DELVE INTO CHICAGO HISTORY FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE! OUR NEW EXCLUSIVE LECTURES CAN BE ENJOYED FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME, YOUR VIRTUAL OFFICE, OR INCORPORATED INTO YOUR NEXT VIRTUAL EVENT.

Through the use of technology, we’re telling stories about the city’s past in compelling and innovative ways to an even broader audience. Chicago History Museum curatorial staff will take you through some of Chicago’s defining moments in history through the lens of its tragedies, triumphs, social justice, and diverse populations. These private sessions include a thirty-minute lecture by one of our experts followed by a Q&A.

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VIRTUAL CHICAGO HISTORY GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Topics by Peter T. Alter, Chief Historian and Director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History

★ WORKING IN CHICAGO
Incorporated in 1837, Chicago was a frontier town that soon became home to numerous industries, such as meatpacking, garment making, goods manufacturing, professional services, and more. Learn how Chicago became known as the “City That Works.”

★ THEY CAME TO CHICAGO
Like many cities in the US, Chicago has welcomed people from all over the world. With his background in US immigration history, Alter discusses how migrants, immigrants, and refugees have adapted to life in Chicago and contributed to the city’s culture.

★ WRITING CHICAGO
Authors of fact and fiction, poetry and prose have shaped how we see the city. Their words help us hear what we didn’t, understand what we couldn’t, and feel what we have never touched. In this virtual lecture, Alter talks about Chicago literature past and present while discussing prominent themes.

★ THE BLACK SOX AND CHICAGO BASEBALL
Discover how and why eight Chicago White Sox players allegedly threw the 1919 World Series through an arrangement with a nationwide gambling syndicate. Alter will discuss what we know about the scandal, the historical context in which it occurred, and relevant items in the Museum’s collection.

Topics by Julius L. Jones, Assistant Curator

★ CHICAGO’S HISTORY THROUGH ITS FLAG
Chicago’s flag is one of the most iconic in the world. Not only is it aesthetically pleasing, its four red stars, two blue bars, and three white bands represent the city’s geographical features and important historic moments. Explore these key events that made the city what it is today.

★ THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE
By the end of the Civil War, Chicago was coming into its own as a hub of commerce and innovation. However, tragedy struck with the Great Fire of 1871, which leveled nearly three-and-a-half square miles of the city over three days. Despite the enormous scale of the devastation, its residents persevered, as Chicago would end the nineteenth century as one of the fastest-growing urban centers in the world. Discover how this key event made the city what it is today and why its recovery was not experienced equally by everyone.

Topics by Brittany Hutchinson, Assistant Curator

★ THE HISTORY OF EPIDEMICS IN CHICAGO
Cholera, influenza, HIV/AIDS, and COVID-19 have all shaped how Chicagoans live their lives. Delve into the history of how Chicagoans have responded to these epidemics, how each event taught us how to overcome catastrophes, and the lasting effects of each “new normal.”

★ REMEMBERING DR. KING: 1929–1968
While Martin Luther King Jr.’s activism focused on dismantling the systems that kept African Americans oppressed in the American South, he also spent time in Chicago and often spoke out on the realities of northern discrimination, particularly around the issues of poverty, education, and housing. Hutchinson discusses the Museum’s exhibition Remembering Dr. King: 1929–1968, which features photographs depicting key moments in Dr. King’s work and the Civil Rights Movement, with a special focus on his time in Chicago.