



As cars flooded Chicago's streets, safe rail crossings became a critical problem. Near the Chicago border with the town of Cicero, Ogden Avenue (Route 66) shared a four-lane subway under the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad with the traffic from two other streets. Each day, 31,000 vehicles squeezed into the passage, creating a near-constant bottleneck. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the Illinois Division of Highways completed the viaduct in 1939, shown here, which they called their "most complicated grade separation problem ever tackled." The view above looks northeast toward Chicago; the view below shows an Ogden Avenue streetcar heading west into Cicero via a tunnel beneath the viaduct. The viaduct was a quarter-mile in length, and the roadway on the truss bridge was 45 feet above Cicero Avenue, the north-south cross street below. (Below, photograph by Truman Hefner, courtesy of the Krambles-Peterson Archive.)



Starting in the 1840s, railroads built their tracks approaching the city's periphery at grade level. As Chicago grew, the grid of city streets engulfed the tracks with no separation between urban neighborhoods and high-volume rail traffic. Five rail companies used the right-of-way across Ogden Avenue between Western Avenue and Rockwell Street, including the Chicago and North Western Railroad. A 700-foot-long viaduct carried Ogden Avenue over the tracks in 1892, but it was in severe disrepair by 1900, as shown in the *Chicago Tribune* illustration at right. In December 1900, a woman named Tillie Canniff fell through a hole in the wooden sidewalk to her death on the tracks below. The railroads made repairs, but by 1910, a new steel and concrete structure (below) elevated the tracks above grade.

