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The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago's Juvenile Justice System, 1899-1945

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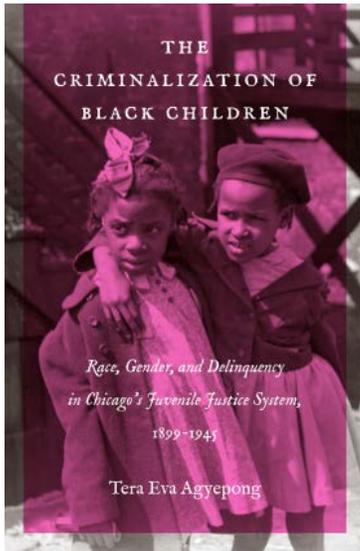
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BOOK REVIEWS

The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago's Juvenile Justice System, 1899-1945. Tera Eva Agyepong. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4696-3644-3 (pbk.: \$24.95), 978-1-4696-3865-2 (hard.;\$90.00), 978-1-4696-3866-9 (Ebook; \$18.99). 196 p.



Today's national news breaks Chicago crime statistics on a daily and weekly basis. Over a three day period this week (May 1-4, 2018), the report on CNN was startling: "40 murders in three days, men, women and children". Crime statistics for Chicago soars and drops each week but remains steady as a national disaster.

Dr. Tera Agyepong, an attorney and professor of history, provides a highly readable and emotionally charged body of historical research on juvenile justice in Chicago and Illinois, between 1899 and 1945.

Black children and white immigrant children who were truant, undisciplined, and victims of neglect and poverty were judged as adults and had no juvenile court to hear their pleas for help. This resulted in adult legal rulings and incarceration in adult facilities where abuses and little to no rehabilitation for children existed.

A national movement to establish juvenile courts and juvenile justice systems attracted the attention of Chicago's legal, social services and law enforcement citizens.

Reading the many pages of intense research by Dr. Agyepong we see the evolution of the establishment of a juvenile court system and separate incarceration facilities for juveniles.

Well meaning but with abundant abuses the resulting court and facilities mirrored the adult penal system. My heart sank as I read of abuses and tragedies heaped upon black

children and white immigrant children from "well-meaning" advocates of the newly established separate system.

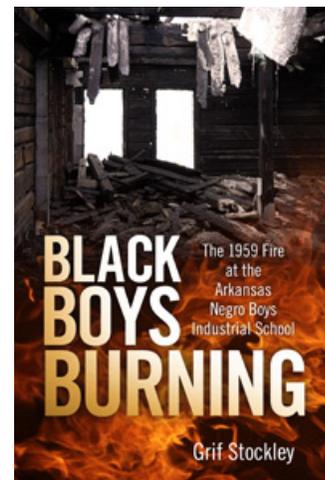
While reading Dr. Agyepong's excellent research, I reflect upon the current news headlines for Chicago's crime rate, "40 deaths in a 3 day period". Might the prison systems, both juvenile and adult, have any factoring in what is going on today in Chicago?

Something isn't right in "Whoville"!

Agyepong's research is a very good resource for students and faculty in juvenile justice courses and American legal history studies. Recommended for public and academic libraries

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Black Boys Burning: The 1959 Fire at the Arkansas Negro Boys Industrial School. Grif Stockley. Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2017. ISBN 978-1-4968-1269-8. 210 p. \$35.00



Try to imagine it is 1959 and you are confined to a room in an old dilapidated wooden dormitory with only one door to exit the room and with windows sealed with locked metal screens. You are there with 68 other boys when smoke begins billowing from the ceiling and panic erupts around you. The one exit door is locked from the outside.

Then imagine you are a mother of one of these boys and you learn on the radio of a fire that consumed 21 lives of the 69 boys. The horror of your son being in the Arkansas Negro Boys Industrial School that day and perishing in that fire fell beyond imagination.

Grif Stockley presents a detailed narrative of the place in Arkansas history of the Fire, of the "history of the school, a