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Pack up the Station Wagon for a Nostalgia-Fueled Road Trip

“The Great Midwestern Road Trip” opens June 26 at Elmhurst History Museum

ELMHURST, Ill. – This year, more than ever, it is predicted that Midwesterners will take to the road for their summer vacations in record numbers to find adventure and relaxation close to home. Undoubtedly, those well-known destinations that have lured tourists for generations will find visitors from neighboring states crossing their borders to gain respite from a year that has had many tumultuous turns. From lakeside resorts and rustic cabins in places “up north,” to Lake Michigan beach towns and journeys farther down the road such as the Dakotas, Ozarks, and Boundary Waters—it would seem that the road trip has made a comeback.

So, it is rather timely—after months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic—that the Elmhurst History Museum opens the new exhibit, **“The Great Midwestern Road Trip,”** in a year that the old-fashioned road trip is having a moment. **The exhibit is open from June 26**

through October 11, 2020, and it takes a nostalgia-fueled journey through the joys of taking to the open road for the classic Midwest vacation experience in the 1940s through the 1970s. The show explores some of the iconic settings Chicago area families visited and what they encountered along the way—from roadside attractions and tourist traps to memorable resorts and restaurants.

Throughout the exhibit, visitors will learn about Midwest vacations through themes such as the rise of car culture; development of the interstate highway system; trip planning and budgeting; the “Green Book” guide for Black travelers; roadside billboards and advertising; and making “pit stops” at waysides and gas stations. Family movies and vacation photos, replicas of neon road signs, and a 1950s-era gas station vignette evoke vivid memories. Guests can mark vacation spots they’ve visited over different decades on a large map, and view a camping and fishing equipment display. Due to restrictions, the exhibit will feature “no-touch” displays; however, visitors will have the opportunity to take a 1946 vacation quiz and play road trip bingo to interact with the displays.

Road Trip Artifacts and Memorabilia

Some of the fascinating collectibles and curiosities featured in “The Great Midwestern Road Trip” exhibit include:

- Mid-century travel brochures, posters and advertisements;
- Kitschy souvenirs, from aprons to ash trays, commemorating tourist destinations across the Midwest;
- Vintage cameras and equipment from the Elmhurst History Museum collection;
- Eight-millimeter films, post cards and photos from family vacations shared by community members.

New Online Reservations and Visitation Procedures

In response to the Restore Illinois COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and to protect visitors and staff, the Elmhurst History Museum has instated some new procedures for visiting the museum that will be in place until further notice:

- **Online reservations are required and can be made at elmhursthistory.org.**
- Visit duration is limited to one hour.
- Only 15 guests per hour, maximum of five people per group. For larger groups, please call the museum to make arrangements at 630-833-1457.

- All patrons must wear face masks and maintain a six-foot social distance at all times.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be readily available.
- Rigorous cleaning protocols have been enacted and high-touch points will be cleaned frequently by staff.

Upcoming Exhibit-Related Programs

Although Elmhurst History Museum's typical summer schedule has been disrupted, the museum staff has planned a number of engaging online learning experiences related to "The Great Midwestern Road Trip" this summer that will allow safe social distancing.

Travel Photo Contest

Ongoing June 1-August 31 FREE

Share memories of past vacations by participating in an online Travel Photo Contest from **June 1-August 31, 2020**. E-mail a digital copy of a favorite/best travel photo with name, email, phone number, and a brief description of where the photo was taken to: ehmprograms@elmhurst.org.

Only one admission per person. Top three entries will win a special gift.

Location: Elmhurst History Museum, 120 E. Park Ave., Elmhurst

More Info: elmhursthistory.org or call 630-833-1457

Online Lecture: *Along the Way: Midwest Waysides and Rest Stops*

Sunday, June 28 FREE

Access pre-recorded program starting 6/28 at elmhursthistory.org (Programs page)

Join Illinois historian Joanna Dowling for a trip through the Midwest via some of the region's lesser-recognized roadside rest stops and waysides along the heartland's highways.

Presented by: Elmhurst History Museum, 120 E. Park Ave., Elmhurst

More Info: elmhursthistory.org or call 630-833-1457

Facebook Live Gallery Talk: *The Great Midwestern Road Trip*

Sunday, July 12

Time: 12:00 p.m. FREE

Access: EHM Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/elmhursthistorymuseum/>

Tune in via Facebook Live as Elmhurst History Museum's curator of exhibits, Dan Bartlett, shares in-depth details about the exhibit and answers questions about "The Great Midwestern Road Trip" exhibit.

Presented by: Elmhurst History Museum, 120 E. Park Ave., Elmhurst

More Info: elmhursthistory.org or call 630-833-1457

Online #TBT Lecture: *Take Your Best Travel Photos*

Thursday, July 23

FREE

Access pre-recorded program starting 7/23 at elmhursthistory.org (Programs page)

Learn how to take great vacation photos in this online program with professional photographer, Kimberly Felten, who will share some of her best photos and discuss useful tools and techniques to take memorable travel pictures.

Presented by: Elmhurst History Museum, 120 E. Park Ave., Elmhurst

More Info: elmhursthistory.org (Programs page) or call 630-833-1457

Road Trip Virtual Trivia Night

Friday, August 7

Time: 7:00 p.m. start Cost: \$10 per team

Registration required: elmhursthistory.org (Programs page)

Dust off your road trip memories and join in on a Zoom trivia night celebrating "The Great Midwestern Road Trip" exhibit. Teams will gather virtually for three rounds of fast-paced road trip trivia covering movies, music, geography and more. Space is limited to 10 teams (up to 6 players each).

Presented by: Elmhurst History Museum, 120 E. Park Ave., Elmhurst

More Info: elmhursthistory.org (Programs page) or call 630-833-1457

Online Book Discussion: *Travels with Charley in Search of America*

Thursday, August 27

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. FREE

Registration Required: elmlib.org/athome

Join a live Zoom discussion with Elmhurst Public Library of John Steinbeck's 1962 novel chronicling the author's memorable road trip across the country with his French poodle, Charley, as he reflected on America's character. Appropriate for adults.

Presented by: Elmhurst History Museum and Elmhurst Public Library

More info: elmhursthistory.org (Programs page) or call 630-833-1457

More program information can be found on the Elmhurst History Museum's web site at elmhursthistory.org in the programs section or call 630-833-1457.

Dig the suitcases out of the attic and pack up the station wagon; summer is here and it's time to embark on "The Great Midwestern Road Trip." The exhibit runs from June 26 through October 11, 2020 and is sponsored by Community Bank of Elmhurst and Feze Roofing.

The Elmhurst History Museum is located at 120 E. Park Ave. in downtown Elmhurst. Exhibition hours are Sunday and Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. General admission is free, and limited free parking is available. For reservations and the latest exhibit and program information, please visit elmhursthistory.org or call (630) 833-1457.

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The Elmhurst History Museum is a department of the City of Elmhurst supported by the Elmhurst Heritage Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit organization. The Museum is located at 120 E. Park Ave. in downtown Elmhurst. General admission is free. For more information, call 630-833-1457 or visit our web site at elmhursthistory.org.