

ALTHOUGH MOST CHICAGOANS ENTHUSIASTICALLY GREETED THE END OF World War I in November 1918 and the subsequent return of local soldiers, they knew that the future held many unanswered questions. The influenza epidemic that attacked the city—and the world—had not been contained. Many had already perished; by the time the epidemic was declared finished, more than 20,000 Chicagoans would die. By mid-1919, production had already begun to decline, and employment along with it. Returning soldiers worried about whether they could reclaim their jobs. African Americans who had arrived during the war as part of the Great Migration feared that white soldiers would in-

deed claim jobs—and at their expense. And between 1919 and 1921 a brief spurt of immigration from Europe would add more newcomers to the mix.

Race and employment were the tinderboxes in Chicago in 1919. On July 27 a stone-throwing incident between white and black residents at the 29th Street beach led to the drowning of Eugene Williams, a young African American swimmer. His death erupted into a riot that ultimately claimed the lives of 23 blacks and 15 whites and left 537 wounded or maimed. In September, steelworkers around the country declared a strike that closed factories in Chicago and its suburbs and led to violent confrontations and large-scale arrests in Gary.

1919

January: Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition) ratified

February: First Pan-African Congress, organized by W. E. B. DuBois, meets in Paris

June: Nineteenth Amendment (Woman Suffrage) sent to states for ratification

a *Background:* Soldiers parade through Gary, Indiana, while strikers look on. The steel industry's notoriously long hours and the antiunion policies of judge Elbert Gary, chairman of U.S. Steel's board of directors and the town's namesake, helped make the strike long and bitter. The call to strike on September 22 by union leadership charged "IRON AND STEEL WORKERS! A historic decision confronts us. If we will but stand together now like men our demands will soon be granted and a golden era of prosperity will open for us in the steel industry. But if we falter and fail to act this great effort will be lost, and we will sink back into a miserable and hopeless serfdom. The welfare of our wives and children is at stake. Now is the time to insist upon our rights as human beings."

b The White Sox scandal continued into 1921 when eight players were tried for fraud in an effort to make baseball respectable again. This criminal subpoena mandated left fielder "Shoeless Joe" Jackson's presence before the grand jury. Although the eight players were acquitted in 1921, baseball commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, formerly a federal judge in Chicago, banned them from professional baseball.

c The 1919 mayoral campaign revealed significant cleavages in Chicago's body politic. Reform candidate Charles E. Merriam failed in his Republican primary challenge to incumbent mayor William Hale Thompson (pictured here voting in 1916). Thompson subsequently fought off five candidates in the general election. Many of Thompson's 259,828 votes (38 percent of total votes) came from German and African American voters, and his African American support drew considerable invective from Democrats in white neighborhoods on the South Side. Defeated by reformers in 1923, Thompson was reelected in 1927.

d World War I offered women many new opportunities, both paid and volunteer. One of the most popular volunteer agencies was the American Red Cross. In this 1918 picture, Red Cross volunteers address the domestic influenza epidemic by making the masks worn by hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans to avoid the spread of the deadly disease.

e National Guardsmen questioning an African American during the riots that traumatized the city in late July. The City Council briefly considered a proposal to avoid future confrontations by creating legally segregated residential districts in the city. Chicago was hardly unique: 26 American cities experienced race riots during the summer of 1919. Chicago's riots killed and injured more people than the others, but even its death toll scarcely compared to the 78 African-Americans lynched that year in the South.

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State of Illinois } ss. *The People of the State of Illinois,*
COOK COUNTY } *To the Sheriff of said County, GREETING.*

We Command You, that you take the body of _____

Joe Jackson

if to be found in your County, and safely _____ *Him* keep so that you have _____ *Him* before our Criminal Court of Cook County, Austin Avenue and Dearborn Street, in the City of Chicago,

Forthwith, to answer unto the people of the State of Illinois, upon an indictment for _____

Obtaining Money and Goods by Means of the Confidence Usue

lately preferred against _____ by the Grand Jury of said Court.

And have you then and there this Will.

Witness, WILLIAM R. PARKER, Clerk of our said Court, and the Seal thereof, at Chicago, in said County, this _____ 20th day of _____

OCTOBER A. D. 19____ 20

William R. Parker Clerk.



Local violence combined with national and international events to make Chicago a major target of attorney general A. Mitchell Palmer's attack on radicals. So wide was his net that the Industrial Workers of the World, headquartered in Chicago, and corporate leaders of firms like International Harvester and the packinghouses were all under suspicion, the first for advocating socialist and anarchist solutions, the second for trying to maintain their long-established commercial ties with Russia after the revolution.

If notions of Americanism were open to question, so, too, were civic pride and integrity. Throughout the summer, Chicagoans had celebrated their

White Sox, seemingly the best team in professional baseball. But the Sox lost the World Series, and by the end of the year, Chicagoans—baseball fans and otherwise—knew about the bribes and the gamblers. Still another question loomed large for the future. On October 28, 1919, Congress passed the Volstead Act, providing for the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution that prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcoholic beverages in the United States.

James R. Grossman

June: Allied Powers sign peace treaty at Versailles, create League of Nations

November: First steamer in Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association's Black Star Line sails

December: United States deports 249 resident aliens suspected of being Communists and anarchists to Russia

