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Windy City Road Warrior Presentations-- Bringing the Highways of History to YOU!

If you are looking for interesting presentations for your museum, library, social group, or any other type of organization, please consider tapping into the informational and visual resources available from Windy City Road Warrior.com! We currently offer a portfolio of PowerPoint Presentations:

The Ghosts of Route 66—Page 1

Centennial 1912: The Titanic and More—Page 2

Good Food Fast: The 20th Century Dining Revolution—Page 3

Bringing Family History to Life: The Stories We Could Tell – Page 4

The Lincoln Highway in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa – Page 4

Greetings From Chicago: Architectural Vistas through a Visitor's Eyes – Page 5

The Illinois & Michigan Canal—Past and Present – Page 6

The Roads that Lead to Lincoln: Honest Abe on the Historic Highways of Illinois – Page 7

Historic Route 66: A Journey Through History – Page 7

Route 66 on a Tank of Gas: The Mother Road in Illinois – Page 8

No Little Plans: The Roads of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago – Page 9

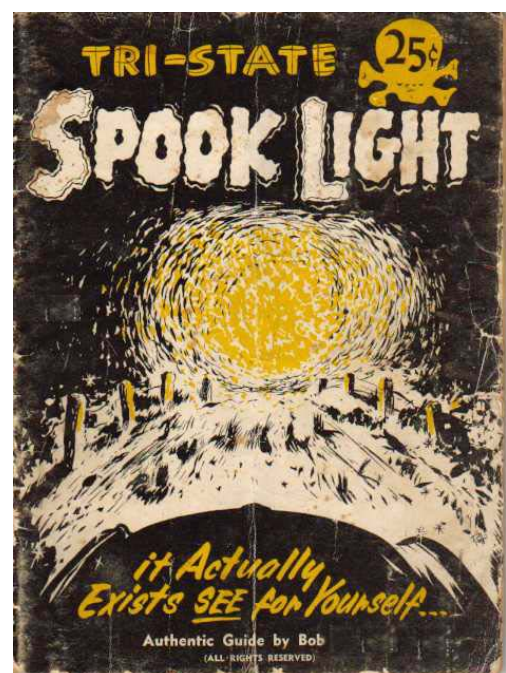
Centennial 1911: Snapshots from 100 Years Ago—Page 9

Standard and Custom Presentation Details – Page 10

The Ghosts of Route 66

Route 66 winds through countless communities on its way from Chicago to California. Along the way the culture of the highway includes ghostly stories and haunting legends. The culture also includes many ghost towns—places left behind by the changing tides of economics and alternate paths. ***The Ghosts of Route 66*** explores both the Ghost Stories and the Ghost Towns to be found along the country's most famous highway.

In Chicago, Route 66 runs past the site of the infamous Schuttler Mansion, the palace of a multi-millionaire that stood empty and possibly haunted for decades after its owner's death. Archer Avenue in the southwest suburbs was often a construction detour for Route 66 in the area where a ghostly Resurrection Mary has been known to ask for a ride from unsuspecting travelers.



In the area where 66 traverses Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma in just a few miles, the mysterious Spook Lights have enthralled and puzzled locals and visitors alike. Dancing in the sky and among the trees, are they reflections of headlights from the highway, or are they the restless spirits of



starcrossed Native American lovers? In Flagstaff, the Museum Club is a famous local watering hole that was once home to collections of hunting trophies, stuffed animals, and Native American artifacts. It is said that the ghosts of former owners who died tragically still wander the building. Whether these stories are manifestations of a spirit world or simply spirited imagination, they abound in all 8 of the Route 66 states.

There is no denying the reality of the many Ghost Towns along the road. Where 66 once brought countless travelers right down the main street of towns such as Funks Grove, Texola, Glenrio, and Amboy, the building of the Interstates left these places to decay.

The second half of ***The Ghosts of Route 66*** looks at the stories of many of these towns and compares their boom town days to their current stark reality. The relics of these towns manifested in their deteriorating structures embody the living spirit of the entrepreneurs that invested their hopes and dreams in the myth of Route 66. Through Ghost Stories and Ghost Towns, the ***Ghosts of Route 66*** live on!

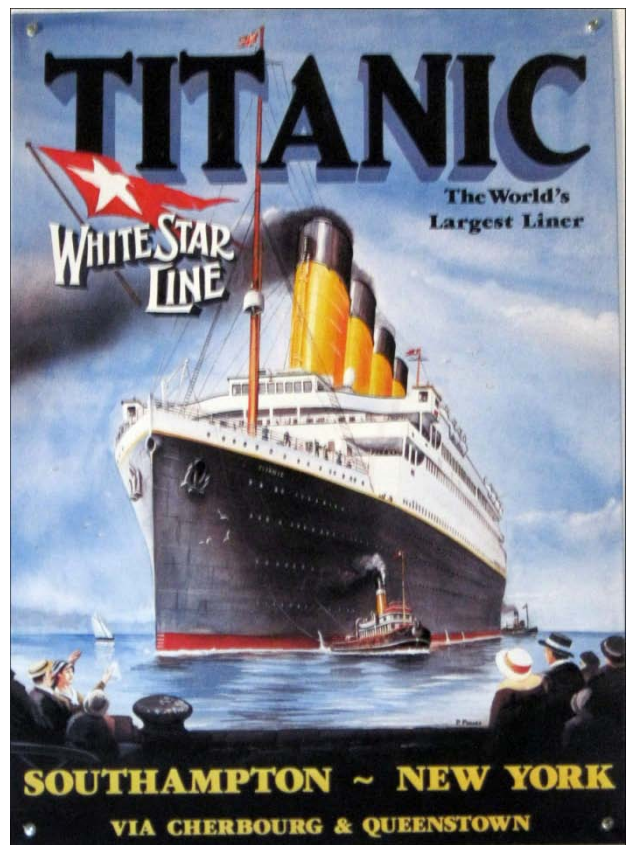
Centennial 1912: The Titanic and More

This new series of programs will change each year to look back at historic events of a century ago. We will look at the milestones, music, and memorable events to discover interesting nostalgia, notable people, and ironic parallels with recent history.

In 2012, we look back in this program series to 1912. The *Titanic*, then the world's largest Ocean Liner sank on its maiden voyage. The horrific event and its aftermath led to the 1915 Seaman's Act requiring additional lifeboats on board passenger vessels and possibly leading to unforeseen consequences in other mishaps including Chicago's *Eastland* disaster.

Also in 1912, Woodrow Willson won the Presidency against a split Republican Party against William Howard Taft, the incumbent, and former President Teddy Roosevelt. All three would claim to be progressives in a period of anti-conservatism.

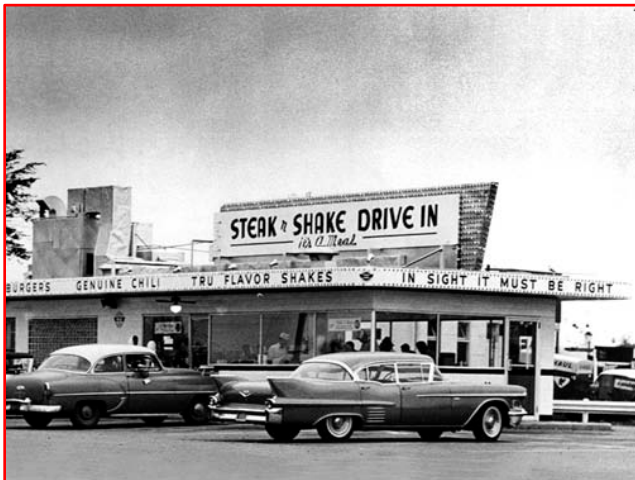
1912 saw the first production of Chevrolet vehicles. A man named Chrysler is hired by General Motors to take over the Buick Division, and Ford sells 3 times as many cars as any other brand. Consumers are able to enjoy the country's first self-serve



grocery stores and the first standalone automobile gas station. The first offshore oil wells begin production off the coast of Southern California. These and other subjects are addressed in **Centennial 1912: The Titanic and More**, as we see that times and technology change, but people and their decisions resonate over time.

Good Food Fast: The 20th Century Dining Revolution

When traveling across the United States, one of the most memorable discoveries in any locality is the one-of-a-kind diner or drive-in, serving food at once familiar but with a unique flair. Hot dogs, hamburgers, barbeque, and country-fried steaks all get a different treatment depending on whether you are in Kansas or Memphis, Santa Fe or Atlanta, New Orleans or Cincinnati.



However, the local specialties are served in eateries welcoming and familiar. Many feature a kitchen visible to the patrons, where the food is prepared “in sight, so it must be right!” The similarity of restaurants stem from their common ancestry of a type of eatery developed around the turn of the 20th century. From railroad dining cars, lunch counters, and breakfast served all day, a new type of dining emerged to serve travelers, workers on a short lunch break, and people in need of a meal around the clock.

Good Food Fast: The 20th Century Dining Revolution tells the story through words, photos, and music, of how our favorite dining establishments evolved from Fred Harvey railroad dining cars and urban lunch counters. We look at the serious concerns in the early 1900s with food safety that led to establishments marketing their open kitchens, use of popular and trusted brand-name ingredients, and scrupulous attention to cleanliness. We see how these trends began in urban centers, such as Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago, and how they spread across the country first along the rail lines, and later along the highways. From carhops to cookie-cutter franchises, from familiar foods to unique eats, this program will satisfy a thirst for knowledge—although it may leave you hungry for more!



Bringing Family History to Life: The Stories We Could Tell

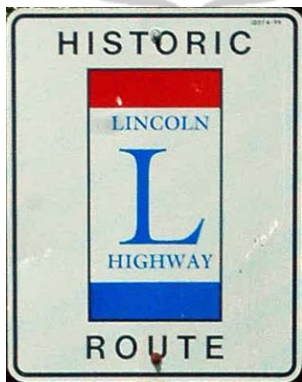
Every family has its stories. Beyond basic genealogical facts, the events in the lives of our ancestors can amuse or entertain, showcase traditions or cultural values, or provide insights into the shared society and culture. Writing the unique stories of a person's family can preserve the facts and provide a record for future generations. This presentation will help people interested in telling their family stories to overcome their fears of writing and commit the oral traditions to the written word.



Through images and music, ***Bringing Family History to Life: The Stories We Could Tell*** is designed to help motivate those who have an interest in their genealogy to take the next step and create a written record of their unique family stories. We discuss how a collection of family images, documents, and heirlooms remain incomplete without the contextual information that can only be provided with a written explanation. We see how organizing our historic objects can be accomplished through simple handwritten methods or through the use of computers, scanners, and digital cameras.

To overcome the fears of writing, we show how getting started with brief biographical sketches can be easy. We cover simple methods for organizing short pieces that can stand alone or later be combined into a larger project. Copyrights and fair use of research materials is also discussed. We end with the message that anyone CAN write the stories of their families—and if they do not, who will?

The Lincoln Highway in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa



Automobiles were the playthings of the rich until 1909, when Henry Ford produced the Model T—the first car that the average working family could afford. The number of cars manufactured and owned began to take off, but unfortunately there were few good places to drive them! For over half a century, long-distance travel in the United States had been accomplished by rail, and few roads suitable for the new horseless carriages existed. If the early cars did not break down on their own, it was very likely they would get stuck in mud on the dirt roads that existed outside of cities and towns.

A grass-roots effort began, backed by car companies and related industries, to pull the country out of the mud. The “Good Roads Movement” championed named auto trails on the best available roads and advocated for government involvement in building hard surfaces on the public highways of the country. The first named auto trail to be marked from coast-to-coast was the Lincoln Highway.





Auto parts entrepreneur Carl Fisher was the guiding force behind marking a trail across the country from New York's Time Square to Lincoln Park in San Francisco. He would go on to found the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the city of Miami Beach, and he would also begin the Dixie Highway. In each state along the way, the Lincoln Highway Association sponsored the creation of a "seedling mile," one mile of hard road that would show the traveler the advantages to be had if "good roads" could become a governmental mandate.

The Lincoln Highway's story includes such luminaries as Dwight Eisenhower and Emily Post, who wrote a series of articles during her trip across the country. Today, the traveler in the Midwest is taken back in time. In Indiana from Fort Wayne to Dyer by way of Valparaiso and Merrillville; in Illinois from Chicago Heights to Fulton through Dixon and DeKalb; and in Iowa from Clinton to Council Bluffs, we end the program with a virtual tour full of nostalgia and history.

Greetings From Chicago: Architectural Vistas through a Visitor's Eyes

After the 1871 Chicago Fire, the city rose from the ashes to become the transportation and commercial Gateway to the American West. Builders, dreamers, and travelers had flocked to the Windy City, creating the skyscrapers and thoroughfares that would come to define the transportation capital of the North American continent. This program showcases the builders who created the

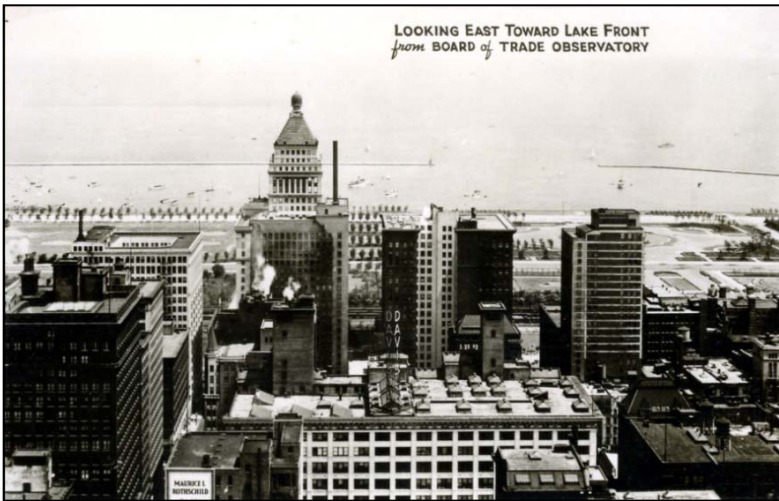


architectural vistas seen by millions of visitors.



Since the dawn of the railroad era, Jackson Boulevard in Chicago's Loop was a haven for travelers coming to the Windy City. The thoroughfare's proximity to five passenger rail stations made it an ideal place for hotels, and the city's architects were employed in building them. In time, the Route 66 corridor would utilize both Jackson and Adams Streets, and travelers using the highway were treated to views of some of the masterpieces of Chicago School architecture.

Greetings From Chicago: Architectural Vistas through a Visitor's Eyes explores the architecture of this important travel corridor. Included are views and discussions of W. W. Boyington's Grand Pacific and Stratford Hotels, William Le Baron Jenney's Fair Store, the Rookery and Monadnock



buildings of Daniel Burnham and John Root, and the Marquette Building of William Holabird and Martin Roche.

Other designers and firms whose work is discussed in the presentation include Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Phillip Johnson. The information and images in this program is based upon an award-winning series of articles that has appeared in the quarterly publication of the National Historic Route 66 Federation since 2007.

The Illinois & Michigan Canal—Past and Present



Long before highways and railroads turned Chicago into the transportation hub of the U.S., the Illinois & Michigan Canal literally put the city on the map. In 1673, the French-Canadian explorers Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette were the first non-Native Americans to travel from the Illinois River to Lake Michigan via the Des Plaines and Chicago Rivers. They noted in their journals that a canal could be built to connect these waterways, creating a navigable channel of travel stretching from the Great Lakes to the vast Mississippi River system.

The promise of a canal's potential for spreading commerce from the settled east to the western frontier led to the founding of Fort Dearborn to protect the Chicago River harbor. The potential also led to treaties with Native Americans and the creation by the state of Illinois of a canal commission that would build and operate the waterway. Chicago was founded to be the commercial transfer point between Lake Michigan vessels and canal barges. When the canal opened in 1848, the flow of commerce across the continent changed forever.



In this PowerPoint presentation, we will explore the story of the building of the Illinois & Michigan Canal and its eventual replacement by newer canals, railroads, and expressways. We will take a "virtual tour" of its surviving structures from Bridgeport in Chicago to its terminus in Peru, Illinois 96 miles to the southwest.

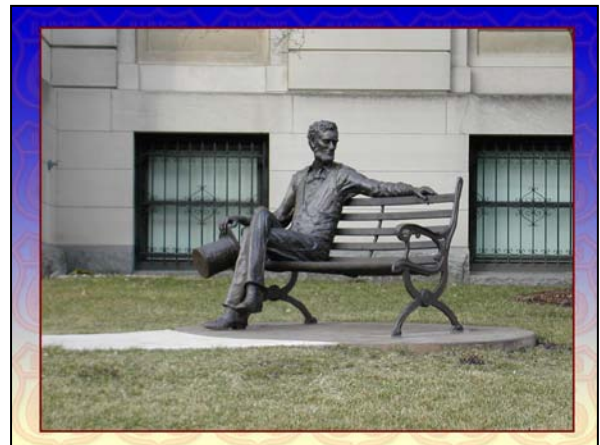
The Roads that Lead to Lincoln: Honest Abe on the Historic Highways of Illinois



The Land of Lincoln will be remembering the 150th anniversary of Civil War events in the coming years, and thus Abraham Lincoln remains a relevant topic. In this presentation, we begin with a whimsical look at the impact that Lincoln has made on our culture, from businesses such as Lincoln Towing and Lincoln Insurance, to cars such as the Lincoln Continental. Next, we trace the major events of his life from his arrival in Illinois in 1830 until he left for Washington as President-elect in 1861.

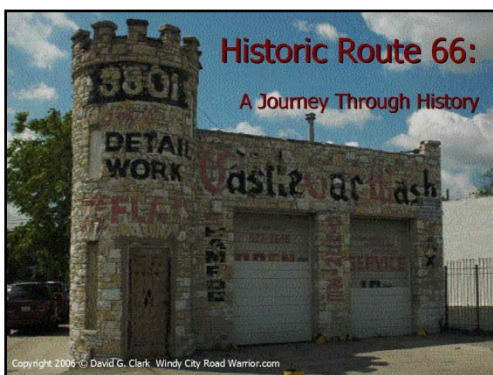
From New Salem to Springfield and on the trail of the Eighth Judicial Circuit through central Illinois, we follow Lincoln as he sets out as a young man to work as a store clerk, postmaster, surveyor, and then as a lawyer. He is elected to the Illinois General Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives. He runs for U.S. Senate, and then he is elected as the nation's 16th President. When the Civil War is all but over, he is assassinated, and his funeral train makes a somber journey into Illinois at Chicago, then southwest to Springfield.

In the final section of the presentation, we take a virtual tour along Route 66, the eighth Judicial Circuit, the Great River Road, and the Lincoln Highway in search of sites related to the life of Abraham Lincoln. The tour includes images of the places visited by Lincoln, as well as monuments and museums dedicated to remembering and interpreting his legacy. The tour includes the well-known sites, such as New Salem State Park; but also included are unmarked historic locations, such as the places where Mary Todd Lincoln lived in Chicago.



The emphasis is on the places that travelers can visit to better understand Lincoln while enjoying the historic highways of Illinois.

Historic Route 66: A Journey Through History



The **Historic Route 66** presentation begins with a video montage of contemporary Route 66 scenes. Next, a short discussion of the history of road building in the United States notes that many of our current highways (including Route 66) follow trails first blazed by Native American footpaths, 19th century canals, and railroad trunk lines. We explore why Route 66 “winds from Chicago to L.A.,” and we look at the historic biography of the local thoroughfares that carried the highway’s traffic in the Chicago area.

Next, a video slide show of images depicts the damage done to Route 66 cities and towns by the passing of time and the migration of through traffic onto the Interstates. From the west side of Chicago, through

neglected areas of otherwise thriving communities and through ghost towns like Glen Rio and Goffs, the photos show desolation caused by the bypass of previously thriving corridors of travel. However, these images do not spell the “End of Route 66.”

The final section of the standard presentation is a “virtual tour” of Route 66 today. Through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, the images show the vibrant life still lived along the highway corridor, despite the fact of Route 66’s “official” de-commissioning in the 1980s. Amidst the decay caused by the interstates, thrifty and industrious business owners and highway enthusiasts continue to breathe life and longevity into America’s Main Street, the Mother Road, Route 66.

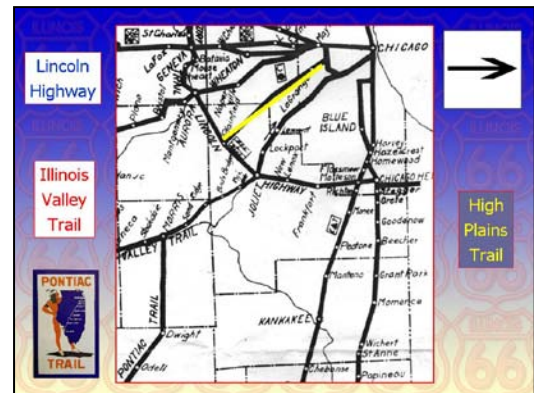


Route 66 on a Tank of Gas: The Mother Road in Illinois



Many travelers believe that Route 66 in Illinois has more attractions per mile than any other state. With our high price of gasoline, people are deciding to remain closer to home on their vacations. **Route 66 on a Tank of Gas** shows in more depth than in our *Historic Route 66* presentation the many Mother Road attractions within the Land of Lincoln, within 300 miles of Chicago. Most vehicles on the road today can travel that distance without refueling, and thus an Illinois Route 66 adventure remains an economical adventure.

The program begins with an overview of road building in Illinois, from our dependence upon the railroad to our early efforts to create “good roads” with countywide programs and privately marked Auto Trails. In 1918, the State legislature passes “An Act to Build Hard Surfaces upon the Public Highways in the State,” which gives the Illinois Division of Highways jurisdiction to improve and maintain a network of primary trunk roads. Financed by \$160 million in road bonds backed by automobile license fees, the state builds roads at a record-breaking pace, pulling Illinois “out of the mud” on modern ribbons of concrete.



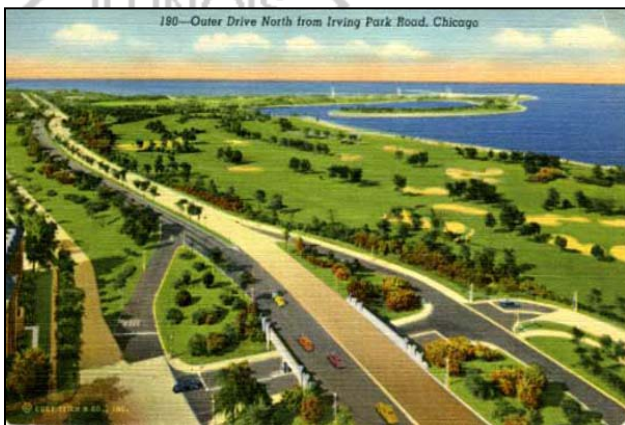
In the second half of the presentation, we take a virtual tour of Route 66 in Illinois from Chicago to the Mississippi River near St. Louis. Along the way, we stop at the restaurants, museums, and historic sites that give Illinois Route 66 its special personality and character. We stop at such iconic Route 66 treasures the Del Rhea Chicken Basket, Funk’s Grove Maple Sirup, the Cozy Dog Drive-In, and Henry’s Rabbit Ranch. For the trip back to the Chicago area, travelers can take advantage of the many different alignments of the highway, whose path changed many times over the years. Thus, the return drive reveals additional treasures.

No Little Plans: The Roads of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago



In 1909, the Commercial Club of Chicago published the **Plan of Chicago** by Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett. At the time, Daniel Burnham was the world's most famous architect, and his firm's designs were both prolific and trend setting. The **Plan of Chicago** was instrumental in influencing the development of Chicagoland as we know it today: Chicago's vast lakefront parks, double-decked Wacker Drive and the Michigan Avenue Bridge, and the Forest Preserves of Cook and neighboring counties were all

concepts contained in and championed by the **Plan**. In our presentation **No Little Plans**, we look at Burnham and Bennett's concepts for road building that included grand boulevards as well as a system of radiating and encircling highways throughout Chicago and the suburbs. They wrote, "While good highways are of great value to the terminal cities, they are of even greater value to the outlying towns, and of greatest value to the farming communities through which they pass." The roads would assist farmers in bringing their goods to market, and would be useful for family excursions and holidays.

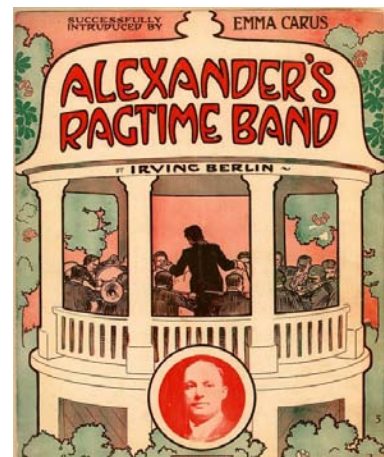


The presentation looks at the four encircling and many radiating highways proposed by the **Plan**, and how that plan differed markedly from our current dependence on tollways and expressways. Burnham and Bennett proposed a system that would add a new dimension to our existing system of surface transportation and would become an integrated piece along with rail and surface transport already in place. We look at how different Chicagoland might be if we had not dismantled our streetcar and much of our passenger rail system in favor of near-complete dependence on cars and trucks.

Centennial 1911: Snapshots from 100 Years Ago

This new series of programs will change each year to look back at historic events of a century ago. We will look at the milestones, music, and memorable events to discover interesting nostalgia, notable people, and ironic parallels with recent history.

The first program in the series looks at 1911. The mayor of Chicago, whose father of the same name previously served five terms as mayor, finishes the last of his own five terms in City Hall. The Illinois Governor testifies concerning the curious shenanigans that annointed a corrupt Chicago politician as U.S. Senator. Plans are announced for great public works amid allegations that government programs only lead to greater opportunities for graft, fraud, and cronyism.



William Howard Taft (right) is in the White House, where he negotiates treaties with Great Britain and France that offer the hope of long-term peace. Yet frictions within the Republican Party lead to open feuds with his former ally, Theodore Roosevelt. The year 1911 sees the flight of the first airplanes with enclosed passenger cabins and the first use of aircraft in battle. Crisco Shortening is introduced to consumers—marketed to bakers as a healthy alternative to animal fats. The favorite new song of the year is Irving Berlin’s first hit—Alexander’s Ragtime Band—one of the first mainstream popular pieces to openly acknowledge African-American influences.



Centennial 1911: Snapshots from 100 Years Ago brings us back to that time so long ago that sheds light on our current culture, in both our progress and our continued challenges.

Standard Presentation Details

Our PowerPoint presentations last 45-60 minutes and involve as much audience interaction as practical. We encourage and prefer time to be set aside at the end of the presentation for Q & A and discussion. We provide the PowerPoint files and can use our own laptop computer. We can supply other audio/video equipment (LCD projector, screen, audio, microphone) if unavailable at the venue.

All of our current presentation offerings include archival postcard views and photographs as well as current views. Musical segments are included with video slideshow accompaniment. We strive to entertain as well as enlighten, and to give the patrons an in-depth experience with information they can use for their own explorations.

Customized Presentations

With sufficient lead-time, we can customize our presentation to the specifications of the customer. Our resources include information that can be used to create programs for any specific segment of highway and transportation history relating to Chicago, or to Illinois, or to the corridors of transportation and commerce for which the city and state serve as hubs. We stand ready to meet any challenge within the scope of our archival resources.

Please use the contact information below for details as to pricing and date availability.