Weird Illinois by Mark Sceurman

Covers The State

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My Personal Review:
Owing to the fact that most Illinois people live in the Chicago area, and that is where I am from, my review is limited to this region.

Famous buildings discussed include the Hull House. One of the unusual buildings featured in the book is the replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and located in suburban Niles. One of the eye-catching restaurants included is the Superdawg. It is a 1950's-style hot dog stand, located at the corner of Milwaukee and Devon, on the far northwest side of Chicago. First opened in 1948, it features the likeness of a boy and girl hotdog perched high above the restaurant. (I remembered it from my 5 year-old self being driven to my grandmother’s burial in 1960).

Some crime scenes are included, notably the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, and the site where John Wayne Gacy, dressed like a clown, murdered over 30 men and older boys, and buried their bodies in his basement. It is said that it took a mysteriously long time for grass to begin growing again at the site.

A number of cemeteries are featured. But ghost stories also originate from other areas associated with death, especially mass death. When a large airliner crashed at O'Hare Airport in May of 1979, killing over 270 people, there were reports of strange lights in the field at night, and knocks on the doors of locals. No one was there when the owners came to the doors.

The authors missed a chance to include the Our Lady of the Angels School fire of 1958, in which 92 children and 3 teachers perished. The school was subsequently rebuilt, and is no longer a Catholic school. But, over the decades since the tragic fire, there had been, from the new school building, occasional reports of mysterious sounds of children screaming.
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