

## 1908 Race Riot Markers

Appears on every marker:

Top:

City of Springfield

Historical Events Memorial Committee

1908 Race Riot Walking Tour

Ossie Langfelder, Mayor

Velma Carey, Chairperson

Bottom:

The Race Riot of 1908 was the catalyst that led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The 1908 Race Riot Walking Tour starts at Union Square Park, Fifth and Jefferson.

### Marker 1 Text

#### Seventh and Jefferson - Site of Old County Jail

On August 14, 1908, a mob gathered at the Sangamon County Jail and demanded the release of George Richardson and Joe James, two black prisoners. Richardson was accused of raping Mabel Hallam, a white woman; and James was accused of the murder of Clergy Ballard, a white man. The prisoners were secretly transported to Bloomington, Illinois, by Sangamon County Sheriff Werner with the help of Harry Loper, a white local restaurant owner. This escape precipitated the Race Riots.

The second marker is located at 223 South Fifth.

### Marker 2 Text

#### 223 South Fifth - Site of Loper's Restaurant

On August 14, 1908, Harry Loper assisted Sheriff Werner in removing George Richardson and Joe James from the County Jail. The mob overturned and burned Harry Loper's car, which had been used to move the prisoners, and destroyed his restaurant. The first fatality of the riot was Louis Johnson, a patron at the restaurant. He was killed when struck by a bullet.

The third marker is located at Seventh and Washington.

### Marker 3 Text

#### Washington Street between Seventh and Tenth Streets (The Levee)

On August 14, 1908, in this area of East Washington Street, the mob vandalized fifteen black and several Jewish businesses. The first

riot.txt

Jewish store attached by the rioters was Fishman's Pawn Shop, located at 719 E. Washington Street, where they obtained weapons.

The fourth marker is located at Eleventh and Madison Streets.

Marker 4 Text

Eleventh and Madison - Area of Scott Burton's Lynching

On August 15, 1908, at about 2:00 A.M., the mob reached the home of Scott Burton. The fifty-six year old black barber tried to escape out a side door of his home, but was overtaken and pummeled unconscious by the mob. He was then dragged to Twelfth and Madison and hanged from a dead tree in front of a saloon. The area, known as the Badlands, suffered major damage including the destruction of forty black homes and businesses.

The fifth marker is located at Fourth and Monroe.

Marker 5 Text

Fourth and Monroe - Site of Payne's Hardware

On August 5, 1908, at about 7:00 P.M., the mob reassembled and stopped briefly at Payne's Hardware Store to obtain a length of clothesline rope. This rope was intended to be used for hanging William Donnegan, a seventy-six year old retired black shoemaker.

The sixth marker is located at Second and Monroe Streets.

Marker 6 Text

Second and Monroe - Site of State Arsenal

The State Arsenal was used as a safe haven for many black families. The mob's intended assault on the Arsenal's sanctuary on August 15, 1908, was thwarted by the presence of military guards. The militia had been called to action earlier by Governor Charles Deneen. The frustrated mob then headed for William Donnegan's residence several blocks away at Spring and Edwards Streets.

The seventh marker is located at Spring and Edwards Street.

Marker 7 Text

Spring and Edwards - Site of Edwards School and William Donnegan's Lynching

On August 15, 1908, William Donnegan, a seventy-six year old retired black shoemaker, was taken from his nearby home by the mob and across the street to Edwards School. His throat was slashed after which the mob attempted to hang him. Upon the approach of the militia, the mob

riot.txt

fled. The militia then rescued Donnegan and rushed him to St. John's Hospital where he died the next day. Mr. Donnegan was singled out because of his wealth and powerful political connections.

The eighth marker is located on Adams between Fifth and Sixth Streets.