



Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America

Cameron McWhirter

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A narrative history of America's deadliest episode of race riots and lynchings

After World War I, black Americans fervently hoped for a new epoch of peace, prosperity, and equality. Black soldiers believed their participation in the fight to make the world safe for democracy finally earned them rights they had been promised since the close of the Civil War.

Instead, an unprecedented wave of anti-black riots and lynchings swept the country for eight months. From April to November of 1919, the racial unrest rolled across the South into the North and the Midwest, even to the nation's capital. Millions of lives were disrupted, and hundreds of lives were lost. Blacks responded by fighting back with an intensity and determination never seen before.

Red Summer is the first narrative history written about this epic encounter. Focusing on the worst riots and lynchings—including those in Chicago, Washington, D.C., Charleston, Omaha and Knoxville—Cameron McWhirter chronicles the mayhem, while also exploring the first stirrings of a civil rights movement that would transform American society forty years later.

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