

# Generations of Missouri



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## 1904 World's Fair

### Chapter Four

Mary, age 30 & Ruth, age 12 | 1904

Mary and her daughter stepped off the streetcar and entered their tall Victorian home. Sweaty, exhausted, but exhilarated by their day, they collapsed on the chaise lounge in the parlor.

"Papa! We're home!" Ruth, Mary's 12-year-old daughter, called.

"Are those my two world explorers? And how was the Fair?" asked Mary's husband, Gerard, as he entered the parlor.

Mary and Ruth had spent the entire day exploring the most exciting event ever to come to St. Louis: the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also called the 1904 World's Fair!

"Oh, Papa!" Ruth gushed. "It was just the most wonderful day! We saw everything! We went to the Palace of Fine Arts, played games, and even ate ice cream cones!"

Gerard laughed, "You ate what?!"

"Ruth," Mary instructed. "It's late! Go upstairs and wash up. We'll be up in a few minutes, and you can tell your father more."

"All right," said Ruth. "But first, can I show him what we bought? Please, Mama?"

Mary opened her handbag, and gently took paper-wrapped glasses out handing them to Ruth. Ruth carefully unwrapped three matching glass mugs. The mugs were sparkling ruby glass with a

gold inscription "World's Fair 1904."

"We couldn't resist!"

"Lovely, Ruth," Gerard said. "Now go wash up as your mother told you."

It had been a memorable day. Mary and Ruth had looked forward to the opening of the World's Fair all through the winter. Now the Fair was open to St. Louisans and travelers from all over the world. Mary and Ruth had taken the trolley to the festivities in Forest Park. Mary spent the day marveling at the cutting-edge artifacts from science, art, and industry from all over the world. It was an exciting time to be alive.

"I'm ready, Mama!" Ruth called.

Mary and Gerard wound their way up the staircase to Ruth's room. "Well," he said. "What was the most amazing thing you saw today?"

"The Observation Wheel!" Ruth squealed. "Mama and I rode it together; we were 265 feet high! And I saw a horse, an elephant, and sculptures and paintings from all around the world."

"That sounds like it was something!" Gerard admitted. "What else?"

"There were people there," she told him. "Indians, small people, giant people, and beautiful geisha women from Japan. They were sort of on display, I guess," she told him. "But they were people."

Mary had felt oddly unsettled, watching the crowds gawk at these people.

"Oh Papa," Ruth continued. "Everything was wonderful!"

"All right, dear," she told her daughter. "Off to bed! Save some surprises for when father attends the Fair!"

Mary dimmed the light and looked fondly at Ruth.

After seeing the world, right here in Missouri, she couldn't help but be excited about the future and her daughter's place in it.

## NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

**Check in your local newspaper for fairs in your area. What kinds of exhibits and rides are there?**

