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Popular Chicago Historian Walovich Debunks Myths and Mysteries About the Great Chicago Fire

ELMHURST, IL — Of all the catastrophic events that have taken place in Chicago’s history, none is more infamous than the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. This October, the City of Chicago takes a look back at the fire after 150 years to consider its impact on the growing city and its long-lasting legacy.

If there’s one thing for sure, it is that 150 years later, no one really knows for certain what happened on that warm October night, when a blaze of epic proportions erupted in Catherine O’Leary’s barn on Chicago’s near southside. Within two days, one-third of the city was decimated by the raging flames leaving more than 17,400 buildings destroyed, 300 people dead, and 100,000 residents homeless.

As Chicago marks the 150th anniversary, many questions still surround the inferno. Was Mrs. O’Leary’s cow, Daisy, the real culprit? Did the nefarious beer deliveryman known as Daniel “Peg Leg” Sullivan play a role? To shed some light on these long-standing myths and rumors, the Elmhurst History Museum welcomes Chicago historian and tour guide, Mr. Al Walovich, with his presentation “Daisy Didn’t Do It: The Truth Behind the Great Chicago Fire.”

The program will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 14, 2021 at Elmhurst City Hall's Council Chambers, located at 209 N. York Street in Elmhurst on the second floor. The program is free to members of the Elmhurst Heritage Foundation and \$5 for non-members. Advance registration is required and can be made at www.elmhursthhistory.org in the programs section. Free on-site parking is available.

Walovich will delve into the history, facts and lies that surround the Great Chicago Fire, and share some of the sites linked to the fire and some of the relics left behind. He is a native Chicagoan who has presented tours and programs on Chicago history and architecture for more than 25 years. His popular tours have included Chicago cemetery tours, the Great Chicago Fire, and the World's Columbian Exposition and he is a seasoned guide on Chicago River tours.

For more information and registration for the "Daisy Didn't Do It" program, go to www.elmhursthhistory.org or call 630-833-1457.

The Elmhurst History Museum is located at 120 E. Park Avenue in downtown Elmhurst. Museum hours are Sunday and Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, and limited free parking is available.

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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 elmhursthhistory.org.