**HISTORY OF WASHINGTON PARK**

**1833** Potawatomi ceded the last of their Illinois and Wisconsin lands as part of the Treaty of Chicago. Chicago is incorporated as a town, and as a city 4 years later. As American townspeople began to outnumber the French and Potawatomi inhabitants, the government forced most of the Potawatomi people from Northern Illinois to new homes on the far side of the Mississippi.

**1845** Illinois becomes a truly free state with the constitution of 1848 that outlawed both slavery and indentured servitude.

**1871** Washington Park is designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, named after the first president, originally “mowed” by roaming cows and sheep.

**1879** Washington Park dedicated, former President Ulysses S. Grant presided over the ceremonies. A boulder was placed where he planted a tree.

**1880** Grand Boulevard horse carriage path is dug (now Martin Luther King Boulevard).

**1881** Washington Park neighborhood.

**1882** Garfield Station built to transport visitors to the 1893 World’s Fair.

**1884** The area was dredged to turn the swampy land into more livable place.

**1887** Cable car reached as far south as 63rd on State Street and 67th on Cottage Grove.

**1891** Washington Park Reflectory is designed by Daniel Burnham.

**1892** The “L” is extended the length of Washington Park and into Woodlawn.

**1894** Loredo Taft’s sculpture “Fountain of Time” added to Washington Park, world’s earliest concrete finished art work.

**1895** The Chicago Real Estate Board set out a formal policy of racial segregation and voted to expel any member who did not own property on white blocks to Black people.

**1896** Jesse Briga moved to Washington Park, he was the founder of The Briga Bank, the first privately owned African-American in Chicago.

**1900** Twenty-seven million visit the south side for the World’s Fair in Jackson Park and Washington Park connected by Midway Plaisance. The Fair was protested by Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass for exclusion of Black Americans.

**1905** The Chicago Defender is founded by Robert Abbott, as a forum to protest by Midway Plaisance.

**1910** 109,000 between 1910 and 1920.

**1917** The city was a “hotbed” of racial tension, culminating in city-wide race riots of 1919. Invading Irish and white gangs led to the formation of the first Black street gangs in Garfield Park to defend the community. Some South Side industry closed during riots, impacting the economy.

**1920** The Black population in Chicago increased from 44,000 to over 109,000 between 1910 and 1920.

**1926** The US Supreme Court upheld racially restrictive covenants in Corrigan v. Buckley that were used to keep Black Chicagoans in segregated and overcrowded areas.

**1930** The University of Chicago serves as headquarters of the Federal Neighborhood Associations through the 30s and 40s, its primary purpose being the opposition of efforts made by the Black community to get legislation passed that declared restrictive covenants as invalid.

**1933-1947** The University of Chicago spends nearly $111,000 on “community interests,” and over $80,000 on defending restrictive covenants.

**1940** The Indian Headland was added to Washington Park. 100,000 workers.

**1947** CTA began to cut service to nearly 100 stations with low ridership or considered “unecomonomical.” Impact was felt hard on Green Line.

**1948** It is designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, named after the first president, originally “mowed” by roaming cows and sheep.

**1950** Washington Park is annexed into the city of Chicago.

**1950** The Chicago Real Estate Board set out a formal policy of racial segregation and voted to expel any member who did not own property on white blocks to Black people.

**1952** Chicago’s thriving “Black Belt” of Bronzeville extends south into the Washington Park neighborhood, wealthier white residents begin to move from the area, closing many businesses; Jazz Age; Washington Park defined as 63rd on State Street.

**1960** First privately owned African-American bank.

**1963** Chicago serves as headquarters for Neighborhood Associations through the 30s and 40s, its primary purpose being the opposition of efforts made by the Black community to get legislation passed that declared restrictive covenants as invalid.

**1966** The Chicago Black Renaissance, influenced by Great Migration and Great Depression, promoted racial pride and a new black consciousness which led to the growth of jazz, blues, gospel and literature that addressed Chicago culture, racial tensions, issues of identity, search for meaning.

**1973** Chicago Housing Authority is formed.


**1981** The Chicago Black Renaissance, influenced by Great Migration and Great Depression, promoted racial pride and a new black consciousness which led to the growth of jazz, blues, gospel and literature that addressed Chicago culture, racial tensions, issues of identity, search for meaning.

**1986** The US Supreme Court upheld racially restrictive covenants in Corrigan v. Buckley that were used to keep Black Chicagoans in segregated and overcrowded areas.

**1990** Washington Park is designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, named after the first president, originally “mowed” by roaming cows and sheep.

**1874** Grand Boulevard horse carriage path is dug (now Martin Luther King Boulevard).

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**1902** The city was a “hotbed” of racial tension, culminating in city-wide race riots of 1919. Invading Irish and white gangs led to the formation of the first Black street gangs in Garfield Park to defend the community. Some South Side industry closed during riots, impacting the economy.

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**1930** The University of Chicago serves as headquarters of the Federal Neighborhood Associations through the 30s and 40s, its primary purpose being the opposition of efforts made by the Black community to get legislation passed that declared restrictive covenants as invalid.

**1936** The US Supreme Court upheld racially restrictive covenants in Corrigan v. Buckley that were used to keep Black Chicagoans in segregated and overcrowded areas.

**1940** The Federal Home Owners’ Loan Corporation creates “redlined” maps of Chicago, identifying areas by racial composition for “risk” in home security or mortgage, making it extremely difficult for Black people or anyone in integrated neighborhoods to secure loans to purchase or upgrade homes, or generate wealth from home ownership. The risky investment label also prevented businesses and small-scale investment, leading to neighborhood decline.

**1947** The Illinois General Assembly passed the Illinois Brightened Areas Redevelopment Act, creating a new agency called the Land Clearance Commission with the power to acquire “blighted” land by force and sell it to private developers for residential development.

**1950** Washington Park is annexed into the city of Chicago.
1970s Service on three branches of the green line south were ended, lines closed.

1980 The construction of high-density Robert Taylor Homes gave the neighborhood a slight increase in population as the base of the community was slipping away.

1982 The Jackson park branch of the CTA was closed and tracks were removed.

1994 Entire Green Line shut down for rehabilitation work, resulting in 2 years of no service to the area.

1997 Demolition of Green Line Tracks east of Cottage Grove eliminating service to Jackson Park

1999 US Supreme Court strikes down racial covenants

1950 Green Hornet Streetcar Disaster: a streetcar traveling too fast for wet conditions veers into a gasoline tanker, triggering a massive explosion that kills over 30 passengers.

1961 The first segment of the Dan Ryan expressway opens committing segregation/ environmental justice concerns

1972 Dyett HS is built on the northern border of Washington Park.

2001 Historic Garfield Boulevard’s “L” station and overpass designated with landmark status

2003 Robert Taylor Homes give the Chicago Land Clearance Areas Redevelopment Act, to give the Chicago Land Clearance Commission more power in eminent domain and to use the land for industrial purposes.

2008 Dyett HS has the largest increase in students going to college in all of CPS.

2010 Obama Presidential Library selects the University of Chicago’s proposal, ultimately choosing Jackson Park over Washington Park.

2019 The Garfield Gateway Project brought $43 million in improvements for the station that included art by Nick Cave.