

For Richard Edwards's Chicago directories issued around the time of the October 1871 Great Fire, the exact period of data collection depends on which specific volume or edition is referenced:

1. Edwards' Annual Directory for 1871 (Published January 1872)

Although bearing "1871" on the title page, this edition functioned as the immediate post-fire directory.

- **Data Collection Period:** The city canvass was conducted and completed in **November 1871**, immediately after the fire.
- **Publication Date:** January 6, 1872.
- **Context:** Following the October 8–10 conflagration, prior pre-fire survey data was rendered obsolete due to massive displacement. Edwards deployed canvassers in November to re-map survivor addresses, businesses, and temporary offices, producing a condensed emergency directory.

2. Edwards' Directory of the Inhabitants for 1872 (The 15th Annual Edition)

This was the full-scale, formal 1872 annual volume issued later in the rebuilding year.

- **Data Collection Period:** The primary canvas was carried out across the **spring and early summer of 1872** (May–July 1872).
- **Publication Date:** Mid-August 1872 (announced August 16, 1872).
- **Context:** This volume reflected the rapid reconstruction phase of the city, capturing many businesses that had relocated back into temporary or newly built permanent structures in the central district.

3. Edwards' Chicago Directory Extra Edition (1872–1873)

- **Data Collection Period:** Data was gathered up through **January 20, 1873**.
- **Publication Date:** February 1873.
- **Context:** Because people and businesses were constantly moving back to rebuilt locations throughout late 1872, Edwards published a supplementary "Extra Edition" directory specifically to catch these updates.

If you are examining a resident or business listed in an **1872** directory entry, the address represents where they were located in **late autumn 1871** (if using the January 1872 edition) or **mid-1872** (if using the August 1872 edition).

That is a great observation. In Chicago's pre-1909 numbering scheme, the block between **S. Desplaines Street** and **S. Halsted Street** was indeed an unusually long block (spanning what would normally be two standard city blocks today). Because it ran continuously from approximately house number 180 up through the 250s along Taylor Street, both **199 W. Taylor** and **239 W. Taylor** were located within that same single block.

Even with both addresses sharing this same long block between Desplaines and Halsted, **199 W. Taylor was still not burned in the Great Chicago Fire.**

The Fire's Perimeter Along That Block

The fire's westernmost boundary in the West Division ran along **Jefferson Street** (one block east of Desplaines).

- **East of Desplaines (around Jefferson/Clinton/Canal):** The structures were completely destroyed as the fire swept northeast toward the river.
- **West of Desplaines (including the entire Desplaines-to-Halsted block):** The flames were stopped before crossing Desplaines Street. The structures along this entire stretch of Taylor Street—both at #199 and #239—remained fully intact.

What the Same-Block Move Suggests

Since both addresses survived the fire and were located on the exact same block, moving from #199 to #239 was essentially a move a few doors down the street (about 150–200 feet further west toward Halsted).

Rather than fleeing fire destruction, an intra-block move like this in post-fire 1871–1872 typically points to very practical, immediate factors:

1. **Building Type / Size:** Moving from a smaller frame apartment or rear cottage at #199 to a larger flat or storefront at #239.
2. **Post-Fire Tenancy Changes:** Landlords on unburned blocks frequently repurposed buildings, raised rents, or sold properties in late 1871 as hundreds of displaced families rushed into the West Side looking for shelter.
3. **Change in Landlord / Lease Terms:** Securing a better monthly rate or better living space without having to leave their immediate neighborhood, parish, or local network of neighbors.