

SECOND EDITION

# CHICAGO IN AND AROUND THE LOOP



WALKING TOURS OF  
ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

GERARD R. WOLFE



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*Frontispiece: Among the most noteworthy skyscrapers of Chicago's famed panorama are the renowned Wrigley Building, left, and the Tribune Tower. In this view looking north across the Michigan Avenue Bridge are the towering buildings that line the Magnificent Mile, the nation's most famous upscale retailing street, with the historic Water Tower and the John Hancock Center visible in the background. (Photo by author)*

# Contents

PREFACE	<i>ix</i>
1. The Loop I: Old Chicago and the Financial District	<i>1</i>
2. The Loop II: The James R. Thompson Center to State Street	<i>55</i>
3. Along the Chicago River, I: The Sears Tower to the Merchandise Mart	<i>111</i>
4. Along the Chicago River, II: The North Branch to the Illinois Center	<i>153</i>
5. The Michigan Avenue "Cliff"	<i>193</i>
6. The Magnificent Mile and Streeterville	<i>237</i>
7. East Lake Shore Drive to the Centennial Fountain	<i>277</i>
8. South of the Loop: Printers Row	<i>305</i>
9. Grant Park to the Museum Campus	<i>323</i>
10. The Prairie Avenue Historic District to McCormick Place	<i>351</i>
11. North of the Loop: The River North Neighborhood	<i>385</i>



CONTENTS	viii
12. The Gold Coast	421
THE PEDWAY: CHICAGO'S DOWNTOWN UNDERGROUND WALKWAY SYSTEM	463
GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS	466
RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY	471
RECOMMENDED READINGS	473
INDEX	479

*Note:* The following are the landmark symbols used in this guide:

- ★ Designated City of Chicago landmark (the six-pointed star is adapted from the official flag of the City of Chicago)
- ☆ Listed on the National Register of Historic Places



# Preface

I am frequently asked by visitors to suggest the best vantage point to appreciate Chicago's spectacular skyline. While the views from atop the John Hancock Center and the Sears Tower provide an all-encompassing panorama for which tourists line up by the hundreds, my favorite spot is in Grant Park, near the Buckingham Fountain, at the crack of dawn, when the first rays of the sun spread across the steel-blue reaches of Lake Michigan. Then, out of the dusk and darkness of the great windswept prairies, Chicago rises slowly in the morning's first light, soaring skyward in a brilliant fantasy of stone and glass, punctuated with pinnacles of gleaming silver. They are all there—virtually every Chicago skyscraper—each contributing its distinctive profile, creating a luminous and dramatic skyline like no other in the world. There is magic in that unforgettable moment that is uniquely Chicago!

This guide to downtown Chicago's splendid architecture and rich history is divided into 12 walking tours of varying length, which when taken in sequence will provide a reasonably comprehensive overview of how the City of Chicago developed and grew, what and where its most significant buildings and landmarks are, and who were (and are) its most important architects. Some tours are necessarily longer than others because of the number of buildings in the itinerary. Tours 1 and 2, for example, which cover the inner Loop in depth, may each be divided easily into two separate tours; likewise, Tours 3 and 4, which follow the banks of the Chicago River. With the exception of Tours 10 and 12, all starting points are within easy walking distance of the center of the Loop. Restaurants are not included in this work, except where essential to the text. Excellent eating guides are available in bookstores, and the following free publications are available in most public places: The Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau's *City Guide*; *Key—Chicago's Official City Guide* (published weekly); and *Where Chicago Magazine*.

Among the illustrations, a number of significant lost buildings are included, to offer a then-and-now picture of the city and help portray the early skyscraper era. Even before the Great Fire of 1871 eradicated just about every building in the Loop area, the city had already begun to mushroom at a whirlwind pace. The devastating fire proved only a relatively brief delay—some might even say a catalyst—in Chicago's inexorable drive to renew itself and expand.