

Rainy-Daisy and the Spirit of the Pan-Am.

Robert M. Gurn

Buffalo's 1901 Pan-American Exposition was an event known for many accomplishments and a world-shaking assassination. The Pan-Am was the world's premier display of 19th Century science and technology. Visitors got to see an impressive list of firsts and milestones of invention. Pictures sent by telegraph, incubator babies, night time electric illumination, movies made at night, and the biggest, best of everything from farm machinery to railroad cars were all on display. Even the presidential assassination produced some firsts. Edison movie cameras were on sight and filmed "The Mob Outside The Temple Of Music At The Pan-American Exposition."

Spirit of Niagara by Permission of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.



Of all of the images and icons to survive, perhaps the most endearing is Evelyn Rumsey Cary's "Spirit of Niagara." Mrs. Cary, a society woman and artist, was on the Women's Board of Managers of the Pan-Am and in charge of the Fine Arts Committee. She created the official Pan-Am poster as both an emblem and an advertisement. *The New York World*, called it "the sweetest picture poem of the great waterfall that has ever

been produced." It was sent all over the world. By Feb 5th 1901 over 1,000,000 posters in ten colors and gold had been distributed and a second printing of 500,000 had been ordered. Schools, municipalities, art galleries and individuals received copies in the months before the Pan-Am, and everyone instantly fell in love with the image. Everyone, that is, except for the Superintendent of Schools in Providence, Rhode Island.

Superintendent Tarbell of the Providence schools decided that the image was unsuitable for children. The image of a mist-clad female was just too much for the sensibilities of Providence. The matter would have rested there except for the *Providence Sunday Journal* and Providence's Mayor Granger. The mayor loved the image and the *Journal* loved the controversy.

On February 2nd, a *Journal* reporter placed tongue firmly in cheek and stated that "the trouble seemed to be the neglect, the malicious neglect, of Mrs. Cary to cover Miss Niagara with three buckle overshoes and an automobile coat." In addition, the *Boston Post*, picked up the gauntlet, claiming that Boston's famous guardians of morals "have not yet found occasion to blush." As soon as the Buffalo papers reprinted the articles, Pan-Am artist, Chris Muegel, took up the challenge and created Rainy Daisy. The replacement image of a crone in umbrella and auto coat delighted the press. *The New York World*, in particular, was overjoyed that now the "Spirit of Niagara" was sufficiently protected from the spray of the Falls."

On February 27 Mayor Granger of Providence came to Buffalo. He met with Mayor Diehl and told him that he was ashamed of the incident. "I hesitated about visiting Buffalo," he said. Mayor Diehl then unfolded a copy of Muegel's drawing in the *Buffalo Courier* and they both burst out laughing.

In an ironic twist, several months after the incident, Buffalo experienced an extremely wet summer. Rainy days almost melted the plaster

THE RAINY-DAISY SPIRIT TO PLEASE RHODE ISLAND



Proposed by Buffalo to Counteract Shock Caused by Other Spirit.

BUFFALO, March 5. — Mrs. Charles Cary, of this city, designed the poster "Spirit of Niagara," which was sent out as one of the advertisements of the approaching Pan-American Exposition. It received many notices of approval for its artistic conception and execution until it reached Providence R.I., where it shocked the public school board, which believed that the figure of the spirit was not sufficiently protected from the spray of the falls. Buffalo is determined to satisfy the country in this matter. If necessary a poster will be made to suit the taste of every State and Territory. Inasmuch as Rhode Island is the first to object it should be the first to be satisfied. Therefore the accompanying cut will show what Buffalo proposes to offer as a poster to the Rhode Island educators. If necessary rubber boots will be added to the spirit.

Printed in the *New York World*
March 5, 1901

facades of the exposition. Umbrellas and boots were often seen on the grounds of the expo.

For a quick Internet tour of the Pan-Am point your browser at the following:

- <http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/centennial/expos.html#Pan-American>
- <http://freenet.buffalo.edu/library/local/pan-am.html>
- <http://intotem.buffnet.net/bhw/panamex>
- <http://rs6.loc.gov/papr/mckhome.html> (Access to motion pictures of the Pan-Am)

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Rainy Daisy courtesy Rainy Daisy University Microfilms Inc.