ABSTRACT

THE POLITICS OF PLACE: GRANT PARK, 1968-2008

by Susan J. Williams

This paper explores the complex relationship between place, public memory, and politics in American history. Grant Park in Chicago serves as a case study of how political events that have occurred there over a forty year period shed light on public memory and the role that places play in perpetuating history. Archival research conducted at numerous libraries in the Chicago area, as well as personal interviews with individuals present at the 1968 riot and Senator Obama's 2008 Election Day speech in Grant Park reveal the persistence of history and memory in shaping the way a community perceives a particular place.

THE POLITICS OF PLACE: GRANT PARK, 1968-2008

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~Introduction~

On November 4, 2008 Chicago's "front yard" became the nation's frontier. For many who could remember the chaos in Grant Park during the 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC), Senator Barack Obama's presidential victory speech forty years later heralded a new era. But Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley disregarded media comparisons between the police riot that occurred there under his father's watch in 1968 and the planned celebrations for Obama's election in 2008. "That was Vietnam. Vietnam's over with. That destroyed a country," Mayor Daley declared. "Bobby Kennedy got killed. It had nothing to do with Grant Park."[1] Nonetheless, as thousands of supporters gathered in the park to celebrate the election of the first African-American president in the United States, there was a feeling that the nation had finally overcome the political and racial battles that culminated in the police riot of '68. By choosing Grant Park as the site for his speech, Obama harnessed the public memory associated with the park to intensify the historic magnitude of his election. Obama's speech in Chicago's front yard merged memories of violence, chaos, and division with experiences of peace, joy, and unity as the nation stood on the edge of a new frontier.

Places are repositories for memories. History becomes concrete through the geographic sites where activities in the past have occurred. In a specific place, a person can reflect on the past through the memories of that particular space. Places and memories are thus closely linked in their bearing on history. Public places, such as city parks, are locations that can bring a community together, or tear it apart, through shared experiences within that space. Grant Park in Chicago is one such site. Its political past is fundamental to its pivotal role in both the history of Chicago and the United States. Significantly, the impact of the park's political past in that monumental space is what informs public memory today. Political events, such as the chaotic riot in the midst of the Democratic National Convention of 1968, continue to have a profound impact on how America makes sense of the park and its role in the recent past. Recognizing the symbolism of the site, Senator Barack Obama deliberately chose Grant Park to acknowledge victory in the presidential election of 2008 as a way of signaling the new-found harmony he hoped to bring to the United States. From the time of its founding, but more particularly in the past 40 years, Grant Park has played a special role in shared public perceptions of the city and the larger nation.

These and other events in Grant Park have shaped the public memory associated with the site. More than ten years after the police riots, Pope John Paul II held Mass in Grant Park in 1979. Then, in 2007, the Lollapalooza music festival took place in the same locale. For forty years, these events, and countless other marches, rallies, and protests, have helped create a politically charged public memory that is encapsulated in Grant Park.

History and memory are intertwined, making it hard to distinguish between the two. Public memory is the utilization of memory to shape the patterns, structures, and sense of history for a community.[2] A community's memories become the basis of its history. Places, events, and time periods become infused with memories, and thus with the community's history. It is impossible to separate memories from the patterns of culture and structures of place that have given a community a sense of history.

Places have a strong hold on memories. Those old enough to remember can recall where they were in 1944 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor or in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy was

[1] John M. Broder and Monica Davey, "Celebration and Sense of History at Chicago," *New York Times*, November 5, 2008, P8, New York edition.

[2] Michael Frisch, "American History and the Structures of public Memory: A Modest Exercise in Empirical Iconography," in *Memory and American History*, ed. David Thelen (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1-2.

assassinated. More recently, discussion of the September 11th attacks often elicits recollections of the time and place where one was when news of planes colliding into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon hit the airwaves. The political events that have taken place in Grant Park have a similar effect on memory. Mention of the 1968 DNC often evokes memories of chaos, groups chanting "the whole world is watching," and views of Yippies—those alternative, counter-culture youth protesters—crowded on the statue of a Civil War general. Likewise, descriptions of the 2007 Lollapalooza music festival are accompanied by memories of Pearl Jam lead singer Eddie Vedder providing political commentary at the end of the festival. These events and the images associated with them have formed the public memory that is forever associated with the site.

Grant Park's history is, at its heart, a story of people using space to assert power and influence as representative members of the American public. These different groups of people or different "publics," have utilized the "open, clear and free" space of Grant Park to claim their title as representatives of the American citizenry. This story is not only a regional history of a local park, but a broader social and political history that resonates with American citizens locally and nationally. Progressives, protesters, the Pope and his followers, rock and rollers, and Obama supporters are all members that compose a broader "American public." Each of these publics had a very different reason for acting within Grant Park's borders. Their experiences in the park varied greatly. But most critical to this history is the role within the broader American population that these publics represented, thus producing a nuanced public memory to perpetuate Grant Park's history.

~ Grant Park Development ~

Grant Park's heritage as a place for the people reflects its political role within the community of Chicago and the nation at large. Its development was part of the national movement to construct urban parks in America at the turn of the nineteenth century. In time, even before 1968, it came to play an important role as a contested space in Chicago.

Grant Park is one of a number of urban parks created in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in the United States. In New York City, famed landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted conceived of Central Park as a "pastoral retreat" from the hustle and bustle of urban life.[3] Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, also developed in the late-nineteenth century, was likewise a recreational retreat for city residents. Residents could find peace and pleasure in these urban landscapes designed to evoke the serenity of English country gardens and the artistic grandeur of the grounds at Versailles. They were places of respite and recreation for the city dwellers of America's booming metropolises.

Urban parks existed in these cities before the mid-nineteenth century, to be sure. Small squares, vacant tracts of land, and common grassy areas could be found in cities across the country. But there was no physical or civic organization to them. They had no meaning as spaces reserved for recreational enjoyment and social development within the city.[4]

The City Beautiful movement emerged at the turn of the century to mold these urban landscapes into a serene retreat. The City Beautiful movement was largely a Progressive endeavor. It came out of a need to address the cramped, grimy, anarchic tenements of America's industrial cities. City Beautiful advocates believed order could be derived within the chaotic cities through a unified design of buildings and streetscapes. Neoclassical and Beaux Arts architecture, part of the City Beautiful movement, highlighted uniform lines mixed with dramatic allure. Neoclassical architecture copied the columns and friezes found in ancient Greek buildings. With special attention to symmetry, Beaux Arts architecture blended these classical elements with arched and pedimented doors and windows and a hierarchy of spaces from "noble" space on the ground level to utilitarian space on the top floor.[5] The combination of these two architectural styles allowed for the continuity and order needed to tame the chaotic cities, while still evoking the pleasure and beauty necessary for social betterment as understood by Progressives.

Just as design was an outward example of the City Beautiful movement, social reform within the cities was an underlying goal of the effort. Progressives concluded that being surrounded with pleasing aesthetic architecture and landscapes could socially uplift working class residents living and working in deplorable conditions. By creating a stable setting in which residents worked and played, Progressive architects believed they could inculcate civilized ideals. Fashioning homogeneity through architecture and landscape, designers believed, would pave the way for disparate ethnic groups to form a homogeneous community. Such a community in turn would reduce social conflict and increase economic productivity."[6]

There were further social and political motives at play within the City Beautiful movement and

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3 Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 3.

4 John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 11-15.

5 Marilyn Stokstad in collaboration with David Cateforis, *Art History*, revised 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005), 1014-1017.

6 Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 13-15.

Progressive reform, related to Grant Park and other parks across the nation. Well-to-do businessmen were most often the reformers who implemented many of the City Beautiful projects. These Progressives, while reacting to the degradation within their cities, were also responding to their own fear of losing political control. They wanted to address the horrific conditions in which urban residents were living, but did so in hopes of tempering the urges of many residents to foment political discord as a result of their living and working conditions. Progressives were trying to suppress labor strikes and the growing political power of working class immigrants in addition to beautifying their cities.[7]

Perhaps the most glorious inspiration for the City Beautiful movement came from France. In Paris, the wide, tree-lined boulevards and strategically placed squares and parks were part of a balanced, aesthetically-pleasing, and orderly cityscape worthy of imitation.[8] The city's ability to expand in an orderly fashion, thanks in great part to French urban architect Georges-Eugène Haussmann's influence, also gave hope to city planners and architects that they might be able to do the same for cities in America. The grandeur and symmetry of the palace of Versailles were also influential in the City Beautiful movement, especially in relation to Grant Park. As a modern-day pamphlet about Grant Park suggests, "As the 'front yard' of Chicago, Grant Park symbolically represents the city to the world, just as Louis XIV intended Versailles to symbolically represent France to the world. The design intent of both parks is to extend the formal order of the city into the garden. The park becomes the interface between Culture, the city and Nature..."[9] In Grant Park, the Progressive City Beautiful movement and its French antecedents made their mark.

The defining moment in the history of the City Beautiful movement came in 1893, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The six-month-long world's fair showcased a "White City" in neoclassical design, neatly organized around lagoons and taking advantage of the pleasurable natural vistas that the lakefront offered. It was the epitome of order and pastoral beauty in one magnificent city. After the fair was over and the majority of the buildings had been burned down, Grant Park was chosen to capture the last glimmer of the beautiful city.

Before Grant Park became the remaining remnant of the City Beautiful movement, it was barren landscape in need of a purpose. When the population of Chicago was less than five thousand residents, active community members rallied against commercial and industrial development along the lake front. As a result, in 1836 the Board of Canal Commissioners allotted a plot of land along Lake Michigan to be "Public Ground—A Common to Remain Forever Open, Clear and Free of Any Buildings or Other Obstruction, whatever."[10] For the next sixty years Lake Park, as it was called at the time, saw little development save for train routes and depots and squatters' shanties. In 1871 the Great Chicago Fire caused the expansion eastward of Lake Park into Lake Michigan as much of the rubble from the fire was simply pushed into the lake, creating more land for the city. This method of disposal only furthered the unsightliness of what Chicagoans some 35 years earlier had hoped to prevent along the lake shore.

Baseball fields and other small structures, in addition to the train lines that already existed, dotted Lake Park throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Though against the parameters set by the Board of Canal Commissioners, the city built the Inter-State Industrial Exposition Building

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7 Ibid, 50-51; Tim Gilfoyle, *Millennium Park: Creating a Chicago Landmark* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 25.

8 Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 11-12.

9 Chicago Park District, Office of Research and Planning, "A Starting Point: Historic Overview" *Grant Park Design Guidelines*, July 1, 1992, 7-18, Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, Illinois

10 Quoted in Tim Gilfoyle, *Millennium Park: Creating a Chicago Landmark* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3-4.

in Lake Park in 1873 as a sign of recovery after the fire. Twenty years later the structure gave way to the World's Congresses Building for the World's Columbian Exposition. Planners had considered Grant Park as a possible site for the fair, but abandoned it in favor of Jackson Park on Chicago's South Side. Eventually the World's Congresses Building became the Art Institute, the only structure ever allowed to remain in Grant Park.[11]

In 1896, the Chicago South Park Commission gained control of the relatively undeveloped land, and renamed it Grant Park in 1901 in honor of former President Ulysses S. Grant.[12]To this commission architect Daniel Burnham brought his plan for beautifying Chicago's lakefront, in what became part of his grand design for the city, *The Plan of Chicago*. Burnham proposed an open parkland replete with parade grounds and a playground flanking the Field Museum, which he placed in the center of the park. In that conception, a large fountain separated the museum from the lake, with a yacht harbor as well. In the end, Burnham's plans for Grant Park never materialized.

Burnham's plan fell prey to precedent. Aaron Montgomery Ward, mail-order mogul and Michigan Avenue business owner, upheld the Canal Commissioners' 1836 designation to maintain the lakefront as a clear and open space. With the exception of the Art Institute, Ward battled for twenty years against any kind of building along the lakefront, and succeeded. Burnham's museum ended up on the south end of Grant Park, on the Museum Campus on land donated by the Illinois Central Railroad. Buckingham Fountain emerged in the east-center of the park in 1927, while numerous sporting and festival grounds made up a majority of the park. In commemoration of his years of service to the city of Chicago, the city built the Richard J. Daley Bicentennial Plaza in the mid 1970s on the northeast end of the park, complete with space for sports and other community activities. Today Grant Park encompasses 319 acres of open land, recreation facilities, and gardens, bordered on the north by Randolph Street, the west by Michigan Avenue, the south by Roosevelt Road, and the east by Lake Shore Drive and Lake Michigan.

Since Grant Park's major development in the early years of the twentieth century, a number of notable political events have transpired within that space. After World War I, Grant Park played host to a trophy show of guns and tanks captured from the German military during the war. Visitors could view the spoils of war for as little as 25 cents during the two week U.S Government War Exposition held in the park. In 1932 presidential hopeful Franklin Roosevelt appeared in front of a cheering crowd in the park on a campaign stop in Chicago.[13] During the Great Depression, area Communists held a rally in Grant Park to protest the planned execution of nine black men from Alabama charged with raping two white women.[14] As a follow-up to the riot during the convention in 1968, female Weatherman members–a militant Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) splinter group–met in the park in October 1969 to rally against the war, with plans to attack military induction centers.[15] In the late 1990s, protesters picketed along the same stretch of Grant Park as student activists did in 1968, though this time they were reacting to Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to the city. The protesters demanded human rights and recognition of political entities in Tibet and Taiwan.[16] Each of these

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11 Ibid, 12-16.

12 Max Grinnell, "Grant Park," in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 358.

13 John Stewart, *The Daily Journal*, http://daily-journal.com/bloggers/breakingnews/index.php/archive/obama-to-be-at-chicagos-grant-park-on-election-day/, accessed April 24, 2010.

14 Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at its Grassroots, 1928-35*, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 108.

15 Daniel J. Flynn, *City Journal*, http://www.city-journal.org/2008/eon1103df.html, accessed April 24, 2010.

16 Mark Skertic, Curtis Lawrence, "Zhu woos farmers over trade; Protesters dog Chinese leader on mission to boost economy" *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 12, 1999, 3.

events, in addition to the DNC riot, the Pope's visit, Lollapalooza 2007, and Obama's speech, have helped to shape Grant Park's political history.

~ 1968 ~

During the 1968 DNC, Grant Park became what revered news journalist Dan Rather recalled as the "proverbial boiling pot."[17] Throughout the 1960s the United States was in upheaval. Martin Luther King led blacks in a battle for civil rights that often met with resistance, as dogs and policemen attacked peaceful protesters of segregation. SDS called for an end to the war in Vietnam; its protests took demonstrators from the campuses of Berkeley to Columbia, inciting students across the nation to stand up against what many felt was an unjust war. Throughout the 1960s, the younger generation of the New Left and the counterculture, who wanted action and radical change both in politics and in society, moved further and further away from parents clinging to traditional social structures and organized political reform. Bob Dylan's song from 1964, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" captured the Old versus New Left battle being waged across American households: "Come mothers and fathers throughout the land, and don't criticize what you can't understand, your sons and your daughters are beyond your command, your old road is rapidly agin', please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand, for the times they are a-changin'."[18] By 1968, students and adults had enough, and this clash between the old and the new took place in Grant Park.

1968 was a turbulent year. Americans confronted destruction and death at every turn. The war in Vietnam and political turmoil rattled America. Assassinations tore the country apart. Everything built up to the breakdown in Chicago at the end of August.

The war in Vietnam raged on, with over 500,000 American combat troops in country in 1968, which was the highest number of servicemen stationed there during the entire war. In January of that year, American support for the war suffered a decisive blow in the form of the Tet Offensive, so-called because it occurred on the first day of the Vietnamese lunar New Year. Communist North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese guerilla forces launched a surprise attack deep into South Vietnam with the hopes of inciting a peasant revolution to overthrow the American backed government there. They took over provincial capitals, and infiltrated the United States embassy in Saigon. Though American forces were able to regain all ground lost during the offensive, media coverage of the attack demonstrated to the American public that the war was unwinnable. This event fueled the fires of anti-war activists nationwide to get America out of Vietnam.

Protests against the war in Vietnam were becoming more prevalent in early 1968. President Lyndon Johnson faced taunts of "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" and "One, two, three, four. We don't want your fucking war" on a daily basis. In February, Robert McNamara, Johnson's Secretary of Defense, resigned his post as a statement of his dissatisfaction and disillusionment with Johnson's wartime policies. When fellow Democrats Senator Eugene McCarthy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy challenged him for the presidential nomination, Johnson knew he had lost the support not only of the American people, but of his party as well. As a result, on March 31, in a televised address to the nation, he stated, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president," effectively resigning from public office the following January.[19]

The nation did not have long to recover from the shock of Johnson's announcement before it suffered another devastating blow. On April 4, a sniper's bullet felled Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Riots broke out immediately

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[17] Dan Rather, interview with the author, February 23, 2009.

[18] Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are A-Changin'", 1963, http://www.bobdylan.com/#/songs/the-times-they-are-a-changin

[19] President Lyndon B. Johnson, *Address to the Nation,* http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/Johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/680331.asp, accessed April 14, 2010.

across the nation as African-Americans reacted in anger and sadness at the murder of their beloved leader. King was a peerless luminary in the nonviolent fight for civil rights in America. But rather than espouse King's insistence for peace, rioters set fires and looted in 125 cities, with 21,000 African-Americans being charged with riot-related crimes.[20] King's death sparked yet another fire of frustration among the African-American community, the kind that was ignited numerous other times throughout the 1960s.

While riots raged in the streets of Detroit, Washington D.C., Chicago, and countless other cities, Senator Robert F. Kennedy pleaded for peace at a campaign rally in Indianapolis. During that speech Kennedy quoted the poet Aeschylus: "Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God." Acknowledging feelings of bitterness at King's murder, Kennedy asked those in the crowd to practice restraint, stating, "What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black."[21] While madness consumed the rest of the country, Indianapolis remained peaceful.

That peace did not last long though. In Chicago, Mayor Richard J. Daley spoke honorably of King, while some in the movement indicted Daley for his previous denial of King and his cause in Chicago. Daley's peaceful rhetoric quickly changed though when the city erupted in turmoil along with the rest of the country. Daley requested the support of National Guardsmen to quell the riot. In an address to his citizens he urged them to "stand up...and protect this city" against the looting, arson, and sniper fire that riddled the city's black neighborhoods. By the end of the riots, eleven Chicagoans were dead and over 25 blocks of shops and apartments were smoldering ruins. Furious at such disorder in his city, Mayor Daley ordered Chicago police to "shoot to kill" during any future rioting, a statement that led to even more destruction in August.[22]

Kennedy's pleas for peace faded just two months after the King murder. The Senator took a bullet himself after a remarkable victory in the California Democratic primary, in a tight race against fellow anti-war presidential candidate Senator Eugene McCarthy. Only moments before, he had celebrated his victory with a short speech to supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Again, the nation mourned the passing of a leader who understood and sympathized with the social and political changes America was experiencing in this tumultuous decade.

By August, the nation was primed for a social and political breakdown in Chicago. The explosive effects of war, riots, murder, and political division converged in Grant Park in 1968, forever changing the public's memory of that place.

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[20] Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), 396.

[21] Senator Robert F. Kennedy, *Statement on the Assassination of Martin Luther King*, April 4, 1968, http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/RFK/Statement+on+the+Assassination+of+Martin+Luther+King.htm, accessed June 3, 2010

[22] Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor, *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Dailey: His Battle for Chicago and the Nation* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 452-455.

~The Mobe, Yippies, and SDS~

While serious designs to disrupt the DNC began in early 1968, the volatile social and political atmosphere within the key activist organizations had been smoldering for a long time. The two main groups spearheading the protests in Grant Park were the National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam (Mobe) and the Yippies. SDS was well-represented in Chicago under the guise of the Mobe, and its ideology pervaded both the Yippies and the Mobe. Numerous current and former SDS members planned and engaged in the protests as well. Though SDS was not a separate contingent in Chicago, it crucially influenced the event. Each of these groups had a distinctive approach to the Chicago protest, rooted in its respective ideological position in the months and even years before the DNC.

The National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam, or the Mobe as it was often called, was an umbrella organization coordinating a wide range of grassroots anti-war factions. Led by pacifist David Dellinger, the Mobe sought to end the war in Vietnam through peaceful and non-partisan protest. By 1968 Dellinger had been an active anti-war protester for over twenty years. During World War II he refused to register for the draft, though he qualified for a deferment on grounds of his employment as a minister. He spent three years in jail for this act of defiance of the "economic cruelty" propagated by the United States and England during the war. Dellinger remained a communist after World War II, opposing capitalism and its inequitable consequences for Americans. In the 1950s and early 1960s he was active in the civil rights movement as a strong proponent of nonviolent protest. Dellinger also used *Liberation*, the magazine he founded and co-edited, as his sounding board for prominent topics of the time, such as anti-war, civil rights, and socialism.[23] Given his years of activism and his dedication to changing the society that allowed a war to occur, it was only natural for Dellinger to lead the Mobe.

The Mobe developed from a number of other one-time protest committees that organized national and international Days of Protest and anti-war marches between 1965 and 1967. Federations such as SDS, the National Coordinating Committee to End the War, and the Assembly of Unrepresented People variously led these protests over that two year period, but by November 1966, it became apparent that there needed to be a coherent organizing principle among these scattered protests being launched by varying anti-war organizations. The Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, which eventually dropped its seasonal moniker, met in Cleveland to discuss actions in New York and San Francisco scheduled for the following April. Influential activists present at the meeting also solidified the Mobe's purpose as being, "charged with suggesting, stimulating and/or organizing actions of a more limited and more localized nature...as long as these actions clearly fall within the consensus reached by the diverse viewpoints of the conference."[24] Though sensitive to the New Left and the counter-culture's conviction to participatory politics, the Mobe's decentralized nature made organizing convoluted and arduous.

The Mobe's first large-scale action was the March to the Pentagon in October 1967. This successful protest saw numerous groups coalesce under the guise of the Mobe. New Left activists espousing "participatory democracy" such as Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis, Old Left proponents of more conservative action and conventional methods for change like David Dellinger, and counter-culture hippy advocates of alternative politics and lifestyles, namely Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, constituted the majority involved in the March to the Pentagon. With the Mobe's determination to connect anti-war groups from across the political and social spectrum, these three camps found favorable circumstances for their respective motivations and methods of protesting in the Mobe-led action at the Pentagon. This watershed event strengthened the divide between the New and Old Left,

[23] David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 61-62; footnote 23, pg. 267.

[24] Quoted in David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 68.

and legitimated the New Left and counter-culture's changing goals and methods of protest.

Norman Mailer's book *The Armies of the Night* recounted the March to the Pentagon from Mailer's own Old Left perspective. Fellow Old Leftists and renowned poet Robert Lowell and journalist and social critic Dwight Macdonald accompanied Mailer at the head of the March to the Pentagon, eventually offering themselves up for arrest during the protest as famous names "expendable for the cause."[25] As Mailer, Lowell and Macdonald looked on, Abbie Hoffman and fellow would-be Yippies attempted to levitate the Pentagon. Hippies passed around a flyer explaining their purpose in levitating the structure:

> We Freemen, of all colors of the spectrum...do exorcise and cast out the EVIL which has walled and captured the pentacle of power and perverted its use to the need of the total machine and its child the hydrogen bomb and has suffered the people of the planet earth...grievous mental and physical torture and the constant torment of imminent threat of utter destruction. We are demanding that the pentacle of power once again be used to serve the interests of GOD manifest in the world as man...Let this day, October 21, 1967, mark the beginning of suprapolitics.

Mailer described the levitating ceremony as counter-culture hippies faced the Pentagon from the parking lot, chanting, "Out, demons, out – back to darkness, ye servants of Satan – out, demons, out!" and "End the fire and war, and war, end the plague of death." Ed Sanders, singer of the counter-culture band the Fugs, intoned, "These are the magic eyes of victory. Victory, victory for peace. Money made the Pentagon – melt it. Money made the Pentagon, melt it for love," while someone else shouted, "Burn the money, burn the money, burn it, burn it."[26]

After the levitation attempt, those espousing more New Left ideals and methods of direct action protest stormed the military police who surrounded the Pentagon. Carrying the flag of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the protesters lined up along a rope behind which military police guarded the building. Some demonstrators placed flowers in gun barrels. Mailer crossed the rope in an attempt to get arrested for what he considered "a real cause."[27] Militant New Left activists and a few venturesome Old Leftists provoked the war-machine head-on, no longer adhering to the nonviolent practice of passive resistance.

As Dellinger had hoped prior to the Pentagon protest, solidarity among the divergent groups prevailed. By welcoming all methods of protest at the Pentagon, Dellinger and the protesters at the Pentagon set the standard for the Mobe's agenda and tactics in Chicago.[28]

In March, the Mobe hosted a planning conference for the DNC protests. SDS, the Young Socialist Alliance, Yippies, black civil rights advocates, and numerous other protest groups converged in Lake Villa, Illinois for a weekend of paper presentations, small group discussions, and resolution debates concerning the makeup of planned demonstrations in Chicago. Conforming to the Mobe's non-partisan and nonviolent credo, Mobe planners Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis outlined the nature of the Chicago protest, that it "should be non-violent and legal...we must make an absolutely clear commitment to non-violent tactics, develop a simple and clear political message that large numbers of Americans can understand." By suggesting such a basic agenda for the protests, the Mobe hoped to welcome moderates and militants alike to Chicago.[29]

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[25] Norman Mailer, *The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, the Novel as History* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1968), 118.

[26] Ibid, 122, 123.

[27] Ibid, 126-129, 138; David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 58-59.

[28] Ibid, 58

[29] Ibid, 87-90

By August the Mobe solidified its plans and its purpose for Chicago. In a letter sent to Mobe members and supporters, the organization pointed out two main goals of their demonstrations in Chicago: to compel the Democratic party to withdraw troops from Vietnam to "stop the needless slaughter of Americans and Vietnamese," and to abolish the institutions of racism in America. In order to do this, the Mobe planned "decentralized initiatives and actions...organized in 'movement centers'" throughout convention week, and "massive coordinated activities" for the 28th and 29th, the days the Party would vote on the proposed peace plank and nominate its choice for president.[30] These "decentralized initiatives" allowed for a wide spectrum of activists to come to Chicago and demonstrate in their respective formats under the Mobe's program for the week. The "massive coordinated activities" would bring together large numbers of protesters to forcefully confront the war machine in the convention hall. Under these conditions of decentralized yet rational activism, the Mobe led the Battle of Chicago in Grant Park.

SDS emerged in 1960 at the University of Michigan as the student arm of the long established League for Industrial Democracy. From its inception, SDS's goal was the transformation of political and social thinking in America. Tom Hayden, a student at Michigan in the late 1950s, emerged as the consummate leader of the New Left and student movements through his work with SDS. Hayden grew up in a Detroit suburb, attending Catholic school and writing secretly antagonistic and socially conscious pieces for his high school newspaper. In college he was editor of the university's newspaper, the *Michigan Daily*. At that time he also came into contact with Michigan graduate student and SDS leader Al Haber, who recruited Hayden into the fledgling liberal, campus organization. After graduation in the early 1960s, Hayden became active in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the student arm of the civil rights movement. He battled for civil rights in the Deep South as an SDS field secretary, thereby acting as a link between the two activist organizations. With Hayden as president of SDS from 1962 to 1963, the organization swelled to represent liberal-minded students on campuses across the country. Many newcomers to SDS were motivated by Hayden's call for participatory democracy in his most influential contribution to New Left thinking, "The Port Huron Statement."[31]

In what was SDS's manifesto, "The Port Huron Statement" challenged America for its apathy toward the paradoxes that existed within its borders: "The declaration 'all men are created equal...' rang hollow before the facts of Negro life in the South and the big cities of the North. The proclaimed peaceful intentions of the United States contradicted its economic and military investments in the Cold War status quo." By creating a community dedicated to "participatory democracy," SDS believed that a new, more positive kind of politics in America could prevail, one which allowed for "the art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations" and "has the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community, thus being a necessary, though not sufficient, means of finding meaning in personal life."[32]

"The Port Huron Statement" was a testament to the alienation of young people coming of age amid the economic boom and Cold War. These members of the Baby Boom generation enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and abundant luxuries, and a media industry that brought news of the world, good and bad, straight into their living rooms. Coupled with the anxieties that commonplace bomb

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[30] Dave Dellinger, National Mobilization letter, August 10, 1968, 1968 Democratic National Convention Collection, Box 4, Folder 6, McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University.

[31] Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), 311-312; David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 75-77.

[32] Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement," 1962 in *The Global Revolutions of 1968*, ed. Jeremi Suri (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 41, 46.

threat drills called “duck and cover,” and virulent anti-communism produced throughout childhood, SDS members began to question the elements of society that created this dichotomous and destructive new American reality. The men and women of SDS who gathered in Michigan in 1962 to craft a mission for their generation made plain their discontent and disillusionment in “The Port Huron Statement,” declaring that “loneliness, estrangement, isolation describe the vast distance between man and man today. These dominant tendencies cannot be overcome by better personnel management, nor by improved gadgets, but only when a love of man overcomes the idolatrous worship of things by man.” In response to this bleak view of American society, SDS affirmed that “The search for truly democratic alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social experimentation with them, is a worthy and fulfilling human enterprise, one which moves us and, we hope, others today.”[33]

This commitment to democratic alternatives and social experimentation, within the bounds of nonviolence, soon morphed into a desire for a complete overhaul of American society and politics, through whatever means necessary. By 1968, Hayden and others associated with SDS were espousing more militant tactics and outcomes. In a paper drafted by Hayden and fellow SDS and Mobe organizer Rennie Davis, the pair called for “a week of demonstrations, disruptions and marches...clogging the streets of Chicago demanding peace, justice and participation in government.” The method they planned was confrontational direct action, “pinning the delegates in the International Amphitheater until a choice is presented to the American people.”[34] SDS was no longer an organization centered on reformulating ideas, but one dedicated to revolutionizing American society and politics.

The Yippies took a less radical yet more raucous approach than SDS to transforming American society. True to their far-out counterculture mentality, the Yippies' mode for changing society was to react to the absurd state of American politics and social behavior with equally absurd counter-statements and actions. Stemming from the Yippies’ mythical formation to their outrageous shenanigans planned for Chicago, the method for change was in line with their madness.

The Yippies materialized from a drug induced haze in counter-culture ringleader Abbie Hoffman's New York apartment as a politically and socially aware counterculture clique. Hoffman was a late-comer to the counter-culture movement, but by 1968 he was its spokesperson. Hoffman grew up in a semi-Orthodox yet assimilationist Jewish family, a paradox that he later said contributed to his interest in society and politics. After graduating from Brandeis University, he entered University of California Berkeley's psychology graduate program, though soon after he had to return to Massachusetts to marry his pregnant girlfriend. While married and raising a family in the early 1960s, Hoffman became increasingly involved in the civil rights movement, working for the local NAACP chapter and volunteering with SNCC in Mississippi in 1964 and 1965. When SNCC expelled all white members from the organization in 1966, Hoffman was organizing in New York, where he immersed himself in the burgeoning hippie counter-culture movement. In that context Hoffman learned to manipulate the power of the media to his advantage, by engaging in absurd and sensational “happenings,” such as joining conventional demonstrators in support of American troops in Vietnam, while flaunting his long, hippie, flower-adorned hair and anti-war rhetoric. Throughout 1967 and into 1968, Hoffman finessed this tactic of drawing media attention, by means of absurd public pranks, to convey his political message as he organized the Yippies and their attack on Chicago.

In Washington in October 1967, the hippie effort to levitate the Pentagon while exorcising the war-making demons rooted in that concrete symbol of all that was wrong with American society and politics. Was a first step forward[35] The counter-culture activists involved in the March to the Pentagon

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[33] Ibid, 45, 42-43.

[34] David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 78.

[35] Ibid, 3-5, 59.

intoned the evil, money-hungry, war-making devils to get out of the federal building and bring an end to the war in Vietnam. After the high of that protest, Hoffman, former Berkeley student-activist Jerry Rubin, Paul Krassner, the editor and publisher of the counter-culture magazine *Realist*, and others converged in late 1967 to plot their next psychedelic attack on Johnson's war machine, this time in Chicago. Hoffman, Rubin and Krassner believed the alternative anti-war protest they participated in at the Pentagon was a new kind of political action that needed to occur in Chicago.

Hoffman, Rubin and Krassner sought a name for their new politics. From their psychedelic free-thinking Krassner came up with Yippie, for the Youth International Party. It was a play on hippie, with a mind to the youthful exuberance and freedom of childhood shouts of joy. Yippie! In conjunction with their youthful mentality, Yippies led childish pranks, "monkey" actions – a play on guerilla tactics used in war – to obstruct politics and society. The group parked a large yellow submarine – alluding to the Beatles song "Yellow Submarine" – in a tow-away zone, covered the Army Recruiting Center in Times Square with posters advising recruits to "See Canada Now," ran through the streets shouting "The war is over!" while hugging passersby and showering them with confetti, and sprayed squirt guns at attendees of a black-tie event featuring Secretary of State Dean Rusk.[36] This new alternative to the marching and speeches of the anti-war and civil rights movements embraced the magical possibilities of a movement based on the enjoyment of lighthearted life experiences. While the Mobe marched in Chicago, the Yippies celebrated the Festival of Life.

The Festival of Life countered what Hoffman and the other Yippies called the "Convention of Death," or the DNC. They wanted this weeklong carnival of drugs, rock 'n roll, and intellectual experimentation to embrace "the politics of ecstasy." But they also wanted to create a forum for an absurd reality in response to the equally absurd reality fostered by the American government. Mainstream newspapers warned Chicagoans of the Yippies' antics. *Chicago's American,* the city's local afternoon daily newspaper, reported, "Yippees plan to paint their cars like cabs, pick up delegates, and drop them off in Wisconsin." Other unrealistic reports surfaced, no doubt planted by Yippies, that they intended during the convention to lace Chicago's water supply with LSD. The Yippies also distributed an ad in early 1968 in the underground press for their planned activities in Chicago, declaring, "We will create our own reality, we are Free America. And we will not accept the false theatre of the Death Convention."[37] This connection between reality and theater was central to Yippie philosophy. While an air of absurdity permeated the Yippies and their counterculture high jinks, they believed their level of absurdity was in direct proportion to the absurdity of the war-making federal government and American society. Hoffman and Rubin knew their antics were "beyond reason," but reason was irrelevant in a society gone mad.[38] According to the Yippies, the only way to counter madness was with madness.

For the Yippies, Chicago was a farce. America was a farce. Society was a farce. "The whole thing can be looked upon as a theater" Rubin stated in a report from *Chicago's American*. "You have the theater of the convention and its obscene politics and Johnson, and he's important to the theater because he's stupid...Even if Chicago does not burn, the paranoia and guilt of the government will force them to bring thousands of troops, and the more troops the better the theater." The Yippies intended to make a show out of Chicago and beat the federal government and American society at their own game.

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[36] Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), 412.

[37] David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 17.

[38] Quoted in Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), 412.

~Preparing for Chicago~

Continuing on the road from protest to resistance, New Left and counter-culture leaders Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, and Jerry Rubin agreed that an alternative convention in the streets should take place while the Democratic Party convened in the Chicago International Amphitheater was necessary to provoke the Party to vote for an immediate end to the war in Vietnam.[39] Throughout the spring and summer of 1968, SDS, Yippies and the Mobe made plans to disrupt the DNC in August.

In *Chicago's American*, investigative reporter Jack Mabley kept Chicago's residents up to date on the protesters' plans, detailing in his "Probe" reports designs for an alternative convention in Grant Park. Mabley related the counterculture's plans:

> The day before [President Johnson] arrives we will announce to the overground press that the President will arrive at 2 p.m. at O'Hare International airport. And it will be our own LBJ who will be greeted enthusiastically by the yippees, honored with a motorcade thru the city, and then grant a press conference to announce America's withdrawal from Viet Nam.

As revealed during the DNC, the Yippies' president was a pig named Pigasus, meant to disgrace the current President and the politics of his administration.

The plans went further than disgrace alone. The radical and passionate counter-culture wanted the protests at the DNC to show the nation its disgust with current forms of political negotiation, to demonstrate that thoughtful, decisive action was necessary to create changes in American society. "Imagine the sight," Yippie Jerry Rubin predicted in *Chicago's American*, "Thousands upon thousands of yippees, from 200,000 and beyond, making their way to Chicago by thumb, Magical Mystery Tour bus, bicycle, car, truck, foot—from big town to small hamlet…coming together in the middle of the country at the end of the summer for a super-creative synthesis, energy explosion, information exchange." But the Yippies' energy explosion information exchange also signified a change in tactics. Reiterating Hayden and Davis's desire to shift from nonviolent protest to resistance, Yippie Paul Krassner stated in *Chicago's American* "the dialogue is over, baby. Tolerance of rational dissent has become an insidious form of repression. The goal now is to disrupt an insane society."

Labeled a "king maker" for his assistance in delivering the presidential nomination to both John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, Mayor Daley was a hard-nosed Democrat of the old political machine generation. [40] His "one-man rule" of Chicago included his influence over four-fifths of the City Council, making it easy for him to approve building and rezoning for the benefit of those he favored and to deny civil reform for those he did not.[41] Daley was not above lying, cheating, or stealing to get the political outcomes for his party that he desired. Determined to maintain order during the riots after Martin Luther King's death, Daley defined the power of his position with his "shoot to kill" orders to the Chicago police. Bringing the Democratic National Convention to his beloved city was Daley's dream come true.[42] He despised the longhaired hippies and was not about to let them disrupt his orderly show of power at the DNC.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1968 the Yippies and the Mobe continued the dialogue with the established political structure in Chicago. Seeking approval for what they were calling the Festival of Life, the Yippies sent a letter to Mayor Daley detailing their plans for political and social

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[39] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 320.

[40] Mike Royko, *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1971), 168.

[41] "Man Who Runs Chicago" *New York Times*, August 26, 1968, p. 23.

[42] Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 119.

activities in Grant Park during the DNC.[43] In July members of the Mobe met with the Superintendent of Parks to discuss obtaining permits for the use of the Grant Park bandshell area for political rallies on August 28 and 29, the week of the DNC. A few days later Davis met with a staff member of the Mayor's office to explain the Mobe's details for the week's events, including designated sites in the park for activists to sleep as well as a parade route under guard of police and the National Guard to ensure order and safety for all involved. When this plan did not appeal to the Mayor's office, the Mobe sought assistance from the Justice Department's Community Relations Service to implore Mayor Daley to allow the group to demonstrate peacefully in Grant Park.[44] Daley was unmoved by the Yippies' and the Mobe's attempts at dialogue. He stood firm in his rejection of all permits for assembly in Grant Park during the DNC.

[43] Yippies letter to Richard J. Daley, March 26, 1968, Jack Mabley Papers, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

[44] City Negotiations, July 31, August 2, August 5, 1968, Jack Mabley Papers, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

~1968 Democratic National Convention~

The Yippies and the Mobe were equally firm in their conviction that action must be taken during the DNC, with or without legal permission. Early in the week they held demonstrations in Lincoln Park where skirmishes between protesters and police occurred when protesters would not clear out of the park for the 11 PM curfew. Journalist Dan Rather, who was in Chicago reporting on the DNC, later described Grant Park early in the week, recalling:

> There were speeches – about the war, assassinations, civil rights, poverty, all kinds of things. There were the smells of outdoor cooking, unwashed bodies, the grass and trees of the park – the wonderful park – mixed with whiffs of marijuana now and then. The police were around. So were state and federal agents, no doubt some "undercover." There was a mixture of joyfulness and anger. Some parts of some crowds could be described as "unruly," but I didn't witness much trouble...Some of the people in the park, a few, had started taunting police. The police were becoming more tense, worried and irritable...Monday night forward, it all exploded. The crowds got much bigger. So did the presence of police and other law enforcement (and intelligence operatives). More of the crowd got more aggressive (some of that aggression obviously egged on by people intent on causing conflict, much of it spontaneous).[45]

The worst of the rioting occurred on Wednesday, August 28 in Grant Park. Protesters gathered at the Grant Park bandshell that afternoon, planning to march to the International Amphitheater where the DNC was being held. The City, which cited federal security measures as prohibiting such disruptions around the Convention site, would not permit this march. Nonetheless, SDSers, Yippies, Mobes, and a civil rights organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), were determined to make their demands known to the Democratic Party.[46]

In the afternoon, a young man visibly removed the American flag from a flagpole near the bandshell. Police violently arrested him, which sparked furious speeches by former SDS leaders Carl Oglesby and Tom Hayden and rioting in Grant Park for the duration of the afternoon and evening. As the protesters later moved throughout Grant Park, trying to find an escape to the Convention, Chicago police and National Guardsmen surrounded them, which resulted in violent clashes between the opposing groups. By 7:30 PM marchers joined the SCLC Mule Train, which had been granted a permit to march along Michigan Avenue on Grant Park's west side. There, in front of the Hilton Hotel, protesters and police battled while the whole world watched.[47]

In a recent interview with Tom Hayden, he recalled what it felt like in Grant Park during the riot:

> Permits were denied for everything, including permits for the [Senator Eugene] McCarthy workers, permits for musicians, permits of course for Yippies, permits for anti-war. And the police had been historically very brutal, and had been particularly brutal in '68 already, as a signal of what they would do to us...At this point it just becomes a tactical battlefield. You go in sort of like a soldier, and see who comes out. Hopefully everybody comes out alright. Each day was unpredictable...For example on the last day a lot of people came out. There was a permit at the bandshell and then all of a sudden the police attacked the crowd, claiming that there was a provocation. But they didn't go after the provocation, they went after the crowd. These were people that thought, "Its a nice sunshiny day, we're far far away from the convention, we're having a rally." Nevertheless, they're being gassed and police are turning over benches and people are getting beaten up. It didn't matter what you looked like, it was mass intimidation and violence. So that's what it was like, night and day. Its not like a protest anymore...it means you're just going to have to act like some kind of confrontation carried out all over tactics. We want to get closer to

[45] Dan Rather, interview with the author, March 2009.

[46] *Crisis in Chicago: 1968 Mayor Richard J. Daley's Official Report—The Untold Story of the Convention Riots*, Jack Mabley Papers, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago; David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 195-207.

[47] Ibid, 195-207.

> the hotel, they want to stop us, so a lot of time spent on how to get closer to the hotel. No time to discuss free love or marijuana of the war in Vietnam, just the hotel.[48]

News cameras rolled outside the Hilton Hotel, where many of the Convention delegates were staying. Shots of police clubbing peaceful protesters and innocent bystanders and of violent protesters punching and kicking police went out nationwide. A summary of the night's events published in *Life* magazine revealed the extent of violence on both sides, from protesters and police:

> During the week of the Democratic National Convention, the Chicago police were the targets of mounting provocation by both word and act. It took the form of obscene epithets, and of rocks, sticks, bathroom tiles and even human feces hurled at police by demonstrators...The nature of the [law enforcement's] response was unrestrained and indiscriminate police violence on many occasions, particularly at night. That violence was made all the more shocking by the fact that it was often inflicted upon persons who had broken no law, disobeyed no order, made no threat. These included peaceful demonstrators, onlookers and large numbers of residents who were simply passing through.

Even patrons inside the Hilton were casualties of the riot, as people outside were pushed up against the hotel's plate-glass windows until it shattered. People inside and out suffered cuts from the broken glass. The police followed the victims through the glass, "clubbing all those who looked to them like demonstrators."[49]

Protesters in Grant Park chanted "the whole world is watching" while inside the Amphitheater the Democratic Party voted down a peace plank and chose pro-Vietnam War nominee Vice President Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic pick for president. Antiwar delegates in the convention hall knew of the police riot going on while they battled for peace within the Democratic Party. In response to the street violence, Senator Abraham Ribicoff, during his nationally televised nominating speech for Senator George McGovern, remarked, "With George McGovern we wouldn't have Gestapo tactics on the streets of Chicago" to which Mayor Daley reportedly responded by calling Ribicoff a "fucking kike."[50] Reporting from the convention, Dan Rather remembered, "As word (and pictures) of the efforts INSIDE the convention hall to stifle dissent spread, crowds in the park got angrier and the police got more, much more, aggressive. It – what was happening in and around the park – became a literal nightmare."[51]

Soon after the vote, many antiwar delegates led a march from the Amphitheater to the riot in Grant Park, eventually joining in solidarity with the protesters. Some delegates, including rejected presidential nominees Senator Eugene McCarthy and Senator McGovern, and Vice President Humphrey were staying at the Hilton Hotel, in front of which the battle of Chicago raged. Tear gas released by the police to disperse the demonstrators wafted into Humphrey's suite. McCarthy, taking favor with the demonstrators in the streets, offered his suite at the Hilton as a makeshift clinic for beaten protesters. McGovern watched the violence below from his suite, and in an outrage asked those in his room, "Do you see what those sons of bitches are doing to those kids down there?"[52] In the area of Grant Park, no one, not protesters, police, or even delegates could evade the battle being fought in the park. That night demonstrators and delegates remained in the park, listening to speakers, chanting, and holding vigil for a cause disregarded by the people in power.[53]

By Friday, August 30, Grant Park was empty. Yippies, the Mobe, SDSers, and other protesters

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[48] Tom Hayden, interview with the author, April 18, 2010.

[49] "Corruption behind the swinging culbs," *Life* magazine, vol. 65, no. 23, December 6, 1968, 38.

[50] David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 201.

[51] Dan Rather, interview with the author, March 2009.

[52] David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 201.

[53] Ibid, 201-207

returned to fighting the cause of the New Left and the counter-culture in other parts of the country. National Guardsmen went back to their posts defending other areas of the nation. But memories of the week's events were forever synonymous with Grant Park.

The Democratic Party was the organization perhaps hardest hit as a result of the riot. On Election Day 1968, the Republicans triumphed, with Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon garnering an overwhelming majority over Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey. Republicans maintained a tight grip on the American political structure for the next forty years, with only two Democrats, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, entering the White House for a combined three terms during that span of time. After nearly thirty consecutive years of Democrats leading the nation, from Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 to Lyndon Johnson in 1968, the change in political dominance that occurred after the DNC riots suggested the battle of Chicago left deep scars on the Democratic Party.

~The Pope in the Park~

Eleven years later an event of a more hopeful and peaceful nature overwhelmed Grant Park. On October 5, 1979, Pope John Paul II held mass there, welcoming an estimated 500,000 worshipers into Chicago's front yard. While this was a peaceful religious event, significant political ramifications nonetheless surrounded it.

City involvement for the event in Grant Park began in August when the Archdiocese of Chicago announced that a stop in Chicago by the Pope was likely during his tour of the United States.[54] By the beginning of September plans were underway for the Pope's visit. Workmen built a new altar for the Pope's mass east of the Petrillo Music Shell in an open grass area to accommodate tens of thousands of congregants. After fears that the parking structure located under this section of Grant Park was not strong enough to bear the weight of the attendees, city officials tested the area for safety prior to the mass.[55] They contemplated closing streets for parade routes and accommodating increased security requirements in the weeks prior to the Pope's visit. Two days before the mass, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that City of Chicago schools would be closed the day of the Pope's visit. It also reported that, by proclamation of the State Commissioner of Banks and Trust Companies, all city banks would close at noon the day of the mass in Grant Park.[56] With the significant involvement of several city and state departments for the preparation and accommodation of the Pope's mass in Grant Park, this event was clearly not a solely religious one for Chicago.

People were excited to welcome the new Pope to America. Pope John Paul II's investiture occurred only a year prior to his visit to Chicago, and many were anxious to worship with this new, energetic, young leader. This visit was also the Pope's opportunity to become acquainted with political leaders in the United States. His trip included an address to the United Nations and a meeting with President Jimmy Carter. It became apparent as he approached Chicago that Pope John Paul II, according to *Life* magazine, was "a man of such earthy magnetism as to transcend the barriers of religious creed—a pope, if you will, for all people."[57]

Prior to the celebration of the mass in Grant Park, the public took issue with the city's role in planning and implementing the event. Citing separation of church and state, many felt the costs in manpower and in money were inappropriate. "In regard to the Pope's visit to Chicago," local citizen and Reverend Frank W. Bumpus suggested that "the taxpayers of this area are not required to pay for this Roman Catholic extravagance." Chicago resident Marge Fallowfield reiterated the Reverend's opinion: "If I had a 'right' in the matter, not one cent of my tax money would be spent to have city workers 'work round the clock' to please the Pope when he visits our fair city. Where is separation of church and state here?"[58]

Others were most unhappy with the choice of Grant Park for the site of the mass. On September 10, Chicagoan Thomas J. Meik claimed that "choosing the Grant Park bandshell for the location of the Pope's mass sounds like the world's worst planning." The crux of Meik's argument was the lack of visibility in Grant Park. He suggested Midway Airport, Meigs Field, or the parking lots of Soldier Field or McCormick Place as suitable venues for the mass. "Anything would be an

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[54] Jack Houston, "Oct. 3-6 called likely for Papal visit here," *Chicago Tribune*, August 12, 1979, pg. B14.

[55] "Voice of the People: The church, the state, and the Pope's visit to Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 1979, pg. E2.

[56] "Papal Visit: City schools close for Pope," *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1979, pg. 13.

[57] Dora Jane Hamblin, "The Firm Touch of the New Fisherman," *Life,* September 1979, vol. 2, no. 9, 46

[58] "Voice of the People: The church, the state, and the Pope's visit to Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 1979, pg. E2.

improvement over Grant Park," Meik complained.[59] Another Chicago resident, Herbert S. Rose, criticized Grant Park for its possible lack of safety: "Chicago's expenditure of several thousand dollars for testing the garage roof in Grant Park seems like money stupidly spent…It would seem prudent to select a site somewhere else, on terra firma. There are many areas in and around Chicago that could be reached without running the risk of possible overcrowding causing an 'accident.'"[60] In spite of harsh public criticism, the Pope's mass was held in Grant Park as planned.

Given the Pope's international religious and political stature, his mass was, in fact, both a religious and political event. Throughout his homily, he reiterated the nation's political strengths and its national achievements and their connections to the nation's religious faith. He congratulated not only Chicago, but the whole United States for uniting in the face of diversity: "When I lift up my eyes, I see in you the People of God, united to sing the praises of the Lord and to celebrate his Eucharist. I see also the whole people of America, one nation formed of many people: *E pluribus unum*."[61] He praised the United States community formed of so many different ethnic backgrounds, and acknowledged the political struggles, especially those of the civil rights movement, that made the United States a strong, united nation.

The Pope encouraged the people of Chicago to see their rich diversity and the misunderstandings that often accompanied these different ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds as fortifications for the "new unity" created over the decades in Chicago. His rhetoric welcomed people of all faiths and political, social, and economic beliefs. As John Navarone, an American theologian, noted, before his visit to the United States, the Pope had consideration for those "who don't share his position. Sometimes I think when [President Jimmy] Carter is speaking he's almost assuming that the rest of the world are Southern Baptists…But [John Paul] has that kind of elasticity of psyche which doesn't seem to project the image of only one possible context for the understanding of his words or the understanding of world problems."[62] The Pope's homily in Grant Park was a message for all who cared to listen and spoke uniquely to each person in attendance.

The Pope's message was also influenced by the political struggles of the time. Only a year prior to the Pope's visit President Carter helped negotiate the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, which brokered a peace between the two warring nations. The Iranian Revolution, in which Iran's pro-Western government fell to Muslim traditionalist Ayatollah Khomeini's influence in February 1979, roused fears of a Muslim fundamentalist backlash.[63] In an early address after his investiture, the Pope stated that the Church's goal was "to stretch out our hands and open our hearts to all people, especially those who are oppressed by injustice or discrimination, whether it relates to the economy, life in society, political life, or freedom of conscience and of belief."[64] In light of these political events and his previous concern for international affairs, the Pope's words in Grant Park were meant to strengthen the religious and political resolve of the people of Chicago and of the whole United States to fulfill their duty toward "the less favored in your own midst and in the rest of the world."[65]

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[59] Thomas J. Meik, "Site of Mass Challenged," *Chicago Tribune*, September 10, 1979, pg. C2.

[60] "Voice of the People: The church, the state, and the Pope's visit to Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 1979, pg. E2.

[61] Pope John Paul II, "Holy Mass at the Grant Park, Homily of His Holiness John Paul II," Grant Park, Chicago, Friday October 5, 1979, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19791005_usa-chicago_en.html

[62] Dora Jane Hamblin, "The Firm Touch of the New Fisherman," *Life,* September 1979, vol. 2, no. 9, 52.

[63] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 289-290, 226.

[64] Dora Jane Hamblin, "The Firm Touch of the New Fisherman," *Life,* September 1979, vol. 2, no. 9, 54.

[65] Pope John Paul II, "Holy Mass at the Grant Park, Homily of His Holiness John Paul II," Grant Park, Chicago, Friday

The Pope's visit was a proud moment for the city of Chicago. Eleven years after the bloody battle in Grant Park during the DNC, the Pope added new memories of hope and peace for the park. Naturally, the people of Chicago wanted to remember this joyous event for years to come. A special edition magazine published to commemorate the Pope's visit displayed pictures of the event in Grant Park and excerpts from his homily. One picture was of the 18k gold paperweight given to the Pope as a gift from the City. Engraved on the weight were the Pope and the Mayor's names, and the phrase "Once Chicago, One World." The magazine also included a statement made by Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne, welcoming the Pope "to a city where all people, of every creed, have eagerly awaited him."[66] It is not clear whether the magazine was commissioned by the City of Chicago, though it clearly was published with a mind to commemorate the mutually civic and religious event.

After the Pope's mass the City of Chicago did choose to physically and permanently commemorate the historic event. Mayor Byrne proposed to the City Council renaming West 43rd Street as Pope John Paul II Street. The chairman of the Committee on Local Industries, Streets, and Alleys thought the Pope's visit to Chicago "made a great impact on the city, and the proposal would be a way to perpetuate the memory of the visit."[67] Political maneuvering both before and after his visit and his politically infused homily ensured that the Pope's mass in the park was forever a part of public memory associated with the political history of Grant Park.

October 5, 1979, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19791005_usa-chicago_en.html

[66] Robert E. Zyskowski, ed., *The Pope in Chicago: An Album of Photographs, Artwork, and Text Commemorating the Visit of Pope John Paul II to Chicago in October, 1979* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1979), Chicago Historical Society Research Center.

[67] Robert Davis, "Seek to name street for Pope John Paul," *Chicago Tribune*, December 5, 1979, pg. C6.

~Lollapalooza 2007~

Then, in the twenty-first century, Grant Park became home to the highly politicized music festival Lollapalooza. After Lollapalooza's successful run in Grant Park in 2005, city officials signed a five-year contract to host the three-day concert through 2011.[68] With Lollapalooza's infusion of public-consciousness rock and roll, hip-hop, alternative, and indie music, the event lends its political credo to forming a public memory of Grant Park that encapsulates the park's political history.

Lollapalooza was created in 1991 by Jane's Addiction lead singer Perry Farrell as a traveling farewell tour for his band. He took the name for the event from a Three Stooges short film he had seen; the term means "something outstanding or unusual."[69] From the beginning, Lollapalooza had a deliberately political bent. Farrell intended the concerts to be both musical experiences and venues for cultural and political exploration. At Lollapalooza he sought to throw "a lot of issues into the public consciousness" and wanted there to be "a sense of confrontation" at the concerts. By including booths supporting political, cultural, environmental, and human rights issues, Farrell felt his music festival creation was "bringing both [left wing and right wing] sides into it."[70]

2007's incarnation of Lollapalooza in Grant Park continued the political tradition that Farrell began sixteen years before. The performers welcomed an estimated 160,000 concertgoers to Grant Park to share in three days of music and political movement. Throughout the festival performers voiced political convictions through song.

On Friday, the first day of the event, singer Ben Harper and Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder collaborated on an anti-war song that harkened back to the anti-war protests of 1968. The duet powered through a cover of Bob Dylan's "Masters of War" amidst shouts of support from the crowd. With America fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as Harper and Vedder sang, "Come you masters of war, you that build all the guns, you that build the death planes, you that build the big bombs, like Judas of old, you lie and deceive, a world war can be won, you want me to believe," "Masters of War" was as relevant in 2007 as when Dylan penned it in the mid-1960s.

On Saturday rock punk legend Patti Smith ended the evening in the rain, but her political message was anything but a wash. Her cover of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was a politically conscious call-to-action for punk-rockers of the twenty-first century. In the middle of her raspy rendition, Smith extemporaneously chanted about pollution and fallout, and yelled "What do we kill them with?...The children sighing and crying and wishing for laughter, love, communication..." The soaked audience responded enthusiastically as she implored them to "Rise up!" in the rain and join the political dialogue.[71]

Chicago native Lupe Fiasco rapped "American Terrorist" in front of a large crowd on Sunday afternoon. Before he began his politically poignant song, Fiasco dedicated it to then-President George W. Bush, the man many at Lollapalooza 2007 were blaming for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Shorty ain't learned to walk already heavily armed," Fiasco rapped, "civilians and little children is especially harmed, camouflaged Torahs, Bibles and glorious Qu'rans, the books that take you to Heaven and let you meet the Lord there, have become misinterpreted, reasons for warfare."[72] Referencing the wars America was engaged in the Middle East, his comments about the Torah, the

[68] Lollapalooza 2007, http://www.billboard.com/bbcom/lollapalooza/2007/history.jsp

[69] Ibid.

[70] Simon Reynolds, "POP Music; A Woodstock for the Lost Generation," *New York Times*, August 4, 1991, section 2, pg. 22, New York edition.

[71] Greg Kot and Andy Downing, "Getting Iggy" *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 2007.

[72] Lupe Fiasco, "American Terrorist," *Food & Liquor,* Atlantic Records CD, http://www.atlanticrecords.com/lupefiasco/lyrics?trackId=track33600203, accessed June 6, 2010.

Bible and the Qur'an conveyed the religious implications that underlay these wars. Fiasco's performance prepared the stage for the sense of political confrontation that took place that night at the end of the festival.

Pearl Jam closed Lollapalooza 2007 with a number of politically charged actions and comments. Eddie Vedder returned the favor by inviting Ben Harper to join him on stage for his band's set two days after their collaboration on Friday. Before going into "No More" with Harper, Vedder brought injured Iraq War veteran Thomas Young onstage to give an anti-war speech. After the speech Vedder dedicated "No More" to Young, who sat listening onstage in his wheelchair.[73] Again indicting President Bush for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Vedder and Harper sang, "The lies that were told to get us to go were criminal, let us be straight, let's get to the point where our voices are heard behind the White House gate...No more innocents dying, no more terrorizing, no more eulogizing, no more evangelizing, no more presidents lying, no more war."[74] Later during Pearl Jam's concert, Vedder incorporated anti-war rhetoric into his performance of "Daughter." In his mix of "Daughter" and Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall" Vedder changed the lyrics to "George Bush, leave this world alone" and "George Bush, find yourself another home."[75] From beginning to end Lollapalooza 2007, at home with Grant Park's political history, was a musical and political extravaganza. As reviews and reports quickly surfaced online and in Chicago newspapers of the weekend's politically charged musical commentary, the park was once again in the political limelight.

[73] Benjy Eisen, "Pearl Jam Bash Bush, Honor Veteran at Lollapalooza," Spinner.com, http://www.spinner.com/2007/08/06/pearl-jam-bash-bush-honor-veteran-at-lollapalooza/

[74] Pearl Jam, "No More," Unreleased, http://pearljam.com/song/no-more, accessed June 6, 2010.

[75] Jon Van, "Band's lyrics cut in Webcast," *Chicago Tribune*, August 9, 2007.

~2008~

Just over a year after Lollapalooza another political event in Grant Park captured the national and international limelight. For what CNN called a "peaceful and jubilant" crowd gathered in the park to celebrate Senator Barack Obama's presidential victory, public memory of the 1968 police riot remained strong.[76] But this time, a new community was gathered in Grant Park to celebrate, rather than protest, the nation's political process.

Much like 1968, 2008 was a year full of social and political ups and downs. War was again a hot topic, the current president was similarly a decidedly unpopular leader, activists continued to struggle for their civil rights, and on top of these significant challenges for the American public, the economy suffered a debilitating slump. By November of that year, Americans were clearly ready for a change, which they saw take shape in Grant Park.

As of Election Day 2008, America had been embroiled in two controversial wars for most of the decade. In 2001 American troops entered Afghanistan in response to Al Qaeda's attack on September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. President George W. Bush initiated Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan a month after the attacks to rid that country of its Islamic militant government, the Taliban, which harbored and supported the terrorist group Al Qaeda, which conducted the September 11th attacks.[77] After an apparent early victory in Afghanistan, with American troops toppling the Taliban government only months after entering the country, President Bush confronted another foe, this one in Iraq. Relying on intelligence reports that Iraq held weapons of mass destruction, Bush sent troops into Iraq in March 2003 to bring down Iraq leader Saddam Hussein and sever his supposed ties to Al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan. In the five years that followed, American troops made some gains in both Afghanistan and Iraq, with the high point in Iraq being the capture, trial and execution of Hussein for war crimes. But the deposition of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Hussein in Iraq was not sufficient to create a lasting peace in the region. Lack of adequate post-combat nation-building strategies and the rise of insurgents in both countries prolonged both wars into what many in the media and Congress were calling a quagmire by 2008. Comparisons to the Vietnam War were common.[78] It was clear at election time that Americans were ready to bring their troops home and enter a new phase of peaceful international relations.

President George W. Bush was a victim of the wars he initiated in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2001, shortly after the September 11th attacks, his approval rating skyrocketed to ninety percent, the highest of any president.[79] Americans had confidence in their president to defend their nation in the face of terrorists and to avenge the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians. But after seven years of war, marred by revelations of prisoner abuse at the hands of military officials, military contracts given to corporations with ties to the Bush Administration, and false reports upon which the rationale for war in Iraq were founded, Americans were decidedly unhappy with their president by the end of his two terms in office. On top of his disappointing tenure as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, in the last months of Bush's presidency the economy plummeted, leaving hundreds of thousands of Americans facing foreclosure and unemployment. Bush's decision to bail out the financial institutions

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[76] Liza Kaufman Hogan, "Chicago's Grant Park turns into jubilation park," CNN.com, http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/11/05/chicago.reax/?iref=mpstoryview

[77] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 264-266.

[78] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 334.

[79] "Bush's Final Approval Rating: 22 Percent," Jan 16, 2009, http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/16/opinion/polls/main4728399.shtml, accessed May 27, 2010.

largely responsible for the economic downturn did not win him points with the American public either. As Senator Obama took the stage in Grant Park on election night, George W. Bush languished in a twenty percent approval rating, the lowest of any president.[80]

Another issue that many citizens and politicians in America were struggling with at the time of Obama's election was the issue of gay rights. While the civil rights movement of the 1960s had long given way to a more nuanced and localized movement for black equality in politics, education, housing, and other social reforms, this new type of civil rights movement, the gay rights movement, blossomed in the first decade of the 21st century. By 2008 gay rights was assuredly at the forefront of the political stage. The most notable and possibly most controversial battle in the war for gay rights was the passing of Proposition 8 in the 2008 California election. Proposition 8 was a state constitutional amendment that defined marriage as between heterosexual couples, thereby overturning a California Supreme Court case vowing homosexual marriage as a constitutional right.[81] Proposition 8 went into effect immediately after the election, ending the state's five month window of performing same sex marriages, after the Supreme Court case mandated in June 2008 that such marriages be allowed in California. Homosexual couples flocked to California to get married legally after the ruling came down. With the 2008 success of the film *Milk*, which chronicled gay rights advocate and the nation's first openly gay city supervisor Harvey Milk's rise to political office in San Francisco during the 1970s, California seemed like a natural leader in the growing state movement extending marriage rights to homosexuals.[82] Political and social discourse surrounding gay rights in America intensified dramatically in 2008 in part due to Proposition 8 and *Milk,* to the point that Senator Obama referenced this minority group in his election night speech in Grant Park.

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[80] "As voters go to polls..."November 4, 2008, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/presidentbush/2008/11/unpopular.html, accessed May 28, 2010.

[81] "Proposition 8 Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry State of California" http://www.smartvoter.org/2008/11/04/ca/state/prop/8/, accessed May 28, 2010.

[82] Richard Corliss, "The Top 10 Everything of 2008, Milk," *Time*, November 3, 2008, http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1855948_1863826_1863831,00.html, accessed May 26, 2008.

~Senator Barack Obama~

Barack Obama's prominent place in American history is a result of the social and political challenges carried out by civil rights activists and social change advocates such as those who battled in Grant Park in 1968. He is a product of the 1960s. Obama was born to a white midwestern mother and a black Kenyan father who met while attending the University of Hawaii in the early 1960s. Obama had the benefit of growing up in an appreciably multi-ethnic state at a time when interracial marriage in the continental U.S. was still taboo, especially in the South. His parents' marriage lasted only five years, and Obama moved with his mother and step-father to Indonesia as a young boy, where he battled with issues of race and identity both in Asia and in America. He returned to Hawaii to attend private school as a teenager, followed by an undergraduate career at Occidental College and Columbia University. Obama was a politically active undergrad, joining in the antiapartheid movement at Occidental. After graduation he moved to Chicago to work as a community organizer.[83] There he forged a bond with the Chicago community that guided his political endeavors on behalf of the people he served. Obama's charisma and his devotion to social justice moved him to ever higher levels of political power, from State Senator for Chicago's South Side, then U.S. Senator for Illinois, to President of the United States.

Even so, Senator Obama was not a shoo-in for the presidential election. At the time of his election Obama was only 47, and had been active in state government for seven years and federal government for only four years. When he gave the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, while he was running for election to his first term as Senator from Illinois, he elevated his stature within the party and notions of a presidential race in his future began to surface. The publication of his second book, *The Audacity of Hope*, in 2004 made Obama a household name, while the book outlined his design for post-partisan national politics.[84] By the time he announced his bid for president in 2007, his meteoric rise to political prominence made his election seem possible though not certain. Obama's hard-fought primary campaign against Senator Hillary Clinton, augmented by his stellar orations to cheering crowds both young and old, proved his ability to answer the people's call for change in America.

The Obama campaign mustered unprecedented numbers of young campaign volunteers and voters. In 1968 students and young activists were at the forefront of protests against the war in Vietnam and the fight for civil rights, and were the most vocal critics of a society and its government that would allow such a war to occur in the first place. Forty years later, students and young activists were again at the forefront of politics in America, this time advocating for what many believed was a positive change in American politics and society through the person of Barack Obama. In Grant Park on November 4, 2008, the political power of America's youth manifested itself once again.

Perhaps Senator Obama's most innovative campaign tool catered to that demographic which virtually delivered him the election, the youth of America. “Yes We Can” was a music video created by hip-hop artist will.i.am in which young African-American, Latino, white, and Asian singers, actors, and other celebrities echoed the words to one of Senator Obama's campaign speeches. While the video was not commissioned by the Obama campaign, it was featured on the campaign website and was shown prior to Obama's speech at a majority student-attended campaign rally on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus in February 2008. The video was released for public viewing on Dipdive and

[83] Peniel E. Joseph, *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama*, (New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2010), 166-167, 169.
[84] Ibid, 181.

YouTube, two public video-sharing websites popular among the young, post-hip-hop generation coming of age during the campaign. Senator Obama again utilized the musical collage's youthful magnetism, along with the video creator's hip-hop appeal as will.i.am and fellow R&B artist John Legend performed the song at the close of the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver.[85] Just as the music of the 1960s and the musicians themselves attracted young people into the counter-culture, anti-war, and social change movements of that decade, so too did hip-hop musical culture attract young volunteers and voters to Senator Obama's bid for president.

Music has long been utilized as a form of protest and political commentary. In 1968, the Yippies hoped to welcome a number of bands, including the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Jefferson Airplane, among others to perform during their Festival of Life. Due to lack of permits for music in the park, only a handful of musicians actually performed, such as the Fugs and folk and protest singer Phil Ochs. In 2007 at Lollapalooza, music was again a format for protest and political commentary, especially when Pearl Jam's lead singer Eddie Vedder led the crowd in a musical chant protesting oil company BP Amoco's dumping chemicals into Lake Michigan, followed by his anti-war anthem "No More." Finally, in 2008 music was used to uplift voters and encourage their participation in America's political process with the "Yes We Can" collaboration supporting the Obama campaign. Senator Obama carried that musical collage into his election night speech in Grant Park, reiterating the slogan that followed him through his campaign.

[85] Brian Stelter, "Finding Political News Online, the Young Pass It On," *New York Times*, March 27, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/us/politics/27voters.html?_r=3&hp=&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1206666163-YpoMNe/u2DIXJ6Q+JgPlLQ, accessed June 10, 2010; Sarah Lai Stirland, "Will.I.Am: From Online Video to Convention Floor," August 28, 2008, http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2008/08/william-from-on/, accessed June 10, 2010.

~Grant Park on Election Day~

Senator Obama announced the location of his possible victory celebration in late October.[86] Campaign employees labored two weeks straight, working out the logistical details of election night's spotlight event in Grant Park. Kati Murphy, a volunteer for the Obama campaign, recalled the magnitude of putting on such an event. There were press, crowd, and site leaders in charge of coordinating each aspect of the event. Whereas typical Obama rallies in places like St. Louis had only six employees working only a few days before the event, the Grant Park celebration had ten people working two weeks beforehand. In the days before the event, that number grew to 40 to 50 people working on logistics in the park. With 70,000 general admission tickets and 5,000 VIP tickets for the night's events, this was no small party.[87] Obama's election night speech in Grant Park was a celebration of historic proportions.

The emotional impact of the event far overshadowed the logistical implications. Murphy, in charge of the VIP tent during the celebration, worked to keep celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey and Brad Pitt in place as they anxiously watched the poll results come in. But her job that night did not have the same effect as the emotional magnitude of the event. Murphy recalled in her blog the following morning, "Last night…the weight of history being made sat on the shoulders of all who attended."[88] Summoning the events of 1968 in her blog, as did so many others both in the media and in their own hearts and minds, public memory made Obama's election night celebration in Grant Park especially poignant for Kati Murphy.

Throughout the momentous day when Senator Obama was elected the forty-fourth president of the United States, journalists, historians, and politicians alike compared his victory celebration to the violent events of 1968. The *New York Times*, CNN, the *Chicago Tribune*, England's *The Independent*, and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, to count just a few, all reported on the historic connection between 1968 and 2008. But more important than the reports were the memories. Claude Lewis, a young journalist covering the 1968 DNC, remembered that event as he watched Obama's speech in 2008:

> Looking back on that day, I recall being in a house that served as headquarters for the demonstrators on the periphery of Grant Park. It was the same parcel of real estate where President-elect Barack Obama gave his victory speech last week. As Obama spoke, my mind drifted back to the park and the headquarters where my interviews with a few idealistic and dedicated protesters were interrupted by an angry army of officers.

In contrast to the infamous events that Lewis remembered, from his viewpoint and the viewpoint of those all over the world who watched both in 1968 and in 2008, "President-elect Obama's victory speech at that precise place last week—40 years after the police riot—was a walk in the park."[89]

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[86] Michael Cooper, "Candidates Close to Home for Finale," *New York Times*, October 23, 2008.

[87] Kati Murphy, interview with the author, April 1, 2009.

[88] Kati Murphy, weblog, comment posted November 5, 2009.

[89] Claude Lewis, "The whole world was watching: Claude Lewis remembers the 1968 Chicago police riot," *Philadelphia Daily News*, philly.com, http://www.philly.com/dailynews/local/20081112_The_whole_world_was_watching__Claude_Lewis_remembers_the_1968_Chicago_police_riot.html

~Change has come to America~

American flags spanned the stage as Senator Obama approached the podium on November 4, 2008. In Grant Park, with the park's history supporting the momentous occasion, Barack Obama claimed the honor of being the United States' first black president. As he had in so many speeches along the campaign trail, Obama inspired his crowd once again when he reiterated his adopted campaign slogan: "Tonight, I think about all that [106 year-old voter Ann Nixon Cooper]'s seen throughout her century in America – the heartache and the hope; the struggle and the progress; the times we were told that we can't, and the people who pressed on with that American creed: Yes we can." Obama used such uplifting rhetoric to encourage hope in the face of struggles that lie ahead for his administration, pronouncing:

> This is your victory. I know you didn't do this just to win an election, and I know you didn't do it for me. You did it because you understand the enormity of the task that lies ahead. For even as we celebrate tonight, we know the challenges that tomorrow will bring are the greatest of our lifetime – two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century....This is our time...to reclaim the American Dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth – that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope, and where we are met with cynicism, and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes we can.

Nodding to the legacy of civil rights that led him to that day, Obama echoed African-American soul singer Sam Cooke's song "A Change is Gonna Come" to the people in the park, saying that "It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America."[90] Indeed, what a change forty years made.

[90] Barack Obama, "Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama," November 4, 2008, http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post/stateupdates/gGx3Kc, accessed June 10, 2010.

~Grant Park Today~

The events of 1968 are still very much in the public consciousness. Though many young people are unaware of the riots that occurred in Grant Park, stories told by the sixties generation and wounds that have not yet healed from that battle keep the story alive as a part of public memory. The media and historians, as was the case on the day of Obama's speech in Grant Park, are the storytellers who keep the past present through public memory. As Dan Rather suggested, "for those who were alive and of memory age in 1968, Election Night coverage called down the echoes and images of Grant Park that summer...For those not alive at the time or not of memory age – and especially for young people – comparing Grant Park 1968 with Grant Park 2008 was a history lesson of sorts."[91] Through media coverage, the past came to the forefront of public memory surrounding Grant Park.

Tom Brokaw, a longtime NBC news correspondent, also brought 1968 and the battle of Chicago back into the public consciousness with his 2007 documentary on that explosive year. The film chronicled the year's notable and often traumatic events, and aired on the History Channel, a cable and satellite access channel. In particular, it featured interviews with members of both sides of the riot in Grant Park, a former student activist and a former Chicago police officer. Forty years later, during Brokaw's joint interview with the two soldiers of 1968, they engaged in a heated discussion about the events in the park.[92] Bringing history and journalism together into an accessible medium attractive to a wide audience, Brokaw's documentary helped inform public memory of Grant Park's intense political past.

The Chicago policemen who battled protesters also continued to remember the events of that hot August night in Grant Park. A June 2009 *New York Times* article described the recent reunion of the officers who were accused of causing the "police riot" in the park 41 years earlier. The reunion was a small private gathering, serving as a therapy session and walk down memory lane for the police officers. As new and younger demonstrators gathered to protest the reunion at the police union hall, policemen inside, now in their middle and late sixties, maintained that they did nothing wrong that night in 1968. "People ask me, 'What is there to celebrate about all of this?'" former policeman Tom Keevers stated. "My answer is that I feel fine about what happened." But as protesters walking past policemen standing outside the union hall exchanged sarcastic comments with each other, it was apparent the battle of Chicago still rages on in the public consciousness.[93]

Though outwardly Senator Obama's speech in Grant Park was a celebration of the Democratic Party's triumph, under the surface it was also a statement about the political changes seen over time in America as exemplified by the park's political history. In a letter to a friend of Tom Hayden, Obama campaign manager David Axelrod acknowledged that choosing Grant Park as the site for the Senator's possible victory speech was a "conscious decision" made to "symbolically overcome the damage that had been done to American idealism forty years before – [in Grant Park]."[94] Senator Obama intentionally harnessed Grant Park's past to make a statement about the changes his historic election symbolized for America. He relied on public memory to make this unspoken statement for him.

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[91] Dan Rather, interview with the author, March 2009.

[92] *1968 with Tom Brokaw,* DVD, released December 9, 2007.

[93] Monica Davey, "41 Years Later in Chicago, Police and Demonstrators Still Clash, but With Words", *New York Times*, June 29, 2009.

[94] Tom Hayden, *The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009), VI.

~Public Memory~

Grant Park clearly has become a repository for memory. More important than its geographic location or its natural landscape, the political events that occurred in Grant Park between 1968 and 2008 have filled that place with a politically charged public memory. Recollections of the DNC riots, the Pope's mass, Eddie Vedder's political commentary during Lollapalooza, and Obama's speech have shaped what people think and feel about Grant Park. These events have formed into a public memory that helps Chicago and the United States understand their past, present, and future.[95]

Public memory is formed through numerous outlets. Cultural representations of the past, such as the Shiloh Civil War battlefield or the William Holmes McGuffey Museum, inform public memory. But stories also shape public memory. Martha Norkunas, a scholar of public memory, suggests that structures and physical landscapes are linked to stories of the past. The essence of public memory, according to Norkunas, is "memory built within a community of people, stories retold year after year to listeners awaiting each detail, in order to know the past and to make meaning of it."[96] As people, such as historians and the media, tell stories of political events in Grant Park, a politically informed public memory about the park emerges.

Just as stories perpetuate memories of the past, a place is a significant motivator for remembering history. Many people's memories come to life when they are in a place where they experienced exciting, sad, or humorous events. Norkunas believes stories are connected to places, and each place elicits numerous stories about the past.[97] Thus these places hold the past through memory. What philosopher Edward S. Casey calls place memory is "the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability."[98] As a public place for the people, Grant Park is part of place memory. It can trigger recollections for those who lived through these events and who share a common past that is encapsulated in the episodes of the past 40 years. But Grant Park also can represent shared pasts to outsiders who were not involved in these political events, but are able to learn about them through present memories and representations.[99] Grant Park holds the public memory of these events for all to understand its political past.

The significance of Obama's speech in Grant Park lies within the niche of public memory of the park's political past. Historian David Thelen notes significant links between politics and public memory. Public memory is useful for politicians to draw on voters' individual memories and responses to the past. Politicians ground their political rhetoric in public memories that voters can create a personal connection with. For example, Thelen recalls the success Democrats had with their constituents into the early 1960s as they were able to harness public memory of Franklin Roosevelt and his handling of the Great Depression. As younger generations came of voting age in the late 1960s, Democrats could not connect such defining memories of the Depression era generation to the young, New Left and counter-culture activists. These politicians were not able to describe memories "in the same vivid, personal, defining ways that voters use it to meet their present needs" as Thelen notes a successful politician will do. Grant Park still holds personal meaning for many of the voters who

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[95] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15.

[96] Martha Norkunas, *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell, Massachusetts*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 135.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Edward S. Casey, quoted in Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 46.

[99] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 46.

experienced or heard stories of the 1968 riots, the Pope's mass, and Lollapalooza. Obama's graceful ability to evoke those memories in a place that encapsulates that past intensified the historic magnitude of his election night speech in Grant Park.

Finally, Grant Park's existence as a public space makes it a location in which public memory can be created and where political discourse can flourish. Grant Park is often referred to as Chicago's front yard. Parsing out this term helps to gain a more nuanced understanding of Grant Park's role as a public space in the heart of downtown Chicago. A front yard is a sort of private public space. It is owned and maintained as a private space by homeowners, yet it reveals the home and the family's image to the public. Historically, houses were often built with the best stone and brick work on the front of the house facing outward toward the public, with the lower quality stone and design being hidden in the back. Today front yards are often adorned with flowers, lawn ornaments, or flags to present a positive or prosperous family image. In the front yard families can present their best image of themselves to the public.

The front yard is also a public space where political statements can be made. Around election time, many front yards become campaign centers. Some homeowners engage in political discourse by posting signs in their front yard in support of their favored candidate or their political issue. As Chicago's front yard, Grant Park holds a similar role as a public space showing the rest of the world the image Chicago wants to portray of itself. It is also a place where political discourse is free to flourish, in the same way that political signs displayed in front yards contribute to political discussion in communities across the country. Grant Park then embodies the role of front yards through its ability to enable public political discourse.

Politics are a public endeavor. In a democratic society, politics must take place among members of "the public" who constitute that democracy. In a public space, such as in Grant Park, the Mobe and the Yippies could legitimate their existence as part of "the public." As peripheral actors to America's mainstream political structure, Yippies, Mobe members, musicians at Lollapalooza, and even a traditionally non-political figure such as the Pope, had to take action in a public space to be considered legitimate political actors. Grant Park's establishment as "public ground" in 1836 and its maintenance as a public space open to political activity over the next 175 years facilitated the demonstrations and protests conducted by these historical political actors to be acknowledged as part of public memory, by means of their legitimated action in a public space.[100]

[100] Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 85, No. 1 (March 1995): 115-116.

~Conclusion~

The history of Grant Park is what defines it as a place for the people of Chicago. As Chicago's "front yard," it is the place where locals congregate to play baseball on one of the many fields within the park, or to sit quietly among the trees in the center of downtown Chicago. It is also the place where visitors come to relax from a long day of exploring the city, or to marvel at the beauty of nature and the immensity of industry coalescing peacefully along the park's borders. This welcome place for people of all walks of life is also what makes Grant Park a very political place. The park's almost democratic feel leaves it open for people to make political statements. Such statements help make Grant Park the politically charged place that it is today. Public memory of the 1968 DNC riots, Pope John Paul II's mass, the political rhetoric that pervaded Lollapalooza 2007, and Senator Obama's jubilant election celebration imbue Grant Park with a political nature that is a result of its political history. As DNC protester and Columbia University professor Todd Gitlin stated on the eve of Obama's election, "He stands on the shoulders of the crowds of four decades ago."[101] Like Obama, public memory of Grant Park stands on the shoulders of its forty-year long political history.

[101] Quoted in John M. Broder and Monica Davey, "Celebration and Sense of History at Chicago Party," *New York Times*, November 5, 2008.

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