

# ChicagoHistoryMuseum

## **Chicago: Crossroads of America**

The Museum's new permanent exhibition interprets Chicago as a dynamic crossroads of commerce, industry, and culture that shaped modern America. Organized thematically, *Chicago: Crossroads of America* presents a rich array of stories, artifacts, documents, design elements, media presentations, and interactive elements that are informative and engaging. The exhibition offers a fresh perspective on the city, one that encourages Museum visitors to explore the city on their own with increased insight, understanding, and appreciation.

The exhibition opens with Chicago's first 'L' car. Built in 1892, the vehicle transported riders to the World's Columbian Exposition. Now, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the 1890s, 'L' Car No. 1 immerses visitors in the past and inspires them to explore the surrounding galleries.

## **City on the Make**

This gallery presents Chicago as a vital crossroads of the American economy where commerce and industry have flourished for decades. Visitors explore three major stories: *Checagou*, the pre-industrial era of Native Americans, including the fur trade and Fort Dearborn; *Big Shoulders*, the age of heavy industry from the 1840s through the 1970s; and *The New Economy* of the recent past and present. Artifacts include portraits of early settlers, a hand-carved bowsprit from a Lake Michigan schooner, the *Pioneer* locomotive, and meatpacking materials from the Union Stock Yard.

## **City in Crisis**

Entering this gallery, visitors are immersed in the sights and sounds of critical events in Chicago history that transformed the city and its identity. Stories include the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the Haymarket Affair of 1886, the 1915 Eastland Disaster, the 1919 Race Riot, 1920s Gangland Chicago, and the year 1968 when the West Side and Democratic National Convention erupted in violence. Eyewitness accounts, compelling images, rare artifacts, and filmed footage transport visitors back in time to each event that not only affected Chicago, but captured the world's attention.

## **Sweet Home Chicago**

Generations of people have made Chicago their home, shaping its neighborhoods and suburbs into distinct communities that are often defined by issues of race, ethnicity, and class. Entering this gallery, visitors find a small theater where they can view a powerful media program that features historic imagery and lively interviews with contemporary Chicagoans reflecting on their neighborhoods. Photo murals and maps surround the theater, while a message board invites visitors to share their thoughts about Chicago.

Adjacent to Sweet Home Chicago, *The Community Gallery* is a changing exhibition space that explores the complex history and cultural diversity of Chicago neighborhoods and suburban areas. The Community Gallery allows the Museum to introduce themes that supplement and enhance the

stories found elsewhere in the exhibition and will feature a series of rotating exhibitions developed in collaboration with various communities.

### **Second to None**

This gallery presents Chicago's many innovations and their impact on American life. As an urban crossroads, Chicago has continuously attracted people with new ideas who have developed a wide array of innovations, including skyscrapers, modern retail practices, progressive theories of education and social reform, the birth control pill, and a host of familiar everyday products. Among the many artifacts featured in this gallery are charming toys from Ward's and Sears, elegant gowns from the 1920s in a re-created Marshall Field's department store window, architectural elements designed by Adler & Sullivan, and Prairie School furniture and windows by Frank Lloyd Wright. Lincoln Logs, Wrigley Gum, Morton Salt, a Schwinn bicycle, and Weber grill are among many other "made in Chicago" items on view.

### **My Kind of Town**

This gallery highlights Chicago as a cultural hub where generations of people have enjoyed a wide variety of special events, cultural institutions, and recreational facilities. The 1893 and 1933 world's fairs, Riverview Park, and Chicago sports teams are featured, along with jazz and blues, the Chicago School of Television, Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, and Millennium Park. Colorful artifacts from these stories and more will delight visitors of all ages.

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