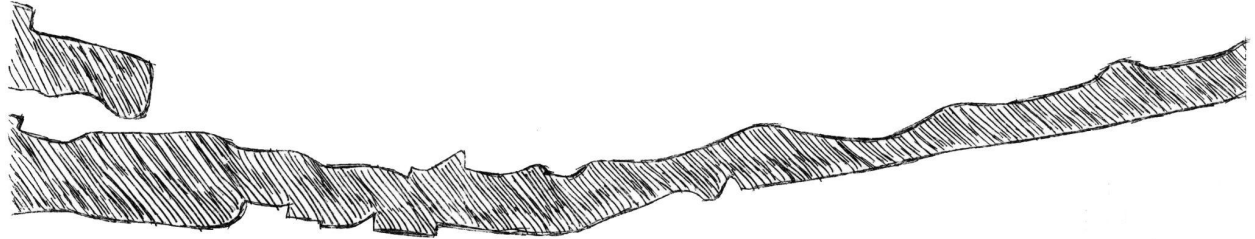


SHORE LAND | 31ST STREET BEACH

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BY EVE EWING, READ BY NIA EASLEY:

On Sunday, July 27, 1919, there was a clash of white people and Negroes at a bathing-beach in Chicago, which resulted in the drowning of a Negro boy.

Jump /Rope

Little Eugene Gene Gene
Sweetest I've seen seen seen
His mama told him him
Them white boys mean mean mean
He didn't listen listen listen
To what mama say say say
Went to the lake lake lake
That July day day day
no, it goes like
Little Eugene W
So sorry to trouble you
Rise, Eugene, rise!
Calm your mama's cries!

Just sit up and look around,
Don't let em bury you down
no, it goes like

Down down baby
Down down, the water's tugging
Sweet sweet baby
Don't make me let you go
Swallow swallow grab the sky
Swallow swallow dark
Swallow swallow grab the sky
Swallow swallow dark
Grandma Grandma sick in bed
Call on Jesus cause your baby's
no, it goes like
All dressed in black black black
All dressed in black black black
All dressed in
And he never came back back back

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: I'm Monica Rickert-Bolter. I am Prairie Band Potawatomi, Black, and German. I am a visual artist here in Chicago. I grew up in a southwest suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It's on the other side of Lake Michigan, so I've always been relatively close to the lake. Those are the ancestral homelands of my dad's side of the family, so that's the Native side. My great grandma, she was part of the boarding schools, but, you know, she didn't want that to happen to her kids and the families, so she had them act white, so her kids wouldn't be taken away. And unfortunately, the language wasn't passed down and certain cultural practices.

August 24, 1816. A treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Limits, made and concluded between Ninian Edwards, William Clark, and Auguste Chouteau, commissioners plenipotentiary of the United States of America, of the one part, and the chiefs and warriors of the united tribes of Ottawas, Chipawas, and Pottowotomees, residing on the Illinois and Melwakee rivers, and their waters, and on the southwestern parts of Lake Michigan, of the other part.

The said chiefs and warriors, for themselves and the tribes they represent, cede to the United States all the land contained within the following bounds: beginning on the left bank of the Fox river of Illinois, ten miles above the mouth of said Fox river ... thence, in a direct line, to a point ten miles north of the west end of the Portage, between Chicago creek, which empties into Lake Michigan, and the river Des Plaines; thence, in a direct line, to a point on Lake Michigan, ten miles northward of the mouth of Chicago creek; thence, along the lake, to a point ten miles southward of the mouth of the said Chicago creek.

In witness whereof, the commissioners and the chiefs and warriors have hereunto subscribed their names and affixed their seals. Ninian Edwards, William Clark, Auguste Chouteau, Mucketeypokee, or Black Partridge, his x mark, Sinnowchewone, by his brother Ignatius, his x mark, Mucketepennese, or Black Bird, his x mark, Bendegakewa, his x mark, Pemasaw, or Walker, his x mark, Nangesay, alias Stout, his x mark, Chamblee, his x mark...

Constitution of Illinois, 1818. The people of the Illinois territory, having the right of admission into the general government as a member of the Union, in order to establish justice, promote the welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their

posterity, do mutually agree with each other to form themselves into a free and independent state, by the name of the State of Illinois. And they do hereby ratify the boundaries assigned to such state by the act of congress aforesaid, which are as follows:

Beginning at the mouth of the Wabash river, thence up the same, and with the line of Indiana to the northwest corner of said state; then east with the line of the same state, to the middle of Lake Michigan; thence north, along the middle of said lake, to north latitude 42 degrees and 30 minutes; thence west to the middle of the Mississippi river, and thence down, along the middle of that river, to its confluence with the Ohio river; and ... Section Six.

Neither slavery or involuntary servitude shall hereafter be introduced into this state, nor shall any indenture of any Negro or mulatto hereafter made and executed out of this state, be of the least validity.

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: So my great aunt Mae, she was born in 1913, 1914, in Tupelo, Mississippi, and hated it down there. She was the oldest of, I think there was about six of them. And as soon as she hit 18, she married the first guy who asked her and headed north, so she was getting out of Mississippi.

Illinois State Statutes Chapter 74, Negroes and Mulattoes, 1845.
Section 1. No black or mulatto person shall be permitted to reside in this state, until such person shall produce to the county commissioners' court where he or she is desirous of settling, a certificate of his or her freedom. And until such person shall have given bond in the penal sum of \$1,000 ...

Section 5. Every black or mulatto person who shall be found in this State, and not having such a certificate as is required by this

chapter, shall be deemed a runaway slave or servant, and it shall be lawful for any inhabitant of this State to take such black or mulatto person before some justice of the peace, cause such black or mulatto person to be committed to the custody of the sheriff. And if such person so committed shall not produce a certificate or other evidence of his freedom, it shall be the duty of the sheriff to hire him out for the best price that he can get ...

Black Laws of Illinois, and a few reasons why they should be repealed. By John Jones, 1864. Gentleman, Editors of the Chicago Tribune, we ask you in the name of the Great God, who made us all; in the name of Christianity and Humanity; to erase from your statute book that code of laws commonly called the Black Laws. We know that thousands of you do not know the effect these laws have upon your colored inhabitants. This section is in direct violation of the Constitution of our state, which declares that *all* men are born free and independent and have an indefensible right to enjoy liberty and pursue their own happiness. But this section denies the colored man equal freedom to settle in this state. Now, it may be said by our enemies, that we are not citizens, and therefore have no such rights as above mentioned. If being natives and born on the soil, of parents belonging to no other nation or tribe does not constitute a citizen in this country, I am at a loss to know in what manner citizenship is acquired by birth. Fellow citizens, I declare unto you, we are American citizens; by the principles of the Declaration of Independence, we are American citizens; within the meaning of the United States Constitution, we are American citizens; by the facts of history, and the admissions of American statesmen, we are American citizens; by the hardship, and trials endured; by the courage and fidelity displayed by our

ancestors in defending the liberties and in achieving the independence of our land, we are American citizens.

Approved February 7, 1865. Be it enacted by the people of the state of Illinois represented in the General Assembly: That chapter 74 of Revised Statutes entitled Negroes and mulattoes, and an act of the General Assembly entitled “An act to prevent the immigration of free Negroes into this state,” be and the same are hereby repealed.

Approved June 10, 1885. Be it enacted by the people of the state of Illinois represented in the General Assembly: That all persons within the jurisdiction of said State shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of inns, restaurants, eating houses, barber shops, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and all other places of public accommodation and amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to all citizens.

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: I'm a very light-skinned version of my mom. And I remember growing up, when I would go hang out with friends, she would ask like, okay, they know we're black, right? I see why she asked me that, why she would be like, “Just be mindful.” You should be able to live and just be, and not always have to feel like you have to fight. I don't want people always have to have that on their mind, where I have to tell you this history. Like I don't want to always see people always having to be the expert on these certain laws or this historical context.

Peter M. Hoffman, Coroner, State of Illinois, County of Cook, City of Chicago. An Inquisition was taken for the People of the State of

Illinois, on the 20th day of July and August 2, 7, 11, 18 and 25, 1919. While there might have been some friction in the use of the beaches, nothing of moment occurred until the afternoon of July 27, 1919. At about two o'clock pm on that day, some white people were in the water at the 29th Street Beach. A party of four colored men and five women approached, indicating their intention to enter the water. They were warned away by white men until they could not use that beach. The colored people left going north and shortly after returned, reinforced, threw stones and drove the white people away, taking possession of the beach and entering the water. The white people retreated south and after a time returned, numbers largely increased, and a battle ensued between the colored men from the north side angle of the beach and the white men at a vantage point to the south. We find that the deceased, Eugene Williams, a peaceable citizen, had entered the water at said beach, the exact time unknown, and was in the water clinging to a railroad tie, that numerous stones were thrown by the white men in this direction, preventing him, from fear of bodily injury, from landing, deceased being compelled to remain out in the deep water of the lake until he released his hold on the railroad tie and drowned.

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: People need to understand our history, so we don't repeat it, so people can actually have some sort of empathy. I want to keep that hope alive, that things do change. Part of that is having that knowledge and being able to confront it and accept, okay, how do we move on from here? What do we do? What are steps that we can take to move forward and not have to hold on to that pain, that hurt, but recognize it. But we also need to know we can heal from it. It doesn't have to shape and define who we are.

– Jeodo Sana folk song in Korean –

Approved May 14, 1903. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly: That every board of commissioners which now has or may hereafter have control over any public park, boulevard or driveway bordering upon any public waters in this State, shall have the power to extend such park, boulevard or driveway over and upon the bed of such public waters. Then the right, title and interest of the State of Illinois in and to the bed of so much of said Lake Michigan shall be vested in such board of park commissioners, and the same shall thereby become a part of the public park or parks under the control of said board.

Plan of Chicago, prepared under the direction of the Commercial Club, by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, 1909. Next in the importance of the development of the lake shore possibilities is the acquisition and improvement of forest spaces. Both the waterfront and the nearby woodlands should be brought within easy reach of all the people and especially the wage earners. All of us should often run away from the works of men's hands and back into the wilds, where mind and body are restored to a normal condition, and we are enabled to take up the burden of life in our crowded streets and endless stretches of buildings with renewed vigor and hopefulness. Should not the public see to it that everyone may enjoy this change of scene, this restorer of bodily and mental vigor, and will not citizenship be better thereby? He who habitually comes in close contact with nature develops saner methods of thought than can be the case when one is habitually shut up within the walls of the city.

Chicago Can Get Fifty Million Dollars for Nothing! By the Chicago Plan Commission, 1916. Fifty million dollars! That is a magnificent sum which can be added to the wealth of Chicago by developing the South Shore Lake Front Parks. The city of Chicago is face to face with the serious problem of disposing of its building waste, excavated earth, ashes and street sweepings. It will cost the taxpayers millions to dispose of these wastes in the future, unless cheap means of handling them are devised now, as afforded on the lakefront. Combining dredging with waste disposal, 1,280 acres in the inner park lands and outer park lands can be made in a little over eight years.

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: I remember looking out into the water and I, kind of, had a moment thinking like, “Thank you for being so beautiful, so wonderful, and just being here for us.” And like, I really want to give back to the lake. It's like, I wish more people had a little bit more respect and appreciation. It's a gorgeous land formation, and it gives so much life, and sustains so much of us being able to have fun in it, and all of our drinking water, like, water is life.

Lakefront Ordinance, Chicago City Council, July 7, 1919. The city approves the plan of the Commissioners for the extension and improvement of its park system on the Lake Front and the construction of park improvements situated on the shore of Lake Michigan now occupied by the 39th Street pumping station. The Commissioners shall provide and maintain adequate bathing beaches with the necessary bath houses, dressing rooms and other suitable facilities, upon the lands to be reclaimed and improved by it between East Roosevelt Road and East 53rd Street. The material used for the filling in or reclaiming of submerged lands shall

consist of sand, earth, clay, cinders, slag, or other material approved by the Commissioner of Public Works. All filling shall be retained by suitable bulkheads or other protection, and, should any of the filling used be of a kind that would contaminate the waters of the lake, such filling shall be confined within watertight bulkheads.

Burnham Park Framework Plan, Chicago Park District, 1999. Burnham Park is located along Lake Michigan, and spans from the south end of Grant Park at Roosevelt Road to 56th Street including Promontory Point. The Burnham Park Framework Plan provides a structure that enables the Chicago Park District and the local community to create a new future for Burnham Park. It contains guidelines for landscape improvements for the development of additional park amenities, and for an improved physical connection between the park and adjacent neighborhoods.

Kellogg Fairbank et al, v. William G. Stratton, Governor et al., Supreme Court of Illinois, 1958. The Metropolitan Fair and Exposition Authority proposes to build an exposition building and auditorium upon a tract of 32.37 acres in Burnham Park. Under the terms of the lease from the Chicago Park District, 6.49 acres of the demised tract, which is presently submerged, must be filled in order to perfect its lease. Plaintiffs assert that the lease from the Chicago Park District is invalid. First, that the legislature had not granted the right to use submerged lands. And secondly, an enabling act specifically provides that title to any such extension shall be vested in the park commissioners for public purposes, and that lands reclaimed thereupon become part of the public park. Plaintiffs say that the use of this tract is not for park purposes, and consequently invalid. We recognize that submerged lands

reclaimed are impressed with a trust in the public interest. However, the facility here contemplated is in the public interest and has been approved by the proper authorities. Under circumstances such as these, we find no violation of that trust.

MONICA RICKERT-BOLTER: The mural at Field Museum I designed, so that's part of me, "I gotta give back to the lakes." It's a Great Lakes mural. It's divided into three sections. The Lakes convene, in section one, and then Sky advises, and then the Lakes speaks. And it just shows like what if the lakes were personified? What if they could talk about what the humans are doing and how they're not taking care, they're not respecting, keep polluting, keep going into the water's territory, like building land, doing these landfills and things. And how the lakes could try to talk to us. How can lakes speak, they can use lake effects, and when those things get worse, then something's obviously wrong. The three-panel mural, the lakes themselves don't have faces but they have distinct colors. If you look at Lake Michigan on any other given day, some days it's a little bit more aqua colored, some days it's like a little darker, deeper blue, that's also part of the beauty of nature.

BY EVE EWING, READ BY NIA EASLEY:

The Pearl Diver

uses waves to her favor:
knows when to resist, which is almost never.
holds the warmth in her tender parts:
the fat on the hips. the breasts.
pushes the darkness aside:
refusing the tangle of green.

reaches also for soft things:

sea cucumber. a slug. the arm of a boy.

grasps also at false starts:

abalone. mussels. a rock with the shape of a tooth.

blinks at every cloud:

a burst of sand. blood in the water.

– Nibi Water Song in Anishinaabe –