TO RENEW ILLINOIS, READ ABOUT ILLINOIS

JOHN T. SHAW, INSTITUTE DIRECTOR

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute’s Renewing Illinois program encourages Illinois college and university students to discuss and debate creative solutions to revitalize the Prairie State. While preparing background materials for the students who will participate in our annual summit, we recognized the need to provide additional sources to allow them to delve more deeply into the history, politics, and literature of Illinois.

To that end, we have compiled a recommended reading list. We asked more than twenty-five prominent Illinoisans to respond to the question:

*If you were teaching an “Illinois 101” course to highly motivated undergraduates, what five books you would assign them to read? They can be histories, biographies, novels, or essays. In sum, they would provide a wide-ranging and nuanced understanding of Illinois.*

The Institute received a remarkable range of recommendations. We pass this list on to all who are looking for a good read and better understanding of Illinois.

RICHARD DURBIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

*City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* by Donald Miller, 1996.
*Bloody Williamson* by Paul Angle, 1969.

Additional Reading

*The Cubs Way: The Zen of Building the Best Team in Baseball and Beating the Curse* by Tom Verducci, 2017.

JIM EDGAR, FORMER ILLINOIS GOVERNOR

*Clout: Mayor Daley and His City* by Len O’Connor, 1975.
*Bloody Williamson* by Paul Angle, 1969.
*Illinois History: A Reader* by Mark Hubbard, 2018.
RAY LAHOOD, FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, FORMER ILLINOIS CONGRESSMAN

The Education of a Senator by Everett McKinley Dirksen, 1998.  

SHEILA SIMON, LAW PROFESSOR - SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, FORMER ILLINOIS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years by Carl Sandburg, 1939.  
Song of My Life by Harry Mark Petrakis, 2014.  
Bloody Williamson by Paul Angle, 1969.  
Gwendolyn Brooks. Anything.  

GLENN POSHARD, FOUNDER - POSHARD FOUNDATION, FORMER ILLINOIS CONGRESSMAN, FORMER PRESIDENT - SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years by Carl Sandburg, 1939.  
Cornhuskers by Carl Sandburg, 1918.  
Spoon River Anthology by Edgar Lee Masters, 1915.  

PAULA WOLFF, POLICY ADVISOR - ILLINOIS JUSTICE PROJECT

The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation by Natalie Moore, 2016.  
JIM NOWLAN, POLITICAL COLUMNIST, FORMER ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE, FORMER PROFESSOR - UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and War Years by Carl Sandburg, 1939.

SAMUEL WHEELER, ILLINOIS STATE HISTORIAN

City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America by Donald Miller, 1996.

Additional Reading

Freedom’s Champion: Elijah Lovejoy by Paul Simon, 1994

DAVID JOENS, DIRECTOR- ILLINOIS STATE ARCHIVES

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson, 2003.

Additional Reading

Bloody Williamson by Paul Angle, 1969.
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair, 1906.
The Illinois State Archives: 100 Most Valuable Documents online exhibit:
https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/online_exhibits/100_documents
ROGER BILES, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF HISTORY - ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, AUTHOR OF ILLINOIS: A HISTORY OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Twenty Years at Hull-House by Jane Addams, 1910.
The Social Order of a Frontier Community by Don Harrison Doyle, 1983.

FRANK CICERO, JR., ATTORNEY - KIRKLAND AND ELLIS, AUTHOR OF CREATING THE LAND OF LINCOLN: THE HISTORY AND CONSTITUTIONS OF ILLINOIS, 1778-1870


ERIKA HAROLD, ATTORNEY - MEYER CAPEL, REPUBLICAN NOMINEE FOR ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America by Alex Kotlowitz, 1991.
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair, 1906.

CHUCK LEVESQUE, PRESIDENT - DEPAUL USA

Chicago: A Novel by Brian Doyle, 2016.
Rootabaga Stories by Carl Sandburg, 1922.
City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America by Donald Miller, 1996.
GREG SHAW, POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR - ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Division Street: America by Studs Terkel, 1967.
There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America by Alex Kotlowitz, 1991.

CHRISTOPHER BELT, ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR, 57TH DISTRICT

A. Lincoln by Ronald C. White Jr., 2009.

EMANUEL “CHRIS” WELCH, ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 7TH DISTRICT


LATOYA GREENWOOD, ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 114TH DISTRICT

There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America by Alex Kotlowitz, 1991.
A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, 1959.

TERRI BRYANT, ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 115TH DISTRICT

Down Don’t Bother Me: A Novel by Jason Miller, 2015.
Sins of the South: Big Secrets in a Small Town by Maureen Hughes, 2012.
When Lincoln Came to Egypt by George Smith, 2016.
MIKE LAWRENCE, FORMER DIRECTOR - PAUL SIMON PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Governor Richard Ogilvie: In the Interest of the State by Taylor Pensoneau, 1997.
Bloody Williamson by Paul Angle, 1969.
The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America by Ethan Michaeli, 2016.

Additional Reading


BERNARD SCHOENBURG, POLITICAL REPORTER AND COLUMNIST, STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Governor Richard Ogilvie: In the Interest of the State by Taylor Pensoneau, 1997.

Additional Reading


JOHN SHAW, DIRECTOR - PAUL SIMON PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE


Additional Reading

Played in Peoria by Jerry Klein Sr., 1980.