

LET'S TAKE THIS TIME TO LOOK BACK AT OUR INDUSTRY'S RICH HISTORY AND FUTURE!

THE DEAL DIARIES

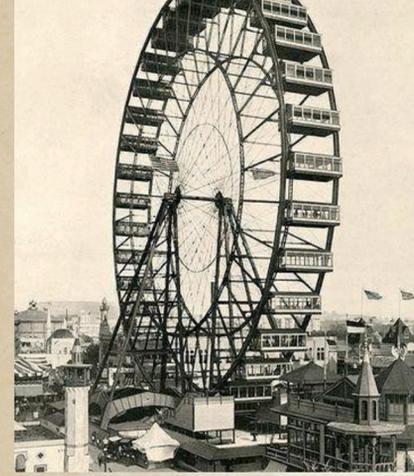
FIRST CHAPTER: FERRIS WHEELS

WHO INVENTED THIS WHEEL?

THE ORIGIN:

Close to 130 years ago, in late 1890s, Daniel Burnham, a well-known architect was entrusted with turning a muddy and watery square mile of Chicago into a world dazzling showpiece. He assembled an all-star team of designers and gave them one directive: 'Make no little plans.'

Burnham was labouring in the shadow of a landmark erected the year before in Paris, an elegant wrought iron structure rising a thousand feet into the air. But, nobody in the States had an answer for the Eiffel Tower. Burnham spoke before a group of engineers employed on the project and chided them for their failure of imagination. To avoid humiliation, he said, they needed to come up with something novel, original, daring and unique.



One of their team members, George Washington Gale Ferris Jr., a 33-year-old engineer from Pittsburgh whose company was charged with inspecting the steel used by the fair, was struck by an idea and quickly sketched a huge revolving steel wheel. After adding specifications, he shared the idea with Burnham, who found the slender rods to be too fragile that would carry people to a height taller than the recently opened Statue of Liberty.

Ferris was not the first to imagine such a wheel. In fact, a carpenter named William Somers was building 50-foot wooden wheels at Asbury Park, Atlantic City and Coney Island; a roundabout, he called it, and he'd even patented his design. But Ferris had not only been challenged to think big; the huge attendance expected at the fair inspired him to bet big.

He spent \$25,000 of his own money on safety studies, hired more engineers, recruited investors. On December 16, 1892, his wheel was chosen to answer Eiffel. It measured 250 feet in diameter, and carried 36 cars, each capable of holding 60 people.



THE FERRIS WHEEL AND SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

- The original 'Ferris Wheel' was designed and constructed by George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. as a landmark for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.
- With a height of 264 ft. it was the largest attraction when it opened to the public on June 21, 1893.
- Rotated on a 71-ton, 45.5-foot axle comprising what was at that time the world's largest hollow forging, manufactured in Pittsburgh by the Bethlehem Iron Company.
- Weighing 89,320 pounds, together with two 16-foot-diameter (4.9m) cast-iron spiders weighing 53,031 pounds.
- There were 36 cars, each fitted with 40 revolving cupolas (the size of a bus) and able to accommodate up to 60 people, giving a total capacity of 2,160 passengers.
- The wheel carried some 38,000 passengers daily and took 20 minutes to complete two revolutions, the first involving six stops to allow passengers to exit and enter and the second a nine-minute non-stop rotation, for which the ticket holder paid 50 cents.
- Over the next 19 weeks, more than 1.4 million people paid 50 cents for this 20-minute ride and access to an aerial panorama few had ever imagined.

THE END OF THE VERY FIRST OFFICIAL FERRIS WHEEL IN 1906:

But when the fair gates closed, Ferris became immersed in a tangle of wheel-related lawsuits about debts he owed suppliers and that the fair owed him. In 1896, bankrupt and suffering from typhoid fever, he unfortunately died at age 37.

So when the exposition ended in October 1893, the wheel closed in April 1894 and was dismantled and stored until the following year. It was then rebuilt on Chicago's North Side, near Lincoln Park, next to an exclusive neighbourhood. It operated there from October 1895 until 1903, when it was again dismantled, then transported by rail to St. Louis for the 1904 World's Fair and finally destroyed by controlled demolition using dynamite on May 11, 1906. So died the one and only official Ferris wheel. Fortunately, the invention lived on due to the unique experience felt by the consumers through this brilliant Gale Ferris idea.



THE GOLDEN AGE OF CARNIVAL BUSINESS:

The Columbian exposition was the beginning of the golden age of carnival business and it wasn't long after this celebration was over that homemade 'Ferris Wheels' began appearing on the scene in scaled down versions. As bonafide carnival companies became a new force, the market was created for a durable riding device that offered portability and safety.



In 1899, Jay Conderman advertised in the Billboard trade paper that his wheel was the largest on the road (40 ft.) and featured electric lighting and upholstered seats for the total price of \$1,000.00.

On Sept. 4th 1900 he filed a patent (# 699621) for his 'Pleasure Wheel' in his wife's name. Litigation was filed with Newton M. Johnson and William E. Sullivan of the Eli Bridge company who were both working on marketing their own models. The conclusion, after much court wrangling, was that you could patent a part on the ride such as a seat or spoke design but you couldn't patent the basic idea of the ride.

The Conderman factory was located in Hornesville, N.Y. and operated for a little more than 12 years from 1898 to 1910, when it was destroyed by fire. Jay Conderman later moved to Chicago and became a successful real estate broker. Meanwhile in 1900, William E. Sullivan and J. H. Clements constructed a 45 ft cable driven 12 seat device on the back lot of the Eli Bridge Company.

The first wheels were powered by a 6 h.p. Semi portable Huber steam engine and came in two sizes; a 45 foot "No.5" and the larger 50 foot model "No.12" known for parks. These were followed by a 55 foot No.16 known as the "Aristocrat" which became popular in the amusement park industry at the time.

Though the old steam engines have long since been retired, except for a few incidental changes, the venerable No.5 design remains pretty much the same as it was first conceived, today and is built by the same company. Records of these wheels have been meticulously kept by the company on each ride sale and resale.

The wheels have been stamped and numbered on the builders plate and on the hubs starting with Sullivan's first wheel. For example, number 720-41 indicates it was the 720th wheel built in 1941.



WORLD'S LARGEST FERRIS WHEEL TAKING SHAPE:



Strong, modern building materials in today's design allow the portability of Ferris Wheels over hundreds of feet that can be easily setup and dismantled with the advent of sophisticated technology. Their solid state electronic lighting systems are a dazzling show in itself.

Located on Bluewaters Island, Ain Dubai adds one more milestone to the list of world records set to be broken by Dubai.

When completed, Ain Dubai will carry 9,000 tonnes of steel and 2,400 kilometres of cable wires housed inside the main spoke cables, which is enough to reach from Dubai to Cairo if laid end-to-end.

Ain Dubai will feature 48 high-tech passenger cabins designed to accommodate 40 passengers each. They'll be air-conditioned and some will even be licensed for rent for private parties.

AIN DUBAI STATS:

- The length of each permanent spoke is longer than a full-scale football pitch
- 2,400km - distance all the cable wires housed inside the spoke cables if they were joined end-to-end. That's the same distance as Dubai to Cairo.
- 16 Airbus A380s: The equivalent weight of the wheel rim.
- 15 London buses can fit inside each leg.
- 25 per cent more steel used in to construct Ain Dubai than iron used for The Eiffel Tower.
- 9,000 tonnes of steel used in the construction of Ain Dubai.

At 250 metres in diameter, the Ain Dubai will surpass many of Dubai's other new landmarks for height, such as the 150 metre Dubai Frame in Zabeel Park. It will be half the height of the Observation Deck of the Burj Khalifa.

Source: Smithsonian Magazine, Showmen's Museum, Cruise Arabia Online, Bluewaters Dubai

