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William, Tuttle M Jr. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. 1970. Reprint. Champlain: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

After World War I, racial tensions were high and the Red Scare was very much a part of American life. William M. Tuttle's well-researched book on the origins of the race war and accounts of the 1919 Chicago riots is an essential read for all historians and those interested in race history in America. Tuttle creates an extremely detailed study of "gut level animosities" (vii) between races as he writes history from the lowest levels of society and, through the uncovering of individual's stories, gives a voice to the true origins of the race riots. Throughout the book, he also builds an image of the "New Negro" (106) and describes how politics, housing, and labor issues created the perfect storm that led to this changing identity.

Tuttle is a professor of History and American Studies who wrote two other books focused on 20th century America and lower-class citizens, which allowed him to dig deeply into individual experiences and connect them to race relationships as a whole. *Race Riot* was first published in 1970, when black Americans were fighting back against white oppression in groups such as the Black Panthers. As Tuttle states in the preface, countless works had been done on black ghettos and the atrocities of racism, however, none have been written specifically on the Chicago riots. His book written almost a half century ago is still read today because it differentiates the white riots against blacks in 1919 from other black rioting in the 1970s. Unlike other books on race history, he makes an effort to not overlook the positive aspects of black communities. He achieves this by discussing the changing identity of black Americans during migration and riots and by bringing to light the fight for justice on an individual level.

The author organizes this book topically, with explanations and examples written chronologically in each chapter. This makes the components of his argument very clear, however, it is somewhat difficult to create an overall timeline with each chapter starting at the beginning of the narrative. This may be a struggle for some readers, but the value of the book and its clarity on specific topics makes the organization worthwhile. Tuttle begins the book with a detailed account of Eugene Williams's death, marking the start of the Chicago race war. He then expands on the terror of the riots themselves. The author writes in incredible detail about specific riots in Charleston, Longview, and Washington D.C., giving the media coverage, police and military action, and government interventions happening during the riots.

In the following chapters, he discusses the causes of the built up racial tensions that led to the explosion of violence from whites against blacks. His argument states that the riots were primarily started in labor, housing, and political tensions at the working class level of society. Even the hot and muggy weather amplified frustrations and added to the perfect storm happening in Chicago and other cities. He discusses how these problems were magnified by the Great Migration of black Americans from the South to the North. Overcrowding of jobs, especially in the stockyards, created massive amounts of friction and violence between the races. There were also divides between black strikebreakers and both white and black union members over working conditions and employment. Tuttle also describes how demobilization of soldiers after World War I led to massive unemployment and discrimination shown in "a hierarchy of color; those with black skin were fired first, then those of brown and lighter brown" (130). Overcrowding also led to housing competition in strictly black ghettos, and the cost of living became increasingly high. Tuttle gives accounts of racist mobs attacking black neighborhoods and

bombing the houses of black families such as Harrison and Austin. Because of interracial conflict over housing, there was a “lack of faith in the willingness and ability of the police to provide impartial protection” (159). This, along with individualism achieved through wages and labor strife contributed to the image of the “New Negro” (159), a newfound desire in the black community to fight for themselves and their image, and to move on from their past of oppression. Tuttle then goes on to discuss how politics continued the riots, stating how black voters “aroused and reinforced the hostility and racial hatred” (184), therefore continuing violent reactions. In the last chapter, Tuttle discusses the impact of the Chicago riots on the black community, media, and politics, as well as how blacks in other cities also began to fight back.

Tuttle uses a variety of primary sources to support his claims, such as interviews from directly affected people such as John Turner Harris, who was present when Eugene Williams drowned. These interviews add to Tuttle’s purpose of writing from the lower levels of society, those who experienced the horror first hand, to tell the story of the riots from where they originated. He also uses letters from migrants to get a better grasp on how the Great Migration affected the lives of individuals. One of his major sources that is mentioned countless times in the text is the *Chicago Defender*, a major black newspaper that circulated news stories and united the black community. Additionally, he uses national archives to dig further into stockyard records to elaborate on the labor conflict. Other studies by historians allow him to give further background information and elaboration on issues during the time period. He uses photos and maps rather sparsely, but the ones given allow the reader to further visualize the extent of riots and migration. His use of mostly primary sources is appropriate for his purpose of delving into the unknown stories of individuals and uncovering new angles of the race war. His detailed

footnotes and extensive essay on sources shows the great amount of deep research and thought that went into this project, and makes this book even more trusted and respected.

*Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* is an insightful work emphasizing the role of the common people in a large scale uprising. It explains how labor, housing, and politics all came together and gradually increased the tension, brewing a perfect storm in the summer of 1919.

I pledge upon my word of honor that I have not given nor received unauthorized help on this work.