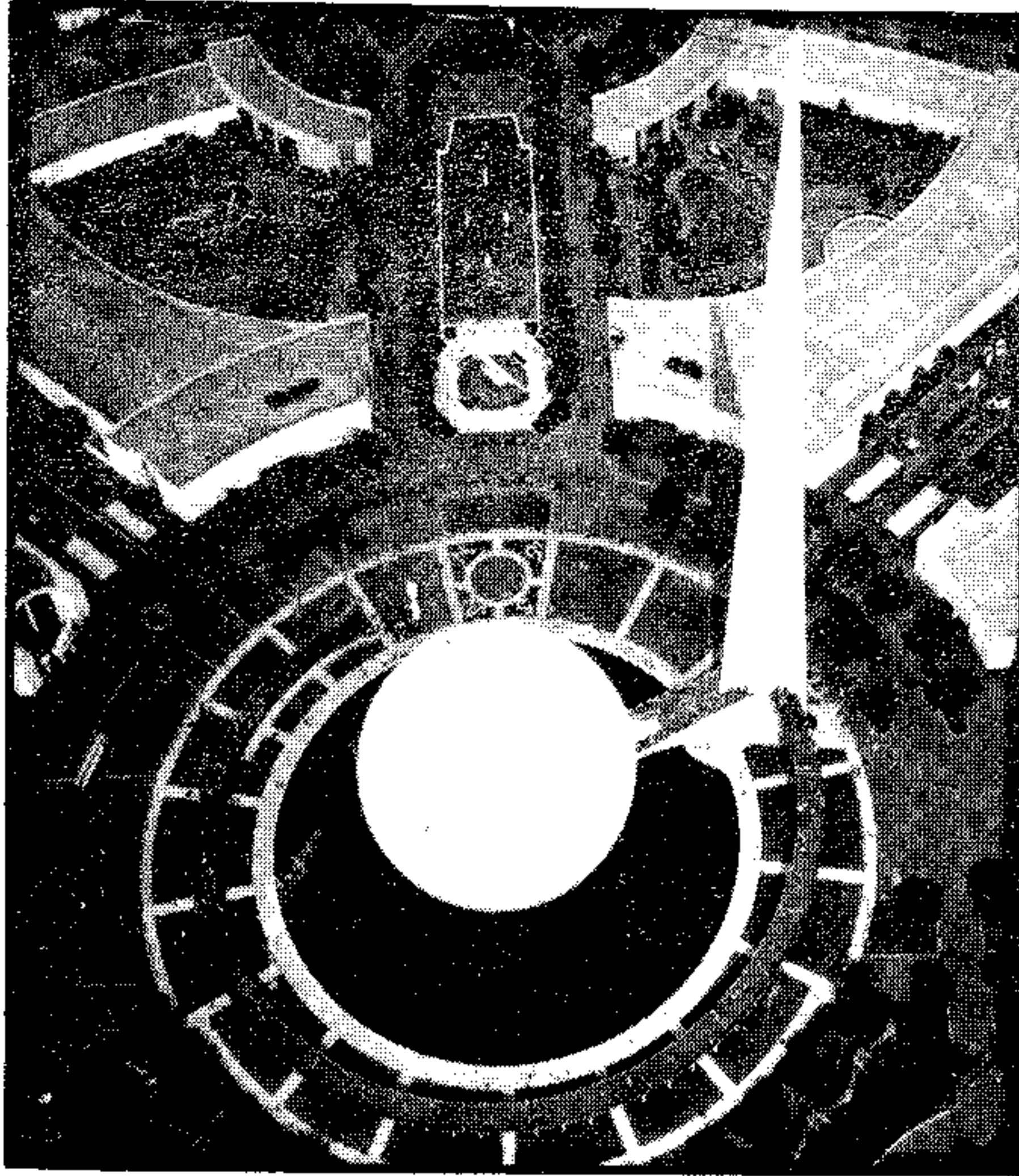


*"Give unto them, beauty for ashes"*  
—Isaiah



The Trylon and Perisphere stood as the Theme symbols of the 1939 New York World's Fair.

## Section 2.2

### From Ashes to Glory - The New York Fairs

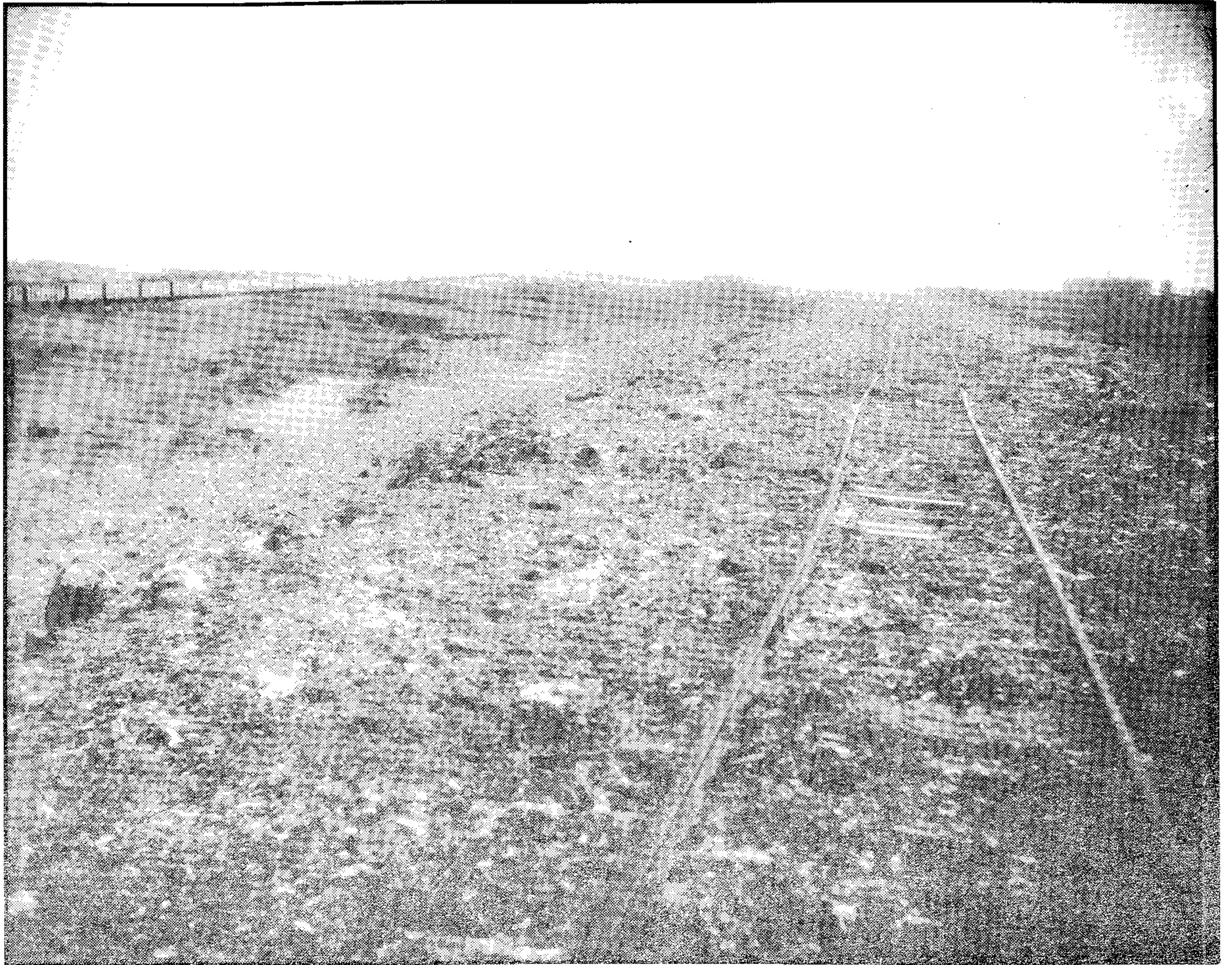
*The World of Tomorrow.* A sleek, streamlined vision of the future. The fantastic fair that signaled the end of an era and the dawn of a new day. Emerging from the Great Depression, the 1939 New York World's Fair seemed to symbolize the hopes and dreams of a generation that had nowhere to go but up.

Like a giant phoenix, it rose from the ashes. Barely an idea in 1935, a miracle of planning and work launched it. The Flushing River controlled. Millions of yards of swamps and marshes filled. Two lakes built. The tides mastered. Roads, gradings, thousands of trees planted. By early 1937 over 1,200 acres were ready for the fair, and for the park it would become.

An army of planners, dreamers, builders, politicians and diplomats labored to make it a reality. This was the message of the Fair itself. 'Look at what we know. At what we can build. At what we can produce. Then, get together and do it.'

Towering over the fair was the structure that symbolized its theme. The Trylon, a pointed tower reaching over 600 feet into the sky, taller than the Washington Monument; and the Perisphere, a huge globe 180 feet in diameter, its interior larger than Radio City Music Hall. The Perisphere rested on columns hidden by mirrors and fountains. At night bathed by colored floodlights it resembled a giant planet floating in space; Mankind's home Earth, the gaze and aspirations of its people directed upward to a brighter and more harmonious future.





The arid, bleak terrain of Flushing Meadows before the fair, as the 1,200 acre site was the domain of the Brooklyn Ash Removal Company.



The fair was conceived at a time when America was a nation one-third of whose citizens were still "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished," and a world from which the hope of true peace seemed to have passed forever. The Flushing Meadow site where the Fair would later take place was symbolic of the Great Depression; a giant Dust Bowl, a desert.

For three decades, the Brooklyn Ash Removal Company, under the domain of a resourceful political scavenger named Fishhooks McCarthy, dumped tons of refuse and garbage across 1,200 acres of the meadow. Piling higher and higher, the grounds became an arid, hellish place-the biggest, ugliest, eyesore in the city's history. Rats, vermine, disease-breeding germs, constant fires and malodorous fumes prevented the surrounding land from being inhabited.

Higher and higher the mountains became, until one, labeled Mount Corona after the adjoining community, rose over 90 feet tall. In his classic novel, **The Great Gatsby**, author F. Scott Fitzgerald used these depressing grounds as a symbol-a dividing line between the wealthy of Long Island and the urban masses of New York City. At that time, the only way to cross from Long Island to Manhattan was by a poorly-planked roadway that crept through the very center of this monstrous dump. A good deal of the action of the book takes place in the center of this site, and Fitzgerald's description of the place immortalized this urban horror: "About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a desolate area of land. This a valley of ashes-a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a

ghastly creak, and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight." Fitzgerald continues..." ..above the gray land are the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it,... the eyes are dimmed a little by many paintless days under the sun and rain, and brood on over the solemn dumping ground. The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and, when the drawbridge is up to let barges through the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour." (The Great Gatsby, 1925, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York).



F. Scott Fitzgerald immortalized the huge dumps in his novel "The Great Gatsby." He called it "the valley of ashes."



The place was not always like that, however. When the original Dutch settlers explored the North Shore of Long Island in the 1600's, they came upon an area of gently rolling hills and meandering streams. They named the town Flushing, after a Holland town which looked very similar. (The Dutch word for Flushing literally means 'Flowing Water.') The Dutch purchased the land from the Mattinocock Indians for an axe for every fifty acres-with the provision that the Indians retained perpetual rights to the Meadows, a place where they gathered their wampum. The area was used for the harvesting of crops of salt hay, fish, crabs, oysters, clams, and wild waterfowl.

Freedom had always pervaded the area. John Bowne, the Quaker, came to Flushing in 1651 and his home was used for the free practice of religion, violating an edict of Governor Peter Stuyvesant-who Bowne deported to Amsterdam. In the end Bowne won the right to freely practice religious beliefs from the Amsterdam authorities, and the Flushing Remonstrance remains an early Declaration of Independence-a cornerstone for religious freedom in the Americas.

As early as 1670 Daniel Denton, on returning to London, published descriptions of the natural beauty of the vicinity. About 1725 Robert and William Prince, father and son, established the first nursery on this continent in Flushing. The Linnaean Botanical Gardens were visited by Kings and Princes and described all over the world. Flushing became famous for her nurseries and natural beauty and it was in Flushing that Joyce Kilmer found inspiration for "Trees."

Many great homesteads grew around the meadow along the Flushing River. A signer of the Declaration of Independence, Francis Lewis, came from the area as did Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner." During the Revolution, the British occupied Flushing and Newtown, and the 37th British Regiment was stationed along the shores of Flushing Bay, with headquarters in the Lent Farmhouse as a protection against raids. The farmhouse stood approximately where the World's Fair Marina is today.

On one of his visits to Flushing, George Washington crossed through the meadow on the Flushing River. It was October 10,



The village of Flushing was founded by the Dutch and the town was the birthplace of Religious Freedom in America as well as the site of the first Horticultural Nurseries in the New World. Known for its natural beauty, the town was visited by President Washington in 1789. (Mural shown above is on display at the central Flushing Post Office.)

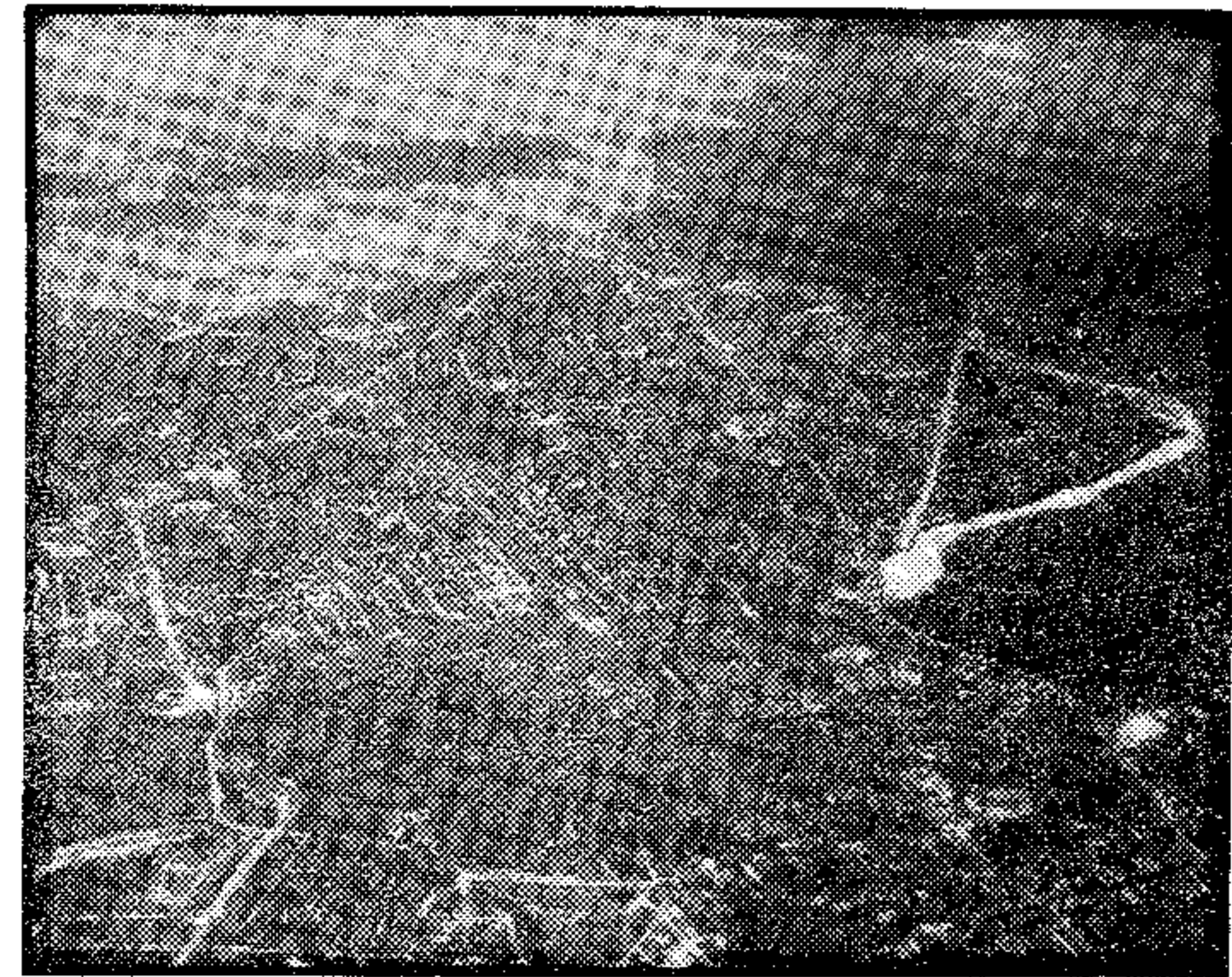


1789, and President Washington had come looking for a site for the future capital of the United States. According to his diary, he arrived on the same barge which had been built for his inauguration six months earlier. He was accompanied by Vice President John Adams and George Clinton, Governor of New York State. The capital-site victory went to the Potomac, however.

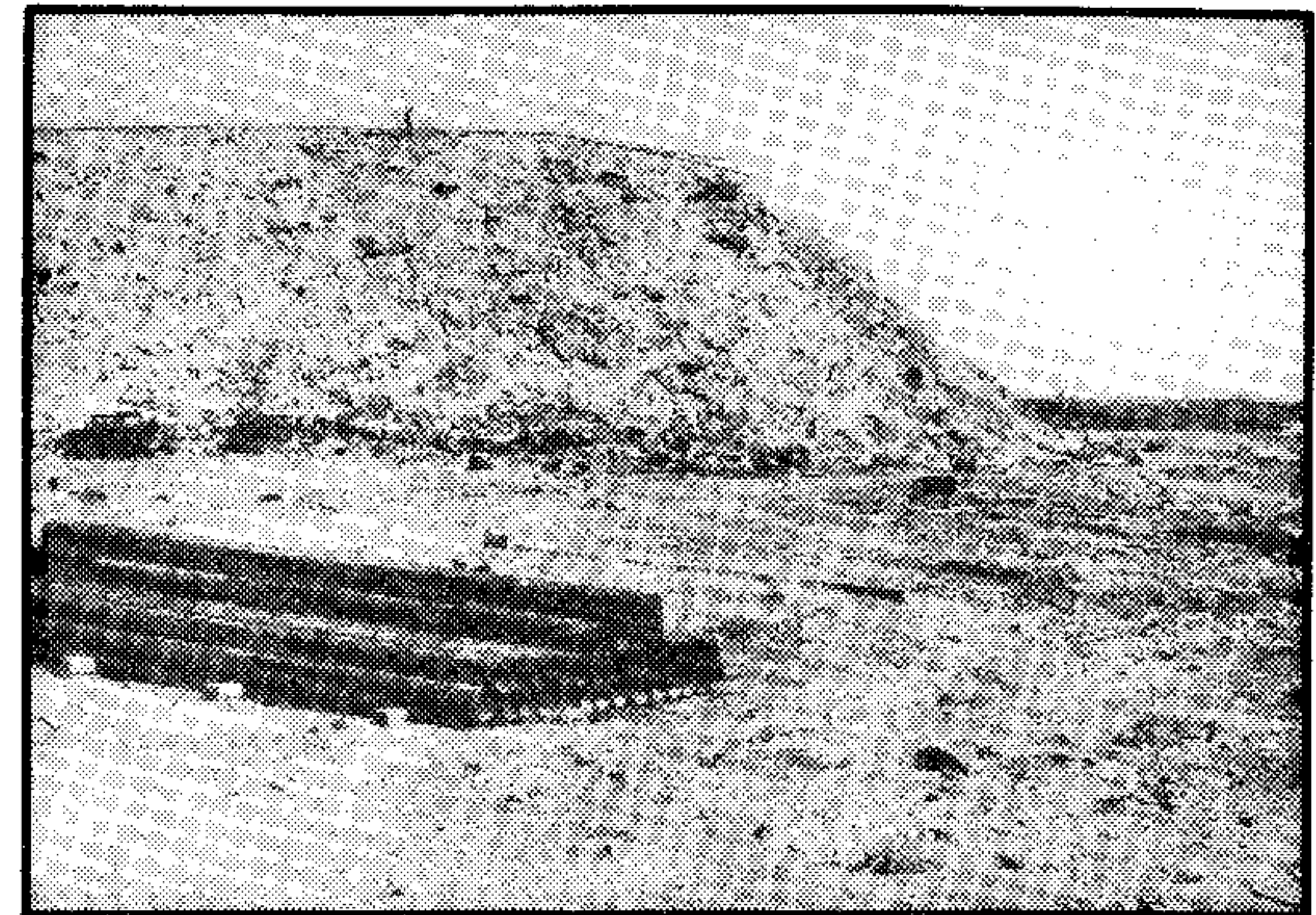
The dawn of the 20th Century saw the great Meadow as an unspoiled part of the Long Island landscape—a tidal marsh covered with salt hay through which a stream flowed into an unpolluted bay, its waters as salty as the Long Island Sound at high tide and brackish at the ebb. There was still plenty of boating and safe swimming in and around the Meadow.

Not far from the virgin and tranquil meadow, however, civilization and the industrial age had emerged long before. By the early 1900's, Brooklyn had grown and expanded with new neighborhoods of immigrants; no longer a city unto itself, it became a suburb of Manhattan, and 'progress' soon reached into the communities of the Borough of Queens, erasing some of the last traces of colonial heritage in Newtown, Maspeth and Flushing. But new communities emerged, in Corona, Elmhurst, Woodside and others, with a new beginning for a new group of Americans.

The land around the Meadow was sub-divided. Farms and country residences rapidly disappeared. 'Progress' had to deposit its wastes someplace, and Nature would have to yield. Within a few years, the Meadow had become this someplace. A combination of contractors, politicians and the Long Island Railroad conceived the idea of filling up the meadow by dumping on it the ashes and refuse of most of the Borough of Brooklyn.



The pre-fair Flushing Meadow site as viewed from the air in 1936 with Manhattan in the background.



A ninety-foot high mountain of garbage in the Corona Dumps (1935).





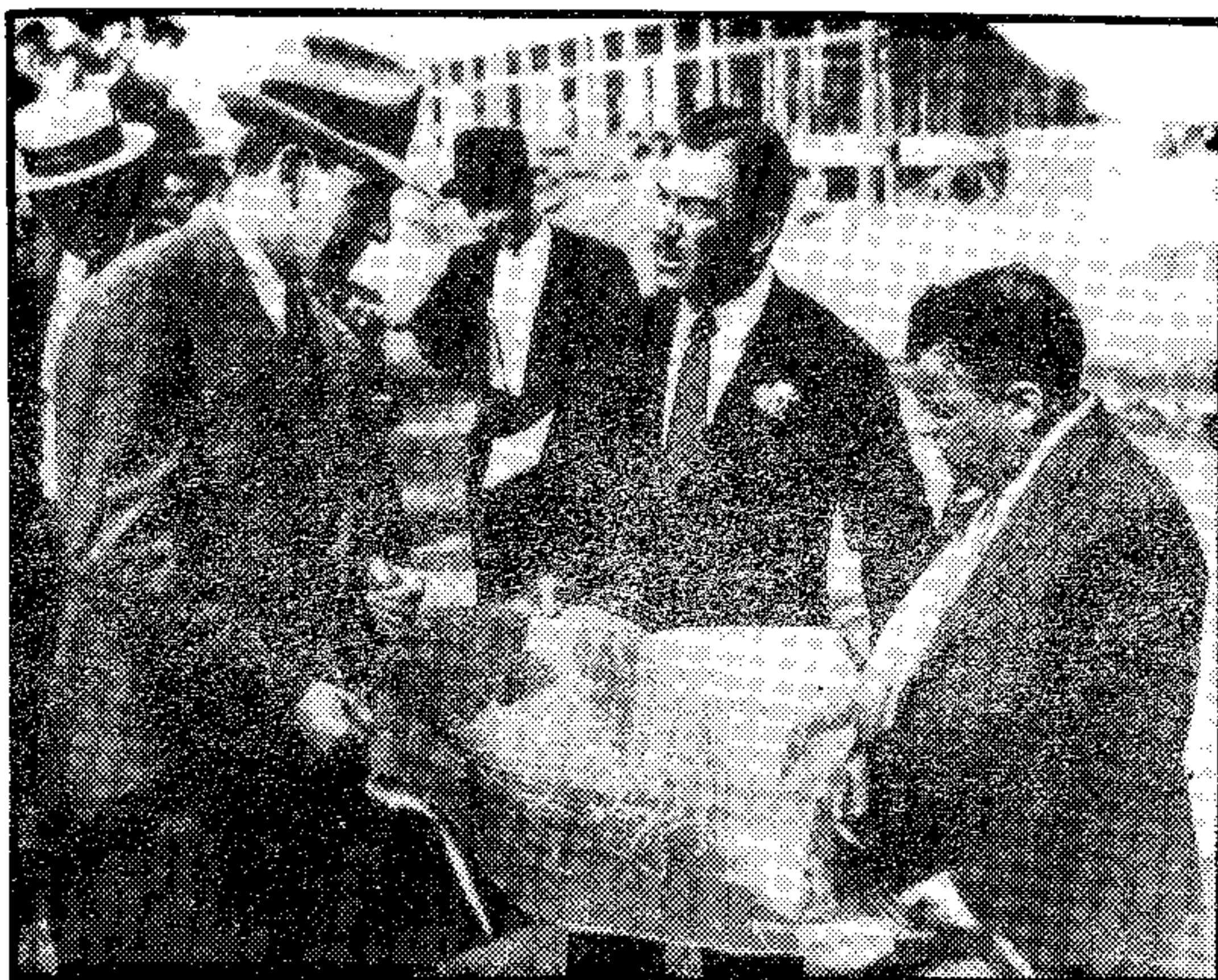
World's Fair President Grover Whalen and Mayor Fiorello La Guardia use George Washington's shovel to officially break ground for the New York World's Fair in June, 1936. Whalen had been a New York Police Commissioner and as the city's official greeter, he invented the famous ticker-tape parade.

The meadow grew to the "valley of ashes" and over the years all attempts at reclamation were met with failure. By the 1930's, however, a new spirit was emerging in the broken town with the arrival of the administrations of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Washington, and the City Hall leadership of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. The Mayor's outspoken and dynamic Parks Commissioner was Robert Moses, the man who had turned a wind-swept barren reef on the Atlantic Ocean into the prize public beach of the World — Jones Beach.

Moses had tried repeatedly to eliminate the dumps and create a great city park on the site; it was located at the very geographic and population center of the city, and it was twice the size of Central Park. But there was no money in sight for such a project and there seemed to be many more pressing problems in those Hard Times.

A Belgian engineer named Joseph Shagden conceived the idea of a World's Fair for New York over drinks in a Kew Gardens, Queens tavern in 1935. He thought it could help the city's economy and provide much-needed jobs just as the recent 1933-34 Century of Progress fair had for the city of Chicago. When the idea reached Moses he immediately envisioned the Fair as a way to eliminate the great eyesore forever and create a lasting legacy of open greenery for New York. Mayor La Guardia, sensing that the Fair could become a boost to the city's morale and prestige, endorsed the idea and in June of 1936, brave citizens tramped through the ugly dumps for the official groundbreaking ceremonies.





the three major figures in the 'ashes to glory' saga were Park Commissioner Robert Moses (left), Fair President Whalen and Mayor La Guardia. Here they are shown looking over plans for the reclamation of the meadow as the permanent N.Y. City Building rises in the background in 1937.



Mural painted on a Fair building during construction in 1938.

The fair's planners immediately grasped a vision of how this event could be a very real vehicle for social change. A Theme Committee of prominent urban planners, historians, sociologists, scientists and engineers conceived a plan for the fair that would be visionary in nature. Unlike most previous expositions which looked to the past or merely showed the marvels of contemporary technology, the 1939 planners viewed the fair as a chance to create a new order-to look to the future. They chose as their theme: "Building the World of Tomorrow with the Tools of Today."

Architect Wallace K. Harrison, who had designed the enormously successful urban environment at Rockefeller Center, and who would later design the United Nations complex and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, translated the fair's theme into the symbols of the Tylon and the Perisphere. This symbol, like an Icon of the Future, would serve not only as landmark, trademark and souvenir artifact, but as kind of symbol of the age in which the fair was looking towards.

Meanwhile, the years of ash and refuse were buried and became the sub-soil for a new environment of trees, lawns, and lagoons. In the greatest single reclamation ever undertaken until that time in American history, the Valley of Ashes was turned in three short years into the World of Tomorrow.

When the first visitors streamed through the Fair's gates on April 30, 1939, they saw a world transformed. This very real metamorphosis gave the entire fair a special significance. If this 'Miracle of a Meadow' could be accomplished in such a short period of time, against all of the odds of those difficult times, then there was indeed hope for the future. George Gershwin wrote the theme song for the fair; he called it "The Dawn of a New Day."





The New York World's Fair 1939 rose out of the ashes of the Corona Dumps. The theme center and N.Y. City building are at center with the fair's various zones radiating outward. On top is the Federal Building and International Area. At bottom is the Transportation Zone.



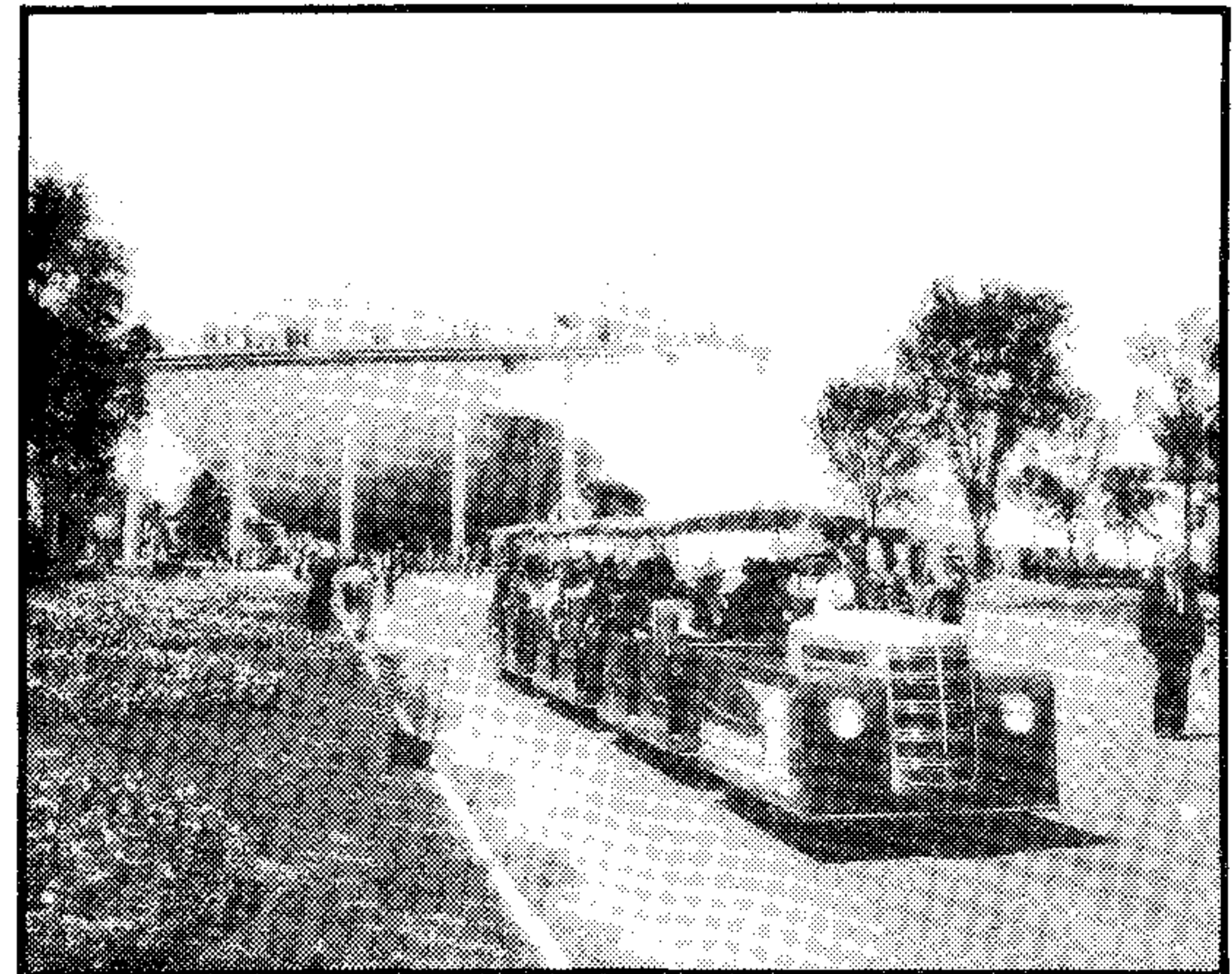
Television was not the only 'miracle' to be displayed for the first time at the fair. Nylon, Air-conditioning, Space Travel, Lucite, Cinerama and 3-D motion picture techniques, fluorescent lighting, pressure cookers, and color photography all got their start at the Fair.

Idealism and optimism beckoned and visitors approached the fair's ten gates with excitement and anticipation. The world needed to believe that tomorrow would be better and inside those gates it was given that assurance. Here, it was almost as if the Depression had never happened.

Here, all about one, was the embodiment of the American dream, 1939 model. Bold modern architecture, sometimes severe, sometimes garish, but always devoid of the traditional classical or Gothic decoration, and glowing with color-offering the first chance most of the visitors had ever had to see what modern architects might do if the economic condition of the country let them go in for large-scale construction. Gardens, fountains, waterfalls leaping off buildings; music resounding everywhere; at night, the splendor of superb lighting. Miracles of invention and of industrial efficiency to goggle at. A sense of festival. Here every man could briefly feel himself, if not a king, at least the citizen of a gay and friendly country, the beneficiary of spotless industrial engineering, privileged to idle along the lagoons, to watch the fireworks flower in orange and blue and green, to see the Trylon piercing the sky behind the young trees turned silver by the lights. Here General Motors and Remington Rand sat cheek by jowl with the WPA, Soviet Russia presented her delights to people who would presently compare them with Eastman Kodak's delights; in this fantastic paradise there were visible no social classes, no civil feuds, no international hates, no hints of grimy days in dreary slums, no depression worries. Here was a dream of wealth, luxury, and lively beauty, with Coca-Cola at every corner and the horns of the busses jauntily playing "The Sidewalks of New York."

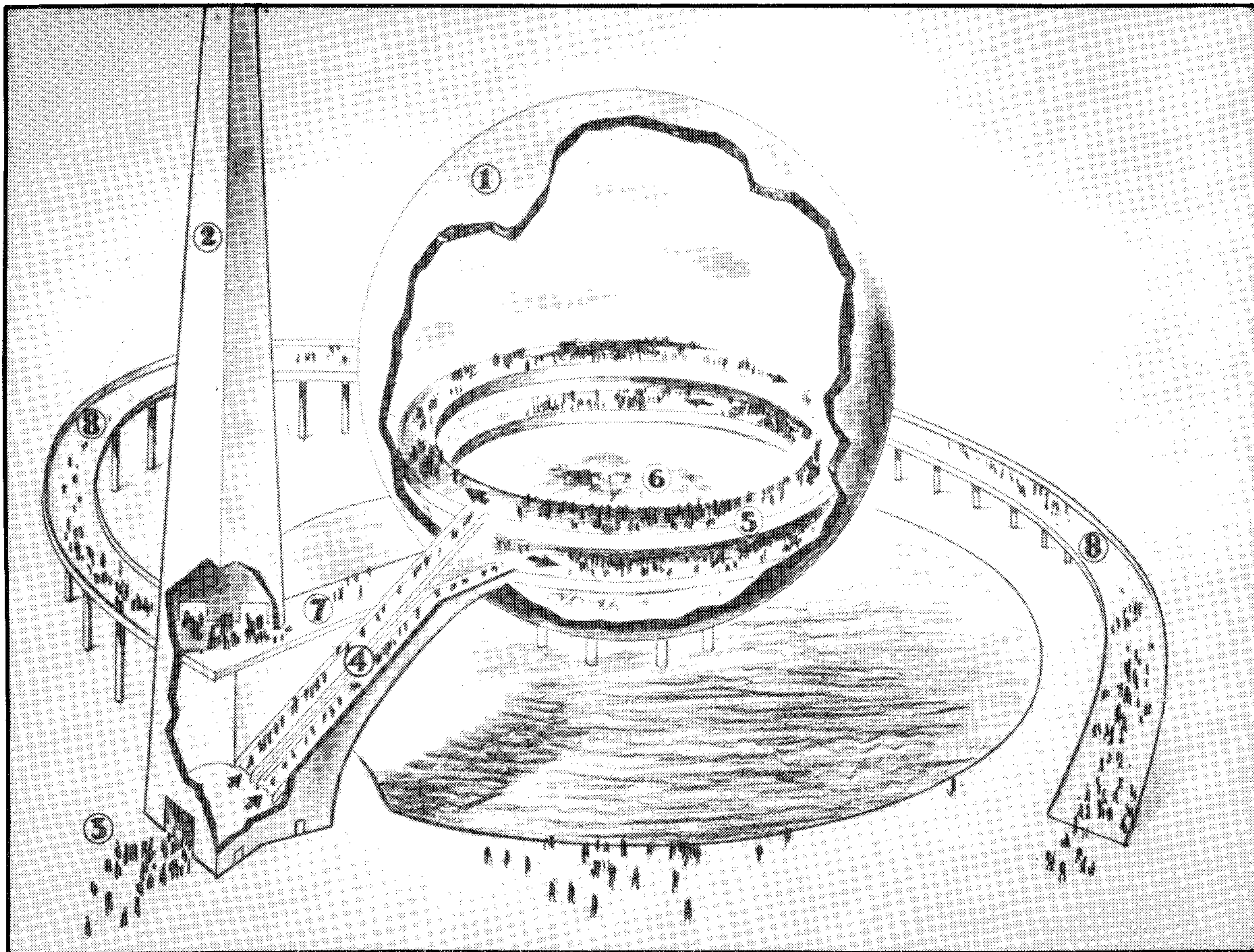


Crowds entering the Fairgrounds at the Main Subway entrance.



Tractor trains pass the Theme Center.





Cutaway shows the 1939 Theme Center (1) Perisphere, (2) Trylon, (3) entrance, (4) escalator to Perisphere, (5) revolving platform for viewers, (6) model of Democracy, (7) exit, (8) Helicline, elevated walkway down to fairgrounds.



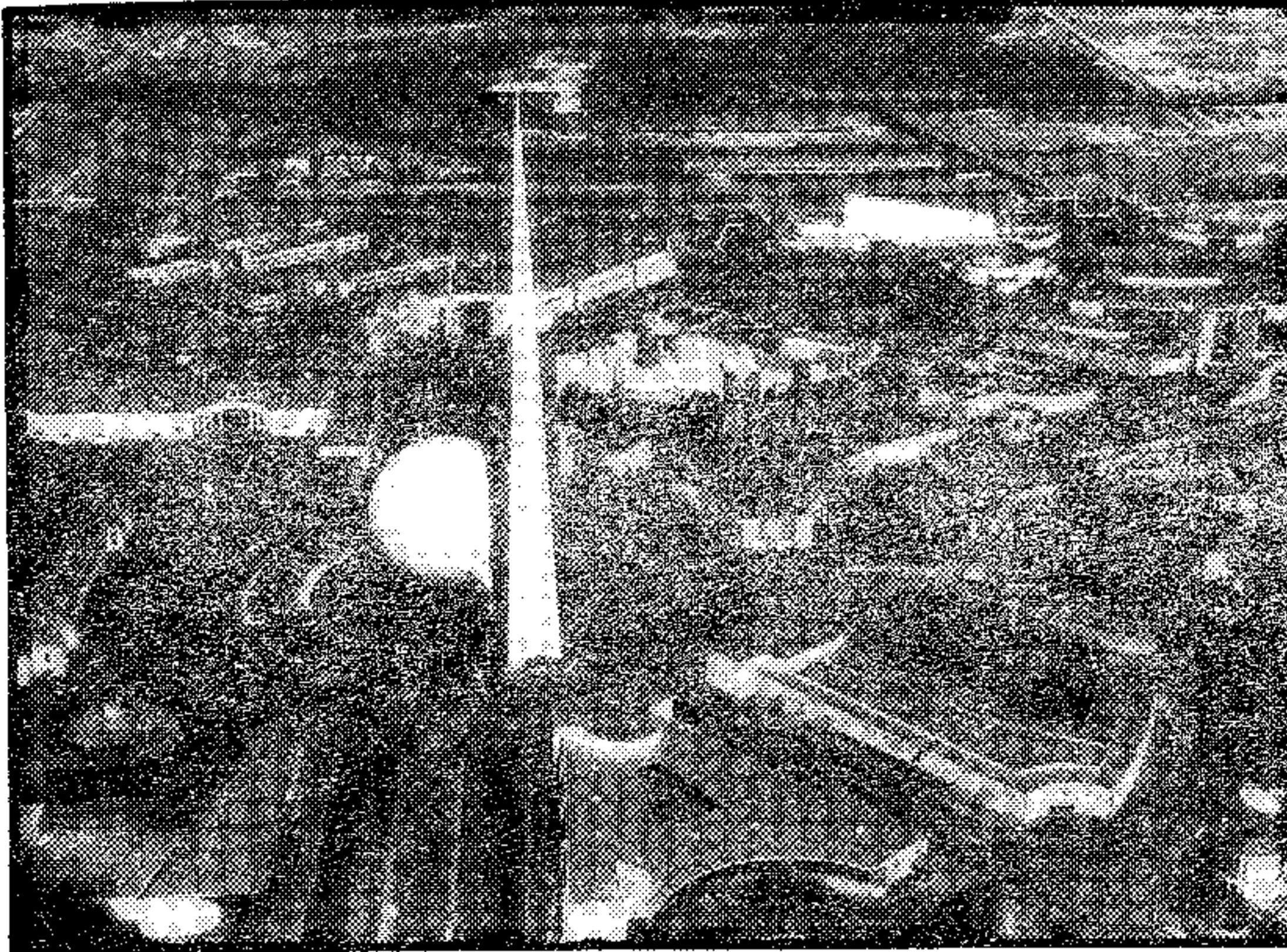


Exhibit zones radiate out from the Theme Center.

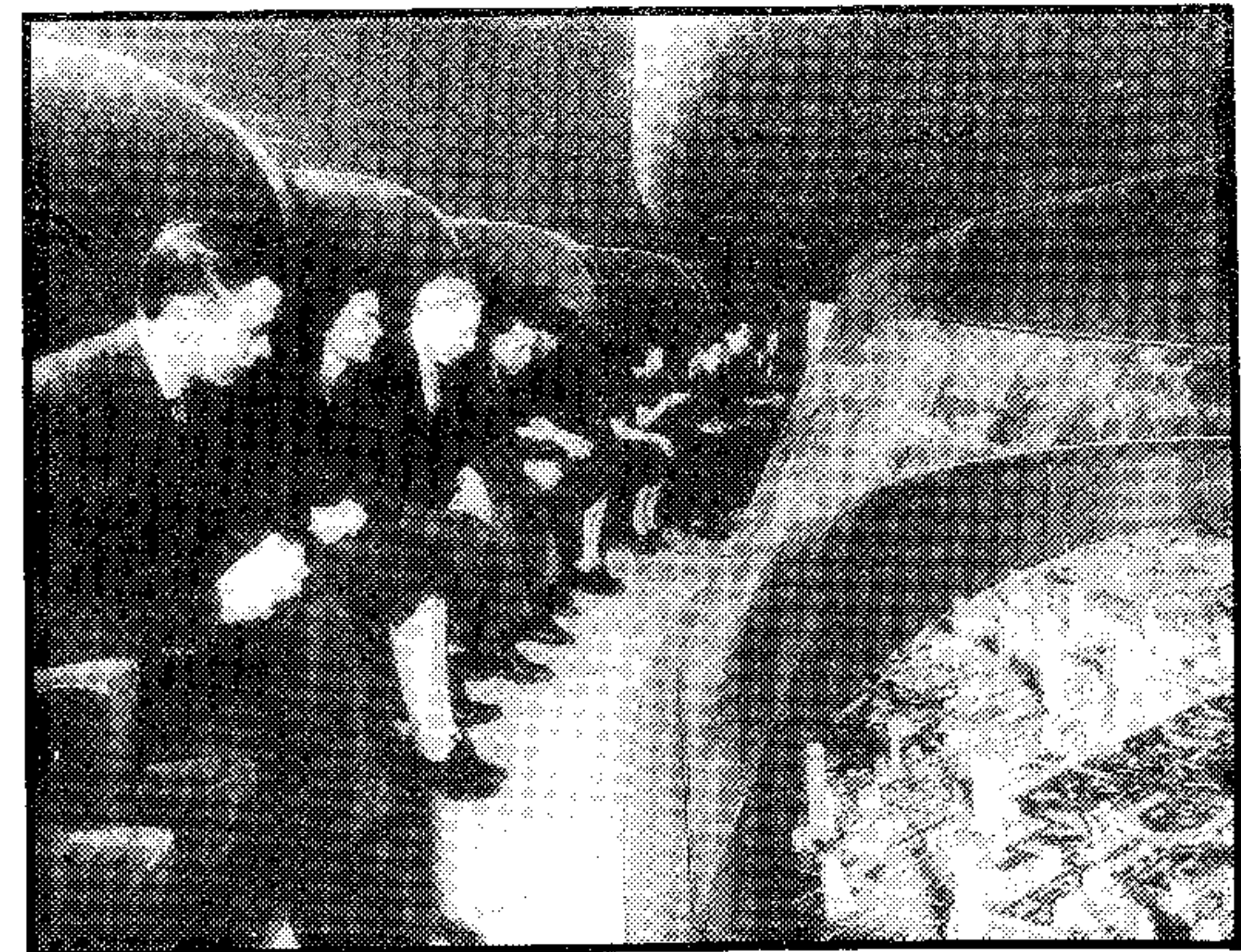
At the Theme Center, visitors were taken into the World of Tomorrow through the Trylon and Perisphere. Inside the giant globe was a stirring presentation, utilizing the most modern audio-visual techniques to portray the ideal city of the future—Democracity.

As visitors left the Perisphere, they viewed the fair from a huge elevated ramp called the Helicline. From that vantage point the entire Fair was laid out in all its splendor, and a visitor could see that the exposition itself was laid out very much like the model Democracity they had just seen inside.

Descending from the ramp, the visitor could travel throughout this carefully designed fairgrounds and visit any one of the attractions in the fair's seven zones—representing various different aspects of living—such as Food, Transportation, Community Interests, Amusements, Science, Health, International. Each of

these zones was planned with an overall design controlling the height, color and landscaping. This gave the entire fairgrounds a coordinated and pleasant environment. Colorful murals and great sculptures abounded everywhere, delighting the eye and providing unique employment for artists who would otherwise have been out of work.

General Motors presented the Futurama, a huge ride over a scale model showing roads, highways and lifestyles of America of 1960. The GM Futurama always had the longest lines. As visitors sat in comfortable moving chairs, they saw safe, efficient and clean cars speeding over seven-lane super highways toward the streamlined city of the future, where pedestrians were protected from traffic, and light, air and green spaces ensured happiness.



Visitors sit in moving sound-chairs as they view the America of 1960 in the General Motors Futurama.

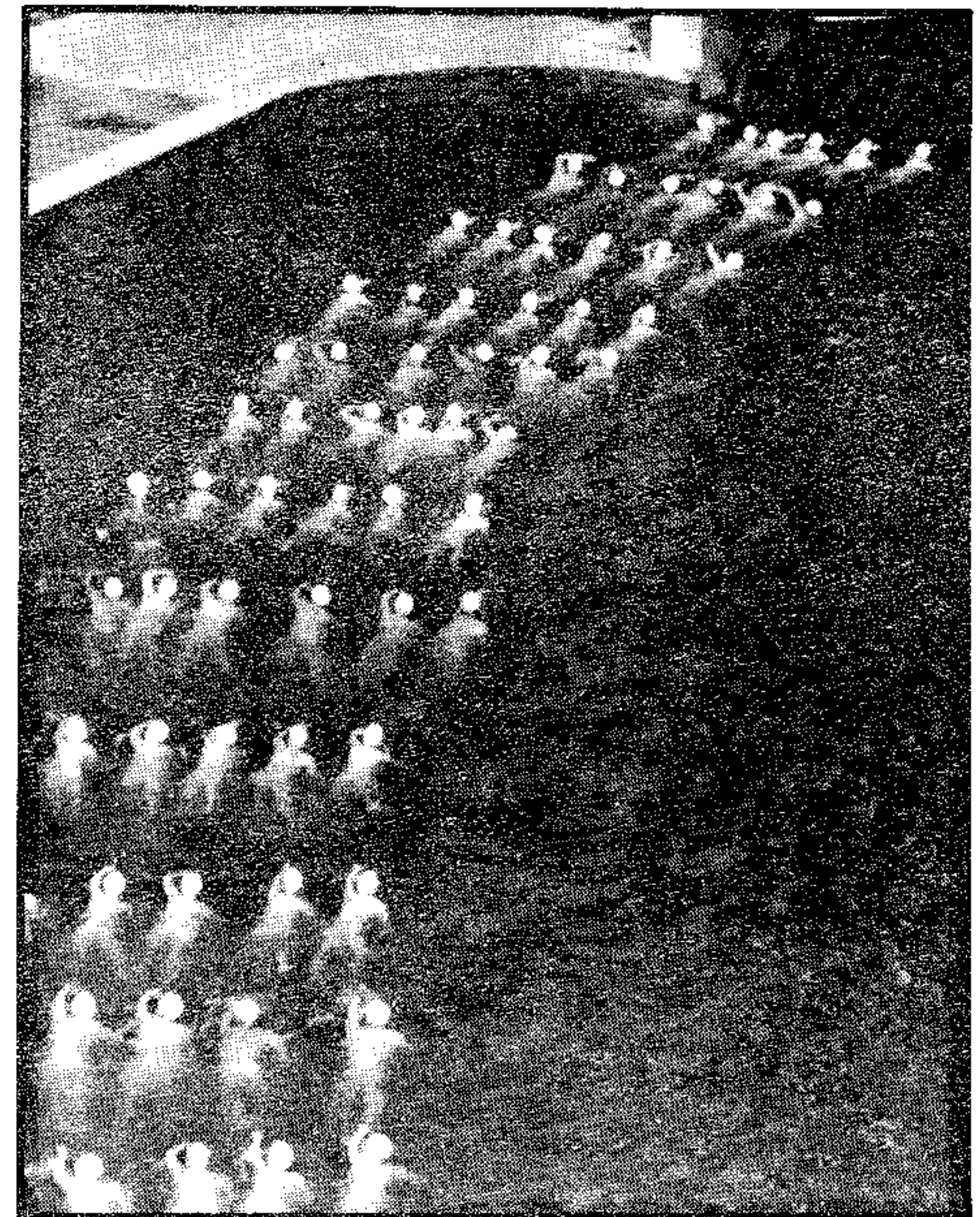




The Parachute Jump towers over the Amusement Zone of the 1939 Fair.

There was lots of down-to-earth enjoyment at the fair. Free long-distance telephone calls at AT & T in addition to the first machine that could imitate the human voice or duplicate the sounds of various musical instruments. There was the Locomotive of the Future at the Railroads pavilion. The Crosley Company showed a fuel efficient compact Car of the Future. But most people were fascinated with the flashy Fords and Chryslers that they could ride on the Road of Tomorrow. These exhibits were all free, like the samples of soup, hams, beer, baked beans, buttons and badges that were given out everywhere as souvenirs. There was always free concerts, shows and special events.

The amusement zone offered Gypsy Rose Lee, Abbott & Costello, Al Jolson, Cary Grant, George Jessell's Little Old New York and a surrealist exhibit by Salvador Dali. The tallest attraction was the dramatic Parachute Jump, a famous ride that later moved to Coney Island. But the biggest hit was Billy Rose's Aquacade. Everyone saved a quarter to see Johnny Weismuller, Buster Crabbe and Eleanor Holm in the splashy, colorful "Bugsby Berlely"-like' spectacle on Meadow Lake, and to view the celebrities that would always drop in, such as Charlie Chaplin or Bob Hope. The Amusement Zone had something for everyone. Mike Todd, animal shows, thrill rides and plenty of girlie shows.



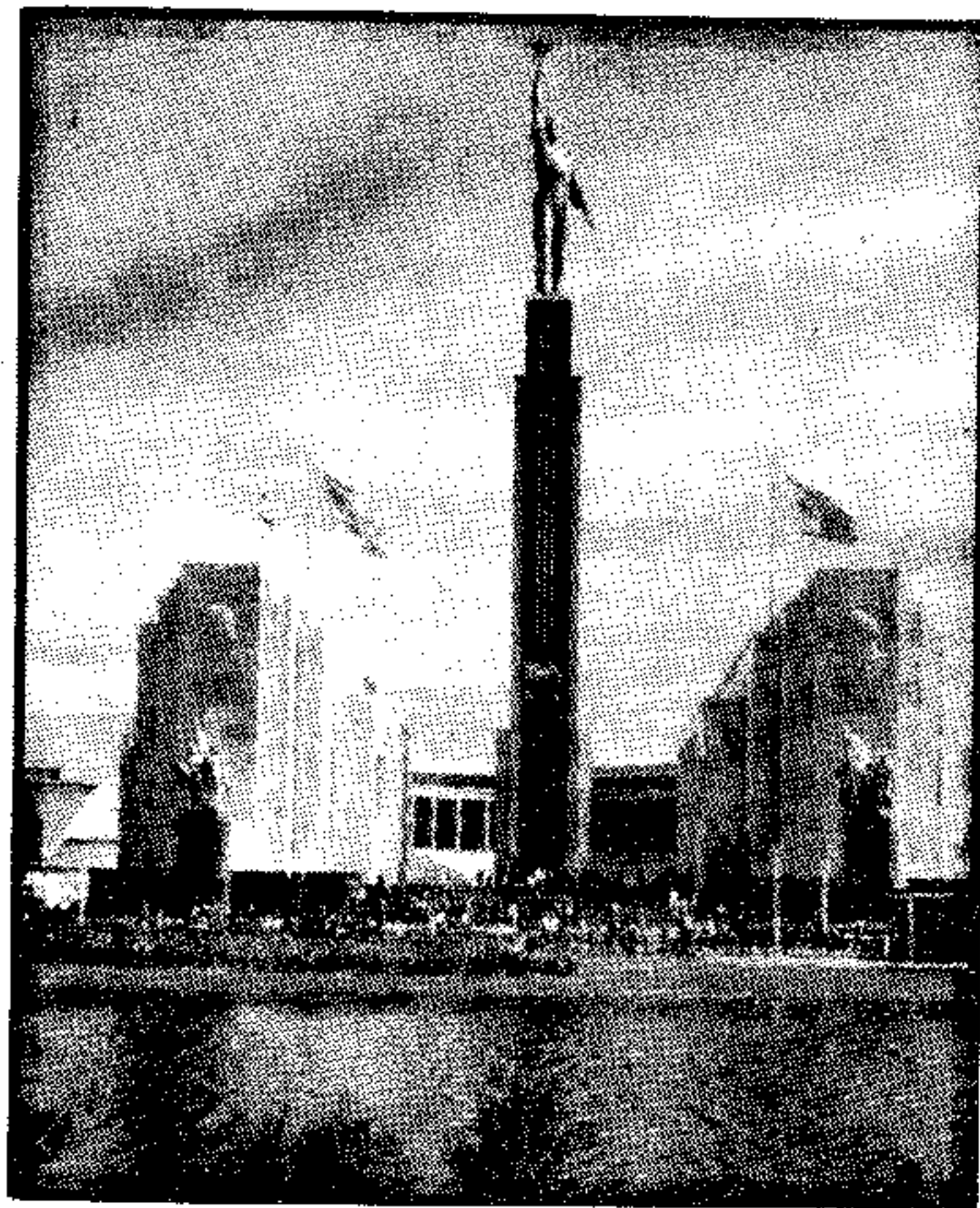
Billy Rose's Aquacade



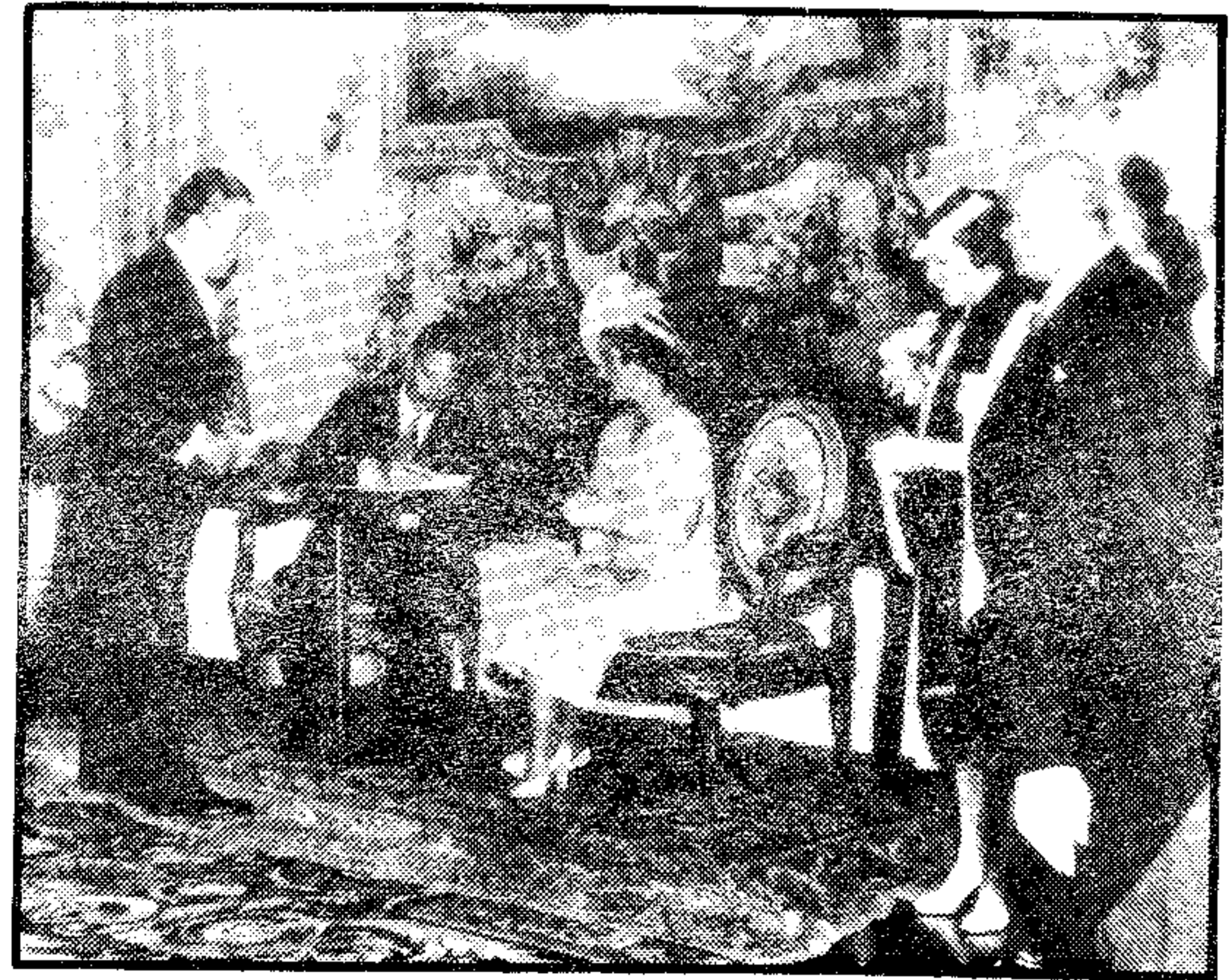
At night the fair burst into a phantasm of light and color and the Lagoon of Nations would present the world's largest and most spectacular show of music, light, fire, color, and fireworks. The Lagoon was situated at the end of the Fair's long central avenue called Constitution Mall. Around the oval shaped pond on Flushing River were situated the pavilions of some sixty foreign nations.

Side by side were the nations that in a few months would be consumed in mankind's greatest conflict. Great Britain exhibited the Magna Carta for the first time outside the British Isles, and the King and Queen of England visited the fair on a bright June day in 1939—the first British monarchs to set foot on American soil since the American Revolution.

The French Pavilion offered a superb restaurant overlooking the Lagoon; Mussolini's Italy erected a beautiful pavilion with a soaring waterfall; the Soviet Union had a giant marble pavilion with huge busts of Lenin and Stalin, and a statue of the Soviet Worker on top. A recreation of the famed Moscow subway was inside.



Pavilion of the U.S.S.R.

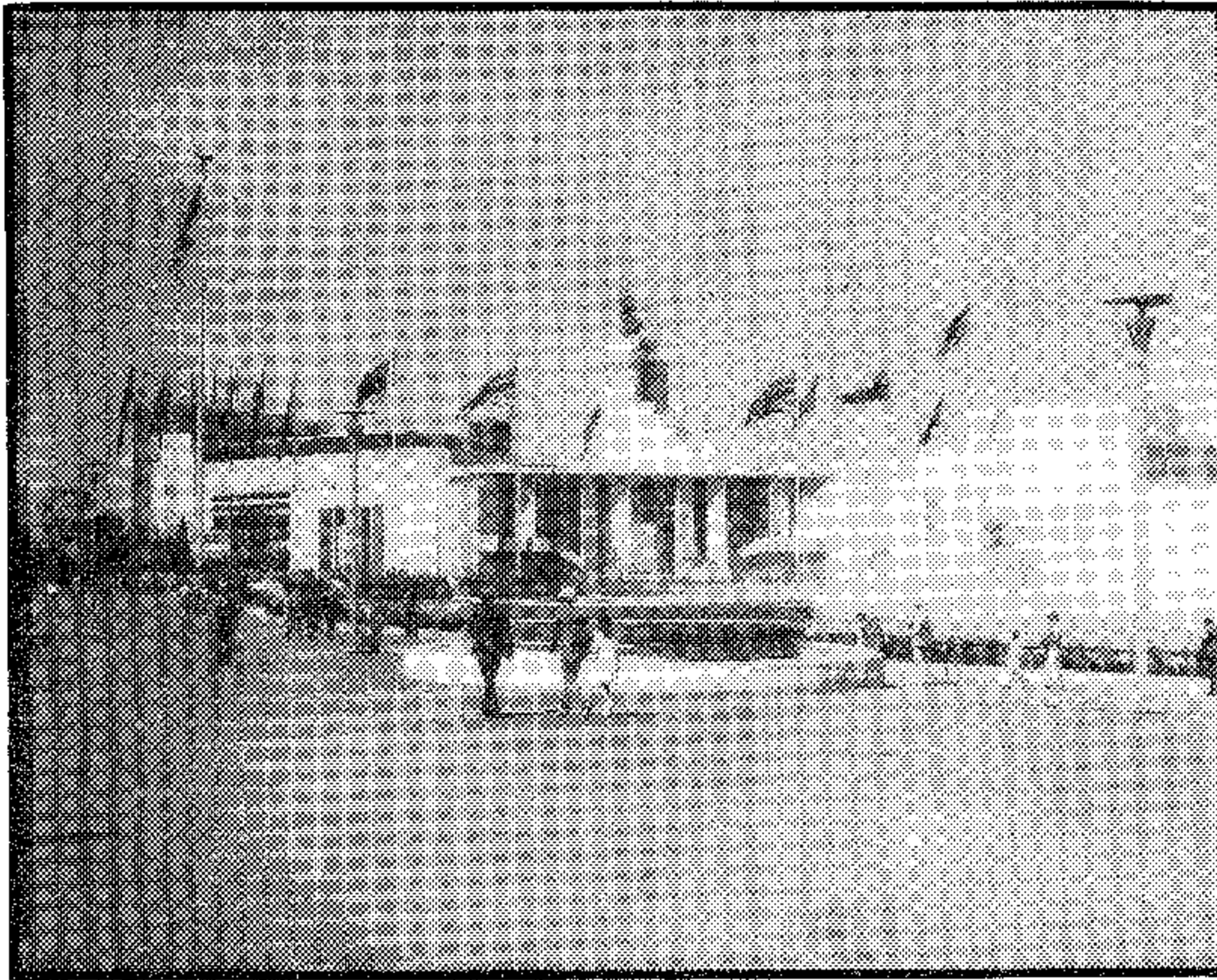


The King and Queen of England sign World's Fair guest book as Grover Whalen (left) and Governor Lehman (right) look on in the British pavilion, June 1939.

Japan had a pavilion in the design of an ancient Shinto shrine and dedicated a garden to the "eternal friendship between the people of Japan and the United States. The only major nation absent from the World of Tomorrow was Hitler's Nazi Germany. When President Roosevelt opened the Fair from the Court of Peace, he answered the recent tirades of the German Chancellor and declared that the eyes of the United States were still "hitched to a star...a star of Peace.

The Nazi presence was felt at Flushing Meadows, as the pavilions of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway and others closed, and then gallantly re-opened under the threat of invasion. While the peoples of these nations existed in peace at Flushing Meadows, their leaders abroad could barely manage a handshake as they prepared for war. By the time of the fair's closing in 1940, events took on a patriotic fervor, with mass rallies at which Kate Smith and others sang "God Bless America."





British and Italian Pavilions.



Fireworks over Meadow Lake in 1940.

Long before the last embers of the fireworks settled into the Lagoon of Nations, events abroad ended the hope, for a time, of a harmonious family of nations. In the years after the fair closed, those cars, highways, television sets and cities of the future were never built as the world plunged into its second orgy in self-destruction of the century. After the war who could have thought that those beautiful streamlined trains would be made obsolete by jet travel, or that our roads would become congested with 73 million gas-guzzling, polluting automobiles. But the fair's message expressed values that we still cherish; our confidence, our optimism. The belief in our capacity to solve problems by working together is still important to us.

To many, the fair was a last bright hope before the world turned dark. For some, it was memorable first summer job, like future Governor Hugh Carey who drove one of the fair's tractor trailer trains. For future astronomer Carl Sagan, it was a child's glimpse at a wondrous buried object called the Time Capsule, a vessel designed by scientists to rest 50 feet below the soil of Flushing Meadows containing a record of Civilization to be preserved for 5,000 years. The memory of that capsule would lead Sagan to fashion an intergalactic capsule forty years later, that would travel on the Voyager spacecraft to the ends of the Universe.

Inside that Fair capsule was a message from Albert Einstein to the future in which he notes that because of the violent nature of man, anyone who "thinks about the future must live in fear and terror." The great scientist had just written the secret and fateful letter to Roosevelt on the Atomic Bomb. But he concluded the statement to the future with the hope that "I trust that posterity will read these statements with a feeling of proud and justified superiority."



Like the Time Capsule, the 1939 World's Fair was itself a kind of time capsule, an isolated, highly compressed and very vivid expression of the forces, the hopes, the social ideas and the common realities of a year that was a pivot-point in our recent history. And like the Time Capsule, it was a belief that there would be a World of Tomorrow. By and large people went to the fair to be amazed, amused and distracted. That they also came away affected, educated-changed-was a function of both the Fair and the era that gave it meaning.

It gave the world a boost. To those who were there, it was the greatest Fair. It told us what we all wanted to hear; that our spirit wasn't broken and that by controlling our technology, destiny in hand, we were ready to face the Dawn of a New Day.



Burial of Westinghouse Time Capsule I on September 23, 1938, the exact moment of the Autumnal Equinox.



Statue of George Washington facing the Trylon and Perisphere down Constitution Mall as a crescent moon rises over the 1939-40 New York World's Fair.





Demolition of the World's Fair, 1941.

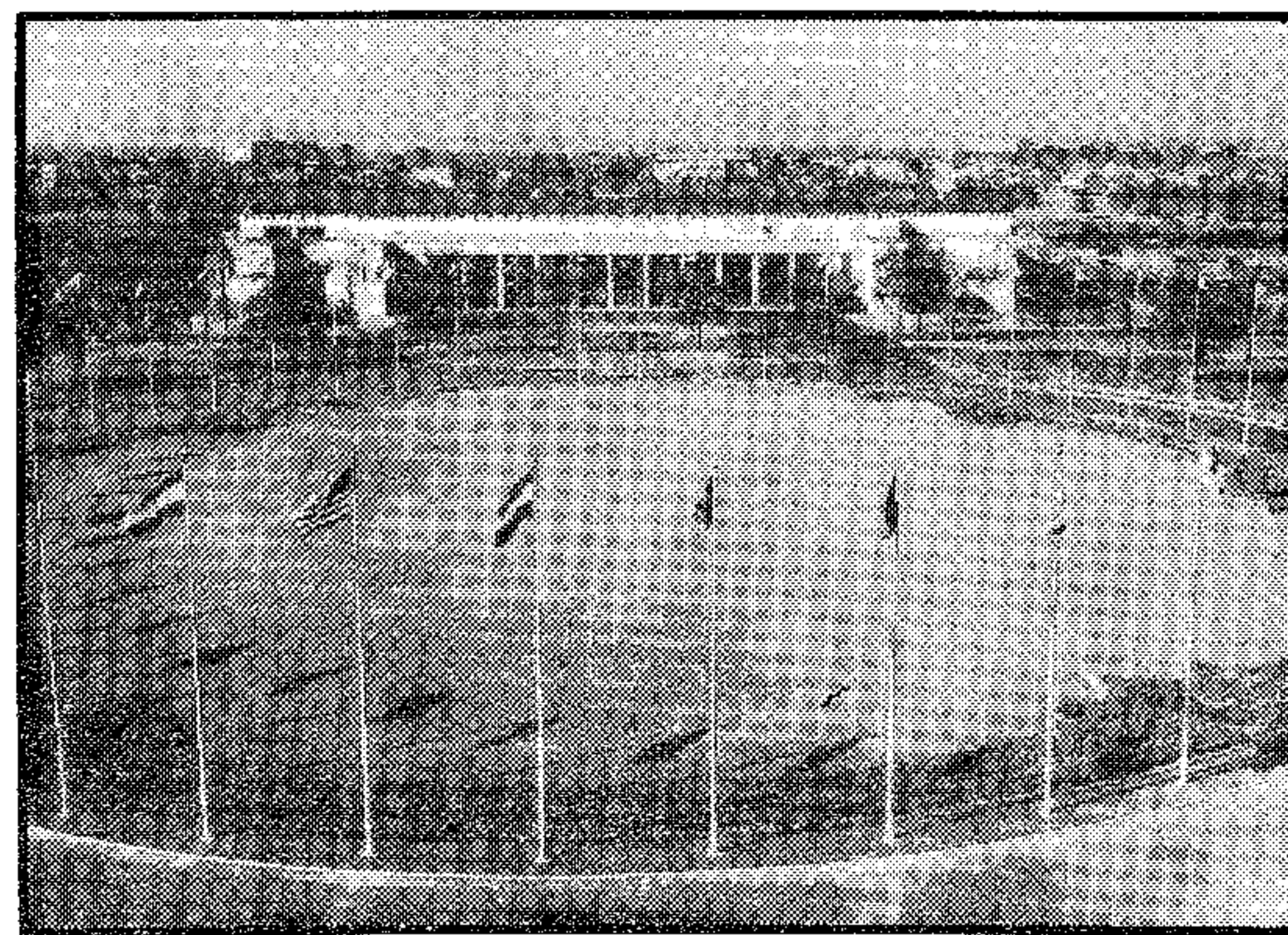
After the close of the fair, the lights began to slowly go out all over the world, as evil marched across Europe and Japan's rising sun was seen in the dawn of a new dark age. The four thousand tons of steel that went into the making of Trylon and Perisphere became scrap destined to make bombs and other instruments of war. Designed to teach lessons of mutual interdependence which would make all future wars impossible, in its own final functioning the symbol become an instrument of war. Vandals destroyed the Japanese Garden after Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the great improvements at Flushing Meadows were not fully realized.

In 1945, the War ended as the terrible force of a man-made dawn of atomic energy burst over Hiroshima. In this terrifying new age, the world looked for a new force for peace. When Franklin Roosevelt visited the Flushing Meadows fairgrounds under construction in 1938, he asked Mayor LaGuardia about the possibility of keeping many of the great structures permanently for a peace center or "United Nations" that would replace the impotent League of Nations as peacekeeping force for the world. Now in the post-war age, that United Nations

was born, and New York was selected as its permanent home. Originally, Flushing Meadows was selected as the site of what was called the "World Capital," but after the gift of the Rockefeller family of land on the East River in Manhattan, the present headquarters was erected.

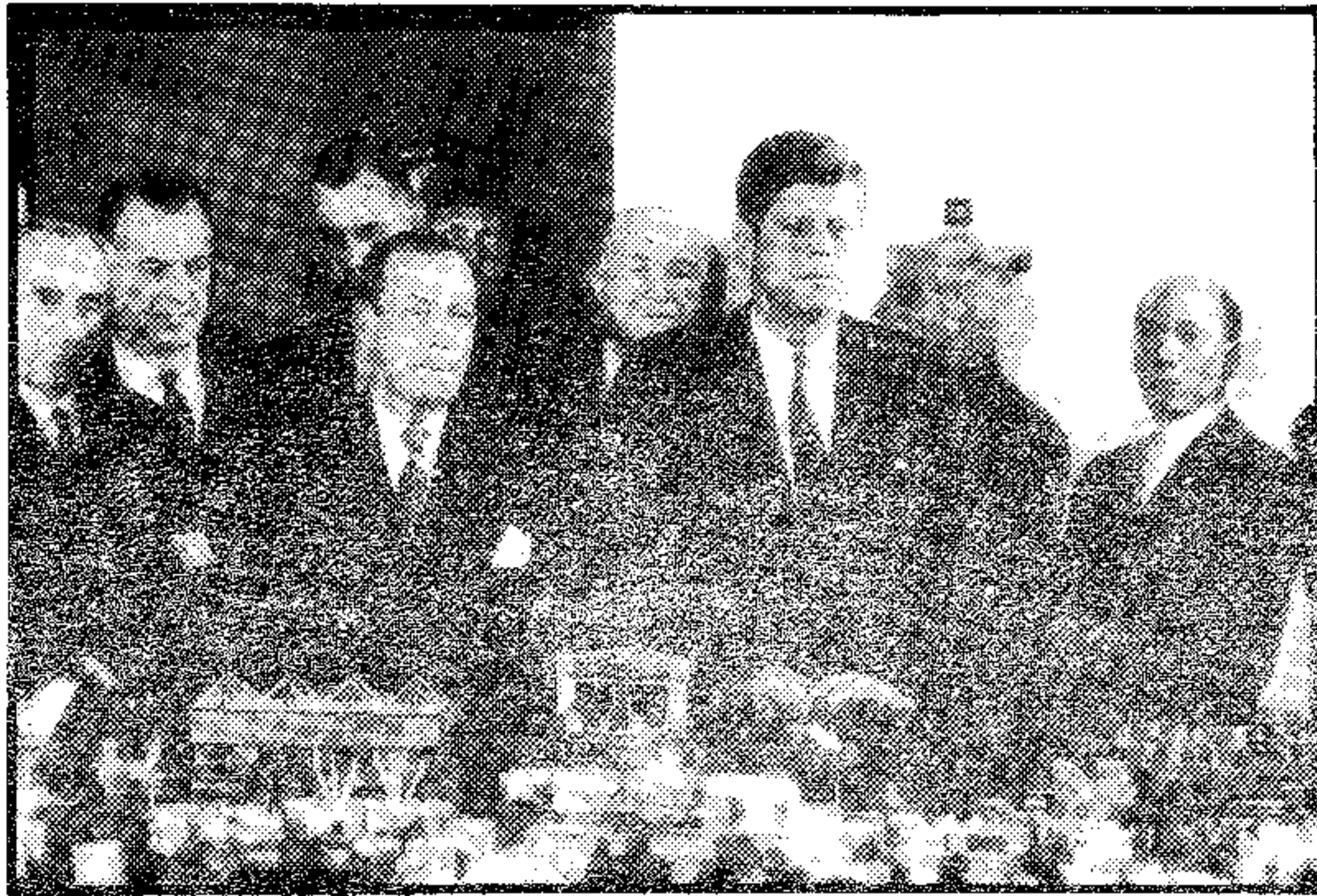
But in the period of 1946-50, the world again came to Flushing Meadows, as the United Nations General Assembly met in their first home at Flushing Meadows in the New York City Building, one of the three structures left from the 1939 Fair. The ice-skating rink that had been left in that building was converted into a meeting place of nations, and for five crucial years decisions were made in the cavernous hall that would affect the future of the world, including the 1947 vote that created the State of Israel.

The Flushing Meadow grounds, although undeveloped were a tremendous change from the blight that existed there before the Fair. The reclamation of the once mosquito ridden meadow and the improvements made at the site for the United Nations, opened up the neighboring communities for development as

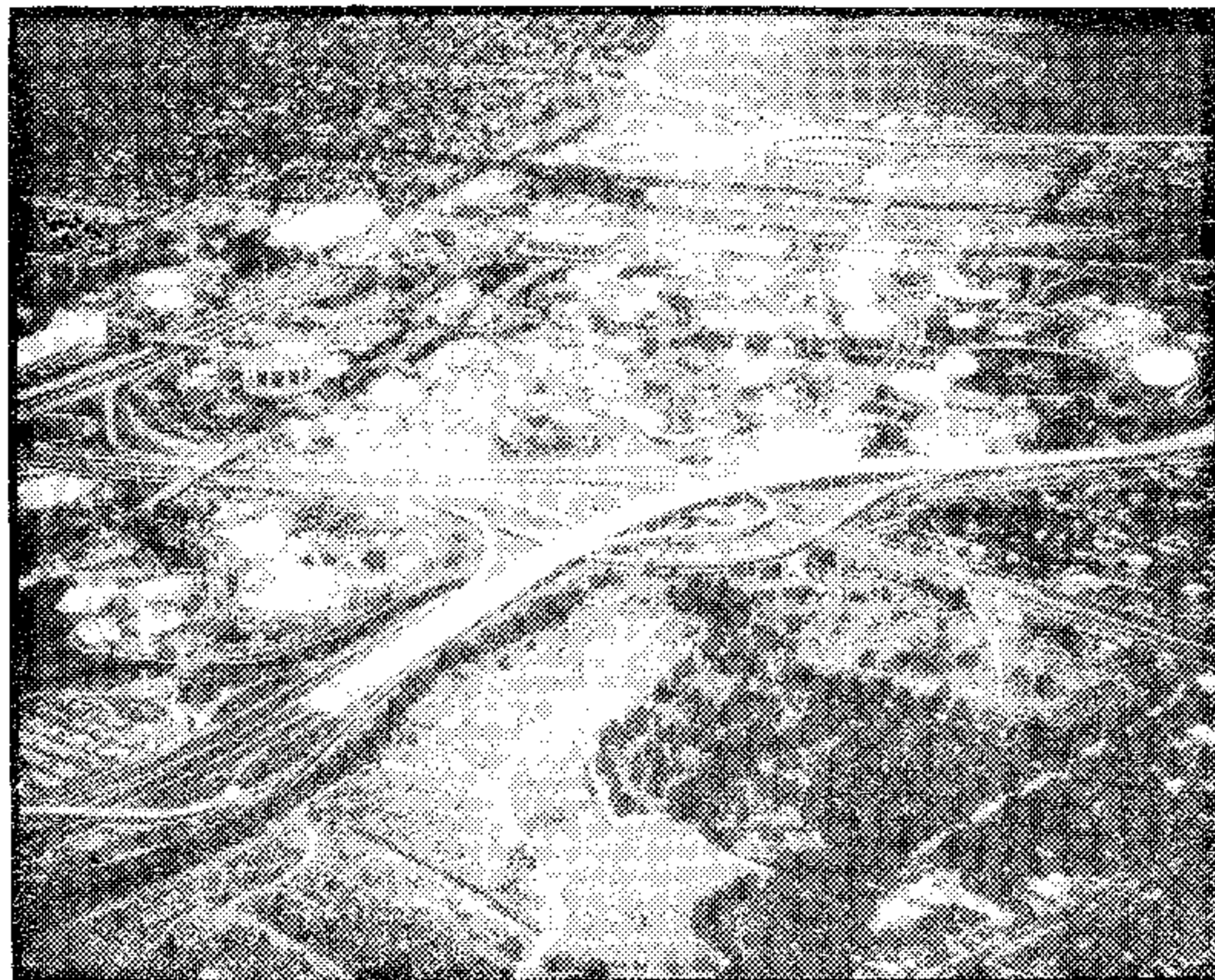


The former Theme Center site is ringed by the flags of the United Nations as the N.Y. City Building becomes the first home of the U.N. General Assembly (1946-50).





President John F. Kennedy views model of the 1964 World's Fair on a visit to the site in December 1962. At right is Mayor Robert F. Wagner; to the right behind the President is Fair President Robert Moses.

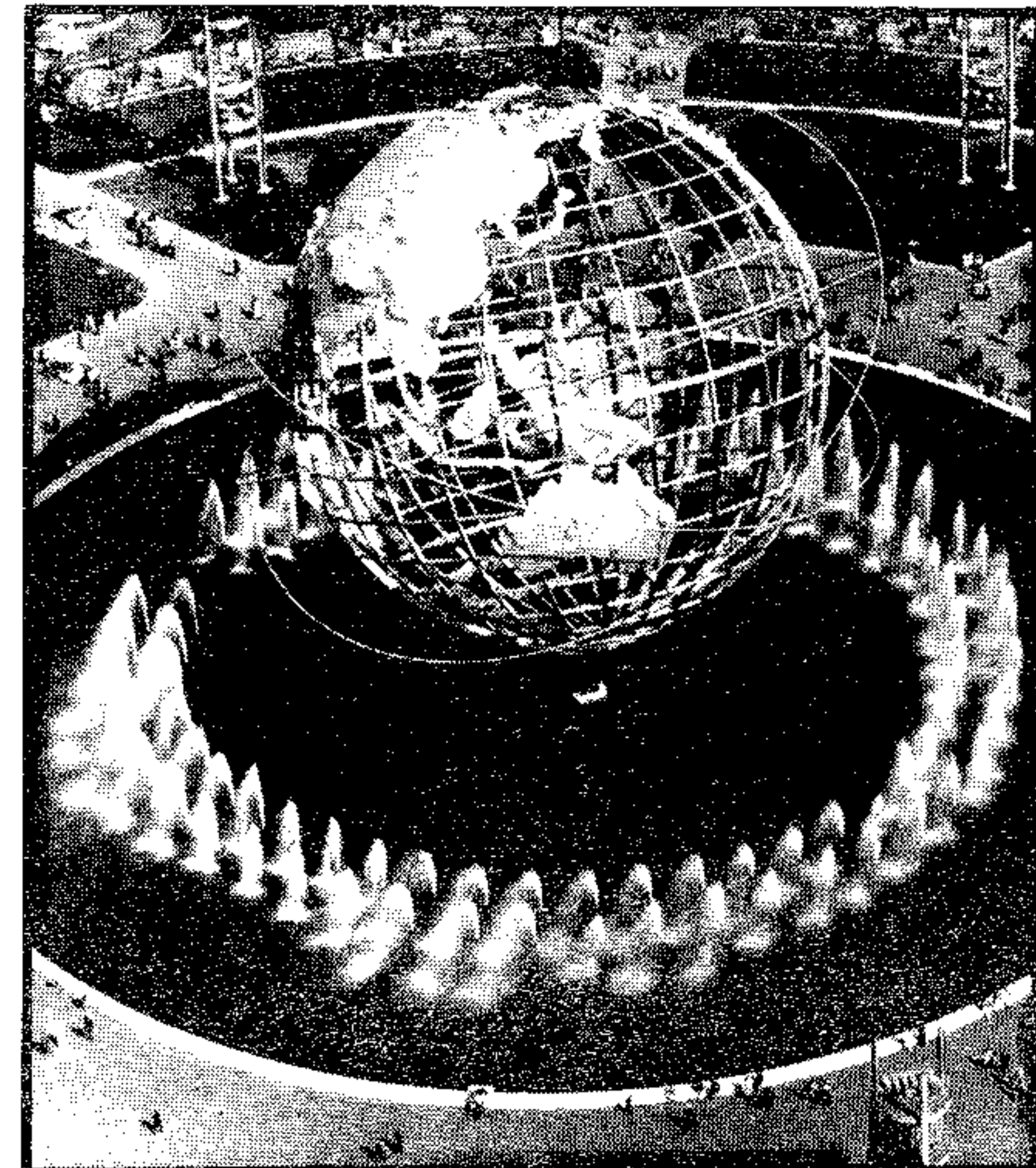


Aerial view of the 1964-65 World's Fair.

new residents found the pleasant surroundings and good transportation desirable inducements to living in the area. The impact of the Flushing Meadow improvement on the adjacent community and the city is shown by a City Planning survey made in 1953. It showed that in just a two block strip bordering the meadow, the assessed valuation showed an increase from \$8 million in 1935 to \$83 million in 1953.

In 1960, a New York attorney named Robert Koppel proposed a second New York World's Fair to mark the 300th anniversary of the founding of New York in 1664. Robert Moses saw this as the opportunity to complete his vision of a great 20th century park at the city's center. President Dwight Eisenhower and Mayor Robert Wagner approved the idea and Moses was named President of the 1964-65 New York World's Fair.

President John F. Kennedy broke ground for the Fair in 1962 and its theme was "Peace Through Understanding." But unlike



The Unisphere, symbol of the '64 Fair, stands on the same site as the 1939 Trylon & Perisphere.





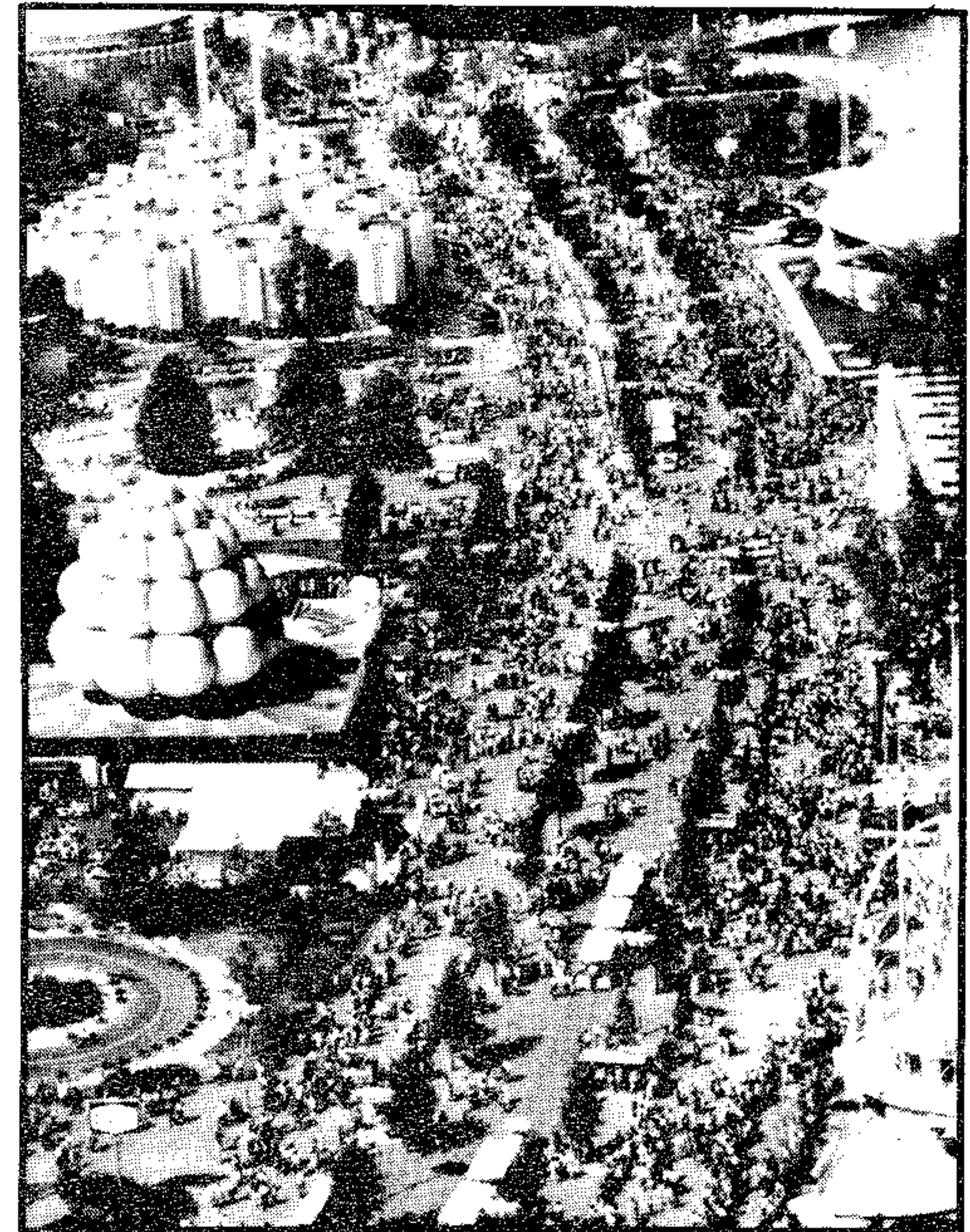
Swiss SkyRide over the 1964 Fair International Zone.

the 1939 Fair, the exposition made no attempt to integrate that theme to its overall design, conception or layout. All exhibitors were allowed to build as they pleased. The result, according to many critics was a hodge-podge, corporate extravaganza.

But to most of the 55 million visitors to the fair, the design may have been free-for-all, but it was alive, vital and vivid. With its complex variety of forms and colors, from the giant clusters of balloons that marked the Brass Rail Hot Dog stands throughout the grounds, to the ancient pogadas and mammoth dinosaurs that were spread out over the square mile of the meadow, the Fair was a vibrant, pop-art symbol of the ever-changing decade of the '60's.

The fair had something for everyone. El Greco and Picasso at the elegant Spanish Pavilion. The original Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence at the U. S. Pavilion. General Motors' Futurama II, with an updated ride showing the glittering cities on the moon and earth in the year 2000. General Electric showed the "Great, Big, Beautiful Tomorrow" of Electricity and Atomic Energy.

Goldie Hawn premiered as a disco dancer at the Bourbon Street Pavilion. A pavilion called "To the Moon and Beyond" inspired director Stanley Kubrick to create the historic film "2001: A Space Odyssey."

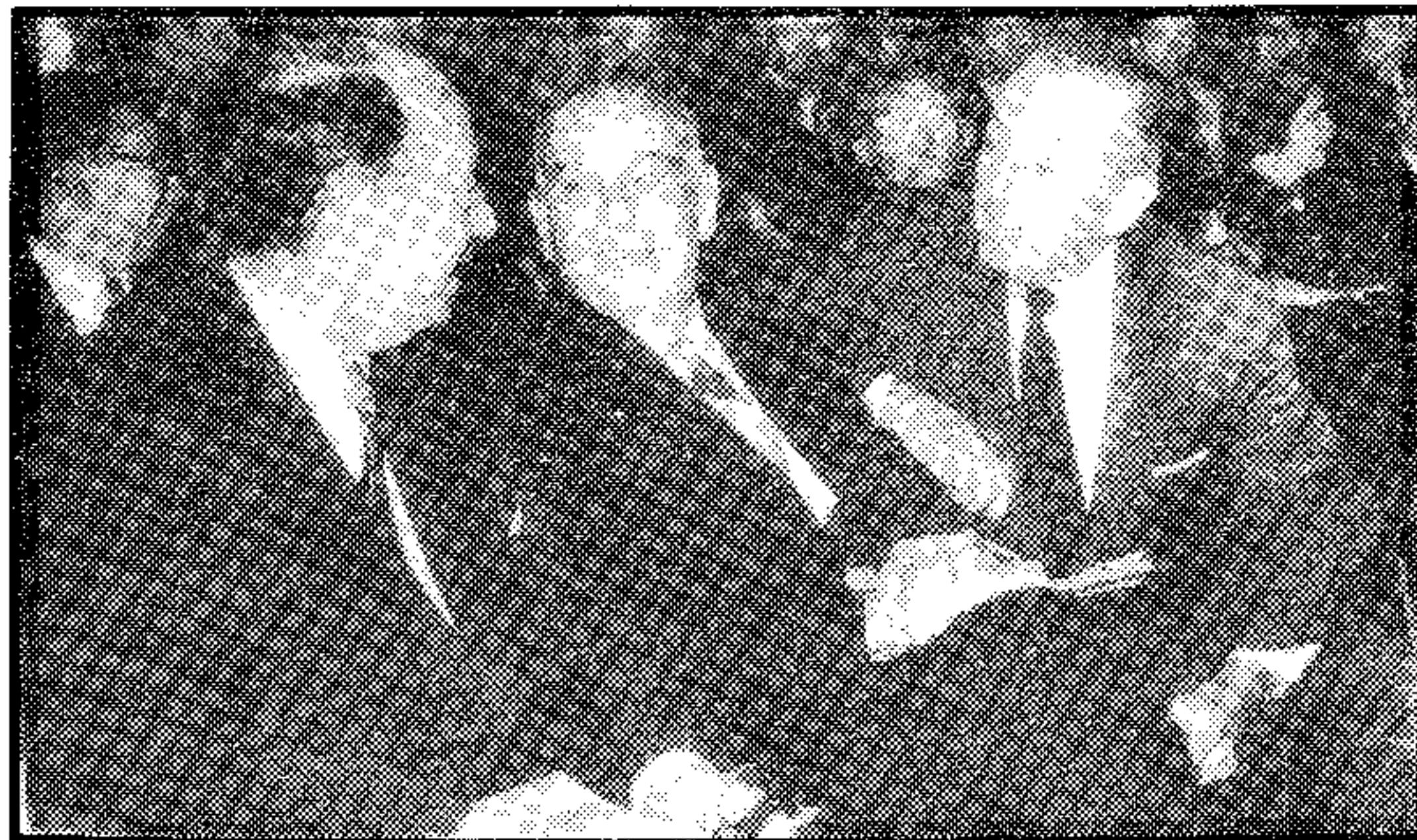


Crowds line a main boulevard of the '64 Fair.





Color TV and videotape were on display at the 1964 RCA Pavilion.



U.N. ambassador Adlai Stevenson, Fair President Moses and Walt Disney at the dedication of the Illinois Pavilion. Disney created four pavilions for the '64 fair.

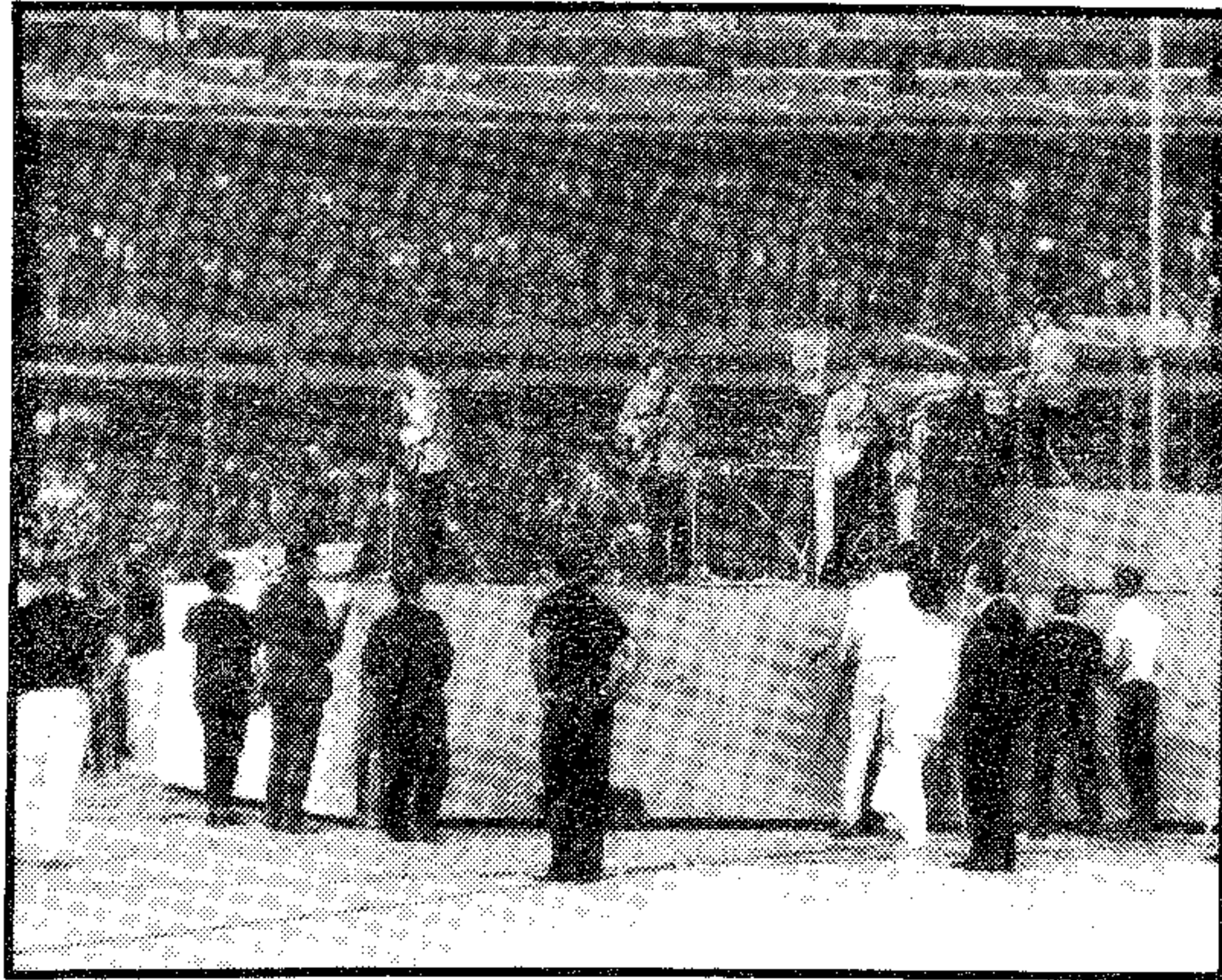
At the RCA pavilion, visitors could see themselves on Color TV and on videotape, advances undreamed of 25 years before when Television was born at the 1939 Fair. At the Bell Telephone Pavilion, visitors could talk via Picturephone to visitors at Disneyland in California. Walt Disney, himself, took a great interest in the fair and designed four major pavilions including the audioanimatronic figure of Abraham Lincoln in the "Future Town" and the spectacular collection of international dolls in the "It's a Small World" pavilion of Pepsi-Cola.

These exhibits were so popular that Disney used the new techniques he developed for the fair to create his new amusement park in Orlando, Florida-Disney World. One of the most popular presentations was the Johnson's Wax exhibit which featured a multi-screen motion picture on the joys of living, called *To Be Alive*. The film won the Academy Award for that year and has influenced the form of movie documentaries ever since, just as the Lewis Mumford film, *"The City"* had at the 1939 Fair.

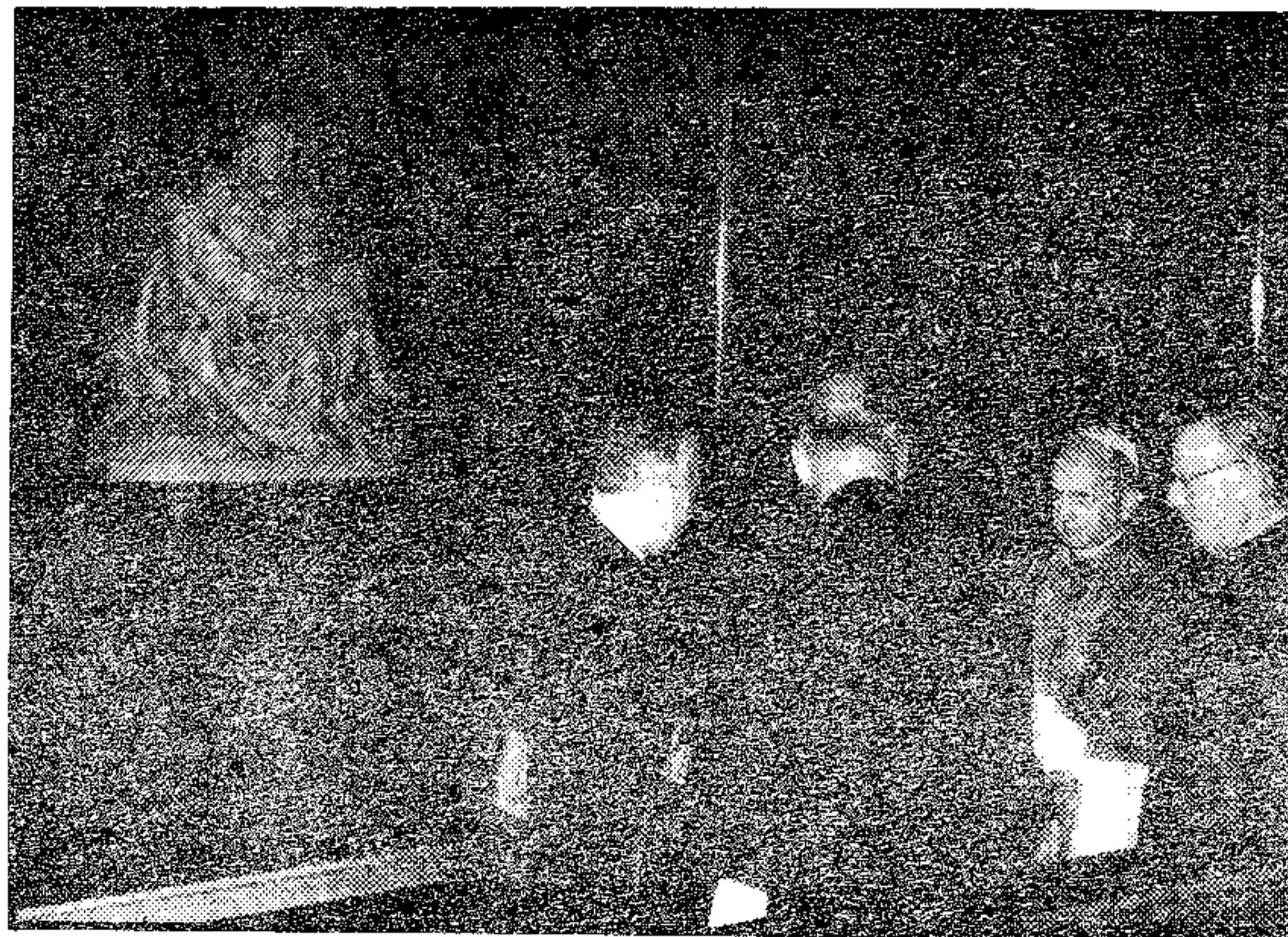
Because of differences between Robert Moses and the Bureau of International Expositions in Paris, the '64 Fair did not enjoy the official participation of the majority of the international community. However, it did have the Vatican Pavilion with the display of Michaelangelo's masterpiece *The Pieta*. Pope Paul VI, the first Pontiff to set foot on American soil visited the Fair in its closing days of October 1965 and made a plea for "No More War...War Never Again."

It was a touching finale to a great and controversial fair. The fond memories of the Waffles from the Fair's Belgian Village would live along with many happy moments of the great fair. But so would the controversy.





The Beatles perform at Shea Stadium in 1965.



Pope Paul VI views Michelangelo's Pieta in the Vatican Pavilion, October 4, 1965.

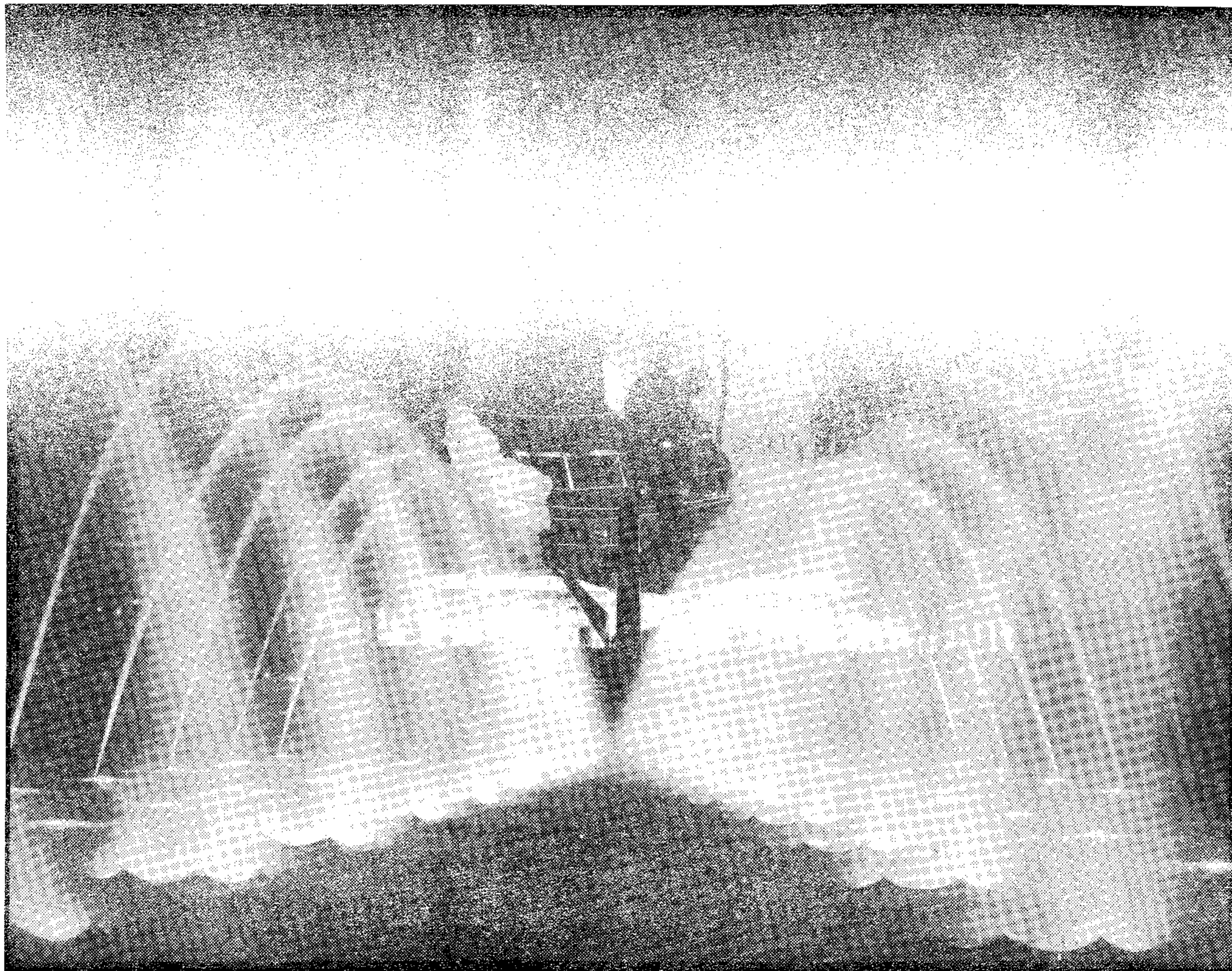
At the fair's opening, President Johnson's remarks were obscured by the chants of Civil Rights protestors-the first time this had ever happened to a President in modern times. It was also the first major Civil Rights demonstration in the North since the Civil War. Although not directed against the Fair itself, but against some of the States and Corporate exhibitors, the demonstration was a symbol of the dawning of the Social Revolution in America. By the Fair's end the Vietnam War was beginning to escalate. The fair's glittering displays of affluence were the norm of those prosperous economic times. It was really, in one way, the realization of part of the dream of the 1939 Fair-the streamlined vision of the Futurama had come true with a society of beautiful cars, clothes and appliances.

After the close of the Fair, the site was transformed into the completed park Moses had dreamed about. On June 3rd, 1967, the World's Fair Corporation returned a restored 1,200 acres of lakes, fountains, buildings and fields to the City of New York. At the dedication ceremonies, Robert Moses said, "Guard it well Mr. Mayor and Mr. Parks Commissioner. It has echoed to the sounds of many footsteps and voices. The world has beaten a path to its doors. Now we return it to the Natives."



Robert Moses talks to reporters following his transfer of the restored Flushing Meadow Park from the Fair Corporation to the city on June 3, 1967.





Night view down the Main Mall leading to Unisphere in 1965. Compare with same view in 1939 (pg. 61).





**President Lyndon B. Johnson officially opens the United States Pavilion, April 22, 1964.**

"The last time New York had a World's Fair we also tried to predict the future. A daring exhibit proclaimed that in the 1960's it would really be possible to cross the country in less than 24 hours, flying as high as 10,000 feet, an astounding 38 million cars would cross our highways. There was no mention of outer space or atomic power or wonder drugs. These were bold prophecies back there in 1939. But again, the reality has far outstripped the vision. There were also other predictions that weren't made at that fair. No one prophesied that half the world would be devastated by war or that millions of helpless would be slaughtered. No one foresaw power that was capable of destroying man or a cold war that could bring conflict to every continent. Our pride in accomplishment must not ignore the fact that our progress has had two faces — its final direction, abundance or annihilation? Development or desolation? This Fair represents the most promising of our hopes. But unless we can achieve the theme of this Fair — Peace through Understanding — unless we can use our skills and our wisdom to conquer conflict as we have conquered science, then our hopes of today will go under in the devastation of tomorrow. If we can, then at the next New York World's Fair people will see an America as different from today as we are different from 1939. They will see an America in which no man must be poor, or handicapped by the color of his skin or the nature of his beliefs, or discriminated against because of the church he attends or the country of his ancestors. They will see an America that is solving the problem of growing cities, inadequate education, depleting natural resources and decreasing natural beauty. All of these dreams and these hopes and expectations depend upon a world that is free from the threat of war. If we can achieve this, then I am sure that speeches at the next World's Fair will look back with amusement at how greatly I underestimated the capacity and the genius of man.

And so I take my leave from what Ogden Nash has called the Promised Land of Mr. Moses, hoping and trusting that in the future it will not take anyone forty years to reach it."

**—President Lyndon B. Johnson's remarks at the  
Opening Ceremony of the 1964-65 New York World's Fair  
April 22, 1964**