



1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBAN DECAY

Thanks to the strength of labor unions and a growing economy, manufacturing jobs enabled semi-skilled workers without much education to make decent wages in the post-War economy. But in a cruel irony, just as African Americans finally inched open the doors of opportunity, many Northern mills, stockyards, and factories began to move to the South, to the Third World, or shut down altogether. Between 1965 and 1990, Chicago lost more than half its manufacturing jobs. Many white Chicagoans left the city, and after the passage of the 1960s civil rights laws made it easier to find housing, many middle class African Americans did too. Today, opportunities for under-educated urban workers are limited mostly to low-wage service and health jobs, such as restaurant worker, clerk, custodian, maid, nurse's aid, and the fastest growing job of all, security guard.

QUESTION:

Why did Chicago's loss of manufacturing jobs so disproportionately hurt African Americans? What kind of economic opportunities are there for young people in the inner city today?

QUESTION:

Do you think the young people at the end of the film who wanted to leave Chicago will do better elsewhere?