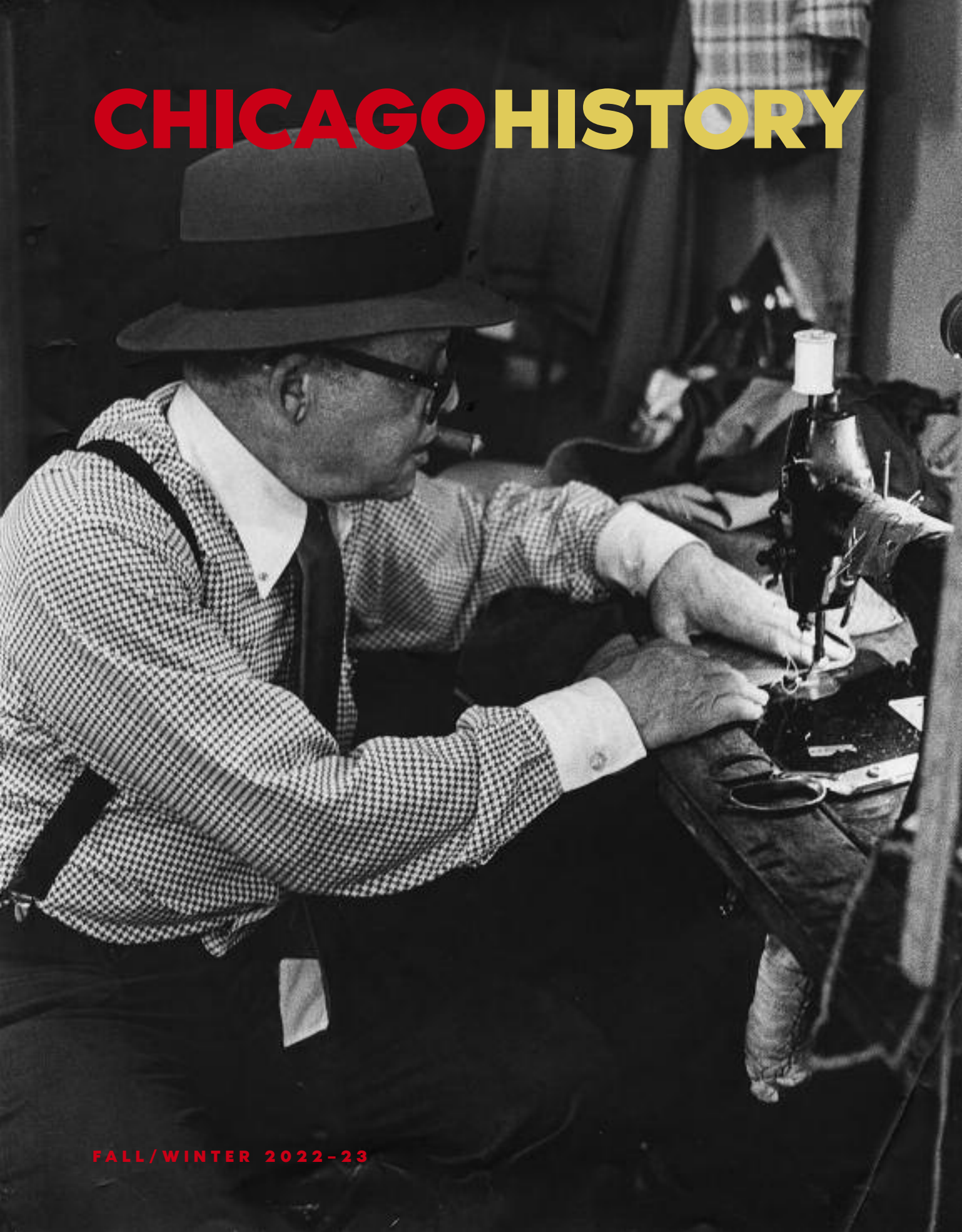
# CHICAGO HISTORY



FALL/WINTER 2022–23

# CHICAGO HISTORY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM • VOLUME XLVI, NUMBER 2

**FALL/WINTER** 2022–23

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*Cover: Scotty Piper working at a sewing machine in his tailor shop on Forty-Seventh Street, May 1971. CHM, ICHi-174416*


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# FROM THE EDITORS

There are many ways to frame history and to share stories of the people who have passed through the area now known as Chicago before and after it was incorporated as a city. As a history museum, part of our work is to weave together stories of different people, perspectives, and events, using oral histories, documents, artifacts, and photographs. The articles in this issue do so in different ways.

First, we give you a deeper look at the Chicago History Museum's most recent costume exhibition, *Treasured Ten: Selections from the Costume Collection*, which opened in April 2022. Clothing can reveal what we value and what we aspire to, ultimately helping us understand ourselves and examine the world in which we live. It can also help us discover more about the person who designed and made the clothing. In this article, we tell the stories of Scotty Piper, Stephen Burrows, Willi Smith, Patrick Kelly, and Barbara Bates—the five designers featured in the exhibition—through their garments, along with their ties to the Chicago area.

Second, we have an article on land acknowledgments—what they are; how they contribute to developing a shared narrative of the past, present, and future; and how they can contribute to collective memory and help provide a foundation for mutual respect. In his article, John Low writes that "places are subject to constructions of a multiplicity of meanings," and land acknowledgments are one way to replace a single master narrative with a shared understanding. He goes onto explain the controversy over knowing which Indigenous peoples were in the Chicago area prior to European contact and lays out the case for promoting the Potawatomi connections to this land in our land acknowledgments.

Third, we have the account of the Chicago Railroad Fairs of 1948 and 1949, which celebrated the railroad as means to connect people across the country, capturing a moment before the interstate highway system changed the landscape of travel and commerce once again. Chicago is often noted for hosting two world expositions, or world's fairs, in 1893 and 1933–34, but the Chicago Railroad Fairs were also large-scale events, attracting more than 2 million visitors each year. The Chicago area has always been a hub of transportation, but at the peak of railroad success, the majority of the thirty-eight railroads participating in the Fair maintained a direct rail connection to Chicago.

Finally, our Making History Award honorees recognized in this issue tell a story of Chicago through the theater. Robert Falls and Roche Schulfer are renowned for transforming Chicago's Goodman Theatre from a struggling theater built out of a school of drama into an inspirational artistic center. Through their interviews after receiving the Theodore Thomas Making History Award for Distinction in the Performing Arts in 2022, they share how they established an artistic collective that created a long-lasting artistic foundation for the Goodman Theatre, successfully making Chicago drama emblematic of larger events in American culture.

# The Designers of *Treasured Ten*: *Selections from the Costume Collection*

JESSICA PUSHOR





Fashion for many is a form of personal expression. It signals our interests and passions. Clothing oftentimes can be the outward expression of who we are, or at least how we would like to be perceived. For fashion designers, it also serves as an artistic medium—a way to give life to their visionary designs and share them across the world. Some fashion designers, such as Chanel, Christian Dior, Ralph Lauren, become household names. For many others, however, the world of fashion is replete with many of the same barriers to success that permeate much of society, including racial discrimination, gender inequality, and economic disadvantages.

Within the Chicago History Museum's vast costume collection of more than 50,000 pieces the one question that gets asked repeatedly by all visitors to the collection is, "Who made this?" From the hundreds of different designers, dressmakers, tailors, retailers, and manufacturers we have represented in our collection, we chose to share the story of five creators: Scotty Piper, Barbara Bates, Stephen Burrows, Willi Smith, and Patrick Kelly, in a small format exhibition titled *Treasured Ten: Selections from the Costume Collection*, which opened on April 9, 2022.

These designers made joyful, energetic, colorful work at different levels of the fashion industry, incorporating their own life experiences and identity into their work in a range of innovative stylish ways. Each of these designers also has a remarkable celebrity clientele as part of their design portfolios, including notables such as Bette Davis, Harold Washington, Cher, Whitney Houston, and Christo and Jeanne-Claude, to name a few.

In addition to featuring two ensembles that demonstrate their design prowess in the history of fashion and highlighting the designers' connections to Chicago, *Treasured Ten* points audiences to the obstacles each designer faced to overcome additional social barriers to find success, showing that clothing is not merely indicative of a historical era, but is embedded in complex cultural narratives.

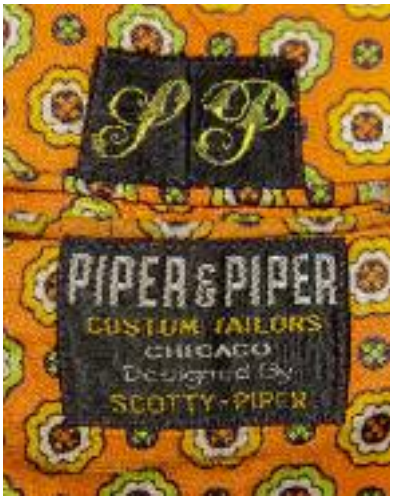
*The entrance to* Treasured Ten: Selections from the Costume Collection *(April 9, 2022–January 16, 2023) at the Chicago History Museum. Photograph by CHM staff*

*Opposite: CHM costume collection manager Jessica Pushor buttons a jacket during a promotional photo shoot for* Treasured Ten. *Photograph by CHM staff*



**Louis Vernon "Scotty" Piper** ran a tailoring shop on Forty-Seventh Street for fifty years on Chicago's West Side, where he created custom suits for Black entertainers, athletes, and ordinary people. His tailoring shop was an institution in the Black community before the Loop was integrated and open to African American shoppers.

Born in New Orleans in 1904, Piper moved to Chicago with his family in 1916. Just three years later, Piper would be involved in one of the largest race riots in history. In what became known as the "Red Summer of 1919," 14-year-old Piper was one of several Black teens on Lake Michigan when a white onlooker threw a rock, striking 17-year-old Eugene Williams and causing him to drown. A five-day long riot ensued, which left twenty-three Black people dead and more than three hundred wounded. Piper fled the city, leaving his family to believe he was killed during the riots. During this time, according to Piper, he joined the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus with a job watering the elephants. Once the circus arrived in Minneapolis, he quit and started dancing the Charleston.




*Detailed view of the label on a men's suit ensemble from Piper & Piper, Custom Tailors, c. 1970. CHM, ICHi-178868*

In 1922, Piper returned to Chicago and began entering dancing contests. Piper was still dancing and performing at local theaters when he became a messenger for the original Chicago "Dancing Tailor," Leo Fox, who made suits for entertainers, politicians, and gangsters. Piper learned to sew and began creating costumes for local performers. In 1925, Piper established his tailoring business at 414 E. Forty-Seventh Street, working for the Wohlmuth Company, eventually becoming the manager. Knowing many of the local and national Black entertainers working in Chicago from his years as a dancer, these performers came to Piper for their "show suits." Later, he worked for the Joseph H. Cohen Vanity clothing store called Scotty, which is how Piper got his nickname.



*Scotty Piper working at a sewing machine in his tailor shop on Forty-Seventh Street, May 1971. CHM, ICHi-174416*

Soon "Scotty Piper, The Dancing Tailor" became the man to go to for suits on Forty-Seventh Street. For more than five decades, Piper created handmade suits for Black celebrities such as Earl "Fatha" Hines, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Ink Spots, Count Basie, and Louis Armstrong (with whom he had grown up in New Orleans). He also created suits for politicians and athletes, such as former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson, football player Duke Slater, and countless others. Though his shop had various locations, it was always along Forty-Seventh Street. Piper's tailor shop was also the go-to place for graduation suits for young Black men on Chicago's South Side, Piper made graduation suits for Harold Washington, Nat King Cole, Joe Williams, Sammy Cooke, and Lou Rawls.

Piper married Mildred Banks Piper in 1927, and they had three daughters. Piper was active in his community, supported many altruistic groups, and was always optimistic about the economic potential of Forty-Seventh Street. Every Bud Billiken Parade for fifty-seven years after its inception in 1929, Scotty Piper would dance the parade route from Thirty-Fifth Street to Fifty-Fifth Street, rather than ride on a float. Piper died on May 15, 1987, after succumbing to injuries sustained in a hit-and-run accident on April 3, 1987.



*Men's wool suit ensemble by Piper & Piper, Custom Designer, c. 1970. CHM, ICHi-178877*



*This silk Stephen Burrows' World dress was worn by Bette Midler for a 1973 issue of* Harper's Bazaar. *CHM, ICHi-178984*

**Stephen Burrows**, known for his sexy women's wear using colorful jersey knits, with his trademark lettuce hems and red stitching, was the first Black designer to achieve international acclaim participating in the "Battle of Versailles" (in 1973), to win a Coty Award, and to have his own mainstream fragrance.

Burrows was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1943 and was raised by his mother, Octavia Pennington, who taught him to draw, and his grandmother, Beatrice Pennington Banks Simmons, who taught him to sew. As a teenager, Burrows loved to dance and would sketch dresses for his dance partners, and he later began sewing his creations. This eventually led Burrows to attend the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, later transferring to the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City to study fashion design, graduating in 1966.

After college, Burrows worked as a designer at various clothing manufactures, while designing clothes for his friends to wear on the side. Burrows created unisex, or any-sex clothing, as he called it, for both men and women that he sold at O Boutique in New York City. This shop was across the street from the popular nightclub Max's Kansas City, which increased the visibility of his designs among clubgoers. These garments proved popular with the "in" crowd of New York City nightlife, and in 1970 Burrows became an in-house designer for Henri Bendel.

Burrows was able to combine his love of dance and his understanding of how fabrics move and can accentuate the body in motion to create the "it" dresses of the disco era. His in-store boutique Stephen Burrows' World became wildly popular in the early 1970s for the slinky, sexy, brightly colored matte jersey dresses that became a staple on the disco dance floors.



*Fashion designer Stephen Burrows in his studio, November 30, 1970. STM-037994247, Chicago Sun-Times*

Burrows was known for bright, solid color fashion, but also enjoyed working with printed fabrics, many of which he designed himself. Famous fashion reporter and photographer Bill Cunningham covered Burrows's December 1972 fashion show, which featured the wrap dress pictured here (see page 8) fashioned of orange silk chiffon printed with a bird pattern in dark orange, with an under-layer of solid orange silk chiffon.[1]

This dress design proved to be remarkably successful for Burrows, as it was worn by entertainer Bette Midler in the January 1973 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. *Bazaar* described the dress as follows: "The rhythmic dress by Stephen Burrows. Hand-screened chiffon in currents of softness. Bias cut, with butterfly sleeves, wrapped waist, swinging knee-length frilled at the hem."




*Label on a wool dress featured in the August 1970 runway show at Stephen Burrows' World, the first at his boutique inside the Henri Bendel department store. CHM, ICHi-179031*

In late 1973, Burrows left Henri Bendel and established Stephen Burrows Inc., creating ready-to-wear garments that retailed at stores across the country. In Chicago, Burrows's designs were carried by local retailers Bonwit Teller & Co, Chas A. Stevens, I. Magnin, and were regularly featured in *Ebony* magazine and in their Ebony Fashion Fair shows. Burrows also signed a deal with Max Factor to create his own women's fragrance, Stephen B., and won Coty American Fashion Critics' "Winnie" Awards (the Oscar of the Fashion Industry) in 1973 and 1977.

Burrows would later return to Henri Bendel's in 1977, where he created sexy, draped chainmail evening dresses and separates. Burrows shuttered his design business in the mid-1980s and remained out of the limelight until 2002 when he reopened Stephen Burrows' World.

*"My mother and grandmother were always ladies of style and still are, I guess they taught me that you didn't have to be rich to look good. I believe that good clothes don't have to be expensive."*

—Willi Smith,
*Chicago Defender*, August 21, 1978




*This red, white, and black ensemble is a perfect example of Smith's pioneering "street couture" look, capturing Chicago street fashion in the late 1980s. CHM, ICHi-178963*




*Label on a men's cotton ensemble designed by Willi Smith for his WilliWear clothing line, 1987. CHM, ICHi-179039*

**Willi Smith** started his label WilliWear in 1976, creating easy, comfortable, and affordable sportswear for both men and women—a fashion style he called "Street Couture," stressing design rather than status. His garments were retailed at many Chicago retailers including Carson Pirie Scott, Marshall Field & Co., and Neiman Marcus.

Born in Philadelphia in 1948, Smith started designing as a child. In high school, he studied commercial art and took extra courses that led to fashion illustrating. Smith won a scholarship to the Philadelphia Academy of Art, but later transferred to Parsons School of Design in NYC. In 1965, he apprenticed with Arnold Scaasi, and in 1967 he left Parsons during his senior year to begin working professionally as a designer.

Smith designed for Bobbie Brooks, Talbott, and Glenora Juniors before joining junior sportswear label Digits in 1969 as their lead designer. By 1972 Smith was nominated alongside Stephen Burrows for the Coty American Fashion Critics' "Winnie" Award for his innovative and unique designs for Digits.

In 1976, Willi Smith founded his label WilliWear with business partner Laurie Mallet after they traveled to Bombay (now Mumbai), where they created a four-piece women's collection made from cotton material readily available in the local textile markets. WilliWear soon became known for offering well-designed basics made from quality fabrics at an affordable price, Smith did this by purchasing foreign-made fabrics and manufacturing his designs overseas, allowing him to retail WilliWear between $35 and $80. To further reach consumers, each WilliWear collection was cut into patterns for Butterick and McCall's so that home sewers could translate the silhouettes.

In 1982, Smith presented his first menswear collection for WilliWear. That same year, his collections were featured at the Chicago Apparel Center's holiday market, and Smith came to Chicago to introduce it. In 1983, Smith was awarded the Coty Award (his fifth time nominated) for womenswear, and in November 1983 WilliWear presented the "Street Couture" Spring 1984 collection, which would go on to be the labels most iconic.

In 1985, Smith won the Cutty Sark Award for outstanding men's sportswear. In 1986 Williwear Ltd. grossed more than $25 million, and he designed the groom and groomsmen suits for the Edwin Schlossberg-Caroline Kennedy wedding.

Tragically, on April 17, 1987, Smith died at Mount Sinai Hospital from AIDS-related complications. He was 39. At the time of his death, he was considered as one of the fashion industry's most successful Black designers. But by 1990, WilliWear closed its womenswear operations and filed for bankruptcy. Smith's sister Toukie Smith, an actress and model, established the Willi Smith Family Foundation for AIDS Research, after his death.

**Patrick Kelly** was the first American and Black fashion designer to be voted into the prestigious Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter, the exclusive union of the French fashion industry. He defied entrenched racist stereotypes by turning derogative racial imagery into highly desirable fashion designs.

Kelly was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1954. He taught himself to sew and made dresses for neighborhood girls for dances and proms. In 1976, he moved to New York City, where he studied at Parsons School of Design for one year before dropping out. Kelly did not find much success in New York but did make friends with many other designers and models. In 1979, famous fashion model Pat Cleveland suggested he move to Europe, and the next day a one-way ticket to Paris in Kelly's name mysteriously arrived at his doorstep.

Kelly slowly began gaining his footing in France by selling his designs on the streets of Paris and at flea markets. In 1985, Kelly and his partner Bjorn Amelan started his label Patrick Kelly Paris, and he showed his first formal collection that year. His tight-fitting, button-trimmed dresses caught the attention of the right people, and soon everyone wanted a Patrick Kelly dress. He became known for designing clothes with a sense of humor and at an affordable price range (when compared to other French designers) and for trying to subvert racist stereotypes by turning derogatory racial imagery (full lips, golliwogs, watermelons, etc.) into desirable fashion designs.

Actress Bette Davis was introduced to Patrick Kelly in 1985 and they became fast friends. On her last appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman* in April 1989, Davis wore a custom-made red knit Patrick Kelly dress covered with questions marks, which Kelly recreated for his 1989 winter line in black wool with red question marks (see page 13).

Kelly was friends with Dorothy Fuller, the director of the Chicago Apparel Center. In April 1987, Kelly showed his Fall line at the Chicago Apparel Center to retailers. Prior to this, his designs were sold at high-end boutiques on Oak Street as early as 1985. He was also appointed the Dorothy Fuller Chair of Fashion Visiting Professor at the International Academy of Merchandising and Design in Chicago beginning in 1988. That same year, Kelly was admitted to the French Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter, the prestigious and exclusive French fashion industry organization. Kelly died tragically and suddenly in 1990 from AIDS-related complications at the height of his career.




*Above: Kelly at the International Academy of Merchandising and Design on November 8, 1988. STM-031996288, Chicago Sun-Times. Below: Label detail from a Patrick Kelly garment. Photograph by CHM staff*




*Kelly working with his students at the International Academy of Merchandising and Design. A student (back right) is wearing one of Kelly's designs—a graphically bold women's suit. STM-031996158, Chicago Sun-Times*





*This black wool knit dress embellished with glass buttons from Kelly's 1989 Fall/Winter line was based on a dress Kelly designed for Bette Davis. CHM, ICHi-178920*



**Barbara Bates** is a self-taught fashion designer born and raised in Chicago. She opened her company Bates Designs in 1986 and began creating custom garments for celebrity clientele, including Whitney Houston, Oprah Winfrey, and Michael Jordan, as well as suits and eveningwear for Chicago women. She is still in business to this day.

Bates was born on June 27, 1955, and was raised on the West Side of Chicago in the Garfield Park neighborhood. Her father, Elvin Hicks, was a schoolteacher, and her mother, Vera, was a homemaker. Bates went through Chicago's public school system. She attended John Marshall Metro High School and had to leave school at 15 when she got pregnant, but she returned to school and graduated with honors in 1972. Growing up, she would watch her mother and aunt always look their best, and she wanted to do the same. Her first designs were made while she was in high school. Bates would draw designs and have a friend who knew how to sew make the clothes for her. This collaboration led her to be voted "Best Dressed" her senior year of high school.

Bates worked a variety of jobs after graduating from high school and wore many of her designs to the office, where her female coworkers would admire her style. In 1984, while working as a secretary for the First National Bank of Chicago, Bates began taking orders for her designs out of the bathroom during her lunch breaks.

In April 1986, Bates quit her secretarial job and started Bates Designs, becoming a fashion designer full time. She opened her first showroom in 1988, a 700-square-foot location at 1130 S. Wabash Avenue in Chicago's South Loop. Her designs were included in the 1987–88 Ebony Fashion Fair (Fashion Sizzle), and she soon opened Bates, her signature boutique on Delaware Street in the Gold Coast neighborhood in November 1989. By 1991, boutiques across the country were carrying her designs.

Her first "tall guy" client was Sam Perkins of the Los Angeles Lakers. He introduced her to Chicago Bulls' stars Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen, who began ordering custom leather clothing. Kool Moe Dee and Mike Tyson were both introduced to Bates clothing retailed through boutiques. Her "Picasso" leather jacket was worn by MC Hammer to accept his Billboard Music award in 1990.

In 1999, she established the Barbara Bates Foundation to uplift inner city youth by providing custom-made prom dresses and tuxedos and, more recently, to promote breast cancer awareness and education for women of color. In 2012 Barbara Bates competed on NBC's reality show *Fashion Star*, and in 2020 Bates Designs, along with four other Chicago companies, were awarded contracts by the city of Chicago to produce 250,000 reusable cloth masks to combat the spread of COVID-19. In October 2022, Barbra Bates Designs celebrated 36 years in business in Chicago.




*Left: Barbara Bates in her store at 1010 South Wabash Avenue on September 15, 1999. STM-000295113, Jim Frost/Chicago Sun-Times. Above: label on a women's suit, c. 1988. CHM, ICHi-179035*



*Barbara Bates's fall collection on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago on October 14, 2001. STM-000574290, Bob Black/ Chicago Sun-Times*

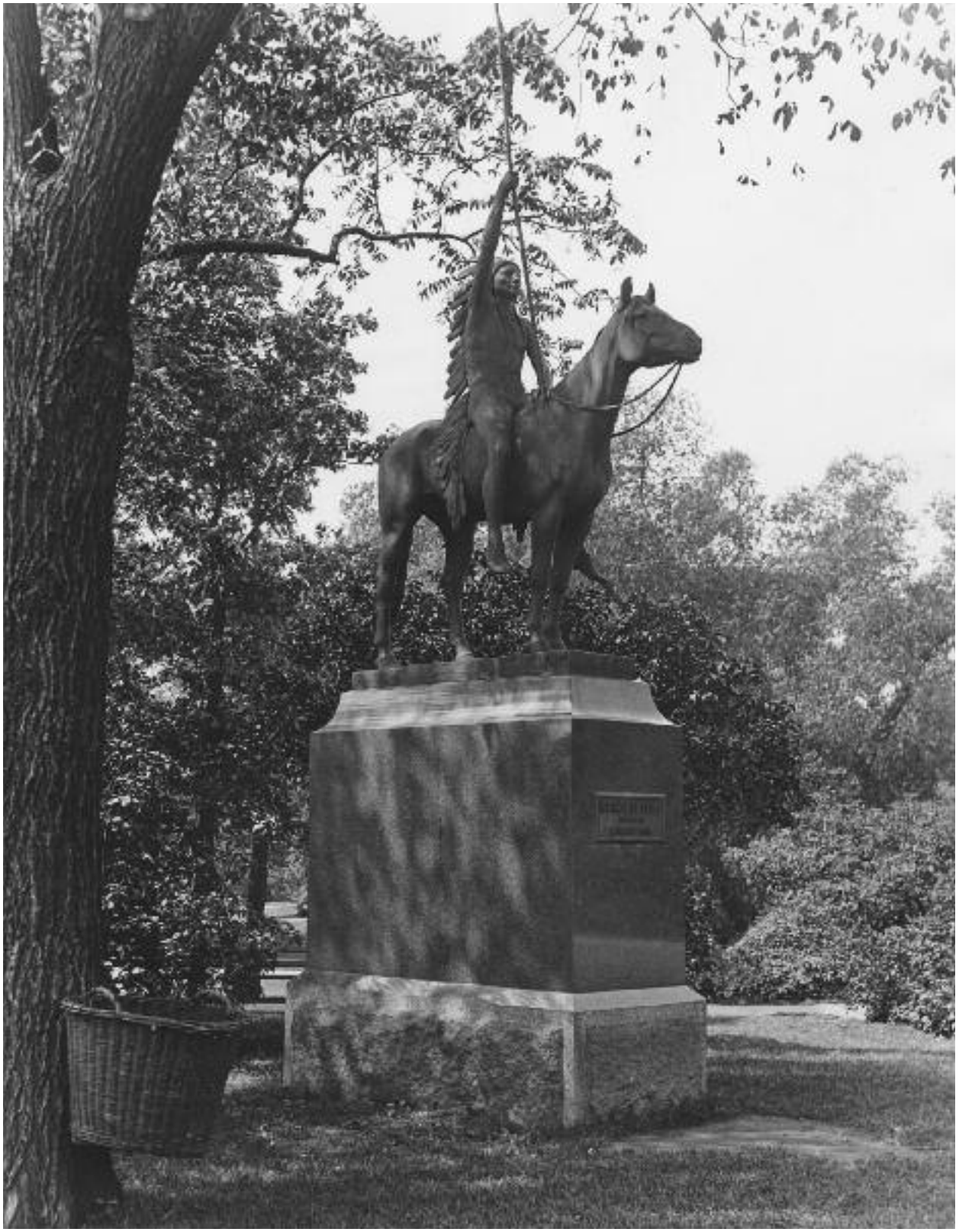


*Part of Bates's design signature includes women's suits that flatter the wearer's figure such as this tangerine-colored, wool blend ensemble, c. 1988. CHM, ICHi-178905*

*Jessica Pushor is the collections manager of costume and textiles at CHM. She holds a MA in Fashion and Textile Studies: History, Theory, Museum Practice from the Fashion Institute of Technology.* Treasured Ten *is Pushor's curatorial debut, and she has assisted on several fashion exhibitions in the past. At CHM, she worked on* Silver Screen to Mainstream: American Fashion in the 1930s and '40s*;* Making Mainbocher: The First American Couturier*;* Chicago Styled: Fashioning The Magnificent Mile®*; and* Inspiring Beauty: 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair. *At the Museum of the City of New York, Pushor assisted with* Stephen Burrows: When Fashion Danced.

ENDNOTE

1. Cunningham's article appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on December 11, 1972, and he closed out his report on the show with this comment on the dress: "The show ended with six pale peach chiffon dresses, each printed with sepia line drawings of sleeping birds, The group was memorable for the soft, feminine ruffles and the blouse sleeves."



A Signal of Peace *is an 1890 bronze sculpture by Cyrus Edwin Dallin located in Lincoln Park. Intended as a recognition of Native peoples and exhibited at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the model for Dallin's studies was Philip, son of Kicking Bear of the Oglala Lakota, who do not have a historical relationship with the lands in greater Chicago.*

# Chicago is on the Lands of the Potawatomi

*Why Land Acknowledgments for Chicago should acknowledge this historical fact*

JOHN N. LOW

*Land Acknowledgments* have become very popular in the most recent past. They emerge from the protocol of the Maori in New Zealand and the traditions for entry onto the lands of another. Land Acknowledgments were embraced in Canada during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings of the 2010s. Most recently, they have become popular in the United States. Many people rightly believe that there is a moral and ethical imperative to acknowledge the Native peoples displaced by their settlement.

When I say, "settler colonist," I mean settler colonialism is that form of colonialization whereby settlers come with intentions of making a new home in Indigenous territories. Settler colonialism is a structure and ongoing system of taking and not a single event, and its legacies continue to this day. The United States couldn't exist without its settler-colonial foundation. As authors Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang note in their important analysis:

> In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward.[1]

As Indigenous lands become acquired by settlers and utilized as a form of capital, it disrupts the traditional Indigenous relationships and lifeways to land. Tuck and Yang continue:

> Settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies. Therefore, settler nations are not immigrant nations.[2]

Land Acknowledgments are *not* a remedy for settler colonialism. They are, rather, an effort to lessen the negative consequences upon Indigenous peoples by addressing the realities of settler colonialism. There are some essential ingredients of a Land Acknowledgment: (a) recognition of the first peoples who were on the land now occupied by settler colonists; (b) recognition that settler colonists are thriving on the lands at the sacrifice of the Indigenous peoples of the particular land or territory; and (c) therefore, to honor the sacrifices of Native peoples who have suffered from the loss of their lands, the individual, institution, or organization commits to doing certain things as amends, recompense, for those Native peoples. It is not merely an "honoring" of their sacrifices. It is, rather, a commitment to steps that can move us toward restorative justice for Native peoples. The goal of Land Acknowledgments is that with education and commitment there can be awareness, which can then be the foundation for healing, truth, and reconciliation.[3]

What is the importance and value of a Land Acknowledgment? It promotes awareness. It reminds all of us that there were Native peoples here living and thriving on lands now occupied by the descendants of settler colonists. It connects history to memory and that to the present and future. I discuss the power of memory in my book *Imprints, The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi & the City of Chicago*.[4] There are important features in historical and collective memory that figure into the value of Land Acknowledgments.

## Memorials and the Power of "Memory"–Memory Work

In order to understand the power of Land Acknowledgments, we have to understand their role in developing a shared narrative of the past, present, and future. Land Acknowledgments are not innocent. They can solidify memory and create and perpetuate master narratives. They can contribute to a collective memory that can be a foundation for mutual respect and understanding. We are at a time in the city of Chicago in which we have the opportunity to reconsider the past and assess whether our shared narratives of pioneer, frontier, civilization, and settlement fairly represent the histories and peoples of Chicago.

*Collective memory* is an idea developed by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs that is distinguished from individual memory. Collective memory is shared, handed down, and developed by a society or group.[5] Why are master narratives that emerge from collective memory so powerful? Their power is not only in the individual memories they convey but in the collective memories with which they are imbued[7] and which facilitate the individual and collective need to be connected to a shared past.[8] The power is that people can change in many ways, but memory devices, such as Land Acknowledgments, will connect Natives and non-Natives to a shared history that better reflects the reality of settler colonialism.[9]

Memory serves as a means of producing knowledge and as an agent in the preservation of the past. Memory is a process by which some things are remembered, forgotten, imagined, and invented. The authority of memory can be institutionalized into religious traditions, legends, songs, statues, literature, and, indeed, Land Acknowledgments. Memory becomes "evidence" for those who recollect.[10] Collective memories are transferred from one person to another in order to make "remembering in common possible."[11] Rituals, myths, symbols, and practices are all a part of memory making and memorializing. Collective memory is metaphoric and legitimizing. It can embody a shared past and a national/group identity. It is partly through the collective construction of the past that communal identities emerge.[12] Memory has power because of its multiplicity of interpretation, uses, and transferability.[13] Land Acknowledgments, therefore, can be a foundation for a remembering of a shared past that includes the sacrifices of Native peoples.

## Memorials to the Native Peoples of Chicago

Decades of settlers colonists in Chicago cemented their memories of American Indians into statues reflecting a celebration of conquest and nostalgia for a mythical past. These monuments and memorials are so numerous that they seem to signal an obsession with rendering Indians immobile; safely ensconced in metal or stone, and in place. Non-Natives created many, a few were created in collaboration with Native peoples, and American Indians themselves created a few. There are many such landmarks "honoring" American Indians throughout Chicago, and most are monuments erected by non-Indians to "honor" Native peoples.

There is a profound story embedded in monuments and memorials created by non-Natives for non-Natives; they reflect a pathos, guilt, and nostalgia for the disappearing—and now "safe"—Indian. These monuments also allow us to envision how non-Natives of the era were responding to, and thinking about, Indians. Such memorials represent a victory celebration over "the first peoples." They began to appear with gathering frequency after 1890 and the assumed subjugation of the remaining Indian peoples within the boundaries of the nation. No longer perceived as a threat, American Indians were embraced as a part of the national patrimony now worthy of memorialization. According to Philip Deloria, the ideology of pacification that bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represented an affirmation of the "vanishing Indian" trope and an expectation of Indian assimilation. Says Deloria, "all these things added up to either complete domination, with limitless access to Indian lives and cultures, or complete freedom to ignore Indian people altogether."[14] Very often memorials and monuments are enduring attempts to stabilize meaning and memory. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a colossal monument was planned to honor "the Indian" in New York City and would have rivaled the Statue of Liberty in size.[15] So many "grand" statues to Indians exist that their presence justified compilation into a book.[16]

Monuments can also be an attempt to insert into the landscape a bookmark of sorts. Landscapes are like libraries; within each are stories reflecting the hopes, fears, aspirations, and lived experiences of human interaction. Like books, places are subject to constructions of a multiplicity of meanings. How we understand and relate to both books and landscapes is ever changing; their meanings are subjective and temporal. The irony is that no matter how heavy the monument, it never stands still.[17] It mirrors the narratives of the hegemon and the counternarratives of the marginalized.

American Indians were rarely consulted on what memorials they might appreciate. Civic leaders made those decisions. After all, these monuments were really not for the Natives—but for the grandchildren of the settler colonists—offered as a kind of apologia in stone. Those monuments that purported to honor the local Indians often reflected a darker message and imagination. Confessed one proponent of such memorials:

> The few monuments that have been erected by white men to commemorate and perpetuate the names and virtues of worthy representatives of the Red race do not at all satisfy the obligations which rest upon us in that behalf. . . . It would seem not only fitting but just that these chiefs and tribes, who were the original occupants and possessors of the soil, should have suitable and enduring monuments to commemorate their names place in public parks . . . so that our children and our children's children may have kept before them a recollection of a race of men who contended with us for more than two centuries for the possession of the country, but who have been vanquished and almost exterminated by our superior force.[18]





*Two examples of Chicago statues meant to "honor" Native peoples include: (above)* The Bowman *and* The Spearman *(1928) at Congress Plaza, made by Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrovic, and (below)* The Alarm *(1884), depicting an Ottawa family, intended to be a tribute gifted by Martin Ryerson, who achieved his wealth in part due to relationships with Ottawa in Michigan in the 1830s–40s.*




*This mural on Chicago's Riverwalk, "Bodéwadmikik ethë yéyék/You are on Potawatomi Land" by Grand Portage Ojibwe artist Andrea Carlson, is a land acknowledgment created to honor Potawatomi people. Photograph courtesy of Anna Munzesheimer*

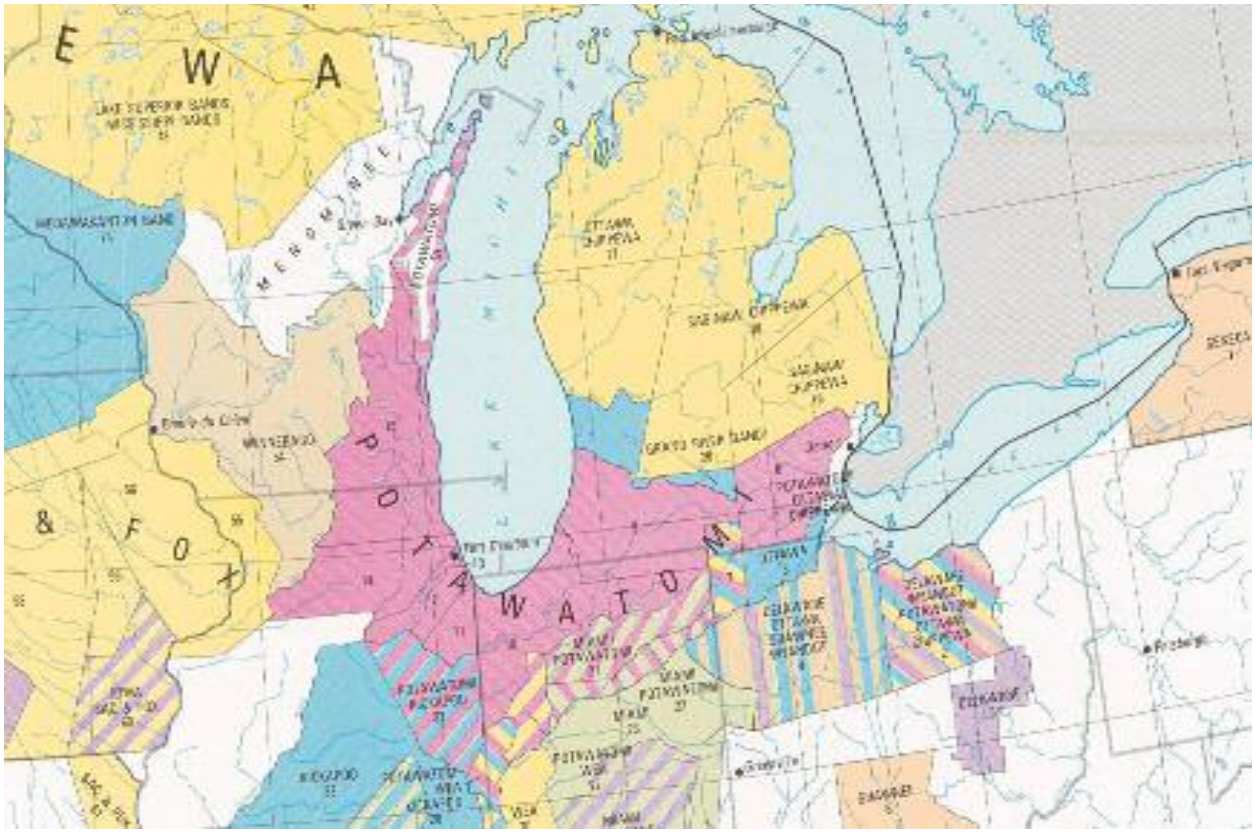
But for the last several hundred years, the mainstream of settler colonists, and their descendants, in the United States have erected a multitude of monuments celebrating their "conquest" of North America. It is a rare occurrence when both Natives and non-Natives can share a commemorative space, language, and performative act that acknowledges the difficulties and complexities of contact between the two. That is indeed the opportunity before us in Chicago today. Land Acknowledgments can disrupt the master narratives of the past and replace it with a shared understanding of what really happened in "Chicago." A Land Acknowledgment becomes then, in part, a memorial to the past and a call to action for the future.

## The Controversy

There is substantial confusion about which Indigenous peoples were at Chicago prior to European contact.

The source of that confusion stems from the fact that there was no contact with Europeans before the Beaver Wars of the 1600s. During the Beaver Wars, the Iroquois drove most of the Algonquian Indians out of the southern Great Lakes region. When Europeans arrived near the end of the Beaver Wars, the Iroquois had been driven back east and Algonquian tribes were returning presumably to their traditional homelands. But the only stories of who was at Chicago before the Beaver Wars are oral histories of the tribes themselves. The Potawatomi have stories that place their origins variously at the lake shores of Milwaukee or near Grand Rapids, Michigan, or Chicago. Those are the stories I grew up being taught as a Potawatomi youth. Conversely, the Miami situate their origins along the St. Joseph River at Mishawaka, Indiana, and the Ojibwe have stories of their origins either at the Straits of Mackinac or the mouth of the St. Lawrence River as it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. In my research, I have found no other tribe that situates their origins at or near Chicago as do the Potawatomi. Again, I think it is reasonable to assume that the Algonquian tribes, including the Potawatomi, returned to their homelands after the end of the Beaver Wars.

It is essential that the collective memory of who was here at the time of the taking by settler colonists be accurate. Today, Land Acknowledgments vary widely in the city as to who is being "acknowledged" for their sacrifices. What I provide below is the evidence that supports the assertion that, I believe most accurately, Chicago and surrounding areas were the lands of the Potawatomi, and they are the ones who should be recognized as so in Chicago-area Land Acknowledgments. I will admit this is my perspective based upon the teachings I learned as a youngster together with primary and secondary sources that confirm those teachings. Other Native peoples may not agree, but what I present here is solid evidence for why Land Acknowledgments relating to Chicago should give primacy to the Potawatomi.




## The Maps

There is a substantial amount of scholarship that has been condensed into maps. The map above comes from the efforts of the Indian Claims Commission, created by the Indian Claims Act of 1946. This judicial body was established to settle land and treaty claims of the various Indian nations, and in that process tribes were allowed to present their best evidence based upon the knowledge of elders, anthropologists, and archeologists. Above is the map that emerged for the Greater Chicago area regarding territories.[19]

The Wisconsin Department of Instruction has also created a map (below left) of the locations of tribal nations in Wisconsin, northern Illinois, northern Indiana, and Michigan. The green areas clearly show that Potawatomi territory included what is now Chicago. Nowhere is there a reference to Chicago also being the lands of the Ojibwe and/or Odawa or any other tribal nation.[20]

Similarly, see the map (below right) courtesy of Michigan State University.[21]









*Maps on this page were created by Kyle Malott, Pokagon Potawatomi member and advance language specialist for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.*

A map from the Pokagon Potawatomi (above) confirms the sites of Potawatomi villages from Door County, Wisconsin, down along the left side of Lake Michigan and through Chicago to what is now Michigan and Indiana.[22]

A more detailed map below shows the location of Potawatomi villages in and around Chicago/ Zhegagoynak.[23] Both maps would be circa 1701, after the end of the Beaver Wars, the retreat of the Iroquois from the Great Lakes region, and the return and reestablishment of Algonquian peoples to their homelands. The villages in and around Chicago also had Potawatomi names because they were Potawatomi communities on Potawatomi lands. Examples include Wakigen/Waukegan, IL (a fort), Zhagnash/Sauganaush, IL (Englishman), Aptë gizhêk/Half Day, IL (half day) Kyankëké/Kankakee (low laying land), Mskoké/Skokie, IL (red earth), Zhabné/ Shabbona, IL (hard to kill), Éshkëm/Ashkum, IL (more and more), Senathwen/ Senachewine, IL (rocky flow), Mëkwan/ Maquon, IL (spoon), Giwani/Kewaunee, IL (prairie chicken), Mkopenak/Portage, IN (place of bear potato), Winm k/Winamac, IN (catfish), Zhonya mbes/ Silver Lake, WI (silver lake), Mnénak/Milwaukee, WI (taken by force), and Gnozhe/Kenosha, WI (northern pike).[24]




Some people misguidedly refer to the map on the "Native Land Digital" website as proof that Chicago was not Potawatomi land (see Native Land Digital: https://native-land.ca/). However, this website includes an important disclaimer as to its accuracy:

> **"Native Land Disclaimer**
> **This map does not represent or intend to represent official or legal boundaries of any Indigenous nations. To learn about definitive boundaries, contact the nations in question."**

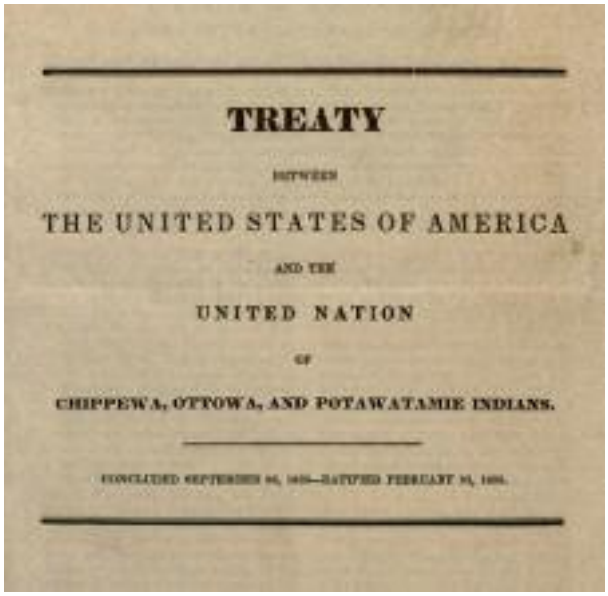
## The Treaties

Many Land Acknowledgments being proffered around Chicago refer to this place as the homelands of the "Council of the Three Fires." This is apparently due to the first Treaty of Chicago (1821), the second Treaty of Prairie du Chien (1830), and the second Treaty of Chicago (1833). Those treaties ceded what is now northern Illinois and Chicago to the United States government, but they were never identified as treaties with the Council of the Three Fires. In fact, all three treaties refer to us as "the United Nation(s) of the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi Indians."[25]

Yet, we were never a "United Nation(s)." This is only the federal government title for the Indians of Chicago because they couldn't tell who we were. We were, and are, individual and distinct tribal nations, and it is true we had loose social, trade, and political alliances with each other. We were Potawatomi in Chicago. And we have no history of living in mixed villages among the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi in the Chicago area. If an Ojibwe person moved to Chicago and married into a Potawatomi family, they became Potawatomi. United Nation(s) of the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi is a construct and fiction created by the United States government. Because our languages and lifeways were very similar, US government officials had difficulty distinguishing between the tribes, and so in an effort to make sure that all the Natives of the region were included in these treaties, they manufactured a "United Nation," which has now been reified into the "Council of the Three Fires."

An article by ethno-historian James Clifton confirms there were only Potawatomi peoples at the 1833 Treaty negotiations in Chicago. He read through the treaty journals retained in the National Archives to confirm this fact.[26] As Clifton reports, the Treaty of Chicago of 1833 was attended by "six thousand Potawatomi, old and young, men, women, and children."[27] Clifton continues: "The Chicago Treaty was negotiated by several different groups of Potawatomi communities and each had interests and aims not shared by the others."[28] Importantly, Clifton concludes:

> The so-called United Bands of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi were from villages in northern Illinois and south-central Wisconsin. The use of designation (for the Indians) by the Americans was misleading since all of those involved were Potawatomi in social identity and political organization. The cover name merely recognized the fact that numerous Ottawa and few Chippewa had earlier assimilated into the Potawatomi communities, and that the Potawatomi proper had long standing alliances with these other societies.[29]


TREATY

BETWEEN

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AND THE

UNITED NATION

OF

CHIPPEWA, OTTOWA, AND POTAWATAMIE INDIANS.

Despite the attack on sovereignty some are making in claiming Chicago as their lands, only a tribal government has the sovereign right and responsibility to make land claims. Not individuals. Any individual making such a claim is attacking and undermining tribal sovereignty. The Pokagon Potawatomi government has claimed Chicago since 1833, and no other federally recognized tribal nation claims Chicago. Individuals cannot make land claims of any significance; that is the sovereign right of tribal nations alone.

## The People

Furthermore, all the signers of the 1833 Treaty were Potawatomi! And while we were a "Council of Three Fires," each was a distinct sovereign nation.[30] There are no signatories to the 1833 Treaty of Chicago who are Ojibwe or Odawa, and the vast majority of signers to the 1821 and 1830 treaties were also Potawatomi.[31] One can tell by the names—these are Potawatomi names. That is because we lived here and this was our home.[32] Almost all the notable chiefs of the era in the Chicago area were Potawatomi, including Waubonse, Shabbona, Black Partridge, Alexander Robinson, Antoine Ouilmette, Sauganash (Billy Caldwell), Gomo, Metea, Blackbird, Aptakisic, Pokagon, Topinabee, Menominee, and Maungeezik (Big Foot). The very important Potawatomi women of Chicago included Kitihawa, Watseka, and Archange Ouilmette. How many non-Native newcomers married into Ojibwe and Odawa families when they came to Chicago? None! Ouilmette married a Potawatomi woman, Robinson married a Potawatomi woman, Billy Caldwell married a Potawatomi woman, Hubbard married a Potawatomi woman, etc. No one married an Ojibwe or Odawa woman to settle in Chicago

because there were only Potawatomi families to marry and be adopted into.

It was the Potawatomi who burned down Fort Dearborn—no one else was there. It was the Potawatomi from Indiana and Illinois who were walked out west on a Trail of Death—no one else has stories of removal from Chicago. Only the Potawatomi of northern Illinois and Indiana were forced onto reservations west of the Mississippi. Simon Pokagon (Pokagon Band Potawatomi) wrote in 1893 about Chicago as *home* at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

> On behalf of my people, the American Indians, I hereby declare to you, the pale-faced race that has usurped our lands and homes, that we have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair now being held in this Chicago city, the wonder of the world. No; sooner would we hold the high joy day over the graves of our departed than to celebrate our own funeral, the discovery of America. And while . . . your hearts in admiration rejoice over the beauty and grandeur of this young republic and you say, "behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land," do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of our homes and a once happy race.[33]

Indeed, it was Simon Pokagon who presented to then Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison (without authority to do so) a copy of the Treaty of 1833 as a sort of deed to the lands upon which Chicago is now situated.[34]

It was the Pokagon Potawatomi who took their claim to the Chicago lakefront all the way to the United States Supreme Court in *Williams v. City of Chicago* (1917). Only the Potawatomi have sued for return of any part of Chicago, and that expression of tribal sovereignty and resistance should be respected.

Land Acknowledgments must be accurate in who they "acknowledge." Truth and reconciliation requires that accurate information be understood and available. If we objectively look at the evidence, the archives, and the available information, it is clear that Chicago is within the homelands of the Potawatomi. A Land Acknowledgment should not operate as a colonial erasure of that truth, and a proper Land Acknowledgment should promote the Potawatomi connections to this land so that it remains in the collective memory of all who care about Chicago.

## A Proposal

It is essential that we acknowledge that Chicago is the territory of the Potawatomi. It is also important to note that many other tribal peoples came through Chicago; some stayed and were incorporated into the Potawatomi




*The Chicago History Museum adopted this Land Acknowledgment in 2021. It is posted in English, Potawatomi, and Spanish on the first floor of the Museum.*



*Four children outside the American Indian Center, when it was located at 1630 W. Wilson Avenue, for the Spring Expo on April 22, 1995.*

and others traded, traveled, etc. and then went to their homes. It is also important that as a result of Indian removal, the Potawatomi were removed from Chicago in a great ethnic cleansing but that 120 years later American Indians from all over the United States came to Chicago as a part of the relocation programs of the 1950s, and they and their descendants now form a vibrant and diverse urban Indian community. Chicago is their home now too. A proposed Land Acknowledgment and Call to Action for those in the greater Chicago area might read something like this:

> The greater Chicago area is situated on the homelands of the Potawatomi people, who cared for the land until forced out by non-Native settlers. The Ojibwe, Odawa, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Miami, Mascouten, Sac and Fox, Kickapoo, Ho-Chunk, Menomonee, and tribes whose names have been lost as a result of genocide also lived, gathered, and traded in this region. Today, Chicago is home to the largest urban Indigenous population in the Midwest, and they continue to honor this land and its waterways, practice traditions, and celebrate their heritage.
>
> Therefore [articulate the specific ways you, your institution or organization is going to connect, collaborate, ally, support etc. Native peoples].

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ILLUSTRATIONS | Illustrations are from the collection of the Chicago History Museum unless otherwise specified. 16, ICHi-036555; 19, top: ICHi-036550; bottom: ICHi-036554. 20, courtesy of Anna Munzesheimer. 21, top: Library of Congress, LCCN 80695449. bottom left: courtesy of the Wisconsin Department of Instruction; bottom right: courtesy of Michigan State University. 22, top and bottom: courtesy of Kyle Malott, Pokagon Potawatomi. 23, courtesy of Michigan State University. 24, CHM staff. 25, ST-30003011-0041, *Chicago Sun-Times* collection.

FOR FURTHER READING | For more on Native American studies, see: *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (Routledge, 2002). For more on memory work, see: Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories, The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (University of California Press, 1997); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford University Press 2009). For more on monumental statues, see: Lisa Blee and Jean M. O'Brien, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

## ENDNOTES

1. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2012): 5; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research,* vol. 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409
2. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," 6–7.
3. *Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement*, The U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC), www.usdac.us. Accessed September 17, 2022.
4. John N. Low, *Imprints, The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi & the City of Chicago* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2016).
5. Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
6. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37. See also Pierre Nova's influential attempt to understand the function of collective memory in modernity, Pierre Nora, "Between History and Memory: *Les lieux de memoire*," *Representations*, vol. 26 (1989): 7–25.
7. "Nearly all the most resilient oppositional cultures have been rooted in collective memory, in precipitates of past historical experience." Jackson Lears, "Power, Culture, and Memory," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 1 (1988): 37–140, 138.
8. "Objects matter in cultural process, especially among peoples who have not relied on written texts for the recording of knowledge. Stripped bare of their traditional objects of use, beauty and power, Native American communities have suffered interruptions of historical memory, paralyzing failures in the generational transfer of political and sacred power and the cessation of organic growth in many ancient stylistic and iconographic traditions." Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, "Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-presenting Native American Arts," *The Art Bulletin*, vol.77, no. 1 (1995): 6–10, 9.
9. LeAnne Howe writes, "Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story, a tribalography . . . tribalography . . . achieves a new understanding in theorizing on Native studies. This is a tall order for a storyteller, but here goes. Native stories, no matter what form they take (novel, poem, drama, memoir, film, history) seem to pull all the elements together of the storyteller's tribe, meaning the people, the land, and multiple characters and all their manifestations and revelations, and connect these in past, present, and future milieus (present and future milieus mean non-Indians) . . . tribalography comes from the Native propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbiotically connecting one thing to another." LeAnne Howe, "The Story of America: A Tribalography," in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002), 29–50.
10. Barry Schwartz, "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory" *Social Forces*, vol. 61, no. 2 (1982): 374–402; George Lipitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Michel Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 59–60; Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories, The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back Into Collective Memory," *The American Historical Review,* vol. 102, no. 5 (1997): 1372–85; Allan Megill, "History, Memory, Identity," *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1998): 37–62; and Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Re-Membering the History of the Hawaiian Hula," in *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific*, ed. J. M. Mageo, 187–204 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).
11. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
12. Edwina Taborsky, "The Discursive Object," in *Objects of Knowledge*, ed. S. M. Pearce (London: The Athlone Press, 2002), 50–70.
13. James E. Young introduced the idea of "collected" memory to better describe memory's inherently fragmented, collected, and individual character. See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials, and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 7. Michael Rothberg argues that the connections between collective memory and group identity is dialogic, what he terms a theory of multidirectional memory, in which memories of multiple peoples and events interact productively in much the same ways that peoples accept, accommodate, incorporate, and/or reject all sorts of outsider influences. See Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization (Cultural Memory in the Present)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2009). As Marita Sturken notes, "Memory is crucial to the understanding of a culture precisely because it indicates collective desires, needs and self-identification." See Maria Sturken, *Tangled Memories, The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 8.
14. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 50.
15. Rodman Wanamaker proposed building the "National American Indian Memorial." Ground was broken in 1913 but construction never advanced beyond the preliminaries. See "Ends Peace Trip to the Indians," *New York Times,* December 14, 1913.
16. Marion Gridley, *America's Indian Statues* (Chicago: The Amerindian/Towertown Press, 1966), see "Introduction." Many such monuments are identified in Gridley's book, which purports to be "a comprehensive compilation of facts and photos of statues honoring or memorializing the American Indian."
17. See, for instance, Lisa Blee and Jean M. O'Brien, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill:

University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

18. Edward Livingston Taylor, "Monuments to Historical Indian Chiefs," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* vol. XI (Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society/Fred J. Heer, 1903): 1–29, esp. 29.
19. "Indian land areas judicially established," Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/80695449. Accessed September 17, 2022.
20. The Ways, https://theways.org/map. Accessed September 17, 2022.
21. Geography of Michigan, https://project.geo.msu.edu/geogmich/potawatomi.html. Accessed November 11, 2021.
22. Courtesy of Kyle Malott, Pokagon Potawatomi, Advanced Language Specialist and tribal citizen.
23. Ibid. Where tribes were located before the Beaver Wars (1609–1701) is difficult to document, and as there were no written records of tribal locations so one must rely on tribal oral histories. According to the stories told to me as a youngster, the Potawatomi returned to their traditional homelands after the Iroquois were driven out of the region. In the Potawatomi language, Zhegagoynak refers to a place of wild onions. "Zhegago-" comes from the word "zhegagosh," which means an onion or leek, while the ending "-nak" refers to the place in which they are located. Another word that references Chicago is "Zhegagok," which has the same meaning but refers to a skunk.
24. Translations courtesy of Kyle Malott.
25. "Treaty of Chicago 1833," First Stories North America, http://projects.leadr.msu.edu/firststoryna/exhibits/show/potawahf/item/20. Accessed September 17, 2022.
26. James A. Clifton, "Chicago, September 14, 1833, the Last Great Indian Treaty of the Old Northwest," *Chicago History* (Summer 1980): 86–96, https://issuu.com/chicagohistorymuseum/docs/redacted-1980sum-chm-chicagohistory. Accessed September 17, 2022.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. "September 26, 1833—Treaty of Chicago," Forest County Potawatomi, https://www.fcpotawatomi.com/culture-and-history/treaties/september-26-1833-treaty-of-chicago. Accessed September 17, 2022.
31. See the Clark Historical Library website at Central Michigan University at https://www.cmich.edu/library/clarke/ResearchResources/Native_American_Material/Treaty_Rights/Historical_Issues/Relocation_the_Potawatomi_Experience/pages/the-treaty-of-chicago.aspx Accessed September 17, 2022.
32. Signatories to the 1833 Treaty of Chicago were To-pen-e-bee, Ob-wa-qua-unk, N-saw-wayquet, Puk-quech-a-min-ee, Nah-che-wine, Ke-wase, Wah-bou-seh, Mang-e-sett, Caw-we-saut, Ah-be-te-ke-zhic, Pat-e-go-shuc, E-to-wow-cote, Shim-e-nah, O-chee-pwaise, Ce-nah-ge-win, Shaw-waw-nas-see, Shab-eh-nay, Mac-a-ta-o-shic, Squah-ke-zic, Mah-che-o-tah-way, Cha-ke-te-ah, Me-am-ese, Shay-tee, Kee-new, Ne-bay-noc-scum, Naw-bay-caw, O'Kee-mase, Saw-o-tup, Me-tai-way, Na-ma-ta-way-shuc, Shaw-waw-nuk-wuk, Nah-che-wah, Sho-bonnier, Me-nuk-quet, hChis-in-ke-bah, Mix-e-maung, Nah-bwait, Sau-ko-noek, Che-che-bin-quay, Joseph, Wah-mix-i-co, Sen-e-bau-um, Puk-won, Wa-be-no-say, Mon-tou-ish, No-nee, his x mark, Masquat, Sho-min, Sho-min, (2d) She-mah-gah, O'ke-mah-wah-ba-see, Na-mash, Shab-y-a-tuk, hAh-cah-o-mah, Quah-quah, tah, Ah-sag-a-mish-cum, Pa-mob-a-mee, Nay-o-say, hCe-tah-quah, Ce-ku-tay, Sauk-ee, Ah-quee-wee, Ta-cau-ko, Me-shim-e-nah, Wah-sus-kuk, Pe-nay-o-cat, Pay-maw-suc, Pe-she-ka, Shaw-we-mon-e-tay, Ah-be-nab, and Sau-sau-quas-see.
33. *The Red Man's Rebuke by Chief Pokagon (Pottawattamie Chief)*. It was subsequently reprinted with a new title that same year as Simon Pokagon (1893), as the *The Red Man's Greeting* (Hartford, MI: C. H. Engle Publisher). According to the contemporary press, *The Red Man's Rebuke* occupied "a prominent place in the Michigan exhibit" at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Anonymous, "Poem by an Indian Chief," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 4, 1893, 9.
34. Emerson Greenman, "Indian Chiefs of Michigan," *Michigan History Magazine*, vol. 23 (1939): 220–49, 211.

# Chicago's 1948–1949 Railroad Fair

JOSEPH M. DI COLA



In the Treaty of Greenville, signed on August 3, 1795, Article III described "one piece of land six miles square at the mouth of the Chikago river [sic], emptying into the south-west end of Lake Michigan, where a fort formerly stood." This particular land cession was the humble beginning of what would become the city of Chicago. In 1803 the United States Army constructed Fort Dearborn on a rise on the south bank of the Chicago River. This post was destroyed in August 1812, but was later rebuilt in 1816.

On August 12, 1833, the town of Chicago was founded and, on Saturday, March 4, 1837, was incorporated as the city of Chicago. The city grew rapidly, in part because of its location at the south end of Lake Michigan where it was accessible to commercial enterprises by water and by land. Mayer and Wade, in their *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, state that the Indigenous population in the area knew the importence of Chicago's location long before others settled there.[1] When the Illinois and Michigan Canal was completed in 1848, it provided a direct connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River through St. Louis and all the way to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

There had been forces at work to build a railroad and, with the aid of stock subscriptions from farmers and other investors, the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was formed by former Chicago mayor William B. Ogden.

*The Galena and Chicago Union Railroad Station (above), c. 1849, was located on Kinzie Street. The Pioneer locomotive (below) of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad in 1893.*



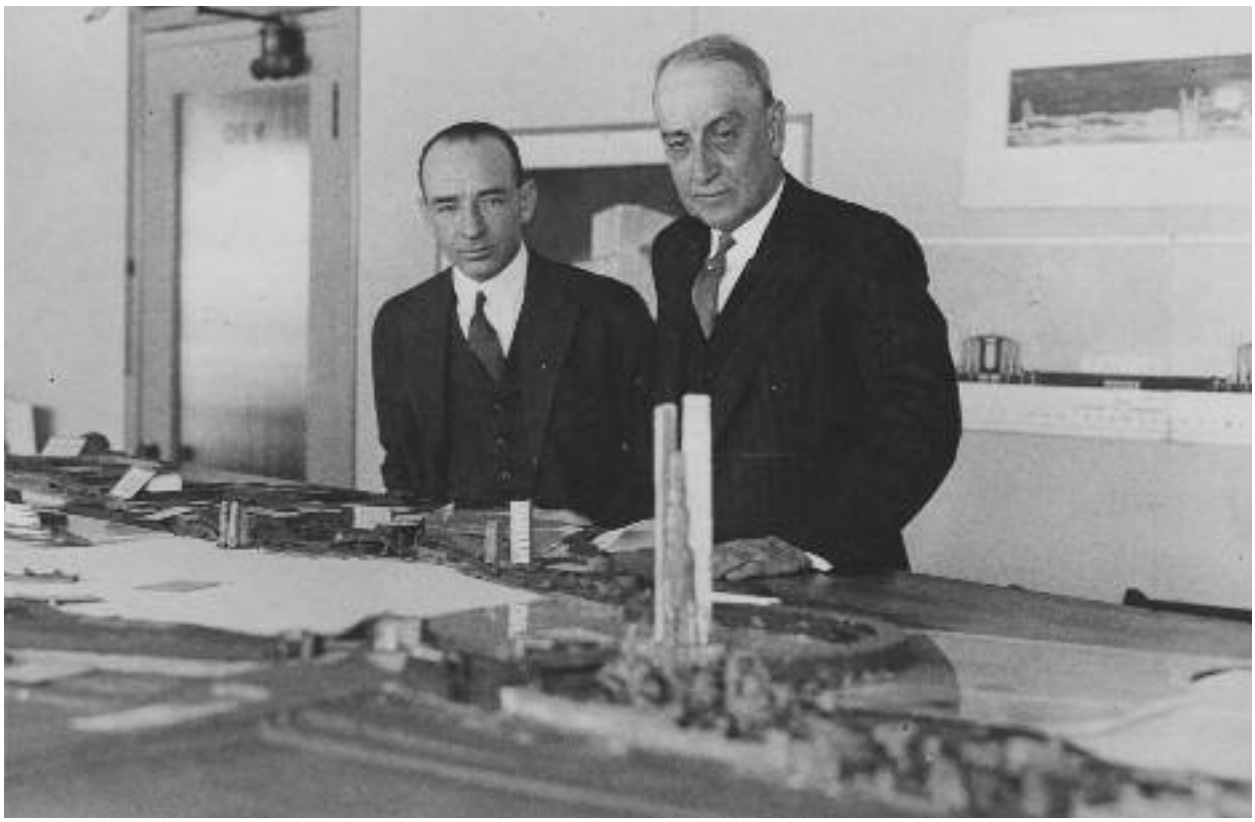
On October 25, 1848, a wood-burning, eleven-year-old locomotive acquired from the Utica and Schenectady Railroad and renamed the *Pioneer* (which today is part of the Chicago History Museum's collection and can be seen in the exhibition *Chicago: Crossroads of America*) made a round trip from Chicago to Oak Park and back. A month later it delivered a load of wheat from the Des Plaines River to Chicago.[2] Within a year, the Galena and Chicago Union returned a dividend of 10 percent to its investors.

## Beginnings

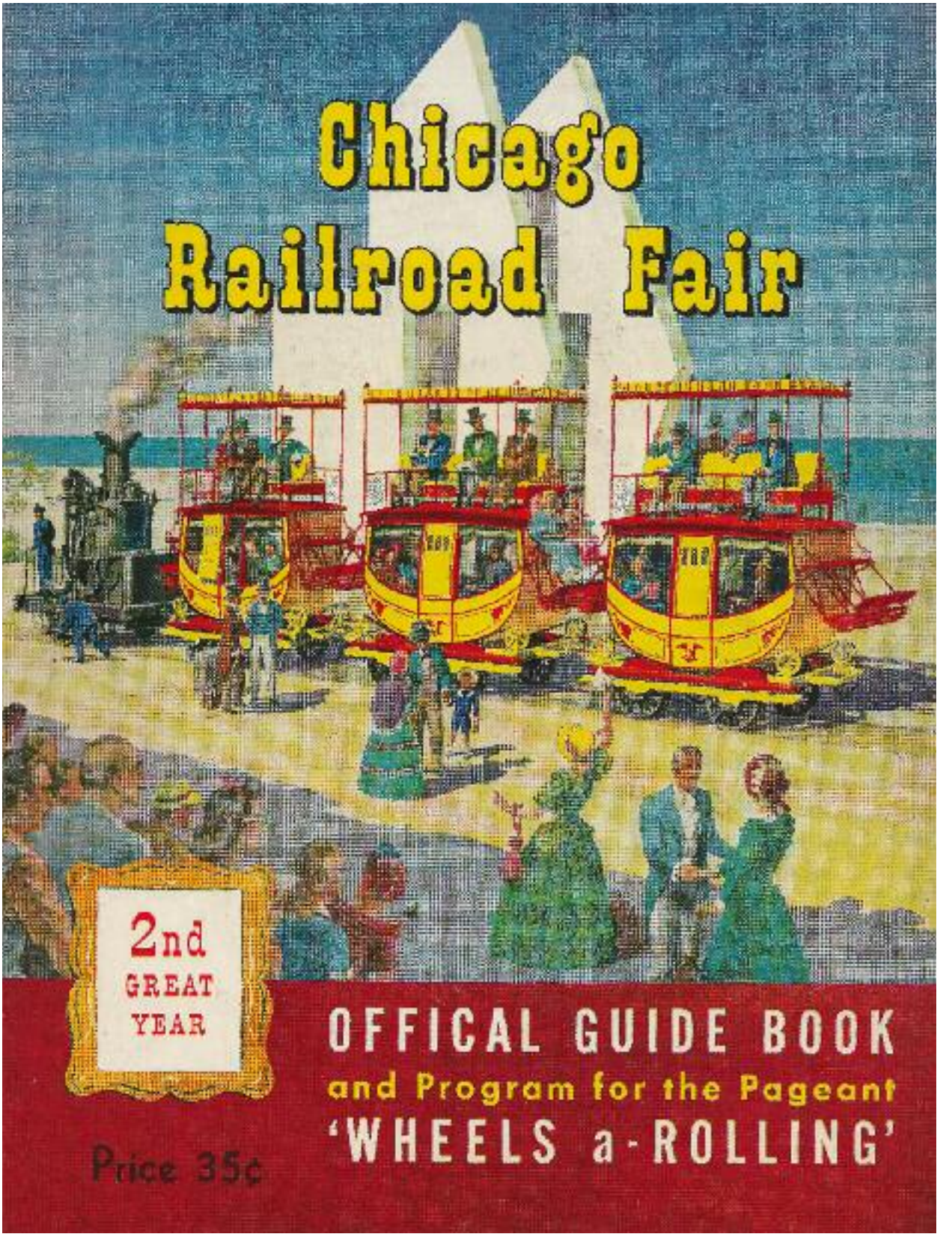
Following Daniel Burnham's *dictum* to "Make no small plans," a fair was planned to celebrate the centennial of the first railroad operating out of Chicago, the brainchild of Francis V. Koval, the public relations manager of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, which was the successor to the Galena and Chicago Union. The fair was organized under the leadership of Lenox R. Lohr, the president of the Museum of Science and Industry. He had previously directed the 1933–1934 Century of Progress exposition. On February 25, 1948, the Chicago Railroad Fair was incorporated as a nonprofit corporation with Lohr as president, R. L. Williams, president of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway System as vice president, Wayne A. Johnson, president of the Illinois Central Railroad as treasurer, and G. M. Campbell, vice-president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company as secretary. The Board of Directors consisted of the presidents or vice presidents of many of the railroads represented at the fair. Staff positions in the corporation were executive officer/general manager, director of exhibits, financial officer, legal counsel, coordinator of publicity, director of special events, superintendent of operations, field engineer, and director of design and construction.

To finance the fair the thirty-eight participating railroads provided interest-free loans based proportionately on their 1947 revenues and whether or not they served Chicago. The loans were repaid based on revenues left over after expenses were paid and were reimbursed to the railroad companies on a *pro rata* basis. The Chicago Railroad Fair was planned originally for 1948 only, but was extended to 1949, and was erected on 50 acres in Burnham Park between Twenty-First and Thirty-First Streets. By late April, railroad section workers completed laying tracks across Lake Shore Drive at Twenty-Eighth Street, which were used to move exhibits into the fairgrounds from the Illinois Central yard.

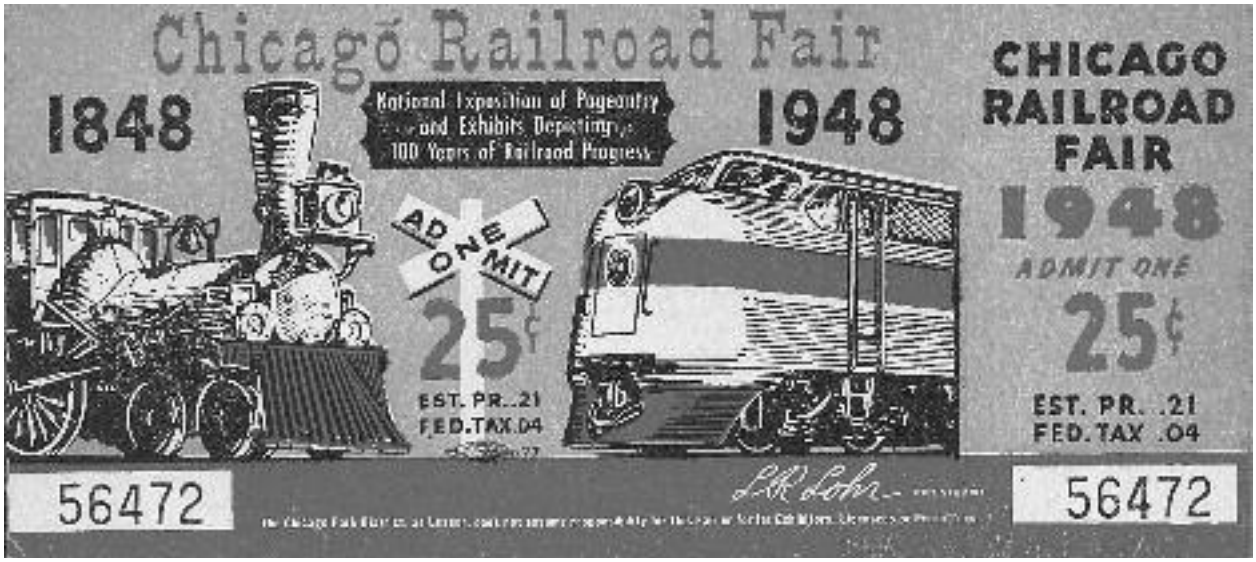
The fair opened in July with a parade down State Street sponsored by the *Chicago Tribune*. It featured a float that was a replica of the New York Central "Empire State Express" locomotive 999, other railroad floats, bands, people dressed as cowboys, Native Americans, and, as honorary grand master, eighty-two-year-old Mary Joanna ("Janie") Brady Jones, the widow of Casey Jones. The hours were 10:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. daily. The fair was planned to run from July 20 to September 20, but it was extended two weeks. Lohr, the fair's president, said: "Decision to extend the period of the Fair is an obligation.



*Here, Lenox R. Lohr (left), future president of the Chicago Railroad Fair, stands in 1931 with Rufus Dawes, manager and president of the Century of Progress, inspecting the layout of buildings and landscapes planned for the exposition.*




*The cover of the 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair Official Guidebook and Program for the "Wheels a-Rolling" pageant promises a second great year for attendees.*




*An admission ticket to the 1948 Chicago Railroad Fair. Entry to the fair cost 25 cents.*

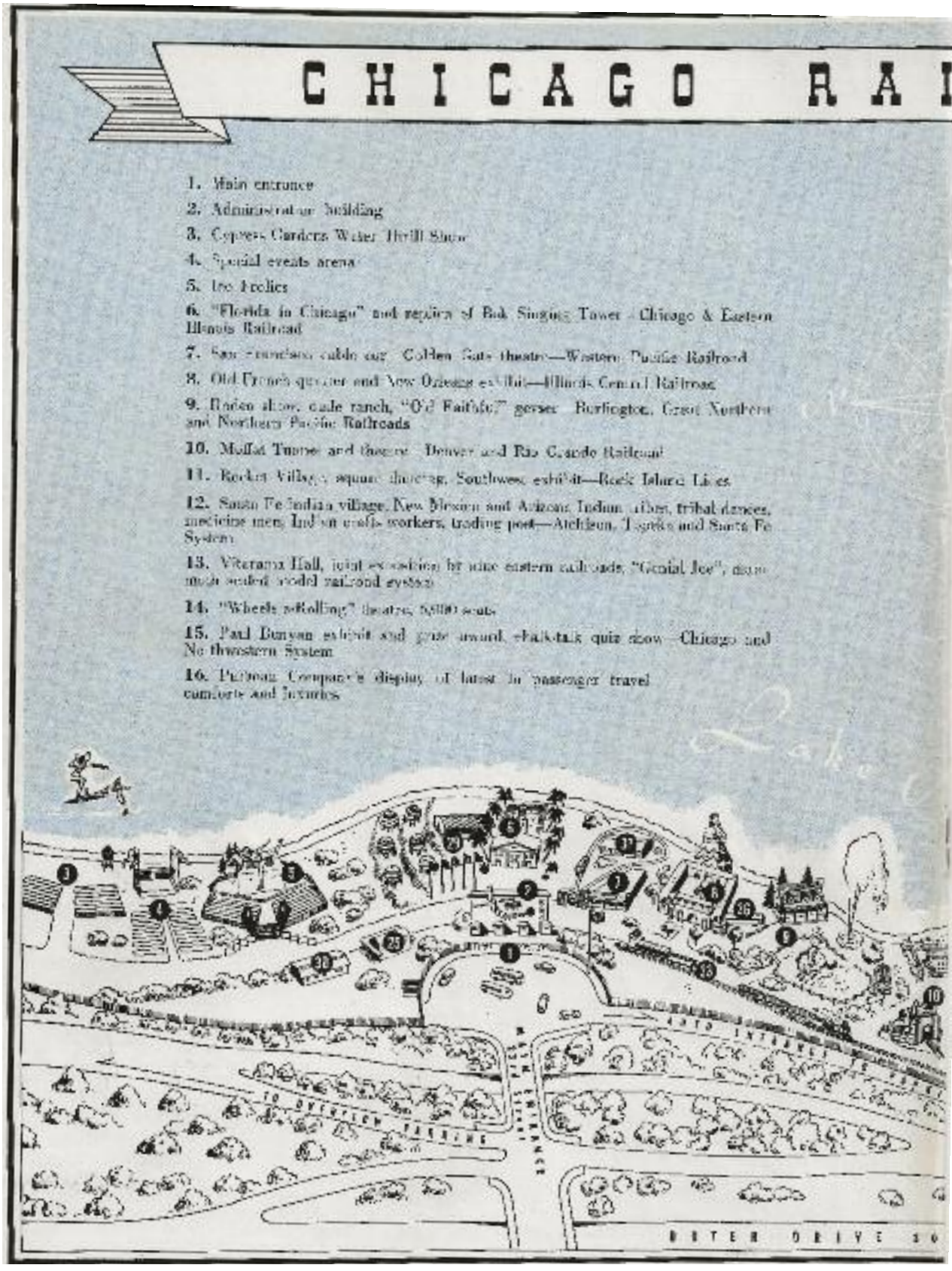
We owe it as a public service to the spectators from all over the United States and Canada who daily exceed early predictions in their attendance."[3] The price of general admission was 25 cents (about $3 in 2022), admission to the "Wheels a-Rolling" pageant was 60 cents, the *Official Guide Book* was 35 cents, a ride on the narrow gauge railroad was 10 cents, and, except for the costs of food and souvenirs, everything else was free. The attendance at the Chicago Railroad Fair paled in comparison to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (28 million) and 1933–1934 Century of Progress (nearly 49 million); however, it drew 2.5 million visitors in 1948 and more than 2.7 million visited in 1949.

Thirty-eight railroads and the Pullman Company participated in the Chicago Railroad Fair; more than twenty railroad equipment manufacturers exhibited equipment and other displays. The majority of the participating railroads maintained a direct rail connection to Chicago, and they were:

Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
Boston and Maine Railroad
Burlington Lines
Chesapeake and Ohio Railway
Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad
Chicago Great Western Railway
Chicago and Illinois Midland Railway
Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railway (Monon Railroad)
Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (Milwaukee Road)
Chicago and North Western Railway
Colorado and Wyoming Railway
Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad
Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway
Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway
Erie Railroad
Grand Trunk Railway
Great Northern Railway
Green Bay and Western Railroad
Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad (The Alton Route)
Illinois Central Railroad
Lake Superior and Ishpeming Railroad
Maine Central Railroad
Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway
Monongahela Railway
New York Central Railroad
Nickel Plate Road
Norfolk Southern Railway
Northern Pacific Railway
Pennsylvania Railroad
Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railway
Pullman Company
Rock Island Lines
Soo Line Railroad
Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway
Texas Mexican Railway
Union Pacific Railroad
Wabash Railroad
Western Pacific Railroad

### Railroad and Related Exhibits

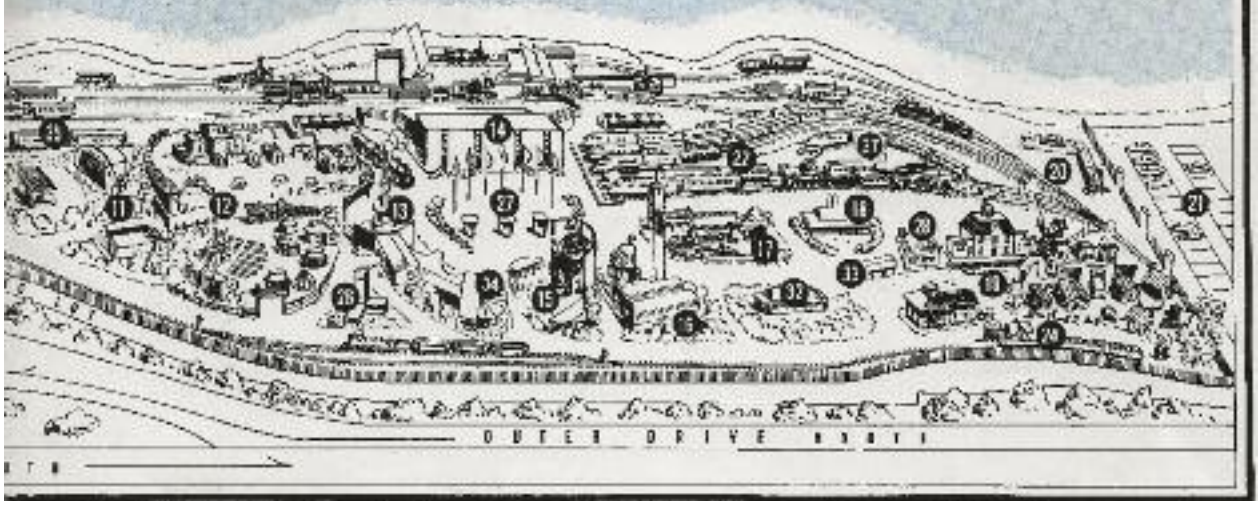
Various railroads mounted special exhibits that highlighted their special trains and destinations. The Chicago and Eastern Illinois exhibit was called "Florida in Chicago," and featured a plantation mansion, 25-foot scale replica of the Lake Wales Bok Tower, palm and




*Map showing the layout and attractions for the 1949 year of the Fair.*

# L R O A D  F A I R

17. Spanish American Village, "Big Boy"—largest steam locomotive ever built, free rides for the kiddies on miniature streamliner—Union Pacific Railroad
18. Shelter Building.
19. Gold Gulch, old gold rush mining town
20. Budd Company's exhibit of nation's newest streamline cars
21. Main parking lot
22. Famous train display, including General Motors' "Train of Tomorrow," the Spanish government's new "Talgo" mystery train, and U. S. Army exhibit
23. "Deadwood," north terminal of Deadwood Central narrow gauge railroad
24. Gold Gulch narrow gauge station
25. Santa Fe movie theatre
26. Travel Building
27. Main plaza
28. Gold Gulch, U. S. Post Office
29. Harbor View Terrace Restaurant
30. Ninth Restaurant
31. Cable Car Inn
32. Railroad Inn
33. Lou's Grubstake Restaurant
34. Eastern Railroads Restaurant
35. Rock Island's "Rocky" and 1200 "Palace" dining cars
36. Illinois Central's "Cafe St. Louis," all-electric dining car
37. Chesapeake and Ohio "Chessie Club" dining and tavern cars






*The 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair added this 35-foot-tall Paul Bunyan robot, which could blink and wave at fairgoers—so long as someone was operating his control booth.*

citrus trees along with tropical plants and flowers, a beach, and an orange juice bar. To showcase one of its routes, the Illinois Central featured a courtyard patio and street scene representing New Orleans's French Quarter. For the 1949 fair, the Café St. Louis dining car restaurant was added adjacent to the exhibit.

The joint display by the Burlington, Great Northern, and Northern Pacific railroads focused on the natural wonders of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest with Yellowstone Park's Old Faithful geyser, a log chalet, a dude ranch, Western music and song, and a rodeo featuring champions from Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Calgary Stampede. The Rock Island's Rocket Village exhibit had a southwestern theme and included a Western-style dance hall featuring square dancing, festive music of "Old Mexico," dining at the "La Fiesta" dining car or, added for 1949, the replica 1880 "Palace" dining car. The Rocket Village also included a refreshment pavilion area where visitors could have refreshments at umbrella tables while being serenaded by strolling musicians.

The Santa Fe Indian Village was a very popular attraction that included 125 participating Native men, women, and children from six tribes from the New Mexico and Arizona region. The Indian Village consisted of replica adobe pueblos, hogans and wickiups, and a kiva where visitors were treated to sand-painting, Native singing and dancing, a medicine man, and a trading post featuring crafts such as silver goods, baskets, and blankets. All of these exhibits were on display for both years of the fair. At the 1949 fair, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad displayed an exact replica of the Moffat Tunnel entrance.

In 1948 a joint exhibit by the Baltimore and Ohio, Boston and Maine, Erie, Maine Central, Monon, New York Central, Nickel Plate, Pennsylvania, and Wabash railroads displayed a 45-foot tower of chromed rails topped by a moving prism ball that was kept in place for 1949. The display also included "Genial Joe," the giant robotic locomotive fireman. In 1949 this exhibit was changed and featured *Vitarama*, a three-dimensional experience with five screens showing the impact of railroads in the country's history. An adjoining building housed an accurately-scaled model railroad. Also for the 1948 fair, the Chicago and Northwestern built a replica of Chicago's first railroad station and located it at the west end of the fairgrounds. For both years the Pullman and Budd companies displayed, respectively, sleeping, lounge, dining, and observation cars and the latest stainless steel passenger cars, such as the Vista-Dome, a car with a glass roof over the upper level observation section.




*This postcard from the Railroad Fair features the narrow gauge Deadwood Central train, which attendees could ride from one end of the fair to the other.*

One highlight of the fair was the Freedom Train, which travelled the country for two years from September 17, 1947, through January 22, 1949. It stopped at the Chicago Railroad Fair July 5–9. The Freedom Train provided people with the opportunity to see many documents and artifacts from the National Archives related to the founding of the republic such as the Constitution and Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence.

At the 1949 fair, some railroads added new attractions. The Chicago and Northwestern displayed a 35-foot robot Paul Bunyan along with Babe the Blue Ox. The Bunyan figure moved, talked, and even shook hands with fairgoers. The Western Pacific Railroad provided free rides on an 1880 San Francisco cable car up the hilly lake shore to a turntable at the top. The ride was located between the New Orleans and Florida exhibits. The Union Pacific displayed the "Big Boy"—the largest ever steam locomotive—and provided free rides for children on a miniature streamliner.

At the south end of the fairgrounds were three miles of track used to display historic and modern locomotives, rolling stock, and passenger cars. The Electro-Motive Division of General Motors exhibited a locomotive with its exterior panels, engine covers, and housing cut away so visitors could view the inner workings of a modern diesel. A full-scale model of a 33-foot long Talgo-type passenger car for the planned Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) lightweight, high-speed "Train X" was on display, in addition to the C&O's coal-burning, steam turbine-electric locomotive—the largest passenger locomotive in service. The Pennsylvania Railroad exhibited one of its Raymond Loewy-designed GG-1 electric locomotives, one of the most stylish engines ever in service. These were just a sample of what was on view from the railroads represented at the fair.

On display, too, were a number of original locomotives, rolling stock, and passenger cars. Some of these were: the Cumberland Valley *Pioneer*, built in 1851; the still-operational Camden and Amboy Railroad's *John Bull*, built in 1831, along with one of its coaches; New York Central's *Empire State Express No. 999*, built in 1893 when it also set a record for the fastest train when it attained a speed of 112.5 miles per hour—a record that lasted for ten years; *The General* (1948 only), built in 1855 and famous from the great locomotive chase in the Civil War; Baltimore and Ohio's (B&O) *John Hancock*, a "grasshopper" locomotive built in 1836; the Galena and Chicago Union (now Chicago and Northwestern) *Pioneer* (1838) along with a coach; and the stainless steel, diesel-powered, articulated Burlington *Pioneer Zephyr*, built by the Budd Company,

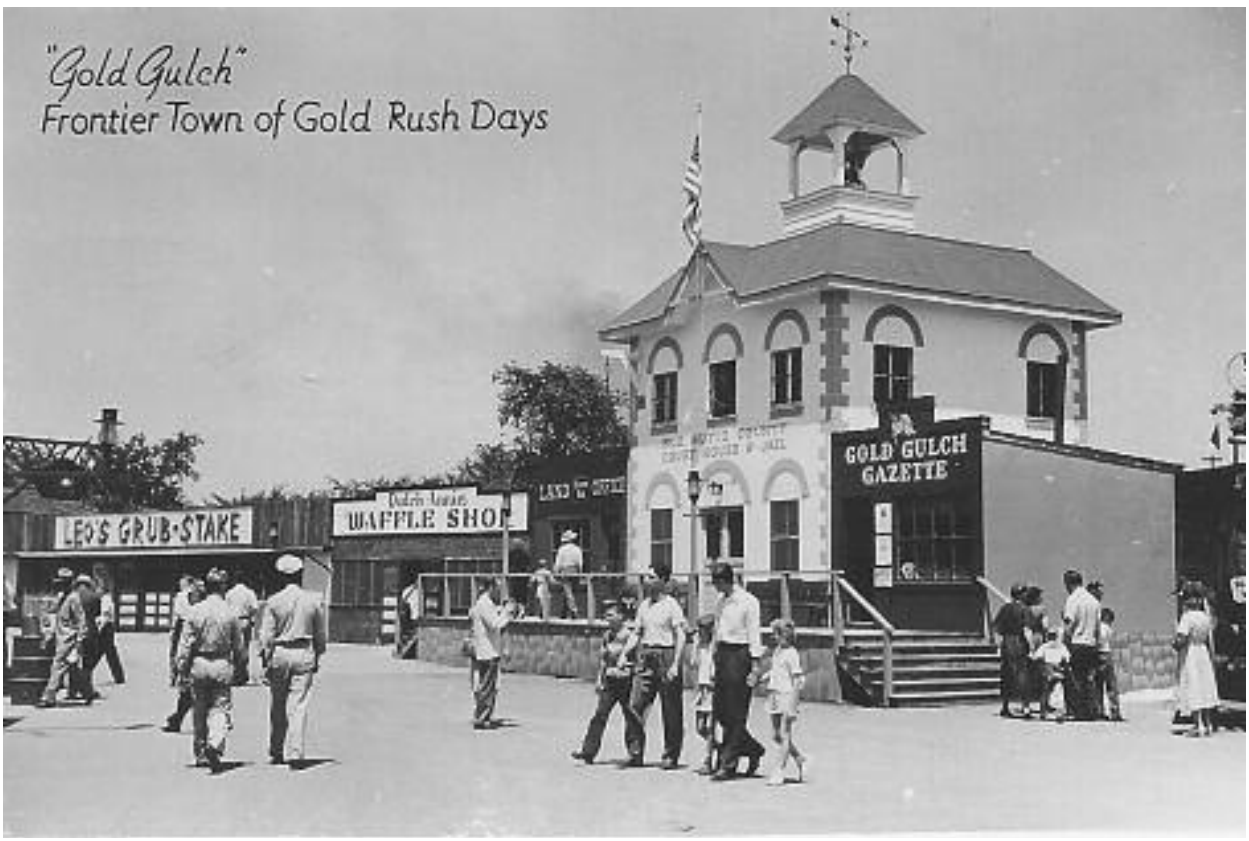
which made its first run from Denver to Chicago's Century of Progress International Exposition in a record-setting 13 hours and 5 minutes.

Some replicas were also exhibited at the Chicago Railroad Fair. Among them were: George Stephenson's *Rocket* from 1829, the first successful steam locomotive; the 8-ton, English-built *Stourbridge Lion*, which, on August 8, 1829, became the first practical steam locomotive to run on American track; the B&O's *Atlantic*, a "grasshopper" locomotive and two replica coaches; the South Carolina Canal and Rail Road Company's *Best Friend of Charleston*; the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad's *DeWitt Clinton* with three coaches; the B&O's *Lafayette* with two barrel cars (which was the first long-boiler locomotive, as opposed to an upright boiler) and the *Tom Thumb* and director's car; and the two locomotives from the "golden spike" ceremony completing the transcontinental railroad, the Central Pacific *Jupiter* (portrayed by locomotive *Genoa*) and the Union Pacific *No. 119* (portrayed by Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy locomotive *No. 35*). Both original equipment and replicas appeared in the fair pageant "Wheels a-Rolling." Historically, the *Tom Thumb* was the first locomotive to pull a load of passengers when they went on a 13-mile journey out of Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills, Maryland, in 1829.[4] The original and replica vintage locomotives were transported to the fair by rail or motor transport and placed onto the tracks using heavy cranes.

Fairgoers could ride from one end of the grounds to the other, and back again, on the Deadwood Central Railroad. At the northern end, visitors boarded at the Deadwood Station, a replica of the type used at Deadwood, South Dakota, in the late 1870s. At the southern end of the grounds was the Central City Station, a reproduction of the one in use years prior at Central City, Colorado. For 1949 a second train was added, the Cripple Creek & Tin Cup.

## The Frontier Town

For 1949, at the southern terminus of the Deadwood Central narrow gauge railroad was the town of "Gold Gulch," a replica of a late-nineteenth-century gold mining town. The wooden sidewalks and busy main street were staffed by people in vintage clothing and recreated the ambience of an old, "Wild West" town. Fairgoers could get a meal at the "Grubstake" dining establishment or slake their thirst at the "Dirty Shame" saloon. Men wishing to be a little less hirsute could stop




*Guests at the fair explore the replica town of Gold Gulch, which featured Leo's Grub Stake, Dutch Annie's Waffle Shop, land office, county jail and courthouse, and the "Gazette" newspaper office.*

by the "Close Shave" barbershop and then head over to the "Old Daguerreotype" picture gallery to have their portraits taken. Gold Gulch included the "Gazette" newspaper, Bank of Gold Gulch (sponsored by the Continental-Illinois National Bank), an arcade, fun house, and nickelodeon. Visitors could also visit the courthouse and jail, test their skills at the shooting gallery, see the "Wild West Hall of Fame" museum, and pay their respects at Boot Hill. Souvenirs were available at the "Adobe Handicraft Shop," and children could have a ride on a Western pony. To get to Gold Gulch, fairgoers could catch a ride from near the entrance to the fairgrounds on the Cripple Creek & Tin Cup.

### Other Attractions for 1949

For 1949 the special track exhibit at the south end of the fairgrounds added the General Motors "Train of Tomorrow" and the lighter weight, low gravity, high speed "Talgo" train recently built in the United States for the Spanish railroad system.

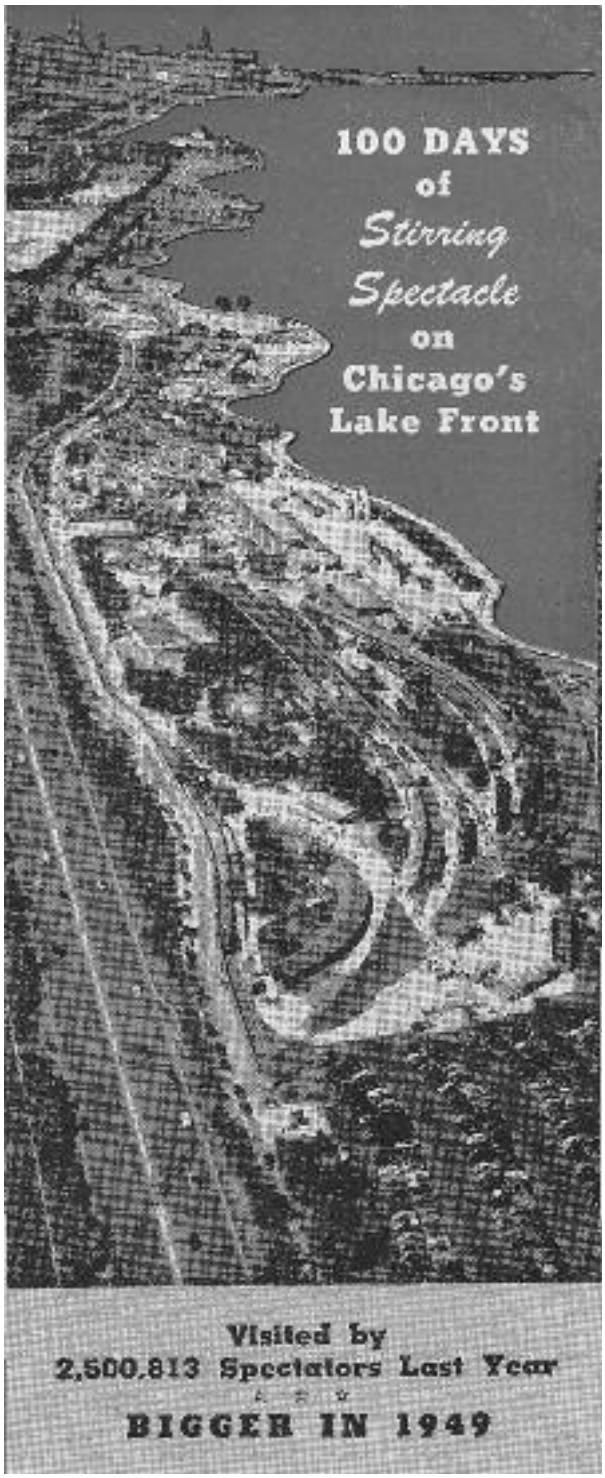
Two additional shows were added for the 1949 fair. The "Ice Show" was presented on a rink just north of the main entrance to the fairgrounds. Professional ice skaters performed in a 30-minute show that included an all-women skating exhibition, which was choreographed and set to musical accompaniment. The show could accommodate 1,200 visitors at each performance, and admission was free.

Just north of the ice rink was a grandstand that seated 4,700 spectators for the "Cypress Gardens Water Thrill Show," offered four times each day. Visitors were thrilled by water skiing, aquaplaning, and water tobogganing feats performed by the world's best champions, and included the comedy routines of the Aqua Clowns. The Cypress Gardens Aqua Belles also appeared dressed in their beautiful gowns and modeling the latest in beachwear in the "Parade of Beach Fashions."

### "Wheels a-Rolling"

"Wheels a-Rolling" was an hour-and-a-quarter-long pageant, presented four times daily (at 2:00, 4:00, 7:15, and 9:00 P.M.) and based on the history of American transportation that presented notable events in the history of the United States, particularly those associated with railroads. It showcased historic locomotives and equipment, modern electro-motive diesel power, horse- and man-drawn equipment, bicycles, and vintage automobiles.

The pageant was written by Edward Hungerford, a journalist and author who specialized in railroad topics. He also was known for organizing railroad expositions such as the Baltimore and Ohio's 1927 Fair of the Iron Horse and Railroads on Parade at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair. However, he never got to see "Wheels a-Rolling"; he died on July 29, 1948. The show was pro-




*This piece of ephemera promotes the 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair with an aerial view of the fairgrounds and boasts more than 2.5 million spectators at the previous year's fair.*



*Slide image taken during the "Wheels a-Rolling" pageant at the Chicago Railroad Fair on July 31, 1949, showing the 1928 replica of the South Carolina Canal and Rail Road Company's Best Friend of Charleston.*

duced by fair president Lohr, assisted by D. M. McMaster. The entire production was staged and directed by Helen Tieken Geraghty, and the musical adaptation and direction was by Isaac Van Grove. Geraghty previously directed the "Wings of a Century" pageant at Chicago's 1933–34 Century of Progress and was the theater director at Hull House.

Illinois Central (IC) personnel played an important role in building the stage and laying the tracks for the pageant, including the mile and a quarter of holding tracks where the locomotives waited to play their parts in the spectacle. Frank Hiter and Marshall Tozer from the IC's Twenty-Seventh Street roundhouse kept the engines running smoothly.[5]

For both 1948 and 1949, the pageant consisted of a prologue, twelve scenes, and an epilogue. It was presented on a 450-foot stage laid with three standard gauge railroad tracks that used Lake Michigan for a backdrop. The stage was flanked on both the left and right by tall, wing-shaped pylons through which the players made their entrances and exits. The grandstand at the 1948 show seated 5,000 viewers; a radically redesigned structure for 1949 accommodated 6,000. The pageant cast included 220 professional performers, 800 period costumes, scores of antiques, horses and oxen, and twenty-one vintage nineteenth-century locomotives, the *Pioneer Zephyr*, and other modern steam and diesel locomotives.

The show opened with an empty stage and the narrator's voice:

> Wheels a-rolling—the romance of travel and transport . . . and adventure in speed, growth, and progress! Today—America is a nation on wheels—wheels that have rolled through wilderness and wasteland, leaving in their wake, a thousand cities and ten thousand towns. This is the story of dynamic dreams and far-flung destinies, linked by highways and iron rails, united and inter-united, spanning a continent, transforming it into a nation. (Tom-Toms begin to sound)[6]

*Prologue: "The Voyageurs—1673" (1948); "Indian Trails and Waterways—1673" (1949)*

The prologue told the story of the years before the arrival in 1673 of French voyageurs along with Marquette and Joliet on the shores of Lake Michigan, portraying the forms of transportation in use by Native peoples—the travois, canoe, pirogue, and horse.

*Scene 1: "The National Road—1815"*
The National Road, running from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois, was the first federally funded highway in the United States. Scene 1 portrayed the importance of this roadway in opening the country westward. Featured were early ox-drawn carts, Conestoga wagons, horseback riders, and early road coaches.

*Scene 2: "The Iron Horse—1829–36"*
This tableau celebrated the introduction of the railroad locomotive and travel by rail, beginning in England with George Stephenson's *Rocket* and the British-built *Stourbridge Lion*, which ran in the United States. Included were the famous race between Peter Cooper's *Tom Thumb* and the *Pioneer* horse car in which the horse prevailed. Many of America's first locomotives and passenger cars operated in this scene: *John Bull*, *Best Friend of Charleston*, *DeWitt Clinton*, *Lafayette*, *Atlantic*, and *John Hancock*. America's first railroads were reaching across the nation.

*Scene 3: "Chicago—1848" (1948);*
*"Rails Across the Prairie—1848–1868" (1949)*
Chicago was shown as being transformed from a swampy locale into a bustling, thriving city. Plank roads were among the main ways to travel to and from the surrounding countryside until the Galena and Chicago Union (Chicago and Northwestern) *Pioneer* made its two seminal epic journeys on October 25 and November 20, 1848, the latter trip being the first for Chicago of a commercial nature. Chicago was on its way to becoming the rail center of the nation. With the coming of the railroad, towns and villages were established along with their houses, stores, churches, and schools all over the prairies west, south, and north of Chicago.

*Scene 4: "Westward Ho!—1849"*
This scene portrayed the California Gold Rush, which began when gold was found by James W. Marshall at Sutters Mill in Coloma, California, on January 24, 1848, and precipitated more westward settlements. Both the Wells Fargo coaches and the Pony Express had a prominent role in in this movement west. The latter was in operation for only nineteen months, soon to be replaced by the telegraph and the railroads. Conestoga wagons, Pony Express riders, and Wells Fargo stage coaches were used for this scene.

*Scene 5: "Lincoln—1860–1865"*
Scene 5 began on February 11, 1861, when Lincoln said farewell to the people of Springfield, Illinois, as he left to lead the nation as president of the United States. For the next four years a bloody civil war tore the nation asunder until, in April 1865, the hostilities came to an end. A few days later, Lincoln was dead from an assassin's bullet, and he returned to Springfield in his coffin on board another train.

*Scene 6: "Spanning a Continent—1863" (1948);*
*"Spanning a Continent—1866" (1949)*
By the end of the US Civil War there were already of number of bridges spanning the Mississippi River. This scene covered the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864, which authorized the funding and construction of a transcontinental railroad between Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California. The Central Pacific forged eastward while the Union Pacific crews laid track westward.

*Scene 7: "The Golden Spike—1869" (1948);*
*"Promontory Point—1869" (1949)*
Showgoers were taken to May 10, 1869, at Promontory Point, Utah, near the Great Salt Lake, where the Central Pacific *Jupiter* and Union Pacific *No. 119* met—the cowcatchers of the two locomotives touching—and California Governor Leland Stanford drove in the golden spike that linked the rails.

*Scene 8: "Harvey House—1878" (1948);*
*Santa Fe—1878" (1949)*
In this scene, Fred Harvey opened the first of his railroad eating houses in 1878 along the Santa Fe Railroad's right-of-way in Florence, Kansas. It grew into a chain that provided quality food, service, and civility throughout the Southwest, served by the famous "Harvey Girls."



*Front cover of 75th Anniversary Fred Harvey restaurant menu from 1941. The restaurant was located in Union Station.*

*Scene 9: "Opening of the Northwest—1878–88"*
Scene 9 showed Scandinavian immigrants populating the northern Great Plains and the Northwest to settle on farms, develop the grain industry, and work in the logging and lumber industries.

*Scene 10: "The Gay Nineties" (1948); "Turn of the Century" (1949)*
In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner wrote of the end of the frontier, and the railroads offered fast and luxurious travel, epitomized in this portrayal by the New York Central's *Empire State Express No. 999*. Illinois Central suburban trains accommodated daily commuting businessmen and shoppers. For most ground transportation, however, the horse was the main source of power, pulling for the carriage trade with its broughams, phaetons, victorias, gigs, as well as for hansom cabs, tradesmen's wagons, horse cars, and horse-drawn fire-fighting equipment. And, of course, bicycles were all the rage. But this was about to change dramatically.

*Scene 11: "The Horseless Carriage"*
Chicagoans were shown taking their first ride in an automobile. Featured in this scene were vintage cars: 1900 Locomobile Steamer, 1904 Cadillac, 1906 Maxwell, 1908 Reo, 1910 Sears, 1913 Chicago Electric, 1912 Stanley Steamer, and more.

*Scene 12: "Pioneer Zephyr—1934"*
Scene 12 showed Chicago celebrating its centennial and the second year of the Century of Progress exposition. The diesel locomotive was about to transform railroad travel when the stainless steel, diesel-powered, articulated Burlington *Pioneer Zephyr*, built by the Budd Company, made its first run of 1,015 miles nonstop from Denver to Chicago's Century of Progress in a record-setting 13 hours and 5 minutes.

*Epilogue: "Modern Transport"*
Finally, "Wheel a-Rolling" closed with current models of automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, and tractors traversing the set while a behemoth steam locomotive and modern diesel met at center stage.

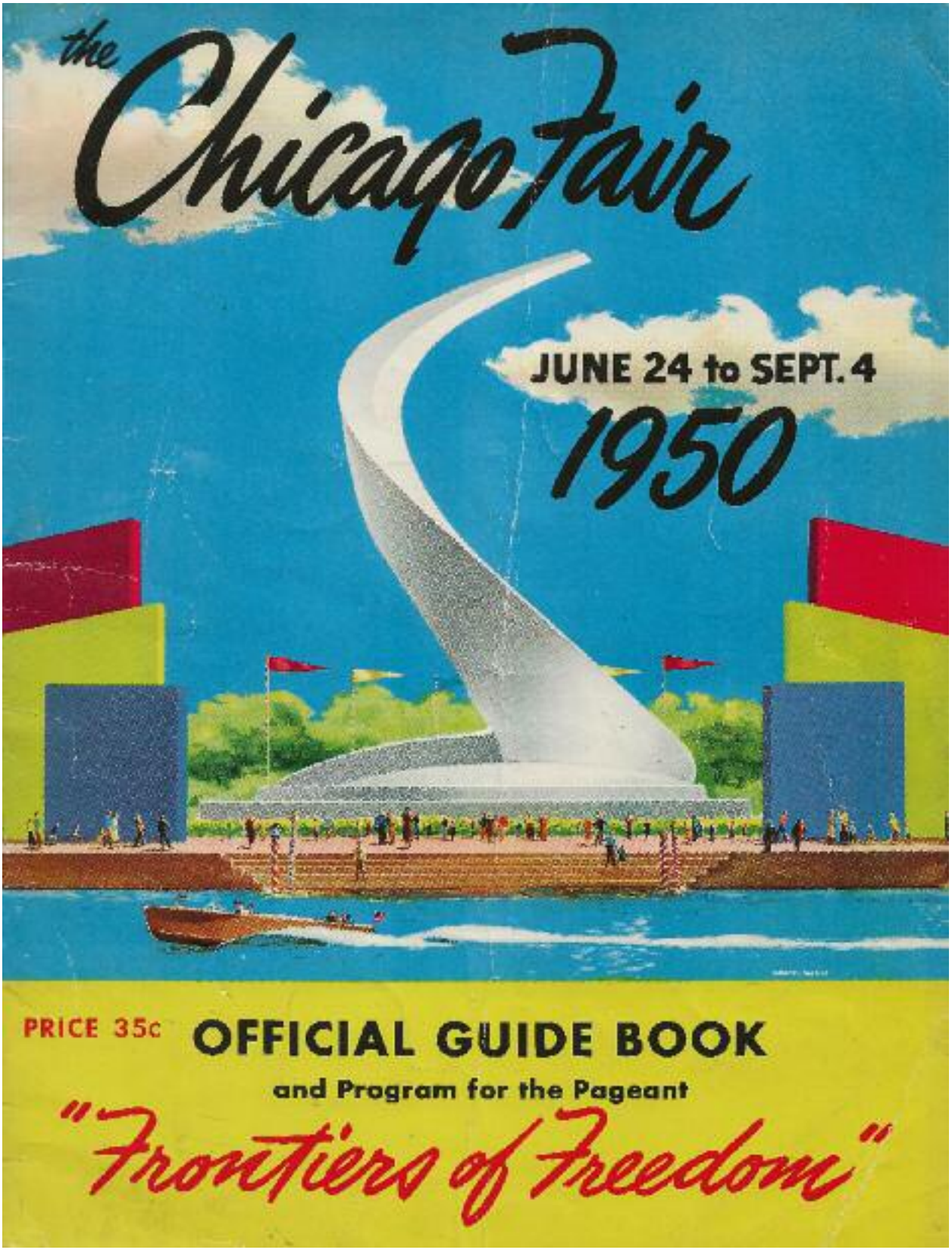
## Aftermath and Legacy

Sometime in 1950 all of the expenses of the Chicago Railroad Fair were paid. The remaining funds, nearly a half million dollars, were reimbursed to the participating railroads on a *pro rata* basis. Meanwhile the fairgrounds were redesigned to host a fair with a different theme. From June 24 through September 4, 1950, the site of the 1948–1949 Railroad Fair was the location for The Chicago Fair of 1950, an exposition that showcased achievements in agriculture, commerce, industry, and science and their




*Exterior view of the front of the Burlington Zephyr at the Century of Progress railroad exhibit located just south of the Travel and Transportation Building near Thirty-Fifth Street in 1933. Photographed for Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company by Ken Hedrich.*


WORLD'S CHAMPION
BURLINGTON
Zephyr
Burlington Route
DUNN




*The Official Guidebook and Program for the "Frontiers of Freedom" pageant at the 1950 Chicago Fair, which was held from June 24 through September 4.*

place in enhancing American living standards. The fair's official symbol was the "Spyramid," designed by Chicago artist Charles Bracken. It represented the nation's continuing search for advancement that reached toward the stars. Continued from the previous fair was the narrow gauge railroad that took visitors from one end of the fairgrounds to the other. In addition to the exhibits related to the themes of the fair, there were various musical and theatrical entertainments, including a big top circus. There was an ice show, a book fair, and the continuation of the Cypress Gardens water show from the previous fair. The pageant, "Frontiers of Freedom," showcased the history of agricultural, scientific, and industrial achievements throughout the nation's history.

Although it was thought that Burnham Park should be kept available for future fairs, nothing came of those ideas and, eventually, McCormick Place was constructed on part of the site. The Chicago Railroad Fair celebrated the history and utility of railroads and occurred at the peak of railroad success. Within a decade, however, the increased use of automobiles and trucks on better roads, the 1956 National Defense Highways Act that led to the development of the interstate system, and the inauguration of jet air travel in the 1960s led to a decline in the railroad system.

One legacy of the Chicago Railroad Fair endures. Walt Disney and one of his animators, Ward Kimball, boarded the Santa Fe *Super Chief* to Chicago and attended the fair in its first year of operation. Both men had a long and abiding interest in railroads going back to their childhoods. Kimball had already built his own full-scale steam railroad in his backyard—the "Grizzly Flats Railroad." At the fair Disney and Kimball marveled at the railroad equipment they saw. They were even given the opportunity to operate some of the vintage locomotives. After their time at the fair, the two men traveled to Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.

For some time, Walt Disney had thought about building an amusement park, and, after his return to California, he drew on his experiences at the Chicago Railroad Fair and Greenfield Village to come up with a vision that would eventually become Disneyland. In 1949 he and his wife bought a large home on Carolwood Drive in the Holmby Hills in the Westwood area of Los Angeles. There he built his own miniature steam railroad, the Carolwood Pacific. It would also become further inspiration for the rail system at Disneyland.



*Visitors to Greenfield Village at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, can still take a ride on the Weiser Railroad, which is pulled by one of the oldest steam engines.*

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*Joseph M. Di Cola was born and raised in Chicago and attended all three years at the fairs. He currently lives in Troy, Ohio.*

ILLUSTRATIONS | Illustrations are courtesy of Joseph M. Di Cola unless otherwise specified. 28, top: CHM, ICHi-021751; bottom: CHM, ICHi-005266. 29, CHM, ICHi-037698. 38, CHM, ICHi-177046. 39, CHM, ICHi-068923. 40–41, HB-02271-B, CHM, Hedrich-Blessing Collection. 43, Library of Congress, LCCN 2020714249.

FOR FURTHER READING | For more on the Pioneer locomotive, see John H. White Jr., *The "Pioneer" Chicago's First Locomotive* (The Chicago Historical Society, 1976). For more on the Chicago Railroad Fairs, see Richard C. Lindberg, *Tales of Forgotten Chicago* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2020).

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ENDNOTES

1. Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
2. Mayer and Wade, *Growth of a Metropolis*, 28.
3. "Extend Closing Date of Fair," *Illinois Central Magazine* (September 1948): 11.
4. "By the Way," *Townsfolk: Society, Sports, Travel and the Fine Arts*, vol. 38, no. 3, 8–11.
5. "Illinois Central Men Play Part in Pageant Success," *Illinois Central Magazine*, September (1948): 11–14, esp. 12 and 13.
6. Edward Hungerford, *Final Script: Wheels a-Rolling*, September 27, 1948.

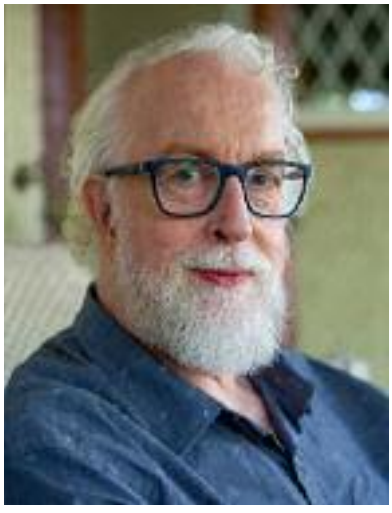
# Reviving Chicago Theater: Interviews with Robert Falls and Roche Schulfer

TIMOTHY J. GILFOYLE

Robert Falls and Roche Schulfer are renowned for transforming Chicago's Goodman Theatre into both an inspirational artistic center and a state-of-the-art theatrical venue. But each did more than revive a moribund theater; they made Chicago drama before and after the turn-of-the-millennium that was emblematic of larger events in American culture. In nearly five decades, Schulfer moved the Goodman from the verge of bankruptcy and closure to one of the nation's leading regional theaters.[1] And behind the scenes, he founded the Off Loop Producers Association in 1976, the predecessor of the League of Chicago Theatres.[2] During that time, the Goodman Theatre also produced more than 150 world or American premieres under the leadership of artistic director Robert Falls.[3] He has been described as Chicago's iconoclastic auteurist director, defined by his expansive ambitions, bold risk-taking on stage, and original conceptual productions. Falls is, according to *Chicago Tribune* theater critic Chris Jones, "the single most significant artistic individual, in the rise of Chicago theater over the past fifty years from obscurity to international prominence."[4]

Robert Falls was born on March 2, 1954, in the small rural community of of Ashland in downstate Illinois to Arthur Joseph Falls and Nancy Stribling Falls.[5] "It did have an idyllic veneer of growing up in a small town, which was ninety percent farming," remembers Falls, "with a two-block downtown with a bank, a library, a café, a grocery, and a dry goods store that went back to probably the 1880s when the town was founded."[6] His maternal grandparents lived nearby "on a pretty significant farm" with cattle and hogs.[7] By contrast, his father was a native of Queens, New York. "He really was a bit of a fish out of water," admits Falls, "being an Irish Catholic New Yorker."[8]

Arthur Falls worked in higher education and politics, serving as the downstate chairman of the Illinois Republican Party. "My father





*Robert Falls (left) and Roche Schulfer (right) were recipients of the Theodore Thomas Making History Award for Distinction in the Performing Arts in 2022.*



*The Back of the Yards Old Time Parade, pictured here in 1975, was sponsored by the Businessmen's Association and began at the 4900 block of South Ashland Avenue, near the bridal shop owned by Schulfer's mother's family.*

spent a large part of his life simply raising money, making phone calls, putting on a Tuesday night fried chicken dinner or a catfish fry with a candidate coming through and stumping."[9]

When Falls was 13 years old, his family moved to Urbana, where his father served as an admissions officer at the University of Illinois. Although Falls lived in Urbana for only one year, the experience proved extremely formative. "I saw plays, student productions at the University of Illinois that were unbelievably impressive." Falls also admits he was obsessive about film. "I was going to the movies three, four times a week on my bicycle. I would sometimes cut school to go to a movie in the afternoon." Falls also attended art films at the university, soaking in the works of Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Akira Kurosawa, and others. "At age 13," Falls concedes retrospectively, "it was mind-blowing."[10]

In 1967, the Falls family moved to Lombard, Illinois, where the teenage Falls attended Willowbrook High School. Here, he fell under the tutelage of Ralph Amelio, a teacher who proved to be an instrumental figure in stimulating Falls's ideas regarding theater, drama, writing, and directing. "Ralph set up what became the first cinema studies class for a high school in the United States," according to Falls. "He was truly what you want in a teacher. He was passionate. He loved his subject." Amelio was an English teacher, "but he loved film," says Falls, "and he was able to convince this suburban high school to let him create a film program."[11]

Roche Edward Schulfer was born in Chicago on September 26, 1951, the son of Thomas Florian and Tess (Ronk) Schulfer.[12] Both were the descendants of immigrants from Prussia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "They lived in the Polish neighborhoods on both the South and the North Sides, around Division, Ashland, and Milwaukee Avenue on the North Side," explains Schulfer, "and the Back of the Yards on the South Side."[13]

Schulfer spent his early childhood near Garfield Boulevard and Damen Avenue on the South Side of Chicago. "My father had been born in Chicago, as was my mother, and my mother's family owned a bridal shop on the South Side at 4900 South Ashland," Schulfer recounts. His father was an aspiring



*The Hesburgh Library on the University of Notre Dame campus in South Bend, Indiana, on June 1, 1967.*

radio announcer and worked in a variety of small stations from Hammond to Joliet. "But he never broke through into the Chicago market," explains Schulfer. "So in 1947 he decided to take over the family bridal shop and then spent the rest of his life regretting that decision."[14]

Schulfer's family moved to Hinsdale, Illinois, when he was five years old, and he attended St. Isaac Jogues School before commuting to Archbishop Weber High School on Chicago's Northwest Side.[15] He readily admits he never enjoyed his Catholic education. "I realize, in hindsight, I was very eager to become a lapsed Catholic and get that as soon as it was feasible."[16]

Despite his critical feelings about his parochial education, Schulfer recognizes that his college years at the University of Notre Dame were transformative. "I was going to Notre Dame at the height of the [Rev. Pres. Theodore] Hesburgh years when he had transformed it from a boys' boarding school to a real university," Schulfer explains. "The academic environment that I experienced was fantastic. I had many, many professors that I fondly remember from those days." Schulfer recalls an institution that fostered "a very open attitude about values." Rather than being defensive or protective, Schulfer discovered an academic world that encouraged students to explore other cultures and values. "Notre Dame was my first contact with Buddhism, Eastern thought, all of that," explains Schulfer. "It was just a wonderful academic experience."[17]

Falls had an equally engaging undergraduate experience. He returned to Urbana when he matriculated to the University of Illinois where, in Falls's words, "I lived and breathed theater."[18] Although he initially experimented with playwriting, by his sophomore year Falls was directing. His first productions included Jules Pfeiffer's *The White House Murder Case*, Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!*, and the musical *Promises, Promises*.[19] Then during his junior year, Falls directed a production of Michael Weller's *Moonchildren* at The Depot, a small off-campus theater. "The people who were involved in that play were mostly a year or two older than I was, and they went up and began their professional careers in Chicago," remembers Falls. In short time, he was invited to direct a production of *Moonchildren* in Chicago at the Beacon Street Theater in the Uptown neighborhood for several months before moving to the St. Nicholas Theatre.[20] "I directed that play as a senior in college, and that play is what really began my professional career."[21]

Falls also toyed with acting. In 1976, after meeting the director and acting teacher Edward Kaye-Martin at the University of Illinois, Falls briefly studied with him in New York.[22] "Ed really taught me about what acting was all about, but he also was, in a way, my first psychologist," according to Falls. "Ed as an acting teacher was able to unlock emotions from me that I could handle, that I could focus, that I could bring to both work and my own personal life."[23] When Falls returned to Chicago to be the artistic director at the Wisdom Bridge Theater in 1977, he invited Kaye-Martin to run an acting studio as part of the theater.[24]

University campus student activities were equally important for Schulfer. As a college junior, he volunteered for the cultural arts commission in Notre Dame's student union. Schulfer quickly became the ticket manager. "I was the person who picked up the phone and solved problems when problems came along," he explains. Most importantly, "I got to know the meaning of 'the show must go on,'" he says with a chuckle. "If the film we were supposed to show was locked in the post office, then you have to go and throw stones at the window of the post office until somebody answered and you could get the film out."[25]

Schulfer concedes he benefitted from the lack of faculty supervision. "There was someone who was allegedly our faculty supervisor, but I never met him," explains Schulfer. "So we just ran the place." He negotiated and signed contracts with Columbia Artists Management and other entertainment agencies and professionals. "I think they thought they were dealing with a university employee" Schulfer admits. "But no, just some 19-year-old kid signing contracts."[26]

Schulfer's first employment experience after college was in 1973 at the *Chicago Tribune*, working as a transcription typist. "I worked the night shift," he recounts. "It was fun when the critics called in with their reviews. That's how they did it in those days. They called in and dictated to the Dictaphone machine, and then I'd type it out and take it to the copy desk."[27]

Schulfer's college experiences with the cultural arts commission at Notre Dame spurred him to send his resumé to multiple theaters. "I tried a couple of times to see if I could get a courtesy interview with the managing director of the Goodman," remembers Schulfer. "Twice they were scheduled, twice I showed up, and twice, he didn't show up, and that seemed to be that." Fortunately, Schulfer says with a smile, "his secretary took pity on me, and contacted me." She informed Schulfer that the Goodman had an opening in the box office and asked if he was interested. "I said yes," Schulfer vividly remembers, "and on September 4, 1973, I showed up to work at the old Goodman in the box office, and that began my Goodman career."[28] Schulfer never left the Goodman Theatre.

Schulfer's early years at the Goodman coincided with Falls's at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre. In 1985, a production of *Hamlet* ignited his career. The tragedy opened with a coffin overflowing with blood on a bare stage. King Claudius held a televised press conference, attended by his queen in a Nancy Reagan red dress. Del Close's Polonius evoked Henry Kissinger. Actor Aidan Quinn as the young prince spray-painted a wall with "to be or not to be."[29] "We had fun and pushed limits, were trying to be imaginative, and created this *Hamlet* which was a sensation of the moment," Falls remembers. "It was really satisfactory and memorable."[30]

Falls's *Hamlet* still holds an iconic place in Chicago theater history. Thirty-five years later and after more than 150 productions by Falls, he claims that *Hamlet* "remains the play where people come up to me and say, 'I saw that, and it was my favorite play.'"

That *Hamlet* was part of a Chicago theater renaissance after 1970. "I don't know specifically why, but something about Chicago at that time was where young people wanted to come and do theater, and that's still continued to be the case today," Schulfer muses. He attributes some of this to the lower cost of living in the Midwest and theater patronage that is not dictated by tourism or film industries, as in New York and Los Angeles. "You could fail or you could succeed," summarizes Schulfer. "If you failed, you could get a chance to succeed again."[31]

Chicago theater in the 1970s and 1980s, according to Falls, "was rougher, rawer, and edgier." He believes actors like John Malkovich, Laurie Metcalf, and William Peterson made "a kind of 1970s theater that's almost mythic, or bigger than life."[32] But pragmatism also played a role. "What made Chicago successful in the early days, and maybe even now, was cheap rent and cheap beer," argues Falls. "You can't afford to live in New York City, and you can barely afford to drink beer if you're a young, struggling artist."[33]

The beginnings of both Falls's and Schulfer's careers also coincided with the rise of the regional theater movement in the United States. The opening of new, innovative theaters such as the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and the Arena Stage in Washington, DC, combined with new funding sources such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation, contributed to the decentralization of professional theater away from the New York-Broadway axis. "There were enough disgruntled artists who hated the limitations of Broadway," explains Schulfer, "and they went to other cities to try to create theaters that were based on art rather than commerce."[34]

That national movement reached Chicago, in part, through the Kenneth Sawyer Goodman Theatre. Founded in 1925 with a $250,000 gift from Goodman's parents, who envisioned an innovative performing arts center within and fully supported by the Art Institute of Chicago. For more than half a century, the Goodman was housed in the rear of the Art Institute at 200 South Columbus Drive.

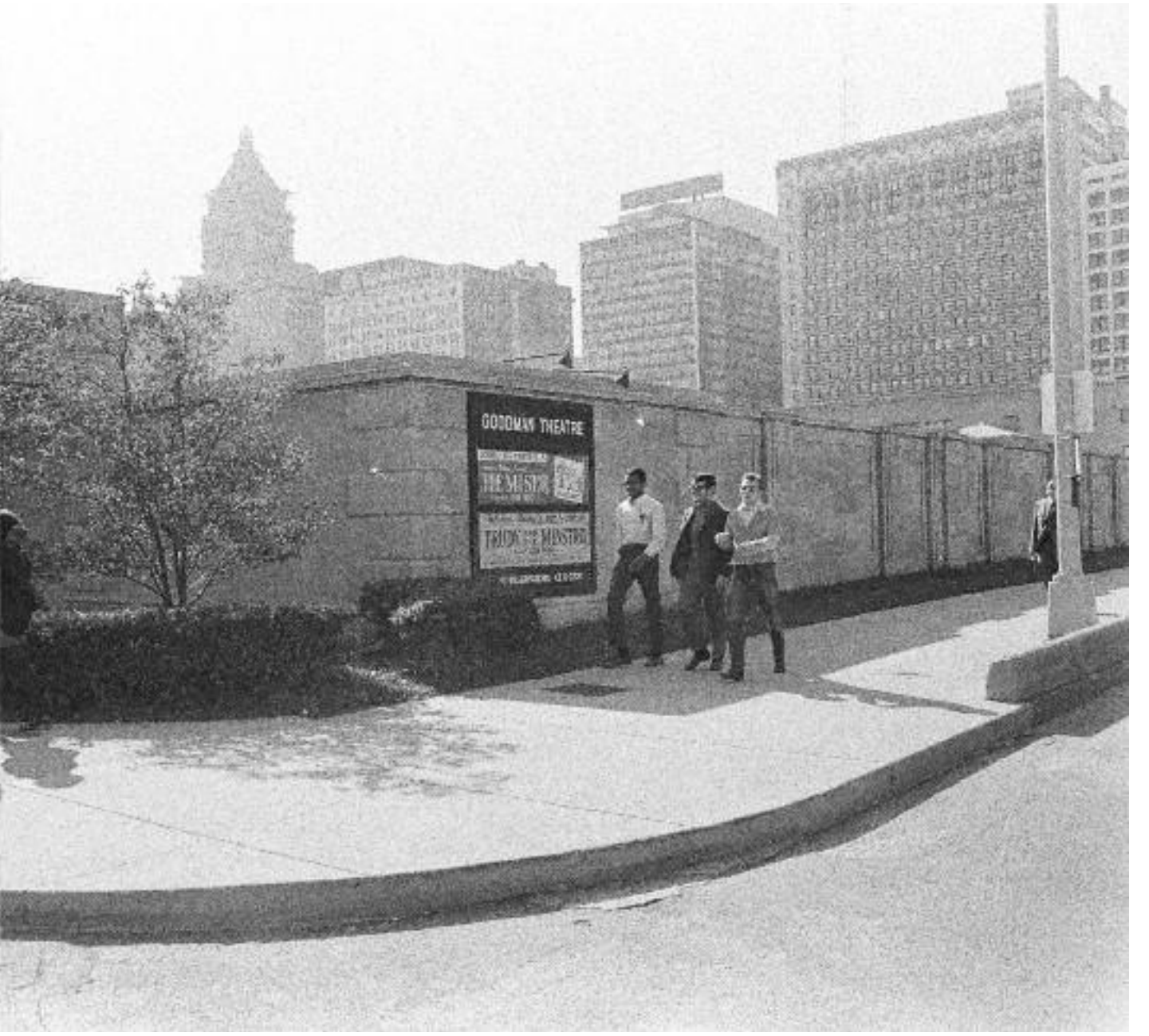
But the Goodman Theatre struggled to survive. "From 1930 until 1968, the Goodman was exclusively a school of drama," Schulfer explains. "There was no professional theater."[35] In the late 1960s, a professional repertory theater was created to help sustain the Goodman. When that proved unprofitable, a subscription series was created in 1972. That only lasted a year. By then, the Art Institute was unwilling to maintain their relationship with the theater. "The Art Institute really did want to get rid of the Goodman," admits Schulfer, "first financially and then physically."[36] That began a long process of generating new financial support for the Goodman and legally separating the Goodman from the Art Institute.

In 1973, William Woodman was hired as resident director of the Goodman Theatre. Along with general manager John Economos, they were charged with reinventing the Goodman according to the new theater company models that were being created around the country. Their solution was Goodman Stage 2. From 1974 to 1983—while Schulfer was promoted from the box office to general manager to managing director to producer to producing director and finally executive





*Left: On June 2, 1975, cast, crew, and guests celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Goodman Theatre at its original location in the Art Institute of Chicago. Above: Exterior views of the Goodman Theatre's original location in 1967.*




director—Schulfer also produced the works in Goodman Stage 2, sometimes under the direction of Gregory Mosher and always on a tight budget.[37] He remembers doing three shows the first year. "We ran out of money," Schulfer admits. "Two of the shows were done in the lobby of the old Goodman at midnight, and that's not a good time or place to be doing theater."[38] Nevertheless, Stage 2 contributed to the transformation Chicago theater through premieres of some of David Mamet's earliest productions, including *American Buffalo*, *A Life in the Theatre*, *Edmond*, and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.[39]

Artistic success, however, failed to solve the Goodman's financial problems. The Art Institute moved to legally separate the Goodman from the Art Institute but allow them to rent the facility on Columbus Drive."[40] But the Art Institute's legal counsel unearthed the deed of gift from the original South



*From left: Larry Neumann Jr. (Percy), Nathaniel Buescher (Tiny Tim), Bret Tuomi (Mr. Fezziwig), Phillip Cusic (Peter Cratchit), Skye Sparks (Belinda Cratchit), J. Salome Martinez (Dick Wilkins), William Burke (Old Joe's Assistant), Kristina Valada-Viars (Abby), Paige Collins (Martha Cratchit), Ava Morse (Emily Cratchit), and Theo Allyn (Miss Ortle) in* A Christmas Carol *at Goodman Theatre (November 15–December 28, 2014).*

Park Commission, which prohibited any other corporation operating on land that is now Grant Park, a clause designed to prevent art dealers from setting up a shop at the Art Institute. "That seemed to kill the deal," laments Schulfer. "The Goodman couldn't rent the space from the Art Institute."[41]

Enter Paul Dykstra. A young attorney and Goodman Theatre board member, Dykstra devised a legal fiction to benefit the Goodman. The theatre was renamed and legally incorporated as "The Chicago Theater Group" and worked out of the Art Institute. "We couldn't be incorporated as Goodman Theatre and be operating in the Kenneth Sawyer Goodman Memorial Theater at the Art Institute," explains Schulfer. "So the Goodman began operations under the Chicago Theater Group auspices with a three-year separation grant from the Art Institute."[42] The Dykstra plan temporarily saved the Goodman.

The finances of the Goodman remained precarious. "We were hanging on by a thread," Schulfer recalls. "Each year it was, 'Will there be a next year?'"[43] But in 1978, with Schulfer as general manager, the Goodman staged Richard Wright's *Native Son*, the first complete work by an African American author on the Goodman stage, and the theater's first production of *A Christmas Carol*.[44] The Charles Dickens classic not only became an annual holiday event, but remains one of the Goodman's most popular and profitable productions.[45]

While Schulfer and others labored to save and redefine the Goodman, Falls was immersed in a similar experience at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre. "I learned everything I know about the theater," Falls recounts, describing his years at Wisdom Bridge. "I opened the box office in the morning. I cleaned the toilets. I picked the programs off the floor. I reopened the box office and started selling tickets." The experience was revelatory for Falls. "My beginnings were pretty humble, at a time when there were very few theaters in Chicago."[46]

After nearly a decade in the theatrical trenches, Falls's humble origins generated interest from the Goodman Theatre. In 1985, the still financially pre-

carious institution was searching for a new artistic director. "For a good part of the next year, we were effectively bankrupt, desperate to make payroll and stay in business," Schulfer admits.[47] During his interview, Falls was asked how he would address the Goodman Theatre's deficit. Falls responded by challenging the search committee: that was the Goodman Board's predicament to solve, not his. "The problem was that the Goodman had shrunk artistically," recounts Falls. He believed the Goodman had a vision problem, specifically that it was effectively operating as an off-Loop theater, not like the larger, more ambitious American theaters such as those at Lincoln Center or the Public Theater in New York. "What the theater needed to do was go bigger rather than smaller," insists Falls.[48] The Goodman Board elected to appoint Falls artistic director of the Goodman Theatre by one vote.[49]

Falls immediately created an artistic collective with fellow Chicago directors Frank Galati and Michael Maggio. Little known to the general public, the collective not only transformed the Goodman, but Chicago theater itself. According to Falls, "Chicago's probably best known for its acting ensembles and as an actors' town," exemplified by the extraordinary success of the Steppenwolf, Remains, and Organic theaters in the late twentieth century. Falls, by contrast, was influenced by European counterparts. First, he was spurred by the Royal Shakespeare Company in England, "where there was a common ground and a common mission," Falls explains, "to produce Shakespeare in the most innovative, exciting, and forward-thinking way."[50] The second inspiration was the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow, Scotland, which had no single artistic director but rather a three-person collaborative composed of a playwright, actor, and director. Falls saw both of these venues as "directors' theaters" and recalls, "I really wanted to create a directors' theater."[51]



*Exterior of the Steppenwolf Theater located at 1650 N. Halsted Street in 1993. The theater was founded in 1974 and originally located in a Unitarian church on Half Day Road in Deerfield, Illinois.*

The collective succeeded because, according to Falls, "even though we were very different, we all shared a similar aesthetic, which included let's go big, let's be ambitious, let's be challenging, and let's put a lot more energy into the big theater."[52] Some of the earliest Goodman productions after Falls was named artistic director—including Falls's *Galileo* (1986) starring Brian Dennehy, Maggio's *Sunday in the Park With George* (1986–87), and Galati's *She Always Said Pablo* (1987)—were products of this theatrical collective.[53]

The collective created by Falls, according to Roche Schulfer, was "a game-changer." "Bob's first season just blew the roof off the joint," summarizes Schulfer. "It was phenomenally successful beyond anything the Goodman had experienced before, and we went from a year earlier having a one-and-a-half-million-dollar deficit to having about a one-and-a-half-million-dollar surplus."[54]

The success of the collective went beyond money. Schulfer believes the collective created a long-lasting artistic foundation for the Goodman Theatre. "It was just a brilliant stroke on Bob's part to have the two other most celebrated directors, arguably, in Chicago at that time become part of the Goodman team," believes Schulfer.[55]

The successful revival of the Goodman Theatre made Schulfer a much sought-after figure among theatrical producers and cultural leaders. In 1976, he was instrumental in the founding of the Off Loop Producers Association, the predecessor of the League of Chicago Theatres.[56] Over the next several decades, he served in key leadership roles in the Arts Alliance Illinois, the Theatre Communications Group, the Performing Arts Alliance, the League of Resident Theatres, the Lifeline Theatre in Rogers Park, and the Arts & Business Council of Chicago.[57]

Falls eventually expanded the Goodman artistic collective to include Chicago playwrights and directors such as Mary Zimmerman, John Logan, Rebecca Gilman, Regina Taylor, Chuck Smith, and Henry Godinez. This is a



*Tennessee Williams watching the rehearsals of his play* A House Not Meant to Stand *at the Goodman Theatre at its North Dearborn Street location on March 19, 1981.*

source of pride for Falls: "There are very few theaters—there are actually no theaters I can think of—that have ever expanded what was originally Galati, Maggio, and I to clearly a collective that was far more diverse aesthetically, culturally, racially than the Goodman, and has stayed committed to it for all of these years."[58]

Schulfer agrees. Combining "a strong artistic director with a strong vision and sharing that with a group of seven, eight, or nine artists who are being paid for their best ideas," Schulfer explains, "is unique to this day in the American theater."[59]

Falls proceeded to transform the Goodman stage. He was known for his bold, grand-scale world premiere productions, which included: *The Speed of Darkness* (1989) and *On the Open Road* (1989), both by Steve Tesich; *Book of the Night* (1991) by Louis Rosen and Thom Bishop (1991); *Riverview: A Melodrama with Music* (1992) by John Logan; *Blue Serge* (2001) and *Dollhouse* (2005), both by Rebecca Gilman; *Frank's Home* (2006) by Richard Nelson; and *Blind Date* (2018) by Rogelio Martinez.[60] Falls's association with Aidan Quinn in *Hamlet*, multiple productions with Brian Dennehy, and a series of Eric Bogosian plays—*Talk Radio* (1987 and revived in 2007), *subUrbia* (1994), and *Griller* (1998)—have become legendary elements in Falls's oeuvre.[61]

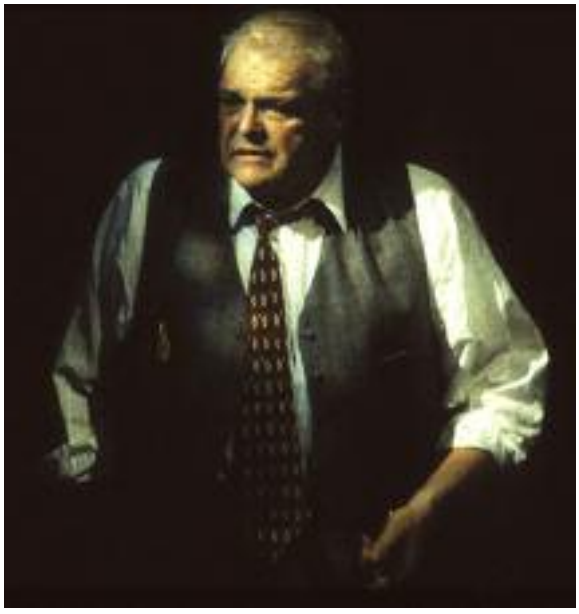
The collaborations with Brian Dennehy were among the most popular. After casting Dennehy in *Rat in the Skull* (1985) at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre, Falls revived their collaboration a year later when Dennehy played the lead in *Galileo* (1986) at the Goodman. Their partnership was repeated in *A Touch of the Poet* (1996), the revival of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1998), Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* (2009), and O'Neill's epic *The Iceman Cometh* (2012). The latter not only starred Dennehy, but according to

one theater critic, "a singular raft of Chicago acting talent, the likes of which had never been assembled before."[62]

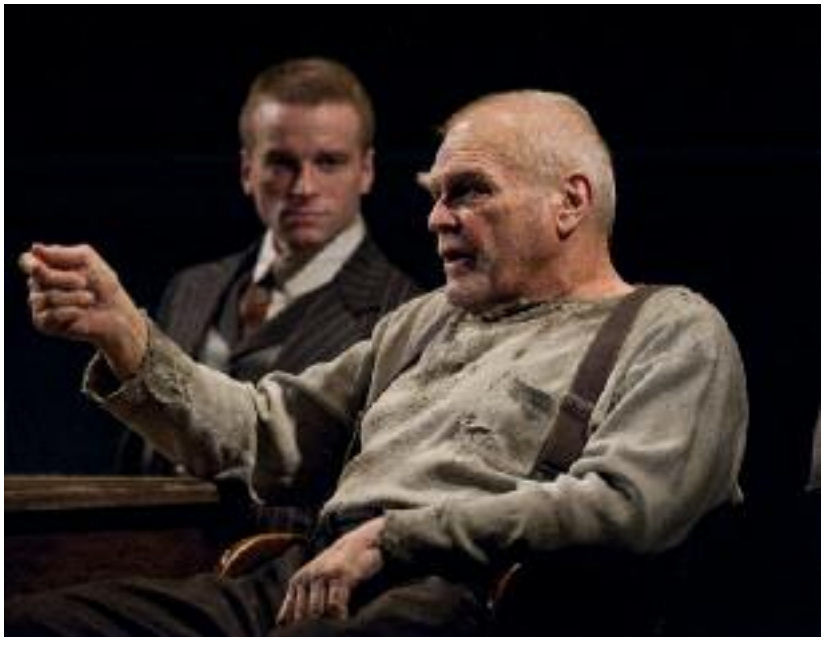
The success of the Falls-Dennehy productions was in part a product of their common Irish Catholic upbringings. Falls admits he abandoned the institutional church after his teenage confirmation. Nevertheless, "Catholicism in my early life has shaped some of the way I've looked at work, art, literature, and writers," a Catholic perspective Falls now believes he shared with Dennehy.[63] "We joked about him being my muse," laughs Falls in describing Dennehy. "I always imagined a beautiful, sprite-like woman who would come into my life and inspire me, but it turned out to be an old football player from Columbia University with bad legs named Brian Dennehy."[64]

Falls also enjoyed a significant collaboration with the famed American playwright Arthur Miller. Falls's revival of *Death of a Salesman* (1998) eventually went to Broadway in New York; he then collaborated with Miller on *Finishing the Picture* (2004), Miller's final play. Falls admits his interest in *Death of a Salesman* originated in high school, when at the age of 16 he played Willy Loman in a school play. The tragedy, he admits, "remained kind of wildly meaningful throughout my career."[65] As a teenager, Falls remembers watching a television production of *Death of a Salesman* with his father with the original Broadway cast from the 1940s. "It was the first time I can recall seeing my father cry, like really open up in tears," Falls remembers. "I was a little disturbed in his vulnerability." He confesses that "I hadn't really seen that, and he's not the first man to have wept buckets during *Death of a Salesman*."[66]

The production of *Death of a Salesman*, however, almost did not happen. "The Miller estate initially said no, because they thought that we were trying to do it and bill it as the fiftieth anniversary production," Falls explains. "We didn't even know it was approaching the fiftieth anniversary, 1999."[67] The Goodman finally received permission from the Miller estate, and it opened to



*Brian Dennehy as Willy Loman in* Death of a Salesman *by Arthur Miller, directed by Robert Falls at the Goodman Theatre (September 18–November 7, 1998).*



*Brian Dennehy (as Larry Slade) with Patrick Andrews (as Don Parritt) in Eugene O'Neill's* The Iceman Cometh *directed by Robert Falls at the Goodman Theatre (April 21–June 17, 2012).*

large audiences and positive reviews. "It was very different visually and, in many ways, interpretively than any major production I can think of that came before it," reflects Falls. "And enough people just started saying to Arthur Miller, you really should go look at this."[68]

Miller did just that. "He was very moved. He was very taken by it," Falls recounts. "He was surprised by it. And he said—ironically—this should be the fiftieth anniversary production."[69] The play opened at the Eugene O'Neill Theater in New York in 1999 to considerable acclaim, and ultimately received Tony Awards for Falls (Best Director), Brian Dennehy (Best Actor in a Drama), the Goodman Theatre (Best Revival), and Arthur Miller (Lifetime Achievement).[70] "That production of *Salesman* took us into the stratosphere in terms of visibility and in terms of artists wanting to work with us," Falls admits. "It was seen in London, it was seen around the country, and that production will always remain very centered in my long career."[71]

The success generated by the artistic vision of Robert Falls during the 1990s led Goodman Theatre officials to consider finding a new performance space and finally physically separate from the Art Institute. Chicago city officials issued a request for proposal (RFP) for reuse of the Selwyn and Harris theaters on Dearborn Street in the Loop, which by then were rather seedy, run-down, X-rated pornography houses. "We responded to it, and that RFP was selected," recalls Schulfer. "And that began the process of the North Loop relocation."[72]

Schulfer credits several instrumental Goodman Theatre board members—Lew Manilow, Irving Markin, Sondra Healy, Jim Annable, Peter Bynoe, and Albert Goodman—in building the new venue. According to Schulfer, several of them "traveled around North America looking at theaters and looking for designs that were optimal." They quickly learned "that theater buildings are like sculptures: they have to be built from the inside out, and the audience-stage relationship is paramount."[73]

In 2000, the new Goodman Theatre designed by KPMB Architects and DLK Architecture opened on Dearborn Street.[74] The timing was fortuitous. By the early twenty-first century, Chicago had a rejuvenated cultural scene in the Loop. Once devoid of people after five o'clock in the evening, the central



*View of construction work for the Goodman Theatre Center of Chicago at the northwest corner of Dearborn and Randolph Streets on October 1, 1999. The caption on the back of the photograph reads: "Adding to the Theater District."*

*The Owen Theatre inside the Goodman Theatre Center has three levels of courtyard seating surrounding a large stage and is typically home to more intimate Goodman productions.*





*From left: Thomas J. Cox (Ensemble), Penelope Walker (Mrs. Alice Fezziwig), Ariana Burks (Ensemble), Cindy Gold (Mrs. Maud Fezziwig), Christopher Sheard (Young Scrooge), and Rika Nishikawa (Ensemble) in the Goodman's 2021 production of* A Christmas Carol.

business district now housed the new Harris Theater in Millennium Park and the newly renovated Cadillac Palace, Majestic (now CIBC), and Oriental (now James M. Nederlander) theaters, all of which joined the Auditorium Theatre, the Chicago Theatre, Symphony Center, the Art Institute, and the Lyric Opera to create a new culture center in Chicago. "As a cultural tourist, you can drop in on a weekend in September and go to the Lyric, and go to a Broadway show, and go to a new play at the Goodman, and spend an afternoon at the Art Institute, see a concert at the Symphony, and never have to rent a car or even take a cab," points out Schulfer.[75]

Falls and Schulfer at times invited controversy. Early in his career, Schulfer worked with director Gregory Mosher to make Goodman productions more representative of Chicago's diverse population through new programming, casting, and marketing strategies.[76] That effort generated a stormy debate in 1984 when the Goodman Theatre cast the first African American Tiny Tim in the annual *Christmas Carol*.[77] "There was a backlash—we lost audience members, we lost subscribers," Schulfer admits.[78] "But in the long run, we developed a new audience—a larger and a broader audience than we had before."[79] Schulfer continued to court controversy in 2021 when Mrs. Fezziwig was portrayed as a lesbian.[80]

The Tiny Tim controversy illustrates how Falls and Schulfer consciously diversified Chicago theater. Schulfer, for instance, was instrumental in introducing Falls and the Goodman Theatre to African American playwright August Wilson. In 1985, just as Falls was about to assume the artistic directorship at the Goodman, Wilson was working with director Lloyd Richards at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut. "They had done a production of *Fences*, which had been very successful," recounts Falls. "But it ended."[81] Roche Schulfer recognized an opportunity and worked with Ben Mordecai at Yale. "Together they said let's keep *Fences* going; let's bring it to the Goodman," remembers Falls. "And that even solved some financial problems for Roche."[82]

That proved to be the beginning of an enduring relationship between Falls and Wilson. "We spent time together socially and in rehearsals," explains Falls, "producing a number of his plays, both world premieres and others." The Goodman Theatre became the first institution to produce



*Artistic Director Robert Falls addresses the company during a rehearsal for* A Christmas Carol *by Charles Dickens, adapted by Tom Creamer and directed by Jessica Thebus at Goodman Theatre (November 20–December 31, 2021). Photograph by Liz Lauren*

Wilson's ten-play "Century Cycle," examining the twentieth-century African American experience. "We weren't the only theater to have done the whole cycle, but we were certainly the first," claims Falls. "It was a wonderful relationship August had both to the Goodman and to the city of Chicago, which he loved."[83]

Schulfer and Falls have garnered a plethora of awards recognizing their significant accomplishments. In addition to the Tony Awards for *Death of a Salesman*, Falls received Tony nominations for Best Play for *The Young Man From Atlanta* (1997) and Best Director for *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (2003). He was the recipient of a Drama Desk Award for *Long Day's Journey into Night* (2003), an Obie Award for *subUrbia* (1995), a Helen Hayes Award for *King Lear* (2010), and multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards.[84] In 2003, Falls was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.[85] He has also received the Savva Morozov Diamond Award from the Moscow Art Theatre, the O'Neill Medallion awarded by the Eugene O'Neill Society, and the Illinois Arts Council Governor's Award. Falls was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2015.[86]




*Schulfer and Falls at* Long Day's Journey Into Night *by Eugene O'Neill and directed by Falls, which opened at Broadway's Plymouth Theatre on May 6, 2003.*

Schulfer is the recipient of numerous leadership honors: the League of Chicago Theaters' Lifetime Achievement Award, the Theatre Communication Group's Visionary Leadership Award, Lifeline Theatre's Raymond R. Snyder Award for Commitment to the Arts, and the Arts & Business Council award for distinguished contributions to Chicago's artistic vitality. *Chicago* magazine and the *Chicago Tribune* have named him a "Chicagoan of the Year" at different times. And, like Robert Falls, the Joseph Jefferson Awards committee have bestowed him with multiple honors.

Significantly, many of Schulfer's awards reflect his extraordinary outreach and compassion: Season of Concern, for support of direct care for those living with HIV/AIDS; Vision 2020, for promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace; the Actors' Equity Association, for promoting diversity and



*At the Chicago History Museum's 28th Annual Making History Awards on June 8, 2022, Robert Falls and Roche Schulfer were presented their award by Paul Dykstra and Les Coney. Photograph by Kyle Flubacker*

equal opportunity in Chicago theater; and the American Arts Alliance and Arts Alliance Illinois, for arts advocacy.[87]

Schulfer and Falls each consider the survival and transformation of the Goodman Theatre to be their greatest professional accomplishments. The Goodman, argues Schulfer, "has gained so much credibility locally, nationally, even internationally, the fact that it's survived is kind of miraculous because there were any number of times when it could have shut down."[88]

Falls concurs. He recognizes that many of the thriving Chicago theaters when he started—Wisdom Bridge Theater, the St. Nicholas Theatre, the Organic Theater, the Remains Theatre—no longer exist. "The continuity of Goodman Theatre when it could have gone under is a very, very important thing."[89] The Goodman's migration from the Art Institute to the new location on Dearborn Street was "a considerable achievement that is historic." It is a "great, great building" because it is more than just physical structure. "Theater artists helped create that theater as advisors," states Falls. "I'm very proud of that, and I think that's something that will go on way past me."[90]

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ILLUSTRATIONS | Illustrations are from the collection of the Chicago History Museum unless otherwise specified. 44, courtesy of the honorees. 45, ST-60001712-0013, Chicago Sun-Times collection. 46, ST-20003643-0028, Chicago Sun-Times collection. 48–49, left: ST-20003192-0009, Chicago Sun-Times collection; right: ST-20003199-0003, Chicago Sun-Times collection. 50, courtesy of the Goodman Theatre. 51, ICHi-065035. 52, ST-11003176-0010, Chicago Sun-Times collection. 53, top and bottom: courtesy of the Goodman Theatre. 54, top: ICHi-065051; bottom: courtesy of the Goodman Theatre. 55,

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FOR FURTHER READING | Recent histories of theater in Chicago include Mark Larson, *Ensemble: An Oral History of Chicago Theater* (Evanston, IL: Agate Midway, 2019); and Richard Christiansen's *A Theater of Our Own: A History and a Memoir of 1,001 Nights in Chicago* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004). On Robert Falls, begin with the insightful articles and interviews in Mara Tapp, "Dramatic Effect," *Chicago Magazine*, June 13, 2007, accessed March 8, 2022, https://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/September-2006/Dramatic-Effect/; and Miriam Di Nunzio, "Robert Falls Celebrates 30 Years at Goodman, with a Nod to Future," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Feb. 11, 2017, accessed March 8, 2022, https://chicago.suntimes.com/2017/2/11/18400518/robert-falls-celebrates-30-years-at-goodman-with-a-nod-to-future. An interview with Robert Falls and Brian Dennehy can be found in the Studs Terkel Radio Archive, Oct. 3, 1986, https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/programs/interview-robert-falls-and-brian-dennehy. Other valuable articles include: Miriam Di Nunzio, "Robert Falls Stepping Down as Goodman Theatre's Artistic Director," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sept. 15, 2021, accessed March 8, 2022, https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/9/15/22675932/robert-falls-goodman-theatre-stepping-down-artistic-director-chicago; Chris Jones, "Exclusive: Goodman Theatre Artistic Director Robert Falls is Stepping Down," *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 15, 2021, accessed March 9, 2022, https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/theater/chris-jones/ct-ent-bob-falls-goodman-theatre-chicago-20210915-b2tu4phdqrbrbinl43k2ft4sui-story.html; *American Theatre* editors, "Robert Falls to Depart Goodman Theatre in 2022," *American Theatre*, Sept. 15, 2021, accessed March 8, 2022, https://www.americantheatre.org/2021/09/15/robert-falls-to-depart-goodman-theatre-in-2022/. Roche Schulfer's lecture "Why Not For Profit Theater" provides an excellent introduction to his economic innovations in the business of theater, available on Vimeo, accessed October 7, 2022, https://vimeo.com/277719891. Schulfer is interviewed in Kris Vire, "Roche Schulfer, the Goodman Theatre's Shrewd Steward," *American Theatre*, March 26, 2015, accessed March 7, 2022, https://www.americantheatre.org/2015/03/26/roche-schulfer-the-goodman-theatres-shrewd-steward/. Summaries of Schulfer's career appear in Thomas Connors, "Roche Schulfer's Long Run," *Crain's Chicago Business*, Dec. 7, 2013, accessed March 7, 2022, https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20131207/ISSUE03/312079995/roche-schulfer-celebrates-40-years-at-chicago-s-goodman-theatre; and BWW News Desk, "Goodman Theatre to Honor Roche Schulfer for 40 Years with Star on 'Walkway of Stars' 9/24," *Broadway World*, Aug. 22, 2013, accessed March 7, 2022, https://www.broadwayworld.com/chicago/article/Goodman-Theatre-to-Honor-Roche-Schulfer-for-40-Years-with-Star-on-Walkway-of-Stars-924-20130822.

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