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Future Remembered: A Look Back, 50 years later, at the Seattle World's Fair!

By Nancy Covert

"Century 21 Exposition"
 turns 50 in 2012

President John F. Kennedy officially opened the Fair on April 21st, 1962.

He spoke by telephone from the Michael Paul residence in Palm Beach, Fla., where he and Mrs. Kennedy were spending the Easter holidays. His voice was heard by 12,000 people seated in the stadium on the fairgrounds in Seattle for the opening ceremonies:

"I am honored to open the Seattle World's Fair today. What we show is achieved with great effort in the fields of science, technology and industry. These accomplishments are a bridge which carry us confidently towards the 21st century. Many nations have sent exhibits and will send their people. We welcome them.

This exemplifies the spirit of peace and cooperation with which we approach the decades ahead.

This manner of opening the fair is in keeping with the exposition's space age theme. Literally we are reaching out through space on the new ocean to a star which we have never seen, to intercept sound in the form of radio waves already ten thousand years old, to start the fair.

The sound emanates from Cassiopeia A in the northern sky. Astronomers see only a faint, filmy cloud where the entire constella-



tion is located. How different did our globe look ten thousand years ago when that sound started its long voyage? We hope that the light which starts from that star today-ten thousand years later arrives here-will see a happy and a peaceful world.

I am confident that as this sound from outer space is utilized to open the fair, the fair in turn will open the doors to further scientific gains by letting all see what has been accomplished today.

Before me is a telegraphic key that is of special significance. It has been used by seven Presidents to open great expositions such as the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific

Exposition (AYP) in Seattle in 1909, the Panama Canal, and many others. It was presented to me by your senior Senator Warren Magnuson at the White House last Wednesday.

By closing this key may we open not only a great World's Fair, may we open an era of peace and understanding among all mankind.

Let the Fair begin!"

At that April opening, Fair President Joe Gandy said, "The Fair has re-kindled civic spirit—the spirit that built a community, out of ashes, that

moved hills and spanned lakes and waterways and sent its commerce around the world."

But first...

Seattle is renowned for its public art—from the quartet of Ionian columns that overlook I-5 (remnants from the original University of Washington) to the bronze statue of Chief Seattle that stands at Five Corners. Then there's the seated bronze figure of Seattle's famous "Acres of Clams Man," better known as 'Ivar's Fish and Chips'; there's also Rachel, the 550 pound bronze piggybank at Pike Place Market; the majestic figure of
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George Washington on the UW campus, and the eclectic outdoor art gallery at Myrtle Edwards Park—all familiar sights to Seattleites.

Among the many monumental figures on display around the city, there's one figure—*Gort*, from the 1951 movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*—who “arrived” in Seattle in 2004 and is displayed outside of the Science Fiction Museum that is in the south wing of the Experience Music Project Museum, brain child of former Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen which opened in 2000 at the Seattle Center. The replica of this alien robot/bodyguard who accompanied his master *Klaatu* on his peace mission to Washington, D.C. to warn America's top scientists and those of other countries about the importance of nuclear deterrence (sound familiar?) now stands, appropriately, beneath the Space Needle.

While Allen, no doubt, has dined atop the iconic revolving restaurant many times, it is Allen's more famous partner, Bill Gates, who was 11 years old in 1966 when he won a dinner at the Space Needle. He won the prize by memorizing and reportedly speaking the words “flawlessly” from the Sermon on the Mount (Book of Matthew, Chapters 5, 6, and 7). No report, however, about what Gates and his family ate during that lofty meal!

With the upcoming 50th anniversary of Century 21—known as the “Seattle World's Fair” this article looks back at that time when the focus was on—technology, space, mathematics, science. Hmmm, haven't we done this before?

But back to the main story—The Fair!

This was Washington's second time to host a major exposition (The AYP was held the summer of 1909 at what became the University of Washington campus; followed by Spokane's Expo '74).

Keeping in mind that Space was the focus for the country's anxieties—well, some of them—fueled by the 1957 launch of Sputnik. Some Americans wondered how they could compete—and the educational focus shifted to science.

Fair planners, looking for some way to mark the 50th anniversary of the AYP, decided to focus on space and technology. The fair, they decided, would appeal to “eggheads” as well as the Average Joe, and avoiding the overly technical approach of the 1958 Brussels World's Fair.



While the Needle is the most visible remnant of that celebration—standing at 605 ft. or the equivalent of 1,320 Milky Way bars—at the time of its construction it became the “tallest” structure west of the Mississippi—taking away the Smith Tower's claim to that designation it had held since 1914. The Needle's famous revolving restaurant, at that time, was powered by a one-horsepower motor (it's since been upgraded to 1.5).

One not-so-well-remembered fact about the Space Needle's history is the role Norton Clapp played in its creation. He was known as the mastermind of Lakewood Community (Colonial) Center and Lakewood Ice Arena. Clapp, then the Weyerhaeuser President, partnered with Bagley Wright, contractor Howard S. Wright, architect John Graham, and financier Ned Skinner forming the Pentagram Corporation. Wright Construction was named the contractor and Eddie Carlson committed Western Hotels to run the facility. Cost for the Needle? \$4.5 million in 1961.

Other local professions were brought on board to build the rest of the Fair. Paul Thiry known as the father of architectural modernism of the Pacific Northwest, served as the supervising architect for the 47-acre, \$80 million project. He was responsible for the overall plan and coordinating the work of the other contributors that included John Graham, Minoru Yamasaki, who designed the U.S. Pavilion (he is best known for the design of New York's World Trade Center) and the landscape architect Lawrence Halprin from San Francisco, CA. Thiry's own contribution was designing the Washington State Pavilion.

The five main areas featured: The World of Science, The World of Tomorrow, The World of Art, The World of Commerce and Industry, and the World of Entertainment. Other designated areas included Gayway with amusement rides, the Food Circus was the converted Armory, Boulevard of the World, and Show Street, the adult entertainment area. Fair officials almost immediately shut down one attractions—the “Girls of the Galaxy”—because the naked ladies were deemed too scandalous.

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Barbara Scott—a “C-21” Ticket Seller

By Nancy Covert

Barbara Scott, a freshman at the College of Puget Sound in 1962, was hired that summer to work at Century 21 Exposition (C-21), better known as the Seattle World’s Fair (WF). Barbara said that Sen. Mike McCormack nominated her and a girlfriend, Marcine Miller, for the fair positions. A short story about the young women’s hiring appeared in the Tri-Cities Herald that spring. Barbara was selected as a ticket seller, and thus began her memorable summer at the World’s Fair.

A month-long orientation was held from March up through the start of Fair in April. The 20-year-old woman’s only work experience had been “as a babysitter”. It was an “eye-opening” experience for her, she recalled. WF ticket takers were union members—that was Dave Beck teamster era—and earned \$2.25 an hour during the fair’s run. “Food Circus workers,” she added, “earned much less.” She saved up enough money to attend the fall semester of college.

She’d hoped to be hired as a tour guide but she was considered too young for that job. Instead, she became a ticket seller, working at the East Gate entry to the fairgrounds. Barbara learned to operate a cash register and make change.

The first few days of the fair, business was slow and she was nervous, but she got into the swing of things quickly. She became good at flashing that “C-21 smile” as everyone was expected to do. Their training included working with professional guides “from New York” who emphasized the importance of being friendly to visitors.

Her gate till always balanced, and because she was good at



**A Ticket Booth at the Fair
(photo: courtesy Seattle Center Foundation)**

keeping track of money, she was “promoted” to the Monorail operation. She traded in her yellow shirtwaist dress for something more “futuristic” looking; a snazzy blue, teal and white uniform. Monorail tickets for adults were 50 cents one way, 75 cents for a round trip, and 35 cents for kids.

Uniforms were cleaned weekly, but by July they had shrunk. Barbara recalled that after all those cleanings, her skirt was above her knees—which wasn’t a bad thing, she added, when the Navy came to town for SeaFair. One appreciative sailor, she recalled, admired her knees!

Barbara says the advantage of working at the fair was the ease with which she got tickets to shows and events such as Henry Mancini and Johnny Mathis. Fair employees, however, received no special treatment, for riding to the top of the Space Needle. “We had to stand in line just like everyone else. If you didn’t get in line for the ride to the top of the needle first thing in the morning, you’d have to wait between 4-1/2 to five hours. The lines were so long.” About 20,000

people a day rode up the Space Needle.

The most memorable part of that summer in Seattle came late in the Fair’s run. Although she was a Pat Boone fan, she switched her allegiance to Elvis after she worked with him when “*It Happened at the World’s Fair*” film was being shot in September.

Barbara rotated selling tickets at various locations on the Fair grounds and in September, she had the opportunity to see Elvis up close and personal. “He was always accompanied by bodyguards that we called the “Memphis Mafia.” “He was much better looking in person than on film,” she decided.

For the day of the filming, she punched tickets for Elvis. When the film was released the following year, her scene with Elvis, unfortunately, “ended up on the cutting room floor”. Barbara said that the film captured the essence of the Fair. “It was a good homage to the fair.”

Barbara’s time with the Fair ended three weeks shy of the Fair’s October closing. She was a student and had to get back to class. She enrolled in the University of Washington in the Library Sciences program and, eventually became an academic librarian at Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, MN, and then at Birmingham-Southern College (B-SC) in Alabama.

Ten years later, she returned to the Northwest and worked as a branch manager for all of the Tacoma Public libraries, retiring in 2010. She now resides in Lakewood and has been active with the Lakewood Historical Society since 2011 serving as Chair of the Museum Collections Committee and the Special Events Committee.

Barbara says she felt the experience was “life changing.” “I’d been shy and introverted. That job gave me confidence.”



May 4, 1962 "Life" magazine cover



The Space Needle "Then" in 1962



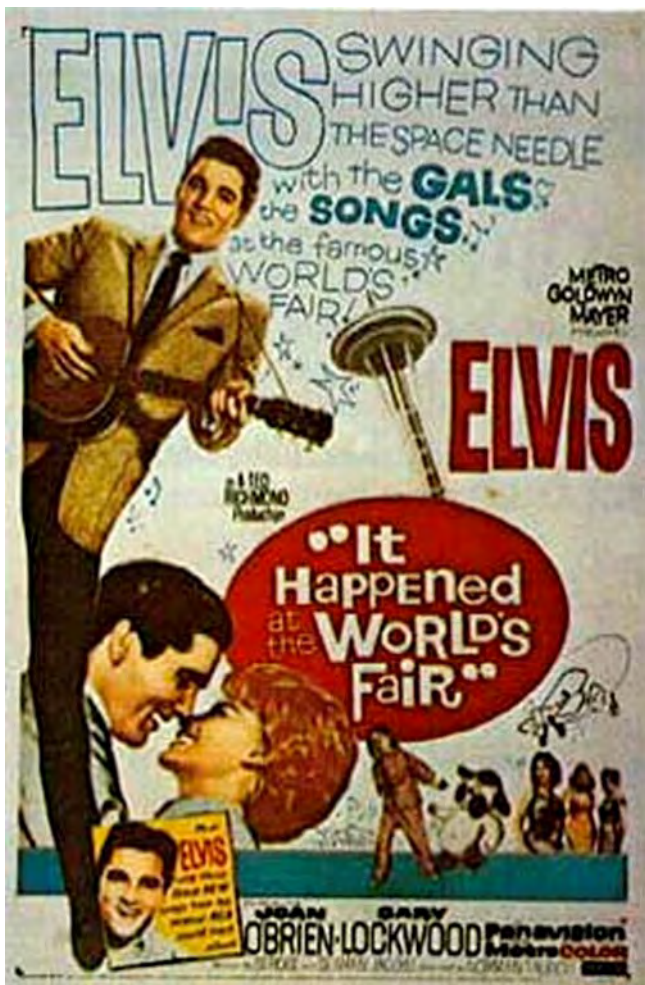
The Space Needle "Now"
Photo: courtesy Jeff Wolff Photography



Paul Bunyan's "World's Largest Birthday Cake"



"Japanese Village"
Photo: courtesy Washington State Archives



Yes, Elvis went to the World's Fair, too!



February 9, 1962 "Life" magazine cover



"Circus Berlin"
Photo: courtesy
Seattle Center Foundation

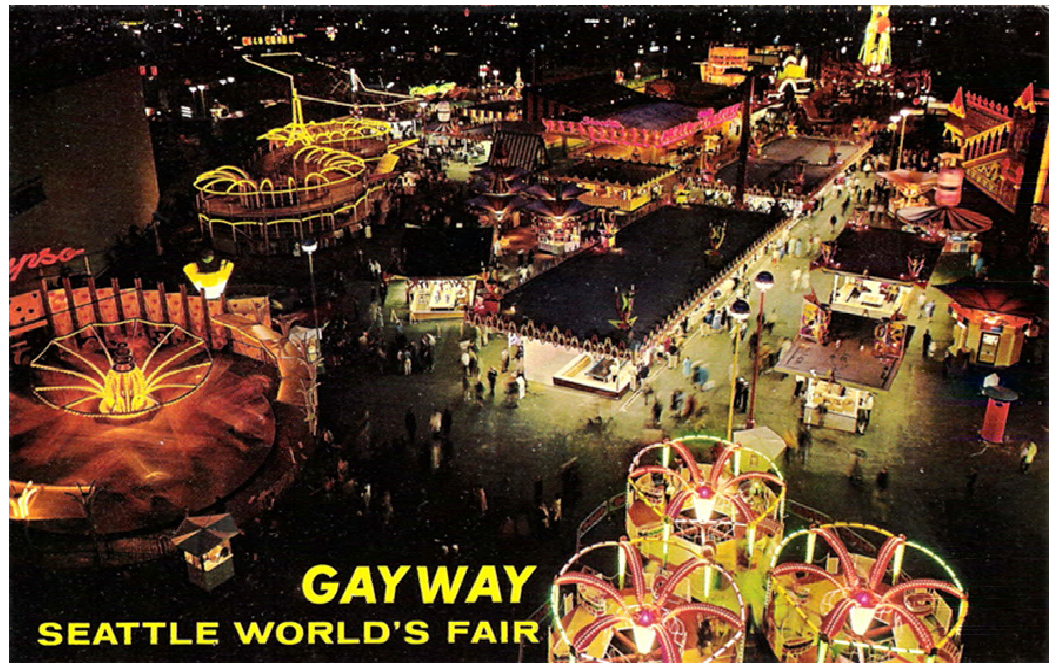


Photo: courtesy Lisa Zigweid, rollercoastersofthepacificnw.com

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Topping the list of Fair celebrities who came to town that year were astronaut John Glenn, movie star John Wayne, musician Louis Armstrong, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and Soviet Cosmonaut Gherman Titov (the second man to orbit earth).

Britain's Prince Phillip came, too, but the visit of "The King", Elvis Presley, overshadowed the British Royal's visit. That September while he was in town Presley filmed scenes for a movie "It Happened at the World's Fair", released in 1963.



Elvis filming a dance number at the Seattle's World Fair
(photo: courtesy Albert Fisher)

When the Needle was officially opened in April 1962, its final elevator had just been installed the day before. Almost 20,000 visitors ascended to the Observation Deck a day during the Fair's run.

Cost for a ride to the top in the early days was only one dollar, while a fancy meal could be enjoyed for about \$7.50.

And thus it went throughout the summer...

At the closing ceremony on October 21st, Gandy said "I hereby officially commit the Seattle World's Fair to history," and he rapped the gavel once. At the end, nearly 10 million people had visited the Fair.

President Kennedy was scheduled to participate in closing ceremonies, but he was unable to be in Seattle for the Fair's conclusion due to a "heavy cold" and needed to be in Washington D.C. to get "bed rest". The Vice President was similarly indisposed with a "cold"?

What was actually unfolding was the Cuban Missile Crisis, the closest the United States and the Soviet Union have ever come to nuclear war. The day after the Fair closed, Kennedy informed citizens that, "*Within the past week unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites are now in preparation on that imprisoned island of Cuba.*" On October 27th Premier Khrushchev informed the United States that the Soviet Union would dismantle the missile sites and remove the weapons.

And now...

World's Fair legacies, besides the Space Needle, include: The Monorail, which eight million people used during the 1962 Fair and about 2 million ride it today; the U.S. Pavilion became the Pacific Science Center, home of IMAX Theater; the Washington

the Food Circus was transformed into the Center House (the futuristic "Bubbleator" time machine was removed in 1984).

Other areas remain essentially unchanged, the Center Grounds with its Flag Pavilion; the International Fountain was remodeled in 1995 to make it safer for kids; and the mosaic mural by Paul Horiuchi remains the backdrop for the Amphitheater.

Other buildings have received major transformations into state-of-the-art structures. The Seattle Playhouse under the leadership of Bagley Wright became the Seattle Repertory Theatre and was replaced by the Intiman Theatre in 1985. What had been the Civic Auditorium became the new grand Opera House for the Fair, was remodeled into McCaw Hall in 2003, home of the Seattle Opera and the Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Other areas have been demolished or removed since the Fair closed. The Sky Ride was moved to the Puyallup Fairgrounds in 1980 and is popular way to view the Western Washington Fair. The miniaturized Ford model T cars are now a favorite in the Antique Car and Country Driving Adventure

at the Remlinger Farms in Carnation, WA. The Fun Forest with its Wild Mouse coaster ride is scheduled to be replaced by the new Daly Chihuly's 44,000 sq ft "glass house." A few of the rides were moved to other tourist areas in the Puget Sound region.

Renovations to the Space Needle were completed between 1999 and 2000 included the Sky City Restaurant, the Sky Base retail store, the Sky Line Banquet Facility, Observation Deck, lighting additions and repainting. Cost for renovations completed in 2000? \$21 million!



1962 Seattle World's Fair
(photo: courtesy Ken Prichard)

State Pavilion became Key Arena that was the setting for Seattle Supersonics basketball games and countless rock concerts; and,

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The 45 millionth visitor was recorded on May 19, 2007. Since 1982, the Needle has been the focal point for the Seattle's New Year's Eve celebration—with fireworks and synchronized music. (Except for 2000, when the show was cancelled due to perceived terror threats against the structure.)

Although most of the fair exhibits are long gone, the Center continues to attract thousands of annual visitors—for Folklife, Bumbershoot (mini versions of the Fair) and dozens of other events that continue to draw fans to the site long after the glow of that landmark time in the spotlight faded.

In a 2011 KUOW-NPR report, writer, Feliks Banal, tells about the fair's start and its conclusion.

Few people, he says, were aware that shortly after the opening ceremony that included a flyover of Delta Dagger jets, en route to Paine Field in Everett, one jet flamed out and lost power. The pilot attempted to restart the engine, but the plane continued its descent toward earth. The pilot safely bailed out, but the plane crashed near Montlake Terrace, leveling two homes and killing one couple. Five neighboring houses also were damaged.

According to Banal, *"the World's Fair had created an atmosphere of pleasant internationalism in Seattle for six months in 1962. The military jet crash at the start and the Cuban Missile Crisis at the end were ironic reminders that beyond the fairground walls and the celebrations of hope for a new century, the future was still held in the grip of a Cold War."*

Where were you in 1962—and more importantly—did you attend the Fair? What's your World's Fair story? Come share your stories on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at a special World's Fair program presented by the Lakewood Historical Society held in the Parish Hall at St Mary's Episcopal

Church, next to the Lakewood Library.



Lakewood's Donut Shop

By Nancy Covert

The Monorail, the Space Needle, the Pacific Science Center and the International Fountain...they're all well known World's Fair icons, but they're all in Seattle.

In this corner of Pierce County we have our own Century 21 monument. It's the House of Donuts, *"a Lakewood tradition,"* housed in that distinctive glass chalet-style structure, at 9638 Gravelly Lake Drive. It has long been a popular rendezvous spot, not only for customers, but half a century ago for folks heading to C-21—as the Fair was known.

Bob and Marilyn Cheatham had been selling donuts from their Lakewood location in the stylized structure they purchased in the late 50s from Ken Clemmet. The popular purveyor of donuts has operated since the Cheathams opened the business in 1959. Yes, that's correct. Three years before the Fair began. So...what gives? According to Marilyn Cheatham, her husband, Bob, regularly visited

the fair "almost every week" of its six-month run. "Bob especially enjoyed the Hawaiian Pavilion and the Belgian Waffle Hut," she recalled.

After the Fair closed, the Cheathams went to Belsham Brothers and bought the commercial-sized piece of machinery. Since October 1962, that large fabricated piece of equipment that operated during the Fair, has been used to create the House of Donuts' signature product: donuts—at least 20 varieties. Sure, it's needed repairs over 50 years, Mrs. Cheatham said, "but not a lot."

Originally from Stockton, CA, the Cheathams came to the area courtesy of the U.S. Army. They operated the House of Donuts until Mr. Cheatham was 90; they also operated a coffee shop in the Green Firs Shopping Center in University Place. It's still in operation, but now owned by Starbuck's. Mrs. Cheatham still owns the House of Donuts, but it's leased to Dan McCarthy.



During the years of their active ownership, Marilyn managed the cake donut production and handled the "front end" aspect of the operation, while Bob mixed the

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dough and baked the donuts. After all this time, cherry donuts are still her favorite, she adds.

Each of their three daughters, and their son learned the business, Marilyn continues. Currently, Karen Lane, the middle daughter, operates a donut shop in Stayton, OR, about 12 miles SE of Salem.

Marilyn says the shop is now serving 4th and 5th generation of customers; all customers, such as Bret Farrar, Lakewood's Police Chief, have been great—"we didn't have any bad customers."

Every day, McCarthy begins making the next day's fresh inventory around midnight. By 9 a.m. he's finished, having created the latest batch of a delicacy that was invented in the 17th century by the Dutch. Known as "oyl cakes" the recipe was brought to the New World—probably New Amsterdam (New York) where its popularity spread.

At day's end, unsold inventory was originally taken to Western State Hospital; today, Marilyn says, they go to the Hospitality Kitchen.

Despite the emergence of competitors, such as Krispy Kreme donuts a few years ago, nothing compares with those created at the House of Donuts. (House of Donuts was recently featured in

the 2/24/12 edition of Tacoma News Tribune's "GO" Magazine.) While folks continue to line up at the counter—there's also a drive-up window—between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for glazed, cake, crullers and other varieties, few knowing the history of the shop.

As part of Lakewood Historical Society's Tribute to the World's Fair the famous World's Fair, donuts will be served at the April 17th program. Don't miss this nostalgic opportunity to "re-visit the Fair," and enjoy this Lakewood tradition.



See Elvis?

(photo: courtesy of Seattle Times)

Elvis Comes to Town

By Nancy Covert

The World's Fair in Seattle saw close to 10 million visitors during its six-month run. Perhaps none of the visitors garnered more attention than America's King of Rock and Roll—he even upstaged an authentic "Royal"—Prince Phillip of Great Britain, who flew his own plane to Washington.

Presley's 1963 film, "It Happened at the World's Fair" came to fruition, according to Wikipedia, due to the suggestion to MGM from Washington State Governor Albert Rosellini that Seattle be the setting. The film made \$2.25 million—small potatoes compared with proceeds earned by today's films.

The film's lame plot revolved around a pair of crop-dusting pilots whose livelihood is threatened when they can't make payments on their plane "Bessie." Mike (Elvis) and his buddy, Danny (Gary Lockwood) – who's gambled away

their savings – become "reluctant hitchhikers," looking for a lift to anywhere. A Washington apple farmer and his niece give them a ride, and they end up in Seattle. When the farmer unexpectedly disappears, a nurse, whom Mike has befriended, wants to inform the Welfare Board. Does the hero solve the dilemma, get his plane back and get the girl? Watch the movie!

The film includes shots of the Monorail and the Space Needle, as well as views of Mt. Rainier. Of course, when the King was in town for the two-week period in early September, 40 off-duty cops closely guarded him. (Be sure to read about Barbara Scott's encounter with the King, elsewhere in this issue.

The following information was placed on a post card for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair

The World's Largest Birthday Cake

The cake was baked to celebrate Paul Bunyan's 128th birthday. The cake was mixed and baked by Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakers, Seattle. Decorations were done by Edison Technical School. Souvenir mail away boxed portions of the fruit cake were sold at the site and Clark's Restaurant, Seattle.

Statistics:

Weight: 25,000 pounds, plus decorations

Height: 23 feet

Icing: 4,000 pounds of C & H Cane Sugar

Circumference: 60 feet (six sides)

Recipe:

Raisins: 7,000 pounds

Eggs: 1,500 dozen

Pecans: 2,200 pounds

Flour: 10,500 pounds

Cane Sugar: 4,000 pounds

A Bunyan pinch of salt: 100 pounds