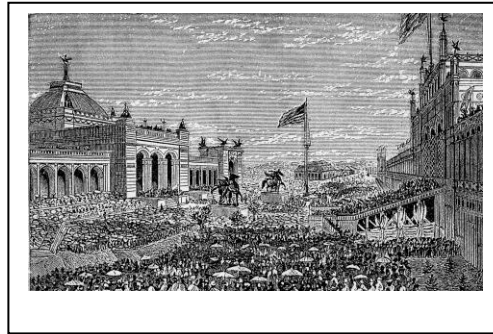


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Centennial International Exhibition of 1876

The **Centennial International Exhibition** of 1876, the first official [World's Fair](#) to be held in the United States, was held in [Philadelphia](#), [Pennsylvania](#), from May 10 to November 10, 1876, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the [Declaration of Independence](#) in Philadelphia. Officially named the **International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures, and Products of the Soil and Mine**, it was held in [Fairmount Park](#) along the [Schuylkill River](#) on fairgrounds designed by [Herman J. Schwarzmann](#). Nearly 10 million visitors attended the exposition, and 37 countries participated in it.



The idea of the Centennial Exposition is credited to **John L. Campbell**, a professor of mathematics, [natural philosophy](#), and astronomy at [Wabash College](#), [Crawfordsville, Indiana](#).^[1] In December 1866, Campbell suggested to [Philadelphia](#) Mayor [Morton McMichael](#) that the [United States Centennial](#) be celebrated with an exposition in Philadelphia.

Herman J. Schwarzmann, an engineer for the Fairmount Park Commission, was appointed the main designer of the exposition. In 1869 Schwarzmann had begun working for the Fairmount Park Commission, which administered the site of the 1876 Centennial Exposition. It is one of the great urban parks of America, its importance in landscape history surpassed only by Central Park. Schwarzmann was the chief architect for the Centennial Exposition, designing Memorial Hall, Horticultural Hall, other small buildings, and the landscaping around them. His work for the Centennial Exposition was informed by the [Vienna International Exposition in 1873](#), which Schwarzmann visited. The Vienna International Exposition in 1873 was marred by disastrous logistic planning and was taken as a cautionary example.

Structures. More than 200 buildings were constructed within the Exposition's grounds, which were surrounded by a fence nearly three miles long.^[17] There were five main buildings in the exposition. They were the Main Exhibition Building, Memorial Hall, Machinery Hall, Agricultural Hall, and Horticultural Hall. Apart from these buildings, there were separate buildings for state, federal, foreign, corporate, and public comfort buildings. This strategy of numerous buildings in one exposition set it apart from the previous fairs.

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