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PROLOGUE

Setting the Stage for St. Louis

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition (LPE) was held in St. Louis, Missouri, from May to December 1904, to commemorate the United States' 1803 purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France for sixty million francs, or roughly three cents an acre, arguably the best land deal in American history. Popularly called the St. Louis World's Fair, the exposition extended over 1,240 acres, the largest in area of any exposition up to that time, or since. The exposition pavilions alone enclosed 128 acres and were filled with wonders.

The organizers wanted to be sure that their fellow Americans understood the historical importance of celebrating the Louisiana Purchase. The federal government, states, and historical societies sent precious iconic heirlooms and reproductions to document American history, patriotism, and nationalism: Daniel Webster's rocking chair, Abraham Lincoln's boyhood cabin, and President Teddy Roosevelt's Western ranch house. New Jersey reconstructed a tavern Washington used during the American Revolution, and Mississippi replicated Jefferson Davis's home, Beauvoir.

The exposition also glorified America's increasing control over the world's natural resources and in particular how business acumen and ingenuity, coupled with scientific and technological know-how, were pushing the United States to the forefront of the industrialized nations. Visitors exclaimed in awe over the symbols of immense accumulated wealth. They gaped at the gigantic electric generators that illuminated buildings and the artificial lagoons. They saw hundreds of the newest technological advances including small electric motors to run factory machines, intended to eliminate the steam engines and belt systems of nineteenth-century factories. There was a Biograph movie showing the giant Westinghouse factory complex in Pittsburgh that covered fourteen hundred acres and employed eleven thousand workers. They saw the first successful "wireless telegraph" that would soon change world communications. Crowds flocked to see the fossil remains of a triceratops in the Gov-

ernment Building, a recreation of a mining camp at the Nevada State pavilion, floral gardens, livestock shows, giant cheeses, and a twenty-foot-tall knight on horseback made of prunes from what is now Silicon Valley.

Visitors listened to thousands of concerts, from the great John Phillips Sousa Band to operettas and the elegant ragtime music of composer Scott Joplin, then living in St. Louis. Everyone played, hummed, or sang the “official” fair song, “Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis,” by Broadway songwriter Andrew Sterling. The exposition was designed to impress the world—and it did. Massive in scope, utopian in intent, the LPE made St. Louis the capital of the American Midwest and seemingly America’s most progressive city, at least for seven months.

The exposition was a bold, ambitious undertaking for a medium-sized Midwestern city with a long history of corrupt and inefficient government, and it was expensive, costing over fifty million dollars. The leaders of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company (LPEC) labeled it the “University of the Future” and an “exposition of processes,” not simply things. Under this broad umbrella they had seven major objectives: 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.

To do this they had to entice many, many visitors to come to the fair. There had be something to interest everyone. The LPE, according to its president, David Francis, would be an encyclopedic place providing a summary or compilation of all existing knowledge at the turn of the twentieth century. Colorado College president, William F. Slocum, wrote in *Harper’s Weekly* that it would give visitors “new standards, new means of comparison, new insights into the condition of life in the world” and help them discover a sense of

purpose in America's rapidly changing society.¹ To aid in this process, the LPE would do something novel. They would host "the world's first assemblage of the world's peoples." Native people, some two thousand to three thousand strong, would be on display to help visitors understand how the other half (indeed, how the other 98 percent) of humanity lived in comparison with their own lives. Its ultimate purpose was to serve as a guide toward a future, albeit vague, utopia. As Francis argued,

*[e]xpositions accentuate the deficiencies of the past, give us a realization of our present advantages, predict the developments of the near future, and equip the arm and the brain alike of the mechanic, the engineer, and the philosopher for future and immediate advances into the realms of the possible. The World's Fair at St. Louis furnishes a magnificent example of what mankind may do when it shall substitute united exertion for contention in one great anthem of harmonious effort.*²

Brave words at the beginning of a century during which organized "contentions," coupled with starvation and diseases, would kill more humans than had died in all previous wars combined. Similar rhetoric had been evident at every fair since 1851, and there would be more at subsequent fairs during the twentieth century.

A second major feature of the St. Louis fair was the conscious use of nineteenth-century evolutionist anthropological concepts. These undergirded a major theme in exposition rhetoric and interpretive displays to celebrate the assumed racial and cultural superiority of Northern European and American nations and to justify their imperial and colonial ambitions. This book is about how then-current, but now long passé, anthropological theories were used for these purposes, and how "Native peoples" were assembled, cared for, treated, displayed, and interpreted.

World's Fairs and Exposition Anthropology before the Louisiana Purchase Exposition

World's fairs began with London's Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations (dubbed the "Crystal Palace" by *Punch* magazine) in 1851. From then until 1915 world's fairs sprang up like mushrooms to celebrate the

heyday of European and American industrialism and imperialism. In Europe international exhibitions became grandiose stages on which nations bragged about their industrial, financial, technical, intellectual, social, and scientific “progress,” their ability to extract raw materials from their colonies, and their successes in “civilizing” their colonial subjects.³ The United States began its own bragging process with the 1876 Philadelphia extravaganza and continued through celebrations of the Panama Canal in 1915.

Major expositions came to have standard features, all of which would be seen in St. Louis in elaborated forms. Popular exhibits, events, or practices established at one fair were expected at subsequent fairs, and visitors were disappointed if they were absent. The first feature was the display of industrial machinery, mining technology, trade goods, and agricultural products in gigantic pavilions; the second was “cultural” exhibits, sculpture, painting, music, and other fine arts. The third feature was the establishment of permanent public institutions initially funded by exposition corporation profits and gifts from private donors. The architecturally eclectic Trocadéro complex, which later housed natural history exhibits, was built for the 1878 Paris fair. In the United States, the 1876 Philadelphia fair resulted in Memorial Hall in Philadelphia and the U.S. National Museum in Washington, while the Field Columbian Museum emerged from the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893 and the Museum of Man from San Diego’s 1915 celebration.⁴

The fourth feature was government funding as direct subsidies or supplemental monies to aid exposition corporations. The process varied from country to country. In the United States, Congress provided loans to the private companies but demanded they be paid back. The United States never accepted total financial responsibility for any exposition but did appropriate money for the construction and operation of government buildings and expeditions to obtain natural history and anthropology collections for exhibits. The largest subsidy for anthropology was for the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition. The exposition company funded a large, separate anthropology department under the direction of Frederic Ward Putnam and Franz Boas who sent out a number of fledgling anthropologists on collecting expeditions to North, Central, and South America. These materials became part of the Field Columbian Museum. Other governments, most notably Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium, similarly provided large subsidies to underwrite expeditions to

amass archaeological and ethnographic collections. These resulted in exhibits that created a prehistoric and historic cultural heritage that supported current nationalist and colonialist ideologies.⁵

At the 1878 Paris exposition, the French added a fifth feature: the public display of new scientific knowledge by emerging disciplines, such as anthropology, and established fields at “international congresses,” held as part of the exposition. Numerous scholarly, professional, trade, and benevolent associations and interest groups were invited to hold congresses, drawing many attendees and providing a major venue for airing and debating theoretical, practical, and public policy issues. The 1878 Paris congresses led, for example, to international copyright laws, the international postal union, and international adoption of the Braille system. Congresses were prominently featured at the 1889 Paris fair, including the International Congress of Anthropological and Prehistoric Sciences, and in Chicago in 1893 (Curti 1950; Mason 1894a, 1894b).

The sixth feature of major expositions was extramural entertainment that included “exotic” peoples. Fairs, held for many centuries in nearly all the world’s trade centers, were mixtures of commerce, entertainment, and theater with dancers, musicians, actors, circuses, jugglers, food vendors, thieves, prostitutes, hawkers, and con artists. Similar congregations gathered at or near modern expositions and included displayed people, billed as “savages” from Africa or Polynesia, who could be gawked at for a fee. These unofficial, outside-the-gates “public nuisance” sideshows posed major crime-control and public-health problems for fair officials. In Philadelphia a “Shantyville” grew outside the exposition gates with such edifying exhibits as a “gigantic fat woman,” talking pigs, fire-proof women, and two “Wild Men of Borneo.”⁶

Paris’s 1867 world’s fair coped with unauthorized entertainment by developing a huge amusement park, installed and operated by the City of Paris, together with international restaurants, arranged around the perimeter of the ovoid-shaped exposition hall. In 1893 Chicago organizers created the Midway Plaisance—a “pleasure area” connecting two sections of the exposition grounds. In the shadow of the great two-hundred-and-fifty-foot-tall Ferris wheel, concessionaires presented dozens of “authentic” peoples from Africa, the Pacific, Arctic, Middle East, and Far East. The most notorious concession was the Streets of Cairo where “Little Egypt” and other women performed

belly dances seriatim, ten hours a day, six days a week, ogled by tens of thousands of onlookers. The Streets of Cairo grossed eight hundred and eighty thousand dollars, more than the Ferris wheel, and the exposition company took 20 percent of the gross profits, as it did from all concessions. Subsequent exposition organizers were quick to see how lucrative the strange and exotic could be.

A related phenomenon, beginning in the early 1880s, was the Wild West show. The most famous was “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s, which played six hundred and sixty performances in Chicago—outside the exposition gates. These shows employed American Indians, especially Lakotas, who made a much better living as “show Indians” than starving on government rations back on the reservations. Wild West shows rapidly became sanctioned attractions at expositions in the United States and Europe, including St. Louis (Fowler 2000, 205; Moses 1996; Kasson 2000).

The seventh feature was *official* “living exhibits” organized, funded, and managed by the exposition companies. At the 1855 Paris fair, static exhibits from French colonies focused on “primitive” material culture, stressing “cultural differences, especially exoticism.” Bringing officially sanctioned, living “exotic” people to expositions came later. There was an attempt to have a federally sponsored exhibit of American Indians in Philadelphia, but Congress balked at the price tag. At the 1883 Amsterdam International Colonial Exposition, the Dutch government underwrote model villages inhabited by “Natives” from its colonies in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia; the price tag was large. Not to be outdone, the French government prominently featured Natives from its far-flung colonial empire at the 1889 Exposition Universelle extravaganza: “On the Esplanade des Invalides *side by side with the latest inventions and with the whole civilized world as spectators* . . . [were] twelve types of African, besides Javanese, Tonkinese, Chinese, Japanese, and other oriental peoples, living in native houses, wearing native costumes, eating native foods, practicing native arts and rites” (Mason 1890, 31; emphasis added). The colonial village also included a Streets of Cairo concession, Angkor Wat models, and replicas of West African mosques. “Human Habitations” was arranged as a “tour” of architectural types, from rock shelters to modern houses. At the 1900 Paris fair, Britain and Belgium erected officially sponsored live and static colonial exhibits, grouped together under the “Moral and Material Work of

Colonialization” stressed the “White Man’s Burden” to civilize the rest of the world.⁷

Smaller fairs also saw living Native peoples as essential to their success. In 1889 St. Louis held a modest trade exposition. An enterprising promoter convinced the Indian Service to let him bring San Carlos Apaches “in all their pride and strength” to perform “their weird dances, ceremonies, and incantations” and to demonstrate (it’s uncertain just how) “their modes of savage warfare.” The Apaches were of great interest, since the U.S. Army had “subdued” them only three years earlier. This seems to be the first officially sanctioned exhibit of Indians in the United States, soon followed by others, including model Indians schools to demonstrate the value of Indian Service assimilationist policies.

The most celebrated gathering of Indians was Omaha’s 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition, which promoters called the “Last Great Congress of the Red Man.” It was designed as an ecumenical assembly of “all” Indian tribes, brought together for the first and last time, apparently to commiserate together before they all “vanished.” When fiscal reality set in, the Last Great Congress shrank to about four hundred people from Plains and Southwest tribes. The 1901 Buffalo fair also had a Last Great Congress of the Red Man in 1901, and publicists billed the LPE Wild West show as yet another “Last Great Congress” (Fowler 2000, 205; McCowan 1899; Moses 1996; Rosewater 1897).

Exhibits of “native peoples” included both sideshow attractions presented by individual entrepreneurs and “official” exhibits of subjugated indigenous peoples sponsored and interpreted by their colonialist masters. After 1883, colonial powers officially exhibited subject peoples under the guise of educational endeavors to demonstrate how much better off Natives were under the benevolent care of their imperialist overlords. Private entrepreneurs unofficially exhibited subject people, especially those of color, as ethnic-racial stereotypes to make money. But it was often superficially difficult to distinguish the official from the unofficial, as each played on the other. The underlying difference was that government agencies were consciously promulgating propaganda to justify colonialism and forced acculturation policies. But both the official and the unofficial exhibitions used the same stereotypes—benighted “primitives” who could only be raised to civilization by “enlightened” benevolent white men.

Bridging these supposedly different exhibit categories were anthropologists attempting to legitimize their field of study, broker their specialized knowledge, and prove their status as “scientists.” Working at expositions gave them a public forum in which to assert their claims to be experts on, and interpreters of, the physical, linguistic, and cultural similarities and differences of exotic peoples seen in relation to white Americans and northern Europeans. Official exhibits were often arranged or interpreted by anthropologists working closely with colonial administrators. As historian Robert Rydell has noted, anthropologists helped support the economic elite’s messages regarding race and social progress and “scientifically” validated and justified overseas imperialist expansion (Rydell 1984, 157). At the same time, participation in expositions was the most public way anthropology—claiming to be a distinctive profession with a unique body of knowledge, methods, subject matter, and interpretive frameworks—could present itself as socially useful and authoritative. Expositions provided them with venues in which to popularize their concepts. The message of its exhibits, both static and living, was: Here are paradigms and concepts through which the “civilized” world may meet, understand, and interpret the “noncivilized” world.

Professionalizing Anthropology

Participation in the exhibition of Native peoples was a part of the campaign that anthropologists had been waging for over two decades to gain public recognition of their professional identity. In the United States, during the 1880s, Lewis Henry Morgan, John Wesley Powell, Frederic Ward Putnam, and their compatriots set out to “organize anthropologic [*sic*] research in America,” as Powell put it in the first annual report of his fledgling Bureau of Ethnology, later the Bureau of American Ethnology (Powell 1881, xxxiii). At the time, anthropology was entirely museum based or was a leisure pursuit of educated amateurs. It can be argued that the first American “professional” anthropologists (individuals paid to do scientific work full time) were members of Powell’s “Corps of Ethnologists.” Over the next two decades, new museums with anthropology departments were founded in Chicago and Philadelphia (Harvard’s Peabody Museum was already in existence), and an anthropology department was established by Putnam at the American Museum of Natural History. Franz Boas developed graduate programs at Clark University (1888)

and Columbia (1896), Putnam at Harvard (1890) and the University of California (1901). By 1900, courses labeled “anthropology” were being taught in over thirty American universities and colleges. When the American Anthropological Association (AAA) was established in 1901, two hundred individuals joined.

Many AAA members were also members of Section H of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1900, Section H established a standing committee on university-level anthropological teaching to develop textbooks and curricula and to formulate arguments to convince university administrators to establish departments. Committee members took their case to professional meetings and academic assemblies. Calling the field “the crown and completion of the sciences,” Frank Russell, one of the first professionally trained anthropologists and a leader of the initiative, argued for majors in anthropology as the foundation for more specialized courses of study. Anthropology’s “very comprehensiveness is a virtue; for thereby it is rendered suitable to serve as a framework for all other knowledge, lacking which the student but too often builds a series of mental watertight compartments that give no unity or harmony to the intellectual edifice” (Russell 1902, 2). It was great rhetoric and became the basis for the message that WJ McGee, the first president of the AAA, carried with him to St. Louis when he became head of the LPE Anthropology Department. Anthropology could pull a fair together into a seamless intellectual whole. The world would see anthropology’s critical value for understanding a changing world.

The living exhibits, official and unofficial, at expositions became sites of social interaction. There Euro-Americans and Europeans met Native peoples and interacted with them in face-to-face encounters. These engagements were based on curiosity about the exotic and foreign, safe adventure through what has come to be called the “touristic gaze.” Indeed these intercultural meetings had “the interest of strangeness” (McGee 1904a, 4). The “living exhibits” at fairs were exciting, disturbing, compelling, and educational for visitors and for Native demonstrators and performers alike, and anthropology could control their meanings.

This book is the story of how anthropology achieved a pseudocentrality of place in the exposition world in 1904. The LPE organizers were aware that exotic peoples were major draws and therefore money-makers. But they did

not want “merely” an exotic sideshow. They wanted their exotic peoples to be interpreted in a modern “scientific” manner and their exposition to be “a vast museum of anthropology and ethnology, of man and his works.” So they brought in an anthropologist, a reputed scientific expert in exotic peoples, WJ McGee.⁸

The anthropology that McGee and most (but not all) of his fellow anthropologists brought to the exposition centered in concepts of unilineal evolution developed since the 1860s in Europe and the United States. The concepts contained an essentialist set of assumed universal cultural, physical, and “racial” processes. These processes had *inevitably* produced the superior white Europeans and Euro-Americans who had created the great industrial and imperial nations and who “properly” should (or thought they should) dominate the world. This was the anthropology that the LPE organizers wanted—and got. It was holistic, inclusive, and encompassing. Everything had a place—agriculture, art, ideas, technology, and even people. By illuminating the processes that had produced the past and the present, they could be used to predict the future and legitimate the rapid societal and technological changes and advances that exposition exhibitors predicted. This kind of evolution implied that the new was natural, inevitable, and beneficial to all.

Anthropology also had an added benefit; it was a new science and by definition that meant “better” to men who saw a bright future in the ideas emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century. The dominant paradigm in the American anthropology of 1900 was a product of American society and reflected its values in the way it posed questions, amassed data, and interpreted evidence, particularly the racist assumptions and Social Darwinist ideologies of the time. It reflected the deeply held and unquestioned beliefs and prejudices of fair organizers that the American way of life was the unquestioned height of civilized development.

Validation was achieved by using the “primitive” as a foil for “enlightened civilization.” “Primitive” represented presumed early evolutionary stages of human society. Certain contemporary societies (hunter-gatherers, peasants) became analogs for the past stages through which “advanced” human societies had evolved. This idea—“as they are now, so our ancestors once were”—had been current in the thinking of political economists and social evolutionists since the late 1500s. One aspect of this Primitivism was the long-held premise

of the “Vanishing Savage”—that nonliterate cultures were doomed by technological and imperialist expansion.⁹ The LPE, like the Omaha and Buffalo expositions, would thus provide the “last chance” to see the “authentic” Native peoples of the world before they “vanished.” But unlike Omaha and Buffalo, the LPE would provide hope for the unfortunate “primitives.” The exposition would give Natives a chance to understand that Euro-American civilization was the pinnacle of evolutionary development. It was a way of life so superior that they would embrace it once they saw it.

In contrast to the fair’s overall evolutionary theme, anthropology as a distinct department was almost an afterthought. It was the first department proposed but the last to be implemented. While the field’s ideas proved useful for the exposition’s explanatory and taxonomic framework, an anthropology department was not considered absolutely necessary—unlike the departments of manufacturing, electricity, or fine arts.

The LPE organizers recognized that anthropology exhibits were expensive, especially if living peoples were included. Like all expositions, the LPE was a venture intended to be profitable for shareholders, hence the directors wanted to keep expenses to a minimum. There were in fact anthropological exhibits all over the exposition grounds—in government displays, foreign pavilions, business booths, and on the Pike—but other exhibitors or concessionaires paid for them. Getting the LPEC to pay for static and living people exhibits was another matter. A major theme of this book is about that struggle.

About This Book

This book is about how anthropology “came to the fair” in 1904. It has several interwoven stories. There are stories about the men and women, professional and vocational anthropologists, exhibits designers, educators, traders, government officials, hucksters, and entrepreneurs, who used Native peoples and their arts and cultures to both educate and entertain visitors, and to advance their own economic, sociopolitical, and ideological agendas. There is also the story of how concepts of then-current evolutionary anthropology were disseminated and how they both reflected popular culture and influenced public opinion. One story, woven throughout, is about how one anthropologist, WJ McGee, tried to articulate and popularize his vision of anthropology as the Science of Man of the present metamorphosing into the Science of Human-

ity of the future. The story of exposition anthropology at the LPE is in large part McGee's quest for professional authority and recognition and his use of anthropology's "subject matter" to obtain his objectives.

The second major story focuses on the almost three thousand indigenous peoples who resided (often under miserable conditions) on the exposition grounds while almost continuously performing, or demonstrating, their "traditional" lifeways for thousands of gawking visitors six days a week. This book is the first attempt to systematically discover the names, cultural affiliations, and individual and family stories of these men, women, and children.¹⁰ What has been garnered, however, is woefully incomplete, especially in regard to the observations, reactions, and feelings of the Native participants. We know they all came voluntarily, but we do not know why many came. Some were professional entertainers and had worked at previous expositions. Others had never been outside their homelands and were traveling thousands of miles to an unknown land. We have gleaned some idea of their experiences, some good, some bad. They must have been frightened and elated, bored, awed, and offended, and as interested in the fairgoers, officials, and anthropologists as the latter were in them. They observed and interacted with fairgoers while they went about their daily tasks. There are hints of the tenor of their observations; they were incredulous and appalled at the rude and unthinking behavior of fairgoers, but also made friends with some. Unfortunately their gaze is simply not very accessible in the archival record. We wish that we could have included their oral histories. We wish that there could be people to talk about their memories, but all participants have long since passed away. We leave it to others to discover if the stories told by participants when they returned to their homes were passed on to descendants. Simply locating participants' names and cultural affiliation has proven to be a daunting task involving over ten years of research.¹¹

We have based our stories on primary documents held in the archives listed in the endnotes. We have consulted LPEC records, correspondence, exhibit plans, departmental records and reports, scrapbooks, daily programs, and photographs. We have surveyed the many newspaper accounts about the exposition—accounts that conveyed information and shaped public expectations and attitudes about the anthropology displays. All sources tell us much of "what went on" during the fair and reflect something about the social, political, economic, and racist ideologies of the day.

We begin our tour of the fair with planning efforts, focusing on the LPE's desire for civic bragging rights. Civic leaders wanted to show the rest of the country that "in public spirit and in private enterprise," St. Louis "stands with the first."¹² We then discuss why the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company organized an anthropology department, since the original goal was to show the development of civilized life in the Louisiana territory, using displays of Indian life in 1800. This would be the "primitive before" picture to contrast with the "civilized after" of American technological and cultural achievements during the nineteenth century.

We then turn to McGee and his vision of anthropology as background for his grandiose exposition plans, his initial attempts to convince fair and government officials to fund them, and the fiscal realities and shifting political winds that required frequent changes in those plans. Major factors forcing changes were the decision by the Indian Service to build a model Indian school and use adult "traditional" Indians as foils and the federal government's desire to bring large numbers of Filipinos to demonstrate how well it was caring for America's new "wards." This is followed by the story of the LPE-sponsored expeditions to convince Native peoples to come to the exposition.

With the LPE ready to open on May 1, we turn to the displays of living peoples whom visitors saw, focusing on the almost three thousand indigenous peoples. Five chapters describe the children and adults associated with the Indian Service's model school and the associated Indian Village, the Philippine Reservation, the LPEC-funded Anthropology Villages, and the "Ten Million Dollar Pike." We look at daily life as these groups lived it, how they coped with fairgoers, earned money, and waded through the mud after torrential rains. It was not easy being a living exhibit in the heat and extraordinary rain of a St. Louis summer and the cold and wet of autumn and early winter.

We next discuss static anthropological exhibits and McGee's attempts to make the exposition a place of original research on Native peoples, including a Special Olympics, a competition designed as part of the third modern Olympic Games. Most projects dealt with anthropometry and psychometry, resulting in what would later charitably be called the "mismeasure of man" (Gould 1977, 1981; Findling and Pelle 1990, 18). We also discuss special events that affected the demonstrators' lives, such as parades and performances, and scientific congresses, arranged to further McGee's professional agenda. We end

with the closing and celebration of the fair and a discussion of how the LPE marked a turning point in Americanist anthropology.

Before we begin, a word must be said about derogatory language and cartoons, dubious assumptions, problematic conclusions, incorrect names for peoples, and strange logic sprinkled throughout the book in quotations. We have retained some of the ethnocentric and racist stereotypical language and slang used by organizers, participants, newspaper reporters, and fairgoers. We recognize that this language may cause pain for many descendants of the people who acted as “living exhibits.” But to omit or edit it would negate the point of the book. The early 1900s was a time of intense racism in the United States against Indians, blacks, Asians, and Southern Europeans. One of the major points of the book is how some anthropologists at the time fought against these prejudices and how others supported them with their nineteenth-century ideas about human physical and cultural evolution.

From the perspective of the history of Americanist anthropology, the LPE was a turning point. WJ McGee, the director of the LPE Anthropology Department and president of the nascent American Anthropological Association, and Franz Boas, who in 1904 was becoming a major force in anthropology, were close personal friends. At the fair’s anthropological congress both gave papers. McGee’s paper was filled with the bombast and racialist assumptions of nineteenth-century unilineal anthropology. As things turned out, it was a swan song for an outmoded set of ideas, at least within museum- and university-based anthropology. Boas’s paper basically destroyed all the theory underlying McGee’s anthropology and laid out the cultural relativism that would permeate Americanist anthropology in the twentieth century. It was McGee’s vision of anthropology, in conjunction with that of LPE organizers, that most of the millions of visitors took away with them. And it was a tenacious vision that can unfortunately still be seen today in expositions, in films, and on television.