HISTORY OF U. S. LIFE RECORDED IN ADVERTISING

Steady Rise in Standard of Living Shown

BY CARL WEIGMAN

If all the news columns in the bound volumes of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE were destroyed, a large part of the history of America during the last century could be reconstructed by a study of the advertising columns.

They tell the story of the growth of commerce and industry, the development of transportation, the great inventions, the changes in manners and fashions and the steady rise in the American standard of living.

Advertising not only reflects the growth of America. it has played a major role itself in the nation's development. Tribune advertisments of the last 100 years helped build the nation's railroads, its automobile and aviation industries, its vast merchandising system, and a thousand other institutions and facilities that make America a land of promise for the whole world.

Advertising has been used since the beginning of commerce, but it had to wait for the invention of printing in the 15th century before it could become a large influence in men's lives.

The great development of advertising came with the industrial revolution of the last century—the century of THE TRIBUNE'S life.

Unfair to Advertisers

Use of single column ads was standard practice in the journalism of the time, since publishers felt it would be unfair to all their advertisers if a few of them were permitted to occupy spaces larger than a column wide. Publishers also opposed the use of larger ads because of the bother of having to saw the hard metal column rules then in use.

The Civil war years marked a turning point in American newspaper advertising. At this time THE TRIBUNE, along with other papers, decided to put the all-important war news on the front page, pushing ads to inside pages.

At about the same time, Hoe's invention of the rotary press made it possible to print larger papers and to increase circulation, which spurred the demand for newspaper advertising space. Reader interest, stimulated by the war news, also had received an impetus from the higher literacy rate made possible by the American public school system.

First Full Page Ad

THE TRIBUNE printed its first full page ad on Aug. 25, 1864. This was made up of nine single column ads, all of which said the same thing—explaining the virtues of Dr. H. H. Helmbold's Fluid Extract of Buchu, a patent medicine. The patent medicine industry boomed after the civil war, largely because the resources of the medical profession could not care for the thousands of ex-soldiers afflicted with disabilities and chronic ailments.

During the war, shortages of manpower on farms and in factories speeded the introduction of labor saving machinery, including the reaper, which was to provide exportable surpluses of grain. The new inventions not only encouraged the use of advertisments of new machines, but indirectly promoted advertising of other products.

The sewing machine is an example of the devices that revolutionized living conditions and advertising in America.

Ready-Made Clothes

Prior to the Civil war, most clothing was made by hand by tailors, dressmakers and housewives. The war time need for army clothing brought the sewing machine into greater use, and after the war manufacture of ready-made men's clothing was started. Hand tailoring of popular priced clothing could not compete with power blades that cut a gross of sleeves or vests in one operation. Newspaper ads introduced the new ready-made clothes and helped build the present gigantic clothing industry.

The sewing machine also revolutionized home life. Every woman wanted one and the sale of yard goods for home dressmakers boomed, along with the advertising of "dry goods" stores selling the merchandise. Packaged goods, such as baking powder and infant foods, also began to be advertised widely.

Display Era Begins

Before the turn of the century, THE TRIBUNE dropped its rule forbidding ads more than a column wide and its rule requiring all ads to be set in agate type. The era of display advertising had begun. Invention of the half tone engraving brought advertising illustrations, which were immense improvements over the woodcuts and etched line engravings previously used.

Meanwhile the nation's transportation and postal systems had so improved that it was possible to distribute goods economically over a wide area. THE TRIBUNE, as one of the leading journals of the middle west, found its space in demand by manufacturers who wished to sell to all the middle west.

Nevertheless, THE TRIBUNE continued to operate on the theory that its first function was to present the news of the day, and that advertising was a secondary, if not incidental, function. In 1905 THE TRIBUNE had only seven employes in its advertising department. Today THE TRIBUNE has 307 employes in the advertising department and 388 in other business offices.

Abuses Are Fought

Together with other responsible publications, THE TRIBUNE was strongly opposed to the advertising abuses of the 19th century, when inferior merchandise and quack medicines often were unloaded on an unsuspecting public. THE TRIBUNE began a series of pioneering efforts to make advertising the honest wife of business.

One of the first of these efforts resulted in the adoption of the United States pure food and drug act of 1906, which regulates the honest labeling of packages. Later came the federal trade commission, which seeks to prevent unfair trade practices.

THE TRIBUNE was one of the first newspapers to censor disreputable advertising, such as that offered by loan sharks, quack doctors, clairvoyants and promoters of dubious financial enterprises. Not only did THE TRIBUNE bar their advertising from its columns, but it conducted vigorous editorial campaigns against them.

Another Forward Step

A circulation fight with the old Chicago Record-Herald indirectly led to another forward step for TRIBUNE advertising. The Record-Herald undertook to outsell THE TRIBUNE by offering all sorts of premiums for subscriptions.

THE TRIBUNE countered by running ads which advertised advertising in THE TRIBUNE, directing attention to one division after another—shoes, bonds, flowers, hats. The ads were run in Chicago evening papers as well as in THE TRIBUNE, and within six weeks a Sunday circulation increase of 20,000 was credited to this campaign. At the same time, the volume of TRIBUNE advertising soared.

The success of the campaign brought realization that advertisments, far from being a necessary evil of a newspaper, are in fact an asset to its readability. National advertisers were quick to take advantage of THE TRIBUNE'S preëminent position in its field.

Permeative Influence

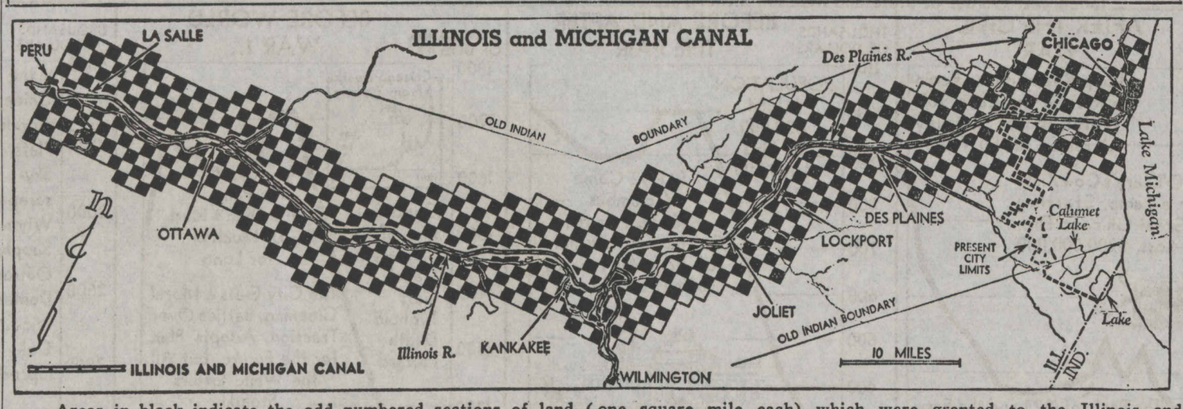
This position has been stated in the authoritative adman's textbook, "The History and Development of Advertising," by Frank Presbrey, as follows:

"In the newspaper, national advertisers have a medium whose local and regional influence often is so permeative that an idea appearing in it with some degree of regularity will be adopted by the whole community it serves, as in Chicago, where THE TRIBUNE'S potency, which is equally great on the socially far apart Lake Shore dr. and Back of the Yards, and the districts in between, is a tribute to good management."

THE TRIBUNE'S crusades to protect both the consumer and the advertiser have been copied by many other publications. The result has been a steady decline in the percentage of objectionable advertising in America. Misrepresentation, bad taste, paid testimonials, and unfair imputations upon competitors occur less frequently each year in the responsible press.

The standards today are a thousand times higher than they were when the press of both England and America was subjected to government censorship and heavy taxation.

Lands Granted to Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission



Areas in black indicate the odd numbered sections of land (one square mile each) which were granted to the Illinois and Michigan canal commission by the federal government. The total grant was 284,000 acres.

100 Years Bring Revolution in Growing Art of Advertising

100 Years Ago

The entire front page of the first CHICAGO TRIBUNE was devoted to advertisments, following the classic tradition of British journalism, and it was almost 15 years after THE TRIBUNE'S founding, when the Civil war began to produce America's biggest news stories, that news began to push advertising off Page 1.

Readers who have the opportunity of inspecting the first extant issue of THE TRIBUNE, reproduced in these pages, will notice immediately the sharp contrast between advertisments of 100 years ago and those of today. The first difference, of course, is that the early ads appear to be very much like THE TRIBUNE'S classified columns today.

Woodcut Illustrations

This is not wholly true, however. Display advertising was printed even in the very first TRIBUNE, distinguished only by the fact that some ads were longer than others and illustrated by tiny woodcuts of the product or service offered. No early advertisment, however, was more than one column wide.

There was another advertising practice in this early TRIBUNE not so generally followed today—the insertion of "business cards." THE TRIBUNE'S first two and a half columns on Page 1 of the earliest edition were devoted to business cards, statements of the kind of product or service offered rather than any specific advertisment of "bargains."

Advertisments Are Mixed

What would be considered "want ads" today were mixed with business cards and merchants' bargain lists in the early TRIBUNE'S columns. There were separate headings for "business cards," "insurance," "for sale or rent," "public houses," and the like, but the classifications were not rigidly observed.

A careful reading of the advertisments in this earliest of Tribunes will give people today the best of clews as to what kind of place Chicago really was 100 years ago.

The Michigan Central railroad advertised its frate rates specifically, something no modern railroad does today. A reader could take his choice of two new dwellings on Wells st. at a rental of $125 a year each. Box seats at the Chicago Theater [legitimate] were 50 cents each. In most of the other advertisments prices were not stated. Patent medicines and clairvoyants were prominently displayed.

50 Years Ago

In the first 50 years of THE TRIBUNE'S existence, advertising came of age. Fifty years ago today, THE TRIBUNE celebrated its golden jubilee by printing advertisments as well as four pages of pictures in full four colors, the first true-color advertising to appear in a daily newspaper any place.

This great edition also illustrates vividly how advertising practices had flourished and grown. Halftone engravings were used to illustrate most of the display ads, and "lay-outs," groups of pictures arranged in the advertisment, were artistic and effective.

Ads Grow Large

Instead of the string of single column advertisments which characterized THE TRIBUNE of 100 years ago, there were two column, three column, four column and half and full page ads. Institutional or promotional advertising was beginning to be used, too, altho it was not until 15 years later that any real effort was made to solicit advertising for THE TRIBUNE.

THE TRIBUNE of 50 years ago had succeeded in departmentalizing advertising almost to the modern extent. There was a page and a half want ad section, much the same as today's, except that bargains such as a "fine 12 room residence with stable" for $40 a month, and a "6 room modern 1st floor flat, only $21 per month" were offered. In the suburbs, $16 would rent a "choice 8 room modern country home and 75 ft. lot on C. B. & Q."

There was a page of bicycle ads, with vivid pen-and-ink drawings of the wheels.

25 Cents a Yard

In the department stores, one full page ad offered "silk embroidered French organdies, the richest grade" at 25 cents a yard, while "imported Scotch zephyr ginghams, 32-in. wide" were 10 cents a yard. An "elegant" corset could be had for 95 cents.

Palmists, hypnotists, cure-all practitioners, and patent medicines still found their way into the advertising columns. They were banned for all time when THE TRIBUNE began the cleanup of advertising in newspapers all over America with its crusades a score of years later. An elegant picture of the Princess of Wales illustrated one advertisment for a malt extract. "Kindly give two bottles to bearer for today's luncheon," the note from her cellarman was quoted as saying.

A NEIGHBORHOOD TYPE OF NEWS!

BY ONEY FRED SWEET

One-fifth as old as THE TRIBUNE is its Metropolitan section, the first issue of which was printed Feb. 6, 1927.

Sturdy as is the Metropolitan section on this anniversary, its infancy demanded much faith and nursing for it was something entirely new as a feature of big city journalism. Soundness of an idea and courage and prestige of the parent organization resulted in a department so successful that it is now an expected part of Sunday reading.

There was a realization that Chicago was made up of hundreds of neighborhoods whose home folks enjoyed reading about what their neighbors were doing, but hitherto the great dailies had lacked the inclination or equipment for recording the intimate happenings of the scattered communities.

At first, the city and suburbs were divided into three section—north, west and south—for the purpose of breaking down neighborhood news coverage. To further interpret life in the area from the personal rather than the mass viewpoint, a change was made in 1929 to five sections—north, northwest, west, southwest, and south.

For two decades, the Metropolitan section has told how the neighborhoods, each a bit different in certain aspects but fundamentally alike, have carried on during a period of world shaking events. It has portrayed those interests that have continued to remain closest to the hearts of a people—the weddings, the social gatherings, the graduations, the anniversaries, the biografies, the hobbies, the everyday human side of life.

Starting with a small staff, the Metropolitan section now has more than a score of editors, reporters and photografers. The neighborhoods, themselves, have had much to do with deciding what type of material is most cherished in the pages. Circulation and advertising figures indicate the section's popularity.

In 1927, the Metropolitan section circulation was 740,680. In 1946, it was 1,021,892. The 1946 increase in advertising was 1,771,885 lines over that of 1927, or 171 per cent. The increase in advertising in 1946 over 1945 was 1,268,686 lines, or 82 per cent.

PRECEDED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Chicago Tribune had been an established institution nearly 12 years before the first public school building was erected in Chicago.

TRIBUNE AT TOP IN ADVERTISING

Leads the Nation; Prints Nearly 33 Million Lines in 1946

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE begins its 100th year at the top of all American newspapers in the volume of advertising which it carries. As a result, THE TRIBUNE can afford to maintain a staff and equipment unsurpassed by any newspaper, and can maintain complete independence of editorial judgment.

During the year ending last Jan. 1, THE TRIBUNE printed 32,851,982 lines [approximately 109,500 columns] of advertising, an increase of 10,414,286 lines over the previous year. This was the greatest amount of advertising carried in any newspaper.

Superior presentation of news and features, a huge circulation and excellence of mechanical facilities all helped set the record, but another major factor was the work and methods of the Tribune advertising department, which has made many pioneering contributions to the development of advertising methods in America.

307 in Department

Any newspaper with THE TRIBUNE'S prestige and large circulation could have a large volume of advertising with relatively little effort. But THE TRIBUNE has not been content to coast on its prestige and circulation. It maintains an advertising staff of 307 men and women, who not only solicit advertisements, but see to it that the readers and the advertisers both get their money's worth.

A copy and art department, staffed by expert writers and artists, helps advertisers prepare their layouts, if they need such service.

A merchandising service department assists advertisers in setting up their sales organizations and securing dealer distribution. A business survey department continuously studies THE TRIBUNE'S five state market, analyzing readers in terms of numbers, buying power, and responsiveness, and studying the market's wholesale and retail distribution system.

Fit Advertising to Needs

As a result, a manufacturer entering the Chicago market with a new product can make use of THE TRIBUNE'S organization to help him fit his advertising to his needs. On the basis of market facts he is advised on how to place his advertising most efficiently. Under The Tribune plan he does not need to place his advertising until stocks of his product have been placed with dealers and thus made available to prospective buyers. This eliminates waste when his advertising appears.

Two studies made last year are typical examples of THE TRIBUNE'S services to its advertisers and the readers of its advertising. To make one of the studies, research workers went into scores of communities, interviewing thousands of housewives on their needs for household goods and appliances. Merchants in each community also were interviewed regarding their stocks and sales methods.

The data obtained in the surveys were offered to Tribune advertisers, who were glad to use the facts in guiding their sales forces and advertising. The results of the studies also were supplied to dealers, helping them to become better merchants.

Research for Retail Stores

Another elaborate research job was done during the year for retail stores. This consisted of a first hand study of the buying habits of housewives. From it maps were developed to show the relative importance of Chicago shopping centers. Still other studies involved the analysis of thousands of sales slips to determine how a store's customers were distributed geografically and according to buying power. The surveys helped stores in their selection and pricing of merchandise and showed them how to advertise their goods more effectively.

In all its enterprises, The Tribune advertising department is guided first by the interests of Tribune readers. Expert researchers make surveys to determine reader interest in various types of news stories, comic strips, features, and advertising.

As a special service to advertisers, THE TRIBUNE introduced a method of testing the effectiveness of various types of ads. This test was carried out by permitting an advertiser to run two ads occupying the same space, but appearing in alternate copies of the paper. Reader response quickly showed which of the two ads was more appealing.

By establishing its Sunday Metropolitan sections, which serve five separate areas of the Chicago district, THE TRIBUNE has been able to assist small merchants, who do not require ads distributed over the whole district. However, some merchants who started advertising several years ago in the Metropolitan section have increased their business so much that they now require space for the full circulation of THE TRIBUNE. A highly effective method by which manufacturers may use the Sunday Metropolitan sections to tie their advertising into the saleswork of their wholesale and retail dealers has also been worked out.

The newsprint shortage of recent years has placed heavy new burdens on the advertising staff. The shortage has required THE TRIBUNE to reject millions of dollars worth of advertising and to ration its space to advertisers. Ingenious methods have been devised to get the maximum use out of the available advertising space.

In THE SUNDAY TRIBUNE, local advertisers are permitted to take space which appears only in the city and suburban editions, while other advertisers are allotted space in the editions sent outside the city and suburban area.

In the daily TRIBUNE, advertising may be limited to the editions appearing after midnight. Similar methods of dividing space equitably have been provided by the classified [want ad] department.

Full Color Advertising

Shortage of newsprint also has hampered THE TRIBUNE'S plans for offering full color advertising, which this newspaper introduced and brought to its present high excellence. Experiments with color are being continued, looking forward to the day when advertising, as well as news pictures, can be printed in color every day.

Techniques of The Tribune advertising department have been so successful that they have been copied by many other publications. Tribune trained men, now owners of advertising agencies, have sent their sons and young friends to work as apprentices on THE TRIBUNE in order to give them the benefit of this professional experience.

A Tribune advertising salesman starts his career in the classified department, where he learns that the interests of the smallest advertisers must be protected as valiantly as the interests of the largest. Last year the classified advertisments accounted for almost a third of the Tribune's total advertising volume —10,203,723 of the 32,851,982 lines. This also was an all time record, approached by no other newspaper in the country.

After serving as want ad salesman [there are now 35 of them in addition to 80 girls who take ads over the telephone] a Tribune advertising man usually moves for a period of training in the business survey and merchandising service departments.

Training in Research

He is given training in research, and learns the No. 1 Tribune rule, that advertising must be sold on the basis of facts, not wishful thinking. As the salesman advances in experience, he may be moved to selling retail display ads. He starts this work in the division which handles ads for the Sunday metropolitan sections, calling on merchants and other advertisers in the various shopping centers thruout the city.

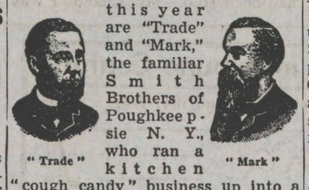
Each salesman is trained to give service to his accounts and to handle each one of his accounts as if he were in business for himself. The same methods of selling are used on small accounts as on larger ones, and the smaller advertisers receive the same assistance and research service as the larger ones.

After this training a Tribune salesman may be advanced to handling larger retail accounts, or he may be assigned to general advertising. He is not only a salesman, but an expert in many phases of business.

Training of a Tribune salesman is a continuous process leading to greater skills and larger responsibilities. THE TRIBUNE follows the policy of filling executive positions from the ranks of its own men. All executives in the advertising department started in the want ad department of THE TRIBUNE and worked their way up.

ANOTHER CENTENNIAL! TOWN GROWS BEARDS FOR 'TRADE,' 'MARK'

Celebrating a 100th anniversary along with THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE this year are "Trade" and "Mark," the familiar Smith Brothers of Poughkeepsie N. Y., who ran a kitchen "cough candy" business up into a cough drop industry which made their bewhiskered faces familiar all over the world.



The original "Trade" was William W. Smith, and "Mark" was his brother Andrew. They were known everywhere by these titles because the trade mark of their oblong cough drop package so nearly underlined their portraits. They inherited the business from their father. "Trade" for many years was business head of the firm, and both he and "Mark" were responsible for many philanthropies in Poughkeepsie.

This year, Poughkeepsie citizens are raising beards as part of the Smith Brothers' centennial program, and two of the best are grown by the present "Trade," William W. Smith, named for his grandfather, and the present "Mark," whose real name is Robert. Still using the family's "secret formula," the company now manufactures 19 million cough drops a day in two modern factories.

BIG CONVENTION IS THE TRIBUNE'S FIRST BIG STORY

River and Harbor Fund Veto Protested

The first big story THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE reported, less than 30 days after its founding, was the Chicago River and Harbor convention, the largest gathering of men, up to that time, in the history of the United States.

THE TRIBUNE, in the 100 years which followed, has always paid close attention to water born commerce, a fact in keeping with its heritage. Tradition has it that THE TRIBUNE'S birthday, far from being accidental, was timed to call attention to the Illinois and Michigan canal, which went into operation April 23, 1848.

Protest Polk Veto

The River and Harbor convention was a nation-wide protest against President Polk who, on Aug. 3, 1846, had vetoed a river and harbor measure providing sums from $5,000 to $80,000 each for improvement of ports, harbors, and facilities on the Great Lakes and inland rivers. Polk, a southern Democrat, was not in sympathy with middlewestern commercial growth.

Thomas Corwin, a delegate to the Chicago convention from Ohio, said that Polk considered a cargo sent by sea from New York to New Orleans to be "commerce" and the ports entitled to federal aid, whereas the same cargo sent thru the Great Lakes from Buffalo to Chicago would be "trade" and the states could finance their own ports and harbors.

Nineteen states were represented at the convention, including every New England state except Vermont; the southern states of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and South Carolina; most of the middle western states, and New York and Pennsylvania. Some of the greatest names in America were present.

Greeley and Weed Attend

Horace Greeley came, both as a delegate and as correspondent for his New York Tribune. So did Thurlow Weed, political boss of the state of New York, head of one of the great political spoils systems, and editor of the Albany Evening Journal. New York sent 300 delegates, Pennsylvania, 27, and other states lesser numbers. Illinois provided thousands. Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Martin Van Buren, and Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri were invited but sent letters of regret.

A tall lawyer named Abraham Lincoln was a delegate from Sangamon county, on his first visit to Chicago. It is said he gave a stirring speech, but neither Greeley, Weed, nor the other eastern journalists reported it. Files of Chicago newspapers which may have reported the speeches were burned in the Chicago fire of 1871.

Greeley estimated attendance at 20,000. Every Chicago hotel was packed and delegates stayed in private homes and on ships that brought them here. Greeley said the meeting place was a tent, 100 feet on each side, pitched on the courthouse square, Clark to La Salle and Washington to Randolph sts. He described the starting parade as "truly magnificent."

The Most Imposing Part

"The citizens of Chicago, of course, furnished the most imposing part of it," he wrote, "the music, the military, the ships on wheels, ornamented fire engines, etc. I never witnessed anything so superb as the appearance of the fire companies with their engines drawn by horses tastefully caparisoned."

Thurlow Weed also wrote he was impressed by Chicago which "is destined to be a beautiful city." He added that "it has four admirably conducted schools, much larger than ours and filled with children."

Edward Bates of Missouri, afterward Lincoln's attorney general, gave a keynote speech compared for fire to William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech in Chicago 50 years later, but none of the eastern editors told what he said. Bates was chairman, and kept the three day convention, July 5, 6, and 7, 1847, on a nonpartisan basis despite the fact that discontented Whigs [The Republican party was not yet born] were in the majority.

Memorial to Congress

The convention adopted resolutions which were made into a memorial to congress containing no specific recommendations, but pointing out that Polk's doctrines of what constituted commerce were fallacies. They contended the President based his conditions of federal aid to harbors solely on grounds that they must shelter and aid "salt water" shipping—a southern viewpoint.

Congress paid little attention to the memorial, but responsible historians, among whom is Albert J. Beveridge, have credited the Chicago River and Harbor convention—THE TRIBUNE'S first big story—with creating the sentiment which defeated the Democratic party at the polls in 1848.

Vital Canal Opened

Chicago's importance in waterborne commerce was illustrated the next year when the $6,800,000 canal linking the Great Lakes and the Mississippi was opened. In its first 10 years, the Illinois and Michigan canal transported 263 million feet of lumber, 27 million pounds of pork, 26 million bushels of corn, 5½ million bushels of wheat, 50 thousand tons of coal, and other frate. Tolls at the Chicago portal alone amounted to a million dollars in this period.

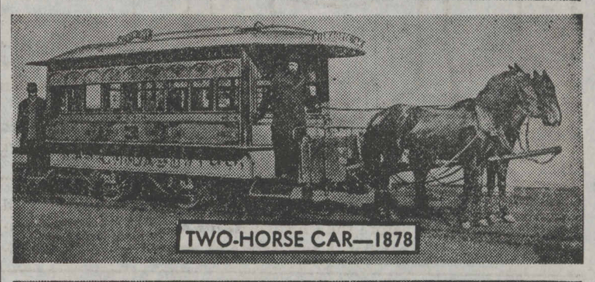
Tolls on the 96 mile waterway from Canalport on the Chicago river to La Salle on the Illinois ranged from 3 to 25 cents a mile for each 1,000 pounds of frate. They reached a peak of $302,958 in 1866, but dropped off to nothing as the railroads took over the carrying burden.

First Oysters Reach City Over the Ice and Snow

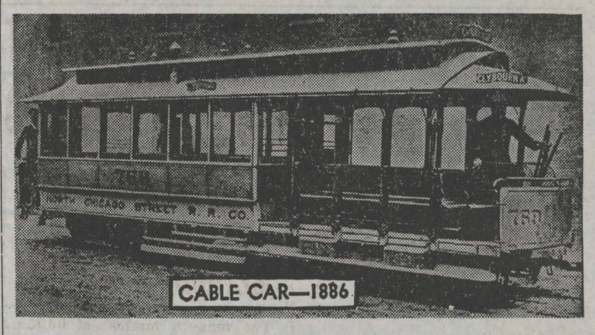
Fresh oysters were served for the first time in Chicago in the winter of 1837-38, by the enterprising proprietor of the Lake house, which overlooked Lake Michigan near the foot of South Water st. and was one of the leading hotels of the northwest. The oysters were brought here from Connecticut, over the ice and snow, on sleighs.

Early Transportation in Chicago

ONE-HORSE CAR—1859



TWO-HORSE CAR—1878



CABLE CAR—1886

STEAM-POWERED ELEVATED TRAIN—1892

OVERHEAD TROLLEY CARS—1893

Horse Railroads Give City Its First Traction Scandal

BY WILLIAM SHINNICK

Chicago had its first traction scandal before Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

The interests involved were several so-called "horse railroads," which had been in existence five years, and the Illinois legislature. The legislators, early in 1865, adopted a law that would have given the horse lines a ninety-nine year franchise without regard to the rights of the city council.

Altho passed over the governor's veto, there was so much popular resentment that the legislation was never put into effect. When the new constitution was framed in 1870 it provided that the legislature could not regulate or authorize street railway franchises without the consent of the city in which the traction company operated.

Two Companies Chartered

The city council had chartered two companies, one on the south and one on the north side, in 1859. The south side organizers were Franklin Parmalee, Liberty Bigelow, David A. Gage and Henry Fuller. Fuller was a real estate dealer and the others were associated in the conduct of an omnibus service. Among the north side organizers were William B. Ogden, Chicago's first mayor, and Voluntine C. Turner, who became the first full time traction magnate in Chicago history.

The first line extended in State st. from Lake st. to 12th st. The rails were spiked to the heavy plank that kept riders and pedestrians from sinking into deep mud.

Once started the horse railroad companies grew with astonishing speed. By 1860, 10 separate corporations were operating in the field. Each charged a 5 cent fare and gave no transfers to other lines. By 1870, 26 routes were in operation. By 1900 a total of 38 corporations had been chartered by the city. Most of them had by that time been absorbed by other companies.

Plan Slowly Eliminated

The "no transfer" arrangement was slowly eliminated. However, it was well past 1900 before the north, south, and west side lines could be brought to make transfers for a single fare covering all routes.

Cable cars began to supersede the horse as motive power in 1882. It was estimated that the cables cut operating costs in half. The last cable line was put in operation in 1894. Twelve years later the last cable and horse cars disappeared.

Electric cars were installed first on the south side in 1890. By 1906 all the street railway systems had been electrified.

The elevated system started as a south side line in 1892, with the steam engine as its power. The other elevated routes were built between 1893 and 1900.

[*Stories of Charles T. Yerkes and William Lorimer, who figured in the traction scandals of this period, are on page 26.*]

As the years went on Chicago car riders became dissatisfied. They began to talk of a unified service. In 1904 a proposal for merging the surface lines companies under municipal ownership was voted on and adopted. The scheme went on the rocks when the Illinois Supreme court declared illegal the 75 million dollars of city bonds with which the purchase was to be financed.

In 1918 the people voted against another municipal ownership scheme, involving the surface lines. Again, in 1925, a project to unify both the L and surface lines under municipal ownership was defeated at a referendum. In 1930 there was still another proposal for unification under private ownership. Valuation set for the two companies exceeded 260 millions. This proposition carried but the depression made it impossible to finance.

Twenty Year Franchise

The surface lines had obtained a 20 year franchise in 1907. They were able to borrow nearly 100 million dollars, which was spent in the next few years for improvements. By 1914 Chicago had a modern street car system.

In that year all the surface lines companies by agreement were put under management of a single board of managers which is still functioning.

In 1927 the 20 year franchise of the street car companies expired. Altho the lines were making satisfactory earnings they were unable without a new franchise to refinance the principal of the improvement bonds of which about 72 millions were then outstanding. The city insisted on a merger of surface and elevated as a prerequisite to any franchise. Unable to meet the condition, the surface lines were thrown into what has been described as "the longest receivership in history."

At the suggestion of Federal Judge Michael L. Igoe joint action to pass legislation setting up the Chicago metropolitan transit authority was taken in early 1945 by Mayor Kelly and Governor Green. This new ownership plan has come closer to consummation than any other requiring combination of the elevated and surface lines.