

LINCOLN PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
ILLINOIS CLASSICS:
A Bi-Centennial Reading List:

Compiled for Illinois public libraries by John E. Hallwas of the Illinois State Historical Society

The Reading List: This twelve-month reading list includes novels, nonfictional works and poetry – all by Illinois authors and expressive of the Illinois experience.

Listed below is the 12-month schedule of selected titles.

JANUARY - Black Hawk, *“Life of Black Hawk” (1833)*. Famous in its own time, it was the first Native American autobiography. A remarkable self-portrait of a complex individual.

FEBRUARY – Rebecca Burlend *“A True Picture of Emigration” (1848)*. A compelling account of settling in Illinois during the 1830s, by a poor immigrant, as dictated to her son, Edward.

MARCH - Edna Ferber, *“So Big” (1924)*. Winner of the 1925 Pulitzer Prize, this novel, set near Chicago in the 1890s and early 20th Century, depicts a widow who supports herself and her son.

APRIL – Jane Addams, *“Twenty Years at Hull House” (1910)*. A superb autobiography, in which the famous social activist recounts her early years and the social work at Hull House.

MAY – Carl Sandburg, *“Harvest Poems” (1958)*. Selected poems by the famous poet and Lincoln biographer, from such volumes as “Chicago Poems”, “Cornhuskers” and “The People, Yes.”

JUNE – Richard Wright, *“Native Son” (1940)*. An acclaimed, powerful novel, about a black youth in Chicago, who is brutalized and deprived by powerful forces, and condemned to die.

JULY - Gwendolyn Brooks, *“Selected Poems” (2006)*. A volume of compelling poems, often about the black experience, by the celebrated, Pulitzer Prize-winning Chicago poet.

AUGUST – Paul M Angle, *“Bloody Williamson: A Chapter in American Lawlessness” (1952)*. A Vivid account of the multi-faceted violence in Williamson country during the 1920s.

SEPTEMBER – Studs Terkel, *“Division Street: America” (1967)*. One of several best-selling books by Terkel. His oral interviews about Chicago become very insightful social commentary.

OCTOBER - Lisel Mueller, *“Alive Together: New and Selected Poems” (1996)*. This volume won the Pulitzer Prize. She deals with her cultural and family history, the value of love, etc.

NOVEMBER - William Maxwell, *“So Long, See you Tomorrow” (1980)*. An acclaimed short novel focused on youth, memory, and personal loss. It reflects Maxwell’s youth in Lincoln, Illinois.

DECEMBER- Sandra Cisneros, *“The House on Mango Street” (1984)*. A celebrated short novel, with chapters like prose poems, about a young woman in a Chicago Latino neighborhood.