

AccNo. 1977.302 and 1977.276  
14 boxes (ArMs A0220-A0230, 1  
oversize box, & 2 artifact boxes)  
5.5+ linear ft.  
4C: 6.3.A, 6.4.C, and 4.5.C  
RLIN No. NYKI 590-940-0592

New York World's Fair Collection  
1939-1940, 1964-1965  
Brooklyn Historical Society  
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Brooklyn, NY 11201

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January 2006  
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## Introduction

The New York World's Fair Collection includes materials from the 1939 and the 1964-65 World's Fairs. Both took place in Queens at Flushing Meadows Park, a site that was extensively redesigned and landscaped in preparation for the 1939 Fair. The collection contains pre-planning documents, preliminary site reports, maps to the grounds, public relations material, memorabilia, clippings, artifacts, invitations to Fair ceremonies, and individual pavilion guides, among other items. The 1964-1965 items in the collection were foldered in July 1966, and afterward re-processed, reorganized, and described in an inventory in January 2006 by Pratt Institute GATEWAI intern Miranda Schwartz. New items were added to the collection in 1977, per accession records.

Provenance of some items in the collection can be traced. In April 1977 Millicent Mullineux donated material from the 1939 Fair to the Long Island Historical Society (now Brooklyn Historical Society), acknowledged by letters from Executive Director James P. Hurley. The items donated included tourist guides, the official Fair souvenir book, pamphlets, and ephemera, such as a Bakelite pin and a World's Fair paper towel. Acknowledgement letters in the accession file to other donors indicate that the Society had put out a call in its newsletter for Fair material.

According to later acknowledgement letters in the accession file, after the 1964 Fair the Society again asked for donations of World's Fair items in its newsletter. A few donors are listed by name but the file indicates that most of the material was personally collected by Society staff, including manuscript curator Ken Stryker-Rodda, at the 1964 Fair. Some items were also sent to the Society by the New York World's Fair 1964 Corporation.

## Historical Note

The site for both these World's Fairs was Flushing Meadows Park in Flushing, Queens. Extensive work was done before the 1939 Fair to convert the site from its previous existence as a giant ash heap to a suitable park, fairgrounds and exhibition site. Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, who was to play a large role in the 1964 World's Fair plans, was involved in ensuring that the community would get a usable park after the Fair was over.

Despite the Depression and instability in Europe, engineer Joseph F. Shagden and Edward F. Roosevelt, cousin to the president, began to plan in 1935 for a 1939 World's Fair to take place in New York City, its purpose to "celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington and the launching of the new American government under the Constitution."<sup>1</sup> The 1939 theme, "Building the World of Tomorrow," had as its grand architectural symbols an immense white sphere called the Perisphere and a triangular obelisk called the Trylon. A special attraction called "Democracy," illustrating the delights of a city of the future, was also a highlight of the exhibition.<sup>2</sup> The Fair ran from April 30, 1939, to October 31, 1939, and then from May 11, 1940 to October 27, 1940. Dozens of countries participated, building grand pavilions to present their cultures and traditions to all Fair attendees. In addition, scores of businesses presented exhibits showcasing new wares and products, including American companies General Electric, Consolidated Edison, and the National Broadcasting Corporation. In addition, masterpieces of Renaissance art were shown in art exhibitions, while the popular "Town of Tomorrow" showed fifteen demonstration homes, each designed to appeal to a different taste.

Decades later, another World's Fair took place on the same site. Parks Commissioner Robert Moses became president of the New York World's Fair Corporation and was instrumental in the pre-planning phases and implementation of improvements to the site. Construction on Shea Stadium (then

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<sup>1</sup> "Gateway to the World's Fair," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 30, 1939, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

known as Flushing Meadow Park Municipal Stadium) also began at this time. (N.b: Moses's interest in the World's Fair site coincided with a decision from the same time period to decline to support construction of a new stadium for the Brooklyn Dodgers.)

The 1964 World's Fair opened on April 22, 1964 and ran until October 18, 1964, and from April 21, 1965 to October 17, 1965. Its theme was "Man in a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe," an idea that seemed appropriate in the newly arrived space age. The architectural symbol of this fair was the Unisphere, which can still be viewed on the former site today. As with the previous fair, country pavilions showcased their culture and cuisines, and business and industry exhibits exhibited products and innovations. Of particular note is the fact that the Long Island Historical Society had an exhibit space in the New York City Building. Correspondence and plans relating to this exhibit can be found in Series 1:6

### Scope and Content

This collection is composed of eleven manuscript boxes totaling 5.5 cubic feet, plus one oversize flat box and two artifact boxes. Two manuscript boxes contain material about the 1964 World's Fair while the other nine relate to the 1939 Fair. The 1964 material includes preliminary reports and planning documents detailing the work to be done on the Fair site in Flushing Meadows Park; the maps and photographs in these reports provide valuable documentation of the extent of the planning and improvements made to the park.

Much of the 1939 material consists of travel brochures to individual American states and to countries around the world. Other material includes brochures from many of the Fair's exhibitions. Memorabilia and artifacts in this collection are varied and range from restaurant menus to invitations to opening-day ceremonies to packets of souvenir Fair tickets.

Visual material exists for the 1964 World's Fair, consisting of 92 color slides, ten color postcards, and two copies of a 35 mm. film reel entitled "Come to the Fair." These materials are stored with the Image Collection.

### Processing Note

Processing the collection involved adding series designations to the 1939 material, rearranging the folders to reflect this new order, and writing the finding aid. Artifacts were moved to two separate artifacts folders, one for 1939 and one for 1964. In addition, duplicate items in different folders were consolidated into a single duplicates folder. Three copies were left in the original folder and extras were moved to the duplicates folder, which is noted at the end of the container list and is the final folder in Box 11. Non-oversize items from the oversize box were integrated into the appropriate folders and series; one oversize book was correctly re-labeled and an oversize magazine was wrapped in protective paper. In processing, an artifact consisting of three sticks of Wrigley's gum was found in the Food Building Exhibitions folder. It was moved to the 1939 artifacts box temporarily. Dr. Pettit edited this inventory, May, 2006.

## Container List

### Series 1: 1964-1965 Fair

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Booklets on Construction & Preparation, 1962-1963	1962-1963
	2	Brochures: pavilion brochures	1964-1965
	3	Exhibits: pavilion pamphlets	1964-1965
2	4	Exhibits: pavilion pamphlets	1964-1965
	5	Guides: official Fair guides	1964-1965
	6	Long Island Historical Society Exhibit at World's Fair	1964-1965
	7	Maps	1964-1965
	8	Memorabilia	1964-1965
	9	Miscellaneous	1964-1965
	10	Opening & Re-Opening Ceremonies, 1964-1965	1964-1965
	11	Press Packet: "Fair News" bulletin, NYWF fact sheet	1964-1965
OS	12	Vatican Pavilion—A Chronicle: boxed book	1964
OS	13	"Preparation of the Site for the World's Fair, 1964-1965"	1960
OS	14	"Flushing Meadow and Beyond: Preliminary Report on a Proposed World's Fair Program"	1964
AB2	15	Plastic lei	1964-1965
AB2	16	Three soda cups	1964-1965
AB2	17	One Belgian cookie tin	1964-1965
AB2	18	One cocktail napkin	1964-1965
AB2	19	Pins, plastic rings, irradiated dime	1964-1965

### Series 2: 1939-1940 Fair

#### Sub-series a: Theatrical and Film Productions

3	1	Theatrical Play: "Railroads on Parade"	1939-1940
	2	Musical: "American Jubilee"	1939-1940
	3	The Aquacade	1939-1940
	4	Film: "Land of Liberty"	1939-1940

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
<b>Sub-series b: Exhibitions</b>		
3	1 Art Exhibitions: art exhibition catalogs	1939-1940
	2 Office Supply Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	3 Railroad Exhibition: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	4 Religious Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	5 Children's World Exhibition: Children's book	1939-1940
	6 Food Building Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
4	7 Horticulture Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	8 Health Exhibitions: book, brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	9 Stamp Exhibition: pamphlet	1939-1940
	10 Highway & Horizons Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	11 Industrial Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	12 Home Improvement Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
5	13 Miscellaneous Exhibitions: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	14 Consolidated Edison: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	15 Ford Motor Company: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	16 Insurance Companies: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
	17 Kodak Company: brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940
<b>Sub-series c: Travel Guides</b>		
5	1 Africa: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	2 Asia: tourist brochures for Japan, India	1939-1940
	3 Caribbean: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	4 Europe (Eastern): tourist brochures for USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania	1939-1940
6	5 Europe (Western) Denmark: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	6 Europe (Western) England: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	7 Europe (Western) France: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	8 Europe (Western) Holland: tourist brochures	1939-1940

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
6	9 Europe (Western) Iceland: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	10 Europe (Western) Ireland: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	11 Europe (Western) Italy: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	12 Europe (Western) Norway: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	13 Europe (Western) Portugal: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	14 Europe (Western) Scotland: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	15 Europe (Western) Sweden: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	16 Europe (Western) Switzerland: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	17 Middle East: tourist brochures for Iraq, Palestine, Turkey	1939-1940
7	18 North America—Canada: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	19 North America—U.S.—Arizona: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	20 North America—U.S.—Arkansas: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	21 North America—U.S.—California: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	22 North America—U.S.—Colorado: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	23 North America—U.S.—Connecticut: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	24 North America—U.S.—Florida: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	25 North America—U.S.—Georgia: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	26 North America—U.S.—Kentucky: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	27 North America—U.S.—Maine: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	28 North America—U.S.—Maryland: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	29 North America—U.S.—Massachusetts: tourist brochures	1939-1940
8	30 North America—U.S.—Michigan: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	31 North America—U.S.—Missouri: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	32 North America—U.S.—New Hampshire: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	33 North America—U.S.—New Jersey: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	34 North America—U.S.—New Mexico: tourist brochures	1939-1940

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
8	35 North America—U.S.—New York: tourist brochures, guide to New York State fair exhibits	1939-1940
	36 North America—U.S.—New York: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	37 North America—U.S.—Ohio: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	38 North America—U.S.—Oklahoma: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	39 North America—U.S.—Pennsylvania: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	40 North America—U.S.—Rhode Island: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	41 North America—U.S.—South Dakota: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	42 North America—U.S.—Tennessee: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	43 North America—U.S.—Utah: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	44 North America—U.S.—Vermont: tourist brochures	1939-1940
9	45 North America—U.S.—Virginia: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	46 North America—U.S.—Washington State: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	47 North America—U.S.—Wyoming: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	48 South America: tourist brochure	1939-1940
	49 South America—Argentina: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	50 South America—Brazil: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	51 South America—Chile: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	52 South America—Colombia: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	53 South America—Surinam: tourist brochures	1939-1940
	54 South Pacific: tourist brochures for Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Java, Netherlands Indies	1939-1940
<b>Sub-series d: Miscellaneous</b>		
9	1 Maps	1939-1940
	2 “World’s Fair News”: vol. 1, nos. 1-11, July 1936-May 1937	1936-1937
	3 “Inside the Fair”: weekly fair bulletin, nos. 1-16B	1940
10	4 “New York World’s Fair Bulletin”	1937-1938
	5 Newspaper Clippings	1939-1940

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
10	6	Ephemera: by-laws, certificate of incorporation, "World's Fair Bulletin," plans for Flushing Meadows Park, souvenir items	1939-1940
OS	7	"World's Fair Preview"	1939
OS	8	<i>New York Herald Tribune</i> special magazine "Gateway to the World's Fair"	1939
OS	9	New York 1939 Official World's Fair Pictorial Map	1939
OS	10	"The Architectural Forum"	1939
OS	11	<i>New York Times</i> special magazine "The Fair in Pictures"	1939
OS	12	Boxed Official 1939 World's Fair Souvenir Books	1939
OS	13	"New York World's Fair World"	1939
AB1	14	Two season ticket passes in cases	1940
AB1	15	Four souvenir ticket booklets	1939
AB1	16	Four souvenir ticket booklets	1940
AB1	17	Two 20-tickets booklets	1940
AB1	18	Souvenir stamps, stickers, pins	1939-1940
AB1	19	One paper towel	1940
AB1	20	Three sticks of Wrigley's gum in a packet	1939-1940
<b>Sub-series e: Guide Books</b>			
10	1	Guide Books: Official Guide Book, 1939, 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	1939
	2	Guide Books: New York City and World's Fair tourist guides	1939-1940
11	3	Guide Books: Official Guide Book, 1940	1940
<b>Series 3: Duplicates</b>			
11	1	Duplicates of any material with three or more copies already in a folder: maps, guide books, brochures, pamphlets	1939-1940, 1964-1965