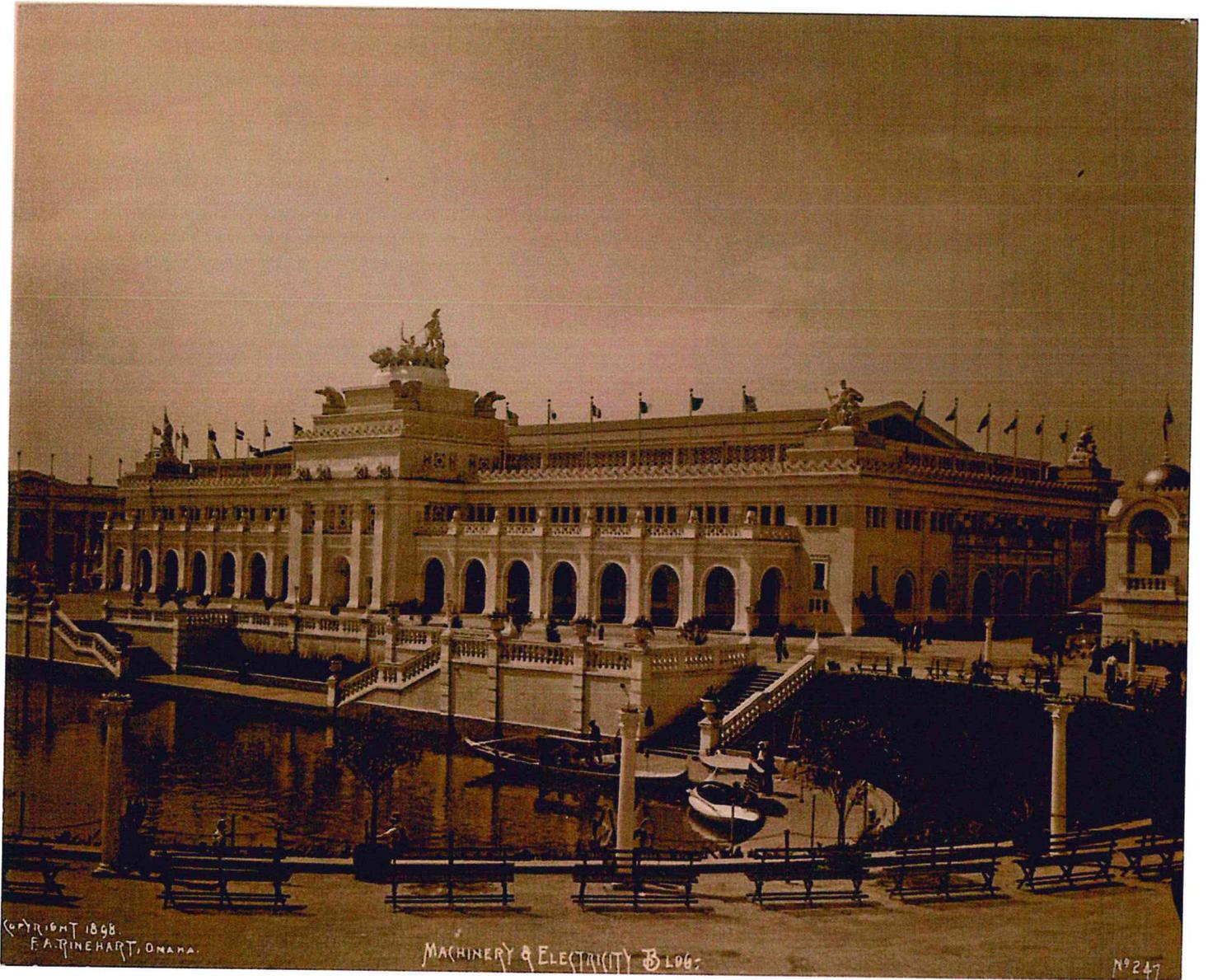






COPYRIGHT 1898.
F. A. RINEHART, OWNER.

Girls & Boys Building



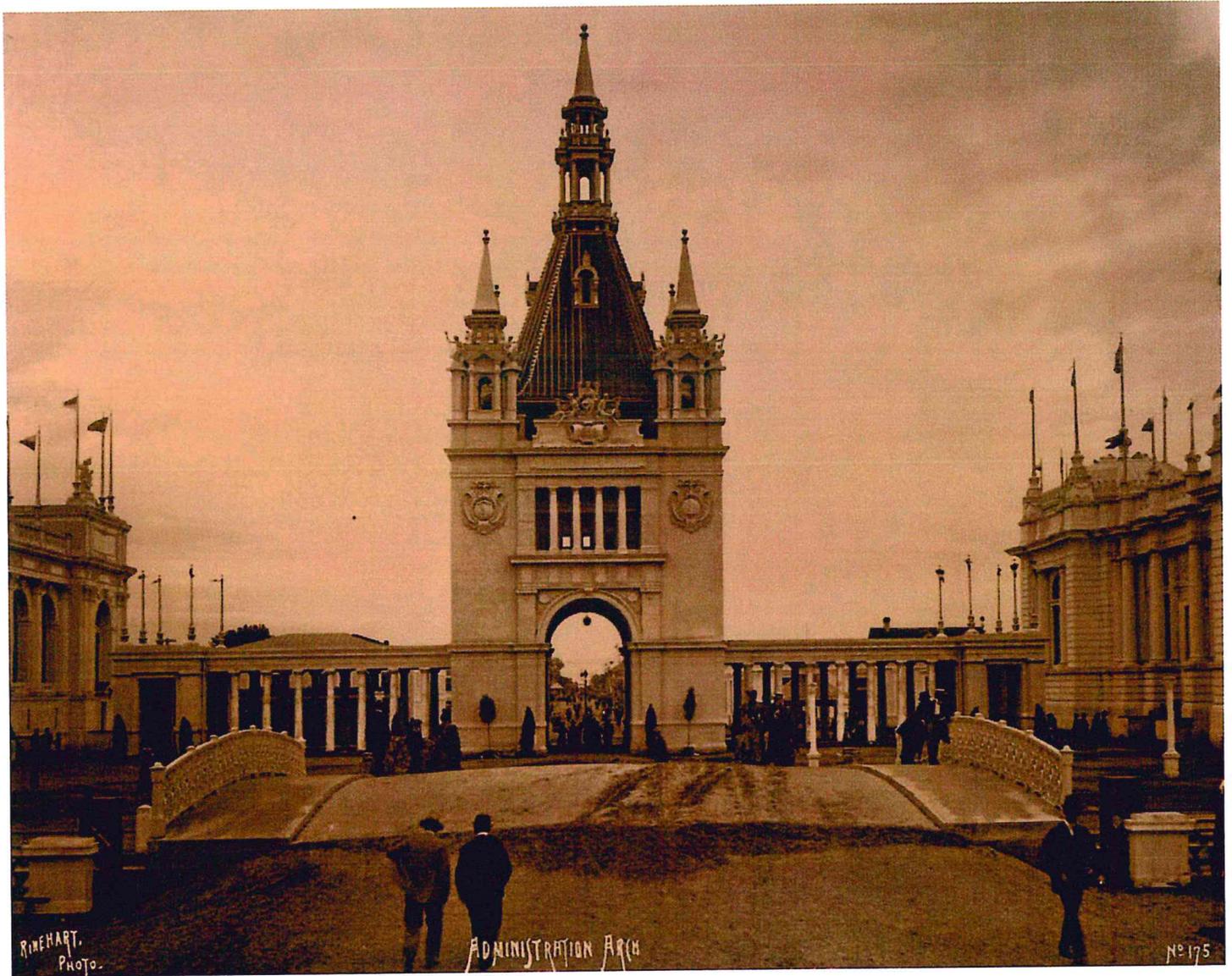
COPYRIGHT 1898.
F.A. RINEHART, OMAHA.

MACHINERY & ELECTRICITY BLDG.

No 247



Copyright 1898.



RINEHART.
PHOTO.

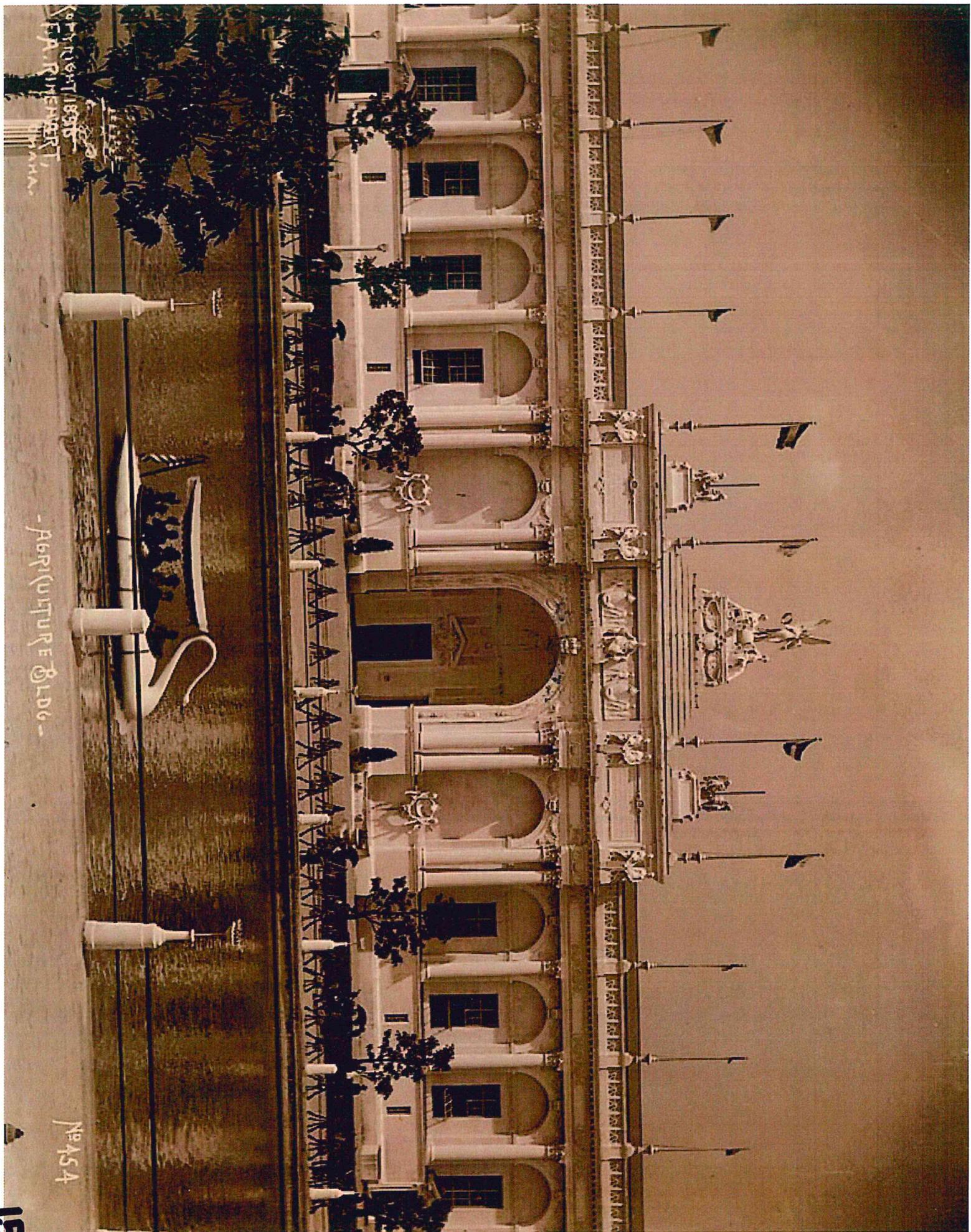
ADMINISTRATION ARCH

№ 175



B-75

ADMINISTRATION ARCH



COMPLET (1896)
F. A. RIMMERT,
DANKA.

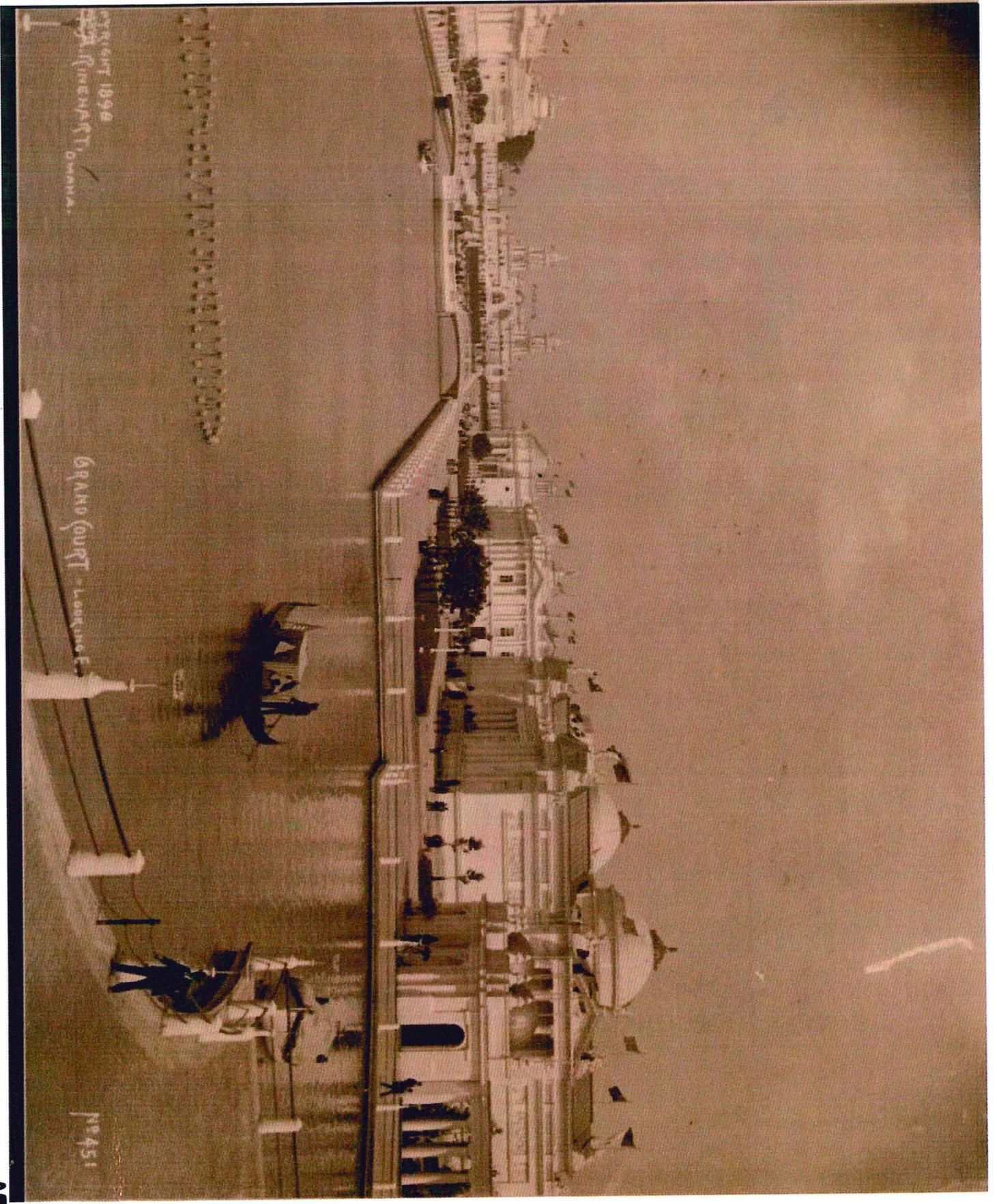
- ARCHITECTURE BLDG -

№ 454



GOVERNMENT BUILDING

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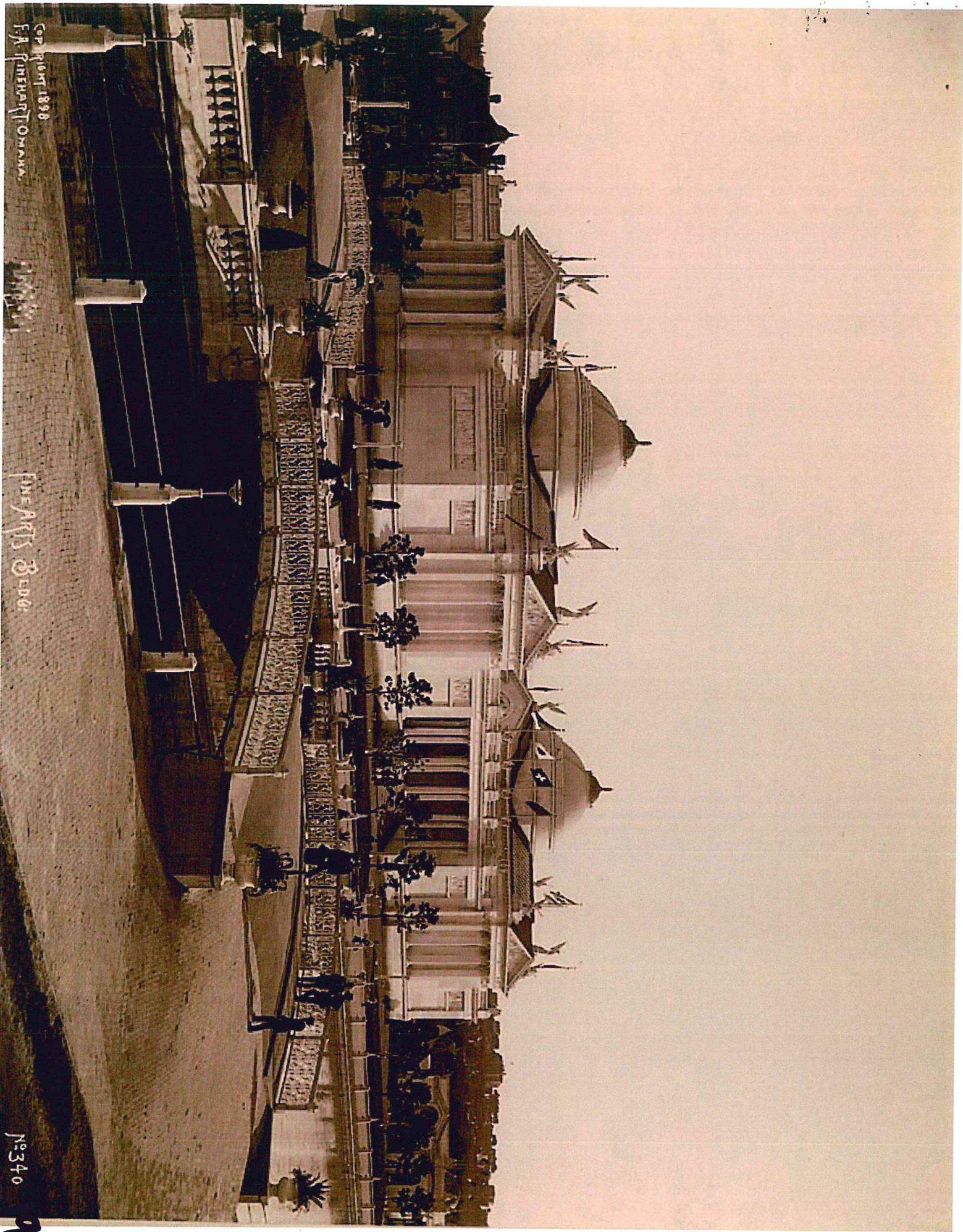


Одесса 1898
Одесса

GRAND COURT - LOUQUE

1898





СП. РОБ. 1898
Ф. А. ПИМЕНТ ОМАН.

FINE ARTS EDGE

№ 340

9



DOCENT PROGRAM

Omaha Faces and Places Docent Guide

Arrival at the Museum

Upon arrival at the museum, Durham staff will check in the school and divide them into their respective groups using the Swanson Gallery. This time will also include a brief introduction to the museum by a staff member. Each class's Education Ambassador will bring the group to their starting location, where the docents will be waiting. (Docents are also welcome to begin with us in the Swanson if they'd prefer.)

If an ambassador arrives at a station and the docent is not quite ready, they are welcome to allow students to explore the space. Please instruct students to enjoy the space while being kind and respectful to the education materials and exhibits. Students can also be asked to start thinking of questions or comments about artifacts or exhibits during this time. Suggestions are below for this specific class. These suggestions and questions can be used to fill time between classes if needed, but do not feel obligated to include them all. They are meant as guiding ideas to help students think and prepare for the tour.

The docent for that field trip option will then have approximately 25 minutes to provide the content in this guide, knowing that slight adjustments may be needed to accommodate the time or answer specific questions.

Ideas and Questions before Exploration Time:

- This exploration time will take place in Trans-Miss exhibit.
- Encourage students to find an artifact in the Trans-Miss exhibit and try to guess its purpose
- Students can also explore the building models and think about why they look the way they do
- *For this particular class, when the docent is ready, ask the students to gather around the building models for the docent to begin.

Materials

Hats & Parasol

Stereoscope

Photo Book

Introduction – Starts in front of white archway

Introduce yourself and explain that we will be exploring important people and events that helped make Omaha the city it is today. We are going to start by seeing an example of one of the most fascinating events that occurred in early Omaha.

Introduce yourself and explain that we will be traveling back in time to the year 1898, which is the year that Omaha hosted its own “World’s Fair” (use air quotes). Technically this wasn’t an official world’s fair, but it was an exposition just as big and important as the ones being hosted in cities like Chicago, Paris, and London.

This diorama you see in our exhibit only shows the impressive Grand Court of the expo. There were other buildings, displays, and things to do that we will talk about in our class today. Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever been to a state fair? Or a local county fair? That is the closest thing most of us have probably experienced to the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, which we will just refer to as the “Trans-Miss”.

Also, throughout the class we’re going to need some help. There are a lot of interesting facts and figures about the expo, but instead of just telling you all of them, we want you to guess! We’ll ask for volunteers to guess and hope to see everyone participate!

Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition Exhibit

The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was in Omaha from June 1st to October 31st in 1898. The expo was an opportunity to introduce Omaha to the world by showcasing area resources, products, technology, and opportunities. *How many people do you think attended the expo? (2.5 million)*

There were several highlights of the expo including the man-made lagoon, the midway, the giant see saw, the Indian Congress, and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show. The buildings were not meant to be permanent structures. They were made from a material called “staff” that was a mixture of plaster and horse hair (example on wall).

Gurdon Wattles was the man who was the driving force behind bringing the expo to Omaha. He led the planning efforts and collected the money to pay for it. *How much money do you think he had to raise to pay for the expo? (\$1 million)*

The expo was located in what is now Kountze Park on 184 acres. Kountze Park holds that name because the Kountze brothers donated the land for the exposition.

Famous Omaha architect Thomas Kimball was the chief architect and worked with a team of workers to complete the project. *How many workers do you think it took to build the expo and landscape the grounds? (5,000 workers)*

The builders had a lot of work ahead of them. They had to construct road and walkways, dig and fill the lagoon you see in our model, lay sod, and plant trees, flowers, and other plants. We have a few more “numbers of the expo” challenges for students here:

Here are just a few of the challenges builders successfully met:

- **How many miles of road and walkways do you think had to be built on the fairgrounds? *(7 miles)*
- **How many gallons of water do you think it took to fill the Lagoon, which stretched half a mile? *(7 million gallons, pumped from the Missouri River)*
- **How many trees, flowers, and other plants do you think were planted on the grounds? (100,000)*

Opening the Expo

President William McKinley himself opened the Expo on June 1st by throwing a switching in Washington, D.C. that allowed electric current to flow to the expo. Electricity all ran through the Electrical Power Plant on the fairgrounds; it was said to be more concentrated electricity than any other exposition to date.

The expo was to showcase new technology and achievements. Some of the new inventions showcased included:

- Electric horseless carriage
- Flush toilets
- Water faucets
- X-ray machines
- Incandescent light bulbs
- Jell-o
- Sno-cones
- Artifact: *Stereoscope*: a toy that “tricked” your eyes into seeing images in 3D

Admission was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children. Food and games would have cost extra! Most working-class families earned only about \$3 per day, so this was a steep price.

For anyone who has been to the state fair, county fair, or even a local carnival, how did you dress? You probably wore comfortable clothes and shoes, especially if it was a hot summer day. For both men and women, the expo would have been an event to dress up for. Show students the mural in the back of the exhibit and the following artifacts.

Parasol: a lightweight umbrella used to shade a lady from the sun (sunscreen had not been invented yet.)

Ladies' hat: (reproduction) Hats were an important part of a woman's wardrobe in the 1800s to the turn of the century. When out in public, it was customary for her to wear a hat.

Men's derby hat: (reproduction) Derby is a stiff hat with a round crown and is usually considered a dressy hat. During this time period, it was typical for men to wear hats when they were in public.

Other Activities at The Expo

The exposition grounds were much larger than what you see in our exhibit. This is a map of the expo. The Grand Court was certainly the centerpiece of the expo but there were several other parts of the fair to experience. The Grand Court itself spanned about 12 city blocks and included 11 buildings such as the Agriculture Building, the Government Building, and of course, the Arch of the States. It's believed that the Arch of the States was the structure that was supposed to be built to be permanent, just like the Eifel Tower in Paris. There were then another several dozen buildings just outside of the grand court including the Dairy Building and the Transportation Building. Each state that made up the "Trans-Mississippi Region" also had their own building.

(Show the midway photos in the exhibit). There were games you could play and rides you could enjoy, including a giant see-saw. The Midway also included villages designed to showcase certain cultures, including the Chinese village, German Village, and an English County Fair.

(Move over the display about the Indian Congress.) The Indian Congress was an encampment about ½ mile north of the lagoon at the Trans-Miss. In all, over 500 indigenous people representing 35 different tribes stayed at the Indian Congress throughout the expo. They performed different ceremonies and festivals, set up examples of traditional housing, and showcased objects and tools. People came to see the dances, games, ceremonies, and fake battles. Members of each tribe also created and sold items.

While this sounds like a unique learning opportunity for people attending the expo, and it started out as such, the organizers of the event soon realized the cultural display wasn't attracting crowds of people. The Indian Congress was turned into a "Wild West" type show, and indigenous peoples were often viewed as primitive and inferior to visitors.

Photos of the entire exposition were taken by Frank Reinhart. Reinhart was particularly famous for his work photographing native tribes, even before the expo.

The exposition helped turn Omaha into a well-known city! It closed on October 31st, 1898. The original plan was to tear down the buildings, but a group of businessmen planned another fair to commemorate that the U.S. has acquired the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Guam. The fair was only open for three months. The site is now home of Kountze Park and nothing from the original fair remains.

Additional Resources

<https://trans-mississippi.unl.edu/>

<https://digital.omahalibrary.org/digital/collection/p16747coll1>

<https://northomahahistory.com/2019/05/18/a-history-of-the-trans-mississippi-and-international-exposition/>

<https://editions.lib.umn.edu/panorama/article/the-trans-mississippi/>