Answering Columbia's Call

Seattle's War Relief Bazaar of 1917
"The biggest thing that ever happened to Seattle."

That bold claim was published in response to the success of the Seattle Girls War Relief Bazaar, organized to raise the funds to outfit Base Hospital 50. The authorization by the Red Cross, in October 1917, included the proviso Seattle raise the necessary funds to fully outfit the hospital itself.

"Society maids and self-supporting office workers and clerks" worked together to plan the bazaar, which was the brainchild of Seattle shipping magnate Frank Waterhouse. Held the week before Christmas, the Seattle Girls' War Work Association, chaired by Miss Gladys Waterhouse and Miss Katherine Kittinger, organized the bazaar.

Volunteers solicited goods and services from Seattle leaders and businesses — everything from cigars to Ford cars — to sell at the bazaar. More than 12,500 volunteers — from University of Washington sorority sisters, to Dames of the Daughters of the American Revolution — worked together to arrange all the details for the event, which would attract over 10,000 a day.

The bazaar was designed and constructed by venerable Seattle architect Carl F. Gould and described as "cleverly conceived and well executed."

Miss Irene Ewing was credited with arranging decorations deserving of "particular attention." The bazaar was held at the Seattle Arena and the Hippodrome Dance Hall. Neither are still standing.

A jewelry drive was also held and "debutantes and working girls united in the bonds of Sammies Sisterhood" donated their gold and silver to be sold to help fund the war effort. The Moran Brothers, local shipbuilders, made a major donation of $16,000, and Waterhouse donated $10,000.

When all the proceeds had been tallied, the bazaar had raised over $120,000. Fifty thousand dollars was turned over to the Seattle Chapter of the Red Cross to equip Base Hospital 50 and the remainder was designated to support dependents of soldiers and sailors from King and Kitsap counties. This resounding success was organized in just three months!
BAZAAR TO OCCUPY VAST AREA

1. The Arena
2. The Hippodrome
3. Looking east on University towards 5th Street
4. Site of the Sammies Sector
5. Now the 5th Avenue Theater
6. Now the Fairmont Olympic Hotel
7. The Plymouth Congregational Church is still standing!
The Bazaar opened each day with a parade of fair organizers on horseback, despite the fact Seattle experienced the severest rain they had seen that winter the week of the Bazaar.

Come Thru, an original composition by Bertha Sophie Tremper, was adopted as the official song of the bazaar. Printed by Seattle’s Craig Music Press, copies sold at the bazaar for fifteen cents. "Every miser helps the Kaiser" was a catchy refrain taken from the song billed as great for fairs and bazaars because of its melodious rhythm.
Anita Miller was the winner of a contest held to design a poster for advertising the Bazaar. An artist for the McDougal-Southwick department store in Seattle, Anita studied at the California College of Arts and Crafts. After moving to Seattle she studied at the University of Washington with Edgar Forkner. Her future husband, Ford Elvidge, served with the base hospital the bazaar was raising funds for.

POSTER HELPS TO WIN BIG FUND FOR RED CROSS

The poster reproduced in monochrome above was designed by Miss Anita Miller, of Seattle, and was given first place in a contest for the best poster to advertise the War Relief Bazaar, the proceeds of which—$10,000—went to the Red Cross for the establishment of a base hospital in France.
Seattle Girls War Relief Bazaar

DECEMBER 17 TO 22 INCLUSIVE

Americans were consumed with patriotic fever after the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Spurred on by an ambitious propaganda program, Liberty Bond drives, Red Cross recruitment drives, and events such as the Seattle Girls War Relief Bazaar, encouraged Americans to conserve food, “knit their bit,” and other activities in support of the war effort.

- PLAN FOR WAR-RELIEF BAZAAR IN ARENA -
- CHARLES H. BEECH & CARL F. GOULD, ARCHITECTS -
Before the doors had even opened, over half of the $100,000 goal had already been reached through advance ticket sales, raffles and donations of toys, knitted clothing, household items, food and more.
In addition to the myriad of booths in the Arena, an outdoor amusement area known as the Sammies Sector offered numerous carnival games including the highly popular *Kill the Kaiser* shooting gallery. Bazaar organizers claimed the entertainment in the Sammies Sector rivaled that of the Paystreak at Seattle's famed Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909.

“No Man’s Land” at Girls’ War Relief Bazaar

War relics and fighting men are a feature of “No Man’s Land” at the Girls’ War Relief Bazaar. Some remarkable curios from the fighting fronts have been assembled, and there is a realistic touch to the display by the presence of men wearing the uniforms of the allied armies.

Sammies’ Sisters Go Over the Top For the Dimes and the Dollars
One of the most popular attractions was No Man's Land, a replica of trenches in France.

Sammy was a nickname for U.S. soldiers; short for Uncle Sam!
MARMON GIVEN FOR WAR BAZAAR

One of the magnificent gifts announced for the Seattle Girls' War Relief Bazaar to be held next month was that of a completely-equipped Marmon 34 by the automobile department of Frank Waterhouse & Company.

The car in addition to the standard equipment includes a combination Victoria top and tonneau windshield, together with plush robe given by Chandler & Leach, space seat given by the E. F. Howard Rubber Company, and seat covers by Malcolms Brothers.

The Victoria top is so designed as to cover the occupants of the tonneau or can be extended over the driver's seat as well. In the tonneau windshield is likewise extendable and may be pulled as far back as desired to protect the passengers from the wind.

Not every story at the Bazaar had a happy ending. Seattle Fireman Frank Rusnick was the winner of the Marmon 34 Touring car donated by Frank Waterhouse and valued at over $4000. Several weeks after the Bazaar, his wife Viola sued for divorce, claiming non-support and asking $50 a month for child support for their young son... and the car!

NORDYKE & MARMON COMPANY, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana
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Metropolitan Square as seen from the fourth floor of the Cobb Building,
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Seattle Girls War Relief Bazaar letter. Edwin Gardner Ames papers,
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About the Author:

Lisa Oberg fancies herself an amateur historian and this is her first zine!
A librarian by day, she revels in the never-ending opportunity to learn
new things, such as discovering the story of the Seattle Girls War Relief
Bazaar while researching the University of Washington’s Base Hospital
50. Since then, her head has been permanently stuck in 1917. Learn
more about Base Hospital 50’s World War I activities on her blog:

basehospital50.blogspot.com
DID YOU KNOW?

Columbia is the feminine personification of America; dear old Uncle Sam is the better-known masculine version.