DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 016 SO 019 006

AUTHOR Danzer, Gerald A.; Matijevic, Maryhelen A.
TITLE Our Community Development Challenge: Documents for American History Courses Featuring Public Works and the Rise of the City, 1871-1941.
PUB DATE 22 Sep 87
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the City in History Conference (Chicago, IL, September 22, 1987).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Development; *History Instruction; Instructional Materials; Lesson Plans; *Local History; *Municipalities; Resource Units; Secondary Education; Social Studies; *United States History; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS Historical Materials; *Illinois (Chicago); Nineteenth Century; *Public Works; Twentieth Century

ABSTRACT

This document provides secondary education instructional materials for teaching about selected areas of Chicago (Illinois) history. Designed to support 19th and 20th century U.S. history lessons, it features a lesson plan developed to introduce students to the history and contemporary focus of Chicago's public works. The lesson plan contains: (1) themes; (2) objectives; (3) required materials; (4) a focus; (5) a suggested teaching plan; (6) a timeline of Chicago history; (7) suggestions for the study of selected Chicago history documents; (8) discussion questions and activities; and (9) five references. An appendix includes reproductions of nine Chicago public works historical documents, along with accompanying discussion guides. (JHP)

Our Community Development Challenge

DOCUMENTS FOR AMERICAN HISTORY COURSES

FEATURING

PUBLIC WORKS AND THE RISE OF THE CITY

1871-1941

This packet of curriculum materials was developed by Gerald A. Danzer and Maryhelen A. Matijevic for the "City in History" Conference, 22 September 1987, in cooperation with the Public Works Historical Society and the Chicago Metro History Fair. The "City in History" Conference is sponsored each year by the Department of History at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The Chicago Neighborhood History Project is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and is part of the Chicago Metro History Fair. The documents are all in the public domain and may be reproduced as printed. The supporting materials may also be reproduced for educational use if credit is given to the Chicago Metro History Fair.

THE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY PROJECT
at the Chicago Metro History Fair
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE
DOCUMENTS FOR AMERICAN HISTORY COURSES
FEATURING
PUBLIC WORKS AND THE RISE OF THE CITY, 1871-1941

Gerald A. Danzer and Maryhelen A. Matijevic

Themes

1. The concepts of infrastructure and public works
2. Urban development: changes over time
3. Using historical documents

Objectives

Students will:

1. develop some definitions that are important to understanding the role of public works in community development;
2. examine a timeline, some maps, some illustrations and some documents that help to explicate these definitions and the role of public works in community development;
3. extrapolate from this foundation to the importance of public works in their own community today.

Materials Needed

Student handouts:

PW:1 A Timeline of Chicago
PW:2 Turning the Waters, 1871
PW:3 The Chicago Watershed
PW:4 Humboldt Park, West Chicago, 1871
PW:5 Moving Traffic, 1890
PW:6 Moving Traffic, 1902
PW:7 Moving the Harbor, 1908
PW:8 & 9 The Wasting Water Debate, 1921
PW:10 Pride of the City

Focus

This lesson introduces students to the concepts of public works and infrastructure, from both historic and contemporary perspectives. It is designed to support U.S. History courses, especially in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The materials highlight urban growth, industrialization and the impact of technological development on the day-to-day lives of people.

Suggested Teaching Plan

I. Introduction

A. In a brainstorming session, students can develop definitions for the terms PUBLIC WORKS and INFRASTRUCTURE.

1. PUBLIC WORKS--"the physical structures and facilities developed or acquired by public agencies to house governmental functions and provide water, waste disposal, power, transportation and similar services to facilitate the achievement of common social and economic objectives." (American Public Works Association, History of Public Works in the United States, 1976, p. 5). Public works are usually paid for with public taxes or public monies. Bridges and highways and public parks are included among public works.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE--"the underlying foundation or basic framework" (Webster). As applied to the notion of community development, infrastructure is the network of public works facilities which supports not only the day-to-day life of citizens, but also the economic well-being of the society at large.

B. Next, students might consider the FACTORS necessary to support public works development.

1. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT--which designates the use of public taxes for the construction of public works projects;

2. SUPPORT OF CITIZENS--whose votes or acceptance of such expenditures is essential to their success;

3. LAND--which is often owned by private individuals must sometimes be relinquished for the construction of public projects.

4. CAPITAL--which is necessary to finance the building of public works facilities. The ability of government to obtain capital is influenced by the economic health of the nation and the policy of government.

5. LABOR--which actually does the work of planning, constructing, operating and maintaining public works facilities and relies on a variety of skills and abilities.

II. Looking at a Timeline (PW:1)

A. The events listed to the left of the timeline note some highlights in the history of Chicago. This is provided as the first handout so that the other documents may be put into a time perspective.

B. The timeline can be manipulated by the students or the teacher to include other information. The right side of the timeline may also be utilized for additional public works events or for listing the documents in this exercise.

C. Questions

1. What key dates and events would you add/use to chronicle the history of your neighborhood or community?

2. Is there any significance that can be attributed to the fact that most of the documents in this exercise seem to cluster around the decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

3. What conclusions can be drawn about Chicago's development from this timeline?

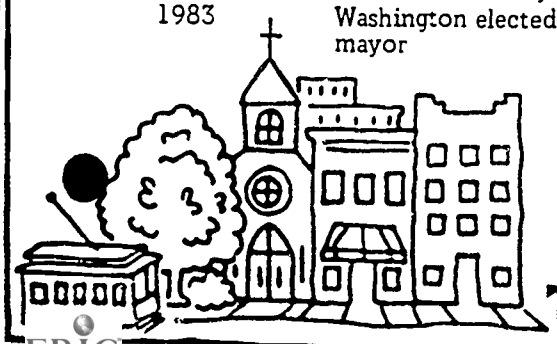
III. Investigating Documents

To develop the themes of this lesson the teacher can select several handouts from the examples provided in the appendix. For each handout, a series of "pointers" and "questions" are given to guide the discussion. The source of each document and additional readings make it possible to extend the discussion for both the teacher and the students. Note that the factors listed above in section I.B. of the teaching plan provide some categories for discussing these documents. Other ideas may be added by the teacher or discovered by the students.

A TIMELINE OF CHICAGO

DATE	EVENT
1763	Treaty of Paris
1779	DuSable settlement
1783	Treaty of Paris
1803	Fort Dearborn
1830	First streets and lots
1848	Canal and railroad
1859	First streetcar
1871	Chicago Fire
1885	First skyscraper
1893	Columbian Exposition
1909	Burnham Plan
1919	Race Riot
1933	Century of Progress Fair
1949	Congress Expressway begun
1968	Year of Protest
1976	Mayor Daley's death
1979	Byrne elected mayor
1983	Washington elected mayor

1750 1775 1800 1825 1850 1875 1900 1925 1950 1975 2000



The Chicago Neighborhood History Project is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities

IV. Conclusion

A. The discussion of the documents might conclude with a review of how public works, the infrastructure and community development are related.

B. Students might also be asked to list contemporary examples of public works projects in the city or in their own neighborhoods. Students could assess the impact of these projects on community development perhaps as a homework assignment.

C. Some of the documents might also be analyzed by students as a homework assignment. Particularly valuable in this respect is the article reprinted in PW:8 and PW:9. Ask each student to write a letter to the editor in 1921 on the issue of water meters.

For Further Discussion

(Quotations from One Hundred Years of Public Works Equipment: An Illustrated History (1985), 12,22.)

A. Pavement Maintenance--

"...The most popular improved pavement today in many cities is asphalt. While it is especially a sanitary pavement, comparatively noiseless, and when kept in good condition gives satisfaction both to those who travel upon it and to the residents along its line, still is has its disadvantages too. Unlike granite, it is affected by the changes of temperature from extreme heat to extreme cold, and also from the action upon it, so that, whether the travel is heavy or light, it loses its strength and disintegrates, thus needing a constant outlay for repairs."

"...We have tried to emphasize the fact to our taxpayers that these improved pavements would not last like the old cobblestone or substantial granite; that the smooth, almost noiseless and sanitary pavements come high, and, like all luxuries, needed constant attention and outlay..."

-Harrison Van Duyne, President, Street and Water Commissioners, Newark, New Jersey, 1896

Road paving is regarded as a "luxury" by this New Jersey commissioner. Do you agree? Can you think of any contemporary examples of the problems and advantages which are described in this excerpt?

B. Snow and Ice Control--

"...The Council (authorized) the city to clean the snow from vacant properties in case such had not been done at the expiration of twenty-four hours from the cessation of a snowfall, the cost to be charged to the property benefited, and collected with the balance of the taxes. This system has continued in operation ever since, and on the whole has proved satisfactory. Last year, we cleaned about three-hundred and forty-seven miles (lineal) of sidewalks, at an average cost of two fifths of a cent per foot frontage each clearing. There has been some variation each year in the cost of doing this work, accounted for by the difference in the weight of the snowfall and the degrees of frost. We hope in the near future to obtain legislation empowering us to commence cleaning the sidewalks at an earlier period than the one now in force--namely, twenty-fouur hours-in which case we shall be able to do the work much more cheaply..."

-John Jones, Street Commissioner, Toronto, Ontario, 1896

What do you think about the timetable and financing schedule specified for snow removal in 1896 Toronto? How does this policy compare to snow removal policies today?

Extensions

A. Ask students to find documents that illustrate contemporary public works projects.

B. A timeline of public works in U.S. History can be created which outlines the key events in the development of the nation's infrastructure:

1789 Congress authorizes the Cape Henry Lighthouse, the first federal public works project

1815 Philadelphia builds water works at Fairmount Hill

1817 Erie Canal construction begun

1858 Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux submit design for Central Park, New York

1883 Brooklyn Bridge completed

1936 Golden Gate Bridge opened to traffic

1956 Interstate Highway Act

1970 Earth Day, Environmental Protection Agency established

C. Students might be encouraged to interview community residents or local leaders to discover their perspectives on the impact of public works. Survey strategies or interviews may also be used to assess the information of or interest ir public works among the school's population.

D. Other parts of the Chicago Neighborhood History Project which relate to the themes of this lesson include:

Unit II, Lesson 4: Techniques for analyzing photographs
Lesson 5: Techniques for analyzing maps
Lesson 6: Oral history techniques might be adapted to the topic of public works;
Unit III, Lesson 1: How to survey one's neighborhood
Lesson 2: Analyzes the Near West Side
Lesson 3: Analyzes South Chicago
Lesson 4: Analyzes Humboldt Park
Lesson 5: Neighborhood analysis can be adapted to the topic of public works
Unit IV, Lesson 1: Comparing neighborhoods; The Handout Forty-Four Cities is especially interesting;
Lesson 4: Compares Lincoln Park, Englewood, Douglas
Unit V, Lessons 1-5: Suburban development
Unit VII, Discusses neighborhood issues--park distribution, community planning and other dimensions of public works.

Bibliography

Armstrong, Ellis L., ed., History of Public Works in the United States, 1776-1976 (Chicago: American Public Works Association, 1976). Prepared by special Bicentennial commission, this large volume is the best systematic introduction to the history of public works in America.

Christensen, Daphne, ed., Chicago Public Works: A History (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1973). Each chapter of this splendid volume deals with a different aspect of public works and is accompanied by numerous illustrations. The book was commissioned by the Department of Public Works.

Cobblestone, "Public Works History," August, 1983. This journal is devoted to making history meaningful and understandable for young people. The entire August issue explores the nature and importance of public works through readable, short articles and interesting activities.

Hoy, Suellen M. and Michael C. Robinson, eds., Public Works History in the United States: A Guide to the Literature (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979). Each entry in this large volume has an annotation. Its organization parallels that of the Armstrong volume above.

Rosen, Howard and Joel Mendes, eds., One Hundred Years of Public Works Equipment: An Illustated History (Chicago: Public Works Historical Society, 1986). This useful collection of photographs includes brief introductions to different types of equipment by various authorities.

APPENDIX

PUBLIC WORKS DOCUMENTS AND GUIDE FOR DISCUSSION

PW:2 TURNING THE WATERS, 1871

POINTERS

1. Location--the old lock between the South Branch of the Chicago River and the Illinois and Michigan Canal at Bridgeport. The view is toward the east, with the city and Lake Michigan in the background.

2. Originally, the canal was higher than the river and the lock was needed to lower the canal boats from the "summit" of the canal to the Chicago River (See PW:3).

3. As Chicago grew and more sewerage was dumped into the Chicago River, the result was "most offensive," causing "pestilential odors...so that the air of the city and the country in the direction of the wind was unendurable." The solution proposed was to dig the canal deeper so that the lock would not be needed and the water would flow the opposite direction. Thus the locks in the picture were removed shortly after the flow of water was reversed. The workers at the lower left are starting to pick away at the limestone wall of the lock, preparing for its removal.

4. The plan never worked well until a new canal, the Sanitary and Ship Canal was completed in 1900. The new canal was cut much deeper than the old Illinois and Michigan Canal. Indeed, more excavation was needed for the Sanitary and Ship Canal than for the Panama Canal.

QUESTIONS

1. Why would Chicago want water to drain from Lake Michigan into the Gulf of Mexico?

2. What public works facilities are visible in this plate?

3. How do you think this "improvement" helped Chicago's development?

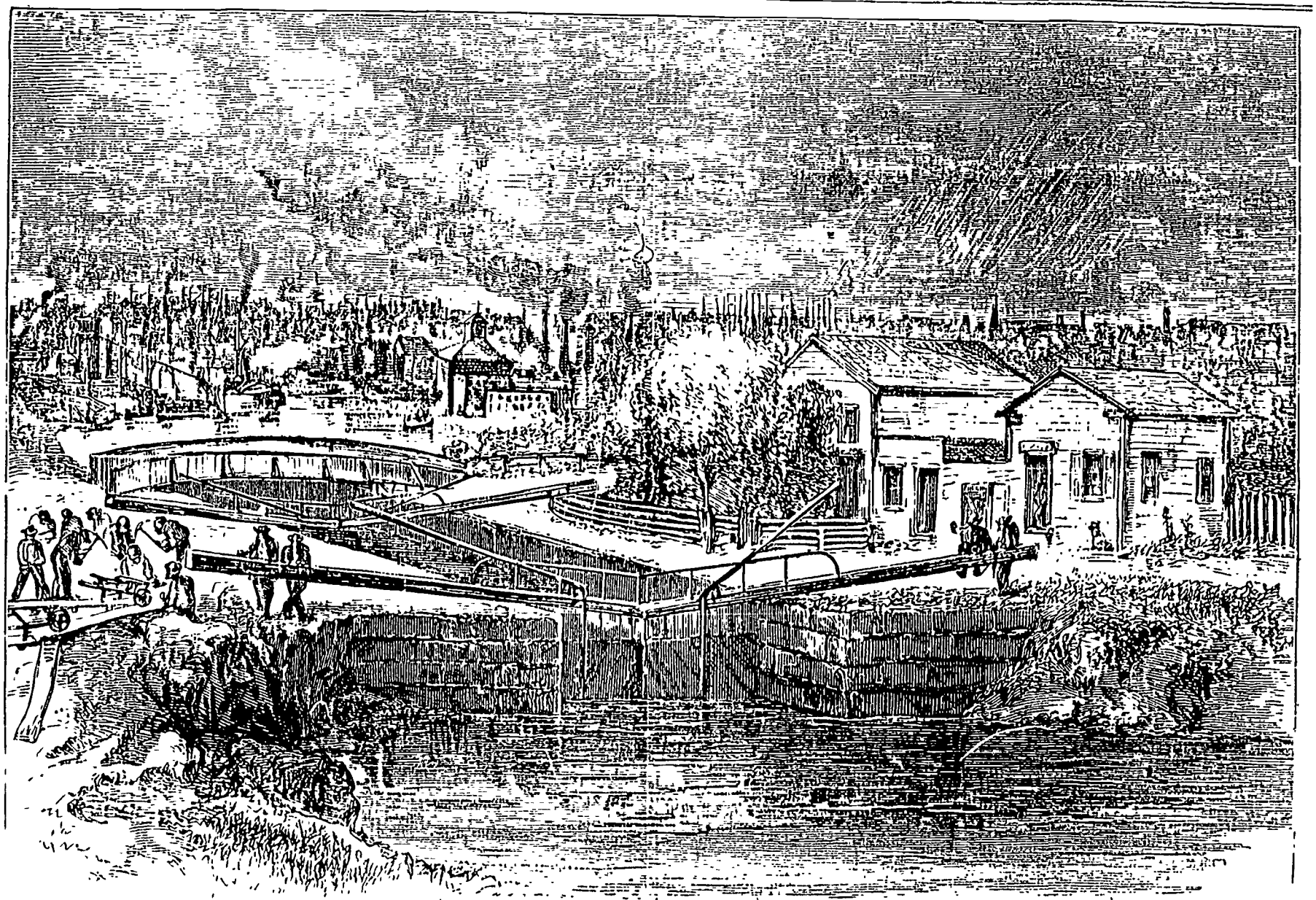
SOURCE

"A Grand Enterprise," Harper's Weekly (July 22, 1871), 669, 671.

READING

Chicago Public Works: A History (1971), 30-37.

Turning the Waters, 1871



TURNING THE WATERS OF LAKE MICHIGAN INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO.—DRAWN BY THEO. R. DAVIS.—[SEE PAGE 671.]

PW:3 THE CHICAGO WATERSHED

POINTERS
1. This is the profile or cross-section of two river valleys (the Chicago and Des Plaines-Upper Illinois) and the divide between them. The vertical scale indicates feet, the horizontal scale indicates miles along the course of the waterways. The vertical scale is exaggerated nearly a thousand times.

2. Start with zero feet on the right hand scale. This is the city datum, the official elevation of Chicago above sea level. Then note:
a. Lake Michigan at this time was about 25 feet below the city; it enters Lake Michigan near the harbor light;
b. Summit (a suburb) is about 25 feet above the city datum;
c. The top of the dam on the Illinois River at Marseilles is about 100 feet lower than Chicago;
d. At the dam, locate the high water profile of the river in 1892 and the low water profile.

3. A watershed is the divide between two river valleys. Chicago's watershed is a continental divide. Waters flowing into Lake Michigan find their way to the ocean over Niagara Falls and into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Waters flowing the opposite direction join the Mississippi River and enter the Gulf of Mexico.

QUESTIONS
1. Who would be interested in a chart like this?

2. The chart was drawn in 1910. Would anything have changed from then until now to make it necessary to draw a new one for today's use?

3. If the canal were dug deeper, could it entirely drain Lake Michigan?

4. Note the Four Mile Crib in Lake Michigan. Why is this source for the city's water supply located so far out inlake Michigan?

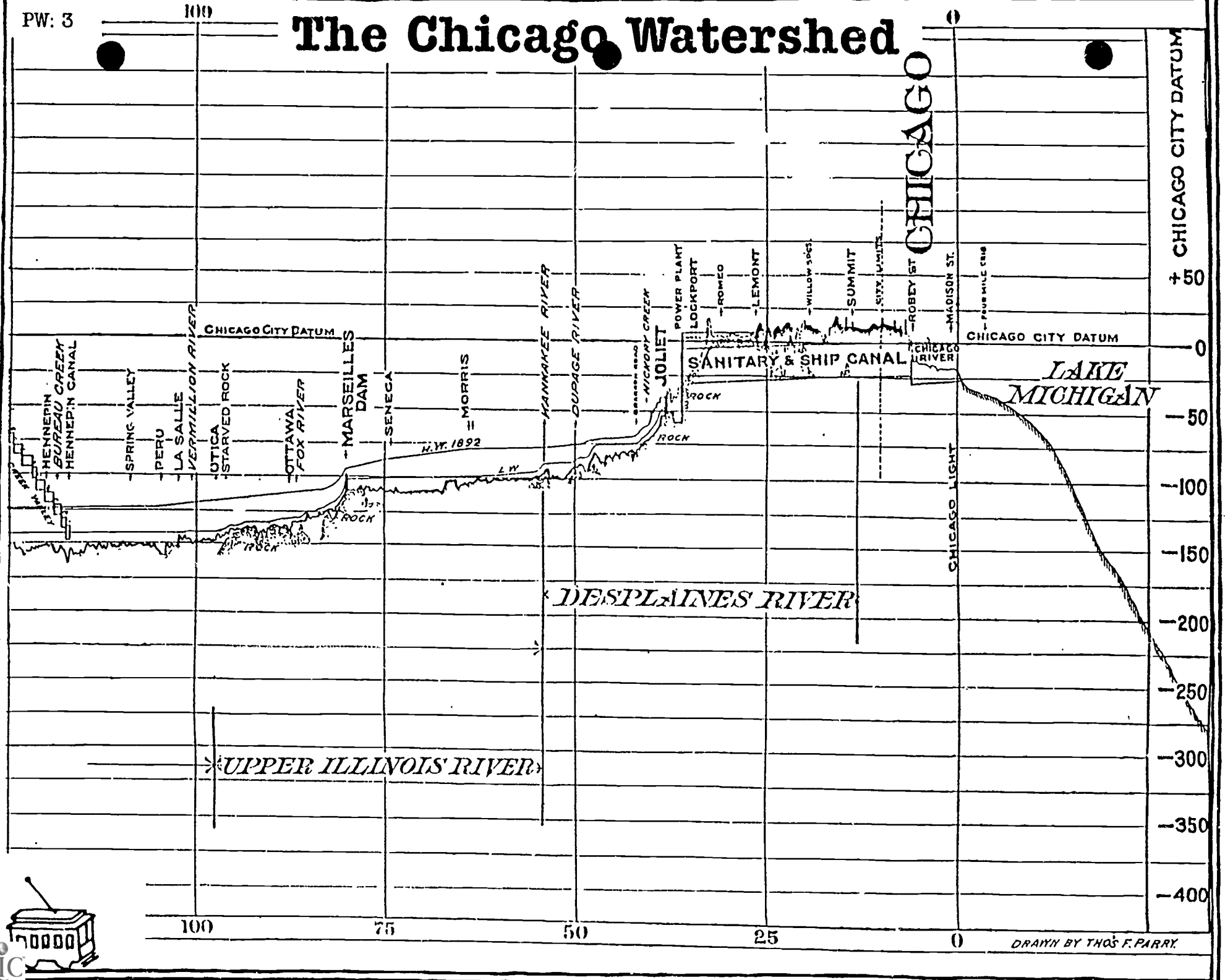
SOURCE
Lyman E. Cooley, The Diversion of the Waters of the Great Lakes by Way of the Sanitary and Ship Canal of Chicago (1913), following p. 24.

READINGS
Irving Cutler, Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent (1982), 5-14.

F. M. Fryxell, The Physiography of the Region of Chicago (1927).

PW: 3

The Chicago Watershed



PW:4 HUMBOLDT PARK: WEST CHICAGO, 1871

POINTERS
1. In 1871, the site of Humboldt Park was flat, poorly drained prairie land. To make a park out of this uninviting location, the engineers suggested digging a lake and using the dirt to build small hills. This would provide several great advantages.

2. The first benefit was drainage. Rain water would run off the elevated surface into the lake where it would be stored and eventually be sent by drainage pipes to the Chicago River.

3. The second benefit was appearance. The blend of hills and water would provide a picturesque landscape appropriate for a large regional park.

4. The third benefit was that the lake could also be used for recreation.

QUESTIONS
1. In what ways can parks be considered public works?

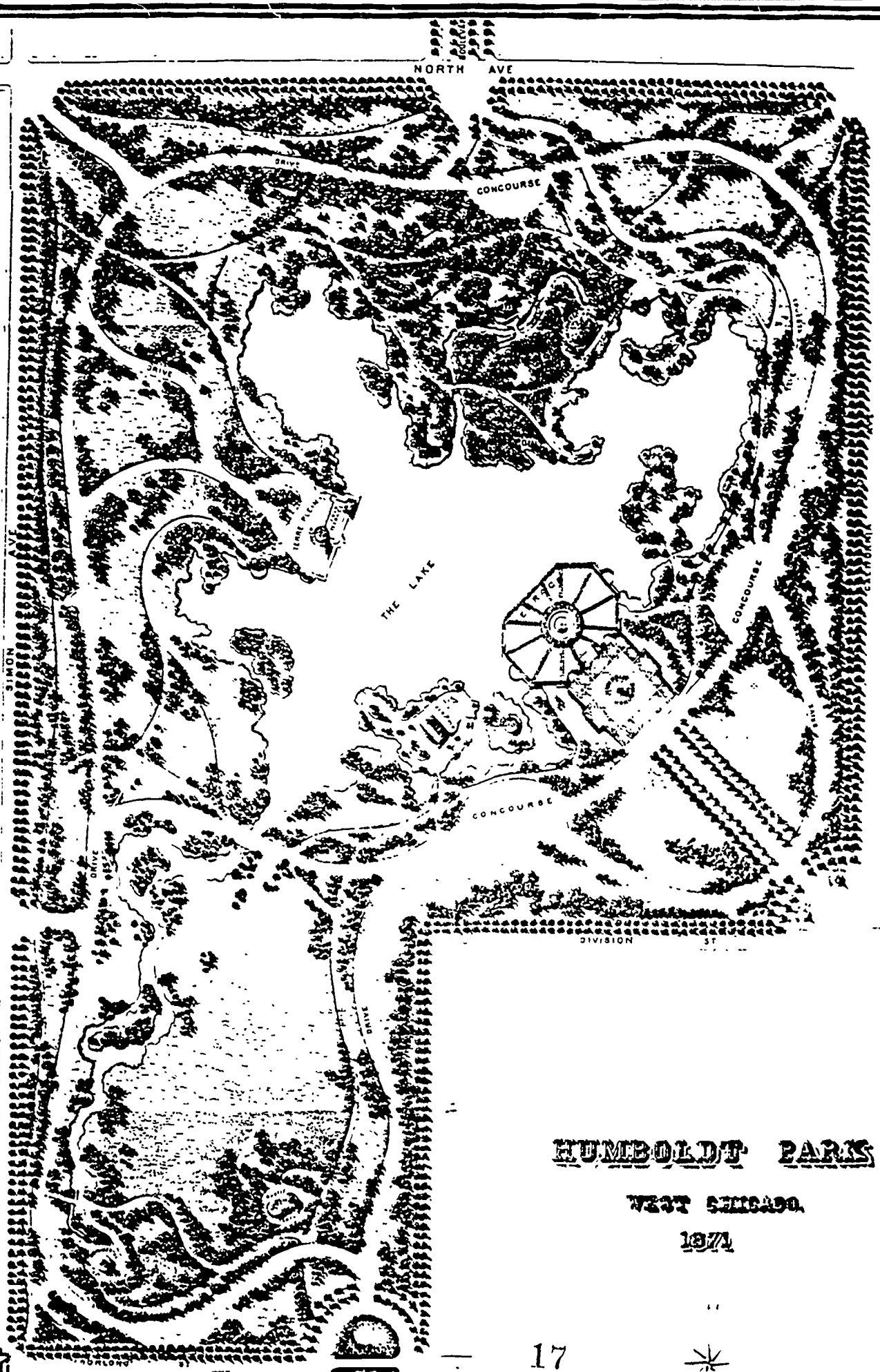
2. How are parks important to a community's development?

3. The text of the Annual Report (the source of this document) talked about two advantages which parks would provide. Not only would they make Chicago an attractive city, but they would also raise "the standard of the city health in a measure that will be felt by every family within a wide circuit." Could the same observation by made of other types of public works

4. Make a list of possible things to do in the park as envisaged by its original planners. Would the list be the same as the opportunities for recreation in the park today? How would you account for any differences?

SOURCE
Second Annual Report of West Chicago Park Commissioners (1872).

READING
Glen E. Holt, "Private Plans for Public Spaces: The Origins of Chicago's Park System, 1850-1875," Chicago History, 8:3 (Fall, 1979), 173-184.



PW:5 MOVING TRAFFIC, 1890

POINTERS

1. The cross-section above and the map below both use the same scale and show the same public works facilities.

2. The major purpose of this extensive public works facility was to keep traffic moving. Pedestrians, wagons, ships, railroads and cable cars (later street cars) are all provided for at this intersection.

3. A swing bridge turned on a pivot in the center of the river to provide openings for boats on either side.

4. Cable cars had to go under the river because the continuous cable would prevent the bridge from being moved.

5. The bridge has been replaced by a bascule type and the tunnel is no longer open to traffic, but his complex of transportation facilities still exists today.

QUESTIONS

1. List the various forms of transportation used in 1890. How is each one provided for in this facility?

2. In what ways did each form of transportation contribute to Chicago's development in 1890?

3. Why is the tunnel no longer in use today?

4. In what ways was the bascule type lift bridge an improvement over the old swing bridge?

5. Who do you think paid for these public works in 1890? Do you think they got their money's worth?

SOURCE

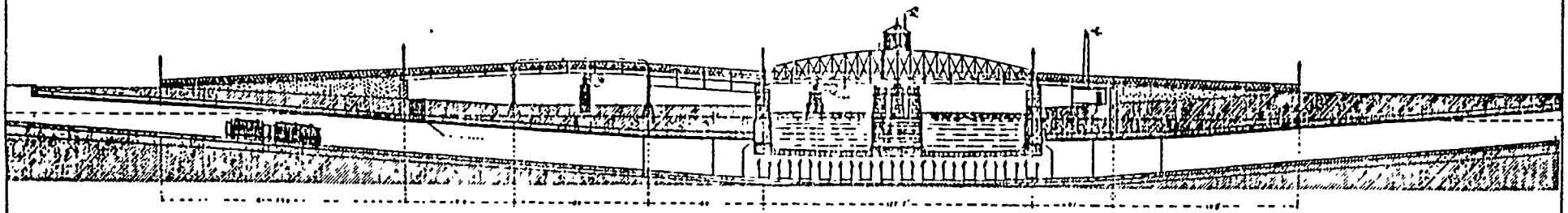
Fifteenth Annual Report of the Department of Public Works to the City Council of Chicago, 1890 (Chicago, 1891), following p. 120.

READINGS

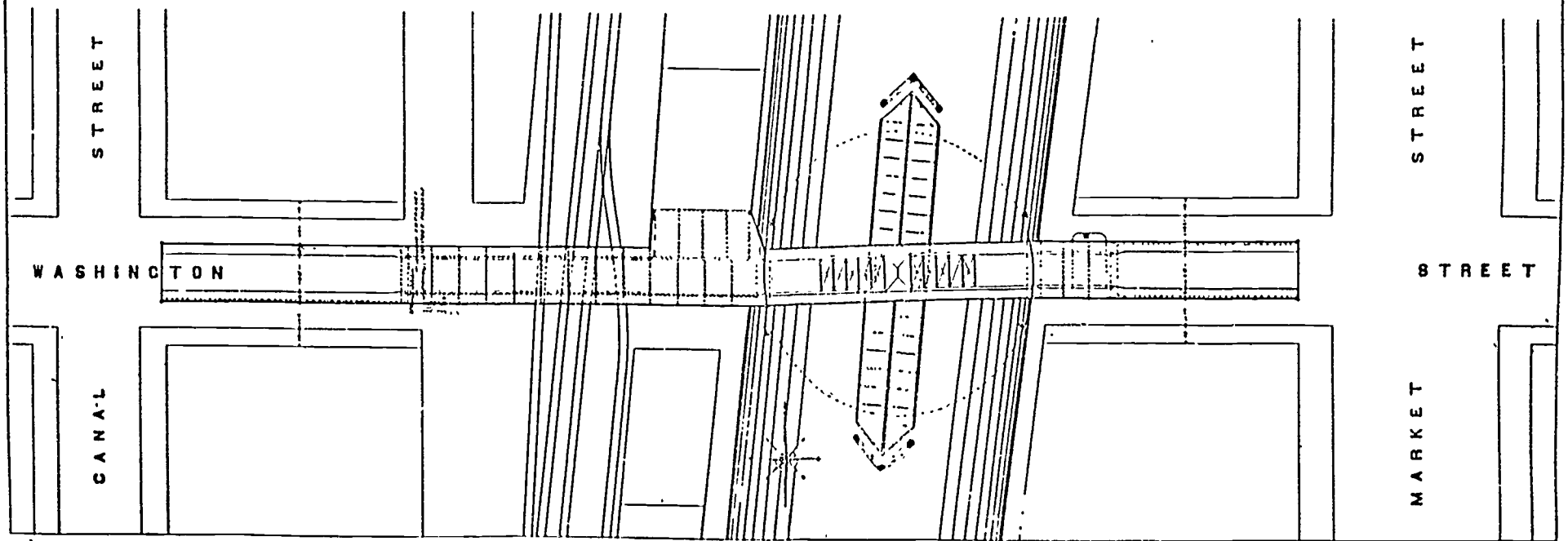
Chicago Public Works: A History (1971), 91-126.

Frank J. Piehl, "Our Forgotten Streetcar Tunnels," Chicago History IV:3 (Fall, 1975), 130-138.

Moving Traffic, 1890



PLAN OF THE
WASHINGTON STREET
BRIDGE AND VIADUCT,
CHICAGO ILL.
1890.
SCALE



PW:6 MOVING TRAFFIC, 1902

POINTERS

1. This is a typical cross-section between stations of a proposed subway for the central business district. It shows a wide range of public works facilities packed tightly into a public thoroughfare.

2. The street, sidewalk and the cable car on the surface level are shown. The author of the report (Bion J. Arnold) from which this cross-section comes, strongly recommended replacing the cable cars with trolleys. Also note the manhole, catch basin and fire plug.

3. Under the sidewalk and the street, on both sides, are a variety of sewers, gas mains, water mains, electrical wires and pneumatic tubes (used for message systems).

4. The subway and its tracks are immediately under the street. Below the subway is a tunnel for use by the Illinois Telephone and Telegraph Company.

QUESTIONS

1. How would this proposed subway keep traffic moving? How much of this proposal was put into effect? How did it help the development of the community?

2. Not every street in Chicago has a structure this complicated. But the same facilities are available in every area. How are the various public services brought to your home or school (transportation, fire protection, surface drainage, water supply, gas, electricity, sewer and telephone)?

3. Who would pay for building and maintaining the facilities picturred in the illustration? Would this be money well spent?

4. Note that the title of Arnold's Report refers to a "problem." Can all public works facilities be considered solutions to problems?

SOURCE

Bion J. Arnold, Report on the Engineering and Operating Features of the Chicago Transportation Problem (1902), plate no. 1.

READINGS

Chicago Public Works: A History (1971), 176-187 and passim.

Paul Barrett, "People in Public Works: Bion Joseph Arnold," American Public Works Association Reporter (September, 1982), 5-6.

PW: 6

Moving Traffic, 1902

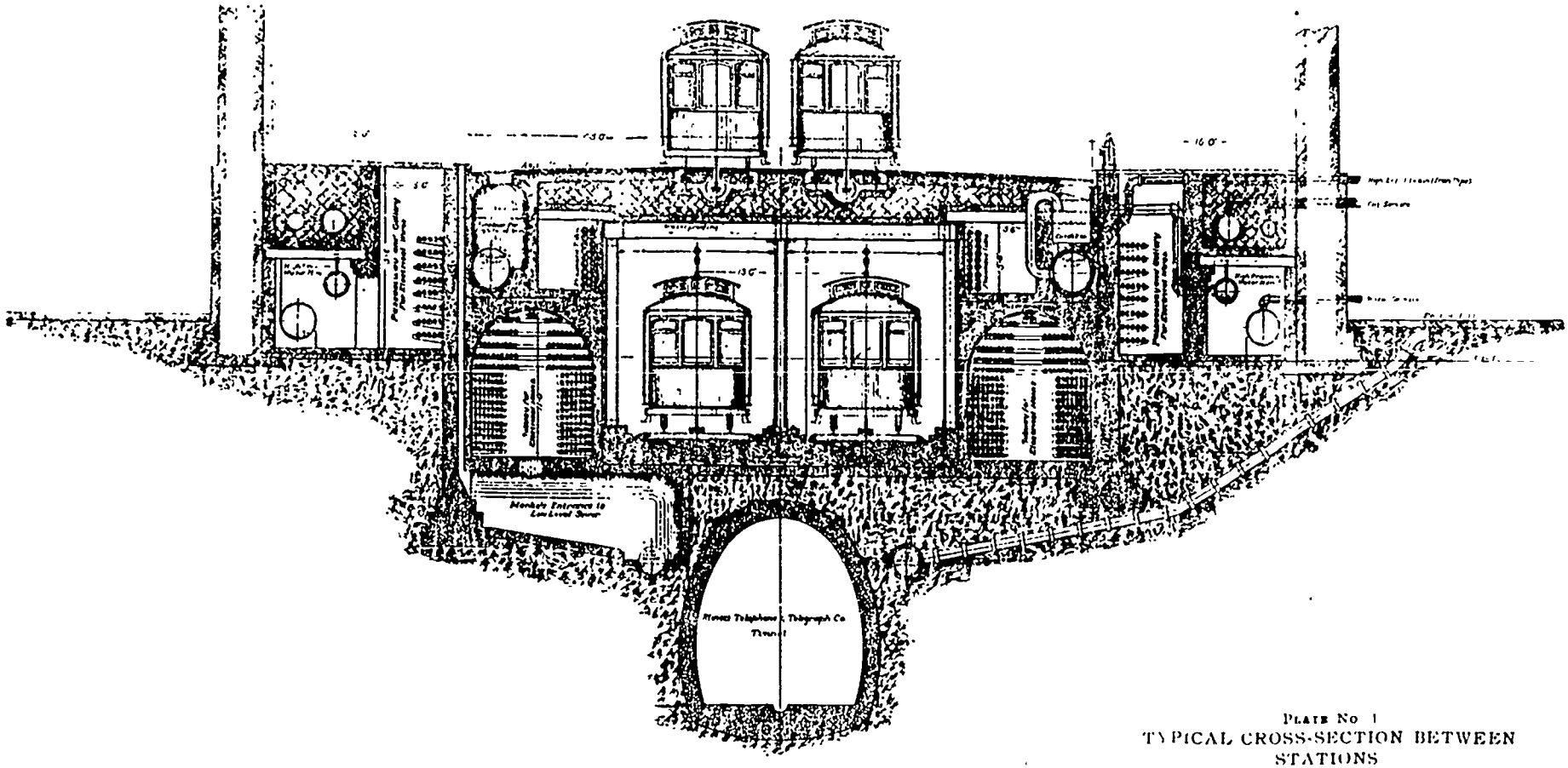


PLATE No 1
TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION BETWEEN STATIONS
FOR
PROPOSED STREET RAILWAY SUBWAY
OVER LARGE TUNNEL OF ILLINOIS TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH CO
ON STREET 80 FEET WIDE
ACCOMPANYING THE REPORT OF SION J. ARNOLD
TO THE
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO
1902

PW:7 MOVING THE HARBOR, 1908

POINTERS

1. A major source of traffic congestion in Chicago was the constant opening of bridges to let boats go through the river. A proposed solution was to build a new harbor out in Lake Michigan, thus keeping lake boats out of the river.

2. This proposal, dated 1908, suggested building a series of long piers into Lake Michigan near the present site of McCormick Place. Only one pier was eventually constructed, on the North side. Navy Pier is today seldom used as a port facility.

3. In 1908, little attention was given to automobile or truck traffic. Note how the map of the Chicago area uses the park and forest preserve systems for reference points, rather than streets and highways.

QUESTIONS

1. What types of public works facilities are represented on this map?

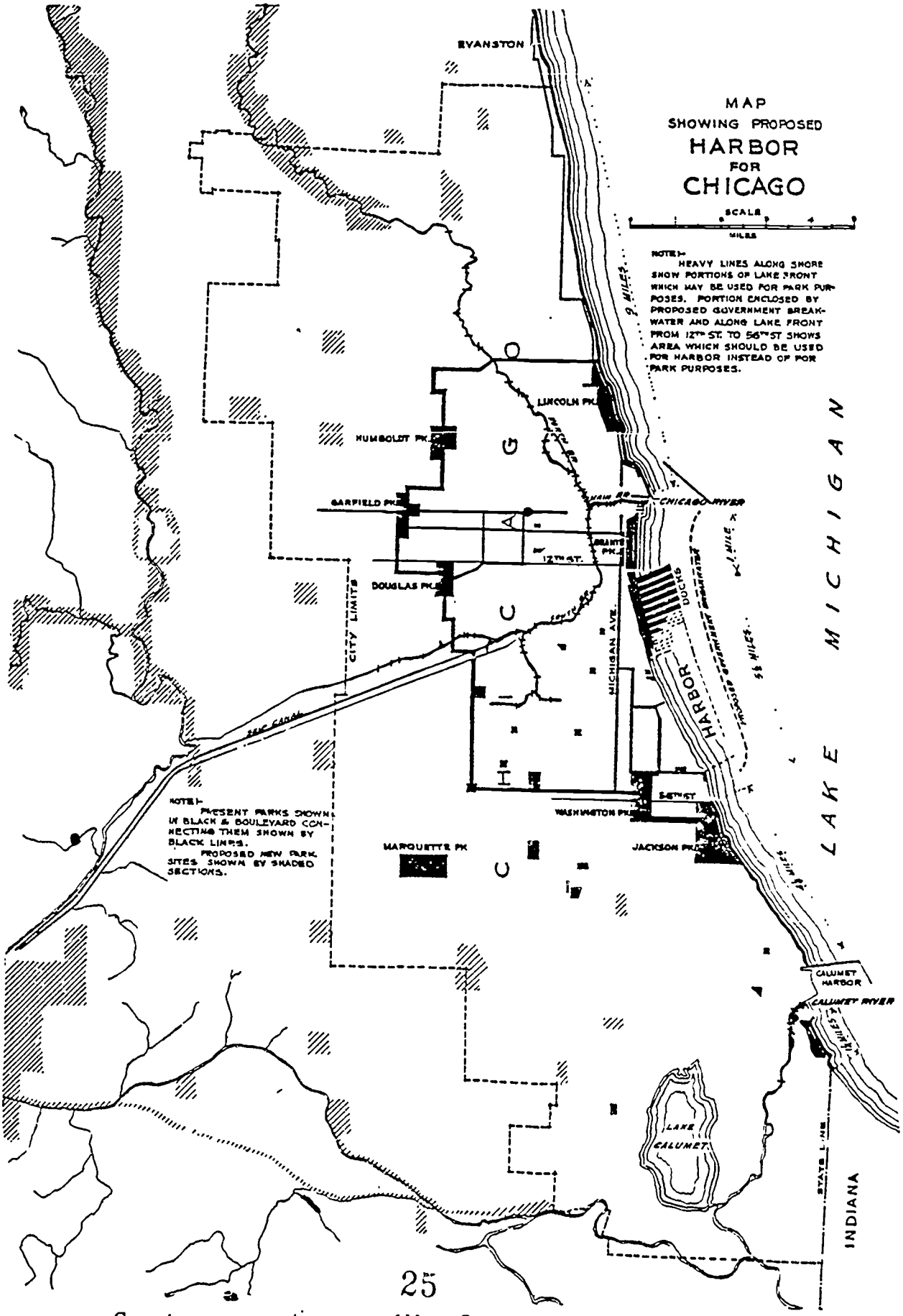
2. Why was an extensive harbor never constructed in Chicago on Lake Michigan?

3. Use this map to locate some other documents used in this exercise:
PW:2 The Bridgeport Lock
PW:3 The Chicago River-DesPlaines River profiles
PW:4 Humboldt Park
PW:5 Washington Street Bridge and Tunnel

SOURCE
Report to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Chicago by the Chicago Harbor Commission (Chicago: March, 1909), following p. 6.

READING
Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis (1969), 292-295 and passim.

Moving the Harbor, 1908



Copy of map accompanying message of Mayor Busse to the City Council, January 6, 1908.

PW:8 AND PW:9 THE WASTING WATER DEBATE, 1921

POINTERS

1. This article raises several important issues respecting any type of public works proposal. Who should pay, the individual user or the public as a whole? How will public health and welfare be affected? How do other communities address similar problems?

2. The editor suggested that residents could save millions of dollars nc matter what they decided on the water meter issue. "The method is simple. Correct plumbing faults and avoid the careless use of water."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the central point of debate in this issue?

2. How was the issue eventually decided?

3. Does the issue also apply to other types of public services such as highways, buses, parking facilities, drainage systems, parks and fire protection?

SOURCE
"Water Wastage Costs Us Millions Yearly," Cook County Real Estate Digest, 1:4 (December 5, 1921), 9, 19.

READING
F. Garvin Davenport, "The Sanitation Revolution in Illinois, 1870-1900," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LXVI:3 (Autumn, 1973), 306-32

COOK COUNTY REAL ESTATE DIGEST

The Official Organ of the Cook County Real Estate Board — CHICAGO

The Wasting Water Debate, 1921

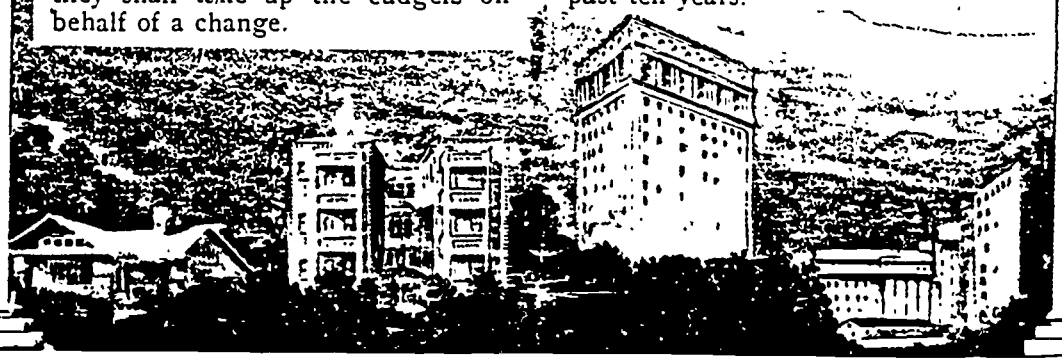
TWO-THIRDS of all the water pumped in Chicago is wasted, if statements printed in local newspapers and interviews with close students of the subject are accepted. Expressed in figures, the wastage will approximate something like one dollar for every man, woman and child in the city each year. The remedy is a general adoption in Chicago of measured service by the use of meters.

Roughly speaking, the above paragraph contains the salient points of the arguments that have been advanced in the past for the installation of a comprehensive system of water meters throughout this city. Whether or not the arguments are conclusive is not for the DIGEST to determine. It can only present its findings on both sides and leave the decision to its readers as to whether they shall take up the cudgels on behalf of a change.

Recent articles appearing in the public press indicate that wastage of water is the most vital problem now confronting the Department of Water of the City of Chicago. In the minds of most people the impression prevails that the vast body of water lying at the doors of the city forms an inexhaustible supply which can be drawn upon as freely as we take in the air we breathe.

Water Not as Free as Air

It is true, that man, by his limitations, can never hope to pump Lake Michigan dry, in spite of the squawks heard from other cities around the Great Lakes that Chicago's Drainage Canal is diverting such an enormous quantity of H_2O to the Gulf that an appreciable difference in the height of the water is discernible as a result of the Drainage Board's efforts in the past ten years.



A Publication *for* Real Estate Dealers, Brokers *and* Owners

Vol. 1, No. 4 December 5th, 1921 15 cents

Water Wastage Costs Us Millions Yearly

Digest Presents Both Sides to Argument for Adoption of Comprehensive System of Meters

While it is true that the quantity of water available is in no danger of giving out, yet Chicago cannot use that water without putting a certain quantity of coal back of every gallon that runs through its pipes. Other cities—notably Greater New York—gets every gallon by gravity and the quantity used does not alter the fixed charge or overhead of the Water Department. In cities where gravity is the power behind the flow of water, the greatest benefit gained through the use of water meters is through the check placed upon consumption. Denver, Los Angeles, and other mountain-fed towns, which have installed a certain limited source of supply based upon the expected requirements of those cities in the next ten or twenty-five years, found it imperative to devise means of limiting the use and wastage of the supply. This means was found in the adoption of the meter, which penalizes customers who use an undue share of the flow. There was no great outcry from the body of citizens in those towns when the plan was first broached, and the retention of the method indicates that it has been found to work successfully.

Chicago Well Fixed

Approximately, Chicago uses twice as much per capita as Greater New York. The actual figures are not at hand, but a generalization indicates that over 300 gallons per day are pumped here as against 110 in the metropolis. At times, during the stress of hot weather, the local department has pumped as high as 367 gallons per capita, one red letter day in the department being an occasion in which it sent a total of 1,040,000,000 gallons to the consumers, an amount large enough to float a dreadnaught.

Of this vast amount of water about one-fourth went for commercial purposes. The remainder was taken by the small consumer.

Some Citizens Careless

The causes of wastage are not hard to find. Among the more vital losses are those due to faulty plumbing; to old and leaky pipes; to wasteful use: to the running of water on hot days for the preservation of food (as a substitute for ice); and to many other minor reasons.

Authorities point to the fact that there is no excuse to be offered for the man who runs his sprinklers from dusk to the following dawn. He gets no benefit whatever from the excessive amount of water used. Those who are too poor to buy ice rightfully come under the head of the city's charitable department, and should be aided by being given free ice, a substitute that would be found really cheaper in the end to the tax-payer than to permit him to run power-driven water through his faucets.

In recent years many households have acquired washing machines and other similar appliances which are driven by water motors. There seems to be no reasonable excuse why citizens should use power without paying for it.

The foregoing covers the main arguments used by the advocates of water meter installation. The other side of the question presents points that cannot be dismissed without the most careful study. One can readily jump from the frying pan to the fire and that alternative is at all times one to be avoided.

Health of City Involved

Reports credit the Health Department with being the most serious opponent of any system that promises to curtail the use of water. Their argument is said to be that even if it does cost the tax-payer more under the present unlimited system yet the gain in public health is many times the amount that would be saved by a restricted use of water. One patient in the hospital costs the city more than millions of gallons of wastage.

Most of the diseases traceable to a restricted water usage are infectious and in many cases virulent. Typhoid, typhus, scarlet fever and other pests of modern civilization gain their greatest headway among those classes of people who do not take as much care of themselves as the well-to-do. A case of the epidemic variety west of the Stock Yards readily finds its way to the most exclusive mansion on the Lake Shore Drive and the good health of all classes of citizens is a matter of concern to every one of us.

The Health Department angle offers strong arguments against the adoption of the metering system and the record of that department of the City Hall entitles it to be heard on any matter on which it takes issue.

Financing Would Be Easy

There is still another side—that of finance. Installation of a comprehensive system of water meters in Chicago would approximate a cost of around $12,000,000. Figures published in the past year in the daily press name that amount. A bond issue for that amount could be retired, both as to principal and interest in five years, it is stated, AND THIS NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THE FIRST THREE YEARS WOULD BE NEEDED FOR ITS INSTALLATION.

This assertion is based upon the theory that the campaign that would be necessary to arouse public sentiment in favor of a bond issue would scare most of the wasteful consumers into fixing up their leakage immediately and checking their unnecessary consumption.

Summarized the problem presented has merits on both sides of the argument. It appears to be unanswerable from a dollars and cents argument. Is the Health Department argument a sufficient bar to the adoption of a comprehensive water meter system?

PW:10 PRIDE OF THE CITY

POINTERS

1. This is the cover of an advertising brochure for a garbage truck manufacturer. It emphasized that housewives and visitors usually represent the "major portion of your audience when your department collects waste materials from homes."

2. This is a vehicle of which the city can be proud. It has neat lines, "it moves about its work without noise and dust and without a chance of odors or any particle of its contents to escape."

3. A feature of the truck which the workers would appreciate is its low loading design which eliminated lifting garbage cans into the old open-bed trucks.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the woman in this picture? What is she doing?

2. In what ways is "City of Cleanliness" an appropriate slogan to put on the truck?

3. Compare this garbage truck with the ones used today. How are they similar? How do they differ?

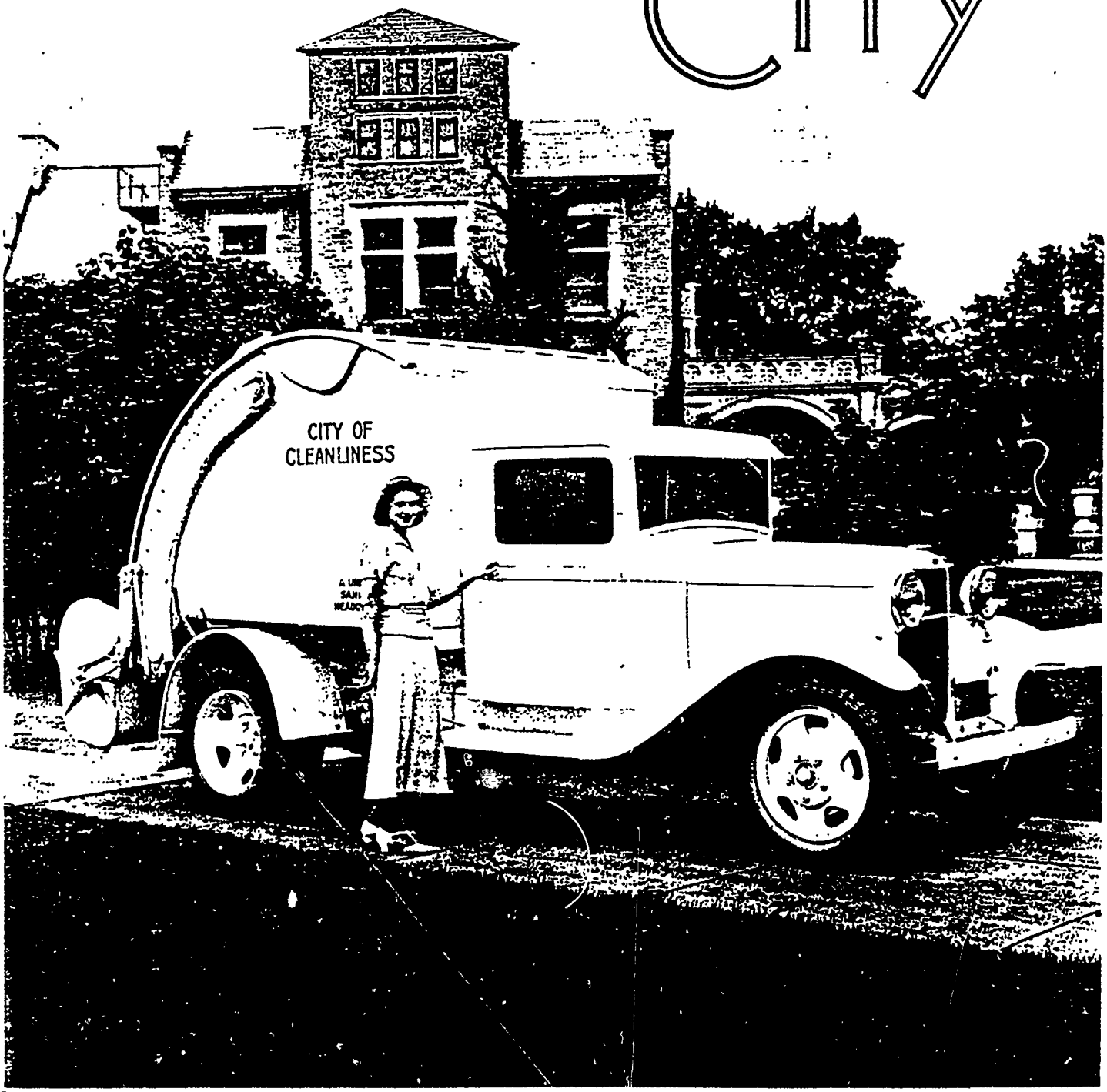
4. In what type of neighborhood is this picture taken?

5. Do any other public works facilities appear in the picture?

SOURCE
Advertising Leaflet (New York: The Elgin Corporation, 1942).

READING
Chicago Public Works: A History (1971), "Refuse Disposal," 145-154.

PRIDE *of the* CITY



The Chicago Neighborhood History Project is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities