

Buffalo Evening News, June 27, 1901: Color, electricity and hydraulics, the three most potent zenii of the earth and air united to give a grand display on the 25th. There were not many of the teeming multitudes at the Exposition that saw it, but those who did departed with yet another vision of the Rainbow City whose indescribable splendors rendered the beholders speechless with their dazzling glories.

The display occurred in connection with the first exhibition of the electric fountain in the Park lake. After months of hard work, after several vexatious delays and one or two grievous disappointments, Chief of Construction Rustin turned on the water last night and set in motion the wondrous electric lighting machinery. Although yet not at its best, the Electric Fountain was a supremely dazzling spectacle.

Visitors hitherto have seen the beautiful sheen of the searchlights in the Grand Basin as they were converged upon the cascades in front of the tumultuous torrent that rolls from the niche in the Electric Tower. They have beheld the lily jets near the same cascades that waver tremulously above the lights like vases of molten silver, and the spray jets that leaped over the concealed lights in the Grand Basin like a shower of sparks from a blacksmith's anvil, and have admired the colored lights in the basin of the Court of Fountains that look like fairy rings. But they never beheld as delightful a vision as they saw last night when the Electric Fountain was started.

The water pouring from the jets assumes various fantastic forms, including pine trees, sheaves of wheat, pyramids, lilies, fans and mist banks. These were subjected to an ever moving, kaleidoscopic play of light green, blue, red and white, causing the water drops to resemble in turn showers of rubies, sapphires, topazes and emeralds.

The site of the fountain, the little island in the North Bay, is homely enough to be called the Isle du Diable. Even the electric lights have no power to transfigure the ugliness of its broken rock surface.

In a chamber below the jets are set 22 glass plates to permit the projection of the rays of powerful arc lights upward to the water jets. The levers which control the several systems of piping and combinations of orifices for the water are operated down in this chamber, as well as the horizontal colored glass screens that are to be interposed between the arc lights and the holes in the ceiling. Of course, these holes, called "holophote openings", are made absolutely water tight to prevent leakage from the basin of the fountain. The pumps which force the water from the various orifices are also placed in the subterranean apartment.

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One particular fountain, however, shows its wonders only at night and then for a brief period. In North Bay, which lies the southern end of the Midway, there is a small artificial island, and it is on this island that the electric fountain is placed. The main jet of water rises two hundred and fifty feet in air, and more smaller jets. These smaller jets are operated so as to produce patterns of falls, pyramids, etc., in endless variety, so that the designs may vary each evening. Below the basin where these waters play is a great room ceiled with different colored glasses. By throwing powerful lights through these glasses the lovely changing effects are produced. In this same room are placed the pumps which operate the jets of water, and the variety and beauty of the changes are illimitable. The shores of the North Bay provide room for thousands of spectators.