



Melinda Fries // The Red Summer Self-Guided Walking Tour Chicago

In the summer of 1919 there were 25 race riots in the United States. During the hot and humid summer in Chicago in July 1919, blacks would use the 25th Street beach and whites would use the 29th Street beach. The riot this booklet covers started on July 27, 1919. Author Melinda Fries writes: "Several times during the day blacks had tried to swim at 29th Street and were chased out. Tensions were high. At 4:00 Sunday afternoon July 27th, seventeen year old Eugene Williams was swimming offshore near 29th Street beach with four friends. A man walked out along the pier and began throwing rocks at them. One hit Eugene and he drowned." This incident touched off the riots which went uncontrolled four days. After August 8th, when the state militia withdrew, 38 people were killed: 15 white, 23 black, all men. 537 were injured: 178 white, 342 black, 17 not recorded, only 10 women. 1000 were left homeless and destitute.

This booklet by Melinda Fries, who is known for her great website ausgang.com, details the events of the riot, maps the locations where many were killed and the details of their deaths, and includes a miles-long walking tour of the sites where many were killed. An intense piece of history that could not be more relevant in light of the many riots and protests happening this year in response to murders by police of black men in Ferguson, Missouri, Staten Island, New York, and multiple other cities and states.

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