

## **Excerpt from Carl Sandburg's report on the Chicago Riot of 1919 for the Chicago Daily News.**

Says Lax Conditions Caused Race Riots

Dr. George C. Hall Blames Politicians for State of Affairs

Charges that colored officials have not properly protected their race and have permitted lax conditions which resulted in the race riots of to-day and yesterday were made to-day by Dr. George C. Hall, 3488 South Park avenue, one of the best known colored men of the city.

Dr. Hall declared that an unwise police policy was at the bottom the cause of the outbreaks. He said that a serious political situation exists in the ward by reason of the fact that the two colored aldermen are responsible to white politicians rather than to the voters who elected them.

### **Deplores Segregation.**

“In the first place, the police had no business to undertake segregation, of bathers with no ordinance or warrant of law or any form of consultation of the people concerned” said Dr. Hall. “The action of the police in this instance may be traced back to the same conditions that permit to flourish at the present time to an extent never before known in recent years. The segregation line on the bathing beach was drawn by the police. Then when a boy got over the line and trouble arose, the police immediately spread their men out through the district. Wherever colored people were in the habit of congregating peacefully squads of policemen were placed. They drew the color line and followed a policy precisely as the authorities do in Georgia.

“The colored people have simply been sold out by colored leaders. Our leaders are in the hands of white politicians. That is the whole situation in a nutshell. We need representatives who are strictly representative, who are responsible first of all to the people of the ward.”

...

### **Caused by Racial Prejudice**

“It appears to me that the best information at hand indicated that this had its origin in or was occasioned by the same old thing, race prejudice, race restriction, which essayed to express itself by stopping two colored boys from bathing or swimming in a certain locality supposed to be pre-empted by white bathers,” said Dr. Williams to-day. “It was but another expression of force to take away from the members of my race the right granted to us by law. Let the best white and colored people come together and form a program that will protect us all and save this city’s fair name.”

Charles E. Fox, president of Kenwood and Hyde Park Property Owners' association which had been dealing with problems in connection with the influx of colored people in white residence districts of the south side, prepared the following statement on the recent occurrences: "The rioting of yesterday emphasizes the need of intelligent co-operation on both sides. Both can be blamed for this unfortunate occurrence. Violence will not help to solve the problems of the races. Some real constructive action at this time tending toward the creation of a commission to adjudicate differences arising from time to time will do much toward solving the problem. Both races have rights and the rights of each should be respected by the other."

Carl Sandburg, "No Protection Is Given," *Chicago Daily News*, 28 July 1919.

SOURCE: Carl Sandburg, "Lax Conditions Caused Race Riots," *Chicago Daily News* (July 28, 1919). Reprinted at: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4974>. Last accessed Friday, December 5, 2008.