



# Living History of Illinois and Chicago®

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## Timeline of Illinois History

### 10,000 BC - 8000 BC

Paleo Indians roam the area, briefly occupying small camps in coniferous forests and subsisting on large game and wild plants.

### 8000 BC - 500 BC

Archaic period Indians inhabit deciduous forests in small groups, hunt deer and small game, weave baskets, and grind seeds with stones.

### 500 BC - 900 AD

Woodland culture Indians develop maize agriculture, build villages and burial mounds, invent the bow and arrow for hunting, and begin making pottery.

### 900 - 1500

Indians of the Mississippian culture improve agricultural methods, build temple mounds and large fortified villages. Most of the settlements are abandoned prior to the historic period.

### 1673

French explorers Jacques Marquette (1637-1675) and Louis Jolliet (1645-1700) descend the Mississippi to the Arkansas River and return to Wisconsin via the Illinois River—the first Europeans to reach the Illinois country.

### 1675

Marquette founds a mission at the Great Village of the Illinois, near present Utica.

### 1680

French traders René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687) and Henry de Tonty (1650-1704) build Fort Crèvecoeur on the Illinois River, near present Peoria.

Iroquois Indians destroy the Great Village of the Illinois.

### 1682

La Salle and Tonty build Fort St. Louis across the Illinois River from the Great Village of the Illinois site.



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1696

Jesuit priest Pierre François Pinet (1660-1704?) establishes the Guardian Angel mission at present Chicago.

1699

Priests of the Quebec Seminary of Foreign Missions found the Holy Family mission at Cahokia, the first permanent settlement in the Illinois country.

1703

Jesuit priest Gabriel Marest (1662-1714) moves the Immaculate Conception mission from present St. Louis to Kaskaskia.

1717

Illinois becomes part of the French colony of Louisiana.

1718

John Law (1671-1729) is granted a French charter for colonizing the Mississippi Valley; his "Mississippi Bubble" scheme bursts in 1720.

1720

Fort de Chartres in Randolph County becomes the seat of military and civilian government in Illinois.

1730

In a major battle, hostile Fox Indians are massacred in east-central Illinois by French troops and Indian allies.

1763

French and Indian (Seven Years') War ends; Illinois country is ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Paris.

1769

According to legend, northern tribes besiege and starve Illinois Indians tribes at Fort St. Louis, now known as Starved Rock.



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1778

George Rogers Clark (1752-1818) defeats the British at Kaskaskia, securing the Illinois country for Virginia.

1779

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable (1745?-1818) establishes a trading post at present Chicago.

1783

Treaty of Paris extends the United States boundary to include the Illinois country.

1784

Virginia relinquishes its claim to Illinois.

1787

Northwest Ordinance places Illinois in the Northwest Territory.

1788

Arthur St. Clair (1734-1818) becomes the first governor of the Northwest Territory.

1800

Congress creates the Indiana Territory, which includes Illinois.

1803

Kaskaskia Indians cede nearly all of their Illinois lands to the United States.

United States Army establishes Fort Dearborn at present Chicago.

1804

William Clark (1770-1838) and his troops depart from Camp Dubois, Madison County, to join Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) for westward explorations.

1809

Congress organizes the Illinois Territory, with Kaskaskia the capital, Ninian Edwards (1775-1833) the governor.

1811



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The first coal mine in Illinois is opened in Jackson County.  
New Madrid, Missouri, earthquake, the largest in United States history, damages southern Illinois (recurs in 1812).

1812

Potawatomi Indians massacre fifty-two troops and civilians in destroying Fort Dearborn.

1813

Land offices are opened at Kaskaskia and Shawneetown.

1814

The first newspaper in the state, the Illinois Herald, is published at Kaskaskia.

1816

The first bank in Illinois, at Shawneetown, is chartered by the territorial legislature.

1817

Morris Birkbeck (1764-1825) and George Flower (1780-1862) establish an English settlement at Albion.

War of 1812 veterans begin receiving 160-acre land warrants in the Illinois Military Tract, a region between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

1818

Illinois becomes the twenty-first state, with Kaskaskia the capital and Shadrach Bond (1773-1832) the first governor. Population of the state is 34,620.

1819

Kickapoo Indians move west of the Mississippi, relinquishing most claims to central Illinois lands.

1820

Vandalia becomes the state capital.

1821

General Assembly charts a state bank at Vandalia, with branches at Shawneetown, Edwardsville, and Brownsville.



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1823

Galena becomes a center for lead mining.

1824

Voters defeat a constitutional convention call to permit slavery in the state.

1825

Gurdon S. Hubbard (1802-1886) establishes the Vincennes Trace from southern Illinois to Lake Michigan.

General Assembly enacts the first public school law and levies a school tax.

Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) visits Kaskaskia and Shawneetown on a tour of the United States.

1827

John Mason Peck (1789-1858) founds Rock Spring Seminary, the first college in the state.

1829

Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi cede lands in northern Illinois by treaty at Prairie du Chien.

1830

The first state prison is built at Alton.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) moves to Illinois from Indiana.

James Hall (1793-1858) launches Illinois Monthly Magazine, the first literary periodical published west of Ohio.

1832

Black Hawk War ends with Sauk and Fox Indians leaving the Illinois lands they had ceded in 1804.



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1833

Treaty of Chicago provides for United States acquisition and settlement of the last remaining Indian lands in Illinois.

1835

General Assembly grants a charter for the Jacksonville Female Academy, the first institution in the state for women's education.

1836

Illinois and Michigan Canal construction is begun between Lake Michigan and the Illinois Valley; completed in 1848.

Galena and Chicago Union Railroad is chartered; completed twelve years later.

1837

Chicago receives a city charter; William Ogden (1805-1877) becomes the first mayor. At Alton a pro-slavery mob murders abolitionist editor Elijah P. Lovejoy (b. 1802).

John Deere (1804-1886) of Grand Detour designs a self-scouring steel plow.

1838

Northern Cross Railroad construction is begun between Meredosia and Springfield; the line is completed in 1842.

1839

Cherokee Indians pass through southern Illinois on the "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma. Springfield becomes the state capital.

National Road is completed from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia.

1839

Joseph Smith (1805-1844) chooses Nauvoo as headquarters for the Mormon church.

1841

Chicagoan John S. Wright (1815-1874) begins publishing Prairie Farmer magazine.



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1842

British author Charles Dickens (1812-1870) visits southern Illinois, described in his American Notes (1842).

1844

Anti-Mormons assassinate Mormon leaders Joseph and Hyrum (b. 1800) Smith at Carthage.

1846

Mormons leave Nauvoo for the Great Salt Lake Basin in Utah.

Donner party leaves Springfield by wagon train for California; forty-two perish in Sierra Mountains snowstorms.

Erik Jansson (1808-1850) and Jonas Olson (1802?-1898) establish a Swedish religious colony at Bishop Hill.

1847

Joseph Medill (1823-1899) founds the Chicago Tribune.

Jacksonville educator Jonathan Baldwin Turner (1805-1899) introduces Osage orange hedges as farm fencing.

Inventor Cyrus Hall McCormick (1809-1884) opens a plant in Chicago for manufacturing wheat reapers.

1848

Chicago Board of Trade is organized; it is now the largest and oldest commodity futures exchange in the world.

1849

Étienne Cabet (1788-1856) establishes a French Icarian communal settlement at Nauvoo.

1850

Population of the state is 851,470.

Illinois Central Railroad receives the first federal land grant for rail construction.



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### 1853

The first state fair is held at Springfield.

General Assembly enacts legislation to prevent free blacks from settling in the state.

### 1855

General Assembly adopts a free public school system.

### 1856

The first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River is completed between Rock Island and Davenport, Iowa.

Illinois Central Railroad is completed between Chicago, Galena, and Cairo.

Rand McNally is established in Chicago; by 1880 it is the world's largest mapmaking company.

Chicago Historical Society is founded, with William H. Brown (1796-1867) the first president.

### 1858

Republican Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861) hold seven debates in the United States Senate contest; Douglas wins the election.

### 1860

Lincoln is elected President of the United States, defeating three other candidates.

Luxury steamer Lady Elgin sinks in Lake Michigan; nearly three hundred perish.

### 1861

Civil War begins; Cairo becomes a troop and supply center for the Union Army.

### 1862

Union League of America is founded in Pekin for the promotion of patriotism and Union loyalty.

### 1864

Abraham Lincoln is reelected President.





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### 1865

General Assembly repeals measures against black settlement (Black Laws); is the first state legislature to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery.

Lincoln is assassinated in Washington, D.C.; buried in Springfield.

Chicago Union Stock Yards opens; by 1900 employs more than one third of packing industry laborers in the nation.

### 1866

Grand Army of the Republic is established in Decatur; the first GAR convention is held in Springfield.

### 1867

General Assembly establishes the Illinois Industrial University at Champaign-Urbana, renamed the University of Illinois in 1885.

George M. Pullman (1831-1897) founds the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago, manufacturing railroad sleeping cars.

Illinois Normal University geologist John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) begins surveys of the Rocky Mountain region; becomes director of the United States Geological Survey in 1880.

### 1868

Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885), Civil War general from Galena, is elected President of the United States.

Marshall Field & Co. department store opens in downtown Chicago; at his death, Field (1834-1906) is the city's wealthiest citizen.

### 1871

Chicago Fire destroys eighteen thousand downtown buildings, with losses estimated at \$200 million.

### 1872

Chicagoan John Jones (1816-1879) becomes a Cook County commissioner, the first African-American to hold elective office in Illinois.



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Chicago merchant Aaron Montgomery Ward (1844-1913) establishes the first large-scale mail order business.

General Assembly grants communities taxing authority to establish and maintain public libraries.

1873

Frances Willard (1839-1898) founds the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Evanston.

Joseph F. Glidden (1813-1906) of DeKalb develops barbed wire fencing, patented in 1874.

1876

United States Supreme Court establishes in *Munn v. Illinois* the principle that business of a public nature is subject to state regulation.

1877

General Assembly establishes the Illinois National Guard.

1878

Bell Telephone Company of Illinois begins service in Chicago.

1880

Leslie E. Keeley (1832-1900) and John R. Oughton (1858-1925) establish the Keeley Institute in Dwight for treatment of alcoholism; by 1900 franchised sanatoriums are operating in many states.

1883

General Assembly enacts the first compulsory school attendance legislation.

William LeBaron Jenney (1832-1907) designs the ten-story Home Insurance Building in Chicago, generally known as the world's first skyscraper.

1886

Haymarket square bombing and riot in Chicago during a labor rally cause several deaths; eight anarchists are convicted, four are hanged, and one dies in prison.



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### 1888

Chicago attorney Melville W. Fuller (1833-1910) is named Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

### 1889

Jane Addams (1860-1935) and Ellen Gates Starr (1859-1940) open Hull House, one of the nation's first settlement houses, for foreign-born residents of Chicago.

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) founds the Chicago Bible Institute for training missionaries to foreign lands.

Illinois State Historical Library is established by the state legislature.

John Mitchell (1870-1919) of Spring Valley becomes president of the United Mine Workers of America (to 1908).

### 1890

University of Chicago is incorporated, with William Rainey Harper (1856-1906) the first president.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra is established, with Christian Theodore Thomas (1835-1905) the first conductor.

African-American surgeon Daniel Hale Williams (1858-1931) organizes Provident Hospital in Chicago, the first black hospital in the United States; performs the first open-heart surgery in 1893.

### 1892

Chicago attorney Myra Bradwell (1831-1894) becomes the first woman admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

Canal construction to reverse the Chicago River flow is begun; completed in 1900.

Illinois and Mississippi (Hennepin) Canal construction is begun between the Illinois and the Rock rivers; completed in 1907.

Adlai Stevenson I (1835-1914) of Bloomington is elected Vice President of the United States on the ticket with Grover Cleveland.



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### 1893

World's Columbian Exposition is held in Chicago, commemorating the 400th anniversary of European exploratory voyages to the western hemisphere.

General Assembly establishes regulations for child labor and factory inspections. Governor John Peter Altgeld (1847-1902) pardons three imprisoned Haymarket anarchists.

### 1894

Pullman factory strike in Chicago becomes a national railway strike; federal troops are called to quell mob violence.

Chicago attorney Clarence Darrow (1857-1938) unsuccessfully defends socialist leader Eugene V. Debs (1855-1926) on charges relating to the Pullman strike.

### 1896

Salem native William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) wins the first of three presidential nominations; is defeated each time.

### 1898

United Mine Workers win labor disputes at Pana and Virden, after eleven miners and guards are killed.

### 1899

General Assembly creates the first juvenile court system in the nation.

### 1900

Population of the state is 4,821,550.

Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal opens between Chicago and Lockport.

Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959) establishes a studio in Oak Park for designing "prairie style" architecture.

Chicago newspaperman Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) launches his literary career with *Sister Carrie*, the first major novel set in Chicago.

### 1903

Fire destroys the Iroquois Theater in Chicago; nearly six hundred perish.



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Joseph G. Cannon (1836-1926), Danville, elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1872, begins the first of four successive terms as Speaker of the House (to 1911).

### 1905

Paul P. Harris (1869-1947) and other Chicago businessmen organize the Rotary Club.

Eugene Debs, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones (1843?-1930), and others found the Industrial Workers of the World union in Chicago.

### 1906

Chicago White Sox defeat crosstown rival Chicago Cubs in the baseball World Series.

### 1908

Springfield race riot leads to formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

### 1909

Coal mine fire at Cherry, resulting in 259 deaths, is one of the worst mine disasters in history.

Architect Daniel Burnham (1846-1912) designs the "Chicago Plan" for development of the lakefront and business district.

### 1910

William D. Boyce (1858-1929), Chicago and Ottawa businessman, founds the Boy Scouts of America.

Winchester native and Northwestern University Dental School dean Greene V. Black (1836-1915) receives the first International Miller Prize in dental science.

### 1911

Chicago sculptor Lorado Taft (1860-1936) completes his most famous work, "The Indian" (later called "Black Hawk"), a massive statue overlooking Rock River in Ogle County.



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### 1912

Harriet Monroe (1860-1936) launches Poetry: A Magazine of Verse in Chicago; includes writings of Springfield poet Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931).

### 1913

General Assembly grants women the right to vote for presidential electors and provides state aid for county road construction.

### 1915

Poet and novelist Edgar Lee Masters (1869-1950) publishes Spoon River Anthology, a volume on small-town Illinois.

Excursion steam Eastland capsizes in the Chicago River; 1812 perish.

### 1917

With support from Governor Frank O. Lowden (1861-1943) General Assembly adopts a modern civil administrative code for state government.

In May and July Illinois National Guard troops are sent to East St. Louis to quell race riots.

Chicago White Sox defeat the New York Giants in the World Series.

### 1918

Influenza epidemic causes thirty-two thousand deaths in the state.

Voters approve a \$60 million bond issue for paving state roads.

Robert Paul Prager (b. 1886), a German-born socialist suspected of disloyalty to the United States, is lynched by a pro-war mob in Collinsville.

### 1919

Chicago White Sox players (the "Black Sox") are accused of gambling on the World Series, which they lost to the Cincinnati Red Legs.

Chicago race riots leave thirty-eight dead and more than five hundred injured; a thousand residents are left homeless.



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### 1920

John L. Lewis (1880-1969) of Springfield is elected president of the United Mine Workers of America (to 1960).

Governor Lennington Small (1862-1936) pardons twenty members of the Communist Labor party convicted under the Illinois Sedition Act.

### 1921

George Halas's (1895-1983) football team, the Staleys, moves from Decatur to Chicago, and wins the national championship; in 1922 the Staleys become the Chicago Bears.

### 1922

Decatur manufacturer A. E. Staley (1867-1940) opens the first commercial soybean-processing plant.

In the "Herrin Massacre," three union miners and twenty strikebreakers are killed in mob violence at a strip mine in Williamson County.

### 1924

At the University of Illinois' new Memorial Stadium, Harold "Red" Grange (1904-1991), the "Galloping Ghost," scores four touchdowns in twelve minutes against the University of Michigan.

### 1925

Charles Gates Dawes (1865-1951) of Evanston becomes Vice President with President Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933); receives the Nobel Peace Prize for the "Dawes Plan" to restore the German economy after World War I.

The worst tornado in United States history devastates parts of Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana; 695 deaths.

Chicago Cardinals win the professional football championship; repeat in 1947.

### 1926

Aviator Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) begins daily mail delivery flights between Chicago and St. Louis.



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1929

Gunmen of Alphonse Capone (1899-1947) murder seven rival Chicago mobsters in the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre."

1930

Utilities founded by Chicagoan Samuel Insull (1859-1938), and valued at more than \$2 billion, produce one tenth of the nation's electric power.

1931

Jane Addams wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

1932

Disgruntled United Mine Workers organize the Progressive Miners of America at Gillespie and Benld, eventually enlisting twenty thousand members.

The number of unemployed Chicago workers during the Great Depression reaches 750,000.

Chicago Bears win the professional football championship; repeat in 1933, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1946, 1963, and 1986.

1933

Century of Progress International Exposition commemorates the centennial of the incorporation of Chicago (held again in 1934).

Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak (b. 1873) dies in Miami, Florida, in an assassination attempt on President-elect Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945).

Chicago Tribune sports editor Arch Ward (1896-1955) organizes the first baseball All-Star Game, played at Comisky Park and won by the American League.

Illinois and Michigan Canal is closed to river traffic.

1934

Chicago Black Hawks win the National Hockey League championship (Stanley Cup); repeat in 1938 and 1961.





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1937

General Assembly creates an unemployment compensation system.  
On Memorial Day, Chicago police fire on strikers at Republic Steel, resulting in ten deaths.

1939

Chicago author Richard Wright (1908-1960) publishes *Native Son*, set in Chicago and the first major novel about the black experience in America.

1940

Chicago theater-chain owner John Balaban (1894-1957) establishes WBKB, the first television station in Illinois.

1942

University of Chicago scientists, led by Nobel Prize winner (1938) Enrico Fermi (1901-1954), achieve the first self-sustaining nuclear reaction.

1945

Chicago Cubs win the National League pennant, lose the World Series to the Detroit Tigers.

American Airlines inaugurates direct air service from Chicago to London.

1949

Orchard Place Airport in Chicago is renamed O'Hare Field, Chicago International Airport in honor of Lieutenant Commander Edward H. O'Hare (1914-1943), Congressional Medal of Honor recipient killed in World War II.

1950

Population of the state is 8,712,176.

Gwendolyn Brooks (b. 1917) becomes the first African-American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize; is named Illinois poet laureate in 1968.

1951

Illinois and Mississippi Canal is closed to river traffic.



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1952

Governor Adlai Stevenson (1900-1965) is the Democratic nominee for president; defeated by Republican Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969).

1953

State Auditor Orville Hodge (1904-1986) is convicted of \$1.5 million theft of state funds.

1954

In Des Plaines, Raymond A. Kroc (1902-1984) opens the first in a chain of McDonald's fast-food restaurants.

1955

Richard J. Daley (1902-1976) is elected to the first of six terms as Chicago mayor.

1957

The nation's first nuclear power generating station is activated at Argonne National Laboratory in DuPage County.

1958

The first section of Illinois toll roads is opened from O'Hare International Airport to the Wisconsin border.

Fire at Our Lady of Angels elementary school in Chicago claims the lives of ninety-two children and three nuns.

1959

Everett M. Dirksen (1896-1969) is elected Republican leader of the United States Senate.

Chicago White Sox win their first American League championship since the 1919 Black Sox scandal but lose the World Series to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Chicago native Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) wins the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for *A Raisin in the Sun*, the first play by an African-American woman to be presented on Broadway.



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### 1962

General Assembly names Pulitzer Prize-winner Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) the first poet laureate of Illinois.

Governor Otto Kerner (1908-1976) leads businessmen on the first Illinois trade mission to Europe.

### 1964

General Assembly approves an at-large election of 177 representatives after the 1963 veto of a reapportionment bill.

### 1966

Illinois for the first time leads the nation in exports of agricultural and manufactured products.

### 1968

Civil disorder erupts during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; police report 650 arrests.

### 1970

After the death of Secretary of State Paul Powell (b. 1902), \$800,000 is found in shoeboxes in his Springfield hotel room.

Voters adopt a new Constitution, the first in one hundred years.

"Chicago Seven" defendants are convicted on charges relating to violence at the 1968 Democratic National Convention; the decision is overturned in 1972.

### 1971

Chicago political and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson (b. 1941) founds Operation PUSH — People United to Save (later Serve) Humanity.

### 1972

Chicago Union Stock Yards closes.

Abraham Lincoln Home in Springfield is designated the first national historic site in Illinois.

Two Illinois Central commuter trains collide in Chicago; forty-five passengers are killed and more than two hundred are injured.



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### 1973

Otto Kerner is convicted on charges involving the sale of racetrack stock while governor.

### 1974

The world's tallest building, Sears Tower in downtown Chicago, is completed. General Assembly approves a state lottery.

### 1976

James R. Thompson (b. 1936) is elected to the first of four gubernatorial terms (to 1991), the longest-serving governor in Illinois history.

Chicago author Saul Bellow (b. 1915) wins the Nobel Prize in Literature.

### 1979

Jane Byrne (b. 1934) becomes the first female mayor of Chicago.

American Airlines crash at O'Hare International Airport kills 275, the worst air disaster in United States history.

Centralia native Roland Burris (b. 1937) becomes Comptroller, the first African-American to hold a statewide elective office in Illinois.

### 1980

Ronald Reagan (b. 1911) in Tampico, is elected United States President; John B. Anderson (b. 1922) of Rockford is defeated as an Independent candidate.

### 1981

Morton Grove ordinance bans the possession of handguns, the most restrictive gun control measure in the nation.

Peoria native John B. "Jack" Brickhouse (1916-1998) retires after broadcasting more than five thousand Chicago Cubs and White Sox games; receives the National Baseball Hall of Fame Ford C. Frick Award in 1983.

### 1982

General Assembly fails to ratify the proposed equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution.



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1983

Harold Washington (1922-1987) is elected the first African-American mayor of Chicago.

1984

Seventeen Chicago attorneys, police officers, and judges are indicted in Operation Greylord on charges of improperly influencing court cases; convictions include the first for a sitting state court judge in Illinois.

1988

Diamond-Star Motors, an automobile manufacturing venture between Mitsubishi Motors of Japan and the Chrysler Corporation, opens in Bloomington.

1989

Clarence Page (b. 1947) of the Chicago Tribune is the first African-American columnist to win a Pulitzer Prize.

1990

Population of the state is 11,430,602.

1991

Chicago Bulls win the first of three consecutive National Basketball Association championships.

1992

Carol Moseley-Braun (b. 1947) of Chicago becomes the first African-American woman elected to the United States Senate.

1993

The worst floods in the state's history ravage western and southern Illinois.

1994

Bonnie Blair (b. 1964) speed skater from Champaign, wins her fifth Olympic Games gold medal, the most by an American woman.



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### 1995

Navy Pier in Chicago, constructed in 1916 as a shipping terminal and then used for wartime navy and marine training and as a campus of the University of Illinois, is renovated and reopens with a giant Ferris Wheel, children's museum, stage pavilion, and retail shops.

Commuter train strikes a school bus in Fox River Grove, killing seven and injuring thirty students.

George H. Ryan begins his four year term as Illinois' 39th Governor.

Jesse White is elected Secretary of State, the first African American to be elected to that office.

### 1996

Chicago Bulls post a 72-10 season, best in league history, then wins the National Basketball Association championship. Guard Michael Jordan (b. 1963) sets NBA records with his eighth scoring title and fourth Most Valuable Player designation.

### 1997

The Field Museum of Natural History, outbidding museums throughout the United States, pays \$8.4 million for Sue, the most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil yet discovered.

### 1998

Fire destroys the historic Pullman railroad-car factory in south Chicago.

Eighteenth District Congressman Ray LaHood (b. 1945) presides as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives during the impeachment of President William J. Clinton.

### 1999

Fourteenth District Congressman J. Dennis Hastert (b. 1942) is elected Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

### 2000

George H. Ryan declares a moratorium on executions across the state.

Gwendolyn Brooks, Illinois Poet Laureate since 1968, dies in Chicago.



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### 2001

Governor George H. Ryan breaks ground for the construction of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum complex.

September 11, terrorists hijack planes and fly into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania; thousands die.

### 2002

Governor George H. Ryan presides at the ceremonial opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield. Construction on the Museum portion of the project begins.

Rod R. Blagojevich is elected Illinois' 40th governor.

### 2003

Senator Emil Jones is elected President of the Illinois Senate, the first African American to hold that post.

Illinois faces its largest budget deficit in state history.

Governor Rod Blagojevich convenes a panel to select the next Illinois Poet Laureate. The Illinois State Library is re-named the Illinois State Library: Gwendolyn Brooks Building.

### 2004

A devastating tornado, category F-3 (sustained winds of 158-206 mph), ripped through the town of Utica, Illinois, destroying more than 100 homes and half the town. Eight people died when the basement of the structure in which they had taken shelter collapsed on top of them.

The death on June 5 of Ronald Reagan at the age of 93. He was the 40th President of the United States and a native of Eureka, Illinois. At the age of 69, he was the oldest President to take the oath of office. He is remembered for nominating the first woman to the Supreme Court and his challenge to Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall. On July 13, a category F-4 tornado (sustained winds of approximately 210-240 mph) hit Roanoke, Illinois, totally demolishing the Parsons Manufacturing Company. All lives were spared thanks to the foresight of the owner of the company who had insisted on building storm shelters.



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Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library opened on October 14, 2004. The library houses books, manuscripts, papers, artifacts, and ephemera related to Lincoln's life, the Civil War, and the history of the State of Illinois.

### 2005

The opening, on April 19, of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. An immediate hit with the public, the museum marked its one-millionth visitor only 21 months after opening.

Considered one of the three driest years on record, Illinois' crops were substantially affected. Illinois is the largest producer of soybeans and the second-largest producer of corn in the United States.

The Chicago White Sox won their first World Series since 1917, when they beat the Houston Astros four games to none.

### 2006

The death of Betty Friedan, at the age of 85 (February 4, 1921 – February 4, 2006). Born and raised in Peoria, Illinois, she was a leader in the women's rights movement, a well-known author, and co-founder of the National Organization for Women.

On March 12, two category F-2 tornadoes (sustained winds of 113-157 mph), struck Springfield, Illinois, at virtually the same time. Nineteen people were injured and parts of the city were without power for several days.

Former Governor George Ryan was convicted in April of eighteen corruption-related charges stemming from an FBI investigation. He was sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison.

### 2007

In February, the University of Illinois mascot, Chief Illiniwek, was retired amid controversy. Forced by the NCAA to retire the mascot or face prohibition to NCAA-sponsored tournaments, the chief danced for the last time at half-time of a men's basketball game. Chief Illiniwek had been the university mascot for eighty-one years. A federal jury convicted four Chicago mobsters and a former policeman of racketeering, conspiracy, and murder in a trial that revealed the darkest secrets of organized crime in Chicago. Billed as the "Family Secrets" trial, it was considered one of the most important trials in Illinois' history. Convicted were Joey "The Clown" Lombardo, Frank





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Calabrese, Sr., James Marcello, Paul “The Indian” Schiro, and former police officer Anthony “Twan” Doyle.

### 2008

On January 1, a statewide smoking ban went into effect. It affected nearly all public places and workplaces.

On February 14, lone gunman Steven Kazmierczak, 21, opened fire in a classroom on the campus of Northern Illinois University, resulting in twenty-four casualties and six fatalities, including the perpetrator. It is considered the fifth-deadliest college shooting in United States history.

On April 18, 2008, an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.2 jolted the southeastern area of the state, with its epicenter located near Mt. Carmel, Illinois.

Barak Hussein Obama became the first African-American elected to the Presidency. He had previously served in the Illinois Senate from the 13th District (Chicago-area) from 1997 to 2004, for the Democrat Party. He served as a United States Senator from November 2004 until his resignation in 2008, when he vacated his seat upon winning the Presidency.

### 2009

Illinois celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth Abraham Lincoln, who was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky.

In October, the Chicago Cubs Major League baseball team filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The death in February, at the age of 91, of Phillip Jose Farmer, noted novelist and short story writer. Raised and educated in Peoria, Illinois, Farmer was a prolific writer who won numerous awards.

The Sears Tower in Chicago was renamed the Willis Tower when a London-based insurance group leased a portion of the building, also acquiring naming rights.

### 2010

Illinois banned “texting while driving” and all cell phone use in highway construction and school zones.



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As a result of the 2010 census, Illinois lost one of its congressional seats Governor Pat Quinn was elected to his first full term, having completed the remaining term of his predecessor, Rod Blagojevich.

Judy Barr Topinka was elected State Comptroller, the first woman to serve in two different statewide offices. She first served as State Treasurer from 1995-2007.

### 2011

On January 31, Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation legalizing civil unions for gay and lesbian couples.

February 1 -2 brought a blizzard of historic proportions, considered the third-worst in Illinois history. It dumped up to two feet of snow on the northern part of the state. Lake Shore Drive in Chicago was closed for several days when it became impassable.

The final episode of the Oprah Winfrey show was recorded in Chicago, Ms. Winfrey's adopted home town. She had hosted her daily talk show for 25 years.

Former Governor, Rod Blagojevich, was found guilty of seventeen counts of corruption. In 2002, he was the first Democrat to have been elected Governor in 30 years, having formerly served in the Illinois House of Representatives from the Chicago area. He was arrested on December 9, 2008, and impeached on January 9, 2009. He began serving a fourteen year prison sentence on March 15, 2012.

### 2012

In January, Senator Mark Kirk suffered a debilitating stroke which left him incapable of returning to his seat.