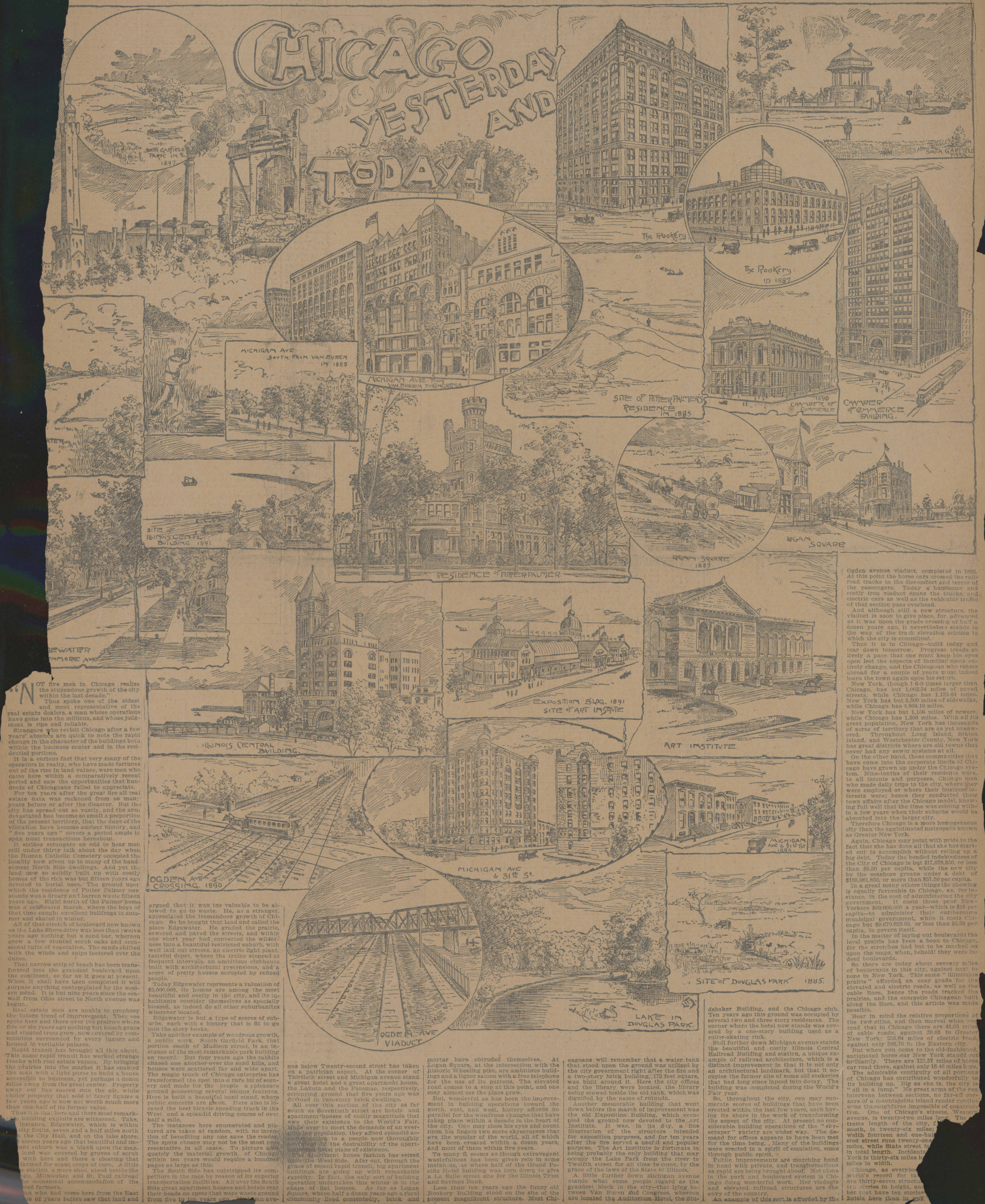


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CHICAGO
YESTERDAY
AND
TODAY

NOT five men in Chicago realize the stupendous growth of the city within the last decade. This spoke one of the oldest and most representative of the real estate dealers, a man whose operations have gone into the millions, and whose judgment is ripe and reliable.

Strangers who revisit Chicago after a few years' absence are quick to note the rapid change in the character of the buildings both within the business center and in the residential portions.

It is a curious fact that very many of the operators in realty, who have made fortunes out of the rise in land values, were men who came here within a comparatively recent period and saw the opportunities that hundreds of Chicagoans failed to appreciate.

For ten years after the great fire, real estate data was reckoned from so many years before or after the disaster. But the city has spread out so vastly, and the area devastated has become so small a proportion of the present territory, that the days of the visitation have become ancient history, and "five years ago" covers a period ample to span most transactions hereabout.

It strikes strangers as odd to hear men still under thirty talk about the day when the Roman Catholic Cemetery occupied the locality now given up to many of the handsomest North Side dwellings. And yet the land now so solidly built up with costly homes of the rich was but fifteen years ago devoted to burial uses. The ground upon which the residence of Potter Palmer now stands was a dreary and barren waste fifteen years ago. Right north of the Palmer home was a celebrated marsh, where the boys of that time caught excellent bullfrogs in summer and skated in winter.

All of that stretch of boulevard now known as the Lake Shore drive was less than twelve years ago nothing but a sandbar, whereon grew a few stunted scrub oaks and occasional tufts of vegetation. The sands shifted with the winds and snipe teetered over the dunes.

That narrow strip of beach has been transformed into the grandest boulevard upon the continent, so far as it goes at present. When it shall have been completed it will surpass anything contemplated by the modern mind. It is but nine years since the seawall from Ohio street to North avenue was begun.

Real estate men are unable to prophesy the future trend of improvement. They see spots here and there over the prairies where five or six years ago nothing but bunch grass and stunted trees grew, now covered by communities surrounded by every luxury and housed in veritable palaces.

Rapid transit has brought all this about. This same rapid transit has worked strange freaks with real estate values. By bringing the prairies into the market it has enabled the man with a light purse to build a house accessible to business, yet perhaps a dozen miles away from the great center. Property away out has soared into the air, while choice property that sold at fancy figures a few years ago is now not worth much more than one-half of its former value.

Thus it is that here and there most remarkable buildings exist, and these, taken, for instance, Edgewater, which is within city limits, seven and a half miles north of the City Hall, and on the lake shore.

argued that it was too valuable to be allowed to go to waste. He, as a stranger, appreciated the tremendous growth of Chicago. So he bought that land and called the place Edgewater. He graded the prairie, sewered and paved the streets, and within one short year had converted the wilderness into a beautiful and quiet suburb, with well laid out streets, an electric light plant, tasteful depot, where the trains stopped at frequent intervals, an ambitious clubhouse built with architectural pretensions, and a score of pretty houses occupied by refined people.

Today Edgewater represents a valuation of \$5,000,000. Its homes are among the most beautiful and costly in the city, and its inhabitants consider themselves as specially blessed, as indeed do all other suburbanites who live so near.

Edgewater is but a type of scores of suburbs, each with a history that is fit to go into the story books.

Take another example of wondrous growth, a public house. South Garfield Park, that portion south of Madison street, is an instance of the most remarkable park building on record. But four years ago the rabbits chased one another over the sand hills, and houses were scattered far and wide apart. The magic touch of Chicago enterprise has transformed the spot into a rare bit of scenery and made for the people a pleasure ground possessing several unique features. Here is built a beautiful band stand, where public concerts are given. Here also is located the best bicycle speeding track in the West, and a splendid driving course of over half a mile.

The instances here enumerated and pictured are taken at random, with no intention of benefiting any one save the reader. The spots chosen may not be the most representative in all cases. To picture adequately the material growth of Chicago within ten years would require a hundred pages as large as this.

The South Side has outstripped its competitors in the race by reason of its superior transportation facilities. All over the South Side great apartment houses and hotels rear their heads on spots that were waste ground five to ten years ago. The average community lived contentedly, brick and

mortar have obtruded themselves. At Logan Square, at the intersection with the historic Wheeling pike, are ambitious buildings and a liquor saloon with a free telephone for the use of its patrons. The elevated road comes to a stop at this point, and one may almost see the place grow.

But, wonderful as has been the improvement in building operations toward the north, east, and west, history affords no parallel for the wondrous changes that have taken place within a decade in the heart of the city. One may close his eyes and count upon his fingers two score skyscrapers that are the wonder of the world, all of which have been created within a dozen years, and most of them within five years.

To many it seems as though extravagant wastefulness has been given rein in some instances, as where half of the Grand Pacific Hotel building was torn down to give a La Salle street site for the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank.

Less than ten years ago the funny old Rookery Building stood on the site of the present magnificent structure. Most Chicagoans will remember that a water tank that stood upon the ground was utilized by the city government right after the fire, and a two-story brick building, 172 feet square, was built around it. Here the city offices and the library were located. The library being stowed inside the old tank, which was dignified by the name of rotunda.

Another memorable building that went down before the march of improvement was the old Exposition Building, which occupied the ground now devoted to the Art Institute. It was, in its day, a fine illustration of the structure intended for exposition purposes, and for ten years after the fire served a useful and popular purpose. The Art Institute is fortunate in being probably the only building that may occupy the Lake Park from the river to Twelfth street for all time to come, by the grace of the laws of the State of Illinois.

A little farther down Michigan avenue stands what some people regard as the grandest block in the city—that lying between Van Buren and Congress, whereon are located the Auditorium Hotel, the St.

debaker Building, and the Chicago club. Ten years ago this ground was occupied by several two and three story residences. The ground where the hotel now stands was covered by a one-story building used as a roller-skating rink.

Still farther down Michigan avenue stands the beautiful and costly Illinois Central Railroad Building and station, a unique example of railroad architecture, which is a distinct improvement in that it is not only an architectural landmark, but that it occupies the former site of some old rookeries that had long since lapsed into decay. The building was completed during the World's Fair year.

So, throughout the city, one may enumerate scores of buildings that have been erected within the last few years, each having its share in the work of transforming the aspect of the city. At present no considerable building operations of the "skyscraper" variety are under way. The demand for offices appears to have been met for the time being. Many of the buildings were erected in a spirit of emulation, some through public spirit.

Public improvements are marching hand in hand with private, and transformations as rapid as being brought about. Not alone in the park and boulevard system is Chicago doing wonderful work. Her viaducts and elevated railroad structures are the envy of the country.

An example of this sort is afforded by the

Ogden avenue viaduct, completed in 1892. At this point the horse cars crossed the railroad tracks to the discomfort and terror of the passengers. Today a handsome and costly iron viaduct spans the tracks, and electric cars as well as the vehicular traffic of that section pass overhead.

And although still a new structure, for the viaduct is soon to give place, for advanced as it was upon the grade crossing of half a dozen years ago, it nevertheless stands in the way of the track elevation scheme to which the city is committed.

Thus it is in Chicago—build today and tear down tomorrow. Progress adds actively a pace that one must keep his eyes open lest the aspects of familiar spots entirely change, and the Chicagoan who roams abroad for a couple of years must indeed learn the town again upon his return.

New York, though 160 times larger than Chicago, has but 1,002.34 miles of paved streets, while Chicago has 1,133.64 miles. New York has but 3,500 miles of sidewalks, while Chicago has 4,864.10 miles.

New York has but 1,156 miles of sewers, while Chicago has 1,233 miles. With all its great population, New York has thousands of acres of territory that are as yet unserved. Throughout Long Island, Staten Island, and Westchester County, New York has great districts where are old towns that never had any sewer systems at all.

On the other hand, those communities that have come into the corporate limits of Chicago have grown up under the Chicago system. Nine-tenths of their residents were, to all intents and purposes, Chicago men who made daily trips to the city, where they were employed or where their business interests were; hence they conducted their town affairs after the Chicago model, knowing full well that the time was coming within a few years when their suburbs would be absorbed into the larger city.

Therefore Chicago is a more homogeneous city than the agglomerated metropolis known as Greater New York.

Again, Chicago may point with pride to the fact that she has done all that she has started out to accomplish without rolling up a big debt. Today the bonded indebtedness of the City of Chicago is but \$17,078,650, or less than \$150 per capita, while the new city by the seashore groans under a debt of \$185,081,850, or more than \$67.50 per capita.

In a great many other things the showing is equally favorable to Chicago, as, for instance, in the cost of administering the city government. It costs those poor New Yorkers \$60,000,000 a year, which is \$18 per capita—to administer their cumbersome municipal government, while it costs Chicago but \$8,670,625.92, or less than \$5.38 per capita, to govern its city.

In the matter of laying out boulevards the level prairie has been a boon to Chicago, for the stretches had but to be marked as upon the maps, when, behold! they were indeed boulevards.

So there are today about seventy miles of boulevards in this city, against next to none in New York. This same "illimitable prairie" afforded an easy grade for the elevated and electric roads, as well as the cable lines, hence the roads tracked the prairies, and the energetic Chicagoan built along the lines, and this article was made possible.

Bear in mind the relative proportions of the two cities, and then marvel when you read that in Chicago there are 41.5 miles of cable roads, against 39.68 in Greater New York; 255.94 miles of electric road, against only 305.70 in the Eastern city.

But when you come to the old-fashioned, antiquated horse car New York stands out brilliantly. There are 121.57 miles of horse car road there, against only 18.46 miles here. The admirable contiguity of all portions of Chicago has contributed wonderfully to its building up. Big as she is, the city is "all in a lump." No great arms of the sea intervene between sections, no far-off corners of a mountainous island render continuous thoroughfares impossible of construction. One of Chicago's streets, Western avenue, is twenty-two miles long. The extreme length of the city, from north to south, is twenty-six miles, with fourteen and one-half miles of streets, while State street is in total length. Incidentally, New York is thirty-six miles in length, with twenty-two miles of streets, and thirty-seven structural stories in height, and her tallest have ten stories.