

A Note from
CHS President Gary T. Johnson

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November 1, 2005
Moving Forward with Renovations

Dear Friend:

On Monday, December 5, 2005, the Chicago Historical Society (CHS) will close its galleries temporarily to continue its renovation. CHS has been able to remain a working museum since spring 2005 when construction began on the east side of the museum. As we move forward, construction will begin on the west side, which will not allow for the galleries to remain open to the public. In addition, as we prepare to install new steel work in the coat check area to accommodate the installation of an authentic L car from the 1890s, Big Shoulders Café will also need to close beginning on November 1, 2005. With that said, the museum will not be closing its doors, as we will still be able to welcome visitors and scholars to the Research Center and Museum Store, as well as continue our [unique bus, walking, and L tours](#) that span the city allowing school groups and adult visitors to explore the beautiful and historic communities of Chicago. Finally, CHS's website continues to offer additional resources such as the [Chicago Daily News Collection](#) and [Archie](#), a database that catalogs many items that can be found within the Research Center's collection. We are particularly proud of the electronic [Encyclopedia of Chicago](#) that came online earlier this year in advance of the closing of our galleries. This is one of the richest online resources that tells the history of a city.

Our mission is to collect, exhibit, and interpret documents, images, and artifacts related to the history of the United States and metropolitan Chicago by expanding our audiences, being a leader in history education and being a premier research institution. Since 1856, the Chicago Historical Society has been a distinguished museum and research center showcasing the rich culture and diverse history of Chicago. In September 2006, CHS will be celebrating its 150th anniversary as a leading institution for this great city. We are Chicago's oldest cultural institution, but by the time of that celebration, we will present a new face to Chicago in our renovated galleries.

The Chicago Historical Society has displayed exhibitions on a wide range of interests over the past years, including Chicago Sports, Harold Washington, Norman Rockwell, and American Presidency. CHS plans to continue to create dynamic and interactive exhibitions in the future. We are currently undergoing a \$27.5 million renovation of the museum. By increasing our Chicago History Gallery from 6,000 to 16,000 square feet, CHS will provide greater access to historic artifacts and documents, their interpretations and stories, and enhance the visitor's experience by setting a new standard for history museums. In addition, visitors will experience for the first time our new Children's Gallery, which will engage



Chicago History Museum

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children in learning about Chicago through their five senses; a new Costume Gallery, which will house one of the nation's most extensive historical clothing collections; and a completely redesigned lobby and event space, which will allow visitors to view treasures from our collection and continue to engage in the rich history of our city.

After the renovation, the Chicago Historical Society will continue to be a national model for other history institutions. CHS will continue to serve as an authoritative resource for Chicago history research and education and is building on 150 years of history to create a new museum for Chicago history.

From all of us at the Chicago Historical Society, we look forward to seeing you in our new galleries in September 2006. We will continue to share news on the renovation project in the coming months. We hope to see you on our [tours](#) and at our [Research Center](#), as well as enjoying our online resources.



Gary T. Johnson
CHS President