<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>The Great Chicago Fire (Essential Events series)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>L. L. Owens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>9 chapters; text is pages 6-94 = 88 pages; about 10 of those pages are full page illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebook available?</td>
<td>Yes (we do not currently own it but there is an unlimited access ebook available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audiobook available?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>In October 1871, dry conditions and a densely populated city with a lot of wooden structures led to a fire that killed 300 people and left more than 100,000 homeless. The people of Chicago rebuilt their homes and businesses and secured their position as a hub of commerce in the Midwest. The fire led to adoption of new fire safety and building codes. Today, misleading myths about the origin of the fire persist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Fact boxes and sidebars; timeline; list of “essential facts”; “highlights of event”; bibliographies; glossary; index.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Mostly drawings and other artwork that appeared in periodicals of the time; a few photographs of structures before and after the fire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Structures</td>
<td>Sequence of events; cause and effect; problem/solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Myths vs. fact in history; how natural &amp; man-made conditions contributed to the event; how do we know what we know of history; what technology &amp; knowledge of science of the era was used to address the event (fire-fighting technology); how &amp; why are safety laws developed; it is easier to destroy than to create</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>What difficult vocabulary there is is typically in quoted material that uses somewhat archaic language. There is a glossary but it’s a bit dubious: it includes words like “miller” and “testimony” but not other words like “effluvium.”</td>
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### Chapter 1 – The Myth of Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow (pp. 6-18 – 13 pages with a few large illustrations)

#### Summary:
- Begins with a bare-bones description of the event: 3 square miles of Chicago burned down Oct 8-10, 1871, killing hundreds and destroying entire city blocks of homes and businesses; an official inquiry was unable to determine the cause of the blaze though it started in a barn belonging to the O’Learys. Remainder of the chapter explores the myth that Mrs. O’Leary’s cow started the blaze: how the myth got started, how it relied on stereotypes of Irish immigrants, how it provided a convenient scapegoat, how it affected O’Leary personally, how it gained traction and changed through song, artwork, and children’s stories, and how the myth became a somewhat positive and jovial thing in later years. Modern scholars have cleared O’Leary of causing the fire, and the author states that Chicago was primed to burn sooner or later.

#### Vocabulary:
- Related terms: myth, folklore, rumor
- Related terms: lots of terms for “fire” - maybe some potential to discuss author’s craft (avoid repetition by using synonyms; but are terms like blaze, fire, inferno, conflagration, etc. truly interchangeable or are there some shades of meaning?)
- effluvium

#### Illustrations:
- Photo: O’Leary barn, where the fire started
- Illustration: O’Leary and cow in barn, cow is kicking over lantern
- Photo: burned out buildings
- Illustration: Norman Rockwell’s painting of O’Leary & cow, 1935
- Illustration: cover of children’s nursery rhyme that perpetuated the O’Leary myth, 1881

#### Sidebars:
- Major sidebar discusses a song written by Brian Wilson called “Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow” that earned a Grammy in 2004, and mentions mysterious fires in the area after the song was recorded.
- Minor sidebars: a quote about the fire from the Chicago Tribune; a note about the O’Leary Home; a note that the name of the cow changed over the years as the myth evolved; a note that O’Leary and cow were officially cleared of blame in 1997 by the Chicago City Council.

#### Questions:
- Summarize the basic facts of the Great Chicago Fire as outlined on pages 6-8. Why do you think the author started by presenting this information?
- What did the people of the time know for sure about the cause of the fire?
- How did the “Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow” rumor get started? What was inaccurate about it? How did stereotypes contribute to it? How did it affect the O’Learys?
- How did the rumor grow and change over time?
- Can you think of other stories of American history that might be oversimplified or mythical in this way?
- Why did the author include the sidebar about the Brian Wilson song on page 10?
- Was the posthumous exoneration of O’Leary and the cow in 1997 important or helpful?
- How does the author get you ready to read the rest of the book on page 18?

#### Interesting Topics:
- Author’s craft: why start this book with a description of the fire? Why spend so much time on the O’Leary myth? How does the author create suspense at the end of the chapter?
- Cause & Effect: What causes led to the O’Leary Cow rumor? What effects did the rumor have? How do myths like this interfere with our ability to understand history?

#### Further Research:
<table>
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<th>Myths of American History: what other simplified myths from American History persist, how did they get started, and what is inaccurate about them? (Some examples: George Washington and the Cherry Tree; The First Thanksgiving; Betsy Ross and the American Flag; etc.) <a href="http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/top-lists/early-american-history-myths-you-probably-believe/">http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/top-lists/early-american-history-myths-you-probably-believe/</a></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Late 1800s - what technologies were (and weren’t) available at the time? What kinds of safety laws didn’t exist then that exist now? What was Chicago like at the time? (This gets explored more in further chapters)</td>
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### Chapter 2
#### Chicago Before the Fire

**Summary:**
- The discovery of the Chicago area by French explorers and the founding of a settlement there are described. A series of treaties eventually shifted control of the growing area from native peoples to the U.S. Chicago’s proximity to water-based trade routes attracted commerce and settlers, and railroads brought even more. This led to a great deal of building, and these buildings were often cheaply constructed wooden buildings. There were also miles of wood-paved roads and sidewalks. In hindsight, newspapers of the day pointed out how hot and dry the weather had been and how inevitable a fire would be. In fact there had already been 20 fires earlier in October 1871, and there was a significant fire just the day before the start of the Great Fire. Chicago was ready to burn.

**Vocabulary:**
- inflammable
- imposing
- annals
- visitations

**Illustrations:**
- Painting: Chicago area in the early 1800s
- Drawing: Jean Baptiste Point du Sable
- Photo: fire alarm box that failed at the start of the fire

**Sidebars:**
- Major sidebar shares quotes from people who avoided a smaller fire the day before the Great Fire started.
- Minor sidebars: facts about Chicago’s origins, growing economic power, building standards, how common useful fire and accidental fires were in Chicago.

**Questions:**
- What factors made the Chicago area a good place to create settlements and do business?
- Using the data from page 24, create a graph of Chicago area population between 1833 and 1870.
- What kinds of people did Chicago’s success attract? What kinds of structures were built out of wood?
- What had the weather been like leading up to the Great Fire?
- Why was the Great Fire in some ways not a surprising event? How does the sidebar on p. 26 support this?

**Interesting Topics:**
- Cause & effect (traits of the Chicago area that made it attractive for transportation, trade and commerce; how business draws settlers; how cheap wooden construction lead to lots of flammable materials being closely packed together)
- Author’s craft (the event comes with its own foreshadowing, which creates suspense)

**Further Research:**
- Chicago as a hub of trade (there’s no map of the region in the book - students might want to get a sense of what waterways other than Lake Michigan are nearby - Chicago served as a link between the lake and rivers that could reach the Mississippi; and later when the railroads arrive, it again served as a major hub for transportation)
- Firefighting and fire alarm technology of the era (it’s unclear how the fire alarms shown and mentioned actually worked) see - [http://www.thechicagofire.com/exoneration.php](http://www.thechicagofire.com/exoneration.php)
- Fires leading up to the Great Fire (wonder if there is newspaper coverage of these, especially the West Side fire from the previous day)
Chapter 3 – The Great Conflagration (pp. 30-40 – 11 pages, 3 large illustrations)

Summary:
- Covers the known events of the three days of the fire. On Oct 8, the fire started in the O’Leary barn between 8:30 and 9:00 pm. Problems with an alarm and with a fire watchman’s directions kept help from arriving until about 10:00 pm, when the blaze was already out of control and was able to cross the Chicago River. On Oct 9, the blaze continued to spread, destroying neighborhoods, businesses, and government buildings and driving the people who did survive into the streets and Lake Michigan. By mid-morning, military help arrived and efforts were made to blow up buildings in order to stop the spread of the fire, but this tactic didn’t help. The fire spread into the evening, when rain began to fall. On Oct 10, much of the fire was out thanks to the rain, but the smouldering ruins were still too hot to approach.

Vocabulary:
- nothing of note

Illustrations:
- Drawing: residents fleeing the city
- Drawing: firefighters battle the blaze
- Photo: newsboy with poster announcing the fire
- Drawing: residents fleeing the city

Sidebars:
- Major sidebar on the Peshtigo Fire, a forest fire that started around the same time as the Chicago fire and killed up to 2,500 people. It didn’t receive the news coverage the Chicago fire did.
- Minor sidebars on the fate of the O’Leary house, details on how the wrong location was initially sent to the firefighters, a note about victims burying their treasured belongings when they could no longer carry them, a note summarizing the casualties and losses from the fire, and information on Chicago’s Waterworks which was damaged during the fire.

Questions:
- Outline the events of the fire on October 8, 9 and 10, 1871.
- What human errors allowed the fire to go on as long as it did on the first day of the fire?
- What role did nature play in this event (both in spreading it and stopping it)?
- How does the sidebar on page 36 relate to the events of the Chicago Fire and why do you think the author included it?
- What kinds of interesting details do you get from witnesses quoted throughout the chapter?
- Based on the final sentence of the chapter, what do you think the next chapter will be about?

Interesting Topics:
- Cause & effect (a number of human errors led to the ultimate disaster - a faulty alarm, a watchman giving incorrect information, a telegraph operator refusing to correct the information, etc.)

Further Research:
- The path of the fire (again, there’s no map, so it’s hard to envision which way it was traveling and what it consumed in its path) and details/photos of the devastation to help convey the scope/scale of the disaster http://www.greatchicagofire.org/great-conflagration/inside-burning-city
- Exactly how big is three square miles? Use Google Earth to draw a shape that is the size of the Chicago Fire (4 miles by .75 miles), but on top of the Waunakee area, to get a sense of the scope.
- The science behind fires of this nature - how do they spread, what perils (beyond obvious flame) do they create, how did it cross the Chicago River?
- As above, information about firefighting and fire alarm technology of the era.
| What were the fire “engines” like? How was water for firefighting accessed and propelled? |
Chapter 4 – From the Eyes of the Fire (pp. 42-50 – 9 pages, 2 large illustrations)

Summary:
- This chapter explores the fire through eyewitness accounts. Author points out limitations in communication technology of the era, and notes that specific efforts were made to gather and document personal accounts of the fire as the people of the time knew there would be a need for and an interest in such records.

Vocabulary:
- fire brands
- havoc

Illustrations:
- Drawing: insurance buildings go up in flames
- Drawing: looters breaking into liquor barrels
- Drawing: family on a roof during the fire

Sidebars:
- Major sidebar: “Human Nature: The Good and the Bad” notes examples of heroism and villainy during the fire
- Minor sidebars: a quote from a witness; a list of questions frequently asked of survivors of the fire; examples of how quickly the fire destroyed buildings

Questions:
- What communication technologies were available at the time of the fire? If you saw a building on fire today, what kinds of technologies could you easily use to document or report it that didn’t exist at the time?
- How did people around the country learn of the fire? Find a phrase or sentence where the author describes the pace of such communications.
- Most of this chapter is quotes from people who witnessed or were somehow involved in the Great Chicago Fire. Make a chart of the quotes used in this chapter, including columns for:
  - Name of person being quoted
  - Person’s role in Chicago
  - What sort of communication the quote came from (telegram, personal letter, interview, etc.)
  - Main factual points in quote
  - Emotional aspect of quote
  - Why you think the author selected this person or this quote
  - What unanswered questions you might have about this person or quote
- Grouping them into three categories (Heroic, Self-preserving, and Criminal), give some examples of behaviors witnessed during the fire.
- Using direct quotes from this chapter, list the different ways witnesses expressed that what they saw was too terrible or incredible to even describe.
- According to Horrace White on page 50, why is it valuable to have a collection of many different and rather limited accounts of the fire instead of one very complete one?

Interesting Topics:
- Author’s craft: this is a chapter with a lot of quotes and personal accounts - what kinds of people does the author quote, what kinds of details make interesting quotes, what points does the author seem to be trying to prove by selecting certain quotes, and how do these quotes transform rather dry “reporting” into something with emotion?
- Opinion vs. fact: all personal accounts are suspect in some sense. One would have to go through many accounts to start to get a consensus view of the event.
- History in personal narratives: the kinds of personal narratives that were preserved by the Chicago Historical Society are one way we know what we know of history.

Further Research:
- Newspapers of the era: what was the general style and tone of news reporting;
how accurate were the drawings; was photography available and common; were the newspapers biased (toward business, against immigrants)? What was coverage of this event like in Chicago vs. other parts of the country? A good example is the front page of *The Janesville Gazette from Oct 10*; it reprints the information from the Oct 9 (*Chicago) Evening Gazette*, more information from telegrams since then, and appeals for charitable contributions. The *Oct 12 issue* has many details of the kinds of contributions that were already pouring in.

- Communication technology of the era: author makes the point that telephones didn’t exist at the time. Telegraph/telegram technology could be explored. There is an opportunity here, also, to explore how things might have been different if it had happened today with cell phones, photography and mapping technology on our smartphones, status updates on social media, etc.
Summary:
- Short chapter describes some of the landmarks and businesses that were damaged or destroyed in the fire.

Vocabulary:
- nothing of note

Illustrations:
- Photograph: damaged Waterworks and water tower
- Photograph: the ruins of the courthouse
- Drawing: crowd tries to cross the Randolph Street Bridge to escape the fire

Sidebars:
- Major Sidebar: “Too Many Losses to Count” enumerates various businesses lost to the fire.
- Minor sidebars: a quote from a witness; the fate of the courthouse bell; trivia about the Potter Palmer hotel; note about the Randolph Street Bridge illustration.

Questions:
- Make a chart of the buildings & landmarks discussed in this chapter, with columns for:
  - Name of Landmark
  - Purpose/Role of Landmark
  - Extent of Damage
  - How Loss Affected Chicago
  - Any Interesting Details
- After making the chart, draw some general conclusions about construction materials or techniques that contributed to the damage or destruction of these landmarks.

Interesting Topics:
- Cause & Effect (certain building materials or techniques led to more or less destruction during the fire; loss of certain buildings created problems for Chicago)
- Author’s craft (this wasn’t a particularly exciting chapter - there was no “plot”, just a collection of anecdotes about buildings - how could the author have better addressed this problem?)

Further Research:
- The Randolph Street Bridge illustration on page 59 is called a “lithograph” in the note on the facing page. What is a lithograph? Find other lithography examples by Currier and Ives, and other Chicago Fire lithographs. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/08/great-chicago-fire-1871-the-sec_n_1948792.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/08/great-chicago-fire-1871-the-sec_n_1948792.html)
- Related: what was the state of photography technology at the time? Why are there no action shots of the fire in progress?
- When this chapter mentions $10,000 or $1 million in 1871, how much is that in today’s economy? [http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/](http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/)
- Look up some of the landmarks described and see if you can find more details, especially photographs (before or after the fire, or even after rebuilding if applicable).
Chapter 6 – Investigating the Cause
(pp. 60-70 – 11 pages, with 3 large illustrations)

Summary:
● The bulk of this chapter is Q&A format testimony excerpts from Catherine O'Leary, Patrick O'Leary, and Daniel Sullivan. Author points out that in total, 49 witnesses were ultimately interviewed, and that despite the testimony the cause of the fire remains a mystery.

Vocabulary:
● company (as in “fire engine companies” - probably means “squads” or “units” rather than business corporations)
● party (used in two different ways on page 64)

Illustrations:
● Illustration: broken oil lamp found in O'Leary barn after the fire
● Illustration: living in the ruins of Chicago
● Illustration: period map of the fire’s area of destruction
● Newspaper page: “Cow’s Innocence Fully Established”, a humorous piece from 1872

Sidebars:
● Major sidebar: defending against the notion that the fire department was incompetent
● Minor sidebars: note about a modern book on the history of the fire; question and answer about O'Learys not having insurance; a note about how testimony was recorded; a note about firefighter witnesses; a note about the volume of handwritten testimony produced;

Questions:
● How many witnesses and how much testimony was collected during the investigation? What was the ultimate conclusion regarding the cause of the fire?
● What does the author attempt to prove in the green sidebar on page 62?
● Based on Catherine O'Leary’s testimony, describe what was in the O'Leary barn on the night the fire started. Describe what was going on “in the front of” the O'Leary place that night? What story did Catherine O'Leary hear about one of those people?
● What conclusion is the questioner trying to force Patrick O'Leary to arrive at?
● Who was the only person to see the inside of the barn during the fire? What were some interesting details from his testimony?

Interesting Topics:
● Author’s craft: This was another “boring list of stuff” chapter, with only Sullivan’s fairly vivid descriptions of the barn on fire to redeem it. How could it have been spiced up a bit?

Further Research:
● 1871 wasn’t exactly “CSI: Chicago”. What are modern fire investigation techniques like and how do they compare to what technology and knowledge was available at the time?
● Who was Daniel Sullivan? The book doesn’t really say if he was a neighbor, a friend, etc.
### Chapter 7 – Suspects and Theories

(pp. 72-78 – 7 pages with 2 large illustrations)

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<th>Summary:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● While the fire definitely started in the O’Leary barn, no one knows how the fire actually started. Aside from Catherine O’Leary, there were other suspects at the time, including neighbor Daniel “Peg Leg” Sullivan, neighbor Dennis Regan, and some mysterious boys mentioned by Louis Cohn years after the event, but there was not enough evidence to pin the fire on anyone.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● nothing of note</td>
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<tr>
<th>Illustrations:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Drawing: O’Leary and her cow in the barn, cow knocking over a lantern and starting the fire; caption points out that “over time” this theory was proven incorrect</td>
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<td>● Drawing: contributions and donations toward relief efforts</td>
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<td>● Photograph: Chicago courthouse area after the fire</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sidebars:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Major sidebar: discusses the possibility that a meteor shower was the cause</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Minor sidebars: one questions Sullivan’s ability to see the fire breaking out from where he had been; one explains how a reporter claims to have made up the cow myth years after the fact; one offers a theory that the fire was started by boys who were smoking in the barn; one repeats that ultimately the cause was never discovered.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● For each of the suspects discussed in this chapter, describe their testimony and the problems with it that made it possibly suspicious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Even if one person accidentally started the fire in the O’Leary barn, can one person truly be blamed for the ultimate mass destruction it caused? Who or what else played significant parts in how the fire spread and why it was not put out faster?</td>
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<tr>
<td>● What theory does the green sidebar on page 74 suggest as the start of the Chicago fire and other regional fires on that same day?</td>
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<th>Interesting Topics:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● This is another boring “list of stuff” chapter and is quite unremarkable. I guess one could explore the idea of solid proof vs. hearsay, logic problems with the testimony, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● No account seems to suggest the fire was intentionally started. Given that, does it even matter if the accidental cause was ever found? Or is it enough to thoroughly disprove the O’Leary Cow theory/myth, assume it was some kind of accident (apparently not at all uncommon since fires happened with great frequency), and instead focus on how the fire got so bad, what allowed it to spread so rapidly and so far, what hindrances kept firefighters from being more effective, and especially how Chicago reacted after the fire?</td>
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<td>● Related: why was trying to finding a person to blame so important to the people of the era? And why does it not really matter now?</td>
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<td>● How would adopting the Meteor Shower theory transform the “story” of the Chicago Fire? (Would it become more a tale of a natural disaster rather than a man-made accident?)</td>
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<th>Further Research:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Other fires that started on the same day in the region, as mentioned in the Meteor Shower sidebar.</td>
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## Chapter 8 – A City in Ruins (pp. 80-86 – 7 pages with 2 large illustrations)

### Summary:
- The extent of the fire’s effects is summarized. The mayor makes a proclamation to the city, exhorting citizens to behave and promising them aid and better days to come. The city is briefly put under martial law. Charitable contributions from around the nation provided much needed aid to the newly homeless and a sense of hope. Some people felt a sense of quiet determination in the city after the fire, while others felt that any sense of hope or excitement for the future would soon be replaced by the sobering realization of how much they had lost and the seemingly insurmountable task of rebuilding ahead of them.

### Vocabulary:
- providence
- comptroller
- voucher
- depredation
- martial law

### Illustrations:
- Drawing: Mayor Mason
- Drawing: men standing outside a real estate office
- Drawing: refugees living in tents

### Sidebars:
- Major sidebar: Mayor Mason’s proclamation after the fire
- Minor sidebars: how many buildings were destroyed; how adults marveled at the resilience of children who had lost everything; former mayor William Ogden not only lost his home and businesses in the Chicago fire, he also lost various properties to the Peshtigo Fire at the same time; Chicago’s Water Tower survived the fire and became a symbol of strength and hope.

### Questions:
- Summarize the amount of damage and casualties described in the first two pages of this chapter.
- As you read Mayor Mason’s Proclamation, make sure you look up the meaning of the following words: providence, comptroller, voucher, depredation. What promises and warnings did the Mayor’s proclamation make? What responsibilities do the citizens have?
- Thinking back to previous chapters, what kinds of situations might the police and/or the military have had to face after the fire that they didn’t have to face before the fire? In other words, why did city government put the city under martial law for a time?
- What kinds of relief efforts and donations took place after the fire? What kinds of jobs were victims able to get in order to earn a little money?
- After the fire, what general mood does the letter from James Milner describe?
- Contrast James Milner’s letter with that of Anna Higginson, written a month after the fire.

### Interesting Topics:
- Stages of grief: were the proclamations of hope and energy just denial? Was the work of restoring the city a kind of bargaining?
- After disasters, we often hear of people trying to put a positive spin on things - how such disasters reveal courage and fortitude of the human spirit, how it brings communities together. We seem to hear less about people whose lives have been utterly ruined by losing a loved one. What is the role of the media in shaping the stories of these disasters for those outside of them?
- Compare and contrast: perhaps compare how one might feel right after a disaster to how they might feel a few weeks or months later, when it becomes apparent that life must and will go on, and that there may be some hope after all.
- Problem/Solution: what problems was the mayor’s proclamation trying to
preemptively solve? What problems was the establishment of martial law trying to solve?
  - Cause/Effect: How did city government respond to the various needs caused by the disaster? How did citizens respond? How did the rest of the world respond?

**Further Research:**
  - martial law: how it works, notable instances of it, why it is dangerous, what rights it rescinds, what powers it gives government/military, etc.
  - Relief and charity efforts after the fire - using newspapers of the era to get a sense of what kinds of organizations were involved, what material they donated, how communication and advertisement of the needs took place, etc. The Oct 12 issue of *The Janesville Gazette* has many details of the kinds of contributions that were already pouring in.
  - In general - relief and charity after disaster in modern times: what organizations exist today, what do they most need, and recently the rather strange issue of organizations turning down certain kinds of donations because they get way too much of one kind of thing and not enough of another.
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<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
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| 9 | **Summary:**  
  - The fire was a turning point for Chicago and the devastation left a blank slate that the city could fill in with new, improved buildings. The fire did not kill Chicago, but allowed it to change in ways it couldn't have otherwise, and Chicago thrived.  
**Vocabulary:**  
  - acquiescence  
**Illustrations:**  
  - Photograph: ruins of Chicago  
  - Photograph: newly built hotel  
  - Photograph: modern-day Chicago Fire Academy, built on the site of the O’Leary barn  
**Sidebars:**  
  - Major sidebar describes four more fires Chicago endured in 1874, 1903, 1946 and 1958.  
  - Minor sidebars: construction began on 300 new buildings within six weeks; quote predicting Chicago will be even more prosperous within five years; trivia about the Palmer House Hotel; trivia about architects involved in rebuilding; note about the Chicago Fire Academy.  
**Questions:**  
  - In what ways was the fire “a turning point” for Chicago as the author claims?  
  - How is the fire brought to life in the quote from William Croffut?  
  - What traits, characteristics and assets did Chicago have “going for it” even after the fire?  
  - In what ways was post-fire Chicago a “blank slate”? What could be done with that blank slate that couldn’t have been done if the fire had never taken place?  
  - What sorts of new buildings were constructed after the fire? What was different about how they were constructed?  
  - According to Chicago Times reporter Everett Chamberlin, what would be an even more awe-inspiring sight than that of the Great Fire itself?  
  - Go back to the graph of population you created for chapter 2 and add on to it with the data on page 94.  
**Interesting Topics:**  
  - Problem/Solution: this is explicitly stated in the first paragraph - the fire “forced the city to examine its problems, find solutions, and start anew.”  
  - Fire as a symbol of destruction and renewal.  
**Further Research:**  
  - Some of the mentioned buildings: Palmer House Hotel, Grand Pacific Hotel, the Tremont, Sherman House, Home Insurance Building (nation’s first skyscraper)  
  - Fire safety codes then and now. Book says new codes were adopted but doesn’t go into any detail. Would be curious to learn if certain kinds of wooden structures became illegal, what kinds of fireproof materials were used, if wooden sidewalks and streets were phased out, etc.  
  - The Inter-State Exposition of 1873 - what was it, kind of like a miniature world’s fair?  
  - The Chicago Fire as part of Chicago’s history today - if you were interested in visiting Chicago, where could you go to do some touristy things related to the Great Fire?  

**General notes:**  
  - If you are looking for two chapters to combine, chapters 4 and 5 would be good choices, or chapters 6 and 7.
An interesting general topic is that of photographs vs. drawings - what benefits and drawbacks do they have (in terms of accuracy, ability to communicate factual information, ability to communicate emotion, ability to capture action scenes in an era when instant photography was not available, etc.)