

[intro music plays]

Voice 1: Seattle is...

Voice 2: Well, we don't use umbrellas.

Voice 3: Coffee.

Voice 1: Computers?

Voice 3: It's a city with a needle.

Voice 2: Home to Sasquatch!

Voice 4: Home to the Museum of History and Industry.

Voice 2: Innovation.

Voice 1: Rain!

Voice 3: A story.

Voice 4: A history.

[intro music finishes]

Julia: All of us at MYA had such a fun time interviewing our guests and hearing their stories last season, so we wanted to share a little more from some of our favorite interviews from season two with you. In this bonus episode, we're sharing more from our interview with Anne Jenner from the UW Special Collection who spoke with us about the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition for Episode 3: The Forgotten World's Fair. We had a great time listening to some of her favorite items in the collection, and to her wonderful immersive descriptions of what the AYP was like. A special thanks to Anne Jenner for this interview. Without further ado, here is the interview!

[jaunty piano music starts playing and fades out in underneath]

Annabelle: I just wanted to start by asking if you can introduce yourself for us and talk about who you are, and what you do, and why.

Anne Jenner: My name is Anne Jenner. I'm the Pacific Northwest curator at the University of Washington Library Special Collections. As Pacific Northwest curator or as curator in a special collections, I help build the archival and library collection that's used by researchers who visit us in the lower level of the libraries. As our special collections is located in the lower level of Suzzallo and Allen Libraries. Our collections are open to the public. As curator of the Pacific Northwest I help bring in collections that tell the story of the history, culture and people of the Pacific Northwest. These can be archival records, photos, moving images, maps, books, periodicals, drawings, digital collections, you name it. We collect these and add these to special collections and help researchers find the information and use them. Also educate people by teaching them how to use the collections and going out and speaking about the different collections that we have. And I also teach archiving classes to the public in a program called We Are History Keepers that I run with the Ethnic Heritage Council where many librarians and archivists spend the day out in ethnic communities helping them learn how to archive their

history, whether they want to archive it for themselves or have it be part of a repository. We just go out and help people understand how to do that.

Annabelle: Ok, great! That sounds really like a very cool job. How long have you been doing that, working at UW Special Collections?

Jenner: I've been in this position at UW Special Collections since 2012, about 8 years. I came here from Chicago although I had lived in the Northwest earlier. I went to UW as a graduate student.

Annabelle: And what brought you into this role? Were you working in a position similar to this before?

Jenner: I was, I was a director of an archives, a special collections at a small University in Chicago and I worked mainly with Swedish American collections but also with university records and with a records of a church. So I did work with ethnic communities but nothing as broad as all the ethnic communities here in the Pacific Northwest. So this was really an exciting opportunity first to come back to Seattle and second of all to broaden the types of materials that I work with and the different groups that I get to meet and work with. It was pretty exciting.

Annabelle: Yes, that's so cool. That's really cool. As we have looked at some of the items in your collections and we noticed that the AYP was a large part and that there were many different items from that. And we were just wondering what sort of items are in the collection related to that that you could describe?

Jenner: Oh that's, that's great! Yeah, the AYP is really special for the University of Washington. As you know the exposition itself took place right there on the campus and as a matter of fact the campus was built simultaneous with building the exposition. So, it was designed, the campus plan was designed with this sort of giant fair in mind. So, I like to think of the most special artifacts that we have from the AYP as being architectural features on the campus itself. For example, Drumheller Fountain, which wasn't named Drumheller Fountain until the 1960s it was called the Geyser Basin, was designed as a water feature right smack dab in the middle of the grounds, the fairgrounds for the AYP. Some of the buildings that still exist today, a few of them were built where they are for the AYP. Another feature is that viewpoint that you get coming down from Red Square called Rainier Vista. The view looking down over the fountain, and straight down the hill toward Husky Stadium that's called Rainier Vista. That had a sort of cascading water feature that went down that hill, obviously built to feature Mount Rainier which you can, you know, you can see on a good day with the mountains out straight from Red Square down there. The George Washington statue which is huge and on the edge of Red Square on 15th, right at Campus Parkway, right by the Henry Art Museum, was erected for the fair as well. And, you know, you walk by it and it looks big but when you see pictures of them installing the exhibit you see one of the guys whose installing it is actually up on the statue. He's like, you

know, his head goes up to his chin he's like standing on George Washington's belt and his head only goes up to his chin. So, like, that's how big the statue is. It's pretty remarkable. And to see those photos all the way from 1909. So those I think are the two or one of the, you know, one of the most prominent things in our collection. I put that with air quotes around it "in our collection". It's the campus itself.

But we have some really interesting small items from the fair, from the exposition, including, you know, ribbons that were given out to people who visited who went for a particular reason. For example, there were themed days where different themes were celebrated, you know, like different ethnic groups, you know, there was like a, you know, a Swedish day. There was a music day. There were, you know, days for different people who were members of different organizations. And then we get, kind of like we would get a t-shirt printed out when we would go to an amusement park with our youth group or something. Or everybody would wear the same t-shirt. They did that. But they would wear these sort of silk ribbons with printing on them. And obviously people kept them; they were keepsakes, they were mementos from that day. And they really tell us, you know, 110 years later, 111 years later, that going to the fair, going to the exposition, with that group on that particular day was really meaningful to that person. It was considered a really special occasion. People dressed to the nines. They were dressed in the fanciest dress. I'm sure you looked at some of the pictures of the exposition and seen the way people really got dressed up. This was an occasion, a very special occasion to go to the exposition. You see that by some of the things that have been saved. We also have other mementos like small spoons with the logo of the exposition and it says AYP 1909.

We also have a very unusual piece that is a large, framed piece of artwork. And it is...first let me back up and say, one of the main things that we see commemorating the fair is this large bird's eye map. Have you seen that map?

Annabelle: Yes, I've seen photographs of it. It looks really cool. It's interesting to look at it compared to the current UW campus and see how similar they were.

Jenner: Exactly. So, I learned a little bit about that map. It's so cool because you could just look at it forever because there's just so many little details in it. It was hand drawn, very idealized, a lot of tiny details in there, you can see some landscaping stuff. But it was drawn two years before the exposition opened. So, it was designed as an aspirational view of what it would look like. So some of the buildings didn't even get built. And some of the buildings changed a little bit or were situated a little bit differently than they actually appear in that bird's eye view. And also like, everything is perfect. It's a beautiful sky, the mountains gorgeous, you can see the dirigible or the little blimp flying in the sky. Everything is ideal. So that came out well before and I'm sure people in the area got to see it and it was used as a promotional piece to help people plan that they really wanted to actually come to the fair. One of the features was these contests you could enter. And there was art that was created. And there's this piece that we have that was created. A large framed piece I'm sure it is four feet wide – it's huge – four or five feet wide by three or four

feet high. It's framed in wood and it has glass over it. It is a replica of that bird's eye view and it's all done in hair. All different kinds of hair. Human hair, I'm sure there's animal hair. All different kinds of hair.

Annabelle: Wow!

Jenner: (laughing) I know.

Annabelle: That's crazy.

Jenner: I'm sure you didn't expect to hear that!

Annabelle: No, I didn't, that's crazy, that sounds really amazing though.

Jenner: And the hair is all twisted up really, really tiny, situated in whisps to actually make all the buildings, all of the trees, the fountain, the sky, the...everything. It looks just like that bird's eye view but it's all made of hair. It's crazy. This woman made it. I can't think of what her name is, I can look it up. But she made this and she entered it in the fair and she won a prize for it. So not only do we have this giant hair art, I guess we call it hair art, but we also have the ribbon that she won and the certificate that she got saying that she won this prize for this. Can you imagine how many hours it took for her to make that thing? So...

Annabelle: Wow, that's impressive. That sounds like definitely something that you wouldn't expect to be in the collection. But that's a really cool addition. Do you have any favorite AYP collection items? Aside from that or anything else that stood out to you?

Jenner: I think – you know, our photograph collection, Frank Nowell. He was the official, the official photographer. His name was Frank Nowell, N-O-W-E-L-L. He was a photographer who had a studio in Nome, Alaska. Not only did he come to photograph the exposition, but he had a giant staff; he had over 16 professional photographer who were working with him there. And they not only photographed all the buildings, and the landscape, and the events and the people. They made it look as glamorous as it was, but also they documented every nook and cranny of the grounds. They also had little stands set up around the grounds where people could purchase the photos when they attended. And they were taking photos of people as they visited too so you could get your picture taken, you know, with the camels on the Pay Streak. And the Pay Streak was the big amusement park area where all sort of crazy exhibits were set up and fascinating curiosities were available to people. There was music and food and rides and, etc. But there were these photographers as well that would take your picture as a keepsake. But this body of photography is now part of our collection. I think MOHAI has quite a few as well. And I know that a lot of the Nowell photographs are in private collections as well. But the fact that we have over 900 of these photos really helps us preserve what the fair looked like and how it was run and how things were built. So that's a really exciting collection that we have.

Annabelle: Yes that sounds very exciting. I've looked at some of the photographs already and they're really amazing. It's so cool to see all the different aspects and it was obviously a very extravagant event that they put on. Overall, what impression of the fair would somebody get from looking at these various items? I know there is some certain things you already discussed but...

Jenner: Well, I think one of the perceptions of the general public outside of Seattle was that Seattle was pretty backwoods, it was pretty rough. They are, you know, out on the coast, and it wasn't very modern or advanced or sophisticated. I think they wanted to make a statement with this Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition that Seattle really was significant, it was thriving, it was modern. It had a lot of capital, people had money. There was industry. There was commerce and business, it was very successful. They wanted to give that perception. So they really raised the bar with the aesthetics. They wanted it all to look very high brow. And you get that from these pictures. I think they felt like they had one shot to tell the world how good Seattle was. It was up and coming. And they also had the advantage of being the gateway to Alaska. This was the last stopping point to get supplies, for example, on route to the gold fields of Alaska. That really was how hordes of people really ended up coming through and then many settling in Seattle. And they wanted to show that we moved beyond that; we're a little more sophisticated than just a stopping ground. I think that they really did that. And I think that that is a kind of a unique component of the AYP... not only a gateway to Alaska but also to the Pacific Rim, so to Hawai'i, to the Philippines and other Pacific Rim countries.

Annabelle: Right, right. I think it's interesting 'cause I was listening to you talk about that and Seattle still is kind of a gateway to other places like the Philippines or Alaska. So many people go through here to get there still today. So it's interesting.

Jenner: Yeah it really did set that precedent and it has remained in many ways. Yeah. Even to China and to Japan, definitely to Hawai'i.

Annabelle: Right, right. And kind of going back to the broad overview of AYP. How would you describe it to someone who had never heard about it before? Because I know it's often referred to as the forgotten world's fair and many people haven't heard about it specifically before. So what would you say to someone who never heard of it?

Jenner: Well, I think most people are familiar with world's fairs. I haven't heard of it described as the forgotten world's fair but maybe you're right.

Annabelle: I think most people think of the other world's fair when you describe Seattle world's fairs.

Jenner: Oh you mean like the Century 21. That was really big.

Annabelle: Yes the Century 21. So they sometimes refer to this one as the forgotten world's fair because that one, kind of one of the main things that people think about when you describe Seattle world's fairs. What would you say to someone who'd never heard about this before? How would you describe it?

Jenner: I would first help people understand- of course everyone know how populated the city of Seattle is now and how every piece of land is developed. Though we do have very beautiful parks and water fronts, etc. But at this time everything north of the ship canal, everything north of Lake Union, it was still undeveloped. So, they took 250 acres of this undeveloped land and they created the little city. The city obviously was where the University would grow and be then enveloped by the rest of the city. But like many other worlds fairs they needed to create buildings, they needed to bring people from all parts of the state and the country and other countries too exhibit products, to perform music, to share customs, to share food and they had to make money doing it. So, it was a *business* that went on for several months. Where did it go from? June through October? And attracted people from all over to come and visit for a day or a week or come many times. People did pay an entrance fee to come in, and I believe they paid for other amenities once they were there. I believe that each of the things that they experienced on the paystreak which was the amusement park area where they could buy food, they could have experiences, they could get their pictures taken, they could ride rides. And people came in celebration. They came to see things that they had never seen before. One for the most peculiar exhibit features was the baby incubators. Did you see stuff about that?

Annabelle: Yes I did. I was actually, right before you joined the call I was talking to Emily about that one actually. Because we were talking about how there's a lot of connections between how some of the exhibits were almost like performances. They were so obscure. Some of them were less of an exhibit. Like what we think of as an exhibit and more like an actual live show.

Jenner: Yeah there were these living exhibits. And one was these baby incubators. This was a, I forget what the doctor's name was, but he had developed this technology to treat babies using incubators. Premature babies or babies who needed, you know, extra medical attentions, with incubators. Electricity and using technology to care for infants was cutting edge. It was not even actually part of, it was not even, it wasn't offered in hospitals. And this was a way to demonstrate this practice of caring for babies. And he did this at many other world's fair and other exhibitions, not just in Seattle. There were actual live, living babies in need of medical care who got medical care at the fair in these baby incubators. And it was so sensational people came and learned about it, got to see it for their very eyes. And it also needed to be financed. So, they made a little restaurant next to it, so people could eat their meals and look at the babies while they were eating their meals. It all seems very bizarre to us today, but this was the way people became exposed to new ideas. They got to see cutting edge technology and this was an example of that.

Annabelle: Yeah that's so interesting that they would use a fair to demonstrate new technology. Was this fairly common at world's fairs?

Jenner: Yeah

Annabelle: And I know that there's also a lot of really interesting exhibits, like the incubators you were describing. And do you have any favorite exhibits that were at the AYP? Or are there any really interesting other ones you can think of? Because we were definitely in our podcast we were discussing exhibits at the AYP quite a bit, that's one of our main topics. We'd love to hear more about those.

Jenner: Yeah, there were buildings that were built specially for specific groups. There was the forestry building, which you can imagine was of significance to the region. Foresters came, worked, brought down forests, brought down timber, shipped it out, made a lot of money. Also built boats and helped build up Seattle with their product. And it was a big part of the culture. The timber industry was very big and it remained big through most of the twentieth century as well.

Annabelle: And also heard a bit about how different states like California or Hawai'i had their own exhibits that were pretty extravagant too.

Jenner: Definitely

Annabelle: I'd read also that there was an interesting exhibit where it was waxed figurines of an army hospital, that were very realistic. What did Seattleites think about this exposition? What was the impression on Seattleites?

Jenner: Extremely proud. And I'm sure that they planned for a long time. They were a part of the planning and they anticipated that they would be part of it. They would come with their families. They would host people from other parts of the country who would come and visit. And they would come with their organizations that they were a part of, with their churches, with their ethnic groups. I'm sure they came many, many times. They kept mementos and you can find mementos on the market on a regular basis. They're still circulating. People are still selling them and buying them, collecting them. Pendants and ribbons and buttons and pins, hats and scarves, other clothing. There are definitely the photos. Artwork that was created for. There's many books that were put out by organizations commemorating the day that their group attended. Taking the opportunity to tell the history of their group, of their ethnic community. Telling the history of how they came to the Pacific Northwest. What their important cultural features are. Many of them are actually written in those languages. They're not even written in English. This took a lot of planning. People were way invest in this. I think that they were very proud because it was a success.

Annabelle: I know you were talking about how, I heard that you were saying that there was some connections to Asia. What were some ways that you believe that the fair connected to Asia? And what were some influences that it had?

Jenner: There were Native populations both from the United States or from the region, from the Coast Salish as well as from Alaska as well as from the Philippines and from Hawai'i who were represented in living exhibitions. You've probably seen examples of this or photos of this. And this was actually one of those legacies of the world's fairs that is really uncomfortable for us to think about today. Because we view Native and Indigenous cultures in a different way today than they did a hundred years ago. Fair goers . . . well there were two different kinds of groups I think who came. Some came with full understanding that they were performing cultural dances and performing cultural traditions for a public. They did this professionally and traveled doing this. Whether they did this only because it was their only way to survive and make money, I don't know. I'm sure that had to do with a lot of the decisions. It was a curiosity for settlers and for new populations in the Pacific Northwest to learn about the Indigenous cultures, but not necessarily in a supportive way. This would be more in a paternal way. That this is an antiquated or a culture that doesn't exist anymore, and it was very "exotic". So these groups were in these living exhibits and people came and watched them live their lives basically. We know for a fact that they were not paid a lot of money to do this, and there was cruel treatment, inhumane, and they were treated shamefully. But it was a very visible part of the AYP and very fascinating to visitors. It wasn't just the AYP who would have exhibits like this. It was a common thing at that time. I think it brought some awareness of these cultures to people, but maybe not in the most constructive way.

Annabelle: That's unfortunate that it wasn't always supporting Native populations.
[pause] But overall, I just want to ask, is there anything that we didn't ask that you'd like to share about the fair? Any important details or things that you haven't talked about yet?

Jenner: I think one of the things that I kind of wanted to talk about is the fact that I was surprised that we didn't have more records than we do about the fair. One would imagine that a fair that was so well managed and that took place on a campus where we still exist today that it would be a no brainer that all of the correspondence, all of the records, all of the financial information, all of the photos, all the fair drawings and plans, etc. would all be deposited in a repository so that people could access them going forward. But in their flurry of running a fair, then dismantling it, and moving on with their lives, and probably having lots of other business ventures at the same time, they didn't take time to actually make sure that the record, the entire record was preserved in a repository, in an archive or in a museum. So, curators, and archivists, and librarians, and historians have had to for the past 110 years pull together collections as they could, and pull together records where they could find them in order to tell the story. It surprised me as an archivist when I made that discovery.

Annabelle: Yeah, that interesting that it wasn't better documented, considering it was a big deal and obviously, as you talked about, I know UW was very much influenced and the building of the UW campus was very much influenced by this fair.

But, that's all the questions we had for you so I just want to say thank you so much for talking to us and answering our questions.

Jenner: Thank you Annabelle. It was enjoyable, I appreciated it.

Annabelle: Yeah! I'm so glad I got to hear more about it. It was really interesting to hear your perspective on different things. And yeah, thank you!

Jenner: Ok, you're welcome. Thank you!

[ending theme music plays – sweeping piano, flute, clarinet]

Julia: A special thanks to Anne Jenner for her interview. Audio editing was done by Vance and the transcript was made by Julia. Annabelle produced the interview. We couldn't have done it without Emily!