

# Preface



As the University of Chicago emerges from a second COVID-19 winter, I am reminded of the insights of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, early members of the faculty who might be seen as deep ancestors of the Chicago Studies Program. Both famously taught that social reality is protean and warned against schematic explanations and easy assumptions; rather, the way to know the world is to engage it in an experiential way that accounts for its mutability. The pandemic has resisted our best attempts to forecast and plan, and this is true not only of infection rates and variants but of the social consequences that have emerged since 2020. The global pandemic has had impacts on our local urban and campus environments that would have been difficult to predict at the outset. The way to know the city of the pandemic, and the city that emerges from it, is to observe and take stock.

A list of topics that have claimed ground in Chicago's public life, whether new or increasingly visible, could be very long. As elsewhere, public health mandates have generated new oppositions and alliances that complicate the politics of the city: one thinks of restrictions on public gatherings, felt acutely in religious spaces, for example, or the vaccine requirement for entry to stores and eateries. Attitudes toward

education and public schools have changed markedly. The housing market has developed in ways that are not advantageous to first-time buyers, which has trained sharper attention on the racial wealth gap and the future of affordable housing. The labor market is profoundly different, along with expectations about the nature of work and the value of face-to-face collaboration. What this means for the future of urban planning and the central city is not yet clear. These are not only important local trends, but affect the ways that global urban trends were manifested in the local during the pandemic. For the Chicago Studies Program, topics like these are of especial interest. They affect the lived experience, and often the social commitments, of students and faculty who make the city their home. They also bridge this experience with subjects of classroom analysis and larger scholarly concerns.

In the 21–22 academic year Chicago Studies has turned attention to such matters of scale in several ways, above all through the conversation series *Climate and the City*, cosponsored with the Program on the Global Environment. Autumn term witnessed the launch of the “Urban October Lecture” as a feature of the annual Urban October hosted by the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation. Loyola University Chicago Professor of History Harold L. Platt lectured from his 2018 book *Sinking Chicago*, which explores Chicago’s long struggle against climate shifts, as seen in the reversal of the river, the elevation of streets, and responses to floods and heat waves. The conversation has continued over the winter term with a variety of local thinkers, activists, and policy makers, all of whom are looking beyond grim forecasts to intervene creatively in their respective areas of expertise. Discussions to date have examined the prospects for mass-transit development, new approaches suggested by data visualizations of climate change, and the use of inclusive communicative strategies to engage Chicago neighborhoods in sustainability and resilience. A full listing of *Climate and the City* events is available at [chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/events/climate-and-city](http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/events/climate-and-city).

Chicago Studies relies on faculty partners across the University to offer a rich menu of courses, events, workshops, and excursions. We have therefore been excited to support the work of the Faculty Working Group of the Committee on Environment, Geography, and Urbanization (or CEGU, for short), which intends to offer a new platform for research and pedagogy on many dimensions of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental transformation. While Chicago Studies aligns with every field represented in the College, an interdisciplinary hub of this kind, located in the Division of Social Sciences, holds expansive opportunities for our undergraduates to study and engage with the city of Chicago.

The *Chicago Studies Annual* remains the intellectual endpoint for the program, the culmination of students’ engagements with the city and region. As before, this year’s contributions represent the finalists from the Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Colloquium, chosen from dozens of submissions, mostly BA theses, and reviewed by a committee of experts. Our five theses reveal the quality of research taking place in undergraduate programs in anthropology, environmental and urban studies, history/Russian and East European studies, history/science and medicine, and public policy, even as the submissions to the colloquium originated in disciplines from creative writing to geographical sciences to theater and performance studies. What also distinguishes these contributions is their keen observation of the life, people, and history of the city, gained through acts of local citizenship and service. The Chicago Studies website features podcast discussions with many of the authors from prior volumes. I strongly encourage you to tune in and consider some of the ways they have channeled their experiences and knowledge into research topics and postgraduate pursuits.

In “When Aldermen Break with Their Voters,” Andrus Hatem, AB’20 (Public Policy Studies), analyzes the politics of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s 2011 decision to close six of the city’s twelve mental health clinics. Though this measure responded to a deep budget shortfall, it was contested and

approved in a changing landscape of popular attitudes and advocacy about mental health services. Hatem investigates why the Emanuel administration was able to cut public services with such ease that were so at variance with the movement of public opinion.

Iris Roos Jacobs, AB'20 (Anthropology and History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine), guides us through a global debate about the display and ownership of human remains by illuminating the local practices of the Field Museum of Natural History. Jacobs shows that debates about the status of human remains are rooted in broader discussions of what museum exhibitions ought to do and the scientific authority they communicate. The exhibition policies of the Field Museum, from the Gilded Age to the present, express this changing relationship, as we see in analyses of colonial acquisitions, museums as places of education or entertainment (or both), and repatriation efforts by indigenous groups.

Tree canopy is at once integral to the Chicago's identity and branding—think of the city's motto, *Hortus in Urbe*—and under acknowledged as part of its lived experience. Sam Joyce, AB'20 (Environment and Urban Studies), gives an imaginative and scholarly account of the distribution of the tree canopy across the city, using a wide variety of data sets to pose new questions about vegetation in Chicago and to arrive at new conclusions about where and why one sees concentrations of healthy, mature trees. Readers learn a good deal about the relationship between the organic and the built environment, and urban planners will find evidence for correcting environmental inequities based on race and class.

Alex Price, AB'20 (History and Russian and East European Studies), received the 2020 Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Prize for her submission, "Finding Yiddishland in America." This essay pursues a rich cultural analysis of Chicago's Yiddish-language press between the years 1918–32 to reconstruct a variety of approaches within the Jewish community to assimilation pressures. Price ultimately finds that the press

not only offered a space for the formation of opinions about Americanization, but helped to create a vision of Yiddish identity in American that immigrants could accept.

The history of a Confederate monument in Oak Woods Cemetery serves as an access point to Civil War memory and North-South reconciliation debates in the Gilded Age in Jarrett Shapiro's essay, "Chicago's 'Harmonious Forgetfulness.'" Shapiro, AB'20 (History), guides us through the economic, social, and racial dimensions of local support for the erection of a Confederate memorial at the cemetery in 1895. Centered on the figure of John Cox Underwood, a former Confederate lieutenant-colonel from Kentucky, this essay captures the intersection of reconciliation with the civic ambitions and growing economic power of Chicago.

The last years have asked us to look in new ways at the life and relationships of our city, and we are fortunate to have intellectually curious and resourceful students in the College who endeavor to do just that. It is a pleasure to thank James Dahl Cooper, AB'76, for supporting this issue of the *Annual*, which ensures that our students' work finds the readership that it deserves.

Daniel J. Koehler, AM'02, PhD'10 (History)  
*Deputy Dean of the College for Academic Affairs*

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Since graduating, I have worked as a political data analyst, with a focus on state and local campaigns. I ran the Vermont Democratic Party's data shop in 2020 and joined the Missouri Democratic Party in 2021 as the party's data manager. In Vermont I worked with candidates up and down the ballot, from races for statewide and federal office to school board races decided by three votes. In Missouri I have provided data analysis and support to the citizens' commissions responsible for drawing new legislative districts. In January 2022 one of these commissions approved a House map that cuts partisan bias by half, increases competition, and improves minority representation. The commission completed its work without court intervention for the first time in forty years.

**IRIS JACOBS** | Thanks first and foremost to my interviewees, Élisabeth Daynès, John Gurche, Janet Hong, Robert Martin, Samuel Redman, Helen Robbins, and Jodi Simkin, for taking hours out of your busy schedules to answer my philosophical questions. Your perspectives were integral to this thesis. Special thanks to my principal investigator, Zeray Alemseged, for

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Following graduation, I consulted as a field archaeologist in the cultural resources management sector on infrastructure projects throughout California. Recently, I have moved to Adelaide, South Australia, for a graduate program in maritime archaeology. I remain interested in issues of archaeological ethics, biopolitics, and community engagement.

**SAM JOYCE** | Thank you to everyone who made this research possible. I could not have completed this thesis without the encouragement, guidance, and insights of my faculty advisor, Alison Anastasio. Thank you as well to Ilana Ventura, Dexter Locke, Jarlath O’Neil-Dunne, David Nowak, Lydia Scott, Lindsay Darling, and the students of the fall 2019 Environmental and Urban Studies colloquium for their assistance throughout the research and writing process. Finally, thank you to Dan Koehler, Chris Skrable, Sabina Shaikh, and everyone else involved in the Chicago Studies program for the opportunity to publish my work. I am currently a second-year JD student at Stanford Law School, where I serve as a managing editor of the *Stanford Law Review*.

**ALEX PRICE** | My research would not have been possible without the generous support of many. I would like to express particular gratitude to my faculty advisors, Tara Zahra and William Nickell, as well as my preceptor, Zoya Sameen, for providing such thoughtful guidance throughout the writing process. I am also deeply grateful to Jessica Kirzane for supporting my study of Yiddish and to the Russian and East European Studies

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**JARRETT SHAPIRO** | This article would not have been possible without the support of those around me. I wish to thank my colleagues in my thesis seminar group—Angel Chacon, Silvia Diaz, Anna Hackemer, Andrew Huff, and Isabelle Sohn—for their constant encouragement and feedback. Next, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my two thesis preceptors, Alexander Hofmann and Serena Covkin, for their unwavering commitment to meet, recommend scholarly sources, and provide constructive criticism. I also wish to thank my faculty advisor, Jane Dailey, for steering my research in the right direction. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my editors, Dan Koehler and Joanne Berens, who helped push this publication across the finish line. An underappreciated aspect of historical research is that it is often a group endeavor, and without the support and encouragement of so many, this story may have remained untold.

Since graduating from the University of Chicago, I have been working in Washington, DC, as a senior legal assistant for the whistleblower practice of Sanford Heisler Sharp, LLP, a national plaintiffs’ law firm specializing in civil rights and employment law. I have also been fortunate to continue my engagement with history and the built environment as a member of both the Landmarks and the Government Affairs Committees for the DC Preservation League, the city’s chief nonprofit advocating for historic preservation. I plan to apply to law school in the near future, and I ultimately hope to forge a career at the nexus of law and cultural heritage preservation.