

INSIDERS' GUIDE®

Off the Beaten Path®

THIRD
EDITION

chicago



A GUIDE TO UNIQUE PLACES

CLIFF TERRY

The Loop



Chicago's central business district, the Loop, was built over the site of the original settlement. (Plates in the sidewalks near the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive show the location of the original Fort Dearborn.) In 1837 the newly incorporated city of Chicago had a population of 4,179, most of which lived in the central area. In 1853 the first combined City Hall–County Court House building was opened, and in 1860 the Republican National Convention met in a huge, boxlike wooden structure called the Wigwam, a temporary building at Lake Street and Wacker, and nominated, of course, a lanky, young, rustic lawyer from Springfield named Lincoln. In the late 1860s, local mover and shaker Potter Palmer built a large department store at Randolph and State Streets that would become Marshall Field's, and a fancy hotel, the Palmer House, opened in 1870.

After the Great Fire of 1871, the business structures were quickly rebuilt, with the new fire code prohibiting the construction of wooden buildings—effectively ending the Loop's other status as a residential area. The Chicago School of Architecture emerged in the Loop from the early 1880s to 1910. Designers included Burnham & Root, Holabird & Roche, William Le Baron Jenney, and, best known of all, Louis H. Sullivan, who decreed, "Form follows function."