

211 Chicago Transformed

Voiceover: This program is sponsored by the United States World War I Centennial Commission.

(Theme music)

Voiceover: The following is a production of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Bringing citizens and citizen soldiers together through the exploration of military history, topics, and current affairs. This is *Pritzker Military Presents*.

Clarke: Welcome to Pritzker Military Presents, with freelance writer and editor Edward Gustaitis for a discussion of his book *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City*. I'm your host Ken Clarke, and this program is coming to you from the Pritzker Military Museum and Library located in downtown Chicago, and it's sponsored by the United States World War I Centennial Commission. This program and hundreds more are available on demand at PritzkerMilitary.org. Although WWI began in Europe in the summer of 1914 the United States did not enter the war until 1917. the war continued to establish the united states' appearance on the world stage as a great power and was the first deployment of US soldiers outside the western hemisphere. Although an ocean away the war did not leave the homeland uninfluenced, and Illinois and Chicago were especially transformed by the war. More than 350,000 men from Illinois went over there to serve in the army, navy, and marines. One out of every twelve men in the army was from Illinois. Illinois furnished more men to the armed forces than any other state in the union with the exception of New York and Pennsylvania. The loss of manpower led to labor shortages that gave way to the Great Migration, bringing people from all ethnic backgrounds into Chicago's work force. The labor shortage also opened up unprecedented employment, social, and political opportunities for women. A surge of successful organizing drives in the steel and stockyards bolstered the union movement of the Twentieth century. It was during the same time that prominent Chicagoans like Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow, John T. McCutcheon, and Ernest Hemingway contributed literature, art, and influential social movements that would forever change the intellectual fabric of the city. In his book *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City* Joseph Gustaitis provides insight into the lasting effects of the Great War not only on the city but the United States as a whole. Joseph Gustaitis is a freelance writer and editor living in Chicago and is the author of *Chicago's Greatest Year, 1893: The White City and the Birth of a Modern Metropolis*, and many articles in the popular history field. Previously Gustaitis worked as an editor of Collier's Year Book and Collier's Encyclopedia. He has also worked in television and won an Emmy Award for writing ABC TV's FYI Program. Please join me in welcoming to the Pritzker Military Museum and Library Joseph Gustaitis.

(Applause)

Gustaitis: Hi. Nice to see everybody. Thanks for coming. It's an honor and a pleasure to be here at the Pritzker Military Museum, which is one of Chicago's treasures. We are going to talk about WWI. I'm sure I don't have to tell you much about it, but just quickly, WWI began in 1915, and the warring entities were the Central Powers, seen in red here: Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey-- and the Triple Entente: England, France, Russia, and Italy. The point I wanted to make in my book is WWI profoundly changed Chicago in ways that people don't think about. One of the changes is demographic. There were a lot of ethnic changes in Chicago. We'll get to that. Another one was the changing role of women and the sexual revolution in the early part of the 20th century. The second point I'd like to make is that the things that happened in Chicago pretty much happened everywhere in the United States. Chicago was a microcosm of the United States, but some trends were even more pronounced in Chicago. In WWI the

United States had four million men in the military, which created a huge labor shortage. That opened up jobs for women and jobs for other ethnic groups. Chicago in 1913. A population of about 2.5 million, and it was growing fast. The largest ethnic group in the city by far were the Germans. The main industries were meatpacking and steel, which turned out to be crucial. The other main industries were farm machinery and sleeping cars, which were made in Pullman. At the beginning of the war Chicago was considered sort of a leftist city, and there was not a lot of enthusiasm for war in general. Jane Addams on the left was a great pacifist. She was, as you all know, one of Chicago's prominent social workers and the founder of Hull House. The mayor, who's on the right, Big Bill Thompson was also against the war. His constituency was very German, and he needed their votes. This is an example of a kind of antiwar sentiment that was prevalent in and around 1913 and 1914. One of the most popular songs of the period was "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier". Several things started to change that pacifist attitude. Once the war broke out the German invasion of Belgium gave rise to lots of atrocity stories, most of them exaggerated. This is a good example of the kind of propaganda that was used to create anti-German feeling. Now as I'm sure you all know the sinking of the British liner Lusitania in May 1915 was one of the great provocations--about 1200 people died on that boat, and almost 200 of them were American. And it's often said that this was the event that propelled the United States into WWI, but this actually happened two years before the United States entered the war. So although it upset a lot of people it wasn't enough. There also was a large sentiment in the United States that we would eventually get into this war, and there was a movement called Preparedness. We should at least get ready. Two of the champions of Preparedness were Henry Cabot Lodge, senator, and the former president Theodore Roosevelt. Why were people so worried? They really did believe that the Germans could conquer the United States. There was a whole series of books called conquest novels. One of the most popular was called *The Fall of a Nation*. It was made into a movie, and it was serialized in the Chicago Tribune. So people were afraid. As part of the Preparedness campaign, a preparedness parade was held in Chicago in June 1916. Even though the mayor was reluctant he decided for political reasons he'd better go along with it. It was huge. The Tribune called it "the largest parade in the history of America", which it might have been up to that time. Well, what got us into the war? One of the chief motivations was German submarine warfare. In January 1917 the Germans who had suspended submarine warfare had begun it again, and they were sinking Allied ships of all kinds, and we were losing lots of cargo and personnel. Perhaps the key event in persuading Americans and Woodrow Wilson and the congress to enter the war was something called the Zimmerman Telegram. In the spring of 1917 the British intercepted a telegram, which was sent by the German foreign minister Arthur Zimmerman to Mexico. In that telegram he proposed that if Mexico would enter the war against the United States as an ally of Germany Mexico might get back Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. This is a cartoon showing called *The Temptation*, obviously which expresses that. When this secret telegram became public outrage just spread through the nation. Congress agreed that this couldn't go anything farther and declared war on April 6, 1917. Okay, so war is declared, a draft is instituted, and Chicago--most of Chicago's soldiers, either volunteers or draftees, were sent to Camp Grant. Camp Grant was a five thousand acre-plot; it was south of Rockford, Illinois. Eventually it had 50,000 men there, and the unit that served there was called the 86th Division. This is a parade of the 86th Division marching across a bridge in Rockford, Illinois. I was told that the end of the column was five miles away at Camp Grant. Give you an idea how many soldiers were there. One of the--during the training of the 86th Division they had several important visitors. Theodore Roosevelt came to talk to them. But one of the most colorful people who came to them was an old frontiersman

called AJ Woodcock known as Old Doc. And Old Doc taught the soldiers what he called the Old Black Hawk war cry from the Black Hawk War of 1832. He wasn't old enough to be in the war of 1832 against the Blackhawk Indians—Black Hawk--Chief Black Hawk and the Sauk Indians, but he knew a lot of people who had been. And he taught the 86th Division the old Black Hawk war cry, which was, "Kia-Kiak". And that--at that point the 86th Division changed its name informally; it became known as the Blackhawk Division. The Blackhawk Division unfortunately became a victim to a defense army policy of poaching soldiers from divisions and sending them to other divisions, so they never went to Europe as a complete unit until the very end of the war, although a lot of Blackhawks served in Europe; they served in other divisions. When they got to Europe the trench warfare that's so famous about WWI was breaking down, and it became open warfare. Interesting thing about the Blackhawk Division, a bit of Chicago trivia, is that the commander of a machine gun battalion was named Frederic McLaughlin. This is him. After the war he came back and decided that Chicago needed a professional hockey team. So he bought an existing hockey team and decided he had to change the name. The hockey team he bought was called the Rosebuds. He said this is not a name that's gonna work in Chicago. So he said, "Well, I know what I'll do. I'll name it after my old division." So he named it the Blackhawks. Now most hockey fans in Chicago probably think that this team was named after the Chief Black Hawk of the Sauk Indians, and it is indirectly, but it's actually named after the Blackhawk Division, the 86th Division. Now Chicago had another very valiant fighting force in WWI, which was the black regiment. This was the 8th Illinois National Guards, which had been formed for black soldiers in the 1890s and had served in the Spanish American War. Their commander was Frederick Dennison. Dennison was the highest-ranking black officer in the United States. He is from Chicago. This is a portrait of Dennison from the magazine of NAACP. Now there was a heavy recruitment on the south side of Chicago trying to get black soldiers. There was controversy in the black community about whether they should even do this because they were second-class citizens. And there were some black intellectuals who resisted the draft and enlistment, but basically the thinking was if we serve our country and die for our country it will advance the cause of civil rights especially in terms of the right to vote. So there were 370,000 black soldiers in the US Army in WWI, and 200,000 of them were sent to France. Very few of those were combat. The army brats did not have very high estimation of their abilities, and most of them were put in labor battalions and unloading ships. But not the 8th Illinois, which became the 370th Regiment. They actually did get to combat, and they were shipped out to France in April 1918. One of the interesting cultural things about the 370th Regiment and other black regiments in France was they had bands, and they were really expert musicians. They could play anything. They could play opera, they could play classical pieces, but they played a lot of jazz. And the activities of the military bands in France are often credited with bringing jazz to France and its popularity there. The 370th band was considered really good, and after the war they toured. The 370th was sent to a French town called Grandvillars. They did not serve under American commanders. They served under French commanders. They were given French equipment, French rations. A French pharmacist and amateur photographer named Lucien Edmond photographed some of the members of the 370th, and the pictures I think show why the French admired them so much. They found them--that their appearance was very immaculate, they were very proud, in contrast to some of the white soldiers who didn't seem very respectful and completely uninterested in French culture. The--as I said, the 370th saw a lot of combat. They came to France with 2,500 men and returned with about 1,300. They got a nickname from German soldiers from the other side of the line who called them Black Devils. The men apparently considered the name complimentary because after the war they--their band toured as the Black Devil

Band. When they came back to Chicago in February 1919 they were given a huge parade and a big story in the papers. And in 1927 the victory monument honoring the 370th Regiment was erected on 35th Street and what is now Martin Luther King Drive. Now on the home front, this is where I will get into the role of women from Chicago in WWI. One of the first things that was realized was that there were going to be shortages of all sorts of things. And there were campaigns and propaganda to conserve--conserve coal, conserve lighting and food especially. This is an example. And women were called on to do their part, and just as in WWI where they planted victory gardens, in WWI they planted war gardens. This is an example of one at a school in Chicago. A really interesting event that happened in Chicago was called the War Exposition, which was from September 2nd to 15th in Nineteen--was it-- '18. This thing was enormous. It is held in Grant Park. They re--actually recreated as best they could WWI battles. They had trenches, they had machine guns, they had cannons. And they displayed trophies of equipment captured from the Germans. This is a French flyer showing off a German plane to an American sailor. The War Exposition drew one million visitors. It went to other cities besides Chicago, but it never got that kind of attendance. So what did women do during the war? Red Cross was--enlisted all sorts of volunteers. At home Red Cross volunteers did such things as rolling bandages, knitting sweaters, and sewing pajamas, and things like that. But--well, let's go back to this. The army created an army nurse corps as early as 1901. The question was whether nurses would be in the army. Well, they were not in the--they were not true members of the armed forces. They were considered auxiliaries. This was the army nurse corps. Nevertheless 21,000 army nurse corps nurses went to France in WWI. Many Chicago women volunteered to work in YMCA canteens in France, which were very popular with the soldiers. They were known as Y-Huts, and soldiers could go there when they had a break and get coffee, donuts, and just relax. They also created segregated Y-Huts for black soldiers. There was a woman from Chicago named Kathryn Johnson who was an editor at a black owned magazine called *Half Century*. She was one of nineteen black women who were sent to work in one of these Y-Huts for black soldiers. She was in France for nine months. One of the reasons I mentioned here not only because this is an almost unknown story about WWI, is that she wrote a book about her experiences called *Two Colored Women with the American Expeditionary Forces*. It's a great source if anyone is interested in this kind of thing. Now there was a big controversy about whether women should be allowed to join the military actually as members. That was done in Britain. The army would not admit women, but the navy did. The secretary of the navy was named Josephus Daniels, and he was fine with admitting women. They didn't really go overseas and serve on ships, but they did a lot of work here as clerical jobs freeing up men. These navy women were known as Yeomanettes, which is not a word that Josephus Daniels liked very much, but it caught on. But there were 11,000 of them who served in the navy as members of the navy, so who were the first women in the US military, and they showed that there's no really logical reason that women could not be in the military. Another need in France was--General Pershing, who was the commander, said, "You know, the telephone service here is terrible." The joke was, if you want to get hold of a friend to talk the phones are there, but it's easier to walk.

(Audience chuckles)

Gustaitis: So Pershing said, "Can you help me out?" And the word went out across the United States--any women would like to volunteer to be operators, telephone operators, in France? They had to speak fluent French and they had to know how to operate switchboards. And Chicago was one of the cities that was a training center for these women who became known as Hello Girls. 223 of these women were sent to France, and the rate at which they could handle phone calls was probably ten times what it was

before they got there. They also were not part of the military, and when they got back to the United States they thought they were gonna be eligible for some kind of pension or whatever, but they didn't get anything until under President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s decided to recognize the Hello Girls. And I think a general was sent out to the home of each surviving one to give them a medal or whatever, and the youngest one was eighty years old.

(Gasps)

Gustaitis: Of course women did all kinds of domestic jobs that were previously men only jobs. They worked on the railroads, and they worked in munitions factories, which was-- they were very popular in munitions factories. For some reason the owners thought that women were more careful handling explosives. Maybe they were.

(Laughter)

Gustaitis: But it was a dangerous job because there were a lot of toxic chemicals, and it was very bad for their health. And in Britain they called them canary girls 'cause their skin would turn yellow from the chemicals. Now we're gonna talk a little bit about the changing morays that happened about the time of WWI. The term flapper is probably familiar to you. It's a term that was used in the 1920 to describe the new liberated women with short skirts and short hair drinking bootleg gin and riding around in tin lizzies. Actually the word flapper started to appear in American just before WWI, and it was the war that really propelled that notion of the liberated woman. As an example here's a woman around 1909, and here's a woman around 1921. You can see what a great revolution in fashion there was, which horrified a lot of people. This is a Time Magazine from January 1964. Those of you old enough to remember the Sixties know that that was what they called the Sexual Revolution, which is still ongoing. But the authors of this article in Time magazine called what was going on the Second Sexual Revolution. They were well aware that the first one had occurred around the time of the First World War. This was the time when modern dancing started to happen, and traditional guardians of morality were horrified. This is called the dance of death, and as you can see, these dances like the turkey trot and the bunny hug were considered corrupting. And these were popular during the WWI. As another bit of trivia, one of the most shocking dances was called the toddle, and there was a--it was done in most--all over the country in most countries. But there was a version called the Chicago Toddle, which was supposed to be particularly naughty. So there was a song called The Toddle, which was written by a Chicago composer. And then there was a song called Chicago, Chicago, that toddlin' town.

(Gasps)

Gustaitis: So if you've ever wondered what that means, that's what it means. It's where they do the toddle. Now of course women started coming to Chicago to work even before the war. There were a lot of opportunities even then. We're fortunate that a woman named Frances Donovan wrote a book called *The Woman Who Waits*. This is about women waitresses in Chicago. She went undercover and got a job as a waitress in 1918 during WWI. Her first reactions when she went to work with these waitresses was they had the dirtiest language she'd ever heard. She couldn't believe it. And they all talked about how they played the sex game. That is they would get their boyfriends to buy them things and they said, "Well it's how we supplement our income." She said these were very tough, independent women. A lot of people thought that these country girls coming to the city were going to be victimized and taken advantage of. She said, "No, not these women." They did come from the country into the city, but they could handle themselves, and they were very tough. This is what I offer as an example of a waitress from nineteen--from this period. This is actually Colleen Moore, the actress, silent movie actress, in a movie called *Her Wild Oats*. You might recognize the name Colleen Moore

because she got interested in dollhouses, and she constructed a huge fairy castle, which is now in the Museum of Science and Industry. Colleen Moore's fairy castle. Of course as an example of the revolution in women's wear, this is one of the popular items. It's called the hobble skirt. It was as you can see banded around the lower leg. It made it kind of hard to walk, but it got men's attention, and that was the--
(Laughter)

Gustaitis: It worked for this guy. Another factor in the sexual revolution was the army. These country boys or even city boys went into the army. One of the first things they were presented with is surprisingly explicit pamphlets on all kinds of sexual matters, and it brought formerly taboo subjects into the open. And many civilians complained of the corrupting influence of army life, especially when the soldiers went to France. WWI soldiers did not spend all their time in the trenches. They were rotated out regularly. They would go from the trench to the support, and they'd spend a couple of weeks on leave in French town, where they discovered French brothels and cognac. So one of the big hits of 1919 was "How You Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm After They've Seen Paris", which was a very good point. Now we'll get to talk a little bit about some of the demographic changes in Chicago. Of course one of the most well known is the Great Migration of black people from the South. This is one of a series of paintings of the Great Migration by the African American artist Jacob Lawrence. It's called One Way Ticket, because these black people in the South were buying one-way tickets to go north. Now when scholars talk about immigration they talk about push factors and pull factors. Something has to be pushing you out of where you are, and something has to be drawing you in. This is a cartoon from the Crisis Magazine, the magazine of the NAACP, which explains a push factor: the frequency of lynching in the South. And you can see, this individual says, "That's it. I'm going to the North." Pull factors are the jobs. With four million men in the military it was huge openings in Chicago especially in the two main industries, the steel industry on the left here and the packinghouses. Most of these migrants came to Chicago on the Illinois Central Railroad. As you can see here it was like a great steel river coming up out of the South. And it took black migrants to the Illinois Central Depot, which was on Roosevelt Road near Michigan Avenue. From there they would go right to the south side. There they created a very vibrant culture. The main street of what was called Bronzeville then was called the Stroll. Had dozens and dozens of nightclubs and dance halls, and it was there that many Chicagoans experience a new form of music called jazz. In 1913 or '14 I think very few Americans had ever heard the word jazz or even had heard the music. By 1919 jazz was undoubtedly the most popular music in the country. So jazz takes root in America during WWI, and Chicago is the capitol of jazz at this time because so many black musicians came up from the south mostly from New Orleans. This is King Oliver's Band. He was the great--when he came to Chicago it really was big time. And the young man kneeling in the front is Louis Armstrong who King Oliver brought to Chicago from New Orleans. The second--well, let's say the Great Migration is pretty well documented in history. The migration--another migration to Chicago is much less so, but it also happened during the First World War. This is the migration of the Mexicans from Mexico to Chicago. And other reasons they came was literacy--well, let's see. A new immigration act was passed in February 1917, and it included the Literacy Act. It required an immigrant to read certain amounts of words, and it also doubled the entry fee from four dollars to eight dollars, which of a lot of people was a lot of money. But the Literacy Act contained a clause. It allowed the secretary of labor to set aside any of the provisions if there was a labor shortage. So he did that. He did it for the Mexicans. First he did it for agriculture in May 1917, and then he did it for--two months later for manufacturing. So Mexicans were exempt from this literacy test and could work in the United States in agriculture and railroads. 'Cause

Mexicans had their own push factors too under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, who was a dictator from 1876 to 1911. A lot of the common lands held by the peasants were confiscated. Then in 1911 began the Mexican Civil War. It was pretty much anarchy for a few years in Mexico because the different rebel groups could not agree, and some ten percent of the Mexican population fled to the United States during the civil war. Many of these migrants began in the United States as working in beet fields. There were a lot of beet fields in the Midwest, and when they were working there they heard about the opportunities to be found in Chicago. And they came to Chicago to work in the same industries as every other immigrant. A lot of them worked on the railroads. This is a group of Mexican immigrants arriving in Chicago during the war. They also found work in the steel plants, especially--after the war in 1919 there was a great steel strike, and they were brought in as strike breakers. This is Inland Steel in East Chicago, Indiana, which became the largest single employer of Mexicans in the United States. No many expected that the Mexicans when they got here would be absorbed just like the other immigrants and blend into the population. Eh, didn't quite work out that way. As you can see they were considered inferior by many. Because of that non-acceptance the many Mexicans who would have been enemies in Mexico found their common identity in Chicago, and there they preserved their native traditions. The other ethnic group I'll talk about did not grow; it diminished. These were the Germans. This is a German ball in Chicago in the mid-19th century. As I mentioned they were by far the largest ethnic group in Chicago. One out of every four people in Chicago was either born in Germany or had a parent born in Germany. A 1908 survey found that Germans were the most admired ethnic group in the United States, and Germans were very proud of what they called their culture. Here's an example of German influence in Chicago. This is the oldest continually operating restaurant in Chicago. Schaller's Pump. I don't know if anybody's been there. It's on Halsted and 37th street. It's been there since 1881. The Berghoff Restaurant you're probably more familiar with. It's not far from here. Another famous German place--that this is the original Berghoff in 1898. Now the German pavilion at the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the famous White City, was so popular that it remained opened after the fair, and it was a popular restaurant 'til the 1920s when it burned down. This is a store in Old Town. It's on Menomonee Street at Hudson and Menomonee. I included it here as an example of how German Chicago was. This is a survivor. Now in the 19th century Americans admired Germany as a land of poets like Goethe and musicians like Beethoven. What happened around the time of WWI is Germany got a totally different reputation as a land of soldiers and militarism. This is--stated in WWI and continued in WWI. So during WWI Germans became the enemy. Germans living in the United States were very suspect. As you can see here, this is in Edison Park, a sign warning Germans that they're not welcome unless they're patriots. One of the things that happened was a lot of Germans changed their name. Schmidt became Smith, Gutmann became Goodman. Also other things were changed. German shepherds became Alsatians.

(Laughter)

Gustaitis: Hamburger became Salisbury steak. Sauerkraut became liberty cabbage. The Tribune actually printed recipes for liberty cabbage. Street names were changed. Bismarck Place became Ancona Street. Frankfurt Street became Charleston Street. Efforts to change Goethe Street and Schiller Street didn't succeed, but they tried. One of the things I noticed about this--when historians write about this anti-German sentiment during WWI they overlook I think a very important result: the onset of prohibition in the United States. Prohibition probably wouldn't have passed without WWI. For one thing Congress passed laws because of the food shortage that grain could not be made into beer. It needed to be used as food. It was almost unpatriotic. No it didn't help that all the

German brewers in the United States, all the great ones--Pabst, Schlitz, Stroh, Schaefer, Anheuser Busch--were all born in Germany. They spoke German. The meetings of the German Brewers Association were conducted in German. So as you can see a lot of patriots considered Germans traitors and therefore drinking beer was almost un-American. So the 18th Amendment passed in June 1919. It went into effect twelve months later. And we all know what prohibition did to the city of Chicago. As I say in my book it--Chicago lost kulture and it got Capone. Thank you.

(Applause)

Gustaitis: Thank you, and good evening.

1: Does your book go into the Central Manufacturing District and the importance of the Quartermaster Corps to Chicago in the war effort?

Gustaitis: Yeah, it's an interesting topic, but I couldn't get into that just for reasons of space.

2: With Churchill's trying to allow the Lusitania to be sunk without informing the captain of the German U-boats and so forth, how do we know that the British war department didn't create the Zimmerman Telegram.

Gustaitis: Oh, that's (chuckles)--you know, the British had a very active propaganda department called the Wellington House, which was very secret. They were responsible for a lot of the atrocity stories coming out of Belgium. I wouldn't put it passed them, but I've seen no evidence that they did that.

3: What was the role of Fort Sheridan in WWI?

Gustaitis: Fort Sheridan, as far as I know, that was where the officers trained. When the men of the Blackhawk Division arrived at Camp Grant their officers were already there. And these officers were trained at Fort Sheridan. So as far as I know it was an officer training school for most of the war.

4: Did the African American soldiers when they returned from France have an easier time finding a job or an apartment?

Gustaitis: Yeah, there was a--apartments I don't know. I don't think so. Yeah. Just after WWII there were issues about women who were working and whether or not they were gonna leave their jobs, and most of them did. And a lot of them never though they were gonna be permanent anyway. A lot of the black workers were just let go. But there was a short Depression after the WWI, so it was difficult for a lot of them to get jobs, but eventually in Chicago that worked out.

5: Was there a significant effect from the flu epidemic in Chicago?

Gustaitis: I don't have numbers on the flu epidemic. Yeah, it certainly was. And it affected the soldiers too. A lot of the Chicago soldiers who went to Europe landed in Britain first, and a lot of them were struck by the flu. And as you know more people died from the flu epidemic than died in combat in WWI. It did affect Chicago, but it was brief, so I don't think it was as bad as some of the epidemics that occurred in Chicago in the 19th century.

6: Prior to the declaration of war by the United States was there strong support, due to the large German population, for Germany in Chicago?

Gustaitis: Yeah. There was. There's a picture in my book of the German consulate being crowded with would-be volunteers who were German Americans. The--only a handful I think actually went to Germany to fight. But all--Germany--Chicago being full of so many different ethnic groups, all of them had to make some sort of decision about where they stood during WWI. The Hungarian population of Chicago generally stayed with the Austrian empire. The Polish were divided, but most of them were with the Allies. And so on and so on. I think the Bohemians probably sent the most--the greatest number of soldiers to WWI from Chicago.

Clarke: Thank you for your talk today. I wanted to ask you, you touch on the 33rd Division, the Prairie Division, a little bit in your book.

Gustaitis: Yeah.

Clarke: What have you discovered about them and their contributions?

Gustaitis: Well, ten men from Chicago won the Medal of Honor in WWI, and none of them were from the Blackhawk division, probably because they never fought as a unit. All ten of them were from the 33rd Division, which was called the Prairie division. The Prairie Division was supposed to be a downstate division comprised of men from downstate Illinois, but a lot of Chicagoans later in the war got--became members of the 33rd division. So that unit was in the thick of it from when they got there to when the war ended. So there are so amazing stories about the Medal of Honor winners, and it's interesting to see how many of the men in the 33rd Division had foreign names. One of the most extraordinary Medal of Honor winners was a Serbian named Mandusich--changed his name to Jake Alex. But there are even German names in the 33rd Division. So, yeah, they have quite a story.

7: So around Chicago there are two large event venues, Navy Pier and Soldier Field. They were all named for the contributions folks made during WWI. Can you tell me a little bit about what happened out at Navy Pier for the navy, or was it just a joint venture?

Gustaitis: Yeah, Navy Pier opened I think it was in 1916, and it was not--had nothing to do with the navy at the time. They just called it Municipal Pier. It was used during WWI. One of the first things it was used for was when they rounded up guys who evaded the draft, they rounded up about a thousand guys and took them to Navy Pier and held them for a while. They found out that very few of them were actually draft evaders. I can't remember exactly what it was used for during WWI, but probably training. But Soldier Field was of course built well after the war. Navy Pier was named Navy Pier right after the war to honor the navy, and then when Soldier Field was built they said, "Well, since we already have a navy pier we need a soldier field."

8: Could you tell us a little bit about your work as an author, what got you interested in this topic, and here in the area of Chicago where did you find your archives to be in the most depth and to be the best ones?

Gustaitis: Well, my previous book was on Chicago in the 1890s. And my real interest became when Chicago made its transition from being just one of the several large Midwestern cities to becoming the global city that it is today. And a lot of things happened in the 1890s to do that, but then also I discovered that these events of WWII--WWI changed Chicago in such profound way that I would explore that too. You know, a book like mine, which touches on a lot of different subjects--you can get the research from newspapers and from things like regimental histories and memoirs. These days except--there's some few exceptions--they're digitized, so you can look them up online. No if somebody was doing a real in-depth history of a certain Chicago unit or something that would be different, but mine is a much broader survey, so I was able to find almost everything I needed that way. I mean, for example I mentioned Kathryn Johnson's book about two colored women in France. That's digitized. I was just so surprised to find it. Ten years ago I would have had to go look for it in the library.

Clarke: I want to thank you for doing this. Thanks for coming.

(Applause)

Clarke: Wonderful talk. Thank you to Joseph Gustaitis for visiting the Pritzker Military Museum and Library and the United States World War I Centennial Commission for sponsoring this program. The book is *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City*, published by the Southern Illinois University Press. To learn more about the book, our guest, or the Museum and Library, visit us in person or online at PritzkerMilitary.org. Thank you, and please join us next time on *Pritzker Military Presents*.

Voiceover: Visit the Pritzker Military Museum and Library in downtown Chicago. Explore original exhibits on military history, or be a part of a live studio audience. Watch other episodes of *Pritzker Military Presents*, find out What's On, at PritzkerMilitary.org.

(Theme music)

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(Theme music)

Voiceover: The preceding program was produced by the Pritzker Military Museum and Library.