



Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image

Douglas Bukowski

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There are politics, politicians, and scandals, but only in Chicago can any combination of these spark the kind of fireworks they do. And no other American city has had a mayor like William Hale "Big Bill" Thompson, not in any of his political incarnations. A brilliant chameleon of a politician, Thompson could move from pro- to anti-prohibition, from opposing the Chicago Teachers Federation to opposing a superintendent hostile to it, from being anti-Catholic to winning, in huge numbers, the Catholic vote. Shape-shifter extraordinaire, Thompson stayed in power by repeatedly altering his political image. In "Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image", Douglas Bukowski captures the essence of this wily urban politico as no other biographer or historian has. Using materials accessible only thanks to the Freedom of Information Act, Bukowski has fashioned an unforgettable story of a volatile Chicago leader and his era. And he does it with such grace and in such an irresistible style that readers will yearn to visit the local speakeasy and lift a glass to colourful politicians gone by.

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