

The GOLD COAST
AND THE SLUM

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY *of* CHICAGO'S
NEAR NORTH SIDE

HARVEY WARREN ZORBAUGH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
HOWARD P. CHUDACOFF

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blocks to the east. Its people, its ways of thinking and doing, like those of the world of furnished rooms, are incomprehensible to the people of the conventional world. Yet those who frequent the "Rialto" are typical of an increasingly large population in the modern city, who, living in the city, are not of it; who, in the ever increasing anonymity, mobility, and segregation of city life are coming to constitute a half-world, a world apart.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLUM

West from Wells Street, and south from Chicago Avenue until Rush Street is reached, then south from Grand Avenue, ultimately merging with the wholesaling and manufacturing district along the river, stretches the slum.

We have already seen that this western and southern area of the Near North Side has had a long history as a slum. The land has always been low in the river district. This lowland early marked the division between the fashionable residence district and the slum, the sandflats at the river's mouth and the lowland to the west being populated by a poorer element. The fire limit established after the fire of 1871, allowing cheap wooden structures to be erected in this west district, while requiring more substantial ones to the east, perpetuated this division. Finally, the streets in the west district were elevated four to eight feet, leaving the buildings with dark, damp basements, a situation favorable to tenement conditions.

One alien group after another has claimed this slum area. The Irish, the Germans, the Swedish, the Sicilians have occupied it in turn. Now it is being invaded by a migration of the Negro from the south. It has been known successively as Kilgubbin, Little Hell, and, as industry has come in, as Smoky Hollow. The remnants of these various successions have left a sediment that at once characterizes and confuses the life of this district. Originally close to the river, the slum has pushed eastward as the city has grown

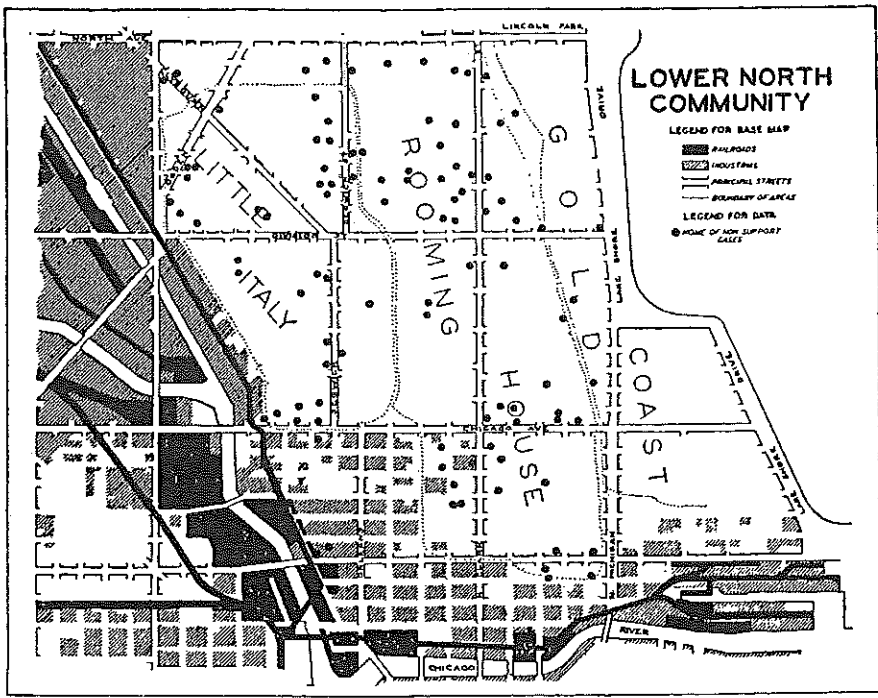
until it now bids fair to sweep across La Salle Street and submerges much of the area of furnished rooms.

The slum is a distinctive area of disintegration and disorganization. It is an area in which encroaching business lends a speculative value to the land. But rents are low; for while little business has actually come into the area, it is no longer desirable for residential purposes. It is an area of dilapidated dwellings, many of which the owners, waiting to sell the land for commercial purposes, allow to deteriorate, asking just enough in rent to carry the taxes. Except for the sporadic building of factories and business blocks, no building goes on in the slum, and most of its structures have stood for a generation and more.¹

The slum is an area of freedom and individualism. Over large stretches of the slum men neither know nor trust their neighbors. Aside from a few marooned families, a large part of the native population is transient: prostitutes, criminals, outlaws, hobos. Foreigners who come to make a fortune, as we used to go west, and expect to return to the Old Country as soon as they make their "stake," who are not really a part of American life, and who wish to live in the city as cheaply as possible, live in the lodging-houses of the slum. Here, too, are the areas of immigrant first settlement, the foreign colonies. And here are congregated the "undesirable" alien groups, such as the Chinese and the Negro.

The slum gradually acquires a character distinctly different from that of other areas of the city through a cumulative

¹ No residences have been built on the entire Near North Side in the past ten years. Building has been confined to the erecting of large hotels and apartments, or to the remodeling of old houses in the Gold Coast district; while along the river and in the slum only office buildings, factories, stores, garages, and the like have been built. See K. Young, *A Sociological Study of a Disintegrated Neighbourhood*.



NON-SUPPORT CASES, COURT OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS.—It is often said that desertion is the poor man's divorce. This is substantially true. This map of non-support cases indicates that in the "world of furnished rooms" and the slum area the family is both unstable and economically maladjusted. Consequently the family in these areas does not meet situations for its members as does the family in better organized communities (data after Mowrer, *Family Disorganization*).

process of natural selection that is continually going on as the more ambitious and energetic keep moving out and the unadjusted, the dregs, and the outlaws accumulate. This is particularly noticeable in the more static European cities. In America, where competition is uncontrolled, change is rapid. But even in American cities this selective process lends the slum a submerged aspect. The city, as it grows, creates about its central business district a belt of bleak, barren, soot-begrimed, physically deteriorated neighborhoods. And in these neighborhoods the undesirable, and those of low economic status, are segregated by the unremitting competition of the economic process in which land values, rentals, and wages are fixed.

HUMAN DERELICTS

The slum comes to be characterized, then, not only by mean streets and ramshackle buildings, but by well-defined types of submerged humanity. The Near North Side slum falls into two parts: an area of cheap lodging-houses along Clark and Wells streets and the streets south of Chicago Avenue, and an area of tenements from Wells Street west. The tenement area is the world of foreign tongues and cultures; the area of cheap lodging-houses is a jungle of human wreckage.

The cheap lodging-house is filled with economic failures: the broken family, the rooming-house family, the "ma-roned" family. A desolating poverty is one of its most striking characteristics.¹ It is filled with derelicts, all man-

¹ The poverty of the slum moves men to strange deeds. An actress died in a North Side rooming house. While the United Charities were discussing means for her burial, her estranged husband, having read in the paper of her death, slipped in to where her body lay and pried loose a diamond and gold filling from one of her front teeth.

ner of the queer and unadjusted. Its bare rooms house the non-family laborer, the factory worker, the waitress, the migrant, the hobo. The criminal and the bohemian find refuge from the conventional world in its haunts.

All the characters that are cast in the sordid episodes of slum life are to be found in the case records of charity organizations. Indeed, the case records of such an organization as the United Charities, supplemented by the police blotter, constitute a sort of dramatic personae of the slum. The following stories from the United Charity case records dramatize somewhat the life of the economic failure and the derelict of the North Side streets that lie in the slum.

The stories of lodging-house families bring out most strikingly, perhaps, the relationship of economic inadequacy to the slum. These lodging-house families live chiefly in the cheap rooming- and lodging-houses that lie south of Chicago Avenue.

R— (LOWER NORTH DISTRICT, UNITED CHARITIES)

The Agency has been in touch with this family for eight years. Scarcely a month has passed but what the family has required assistance. In the eight years the family has lived in more than a dozen rooming-houses. Sixteen agencies, at one time and another, have been interested in the case. The problem as stated by the agency, consists in epilepsy, intemperance, tuberculosis, maternity imprisonment, unemployment, and bad housing. The story, as adapted from the case record, follows:

The father, mother, the father's mother, and five children live in one room and an alcove. The blankets are worn; there is no stove; and the floors are bare. Cooking is done on an inadequate gas plate. The children are dirty and undernourished. The father is out of work. The mother is pregnant, expecting confinement shortly.

The family is continually in debt, always behind in the rent, has several times been evicted. The father, an electrician by trade, drinks heavily, once having been arrested for having a still in his room, and

works irregularly. The record shows eight years of continuous effort to keep the man placed; he has had a hundred jobs in that time. The mother works occasionally.

The father, when drunk, is maudlin and irritable. He demands money from the mother for whiskey. When she refuses, he throws the teapot full of hot tea at her, scalding her and the baby. There is a family brawl; the police are called; he gets thirty days in the Bridewell. The woman, in constant fear of pregnancy, tries to keep from sleeping with him, and they quarrel. A woman taken in to room brings a man to live with her; a brawl results.

The Agency is constantly trying to get the man to "brace up," to supply the morale normally supplied by some group. He is always promising and failing. An interesting group of attitudes cluster about the case. The family formerly had a fairly comfortable home out on the Artesian Avenue, but they were burned out in 1914. Since then the man has believed luck was against him; has lost his grip, drifted, drunk. Both he and his wife blame it all on "luck" and "this furnished room life." They show shame, occasionally, at their condition and the way of living, at having to accept relief. But these moments are rare and passing. Usually they take it as a matter of course, and show no glimmer of self-respect or hope.

Their relatives have long since turned against them—"like pouring money into an empty well." At a family conference, called by the Agency, the brother refused to take the case into court because "the newspaper publicity would be too humiliating." The uncle, fairly well to do, said he was "through with them." The one time that the Agency succeeded in getting the family out of the slum, the man soon wanted to move back, saying he did not want to work in the neighborhood, "because everybody knows me." The whole group of conditions and attitudes serves to isolate the family and to keep it in the slum.

Another case, an immigrant family of the second generation, after having moved out of the slum, is forced back into it again by the protracted illness of one of the children, and the heavy hospital bills which ate up all the family had saved. A visiting nurse told of a case where the family was gradually forced into the slum because the priest kept in-

sisting that they have children until they had more than the father could support.

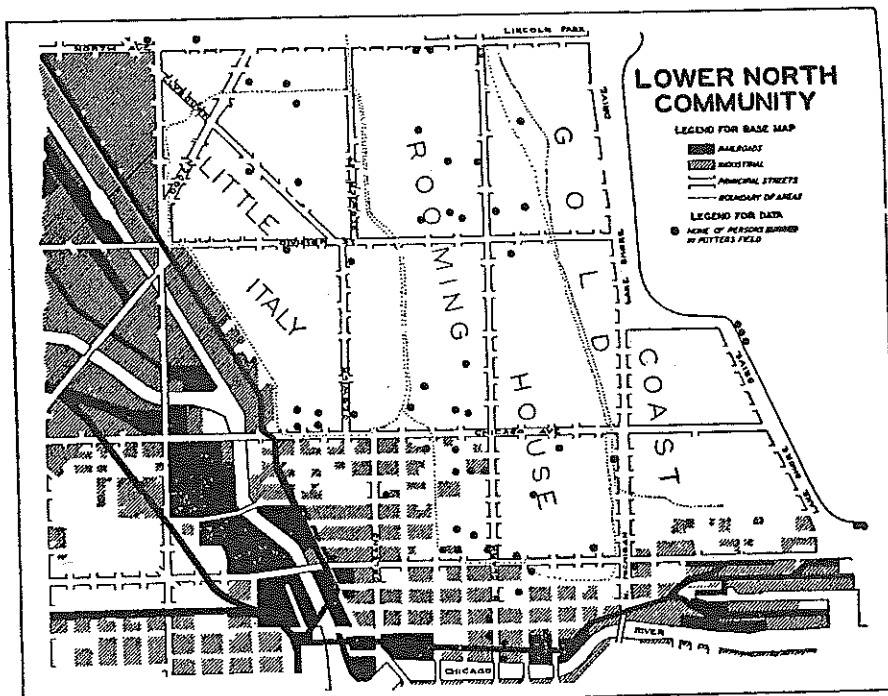
All the records of these families tell more or less the same story: economic misfortune or failure, physical inadequacy, drink, dope or gambling, a loss of grip, *and finally a set of attitudes that at last accommodates the family to the slum, and isolates it.*

Into the slum there drift, for similar reasons, a large number of men and women derelicts, users of opium, drunkards, the "queer," criminals and outcasts, men and women of unstable or problematical character who want to get away from their own communities to a place where they will not be known, or who are forced out and down into the slum by failure or unwillingness to adjust themselves elsewhere.¹

An elderly woman applied through letters to several wealthy women for aid. She told a pitiful story of her past, and gave the usual appeals for assistance. She was referred to the United Charities, much to her chagrin. She did not want to fall back upon public charity for her living, she said. Circumstances made it necessary for her to accept help, but it cut her pride, and she made every effort to conceal her identity. It was discovered later that she had formerly had social position and wealth, and had been a member of several prominent clubs in the city where she had lived. Through her husband's and her own drinking the family had been reduced to desperate circumstances. In the slum of Chicago's Near North Side she had endeavored to cover up her life-story.

A young couple applied to the United Charities for assistance, saying they had come from Omaha, where they had had clerical positions, to Chicago, in the hope of bettering their condition. They said they were but temporarily stranded. A great many of these people tell stories of their past successes and their sure prospects. They often

¹ The following stories are taken from the case records of the Lower North District of the United Charities.



THE POTTER'S FIELD.—Interestingly enough, burial in the "potter's field" seems indicative not so much of the poverty of the slum as of the isolation and lack of group contacts of the rooming-house areas. The above map shows the addresses of persons buried from the morgue when their bodies were left unidentified and unclaimed.

insist that they are quite embarrassed at having to appeal for help. This latter attitude is quite in contrast to that of the professional beggar, the man or woman who makes a living by going from one charity agency to another. It turned out that neither of the young people had lived in Omaha, as they claimed, but that they had run away together, against the advice of their parents, from a small town down state.

Mrs. L. V. was quite a character along Clark Street. She claimed to be of a noble German family; that she had been deserted by her husband; and that she was trying to give her son a musical education. She applied to the Lower North Community Council, and was referred to the United Charities. She turned out to be a dementia praecox case, with a history of petty graft, prostitution, and blackmail. Her address and culture (her early history was never uncovered) enabled her to get by. The son had real musical talent, but had developed an exceedingly erratic "shut in" personality, due to conflict over his inability to study.

G. is an actor, of a long and checkered career. After a year at Harvard, where he roomed with Frank Bacon, he went on the stage. Early in life he displayed considerable talent and was with several successful shows. He married a professional woman of great beauty. But two years after their marriage she died, and he immediately began to drink heavily. He sank rapidly to stock, small road shows, unimportant parts, nothing at all. Now he goes about the Near North Side, living in cheap rooms, from which he is often evicted, sleeping in ten-cent "Gops" or in parks. He rarely has over twenty cents in his pocket. A regular visitor at the agency, he is continually promising to look for work, but never doing it. Periodically he goes on a spree, turning up again with his clothes ragged and tattered, and his face haggard. He has had a score of odd jobs, distributing quack pamphlets (for which he was put into the Bridewell), peddling patent medicines, but never sticking to anything for very long, feeling that these jobs were beneath his professional dignity. His whole life is now organized about dreams of the glory of his past, and his purely imaginary dignity as a member of "the profession." He peddles early mornings and at night after dark for fear some of his old associates might see him. When offered three dollars a day to be a super for a movie company in

a mob scene, he said, "When I take part in a mob scene, it will be in a coal yard or a graveyard, but never in the profession." Many of his old friends have tried to help him, but his pride keeps him from seeing them. G. is always dreaming of getting back on the stage. "If I could only get a wardrobe!" But every time he gets a wardrobe he pawns it and gets drunk.

B. came into the office. She said that her husband had deserted her. They were formerly vaudiville people. For nine years he was a good husband. Then he was converted and became an evangelist for a city mission. Since then he has never supported her, and for a year she has had no word of him.

At —— Iarrabee Street lives a broken-down hag of a woman in a store piled with junk and filth: old china, broken furniture, old papers, etc. She sits by the hour in a rocker in the midst of it all, seldom going out. The Sicilian children in the neighborhood call her "teacher." She was graduated from the University of Chicago in the early nineties, a Phi Beta Kappa student. She never married, but was a teacher of English in a large city high school. She began to take dope. Then she disappeared. Several years later she was found at the present address in the slum. She refused all help from social agencies, whose workers she considers her inferiors. She has a letter from a wealthy woman in Hyde Park, an old college friend: "I would be glad to help you. But of course, if you won't have anything to do with your old friends. . . ."

Stories like the foregoing could be indefinitely multiplied from the case records of charitable agencies. For the slum is full of unadjusted, often psychopathic personalities who are isolated from their old associates. And the barrier is never one of disease, or failure, or vice alone. It is always accompanied by a set of attitudes that serve to shut the person off from the rest of the world.¹

¹ It is this complex of attitudes, through which the person has become accommodated to the slum, that often makes the behavior of the slum dweller so incalculable to the budget-minded social agency. It is often remarked how difficult it is to get a family to consent to move out of the slum

It will have been remarked, in the foregoing cases, how frequently drink and drug addiction play a part in the descent to the slum. Indeed, a few years ago there was a block below Chicago Avenue known as "dopey block" be-

no matter how advantageous the move may seem from the material point of view, and how much more difficult it is to keep them from moving back into the slum. The story of the old woman who insisted upon being moved from a pleasant country home back to the slum, giving as a reason "People is more company than stumps, nobow," is a classic of social work. The person's behavior becomes conditional upon stimuli of slum life. Without these familiar stimuli the person becomes restless, lonely, uncontrollable. The story of Jenny well illustrates this hold of the slum upon its dwellers.

Jenny was the daughter of "Ella the High," a notorious madam who lives near Wells and Superior streets. They lived in the worst of basement rooms, in which water was always standing on the floors after spring rains. Jenny was accustomed to scenes of drunken carousal and viciousness when her mother entertained men. The mother had cancer, and at fourteen Jenny accepted the responsibility for the family and went to work in a factory. Her mother kept encouraging her to form an alliance with some traveling man who could help support the family. But at seventeen she met a young man who worked at the bottling works whom she was crazy to marry. Since he made but twenty-two dollars a week, her mother would have none of it, insisting that she live with a man who made fifty and would turn it all over to her—the fact that this man had a wife in Minnesota being immaterial. Then one night Jenny was kidnaped on the street and raped. She had a frightful experience and was in the hospital for weeks. Such was the slum to Jenny.

The young fellow from the bottling works still wanted to marry her. A group of women on the Gold Coast learned of the case through a social worker and said that if the man wanted her that badly they would make it possible. So they gave her a wedding at River Forest—so "swell" that her mother was reconciled. Then they put the couple in a little wooden house on Oak Street just off the Gold Coast. They fitted it up with bright chintzes and things, and were terribly pleased with what they had done. But one morning not long afterward the social worker found the house empty. The couple had moved in the night. A few weeks later they were found in a single basement room back again on Wells Street—dark, damp, and dirty, but on Wells! Jenny's explanation was that over on Oak Street life was too quiet; there was no excitement; "the wagon never backed up to anybody's door!"

cause of the number of drug addicts who lived in it. It has since been cleaned up. But "dope" is still liberally peddled in the slum. The following excerpt from the "Diary of a Dope Fiend" is from the story of a formerly influential business man of Chicago, who in a few years of drug addiction, became a derelict in the slum:

January 1. Slept all day. Up at 7 P.M. Had the blues. Nowhere to go. No money; no friends. Would have had plenty if I had been a different man. Oh, how one feels to have no one to be with. Took my first nip of morphine—just a nip. Wonderful dreams. Lifted me out of my misery.

January 4. Pawned my razor. Went to doctor. [The doctor who let him have the opiate.]

January 22. Up at 9 A.M. Looked for work. No money. Tired, sick, all in.

January 28. Went to doctor. Feel bad. When a fellow's broke, he's no good to himself or anyone else. Hell on earth. I owe everyone. What is a fellow to do?

January 29. Went to bed with my thoughts. God! It's awful.

January 31. Took three and one-half grains.

February 1. No money. Am hungry. No place I can go. Don't know what to do. Took five grains. [He got a few jobs during the month, but could not keep them.]

February 11. Must try to get away from this thing. It's growing on me. Cut down my dose today to three and one-half grains.

February 18. Had to have seven grains today.

February 21. What's the use of trying to quit? Took ten and one-half grains today.

February 25. Had dream last night about Dora.

March 1. Sold coat. Borrowed \$15. To pay back \$9 each pay day.

March 7. Took twelve grains today.

March 24. Used lots of _____ today. Don't know why. Wish I did not have it.

March 25. Use more and more. Can't let it alone. Don't know what to do. Tired and sick. Damn fool. A fool there was and that am I.

March 26. Seven grains. Nothing left. Am glad. Will now let it alone. Never again. What a fool one is when he has this stuff. Those who know nothing about it are fortunate. [In the month of March twenty-two visits to the doctor to get the drug are recorded.]

April 3. Slept all day. And without a dime. I know I am a fool, but I went to the doctor.

April 4. Got \$1.50 on my bathrobe. Sorry to pawn it, but I had to.

April 5. Got 15 cents to live on. It's a lot. Ha, hal To hell with everything.

April 6. Another damn day. Wish things would go up in smoke. This is a hell of a place—this world. Some have everything; others nothing. Hope the war raises hell with all things and people with money.

April 7. I wish something would happen. This is awful. I'm thinking of someone tonight. I wish she were here.

April 11. Put gray suit in pawn. Paid doctor one dollar. Ate good meal once more. But the three dollars for my suit, it won't last long.

April 12. What a boob I am without a dime! Gee, I wish I were like I used to be. How would it feel, I wonder?

April 21. Tried to pawn my overcoat. One dollar is all I could get. When is this going to end? Wish I was like I used to be. Oh! what I have lost because of a girl!

April 29. I wish I was dead. What in hell am I living for, anyway? Saw Mrs. Williams today. She told me B. was going to get free. Best girl in the world. Hope she gets a good man. None like me.

May 2. I must get work today. Only coffee and rolls in two days now. I've only five cents. I think I'm going crazy.

[On May 6 he pawned his fountain pen to get morphine. The next entry is written in pencil. May 21 he vowed again to quit the drug, declaring he would cut off a grain a day. The dose that day was nine grains. The next day it was eight, the next seven, and so on down to four. He made his final entry on May 28, after taking nine grains. "No use trying," the entry read, "I can't quit!"]

It is in the lodging-house of the slum that the rank and file of the underworld "hang out." Many of these North Side

* Document 29.

lodging-houses are criminal haunts. A "flower girl" writes of such a house on La Salle Street:

Effe's avarice had prompted her to keep the house full of lodgers. Some of them were morphine addicts; some smoked "hop"; others were "cokeys." All belonged to that stratum of society referred to as the "underworld." There was Paddy Gallagher the "wire," a pickpocket who lived with his "mob" in comparative harmony; "Dago" Charlie, who talked of social inequalities as rapidly as any parlor bolshevik, and played his violin to soothe himself between smokes; "Boston" Nell, a large, matronly looking, gray-haired woman, whose respectable appearance belied her professional activities as a nationally known "lifter." "Dad" Miller, an old thief who looked like a great general, and Ada, his young wife. "Dad" didn't drink, and he rarely "smoked," but he had a record of twenty-seven years done in various prisons. Ada was both a shoplifter and a pickpocket—an unusual combination of talent, for your criminal is usually a specialist if he is wise. She made a pretty picture on occasional afternoons, wheeling the baby along State Street, and here and there "lifting a poke" from some unsuspecting admirer of the child. But she was overly addicted to morphine and thin as a rail, honey, like a woman after a fever. But "Dad" loved her. He even forgave her frequent lapses from faithfulness to him, which is not usually the way with crooks, who mostly require their women to be "straight." But "Dad" was a philosopher, of a sort. There was "Frenchy," a dark, sharp-nosed little man, who from long imprisonment and brooding was what "Paddy" called "str nuts," and was always muttering and praying. There were others too numerous and transient to mention: beggars, "dingers," "D.J.'s," and "T.B.'s," and so on. That is, they twisted an arm or a leg, or they played music, or coughed as though they had tuberculosis, each of his own line. There were quarrels and brawls when some drug-crazed man would go "blind" and break up things until he tired himself out, or was overpowered by some of his friends who feared police interference. Police there were, occasionally, but they came in search of one man or one "mob," and made no more to do about it. It is convenient for the police to let criminals hang out together, for then they know where to look when one is "wanted."¹

¹ Document 30: "Duffe—The Autobiography of a 'Flower girl.'"

In another lodging-house on La Salle Street lived Katherine Malm, the "tiger woman" of a recent and sensational episode of automobile banditry and murder.¹

In testifying, Katherine said that Malm was introduced to her as "the biggest crook on the North Side." Another girl who roomed on La Salle Street spent her nights at North Side cabarets, luring victims for sick-up men.

The lodging-house area of the slum is an area in which women must live at men's terms, as is brought out in the following excerpt (*Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 1923) from the sensational "Hate Diary" that was to have been the primary evidence of the State's Attorney's office in prosecuting L—K— for the murder of her husband, but which at the trial the State's Attorney failed to produce. L—K—, keeper of a slum lodging-house on the Near North Side, shot the husband who deserted her. The following lines are from a diary reported to have been found in her room:

"Alone, alone, always alone. Washing from babyhood up—corn bread and bacon to eat. Clothes to wear to school that other children would make fun of. No school but that I walked miles to get to.

"Then six months a year snatched between wash days. No mother, no father, no real friends. . . ."

"A few months of happiness in Chicago with Frank until I found that also false. A few months with Harry, my husband, until that awful day when I found that letter, and then my heart broke. My husband was false to me in every way, and I was sick, tired, and disgusted. . . ."

"My faith has had cuts and jags all my life. When I found that letter I died. Five long years of hell! The only diversion I had from that old dull hurt has been work, work, work, some dissipation, and—I must not lose or die!

"Men, how I hate them. I hope the day will come soon so that—damn them—I won't need them. . . ."

"I will play the damned man; he is my only hope. . . ."

"I saw last night the damned man. I was as nice as I could be to him. He forced his attentions on me. How can women swallow the hot air that men try to hand them. . . . O, I would like to say, 'Shut up, you fool; you are after what you can get; I am after the money. You want me and I need you.'

"Well this is a man's world, say what you will. At last I will have to admit it is a man's world. It took me thirty years to find that out."

GHETTOS—OLD AND NEW

The ghetto was the name given to an area in European cities in which for centuries the Jews were confined. This confinement was the creation of the racial religion of the Jew himself, however, and not a product of Christian coercion. The ghetto formed a more or less independent community, with its own customs and laws, and was always in controversy with the larger community.

Most of the foreign colonies in American cities are after the pattern of the medieval ghetto—especially the Negro quarters or black belts, the Chinatowns, and the Little Italys. They have their own traditions and customs, their own regulations and laws, to which the Mafia and Tong wars bear evidence.¹ The Chinese Tongs, for instance, enforce

¹ The following item from the *Chicago Tribune* of July 11, 1922, part of which was quoted in chap. i, well illustrates the way in which the foreign colony tends to set up law within law, and to settle its own disputes in its own way without appeal to the American courts:

SYRIANS AND ASSYRIANS IN DEADLINE FIGHT

"Three men were stabbed, several badly beaten, and ten arrested during a pitched battle between rival factions of Persians in a coffee shop at 706 North Clark Street early yesterday evening. Police in answering a call of a riot were forced to fight their way through more than 200 men engaged in the fight.

"Patrolman G. V. Magnuson and Police Surgeon William Smale of the Chicago Avenue station were the heroes. Together they dashed into the coffee shop and dragged out the wounded men and placed them in an ambulance. Then they drew revolvers and held the fighters at bay until reinforcements arrived.

"For several years there has been an unwritten law that no Syrian Persian was allowed north of Huron Street on Clark Street. Five members of the race wandered into the coffee shop of Titan & Sayad and sat down at a table to play cards.

"In a short time six Assyrian Persians entered the place and saw them. They walked to the table, it is said, and remarked that the Syrians had better get off the street. At that the five Syrians started to fight.

"In a moment other men in the place drew knives and advanced on the battlers. Chairs were overturned and windows broken. The fight led out to the street. Finally more than 200 had taken up the fight. Some one sent in a call to the police."

their own laws and impose their own fines; the American courts and law are only resorted to when help is needed to enforce the Tong law against a rebellious member. There is always a "boss" or a "king" in the colony—several, perhaps, if it is a large colony. The boss or king knows more English, has been in America longer, knows the city and the police, has influence both with his countrymen and with the inscrutable American law. The police seek to deal with the colonists through him and his ability to enforce the unwritten regulations of the colony. The colony is little understood, either by the law or by the rest of the city, and comes to constitute a little world by itself.

These foreign colonies, both in the cities of Europe and America, are located in the slums. It is in the slum, in every city, that one finds Little Italy, Little Poland, Chinatown, and the black belt. As we have already remarked, this does not mean that the immigrant necessarily seeks the slum, or that he makes a slum of the area in which he lives. But in the slum he finds quarters that he can afford, and relatively little opposition to his coming. Moreover, as the colony grows, the immigrant finds in it a social world.¹ In the colony he meets with sympathy, understanding, and encouragement. There he finds his fellow-countrymen who understand his habits and standards and share his life-experience and viewpoint. In the colony he has status, plays a rôle in a group. In the life of the colony's streets and cafés, in its church and benevolent societies, he finds response and security. In the colony he finds that he can live, be somebody, satisfy his wishes—all of which is impossible in the strange world outside.

The slum district of the Near North Side harbors a half-

¹ See John Daniels, *America via the Neighborhood*, pp. 96-97; and Robert E. Park and H. A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted*.

dozen fairly well defined foreign colonies. The largest of these, Little Sicily, will be described in another chapter. But besides Little Sicily there is a Persian colony, a small settlement of Greeks, a little black belt, and the poorer elements of Chicago's German and Swedish populations. Each of these has given an area within the slum its characteristic stamp, and is living a life more or less to itself.

PERSIA IN AMERICA

The largest colony of Persians in the United States is located on the Near North Side of Chicago. It is difficult to estimate its numbers, as the United States census groups the Persian with the natives of Hedjooz, India, China, and Japan, as from "Other Asia." Prominent men of the colony claim for it a population of from three to six thousand. Three thousand would seem to be a fairly accurate estimate.¹ The greater part of the colony lies between Dearborn and Wells streets, south of Chicago Avenue. But there is a scattering of Persians east of Dearborn, and north along Clark and Wells. Indeed, during the past two or three years there has been quite a noticeable movement north along Wells Street.

The majority of this colony came from the province of Urmia, though there are others from Hindustan and the Transcaucasus. In their native country, which is rugged and mountainous, they worked vineyards and orchards, and were distinctly provincial and rural people. Practically the whole colony call themselves Assyrians (Christian Persians); there are not a dozen Mohammedan Persians in Chicago. And their emigration from Persia was due to the religious intolerance and persecution which flared up in the Mohammedan

¹ Documents 31 and 32.

countries of Asia Minor during the war. There were but two or three hundred Persians in Chicago before the war, the remainder of the colony having arrived since 1918.

By far the larger part of the colony consists of single men between twenty and forty years of age. There are few women and children. Consequently most of the Persians live in lodging-houses, or in buildings which the few families take over and convert into rooming-houses for friends and relatives. The colony is pretty well scattered among the other groups in the slum. There are no blocks that are solidly Persian. There are, however, many houses which have only Persians living in them; and groups from the same town settle in the same block. Thus the Persian colony, like every foreign colony, tends to be a mosaic of miniature Old World villages.

Most of the Persians, because of their rural origin, have no trade or profession. There are a few skilled laborers in the colony, a number of small shopkeepers, and a score, perhaps, of professional men. But the most frequent occupation is that of cook or waiter in a restaurant or hotel; many others are janitors, or work in factories.² The standard of living is much higher among the Persians than among similar immigrant groups, however. The Persian does not save and send money to the Old Country, as does the Italian, for example, but spends his wages for his immediate needs.³

¹ Among eighty-five Persians studied through the records of the immigrant Protective League, the following occupational distribution was found:

Workers in hotels or restaurants . . .	29	Painters	4
Janitors	17	Tailors	3
Factory laborers	8	Bakers	2
Shopkeepers	6	Other occupations	11
Garagemen	5		

² Florence Nesbitt, director of the Lower North District of the United Charities.

The Persian brings with him, of course, a heritage of Old World custom and tradition. But in a colony of single men, where families are few, custom does not play the part in social life and control that it does in a more normal community. A great part of the life of the colony centers about the coffee house. The men gather in the coffee houses in the evenings, eat Assyrian dishes, talk, smoke, and play cards. The gossip of the coffee house plays a large part in the forming of opinions. There used to be a Persian paper in Chicago, and among the Persians the editor of the newspaper is always influential. But there were too few subscribers to support the paper. Control in the colony is now largely vested in the steamship agent and in the church. There are no politicians, as we use the term, among the Persians. But the steamship agent, knowing every Persian in Chicago, and many in Persia, is politically influential and takes the place of the "boss" of Little Italy or Little Poland. The real power in the colony, however, is the church. For the Chicago colony is a religious sect, driven to America by religious persecution. It is Assyrian first, and Persian afterward.

The future of the colony is difficult to predict. Just before the passage of the immigration law of 1921 many of the men were bringing over families, wives, or sweethearts. But the law limits the number who can be admitted to the United States from all of "Other Asia" to seventy-eight a year. So the growth of the colony has closed, and it will be impossible to bring more Persian women into the colony. At the same time there is at present considerable sentiment against intermarriage. On the other hand, the religious situation in Asia Minor precludes the return to Persia of any great number. If our immigration policy remains as it

now is, the Persians will probably intermarry with other nationalities and gradually lose their identity.

ATHENS ON THE "L"

East of the "elevated" on Chicago Avenue, and south of Chicago Avenue on Clark Street, one sees curious Greek lettering on the windows of stores, coffee houses, and cafés. Here, in the lodging-houses of the slum, mingling with the Persian colony, is a population of nearly one thousand Greeks. In the vicinity of Chicago Avenue and North Clark Street is a suburb of the large Greek colony about Halsted and Harrison streets which is the second-largest Greek colony in America. Like the Persians, most of the Greeks come from rural districts, though some come from the cities of Tripolis and Sparta, and small coastal towns. But, unlike the Persian, the Greek comes solely from an economic motive, the desire to get away from the extreme poverty of his native country and to make a small fortune in America.

The North Side colony is made up largely of the lower class, or "tramp" type of Greek, who migrates from city to city. His migratory tendency is evident in every phase of his life: his constant changing of lodging-houses, of occupations, and of habits. The majority of these Greeks work in restaurants, factories, or stores. Those who work in factories usually have mechanical knowledge, gained while "tramping" about on boats.

Like the Persians, again, they are largely an adult male population. But they do not live together in houses as the Persians do. They usually live in pairs, in lodging-houses which often contain as many as five nationalities. Nevertheless the Greeks are very clannish. The majority of Greeks

A recent survey of five hundred Negro families in the area bounded by Chicago Avenue, Larrabee, Division, and Franklin streets, made by the Chicago Urban League, gives an interesting picture of this Negro population. Eighty-nine per cent of it is native to the rural South; 55 per cent of it has come from the South to the Near North Side since 1918; 63 per cent of it has come to the Near North Side since 1922. It is a population evenly divided as to sex, composed largely of young wage-earners. The modal family size is two persons. The Near North Side Negro lives in rundown dwellings, with stove heat, falling plaster, outside toilets. Sixty per cent of the Negro families live in rear flats or basements, for which they pay a modal rent of less than four dollars per room. A third of the families take lodgers. Negro families move about frequently within the area, 63 per cent having lived at their present addresses less than one year. The men have irregular employment as unskilled laborers, 85 per cent of the men earning less than 32 dollars per week. The modal wage for men is \$20-\$24, and for women \$12 or less. Poverty is extreme and mortality is high.¹

The Sicilian has not retired before the Negro without a show of resistance. On the school and public playgrounds are re-enacted the scenes of a generation ago when the Sicilian was forcing out the Swede. The Negro child is often mistreated and ostracized. There are gang fights on playground and street. The police patrol clangs along the streets of Little Hell in answer to not infrequent riot calls. Sicilian fathers protest to the schools against admitting Negro children. Sicilian landowners band together to keep the Negro from acquiring property. But the resistance is in-

¹ Document 34, "The Negro on the Lower North Side," a survey made by H. N. Robinson, of the Chicago Urban League, in 1925.

effective and sporadic, and the invasion is on the whole a peaceful one. A Negro population of several thousand has already penetrated Little Sicily, bringing with it its barber shops and pool halls, its markets, and its "store-front" churches.

SVENSKA KLUBBEN AND THE RED STAR INN

There remain on the Near North Side many remnants of the German and Swedish populations that formerly lived there. Not far below North Avenue, on North La Salle Street, is the Svenska Klubben, a club of well-to-do Swedish business men. And at the corner of Germania Place and Clark Street are the Lincoln Club (formerly the Germania Club), a fashionable German club, and the Red Star Inn, a famous old German restaurant. Farther south on Clark Street, just above Chicago Avenue, is the old Turner Hall, still the home of several German and Swiss *Wirtshäuser*. The very names of the streets are reminiscent of the German population: Germania Place, Goethe Street, Wieland Street, Beethoven Place, and Schiller Street.

North Avenue is still a northern European thoroughfare, the street of the poorer elements of the German, Hungarian, Swedish, and Swiss populations of the North Side. Its many German cafés—Wain Stube (with a bunch of huge gilded grapes over the door), Pilsner, Wurzn Sepp Family Resort, Komiker Sepp—give it a distinctive color as contrasted with the Greek and Persian coffee houses on Lower Clark Street, or the Sicilian shops and soft-drink parlors along Division Street. Drug stores have no soda fountains. The windows of the many delicatessen shops plainly proclaim Swiss, German, or Hungarian; and they have little tables about which men eat lunches of rye bread,

sauerkraut, sausage and pickles, perhaps with *alpenkräuter*, and talk in German. At the corner of Larrabee and North Avenue is the Immigrant State Bank (with name in German, Hungarian, and Italian, as well as in English), the Chicago Hungarian Athletic Association, a Hungarian daily, and a Hungarian barber shop. To the east are a building and loan associations and several steamship agencies. On Halsted, near North Avenue, are two German labor newspapers, and St. Michael's Bavarian Church. North Avenue has a few chain grocery stores, but most of its groceries are neighborhood stores; it has several five-and-ten-cent stores; and it has a "loan bank" where, the pawnbroker says, articles are pawned, not for drink, dope, or women, as along Clark Street, but to buy food and pay the rent. The names along the street are nearly all northern European: Carl Bocker, Cigars and Tobacco; Stroup & Happel, Architects; A. Schlesinger, Schiffskarten.

The large part of this German and Hungarian population now lies between Clybourne Avenue and Center Street, with the Swedish population north of it. The more well-to-do and influential elements of both the German and the Swedish populations long since crossed North Avenue and moved northward before the pressure of the Sicilian immigration. That many German, Hungarian, and Swedish clubs and newspapers are located on the Near North Side is significant only historically; the center of influence, economically, culturally, and politically, now lies farther north. The Teutonic population, chiefly German, which remains below North Avenue, consists of the poorer element which has lagged behind in the general exodus, clinging to the old wooden tenements on the narrow, often crooked, streets of this district. Its chief contribution to the life of the Lower

North Side is a poverty problem. But since there is practically no German, Swedish, and Hungarian immigration, and the Sicilians are pushing steadily northward, it would seem to be a matter of but a few years until the last remnant of this early population moves out of the Near North Side.

SLUM PATTERNS

It is apparent that the slum is more than an economic phenomenon. The slum is a sociological phenomenon as well. Based upon a segregation within the economic process, it nevertheless displays characteristic attitudes, characteristic social patterns which differentiate it from adjoining areas. And it is this aspect of slum life that is especially significant from the standpoint of community organization. The slum sets its mark upon those who dwell in it, gives them attitudes and behavior problems peculiar to itself.

The slum is a thoroughly cosmopolitan area. Foreign colonies, urban, rural, and alien cultures, diverse tongues and creeds exist side by side, mingle, and interpenetrate. Moreover, in the foreign colonies, especially in the black belts, Chinatowns, and Little Italies, where a whole people is segregated by virtue of color or culture, one finds more grades of people living together than in any other area within the city. This Near North Side slum, with its history of cultural succession and its twenty-eight nationalities, is one of the most cosmopolitan areas in a distinctively cosmopolitan city.

The cosmopolitanism of the slum means more than a polyglot culture. It involves a breaking down of prejudices, until in an area like "Bughouse Square" social distances are reduced to a minimum. There is tolerance of "foreign"

customs and ideas not to be found without the slum. Groups in accommodating themselves to one another assimilate one another's folkways and mores. Cultures lose much of their identity. The mores tend to lose their sanctions. And in this cosmopolitan world, by virtue of this tolerance of the "foreign" and interpenetration of customs, traditional social definitions lose their meaning, and traditional controls break down. Groups tend to lose their identity, and the social patterns of these groups tend to merge into a hybrid something that is neither Sicilian nor Persian nor Polish, but of the slum. This is particularly true of the smaller groups, like the North Side Jew, Pole, and Greek, who do not live in colonies but are scattered throughout the slum.

The life of the slum is lived almost entirely without the conventional world. Practically its only contacts with the conventional world are through the social agency and the law. The social agency is looked upon as a sort of legitimate graft whereby small incomes may be considerably supplemented,¹ and the law, symbolized by the "copper," the

¹ It is not exceptional to find families who make their entire living by exploiting charity organizations (see Document 35). One such character, "Honest to God Sam," had fourteen charities helping him at one time, each ignorant of the aid he was receiving from at least ten of the other thirteen. The "basket rush" at Thanksgiving and Christmas becomes a sort of game. Families pride themselves on their ability to get more baskets than their neighbors; and the champion basket-getter thereby secures status. Often the baskets are not wanted for any other reason. A visiting nurse tells of visiting a family three days after Christmas and finding the children playing with turkeys dressed up in sweaters, as dolls. A Polish woman was furious because Nick and Alec had been drunk Christmas Day, and as a result the family had got but seven baskets from the Salvation Army, when they might have got nine. One block organized to get baskets and then held a street market and sold the baskets at five dollars a piece.

Yet basket-giving is spectacular. It gets status for the giver as well as the receiver. The newspaper photographs the lines waiting for baskets. A

"pull," the "digger," and the "wagon," is to the dweller in the slum a source of interference and oppression, a cause of interrupted incomes, a natural enemy. The Lake Shore Drive is as "foreign" to many a resident of Little Hell as though it were separated from him by the Atlantic Ocean.

The slum is a confused social world to those who grow up in it. This is due on the one hand to what we have referred to as the cosmopolitan nature of the slum, its lack of common social definitions, and its many conflicting definitions that arise out of its various cultures. But it is more directly due to the functioning of the slum family and the slum community.

The "normal" community tends to meet crisis situations for its members. The "normal" family does the same thing. But the slum community and the slum family fail in this respect. Over a large area of the slum, the area of cheap lodging-houses, there is nothing of the nature of a community. And the persons and families who live in these lodging-houses are segregated there because they have failed, for one reason or another, to adjust elsewhere. Many of these families are broken families; others are disorganized; still others are merely ineffective. Moreover, the very physical conditions of lodging-house life, particularly its fashionable Near North Side church recently discontinued a constructive social experiment in favor of basket-giving and financing of "poor" families (see Document 36). Indeed, the contact of the conventional world with the slum has, until recently, largely consisted in these spectacular gestures. The city mission, with its bread line and its ragtime gospel, is not the least interesting in these gestures. Missions are found only in the slums, and only in the slums of English and American cities. This fact is likely enough the result of the Anglo-Saxon's individualistic philosophy. "You must not interfere with a man's private life and affairs until he is down and out and gone to the devil. Then, however, you are permitted to step in and see what you can do for him."

mobility, make impossible that constellation of attitudes about a home, with its significant ritual, which affords the basis for that emotional interdependence which is the sociologically significant fact of family life. As a result, the person who dwells in the lodging-house of the slum has to meet his problems alone. This is peculiarly significant in the behavior patterns of the child.

Much the same situation meets the second generation in the foreign colony. The immigrant generation, feeling little other pressure than the necessity of learning the minimum of the English language required to get along economically, shuts itself off in a Little Sicily or a ghetto and lives to itself. The American-born generation, however, is not able to live to itself. The law requires it to attend American schools; and in many other ways it is precipitated into American cultural life. It finds itself living in two social worlds, social worlds which define the same situation in very different ways. At once cultural conflicts arise; perhaps merely vague bewilderment and unrest, but often definite problems of personal behavior. In the normal native community, we have said, the family and the community meet these problems for the child. But the foreign family and community are not able to do this completely or successfully. Their attempts are likely as not but serve to mark the child as a delinquent in the eyes of the *Americanae laevi*. The child, consciously if vaguely, feels this inadequacy of the family and community in helping him to make his adjustments; nor can he find in the Old World life of the colony satisfaction for his wishes as defined by his contact with American life.

Herein lies the significance of the fact that there is an ecology of the "gang." The boys' gang is an adjustment that results from the failure of the family and community to

meet the boy's problems. This failure is especially characteristic of the foreign family and community, which economic necessity has segregated in the slum. Hence it is that the slum, particularly the foreign slum, is gangland. For gangland is but the result of the boy's creation of a social world in which he can live and find satisfaction for his wishes.

The characteristic habitat of Chicago's numerous gangs is that broad twilight zone of railroads and factories, of deteriorating neighborhoods and shifting populations, which borders the city's central district on the north, on the west, and on the south. They constitute a sort of medieval empire in a modern city. This empire is divided into three great domains: the North Side Jungles, which lie north and east of the north branch of the Chicago River; the West Side Wilderness, which lies west of the Loop and the river; and the South Side Badlands, which extend south of the Loop and east of the South Branch of the river. The realm of the gang also extends into the better residential areas along railroads and business streets which reach into these communities like tentacles of the slum. In addition to these chief regions of gangland, there are certain appended areas attached to industrial and other suburbs and satellites which include slum-like districts and foreign communities of the poorer type. The haunts of the gang, however, are chiefly to be found in the so-called "poverty belt" about the loop.

The beginnings of the gang can best be discerned in one of those crowded sections of the city that comprise its characteristic habitat. On a warm summer evening, for example, the formation of gangs may be easily observed in the twilight life of the slum. Groups of children at play are everywhere. They readily meet in their social environment, hostile forces which knit them together and give them solidarity. The embryo gangs often have their beginnings in the fighting that takes place between rival streets. While many of them are ephemeral, others develop considerable social self-consciousness. They often get a name from their own street or of their own choosing. In this way the embryo gang becomes solidified and permanent and acquires considerable stability. Boys may hang together in this manner throughout the

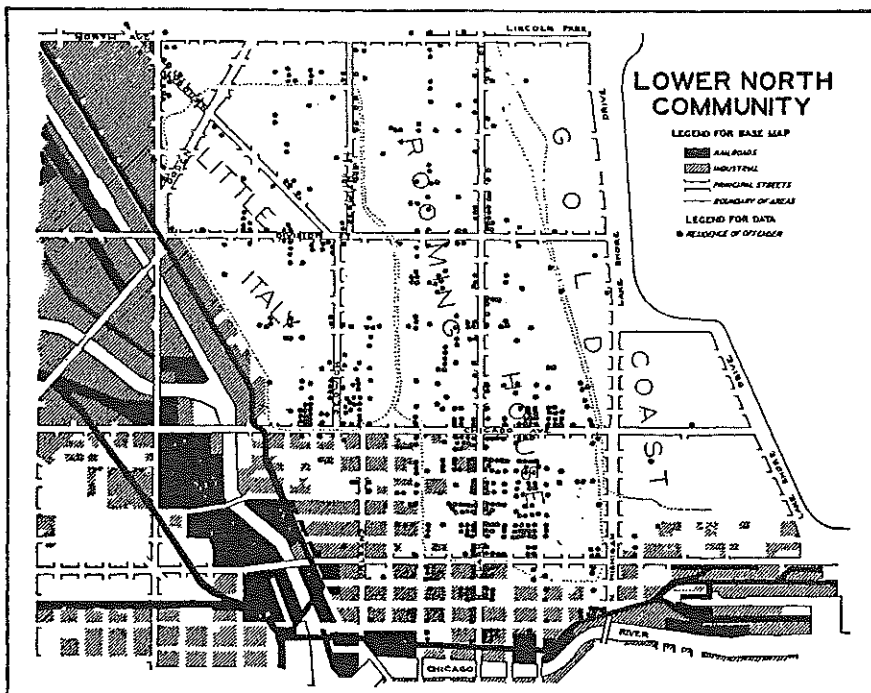
whole period of adolescence, and when they arrive at manhood they represent a well-integrated group. After the gang has developed for a period, it is likely to become conventionalized, taking on some traditional form like a club, or following some social pattern in the community. The dominant social pattern for the gang in Chicago is the athletic club, a type of organization which is the dream of every street gang. In the conventional stage, however, the formal acquisitions are largely external and the group still retains many of its old gang characteristics. Out of these gangs of boys and young men the criminal gangs develop, and often these dangerous associations masquerade under the name of clubs. The crime commission of Chicago estimates that there are 10,000 professional criminals in the city. It is more than likely that their training was in such gangs, which, usually unsupervised, are veritable cradles of crime.

Besides creating juvenile delinquency and training criminals, the gang acts always as a source of disorder in the community. It is a problem for school, for park, for playground, and for settlement. It thrives on conflict. When there are riots, the gang takes a leading part in them; and it easily becomes a nucleus for the mob. In its more mature forms, in unscrupulous hands, it becomes the instrument for evil. It may be used in labor shugging, in strike breaking, or in violent competition. In Chicago, as in other cities, it has become a favorite tool of political bosses, who subsidize it and protect it in its delinquency in return for strong-arm work and votes.

Yet it would be erroneous to suppose that the gang is inherently evil. It is simply a spontaneous expression of human nature without social direction. It is a product of neglect and repression. It flourishes like weeds in the formal garden of society. If properly directed and encouraged, the energies of the gang can be turned into highly desirable channels. Supervised, the gang may become an instrument for the personal development instead of the demoralization of its members. Socialized, it may become a constructive agency in the community.¹

The gang originates as a conflict group, a group in conflict with the social definitions of one or all of the family, the

¹ Document 37, prepared by Frederic M. Thrasher, whose significant study, *The Gang*, has recently been published.



CRIME.—The Near North Side, including "Little Hell," "Death Corner," and the "Rialto," is notorious as the worst police district in Chicago. Crime concentrates in the southern end of Little Sicily and in the slum lodging area about the Rialto. This map gives the distribution of adult arrests from the East Chicago Avenue and the Hudson Avenue stations from August 15 to September 15, 1924, totaling 674.

community, and the conventional world. The "gang" often becomes the most sensitive and intimate zone in the boy's social world, the focus of his loyalties and his emotional life. But membership and status in the gang is the reward for behavior that is defined by the larger community as "delinquent."¹ In the conflict situation these delinquent patterns are fixed in the boy's personality. The "vice lords" of the passing generation were the products of the "gang" life of the Irish slums, many of them of the old "Market Street Gang" of Little Hell; and the underworld kings of today are the products of the gang life of the Jewish and Italian slums.²

Taking into consideration the segregated nature of the population of the cheap lodging-house, with its mobility and anonymity and its lack of group life, common social definitions, and public opinion, and taking into consideration the social patterns that grow out of the cultural conflicts of the life of the foreign colony, it is not surprising that the slum is a world of unconventional behavior, delinquency, and crime.³

And this Near North Side slum, with its frontier and rialto along North Clark Street, is the worst police district

¹ An extreme but interesting illustration is the following, given by Shaw in *The Boy's Own Story*. Membership in a gang of boys "back o' the yards" was contingent upon the promise that all money that came into a member's hands, no matter in what way, should be turned over to the gang. One day a boy was given five dollars by his mother to pay a grocer's bill. He paid the bill and was given a receipt. Later in the day, at the gang's shack, when he was taking some things from his pocket, the receipt fell out and was seized upon by another member of the gang. When it was discovered the boy had violated the code of the gang, he was beaten to death by the other members.

² The late Dean O'Bannion, for one, was a product of the Market Street Gang. The Miller boys grew up in the "valley."

³ All that has been said in chap. iv on the effect of mobility on the life of the rooming-house district applies to the life of the cheap lodging-house as well.