From the outset, garden cemeteries were intended as civic institutions designed for public use. Before the widespread development of public parks, the rural cemetery provided a place for the general public to enjoy refined outdoor recreation amidst art and sculpture previously available only for the wealthy. And this was truly earnest. As early as 1861, when it was established, Chicago was making the park a public work to be paid for by the tax dollar. Several years later, the city would budget $25,000 to purchase land for a park near the city center, and then invest in the coming development of the park as a place for all people to enjoy. The park would be named Lincoln Park, and it would become one of the earliest examples of a public park in the U.S. To appreciate the importance of this, it is important to understand the role and significance of the park in the development of the city.

Chicagoans' need to create a place for recreation and enjoyment in an urban environment was met by the development of the park in the 19th century. As the city continued to grow and develop, so too did the need for space to enjoy nature and escape the hustle and bustle of urban life. The park became a symbol of the city's commitment to providing a place for people to come together, relax, and enjoy the beauty of nature.

The park's significance extends beyond its physical appearance and its role as a recreational space. It also represents a commitment to the cultural and historical development of the city. The park is home to numerous monuments and landmarks, each with its own unique story and significance. Some of these include the Lurie Garden, the Lincoln Statue, and the Serpentine Bridge, just to name a few. Each of these landmarks represents a different aspect of the city's history and culture, and they serve as a reminder of the rich heritage that Chicago holds.

In conclusion, the development of the park in Chicago was a significant event in the city's history. It represented a commitment to providing a public space for all people to enjoy, and it also served as a symbol of the city's cultural and historical development. Today, the park remains an integral part of the city's identity, and it continues to serve as a place for people to come together, relax, and enjoy the beauty of nature.
Richard Nickel (May 3, 1926-April 13, 1972)

Noted architectural photographer Richard Nickel ironically died in Louis Sullivan’s Stock Exchange building, then under demolition. Nickel spent over 20 years cataloging and collecting the works of Sullivan and other building designers—measuring and photographing Sullivan buildings. He set up his camera about the time buildings were coming down, and he returned to sites at night to salvage decorative bits and pieces he could carry off - terra cotta, stone, metal, castings. Through his efforts we have a much better record of some of the greatest buildings in Chicago architectural history.

Cyrus McCormick (Feb. 13, 1845-May 5, 1904)

McCormick was an industrialist and inventor of the first commercially successful mower - “the horse-drawn machine to harvest wheat - he was on the winning end of that and his father and others. He worked as the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, where he innovated marketing and distribution techniques. McCormick’s accomplishments have impacted agriculture around the world.


Marshall Field has been a journalist in Chicago and a Chicago historical figure. In 1865 he and Levi Leiter joined the merchandising firm of Potter Palmer. When Palmer withdrew, the firm became Field, Leiter and Co. In 1863 Field bought out his partners for $2,500,000, naming it Marshall Field and Company. In an age of inexorable merchandising, Field emphasized customer service, liberal credit, the one-price system, the privilege of returning merchandise, and the department-store restaurant. Field is credited with the phrases, “Give the lady what she wants,” and “The customer is always right.” Field’s estate was valued at $125,000,000. Among his benefactors were the University of Chicago and the Columbian Museum (later the Field Museum of Natural History). His grandson Marshall Field III (1895-1956) founded the Chicago Sun-Times (afterward the Chicago Sun-Times).

William Hulbert (Oct. 25, 1822-April 30, 1902)

Hulbert was part owner of the Chicago White Stockings, later to become the Cubs. He and Albert Spalding founded the National League in 1876. He was elected National League president and is credited with establishing negotiability, through opposition to betting, rummies and other abuses. His monument in the shape of a baseball is one of the most unique in Grant Park, and features the eight original cities that comprised the National League.

Allan Pinkerton (Aug. 27, 1831-Jan. 3, 1884)

One of America’s first undercover agents, Civil War scout and guardian of President Lincoln. Founded the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, providing detective services, capturing train robbers and counterfeiters. The agency had the world’s largest collection of mug shots and a criminal database. The agency’s logo, the All-Seeing Eye, inspired the term “Private Eye.” Near Pinkerton’s monument are memorials to two agents who helped foil an assassination attempt at Lincoln’s inauguration, Kate Warne (described by Pinkerton as America’s first female detective) and Timothy Webster (later hanged by the Confederacy as a spy).

László Moholy-Nagy (May 7, 1869–May 6, 1926)

In 1923, Moholy-Nagy left Germany and moved to Chicago, and became director of the New Bauhaus and later opened his own School of Design.

Howard von Doren Shaw (July 8, 1870-May 8, 1932)

Shaw’s privileged upbringing included the Harvard School (Chicago preparatory school), earning early acceptance Yale, architectural training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and extensive travel to Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and England, where he studied the masterworks of significant architecture. He returned to Chicago, working in the office of William Le Baron Jenney (inventor of the steel frame skyscraper).

Inez Clarke (Sept. 27, 1878–June 1, 1984)

This grave with the statue of a young girl is marked “Inez” and “Daughter of J. N. & M.C. Clarke.” For decades the girl’s identity had been in question. It is now all but certain that the girl is Inez Briggs, the daughter of Mary C. Clarke from a previous marriage. Legends of the girl have been numerous. One states she died when struck by lightning during a picnic or when locked outside... from this came another that the statue disappears during thunderstorms because Inez is so afraid.

Walter Newberry (Sept. 18, 1906–Nov. 6, 1980)

Real estate investor Newberry organized the Whig party in Illinois and helped Ogden become Chicago’s first mayor. He was president of Chicago’s first Young Men’s Library Association, a member of the Board of Public Education, and a major contributor to St. Paul’s Evangelical Church. An antebellum man, Newberry joined the Republican Party, and supported Abraham Lincoln for the Senate and the presidency. He donated to the Orphans’ Home Association and helped to found the Chicago Historical Society. After his death, his wishes were carried out and $2.1 million and some prime city property were donated to the Newberry Library, which became one of the world’s great research libraries.

Ernie Banks

Ernie Banks was the Cubs’ first African-American player and one of the first Negro League players to join the MLB without first playing in the minor leagues. It’s regarded as one of the greatest Cubs players of all time. In 2013, Ernie was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his contribution to sports.

About the Authors

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