

A 1947 Reporter Vaults Back Thru Time Into 1847

MASTS OF SHIPS TALLEST THINGS WITHIN HIS SIGHT

And He'll Have to Wait 20 Years for a Cigaret

(The Tribune has sent a correspondent on the most impossible assignment—to go back and live in Chicago of 100 years ago, when The Tribune was founded. In keeping with the times, he writes under a pseudonym compounded of his initials. What he saw and did follows.)

BY FLASH
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)
Old Chicago, June, 1847—I had a cigarette in my mouth when I started on this assignment, but it disappeared. So did the package of cigarettes in my pocket. They won't be used here for another 20 years.

A dock hand who helped me ashore this morning on the Chicago river wharf just east of Clark st., suggested I could buy some "segars" at J. H. Reed and company, the drug store at 159 Lake st., below the office of a new daily newspaper, THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

[J. H. Reed and company's advertisement offering a new shipment of "segars" will be found on page four of the first extant issue of The Tribune, reprinted in this section.]

Loose Sand and Mud
There is nothing except loose sand and mud between where I stand and Lake st., but I will have to cross it if I want a place to eat and sleep and something to smoke. The dockhand says there are plenty of places to buy "segars" and more than a score of well-provisioned hotels to choose from in this new little town.

There are no "old residents" in Chicago. Fourteen years ago, less than 500 people lived here. Today, there are almost 17,000 living in an atmosphere of constant hammering, new lumber, mud, and slab houses. Chicago is a boom town on the western frontier and, except for sailing ships and their tall spars, it looks like any mud-bound army camp.

Something has happened to my clothes. The pants are tighter thru the legs. I feel as tho I were walking on pipe cleaners. My coat collar has hiked up around my throat.



with an extra button in front where my used to show, I am wearing a white shirt, but it has a stiff, unfamiliar stock around the neck. On my feet are a pair of black boots that come to my calves, of excellent leather, but pointed at the toe. I will need them to negotiate the sea of mud that lies around me. Nobody could wear his oxfords in Chicago. They would be sucked down into the mud like bedroom slippers in the first 10 feet of walking.

He Wears a "Stovepipe"
I have a hat—kady is a better term. It is a "modified stovepipe," with the crown smaller than the headband and a stiff brim, rolled at the sides. My brown wool broadcloth suit is of exceedingly fine texture and weave, so firm and hard I wish I could remember where it came from. Over it I have a curious white linen jacket, a garment which seems to be affected by all the other men who came out on the boat with me from Buffalo.

Perhaps, if we get out of this Chicago river slough, and on to the plains where there is some dust, it will be of use. Underneath, I have long underwear, a two-piece suit with a drawstring in the pants. It is uncomfortable, but I suppose it is part of the usual male uniform.

My garments apparently are in style, for the rest of the men on the boat are wearing the same things. The tragedy of this journey is my fine, saddle leather airplane case which has turned into a carpetbag.

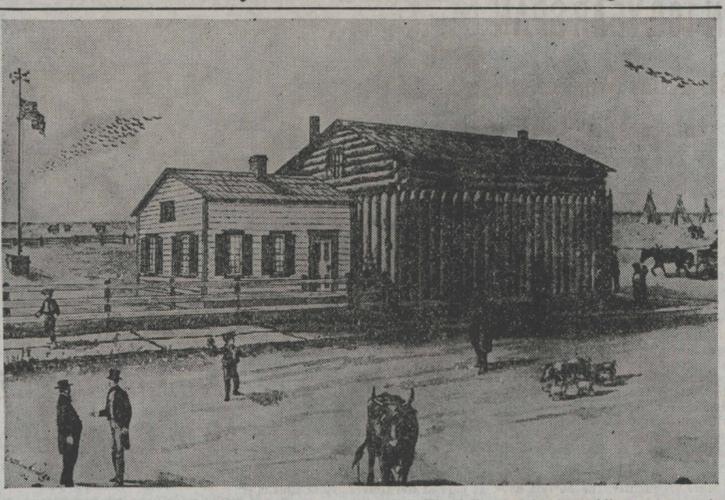
No Tall Buildings
The tallest things within my sight are the masts of the ships which line the bank of the Chicago river, on either side, all the way up into the north and south branches. In the south branch you can see the toothpicks and spiderwebs of ship rigging almost to 12th st. (Roosevelt rd.).

There are no tall buildings. The tallest is three stories, if you discount the church steeples, and all of them are wood. They tell me there are only five brick buildings in town. Nothing has been made of stone. There are no cellars or basements. It is too wet.

I came here on Buffalo on the "propeller" St. Louis, a steam boat which carried 200 passengers. There are no railroads. Next year, they tell me, they are going to get the Galena and Chicago Union railroad started.

Week from New York
It takes a week to get here from New York by water and rail. You come by steamer to Albany and by Erie canal or by railroad wagon, about at walking pace, to Buffalo. Then you take another steamer to Detroit.

Cook County's First Jail Over 100 Years Ago



The first Cook county jail, as it appeared in 1836. The jail stood in the public square, at the southeast corner of Randolph and La Salle sts. (Chicago Historical Society)

The fire department is entirely volunteer and is composed of 10 companies to which the wealthiest and most dashing young men of Chicago belong. These companies are social clubs as much as civic protection, and their rivalry at getting first to fires often results in fights and sabotage among them.

March in Holiday Parades
The "firemen" wear gaudy uniforms and march in holiday parades. They include the Fire King Engine company, motto "Pro Bono Publico"; Metamora Engine company; Niagara Engine company, motto "Semper Promptus"; Red Jacket Engine company; Excelsior Engine company; Philadelphia Hose company; and Rough-and-Ready Bucket company.

About food. This morning, for breakfast, I had fried bacon, venison cutlets, hot cakes and wild honey, fried eggs, bread, butter, and tea with what they call "Indian sugar"—maple sugar.

They Go Together
Food and lodging go together. You can get it aboard ship, in a hotel or tavern, or in a boarding house. Diners include fine beef steaks or roasts, pork, chicken, game, wild fowl, potatoes and three or four kinds of vegetables, bread and rolls, coffee, tea, fruits, spiced desserts, nuts, candy, and the like. There are good soups if you want them.

Lunch or dinner costs about 25 cents in a hotel, and excellent board and room here in a private establishment, complete with room, fuel, meals, lights, linens, and maid service, costs from \$1.50 to \$2.25 a week. All the hotels except the temperance houses serve good whiskies, seignett brandy, champagne, port and sherry wine, West Indian rum, and a variety of cordials at 6 cents a drink. A pint of gin is 12½ cents and a pint of good whiskey about 35 to 50 cents.

It's Still Frontier
There is still frontier, but there is no lack of the delicacies of fine living, from a gastronomic standpoint. They've been eating ice cream here for 12 years, and there is a French confectionery on Clark st. which boasts Parisian chocolates. Pickles, mustard, ketchups, spices, and the like abound in grocery stores.

It will cost me about \$3.00—\$3.20 was the figure quoted to me—to get a complete new outfit of clothes. Extra pants, with braces, will be \$4.38 a pair; an overcoat, \$20; a new suit of this long underwear, \$1.25; a pair of shoes—boots" they call them and they are—\$5, and a cloth cap to replace my tall hat, \$2.

A girl could pay about the same for a new outfit, or a lot more, depending on whether she got it from Mrs. Atkinson, the milliner and dressmaker on Clark st., opposite the postoffice—"ladies' own materials made up"—or from Paris by way of the Atlantic, Erie canal, and Great Lakes.

\$1 a Day for Laborers
The Irish are the only real proletariat in this town. They are coming over in droves following the potato famine, looking for cheap, rich land. At first, common labor got about \$18 a month. Now, with times looking up, the wage scale stands at \$1 a day for common labor, \$1.25 a day for foremen, carpenters, and joiners, and sometimes \$2 a day for such skilled craftsmen as printers, who can sell as well as set type.

Flour is edging right now at \$5.75 to \$6 a barrel, thought to be an extremely high price, but you can rent a farm, looking for cheap, rich land, at \$75 to \$300 a year, depending on size, convenience and location.

There are no such things as street lights. This is the oil lamp and candle era. They used lard oil here for the first time only six years ago and it is advertised today as furnishing a "clear and beautiful light, comparatively smokeless."

Sperm whale oil is the standard lighting fuel, altho a fellow named Fitz Sutherland is manufacturing camphene and spirit-gas which he says gives "bright yet soft and pleasant light with cheapness." Just this year he built a new factory to make it. It will be three years before illuminating gas is used.

Wood is the chief source of fuel for heating and cooking, altho some of the more inventive citizens are getting to burn coal in open grates. Coal is considerably cheaper than wood, too, at \$6 a ton against \$5 or \$6 a cord, altho only 15,322 tons of coal were imported here this year. Little is mined in Illinois.

Richest Year in History
This is the richest year in Chicago's history, but the town still has what the economists would call an "unfavorable balance of trade." In this year, Chicago imported \$2,641,852.52 worth of goods, including most of the manufactured articles used here, and exported \$2,296,299 worth of raw products.

These figures have been broken down for me by George Norris, who puts out the city directory, and the biggest items of imports, all of them from New York state, are dry goods, \$837,451; groceries, \$506,027; hardware, \$148,811; boots and shoes, \$94,275; drugs and medicines, \$92,081; iron and nails, \$88,275; liquor, \$86,334; hats, caps, and furs, \$68,200; and jewelry, \$51,000. Books were only \$43,580, and machinery only \$37,432.

What is Chicago's biggest export and its greatest source of money. A total of 1,974,304 bushels of wheat was shipped out of here this year, a record. Other items include the meat shipments, tallow, wool, lard, corn, oats, butter, leather, lead, deer skins, hay, brooms, white fish, beeswax, glue, and 60 bales of buffalo robes.

There Are 25 Churches
There are 25 hotels and taverns here, 300 dry goods stores, some of which also sell groceries, 65 wholesale and retail grocery stores, 26 attorneys, 2 architects, 8 bankers and brokers, 15 barbers, 3 pool halls, 5 bowling alleys, 25 boot and shoe makers, 3 brewers, and 17 master builders.

There are 20 churches, 11 clothing stores, 3 colleges, 14 coopers, 3 crockery stores, 5 dentists, 10 drug stores, 2 engravers, 9 fruit stores, 17 hardware stores, 13 insurance agents, 5 peace justices, 6 notaries, and 14 newspapers, including 6 weeklies, four monthlies, and 4 dailies.

Chicago has 1 theater, 1 upholstery, 1 starch factory, 1 pottery, 1 marble factory, 1 ink factory, 1 dyeing establishment, 1 bathhouse, and one fellow who is making what is known as "grain crades."

A Jail of Logs
The courthouse is a two story brick building standing on the southwest corner of Clark and Madison sts., and the whole block, in that it occupies just a fraction, is called courthouse square. It is a little building of rough logs held together with iron bolts.

There are three libraries, none of them public, of course, which have a total of 12,500 books on their shelves.

I asked about new books in Griggs & Bross book shop, and here is what they told me: Among the most recent titles are Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," "Jane Eyre," and "Vanity Fair," the latter being the work of an English novelist named Thackeray. Poetry is very popular and among some of the latest works are Tennyson's "Princess and Longfellow's "Evangeline." The oratorio, "Elijah," was first sung only a few weeks ago in New York, but nobody here is brave enough to attempt such a production.

As to inventions, Elias Howe built his first sewing machine two years ago, but there are none here. The only machinery is run either by steam or by horse or mule treadmills. There is not a power driven printing press in the city.

Doctors do all surgery in their offices. Rush Medical college, established four years ago, confines its instruction to classroom lectures and dissection. There is a private operated "madhouse," but no county hospital. Either was used in surgery in the east for the first time only this year.

City Had "Tremendous" Debt in 1844—\$8,977.55
The city of Chicago, only three years before THE TRIBUNE was founded, was burdened by what writers then thought was a "tremendous" debt. It consisted of city bonds, held by Strachan & Scott, a firm of Scotch bankers, amounting to \$5,000; bonds for the Clark st. bridge of \$3,000, and bonds and interest for a breakwater in the lake amounting to \$977.55—a total of \$8,977.55. The city directory of 1844 said it was hoped that "revenues derived from taxation and other sources will soon afford the means to extinguish these liabilities entirely."

A Famous Structure
One of the middle west's then most famous structures, the Exposition building, was opened in 1873. The scene of several Presidential nominations, Garfield, Cleveland,

LANDMARKS DIE WITH TIME, BUT LIVE IN MEMORY

Fire and wreckers have removed and skyscrapers have replaced most of Chicago's historic landmarks during the last 100 years. Consequently many of the present generation know of the city's earlier days only from pictures and writing by contemporary Chicagoans. So a vicarious typewriter tour of the old town may give the modern Chicagoan some idea of what this city was like in its youthful days.

For example, probably only a few know that Chicago's first public school was built in 1836 at the southeast corner of Dearborn and Madison sts., where stood the former TRIBUNE buildings of both before and after the fire of 1871.

Towering office buildings now are on the site of several other educational buildings of the old days and on ground once occupied by churches.

Built 99 Years Ago
The First Presbyterian church was built 99 years ago at the southwest corner of Clark and Washington sts., where the huge Conway building now stands. At the other end of the block, at the southeast corner of La Salle and Washington, was the First Baptist church, built in 1850. It was removed in 1864 and supplanted the following year by the Chamber of Commerce building which housed the Board of Trade for several years. It was rebuilt in 1889 and five stories added.

And then in the great building boom of the 1920s wreckers again cleared the site and the present 38-story building was sent skywards. It originally housed the Foreman banks and now is the home of the American National Bank and Trust company.

A third church overlooking the old public square in which the first city hall was built in 1840 (and where the present combination municipal and county building stands) was the First Methodist church. It originally occupied a stately home moved over from the north side in 1838. Later a more permanent edifice was erected and today, 109 years from its beginning, it is housed in a unique structure, the Chicago Temple, a steeped multi-storied office building.

Grand Pacific Hotel
Towering office buildings also cover the sites of some of Chicago's most notable hotels of past days. The east section of the Continental Illinois National bank building stands on the site of one of the city's most famous hostels—the Grand Pacific. Just as the new hotel was about to open the 1871 fire closed its doors with sheets of flame. It was rebuilt and achieved fame through the country. Before either of the two Grand Pacifics was built the land was the site of Northwestern university in 1853.

At the southwest corner of Washington and Fifth av. [now Wells st.] once stood the Baltic hotel, Chicago's most fashionable hostelry of the 1850s.

A Parking Ground Now
Automobiles now are parked on the site of what was one of Chicago's leading commercial hotels—the Tremont house—built in 1839 at the southeast corner of Dearborn and Lake sts. The original Tremont was built diagonally across at the northwest corner in 1833 where it became famous for its billiard table. At the first in the city, the second Tremont was rebuilt in 1843.

The present Sherman hotel is on the site of one of Chicago's oldest and best known hostels, the Sherman house, erected 111 years ago by Mayor F. C. Sherman. Adjoining it on the west was Hooley's theater (later renamed Powers) Chicago's most fashionable playhouse under both names.

The Windsor-Clifton hotel was on the site of Carson, Pirie Scott & company's men's store at the north and Blaine, it was razed in 1891. It was replaced by the Art Institute.

Chicago's first really high class hotel was the Lake house, opened in 1835 on part of the site of the Wrigley building annex. It was the first to employ a French chef and the first to use printed menus. Later it became the Illinois General Hospital of the Lakes (1850-'52) conducted by the Sisters of Mercy and a forerunner of Mercy hospital. In 1868 it was converted into Chicago's first flat building.

A few blocks farther north, at the northeast corner of Cass st. [now N. Wabash av.] and Ontario st., was the residence of Joseph Medill, editor of THE TRIBUNE for 44 years. This is now part of the site of the new 2 million dollar Cadillac building.

On what most Chicagoans consider the city's most historic piece of real estate, the site of Fort Dearborn, stands the London Guarantee building, recently sold for 4 million dollars.

BRIDGE IS BUILT AFTER GIFT OF LAND TO CHURCH
How Chicagoans in the "north division" finally got a bridge across the main channel of the Chicago river, connecting the north side with downtown, is told in files of old Chicago newspapers. South side residents opposed a bridge at Clark st. because they wanted to confine trade to their bank of the river.

Walter L. Newberry and William B. Ogden, two pioneer real estate owners, in 1840 presented two blocks of north side land to the Catholic church as site for a cathedral. Churchgoers forced the building of a Clark st. bridge so they could attend services at the cathedral.

"It was said at the time that the present was to influence votes on the bridge question," a writer in the old Chicago Times reported. "It undoubtedly did."

A BUGGY FOR WENTWORTH
"Long" John Wentworth, 6 feet 6 and 300 pounds, was the first congressman to live in Chicago. His district, in 1843, extended to the Wisconsin line, west to Rock River valley, and south to Pinckney, La Salle, Bloomington, Urbana, and Danville, and he said he rode it all—in a buggy.

The Kinzie 'Mansion' on the Chicago River



Drawing of the Kinzie "mansion," pioneer home built on the north bank of the Chicago river just east of the present site of the Michigan av. bridge, between Tribune Tower and the river. (Chicago Historical Society)

Altho often referred to as Chicago's "first citizen," John Kinzie probably never thought of it as a future metropolis, and certainly had no desire to see it become one. He was a fur trader who sought only friendly relations with his customers, the Indians, and a man who hoped that the frontier would stay put for a while so that he could set down after his earlier transient life.

Nor was Kinzie the first permanent settler of Chicago. The cabin to which he moved in 1804, on property now owned by THE TRIBUNE, between Tribune Tower and the Chicago river, was built in 1779 by a Negro trader, Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable. Three other cabins in 1804 were occupied by French Canadian traders, one of whom, Antoine Ouilmette, later helped Kinzie operate his network of trading posts.

Strangers Always Welcome
Kinzie's reputation among traders and casual visitors was based on his prominence as a fur trader and the hospitality of his home, where strangers always were welcome. Because his children lived in Chicago, married, and built their careers here, it was inevitable that the Kinzie name should become closely interwoven with the city's early days.

Kinzie was born in Quebec in 1763. His family moved to New York at the age of 10 he ran away, found his way back to Quebec, and became a silversmith's apprentice. He turned up later trading silver trinkets to the Indians near Detroit, where he ransomed and married a girl the Indians had captured years earlier in Virginia. She bore him three children but soon took them back to her ancestral home and there remarried.

Kinzie then married Eleanor Lytle McKillop, a widow with a young daughter, and established a trading post on the St. Joseph river, where their first son, John H., later to become the second chief executive of Chicago, was born in 1803. The following year Kinzie followed the frontier to Chicago, where he two daughters and another son were born. He was later joined by two children of his first marriage.

Agent for Astor
Kinzie's trade in silver trinkets led him into the fur business. He established relations with John Jacob Astor's new American Fur company in 1809. He later became its agent. During this time he established several branch posts along the upper forks of the Illinois river. The Indians knew him as Shaw-nee-aw-kee, "the silver man."

His business and personal relations with the Indians antagonized military and commercial expansionists, and a Fort Dearborn massacre was killed during a struggle with Kinzie in 1812. Fearing reprisals, Kinzie left town, but returned when witnesses had established that the killing was in self-defense. The Indians spared Kinzie and his family in the Fort Dearborn massacre later that year, but turned him over to their allies, the British. Eventually released, he rejoined his family. Kinzie died in 1828.

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Great phalanxes of refugees from political oppression in Europe fled to Chicago and settled here in the last century, and those who have become the strongest and most worthwhile core of Chicago's population always have looked to THE TRIBUNE for guidance, leadership, and support.

Chief among them in number have been the Irish, who found a warm friend in Joseph Medill, founding publisher of THE TRIBUNE, and his son, Protestant Irish Scotch descent. Medill was a close student of Irish history, and the columns of THE TRIBUNE during the days of heavy Irish immigration did almost as much to enlighten the newly arrived countrymen of his forebears in the history of their motherland as they did to teach them the value of the freedom they found here.

A Principal Speaker
A distinguished company of Chicagoans of Irish descent, both Protestant and Catholic, met here in 1882 on an anniversary famous in Irish history and the cause of freedom. Joseph Medill was one of the principal speakers. The occasion was the centennial anniversary of the great convention of Irish volunteers at Duncannon, Feb. 15, 1782. The columns of THE TRIBUNE 100 years and a day after that date carry a full account of the Chicago dinner and the convention which it observed.

Medill related the story of political and economic oppression in Ireland almost from the dawn of its history. From the year 1688, the Irish had a nominal parliament, but it was a poor excuse for a legislative body, he said. No Catholic was permitted to sit in it, nor any Protestant except a member of the Anglican church. The act was passed, stripping all Presbyterians, who constituted two-thirds of Irish Protestants, of religious and political rights.

Then the British parliament, under demand of English landlords and manufacturers, banned sale of Irish woollens, chief manufacture of the island; then exportation of Irish wool, salt meats, cattle or mutton; then the manufacture of silk. For 85 years, Ireland lay ruined under these English laws, while her young sons and daughters fled to America and freedom.

Irish Get Opportunity
The revolt of the American colonies and a simultaneous war with France, which drained England of soldiers, gave the Irish their opportunity. A strong Republican leader, Henry Grattan, had grown to stature to guide them. Under danger of an alleged French invasion, the Irish mobilized 30,000 home guards.

Joseph Medill told the story: "On the 19th of April, 1780, Grattan introduced into the Irish parliament his famous declaration of Irish rights, and supported it with a speech which Grattan alone could make, declaring it to be the true sense of the house 'that the king, lords, and commons of Ireland only are competent to make laws binding on the people of this realm, and that we will not obey or give operation to any laws save only those enacted by the king and parliament of Ireland.'"

The Right to Meet
Then came Grattan's masterpiece, the call to one of the greatest gatherings of free men in world history. He summoned a military convention to the little town of Duncannon, in Tyrone, overlooking Loch Neagh, in the heart of Ulster. The delegates insisted on the right

of armed citizens to meet and discuss political grievances; that nobody except the king, lords, and commons of Ireland could make laws to bind the kingdom; that British laws limiting the rights of the Irish parliament were unconstitutional and a grievance; that all the ports of Ireland were open to all countries, and that the Irish courts must be independent.

All of Ireland ratified the platform of the Duncannon convention, Medill related, and it became the Irish Declaration of Independence. "The English parliament passed a bill, and King George signed it, granting substantially all the Irish had asked, and thus, after centuries of slavery, Ireland was practically free.

"The moral of the Duncannon convention is apparent," he said. "It shows what the Irish can do for themselves when fully and heartily united.

England has dominated Ireland by reason of her political discords and sectarian differences. England's policy always has been, 'divide et impera,' and Ireland's, with one bright exception, to play into her hands and fall a prey to internal jealousies and dogmatic bigotry."

A.M.A. CENTURY IS MARKED BY MEDICAL GAINS
Approximately one month before THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE's small press began turning a century ago, the American Medical association was founded in Philadelphia. One of Chicago's notable early physicians, Dr. Nathan S. Davis, a founder of what is now the Northwestern university school of medicine, is known as the Nestor of the association.

The A. M. A. has 131,590 members and 72,243 fellows who come into intimate contact with virtually every family in the nation. American medical standards, the highest in the world, can be attributed to this organization.

Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the A. M. A. Journal, recently said that "the prodigious advancements in medical science during the century following 1847 helped to build the A. M. A., which educates its members through meetings, exhibits, its many periodicals, its councils and committees and in many other ways. The benefits of all these activities are passed on to the public—the ultimate consumer.

"The A. M. A. is a nonprofit institution. Its purposes are to promote the science and art of medicine; to organize the medical profession and safeguard its interests; to elevate the standard of medical education and practice; to bring about the enactment of uniform legislation for the public welfare and to promote public health."

First Telegram Arrives from Milwaukee in 1848
The first telegram received in Chicago came from Milwaukee on Jan. 15, 1848. Col. J. J. Speed operated the Chicago telegraph office in the Saloon building, Lake and Clark sts. The building, however, was not from a tavern but from the fact that it was the city's first public meeting hall or saloon.

18 Persons Killed in City's First Big Railway Wreck
Chicago's first big railroad wreck occurred in April, 1853, when a Michigan Southern and a Michigan Central train collided at a crossing just south of the city. Eighteen persons were killed and both rail companies were censured for carelessness by a meeting of citizens.

Oppressed of World Flock Here; Find Friend in Tribune
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