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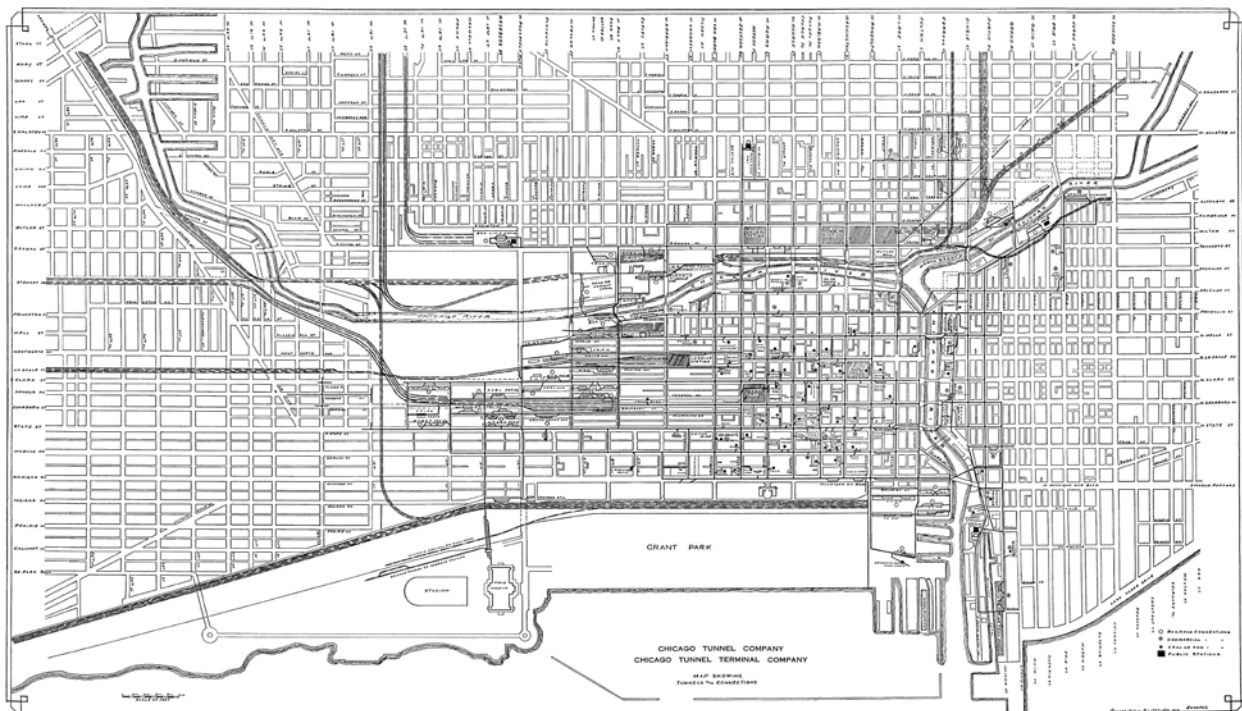
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Chicago's Underground Freight Railway Network.

In 1899, Illinois Telephone and Telegraph laid telephone cables through Chicago by building a network of underground tunnels. A narrow gauge railway was laid to assist with excavating the tunnels and installing the cables but the system was quickly adapted and used as a means for transporting freight between public stations, basements and elevator shafts.



The Illinois Telephone and Telegraph Company had built the first 26 miles of concrete tunnel by 1905, after which construction work became the responsibility of the Illinois Tunnel Company. Despite strike action in 1908, the company expanded the subterranean network to 60 miles before the cost of construction left it bankrupt by 1909.





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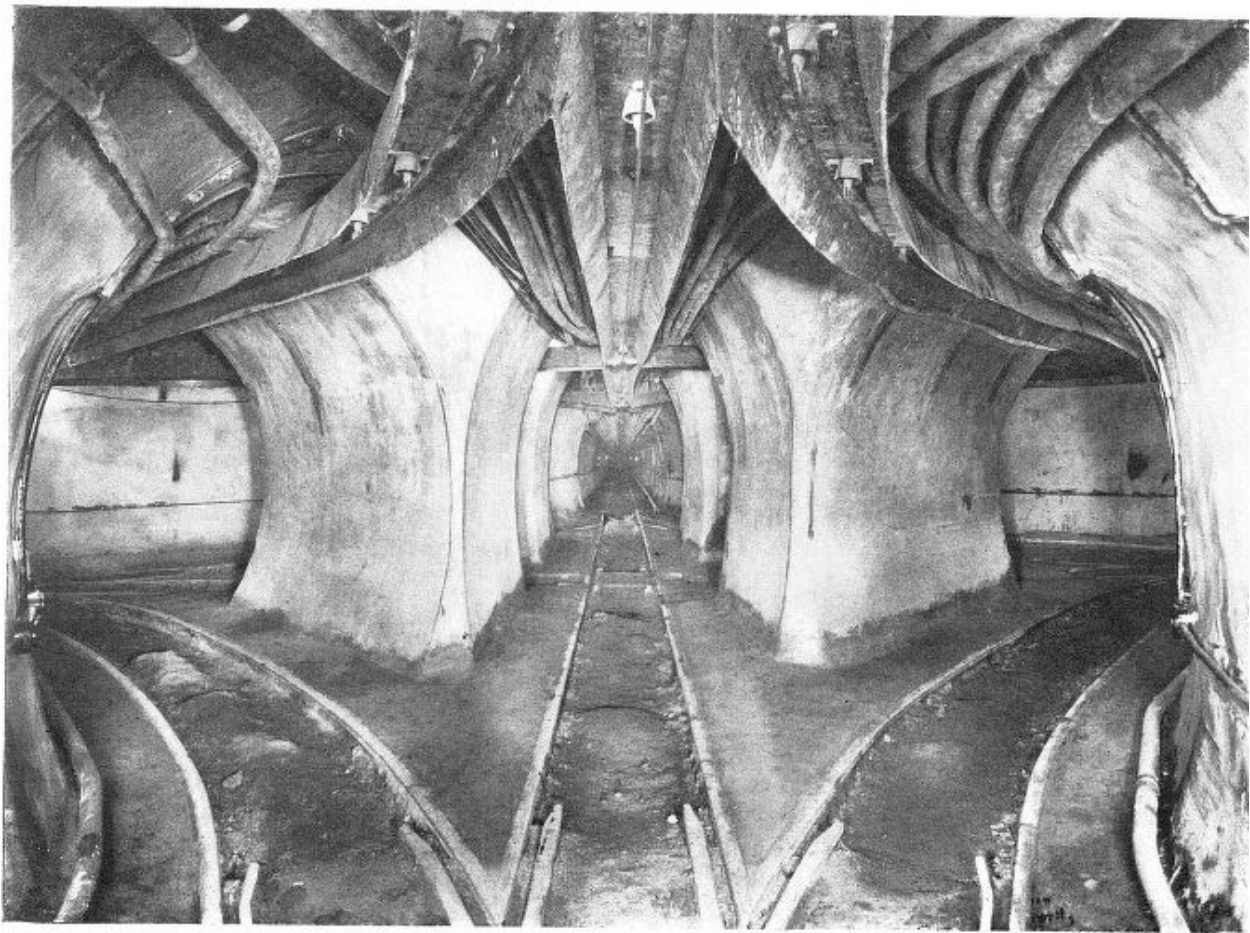
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Interestingly, the constant underground air temperature of 55° led to a second line of business for the subterranean network – air conditioning. Several theatres above, all owned by the same company, purchased tunnel air to keep audiences cool. The same air was similarly used during winter, requiring less energy to heat than colder outdoor air.



TYPICAL STREET INTERSECTION—CHICAGO.

Almost a century after construction, the doomed tunnels had helped facilitate the Chicago Flood of 1992, despite chief engineer George W. Jackson's original intention that measures to prevent flooding be maintained through the use of portable bulkheads. The tunnels were ultimately drained at enormous expense. Chicago's underground freight network was the main inspiration for London's Post Office Railway (Mail Rail).



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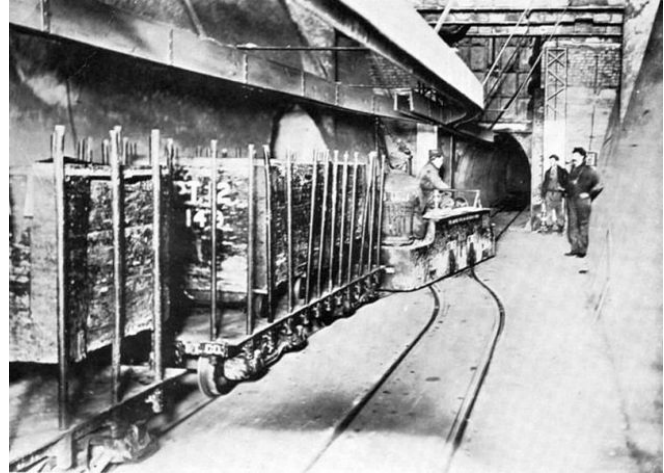
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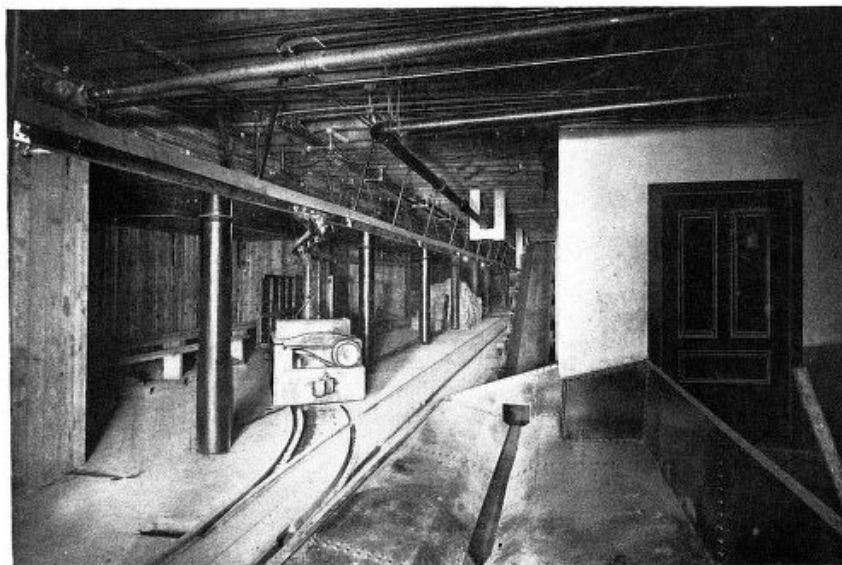
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Chicago's Great Flood

On the April 13, 1992, the Chicago River mysteriously sprung an underground leak which flooded subways and basements across the Chicago Loop with up to 40 feet of fishy water. People were evacuated and power went off while a mass of debris quietly began swirling in the river, directly above a breach in Chicago's historic underground freight railway network.



Lying 40 feet underground, the railway network once linked four public stations and many large businesses in The Loop. Over the years, the tunnels supplied telecommunications, delivered coal, transported mail (inspiring London's Mail Rail) and took excavation debris to the shore of Lake Michigan where it was used to create the land under Grant Park, Soldier Field and McCormick Place.



TYPICAL DISTRIBUTING STATION—CHICAGO.



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In the early twentieth century, buildings were actually constructed with deep foundations in order to access these handy waterproofed tunnels directly (and possibly illegally). Unfortunately, after the tunnels were abandoned in 1959, the redundant access shafts were mostly bricked-up and forgotten about. At least, this was the case until the early hours of the 13th when the basements of City Hall, The Merchandise Mart, Chicago Hilton and Towers, the Federal Reserve Bank and many other business district buildings and subways began to flood.



It was decided that the breached section of tunnel underneath the river had been slowly deteriorating under pressure created from a piling being driven too close to the tunnel wall during remedial work on the Kinzie Street Bridge back in 1991. Allegedly, urban



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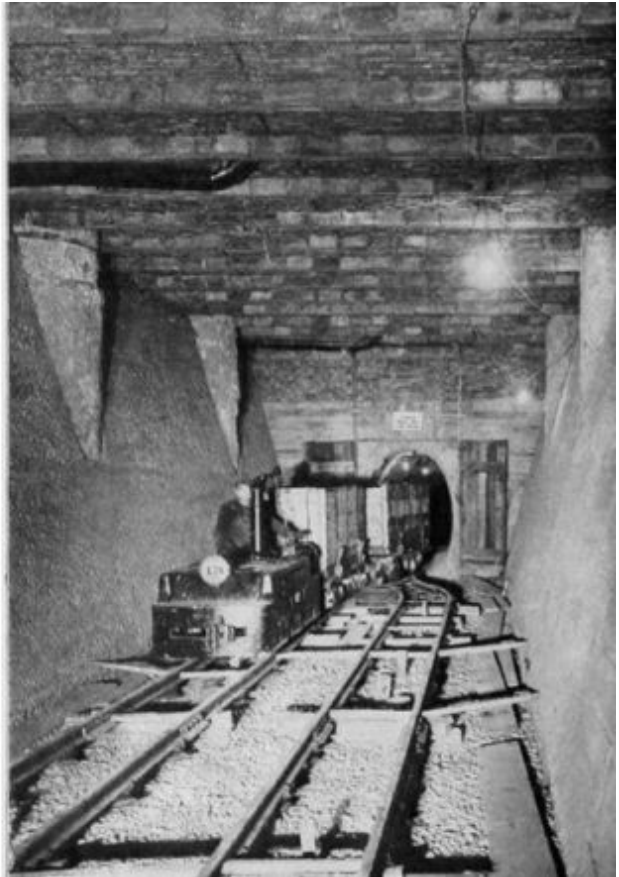
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explorers had initially noticed a small leak inside the tunnel, which had been reported during a cable inspection, but there was a delay in deciding who would fix it.



Chicago's resulting flood (or 'leak', as it was called for insurance purposes) caused around \$1.9 billion worth of damage. After attempts to close the breach by dropping rocks from above, the tunnels were finally drained, drilled and plugged. To prevent further problems, the section underneath the river was eventually sealed off from the rest of the network and the tunnels have since been secured after a terrorist threat.



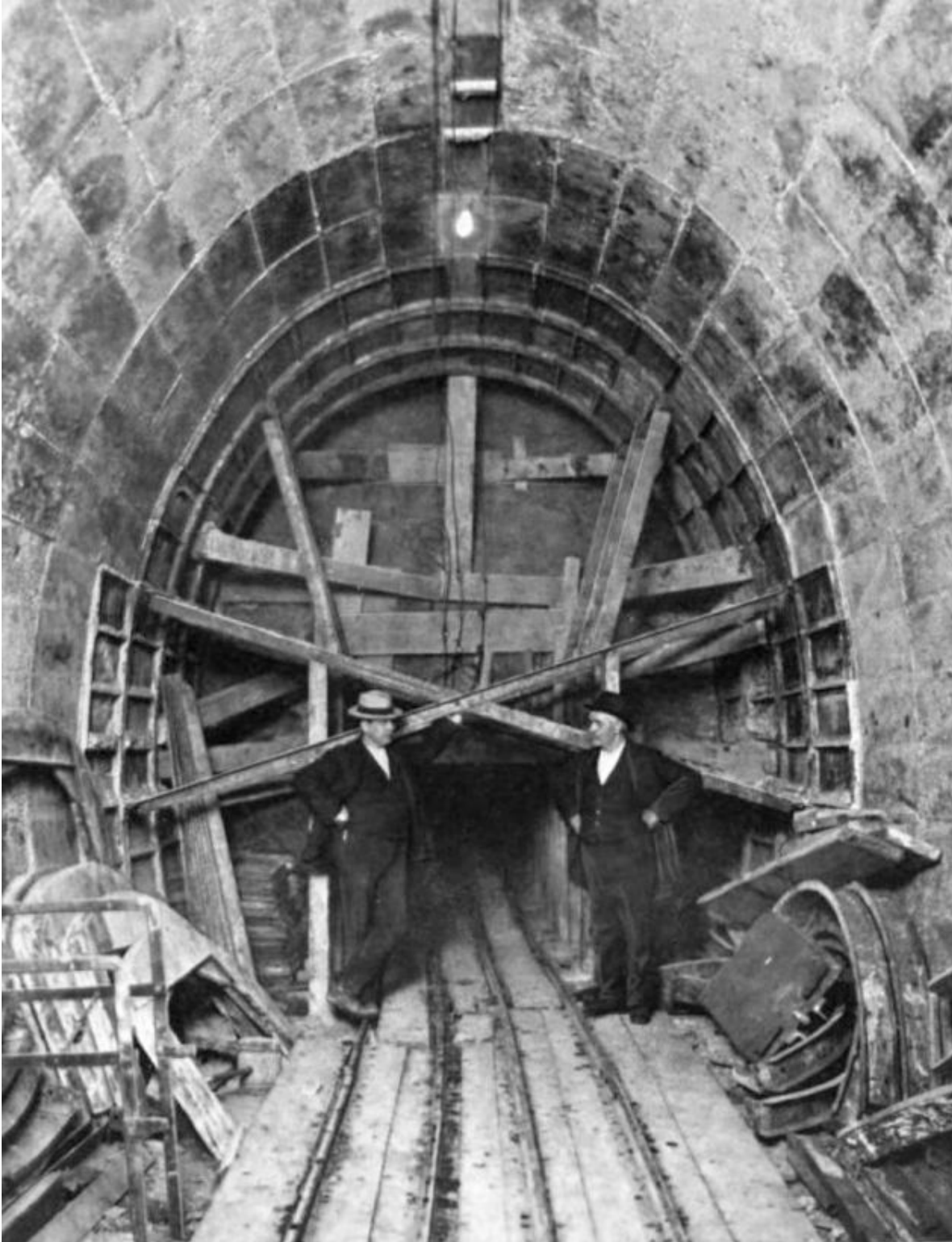
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