

1884 World's Fair, 125 Years Later

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newwave@tulane.edu

In December 1884, the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition brought travelers from around the globe to New Orleans. At its 125th anniversary, few reminders are left of the exposition, but it focused international attention on the Crescent City and the neighborhood that would house the uptown campus of Tulane University.

After the Civil War, New Orleans had become "something of a tenuous place for investment," says Richard Campanella, assistant professor of research in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science. "So the Cotton Planters Association and other officials and commercial leaders looked for a way to bring new attention to the city," he says.

See how the world's fair changed the uptown area of New Orleans and what remains of the fair's exhibits in this video produced by Brandon Meginley.

The World's Fair, located where Audubon Park is today, brought new attention to uptown New Orleans, says Campanella.

Tulane University moved its campus uptown a decade after the fair.

The fair featured displays from every state and many different countries. The main exhibit building, at 1.7 million square feet, was the largest wooden structure ever built. It was demolished, along with most other exhibition buildings, in the 1890s.

Brandon Meginley is a senior majoring in journalism at Tulane University.