

## Hyde Park Historical Society Headquarters

5529 S Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637

### Short Intro:

The Hyde Park Historical Society, located on 5529 S Lake Park Avenue, is a non-profit volunteer-run organization created to preserve, record, and create public interest in local history. The organization was founded in 1975 and it has been housed in a restored cable car station since 1980. The Hyde Park Historical Society holds monthly open houses, events, and special guest lectures to inform and engage the Hyde Park community.

### Local History/Background for Teachers' Prep:

Any and every town needs a historical society, for without this vital community organization, local history is bound to get lost in the whims of daily life. The Hyde Park Historical Society was created to fulfill this purpose in 1975. Originally it was the Hyde Park-Kenwood Historical League. Clyde Watkins, Tom Jensen, Leon Despres, Jean Block, Victoria Ranney, Thelma Dahlberg, Muriel Beadle, and many others were involved in securing the old cable car waiting station as the headquarters of this organization.

The Chicago City Street Railway constructed this building in the 1890s as a waiting area for the cable car staff or the passengers, the exact details of the use are unclear. Then, from 1989-1970s, the building was used for two successive restaurants. Eventually, it was being used as a storage shed, at which point the Historical Society decided to purchase it. **John Vinci (b. 1937)**, a Chicago based architect, who works on historic building preservation was hired to do restore the cable car waiting room to its original condition. Because there was no clear evidence of what this building used to look like in its original condition, it was restored by looking at what other cable cars during the time would have looked like. In this way, the existence of the historical society and the reconstruction of this building portray the paradox of how we both construct and preserve the past.

The Hyde Park Historical Society now serves variety of functions, organizing events for the local community to engage with their history and archiving at the Regenstein Library the sources they receive from the community. Currently, the Society is working on the Oakwoods Cemetery, an oral history project, and preservation.

**Images:**



“Hyde Park Neighborhood”

Image Sourced from The University of Chicago Photographic Archive.  
<https://photoarchive.lib.uchicago.edu/db.xqy?one=apf7-04715-001.xml>.



“Hyde Park Neighborhood”

Image Sourced from The University of Chicago Photographic Archive.  
<https://photoarchive.lib.uchicago.edu/db.xqy?one=apf7-04716.xml>.

**Videos (Pre-Field Trip Prep):**

A History of The Hyde Park Historical Society Headquarters by Mallory Price  
<https://youtu.be/pRPOvvJoBIg?si=dEydWSViOobbF1TF>

### **Questions for Discussion:**

- Why do we need to preserve and record local history?
- What would you do if you volunteered for the Hyde Park Historical Society?

### **Suggested Activities:**

- **Monthly Open House!**  
If the field trip can be planned on Hyde Park Historical Society's Monthly Open House dates (<https://www.hydeparkhistory.org/upcomingevents>), students will get a chance to tour the inside of the location, interact with community members, and see how the space is used in real life.  
Alternatively, a specific tour can also be requested by contacting the society at [Info@HydeParkHistory.org](mailto:Info@HydeParkHistory.org) or 773-493-1893.
- **Archival Research Practice!**  
A visit to the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago—where Hyde Park Historical Society's archives are housed—is a good opportunity to introduce students to primary source research. A collection of photos, maps, and other sources from the Hyde Park Historical Society's archives can be requested for viewing, which the students can analyze and compare. At the end of this 15-20 minute analysis of one source, students can share their findings with the entire group. This activity will include an introduction to primary sources and their use before the field trip, as well as, a post-trip reflection and what students would like to learn more about through the archives.
- **Color Hyde Park!**  
The Hyde Park Historical Society releases one new coloring page each month featuring a location on one side and its significance on the other side. Students can color in these sheets and discuss the architectural wonders of the locations, while simultaneously doing a fun activity allowing them to explore their creativity. The coloring sheets are available here: <https://www.hydeparkhistory.org/colorhydepark>.

### **Walking Tour Video or Request a Tour from HPHS:**

### **Further Resources:**

Hyde Park Historical Society's Website

<https://www.hydeparkhistory.org/>

Library of Congress: Getting Started with Primary Sources

<https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/>