

Senior Seminar-History of Chicago

Reading Guide: City of Big Shoulders, Chapter 9; Chicago: 1915-1929 WWI and the Roaring Twenties

Use this guide to take notes as you read the chapter. You should be able to address the following thematic questions...

Major Themes:

1. World War I would not have a revolutionary impact on the social and economic fortunes of Chicago, however, the war would significantly impact the city's sizeable German population negatively—forcing this once politically, economically and socially powerful ethnic group to assimilate quickly into the American culture.
2. World War I would create employment opportunities for African American laborers triggering a historic migration of southern blacks into the city; permanently reshaping the ethnic make-up of Chicago.
3. Politicians realized the strength of ethnic and political allegiances and would transform how politics was conducted into the coming century.

What role did America/Chicago play in WWI (166)?

1. Late entry ended the war's stalemate in favor of the allied powers.
2. Chicago business profited handsomely supplying the war effort--earning more than \$100 million on the sale of supplies.

What ethnic community was negatively impacted by the War in Chicago? What legacy did that negativity lead to? (167)

1. German immigrants had achieved success in Chicago—the war created hostility against German-Americans fueled by British propaganda.
2. Local Germans distanced themselves from their German heritage.
3. Many Germans “Americanized” their names and businesses.
4. To this day, German ethnic identification remains low.

The war had a significant impact on the labor market in Chicago—how so? What ethnic population would benefit?

1. The war and travel restrictions ended the flow of cheap immigrant labor.
2. Many Anglo-Americans left to fight in the war adding to the labor shortage.
3. The labor shortage led to demands for higher wages—employers hired black laborers.

The war had a profound effect on Chicago's African-American community;

1. The demand for cheap labor would lead to a “Great Migration” of southern blacks into the industrial north. 1.5

how so?

What two reasons would lead blacks to migrate?

What black newspaper founded in Chicago would serve as an outspoken critic of southern racial discrimination and continue to influence the black community through WWII?

How would the paper be distributed into the south?

African-Americans would enjoy unparalleled freedom in Chicago compared to the south in all areas except for: _____

What area in Chicago would most migrating African Americans move to? (169)

Where was the black entertainment district located during this time?(170)

What was the district referred to as?

How would the conclusion of WWI affect Chicago's ethnic communities?

Ethnic frustrations would be fueled by several factors in addition to the war related outcomes, these were: (171-172)

What event would lead to the Race Riot of 1919

What Chicago loop landmarks were built

million African-Americans would migrate.

1. Pull factor: higher wages
2. Push factor: escape oppressive racial discrimination

1. The Chicago Defender
2. Porters distributed copies of the paper in numerous small southern towns on the train's stops.

1. housing
2. south-side (the black belt—one of the most segregated areas in America)

1. State Street, between 31st and 39th streets
2. the "Stroll"

1. German Americans were angry and frustrated over the harsh peace imposed on Germany
2. local Italians were promised land in the settlement but were denied and protested the insult to their country.
3. Poles and Jews fought in the streets over alleged anti-Jewish pogroms
4. Irish-Americans clamored for Irish independence and were embittered over US support of Britain.

1. Sharp economic recession in 1919
2. no new housing built during the war
3. doubling of the black population

1. black boy killed (drowned) for swimming at a white beach (29th street) and the police failed to arrest the perpetrator.

1. Merchandise Mart

during the prosperous 20's? (175)

2. Palmer House
3. Medinah Athletic Club
4. Tribune Tower
5. Palmolive Building
6. Board of Trade Building

What organization would push a nativist movement that thrived in the Midwest and north and attempted to restrict the growing power of immigrants, roman Catholics and Jews in the 1920's (175).

Ku Klux Klan

The years between 1915 and 1930 bridged the political era of charismatic personalities and machine politics. The political era was epitomized by one mayor: Big Bill Thompson (182). He was characterized as:

1. appealed to voter's prejudices
2. openly corrupt
3. courted the city's ethnic voters
4. political chameleon-changing positions to accommodate constituents
5. created the "politics of image"

What political affiliation would Thompson use to court the immigrant vote? (183)

America First, opposed to intervention in WWI

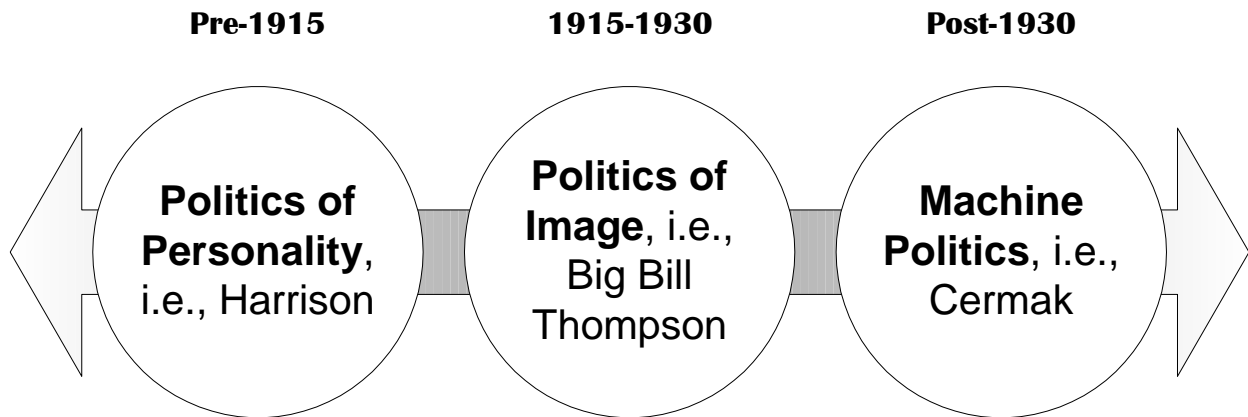
Big Bill Thompson sat out the 1923 election and was succeeded by William E. Dever; considered the nation's "best mayor," what would characterize Dever's term? (185)

1. honest, well bred, urbane and a prudent reformer.
2. instituted civil service reform; built Wacker drive and Midway Airport
3. Enforced prohibition (his undoing) alienating the city's immigrant population

Who sowed the seeds of the Cook County Democratic Party (CCDP)? (187)

Big Bill Thompson

Chicago Politics



- ❑ Catered to middle and upper class Chicagoans
- ❑ kingmakers ruled
- ❑ little party loyalty
- ❑ voters rallied around charismatic individuals

- ❑ Willing to accommodate all minorities--courted the immigrant vote
- ❑ openly corrupt
- ❑ created jobs and patronage
- ❑ understood that conciliators win by keeping many parties happy.

- ❑ Cook County Democratic Party dominated politics through the "machine"
- ❑ Strong party loyalty
- ❑ catered to blue-collar voters--winning support through employment