

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition leaves a lasting legacy for the city and the nation: Its neo-classical buildings inspire cities across the country to build palatial museums in park locations. The lone survivor today houses the **Museum of Science and Industry**.



Bertha Palmer (Mrs. Potter Palmer) organizes an exhibition of French Impressionist paintings, exposing many Americans to the most avant-garde art of its day. In 1924, she donates her collection to **The Art Institute of Chicago**, where many of the paintings are still on view.

Living anthropological displays, gems, and taxidermy mounts and models from the Columbian Exposition form the core of the collections of **The Field Museum**.

Carl Akeley revolutionizes taxidermy, sculpting realistic bodies on which to drape animal skins, rather than stuffing them with the usual rags and sawdust. His life-like taxidermied horse (now gone) astounds visitors to the Fair.

The Fair constructs the world's first Ferris wheel—nearly twice as large and carrying nine times as many people as the brightly lit **Navy Pier Ferris wheel** (currently visible from downtown.)

Wallace Atwood, secretary of the Chicago Academy of Sciences (now **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**) builds and installs the *Atwood Celestial Sphere*. Widely regarded as the predecessor of the modern planetarium, the sphere is now on display at the **Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum**.

The Chicago Historical Society buys the 40-year-old “curiosity collection” of Chicago candymaker Charles Gunther, including *Lincoln's deathbed* (on view now at the renamed **Chicago History Museum**).



The **Field Museum** pioneers important innovations in natural history exhibitions, including taxonomically arranged taxidermy displays; the first large-scale collection of wax plant models, including environmental dioramas; and large-scale paintings showing fleshed-out dinosaurs in their natural environments. Many of these elements are still on view in exhibits such as *What is an Animal?*, *World of Birds*, *Plants of the World*, and *Evolving Planet*.

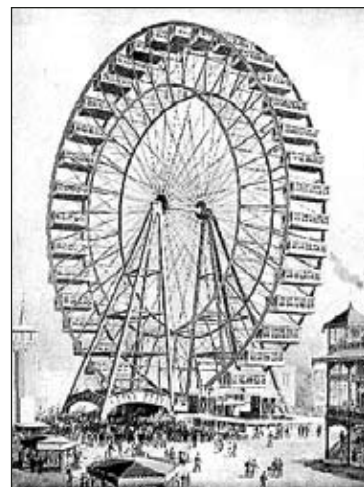
**The Museum of Science and Industry** opens the first corporate-sponsored exhibitions, conceived to promote “modern” products and goods—Commonwealth Edison and B.F. Goodrich among others. Now, look around for John Deere, United Airlines, SBC Ameritech, and more.



Anthropologist Franz Boas pioneers the first “life groups” at **The Field Museum**, displaying artifacts in their cultural context. One of Boas’ life groups (*Kwakiutl Home*) still survives in the *Northwest Coast and Arctic Peoples* hall (where films by Boas may also be seen).



Carl Akeley perfects the art of diorama to create his first major large-scale habitat series—*The Four Seasons*—on continuous display at **The Field Museum** since 1902.



Adler Planetarium opens as America's first planetarium (and the first in the western hemisphere.) Now named **Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum**, it is still the world's largest museum of astronomical history.

The **Museum of Science and Industry** creates one of the first major “immersive” rides and experiences—*The Coal Mine*—still open for adventure.

**Brookfield Zoo** opens as the first spacious “barless” European style zoo in the United States. The zoo's *Su-Lin*, the first panda in an American zoo, may now be visited in *World of Mammals* at **The Field Museum**.



Reflecting a surge of popularity for period rooms, the *Thorne Miniature Rooms* are constructed; they can be seen at **The Art Institute of Chicago**.

**John G. Shedd Aquarium** opens as the first inland aquarium with both freshwater and saltwater permanent displays. Visit the *Australian lungfish* named *Granddad*—he arrived in 1933 and is the oldest living fish in a public aquarium.



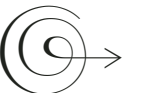
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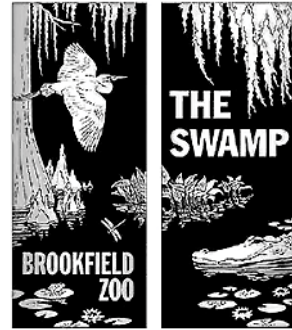


At **The Field Museum**, Malvina Hoffman's 105 sculptures of people from around the world (*The Races of Mankind*) are dispersed across the building to eliminate the context of racial hierarchy and classification. Some of the stunning bronzes are still on view. The *Pawnee Earth Lodge* is the first immersive museum environment to be built specifically to deliver programming. Its popularity led to a similar use for the *Maori House* in *Pacific Spirits*.

America's first African-American museum opens: the **DuSable Museum of African-American History** (originally the Ebony Museum). In this ethnic city, it joins others such as the **The Polish Museum of America** (1935) and the **Ukrainian National Museum** (1952). Reflecting growing economic and social empowerment in these diverse communities, more follow in the coming decades: **Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture**, **Swedish American Museum Center**, **Spertus Museum of Judaica**, **Latvian Folk Art Museum**, among others.

The Mexican Fine Arts Center opens. Renamed the **National Museum of Mexican Art** in 2006, it is an early example of an ethnic museum as community center. Others have since followed, including the **Irish-American Heritage Center** (1991), the **Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center** (1996), and the **Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial** (2004).





Spurred by new developments in learning psychology and successes at children's museums and science centers, **The Field Museum**, under the leadership of Michael Spock and Sandy Boyd, bring interactivity and visitor-friendly narratives into a mainstream natural history museum. See the products of this dynamic era by visiting *Inside Ancient Egypt*, *Traveling the Pacific*, *Animal Kingdom*, and *Africa*.



1980s – 1990s

2000s

Place-based exhibitions at zoos and aquariums pull a human cultural context into traditionally animal-based displays: *Amazon Rising* and *Wild Reef* at the **Shedd Aquarium**; *The Swamp* and *Habitat Africa—The Forest* at **Brookfield Zoo**.

Public sculpture meets the Chicago lakefront in **Millennium Park**, site of the Frank Gehry-designed *Pritzker Pavilion*, Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* ("The Bean"), and Jaume Plenza's interactive *Crown Fountain*.

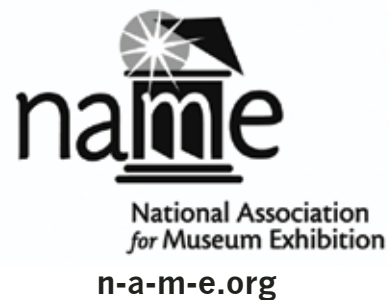


## Sweet Museum Home Chicago

### Still Making Exhibition History



- ★ Join the Big Red One and go straight to heaven—at **The First Infantry Division Museum** and the **Billy Graham Center Museum** in Wheaton
- ★ Funky fun (that's not really there)—at the **Holography Museum**
- ★ Largest collect of Mesopotamian artifacts outside of Iraq—at the **Oriental Institute Museum**
- ★ Inside the human body!—*Body Slices*, still on view after 60 years at the **Museum of Science and Industry**
- ★ Pierced by a meteorite!—1929 Pontiac coupe car seat, at **The Field Museum**
- ★ Visit Chicago's past—at **Clarke House**, **Glessner House**, and the **Second Presbyterian Church** in the **Historic Prairie District**



Chicago Museum Exhibitors Group  
CMEGChicago.org

## 100+ Years of Museum Exhibitions

### A Tour of Chicago's Milestones



Although Chicago's museums continue to grow and reinvent themselves, visitors can still find vestiges of many of the greatest moments in the evolution of American museum exhibitions. Take a tour—or several—of important milestones of the last 130 years of the art of the exhibition.

1870s

Chicago's first museum (the Chicago Academy of Sciences, founded 1857), housing one of the country's finest natural history collections, loses its entire collection in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. But today, the Academy lives on as the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum** where you can visit an old-fashioned "cabinet" of specimens in the *Wilderness Walk*.

