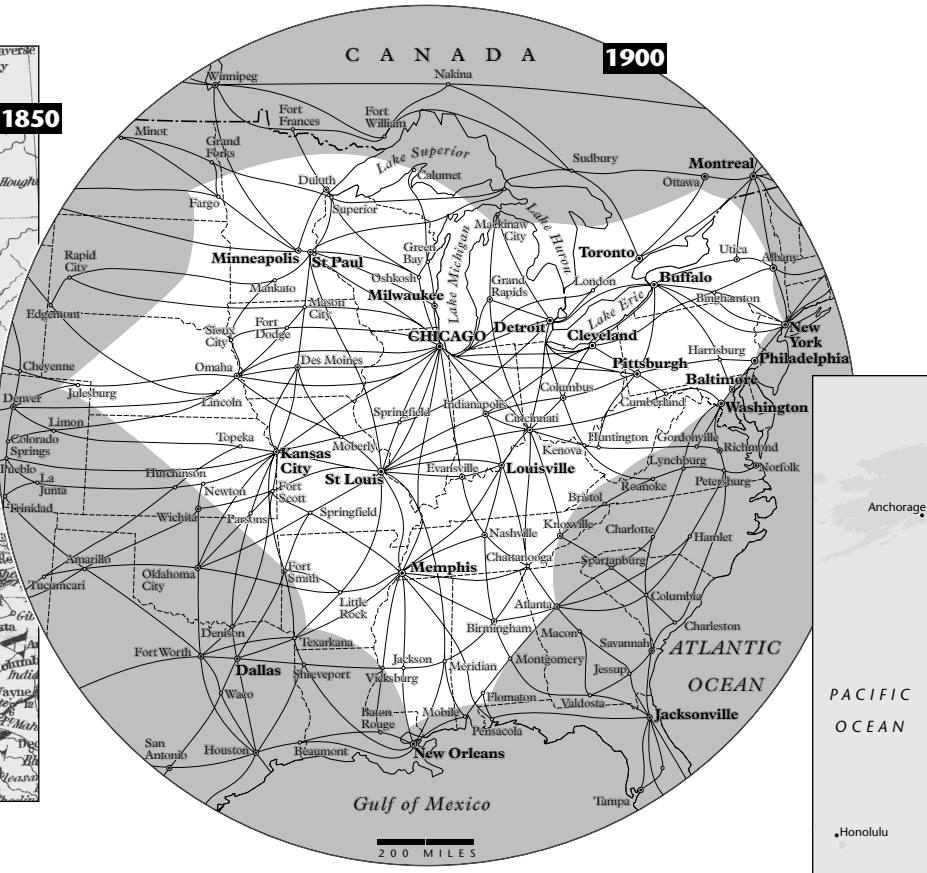


Chicago's World—Within a Day's Travel



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shaped their city to proffer these conditions. Chicago became the great western anchor of a vast heavy-manufacturing belt stretching from Massachusetts to Illinois. To the west, north, and south lay the immense resource regions to supply it with raw materials—corn, wheat, cattle, LUMBER, iron ore, coal, and petroleum—with Chicago as consumer and funnel to eastern markets, as well as dispenser of manufactures to these staple-producing regions. From 1900 to 1970, Chicago functioned as a

complete national-scale metropolis, with particular sway over a continental interior extending to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. By 1950, Chicagoans could travel to four continents in a single day's journey, thanks to planes and trains. New York had more international ties and better links with the national hinterland when only one extra-local connection was needed, but Chicago was its only serious competitor and trying hard to cut the margin.

Chicago's world was enlarged socially, too, by the diversifying regions around the world from which it drew its new population elements. A ceaseless procession of new migrants piled into Chicago's growing factories. Eastern and Southern European immigrants streamed through East Coast ports of entry and headed straight for the capital of the midcontinent. Subsequently, AFRICAN AMERICANS headed north in unprecedented numbers from the penury of southern cotton fields. All added to an already multicultural city long dominated by YANKEES, IRISH, and GERMANS. For some from overseas, such as the SWEDES, LITHUANIANS, and DANES, Chicago became the second city for their ethnic community in the world, a veritable exclave of emigrants with new lives and new allegiances.

The world Chicagoans created in the region during this long period of industrial hegemony was characterized by rising densities in developed districts, infilling between the spokes, and aggressive expansion into the urban fringe, pushing it back until the metropolitan wheel became more like a giant crescent extending inland from the lakeshore. As the suburbs proliferated, an antiurban bias pitted them increasingly against the central city, socially and politically. The spread of the automobile offered individual freedom, until the next encounter with gridlock. Superhighways were inserted into the metropolitan frame, disrupting community life in the tight neighborhoods where EXPRESSWAYS were pushed through, while creating wholly new axes for urban development beyond the built-up zone.

Chicago flowered in this period as a center of literature, ART, design, and performance. From the novelists of the early-twentieth-century CHICAGO LITERARY RENAISSANCE to the rise of Chicago BLUES music, from the advent of the ART INSTITUTE to the rise of OPERA, BALLET, and the popularity of THEATER, Chicago invented, presented, and reconfigured its feisty urban culture to the world. Through boom and depression, peace and war, expansion and segregation, this cultural awakening created a canon of works that reflect the energetic, convoluted, contested social worlds of the time and something of the identity of the place. Above all, Chicago projected a hunger for and celebration of modernity, best captured in the technological wonders of the 1933 CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXPOSITION and the continuous record of architectural innovation from the earliest steel-skeleton SKYSCRAPERS to the Miesian lessness of slab-style architecture that culminated in the totemic Prudential Insurance Building.

But it was a fractured modernity, tolerating racial injustice, housing segregation, job discrimination, and political demagoguery. Urban PLANNING came of age, became bureaucratized, and, despite successive clarion calls for collaborative regional visions (beginning



Chicago's relations with the wider world changed as its transportation links extended its geographical reach. The white areas on these four maps show how far a person could travel from Chicago by scheduled service in a 24-hour period, calculated for four dates at 50-year intervals since early in the city's history. In 1850, travel was restricted to lake and canal boat, stagecoach, and a single railroad line west of the city. Consequently, the zone of access with a day's travel reached little farther than Peoria, Milwaukee, and some other local centers within the region. By 1900, railroads had supplanted all other means of fast long-distance travel, and Chicagoans could reach most of the remainder of the United States and some parts of nearby Canada and Mexico within a day. In 1950, air service had joined railroads to extend 24-hour travel from Chicago (often in combination) to much of North and Central America, as well as some localities in Western Europe. By 2000, this combined reach, together with road service, had effectively expanded Chicago's reach to much of the rest of the well-populated world.