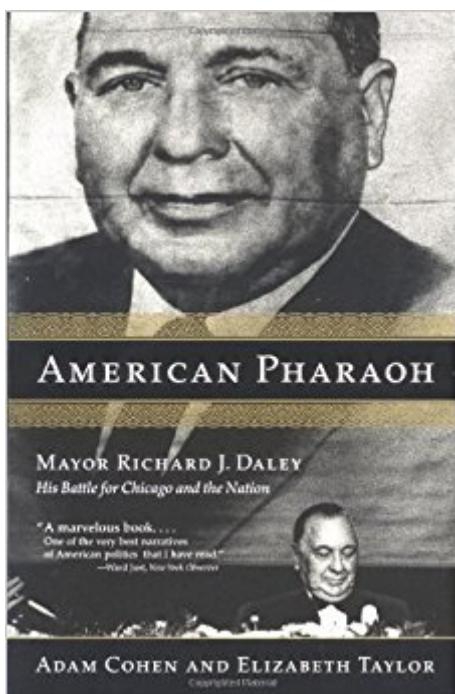


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# American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley - His Battle For Chicago And The Nation



## **Synopsis**

Now in paperback comes the story of Richard J. Daley, the last of the big city bosses, the patriarch of a political dynasty, and a major national figure in American urban politics. of photos.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

You might say it took a village to raise this child. Richard Daley and Chicago are inseparable, and it's impossible to discuss one without at least mentioning the other. Consequently, American Pharaoh includes far more material than your average biography; this is as much the story of the city as it is of the man. Covering the years between 1902 and 1976 (that is, between Daley's birth and death), authors Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor show us a life that in some ways symbolizes the American dream: a boy from a poor neighborhood grows up to wield unimaginable power, yet never forgets his roots. But Daley's was a complicated legacy. While filling Chicago with modern architecture and affecting national politics, he was also held responsible for the segregation and police brutality that tore the city apart during the late '60s and early '70s. Throughout the book, Cohen and Taylor remind readers that Daley's real influence came from the powerful political machine he created. When he didn't like guidelines from national agencies, for example, he went directly to the presidents he helped get elected. When he got bad local press, people lost their jobs and his neighbors marched in his support. When Martin Luther King Jr. came to town, he was greeted by a handpicked organization of African American leaders with strong ties to Daley's machine. It's startling to remember that this was simply a local office; the mayor's loyalties and

prejudices affected the entire country. American Pharaoh shows politics at its deepest level, and each chapter brings new insights into a complex man and the system he created in order to rule the city that made him. --Jill Lightner --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Like all good biographies, this first full account of the life of Richard Daley does more than tell the story of an individual. In the course of telling Daley's tale--from his birth (in 1902) to his death (in 1976)--journalists Cohen and Taylor also chronicle the history of 20th-century Chicago. They capture the grittiness of Daley's boyhood--the day-to-day of life near the stockyards, the importance of ethnicity in local neighborhoods and the city's seemingly paradoxical combination of parochialism and diversity, dynamic growth and resistance to change. Initiated into machine politics as a young man, Daley quickly embraced the machine's values of order, allegiance, authority and, above all, the pursuit of power. Later, he ran the city in accordance with these values; the authors explain that he always assessed his options in terms of what would both enhance his power and encourage Chicagoans to stay in their proper place. Cohen (a senior writer at Time) and Taylor (literary editor and Sunday magazine editor of the Chicago Tribune) use the most famous crisis during his tenure, the 1968 Democratic convention, to illustrate how the mayor's rigid values dictated his actions--but more importantly, they say, his myopic passion for order worked together with his deep racism to shape modern Chicago. And, they argue, his legacy is a cultural legacy--through him, early 20th-century ethnic narrow-mindedness shaped everything from the character of Chicago politics to its landscape. (Constructed during his tenure, Chicago's freeways and housing projects keep everyone, especially blacks, in their places.) Penetrating, nonsensationalistic and exhaustive, this is an impressive and important biography. 16 pages b&w illus. not seen by PW. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A masterpiece that not only serves as a biography of Richard Daley, but shows us how the City of Chicago came to be what it is today. There have been some serious power brokers that have served as Mayors in America, but Richard Daley, in terms of acquiring and holding power, must rank at the top of that group. The book is detailed, but for those looking to see how municipal government works this might not be the book for you. In Chicago if Daley wanted it done it was done. Not a lot of grass roots organizing involved in getting decisions made and executed. The book properly focuses on how Daley's perch as Chair of the Cook County Democratic machine was just as valuable to him, in many respects, as the Mayors job, allowing him to exert control not only in Chicago, but across the entire State of Illinois. The Democratic Convention of 1968 is covered very

well, and is a history that many of us are familiar with. What I learned beyond my prior understanding was how official and conscious government acts by Daley contributed to the segregated housing landscape that existed in Chicago at that time. He molded the City, and his vision did not include integration of housing. Daley, due to these policies, had to try to face down Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who came to Chicago to bring the civil rights movement to the urban north. Daley did not choose to overtly resist, but chose tactics that obfuscated his goals, promised progress, but delivered little. A fascinating book that should be read by all those interested in the acquiring and holding of power. Daley, from that perspective and on a smaller scale, rivaled LBJ as a power politician. The book honestly depicts some of the awful things he did, but does its best to give Daley some credit where it might have been due. Having just read the Tom Menino book I think it could be fairly said that Daley predated Menino in putting forward malapropisms. A couple of great ones: "Gentlemen, get this thing straight once and for all. The policeman isn't there to create disorder. The policeman is there to preserve disorder." "Today the real problem is the future." This book is highly recommended.

This is an uneven book. In the aggregate - it gives a great feel for the history of machine politics in Chicago, the roots and rise of Mayor Daley, the careful racial segregation of public housing, etc etc. I was looking for a view into Chicago history and I got an excellent one. I would say the book is way too detailed in many parts and found myself increasingly starting to surf through the book in search of more interesting sections. The sections on the 1960s, the role of the police, the 1968 convention - those are all WOW sections. But other parts of the book were excessively detailed and dry. You have to want to know a lot about Daley and Chicago political history to make it through this. In my case I actually did, but probably not for everyone.

AMERICAN PHARAOH by Cohen and Taylor contains 614 pages and 16 pages of black and white (not glossy) photographs. The book focuses on Mr. Daley's technique of ensuring cooperation through the use of patronage jobs, and on Daley's methods for keeping black people segregated in black-only housing projects. Hundreds and hundreds of pages are devoted to race relations. However, topics relating to business development are given short shrift. Daley's methods for converting Chicago from its dilapidated state in the 1950s to the gleaming showpiece that it became in the 1970s receive only a few pages of writing. In this regard, AMERICAN PHARAOH is a strangely lopsided book. PATRONAGE JOBS. Patronage jobs are distinguished from civil service jobs. Patronage jobs are awarded by ward bosses, while civil service jobs are not. The mayor

preceding Daley (Martin Kennelly) was anti-patronage and had a war on patronage. He had insisted on using civil service exams in the hiring methods. Patronage workers are government workers who knew their jobs were at stake, unless they contributed time and money to election campaigns. (pages 92, 116, 121, 122). Chicago had 50 wards. Each ward was allotted a number of patronage jobs. For example, Daley's political base, the 11th ward, had 2,000 patronage jobs (p. 156). For any given branch of city government, from 50-75% might be patronage jobs. Each job applicant needed to document his precinct work, in applying for the job. For Daley's benefit, each patronage job was equivalent to getting ten free votes (p. 159).**PASSIVE HYPOCRACY.** When faced with issues of segregation in schools or public housing, or violence in public housing, Daley responded with "vague expressions of sympathy," that is, with "passive hypocrisy." Daley's passive hypocrisy is described on pages 134, 172, 322, 340, 403, 410, 431, and 465.**WHY BLACKS VOTED FOR DALEY.** Although Daley was against open housing and school integration, blacks voted for him because he handed out patronage jobs (p. 301-302, 339). What also helped Daley is that blacks accepted school segregation, as they didn't want their kids in hostile white schools (p. 437). Also, blacks (e.g., Kenneth Campbell) worked against school boycotts, while other blacks (e.g., Wendell Green) were apologists for the racist superintendent of public schools (Benjamin Willis) (p. 313-314).**DALEY BUILT BARRIERS TO KEEP SLUMS FROM EXPANDING.** Daley used Ryan Expressway (7 lanes in each direction) to separate the white south side from the black belt (p. 188-189, 229). Daley razed 100 acres of slums in between the black belt and the Loop, and in its place built middle class apartments, with rents that would keep poor blacks away (Lake Meadows; Prairie Shores) (p. 176-177). These new apartments were built near important employers (Ill. Inst. Technology, Reese Hospital). In planning the Univ. Illinois at Chicago, Daley made certain that it was built in the Harrison-Halsted neighborhood, just west of the Loop. The goal was for the campus to act as a barrier between black housing to the west (Addams House) and the Loop. In ten years, Harrison-Halsted neighborhood became a white neighborhood (p. 224-233). Slums in Hyde Park (near Univ. Illinois) were razed and replaced with middle class private apartments (University Apartments). Once occupied, the average income in the area increased 70%. University Apts stood as a barrier between the University and the ghettos to the north.**BLACK VS. WHITE HOUSING PROJECTS.** To ensure the desired location of new black housing projects, Daley selected his own executive (Alvin Rose) for the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). In other words, to ensure that new housing projects would be black-only, Daley had them built only in black neighborhoods (p. 201). Massive housing projects were built in 1966. These were black-only (Hilliard, Ickes, Dearborn, Stateway, and Taylor) and white-only (Trumbull Park, Lathrop, Lawndale Gardens). The CHA kept

separate waiting lists for the black projects and white projects (p. 331-334). The black housing projects were considered to be "filing cabinets for the poor" and were populated by a disproportionate number of single mothers (p. 183-188).**FUND-RAISING TECHNIQUES.** To ensure that people would vote for his bond initiatives, Daley made certain to have them decided in low-turnout elections, that is, April elections, where he could count on votes from his patronage employees (p. 289). To ensure an increased sales tax, Daley side-stepped the voters in city elections, and made use of a loophole that allowed state legislature instead to vote for approval of the city tax. This resulted in more funds for an exposition center, airport, highways, and mass transit (p. 166).**DALEY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.** In the years before Daley, Chicago was in the state of decline, with losses in manufacturing jobs. Sales in the Loop were plummeting (p. 164). Daley managed to get funding to improve city clinics, street lights, potholes, street sweeping, water fluoridation, paving roads (p. 167-169). Daley's contribution to O'Hare Airport was to convince the airlines to absorb the cost of operating and expanding the airport. O'Hare was the world's only self-supporting airport (taxes were not used) (p. 233-237). The Loop revival (1955 to 1970) included Prudential Building, Sears Tower, Equitable Building, Gateway Center, One and Two Illinois Center, Dirksen federal court, Kluczynski Building, Marina City (p. 292-293, 504-505). To ensure success in the Loop revival, Daley hired talented "whiz kids," not patronage workers (p. 373-377). McCormick Place is another Daley accomplishment (p. 293, 433, 510).**ELIZABETH WOOD.** The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was established in 1937, and the mayor at the time (Kelly) appointed Elizabeth Wood. Wood's philosophy was "managed integration" where blacks would be moved into a white project, but not in numbers(10-15%) enough to inspire whites to move away, and to make sure that when a white moved out he was replaced with another white. Wood tried to convince CHA to admit blacks to all-white projects. Also, her plan was to admit only higher quality blacks to housing projects (and to refuse the criminal element). Wood refused to hire patronage workers. Eventually, Wood was forced out, and she moved to New York City. Of course, all of Wood's innovations were eliminated, resulting in a return to strictly all black and all white housing projects (p. 70, 101-109).**FRANCIS KEPPEL.** Francis Keppel was U.S. commissioner for education. His job was to ensure compliance with Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required integration standards be met in order to receive federal money for schools. If Chicago failed to meet the integration standards, Chicago would lose \$32 million. At this time, controversy surrounded these schools: Fenger (white only), Altgelt (black only), Orr (white only), and Marshall (black only). On Oct. 1, 1965, Keppel declared Chicago schools to be in non-compliance with Civil Rights Act. But Daley fought back by insisting on an investigation of Keppel, and by consulting President Johnson (LBJ). LBJ caved in to

Daley's request because LBJ wanted Daley's support in the upcoming 1968 election. Keppel was then removed from his position as watchdog for the Civil Rights Act, and Daley got the federal money (p. 335-336, 350-353).CONCLUSION. As is evident, most of the book is about race relations. If you need details of Daley's accomplishments relating to business, economic development, highways, transportation, manufacturing, and such, one might want to consult another source. For those interested in proceeding to a more detailed book, I might recommend CHICAGO POLITICS -- WARD BY WARD by David K. Fremon.

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