

Photographic Views of the Great Springfield Race War August, 1908



"Scene on East Madison Street. In the heart of the 'Black Belt.'"

On August 14-15, 1908 Springfield, Illinois was rocked by a race riot that resulted in the deaths of nine people, dozens of properties being destroyed or damaged, and the displacement of a large segment of the city's black population. The riot was a seminal event in Springfield's history and is the acknowledged catalyst for the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in early 1909. The document presented here is a small (5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "), 18-page, black-and-white pamphlet, printed by the *Illinois State Register* (one of Springfield's leading newspapers of the day) shortly after that eventful weekend. This souvenir booklet was reprinted from content published in the Saturday, August 15, 1908 edition of their newspaper, which carried extensive coverage on the previous evening's events.

As this booklet is fairly rare, and online copies of the publication were not available to view, we are reproducing it here for the public's use. We thank Richard Hart (Springfield, Illinois) for loaning us his copy of this publication, and allowing us to scan it for presentation here.

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For a contemporary collection of images associated with the riot, see also the scrapbook prepared in 1909 and entitled [*In the Wake of the Mob An Illustrated Story of Riot, Ruin, and Rage*](#). For a power point presentation summarizing the context of our recent archaeological investigations at the site of houses destroyed during the riot, [click here](#). Similarly, for a companion power point presentation summarizing the archaeological investigations, [click here](#). To access the larger Phase II archaeological report, entitled *Results of Phase II Archaeological Investigations of Sites 11SG1432 and 11SG1433 for the Proposed Carpenter Street Underpass, Springfield Rail Improvements Project, Springfield, Illinois* (Mansberger and Stratton 2016), [click here](#). And finally, for the artifact appendices to the above referenced Phase II archaeological report, [click here](#).

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS
OF THE
Great Springfield Race War

AUGUST, 1908

Depicting Work of Mob's Violence in the Venting
of Their Wrath on the Blacks.

PRICE, 25 CENTS


From Illinois State Register, Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD'S GREAT RACE WAR.

(Extracts from Illinois State Register of Saturday morning, August 15, 1908.)

"Mob law, implacable, inexorable, with justice as its excuse and basing its depredations upon the theory that might makes right, held Springfield in its grasp all last night while a great mob of men, thirsting for revenge for the brutal assault upon Mrs. Hallam and the cold-blooded murder of Clergy Ballard, foiled in their early attempt to get the negro prisoners charged with these crimes from the county jail, stoned the troops called out to resist them, defied police and sheriff's deputies, wrecked the restaurant and burned the automobile of Harry Loper because he aided in spiriting the negroes away from the city; fought a desperate battle with bullets and fire brands in the negro district, shattered plate glass windows, burned twenty houses before 3 o'clock this morning, and held a general reign of terror, leaving in the wake of riot a long list of dead and injured.

"The immense crowd first showed its desperation when it defied the troops and the officers and threatened to attack the jail. Sheriff Werner pleaded in vain. He declared time and time again the prisoners had been taken away.

"But the crowd would not heed advice. They demand-

ed revenge. When they found they could not succeed in gaining entrance to the jail they turned their attention to Loper's restaurant, bent upon destroying that because they had heard that Mr. Loper had aided in spiriting the prisoners away. * * *

"'On to Loper's,' was the cry that was raised by the mob last night when they heard that the negro prisoners — Joe James and George Richardson — had been spirited away from the city in Mr. Loper's automobile. And 'on to Loper's' the mob went. Bricks were hurled, Mr. Loper's automobile overturned and then burned, the entire building wrecked and furniture smashed or burned with the automobile.

"Fully ten thousand people packed Fifth street from Adams to Monroe, and across the intersections, watching the ring-leaders wreck the building and contents.

"It was while the work of destruction was at its height that Louis Johnson, a lad about 17 years old, residing at 1308 East Reynolds street, and who was employed at the Desnoyers Shoe factory, was killed. Conflicting stories are told as to his death."

The total dead to date numbers six and the wounded are innumerable. The property loss will exceed \$200,000. The cost to the county and state cannot at present be estimated. The following photographs are genuine views of the mob's destructive work.

SANGAMON COUNTY JAIL.



Where the prisoners were first confined and first mob violence was manifested.

EXTERIOR OF HARRY LOPER'S CAFE ON SOUTH FIFTH STREET.



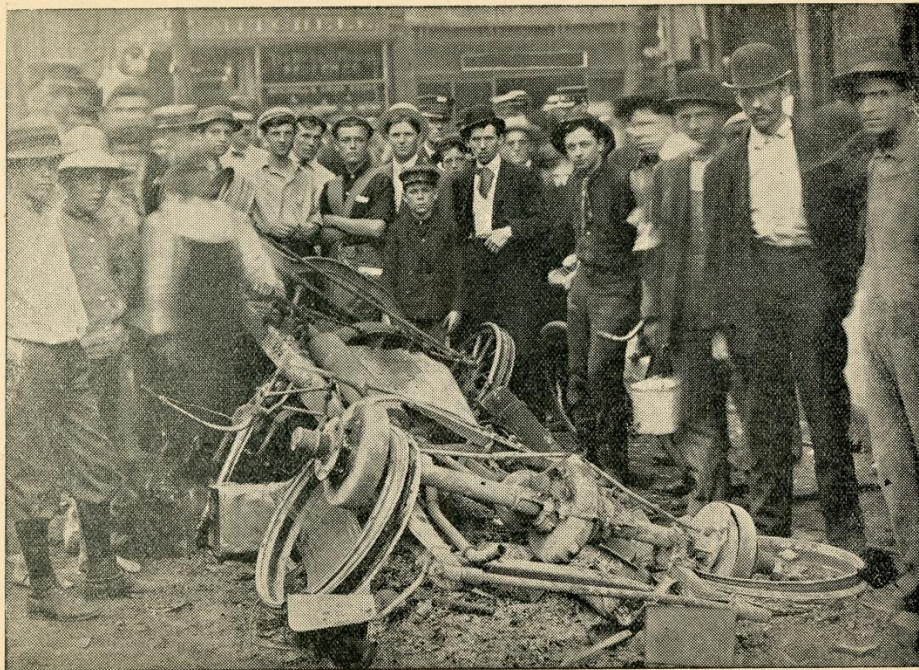
Where mob vented wrath on Mr. Loper for assisting their prey to escape their vengeance.

Interior of Loper's Cafe After Mob Had Completed Devastation.



Everything was demolished, including the handsome buffet in the basement. All furniture and fixtures were carried into the street and burned.

THE REMAINS OF LOPER'S \$5,000 AUTO.



This auto was used by Mr. Loper in spiriting the prisoners away from the jail.

FISHMAN'S PAWN SHOP AND JOHNSON'S SALOON.



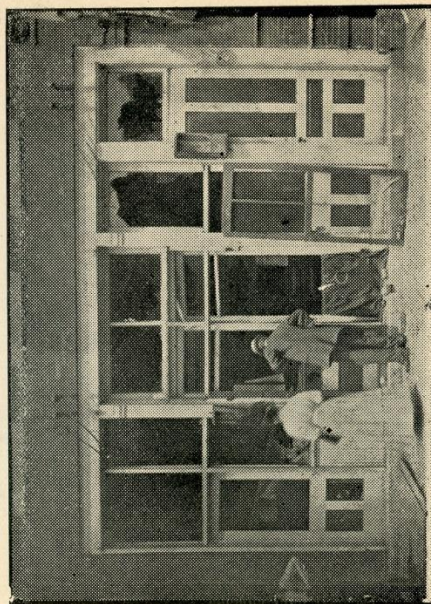
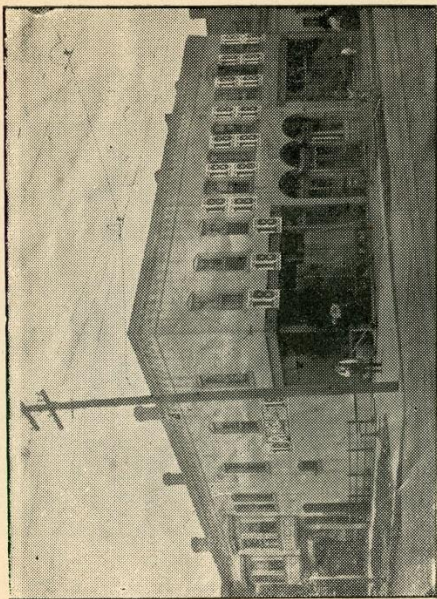
These were visited by the mob directly after demolishing Loper's restaurant. The pawn shop was completely destroyed and the saloon badly damaged.

OSBORNE'S COLORED BARBER SHOP.



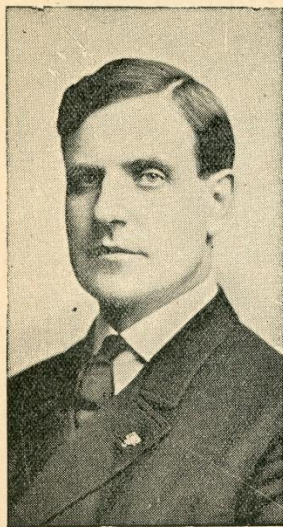
Completely wrecked and all tools confiscated.

'Dandy Jim's' Saloon at 8th and Washington.



Ed. White's (colored) Saloon.

Mayor Roy Reece.



Who narrowly escaped mob violence.

Another Scene on East Washington Street.



SCENE ON EAST MADISON STREET.



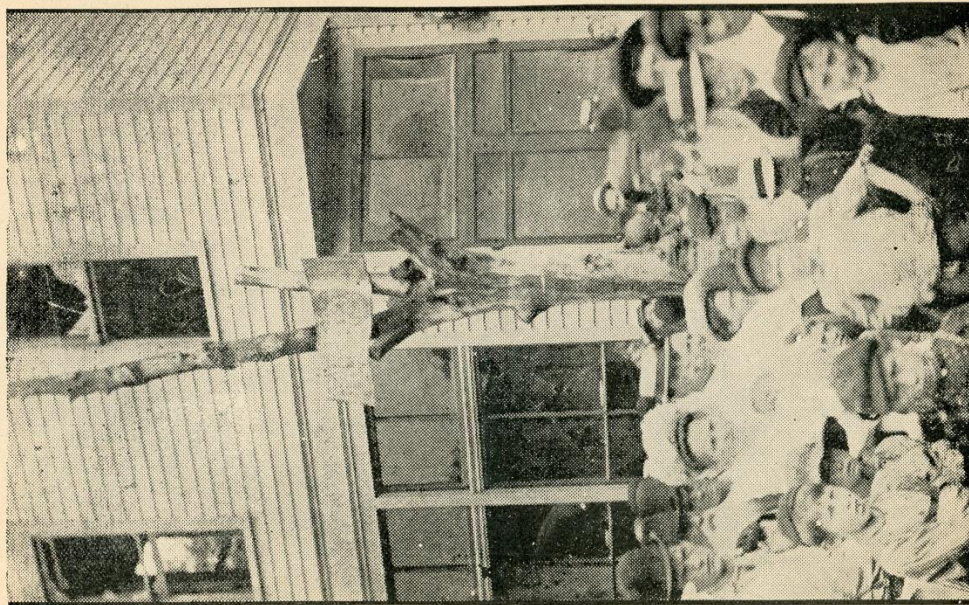
In the heart of the "Black Belt."

ANOTHER VIEW ON EAST MADISON STREET.



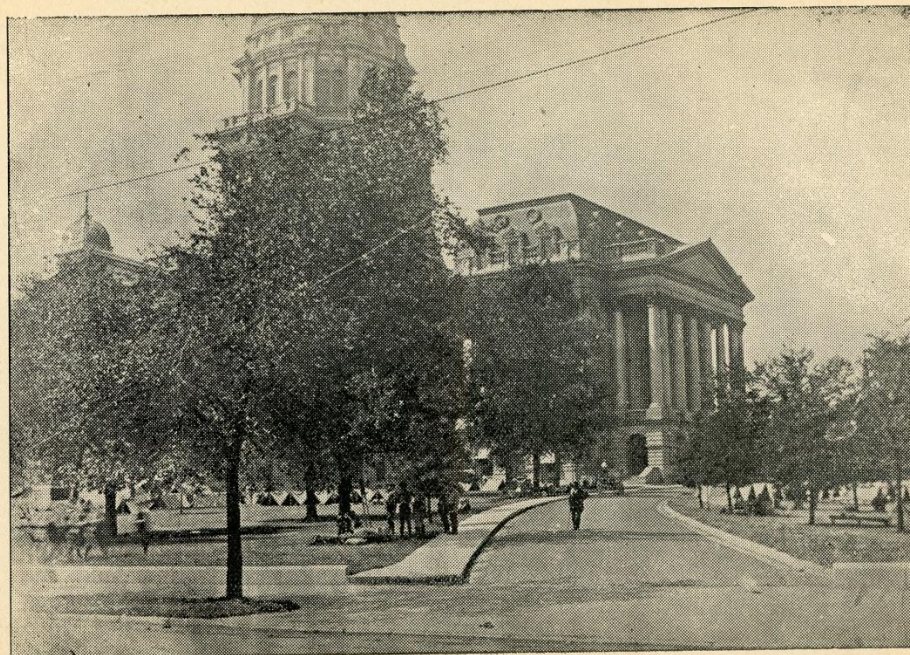
Where mob's violence reached its highest pitch.

SCENE OF LYNCHING.



Shows tree at 12th and Madison, on which Scott Burton was hanged.

SOLDIERS ENCAMPED ON STATE HOUSE GROUNDS.



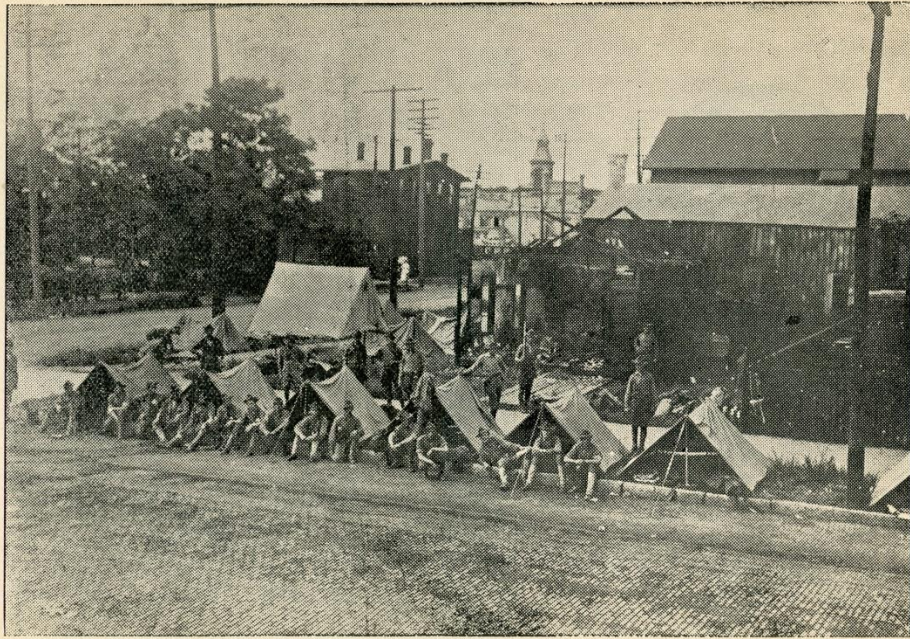
SOLDIERS ENCAMPED AT THE STATE ARSENAL.



TROOPS ENCAMPED ON CAPITOL HILL.



TROOPS AT NINTH AND JEFFERSON.

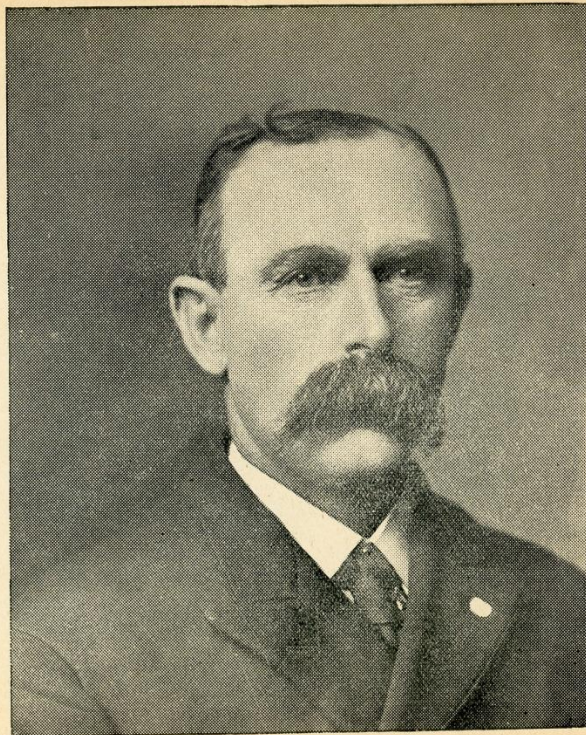


Showing barber shop of Scott Burton, who was lynched, the first building to be fired.



W. H. BOWE.

Deputy County Treasurer, who was shot and almost lynched by negroes.



SHERIFF WERNER.

ROY YOUNG MAKING SPECTACULAR CONFESSION.



Young stands in the doorway pointing. On one side of him stands Detective Jones, on the other, Detective Borgardus. He is pointing out a house he helped to burn.