

WINTER 2009
VOLUME 46, NUMBER 2

**Richard Wright, Citizen of the World:
A Centenary Celebration**

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Amidst the growing numbers of unemployed during the Depression, many writers struggled to survive day-to-day. Barring the Fitzgeralds and the Hemingways, most writers could not make a living from their pens. Working a full-time job – if you could find one – took time away from writing. The Federal Writers' Project put writers to work by utilizing their skills to tell the story of America's history. For Richard Wright, writing guidebooks for the Illinois Writers' Project was a way to “earn my bread” (*Black Boy*, 444). But his time on the Writers' Project was more than just a way to support himself and his family. It was a place where he could apply his readings in sociology, develop his knowledge of Chicago's South Side, and continue to work on his own fiction.

Instituted along with FDR's Federal One, a division of the Works Projects Administration (WPA) that was dedicated to the arts, the Writers' Project employed more than 6,000 writers at its height.¹ The job of those working on the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) was to develop guidebooks for tourists that highlighted state history, local landmarks, and regional folklore. For a nation still struggling to define itself, the FWP was intended to promote a common appreciation for American culture. In Illinois, 300 different projects were coordinated in offices across the state, one of them in the Chicago Loop downtown on Erie Street. Upon hearing about the formation of the Illinois Writers' Project, Wright went to his relief worker Mary Wirth and asked to be transferred. In order to get a job, applicants had to first show that they were published authors, so Wright submitted a list of the poetry and short stories that had appeared in the left-wing press, and he was promptly hired.

When Wright moved to Chicago in 1927 he saw it as an “unreal city” (*Black Boy*, 307). In the decade he spent in Chicago, thanks in part to the time he was on the Illinois Writers' Project, he came to know it intimately. It was in Chicago that he matured as a writer and met other young authors, several of whom were also on the federal payroll. In 1933, Wright joined the Communist Party to participate in the Chicago chapter of the John Reed Club, where he met Jack Conroy and Nelson Algren. Living in Bronzeville, Wright met other African American writers interested in art, poetry, theater, and literature. He formed the South Side Writers' Group along with Arna Bontemps, Frank Marshall Davis, Ted Ward, Marian Minus, Bob Davis, Ed Bland, Fern Gayden, and Margaret Walker.² Together, they created what professor Robert Bone (1986) coined

the “Chicago Renaissance,” a more radical and socially conscious literary movement than what existed in Harlem during the 1920s.³

In addition to literature, it was Wright’s readings in sociology and psychology that were his “most important discoveries” while in Chicago (*Black Boy*, 327). Visits to his relief worker’s husband, Louis Wirth, a professor at the University of Chicago, proved Wright’s prowess for sociology. Along with Robert E. Park, Ernest Burgess, Robert Redfield, and W. Lloyd Warner, Wirth was a member of the “Chicago School” of sociology that tracked patterns of urbanization, juvenile delinquency, and minority groups. Wirth equipped Wright with a list of undergraduate readings and was astonished at how quickly the young scholar became versed in sociological perspectives.

Working as a research assistant for Wirth was Horace Cayton, who had moved to Chicago in 1931 to become a graduate student in the Sociology Department at the University of Chicago. Cayton says he was in Wirth’s office when Wright knocked on the door and introduced himself: “Mrs. Wirth said that her husband might help me. I want to be a writer.”⁴ During his time on the WPA, Cayton supervised more than twenty studies of Chicago’s South Side under the direction of both Wirth and W. Lloyd Warner, a professor in anthropology and sociology. Some of these materials became known as the Cayton-Warner papers and were the basis for *Black Metropolis* (1945), written with St. Clair Drake who also worked on the WPA. Cayton openly shared his findings and Wright used much of this information to write *12 Million Black Voices* (1941), as well as a short unpublished pamphlet “The Negro and Parkway Community House” (1941), an important African American community center directed by Cayton in the 1940s.⁵ The Illinois Writers’ Project essays make it clear that in the mid-1930s the two men inhabited a shared intellectual universe. Providing an introduction to *Black Metropolis*, Wright wrote about his own realization that “sincere art and honest science were not far apart” (xviii). In his view, the “dominant hallmark” of the book was its combination of sociology and anthropology. This approach “examines the social structure as though it were frozen at a moment of time, which is the approach of anthropology; and it examines the processes and dynamics which take place in that structure, which is the approach of sociology” (xx). It was what Wright himself had attempted to achieve while at the Illinois Writers’ Project.

Although Wright may have worked on the Writers’ Project as early as summer 1935, the first record of his time there is the essay, “Ethnographical Aspects of Chicago’s Black Belt,” with the date, December 11, 1935, as well as his address, 3743 Indiana Avenue, noted on the front page.⁶

The ten-page essay begins with a table indicating the influx of blacks into Chicago between 1900 and 1935. Citing census data, Wright shows how the black migration was a “drastic transition” from agricultural and domestic work to urban industrial labor. The rising population reached its peak during World War I, with several violent clashes that culminated in the 1919 race riot. While racial in nature, the conflict came from a “multitude of maladjustments” rooted in long-neglected areas of housing and labor. Since then, Wright says, a degree of “relative stability” had been reached between blacks and whites in the city.

In a four-page addendum titled “On the Ethnography of the Negro (Additional),” dated January 13, 1936, Wright mentions that a growing disillusionment among black migrants had taken two forms – Garveyism and radicalism. A member of the Communist Party at the time of this writing, it is interesting to note Wright comments that except for a brief period in the early 1930s, radical groups had made “no great headway.” The list of contacts for this essay reflects the politically diverse community Wright was a part of, including Samuel Stratton, a teacher at Wendell Phillips High School who was active in the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH); Vivian Harsh, librarian at the George Cleveland Hall branch of the Chicago Public Library also active in the ASNLH; Blanch Shaw, who worked at the downtown branch of the Chicago Public Library and helped organize a union among librarians; and Thelma Kirpatrick, black leftist and writer for the regional party organ, *Midwest Record*. Wright compiled much of the “Bibliography on the Negro in Chicago” from the Special Negro Collection that Harsh had assembled at the Hall branch library.

In an essay on the Chicago Urban League, dated January 8, 1936, Wright takes stock of the data collected by this organization that may be of use to future researchers on the Writers’ Project. “White City – Recreational Center,” finished some time before the summer of 1936, is about a popular tourist destination on the South Side that was modeled after the 1893 Columbian World’s Exhibition in Chicago. “Hotels,” dated March 3, 1937, is simply a list of lodging options on the South Side. “Agriculture and Farm Life,” undated, was new territory for Wright and he received help from Merrell Gregory, the assistant editor of the widely circulated newspaper *Prairie Farmer*. These are examples of the routine assignments Wright performed as a relief worker.

In 1936, between January and July, Wright transferred to the Federal Theatre Project where he worked as a publicity director. He had a deep interest in the stage and hoped to see the creation of a “genuine Negro theater”

(*Black Boy*, 429). But when Wright proposed the production of a Paul Green play about a southern chain gang, the black actors revolted saying that the prisoner roles were degrading. After some of them threatened Wright with pocket knives, he asked to be placed back on the Writers' Project.⁷

The other essays that remain from his time on the Writers' Project illustrate Wright's familiarity with all classes of Chicago's South Side.⁸ "A Survey of the Amusement Facilities of District #35," dated March 3, 1937, covers Wright's own neighborhood. He begins with the stretch of State Street known during the 1920s as "the Stroll," which had since experienced an economic downturn and was by then "almost solidly lumpen-proletariat."⁹ He describes in detail the beer taverns, dingy cafes, and pool rooms that were common. These were the kinds of hangouts that Bigger Thomas and his friends frequented in *Native Son*. Wright then describes the progressively quieter working class neighborhoods to the east, including Indiana Avenue where he had an apartment (Bigger lived close by at 3721 Indiana). In this essay, he remarks how Cottage Grove Avenue was a "dividing line" between black and white neighborhoods, the same street that also symbolically separated Bigger from the white world of Mary Dalton.

The report "Amusements in Districts 38 and 40," though not dated was probably written at the same time as the previous amusements essay. It examines the local sites made famous during the period – roughly 1935 to 1950 – of the Chicago Renaissance. The black population was moving further south, and along Parkway Avenue (known as the "promenade") lived many wealthy African Americans such as Robert S. Abbot, Oscar DePriest, and George Cleveland Hall. At 47th and Parkway, in the center of Bronzeville, stood the Savoy Ballroom and Regal Theatre which were first-class facilities catering to and staffed by African Americans. The infamous masturbation scene that was censored in the first version of *Native Son* took place at the Regal Theatre (32). Wright fails to mention that other nightclubs such as the Grand Terrace Café, though they had an "all-Negro revue," excluded blacks or made them sit in the balcony. Earl "Fatha" Hines had the hottest big band in Chicago, but was controlled by the Grand Terrace's owner, Al Capone.

Wright utilized his knowledge gained on the Federal Writers' Project to convey a spatial representation of fear in *Native Son*. In the chapter "Flight," Bigger surmises that he can escape from the police because he knows the neighborhoods of the South Side "from A to Z" (169). When Bigger stops to look at a newspaper, he sees a black-and-white map that shows the progress of the manhunt moving south from 18th, to 28th, to

38th Street, soon to catch him at 53rd where he is hiding (284). While writing *Native Son* from New York, Wright drew upon his research and writing from the mid-1930s when he was a relief worker for the Illinois Writers' Project.

Also important is the essay "Washington Park," dated March 27 and probably written in 1937. Wright gives considerable space in the essay to the educational and recreational activities in the park, but only makes brief mention of its significance as an open forum. Washington Park was the center of black political and social life during the 1930s. It was where debates were held between Socialists and Communists, Christians and non-Christians, nationalists and pan-Africanists. It was where rallies, marches, and parades took place. Although Wright had spent much time there, he appears to have edited out any radical or racial commentary that would have sent up red flags indicating his own political views. To do otherwise might have cost him his job with the Writers' Project.

While writing what were ostensibly tour guides, the Writers' Project allowed Wright to systematically study Chicago's South Side, become an efficient writer, and ultimately get paid for working on his fiction. He submitted an early draft of "Big Boy Leaves Home" to the Illinois Writers' Project, like others who were allowed to pursue their own poetry and fiction while on the government's time sheet. When Wright moved to New York in 1937, he transferred to the New York Writers' Project where he wrote about Harlem for the New York guide and finished the short stories that were included in *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938). The Dies Committee (an early committee hunting down "un-American" activities) cited one of his short stories, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," published in the Writers' Project collection *American Stuff* (1937), objecting to the vulgar language and calling it "filthy." Although these were just relief workers, they attracted the attention of anti-communist crusaders.

Indeed, the FWP was doing a dangerous thing – it was cultivating a generation of black and working class writers whose works would later reach the hearts of American readers. Many African American writers, such as Sterling Brown, Arna Bontemps, Margaret Walker, Fenton Johnson, Frank Yerby, Zora Neale Hurston, and Ralph Ellison, benefited from their time on the Project. According to Nelson Algren, who worked in the Chicago office, the writer who gained the most from the Writers' Project was Richard Wright, who was "more alert to its advantages and more diligent than most of us."¹⁰ The novel he started writing while working on the New York Project, *Native Son*, would soon introduce the nation to one of the greatest American authors of the twentieth century.

NOTES

¹The two authoritative sources on the Federal Writers' Project are *The Dream and the Deal* (1972) by Jerry Mangione who was a FWP worker, and Monty Noam Penkower (1977).

²For Margaret Walker's reflections on her time working with Wright on the Illinois Writers' Project see her biography, *Richard Wright: Daemonic Genius* (1988).

³For books on the period see Bill Mullen (1999) and Anne Meis Knupfer (2006).

⁴quoted in Herbert Hill (1966: 196-197).

⁵A copy of the unpublished pamphlet is included in the Horace Cayton papers at the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Woodson Regional Library, Chicago.

⁶This essay, along with "Bibliography on the Negro in Chicago," both held in the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, were first published in 1972 with an introduction by Michel Fabre, in *New Letters* (1972), pp.61-75. My deepest gratitude goes to Michael Flug, current senior archivist of the Harsh Collection, now housed at the Woodson Regional Library, for his help on this project.

⁷During his time on the Federal Theatre Project, Wright submitted "Outdoor Theatre in Chicago" (January 5, 1936) and "Playwrights in Chicago" (January 28, 1936), which can be found in the Federal Theatre Collection, Performing Arts Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

⁸All IWP materials were to be duplicated and sent to Springfield, Illinois, where copies of all these essays are kept at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in the Federal Writers' Project Records. Copies of some of the articles are also held at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

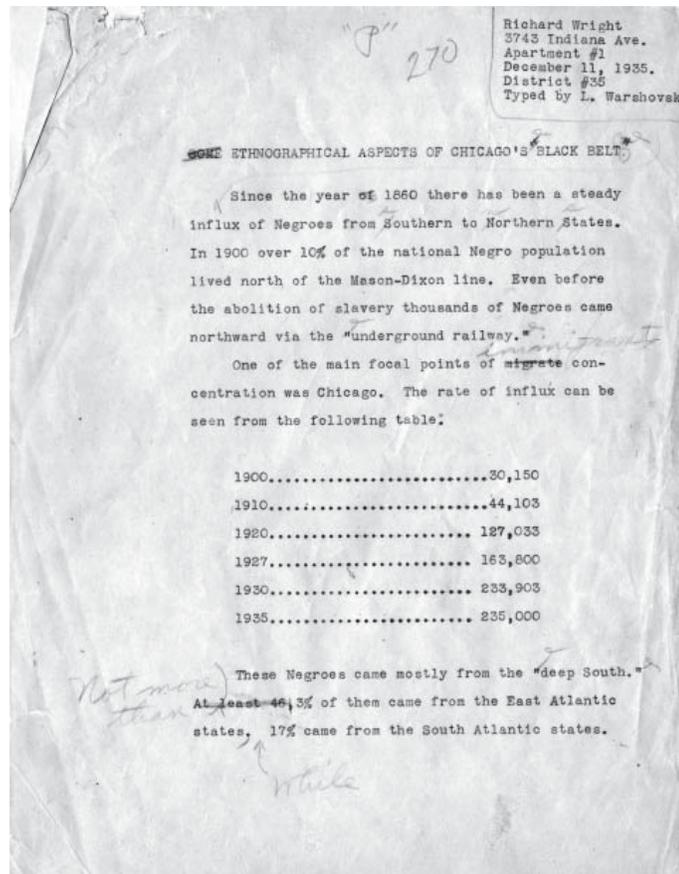
⁹For more about "the Stroll" see Dempsey Travis (1983: 30).

¹⁰Mangione (1972: 121).

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Front page of "Ethnographical Aspects of Chicago's Black Belt." Courtesy of the Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library.

THE ILLINOIS WRITERS' PROJECT ESSAYS

I. ETHNOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS OF CHICAGO'S BLACK BELT
(11 December 1935)

Richard Wright
3743 Indiana Ave.
Apartment #1
December 11, 1935
District #35
Typed by L. Warshovs

Since the year of 1860 there has been a steady influx of Negroes from southern to northern states. In 1900 over 10% of the national Negro population lived north of the Mason-Dixon line. Even before the abolition of slavery thousands of Negroes came northward via the "underground railway."

One of the main focal points of migrant concentration was Chicago. The rate of influx can be seen from the following table:

1900.....	30,150
1910.....	44,103
1920.....	127,033
1927.....	163,800
1930.....	233,903
1935.....	235,000

These Negroes came mostly from the Deep South. Not more than 46.3% of them came from the East Atlantic states. 17% came from the South Atlantic states.

As the above table demonstrates the rate of influx increased with the passing of the years. The peak, however, was during the World War period. During the decade from 1910-1920 the Negro population in Chicago increased 148.5%. One of the outstanding facts about this data for this period is that the large increase did not bring into existence any new colonies but resulted in the expansion and increased density of areas in which groups of Negroes had lived prior to 1910. During a period of 18 months from 1917-1918 it is estimated that more than 50,000 Negroes poured into Chicago. All of these, however, did not remain. Chicago was but a re-routing point, and many moved later to nearby cities and towns. The tendency was to reach those centers paying the highest wages and offering the most permanent prospects.

The causes of Negro migration to the North were mainly two, sentimental and economic. Each of these causes has a bearing on both the North and South.

In the eyes of millions of Negroes the North has long been a haven of opportunity and justice. Many of those who came North did so to escape the sharp competition of southern white labor, to avoid the persecution of petty officers of the southern law and the persecution of the southern press, and to gain the long denied right of franchise.

The above causes of Negro migration existed long before any exodus of Negroes took place. The more immediate and pressing causes were economic and social. The living standards of the southern Negroes were abnormally low. Wages were as low as \$.50 per day. Added to this were the boll weevil pests, floods, storms, all of which augmented the hazards of rural life. Other contributing factors were vicious residential segregation and a lack of school facilities.

These causes were for the most part latent and did not become strong and pertinent factors in migration until two events of deep significance took place. The first of these was the partial cessation of immigration from foreign countries. The second was the rapid expansion of Northern industry caused by the World War. It was then that Negro newspapers made glowing appeals to their exploited race to come North. Northern industrial firms, faced with growing labor troubles, welcomed cheap southern Negro labor.

In the beginning urban life had a retarding effect upon the Negro migrant. Adjustments were slow and difficult. The steady influx brought about serious and exciting complications. The first and foremost of these were in the sphere of housing. At the beginning of the migration many of the Negroes lived in a limited area on the South Side, principally between 22nd and 39th streets, and Wentworth Ave. was the main thoroughfare. Prior to the influx of the Negroes to the South Side many vacant houses were to be seen in this area. Because of its proximity to the old vice district this area had an undesirability to the whites. The newcomers gladly took these houses. But, as the rate of influx increased, a scarcity of housing followed, and the migrants pushed vigorously southward and eastward.

It was at this point that the greatest excitement among the whites prevailed over the coming hordes of Negroes. A form of organized resistance to the moving of Negroes into new neighborhoods was the bombing of their homes and the homes of real estate men, white and Negro, who were known or supposed to have sold, leased, or rented local property to them. From July 1, 1917 to March 1, 1921 the Negro housing problem

was marked by no less than 58 bombings. Arson, stoning, and many armed clashes added to the gravity of the situation.

From the very beginning the Negroes were outspoken in their indignation over these conditions, but their protests had no apparent effect in checking the outrages. The repeated attacks made the Negroes firm in their stand.

Despite this, the general trend of the Negro population was moving steadily southward and eastward. In considering the expansion of Negro residential areas, the most important is the main South Side section where 90% of the Negro population lives. During the 20 years from 1910 to 1930 the increasing Negro population between 12th and 31st streets was pushing east of Wabash Ave. and was stopped only by the Lake. To the south it reached to 49th St. Negro families are now filtering into the Hyde Park and Englewood areas.

The second resulting complication of the Negro influx into Chicago raised itself in the fields of industry and labor. The Negroes' position in the industrial life of Chicago is so intimately connected with the changes due to the War that a summary of certain facts of common knowledge in connection with the War will be helpful. With the coming of hostilities in 1914 many industrial plants doubled and trebled their labor forces. An outstanding example of this was the increase of the labor force of a stockyard plant from 8,000 to 17,000 workers. The War stimulated the demand for goods, and therefore for labor, and at the same time there was a sharp decrease in the available labor supply. Immigration from enemy nations had ceased, and there was a partial cessation of immigration from other countries. The labor shortage became acute when the United States entered the War and enlistments drew thousands from northern industries. A demand for Negro labor was the result.

According to the 15th Census of the United States, Occupational Statistics, Illinois, the Negro was employed mainly in two forms of gainful occupation, industrial and domestic. When it is remembered that in 1910 the Negro population of the United States gainfully employed was 75% agricultural and domestic, it is evident that the northward migration involved a drastic transition of the southern Negro from rural labor to highly specialized industries of northern cities. It is estimated that two-thirds of the male Negroes in northern cities are gainfully employed in industry (1920 census).

In Chicago particularly there was a marked increase in Negro workers in industry. One of the reasons of this increase was that many firms employed Negroes to take the place of strikers. The Negroes' loyalty to

employees, their ignorance of unionism, made them especially attractive to certain sections of basic industry where labor troubles were imminent. In many instances it was charged by union officials that some stockyard companies were importing Negro labor from the South to drive wages down. There are, however, no reliable facts or statistics to support this view. But it can be definitely stated that the influx of Negro laborers into many branches of industry did much to increase racial antagonisms between white and Negro labor. When Negroes were introduced into a plant during a strike and remained afterward, a period of strained relations most certainly ensued.

Another factor contributing to the Negroes' adjustment in Chicago arose out of a peculiar political situation. For largely sentimental reasons the Negro is predominantly Republican in his politics. The large role played by the Negro vote in factional struggles aroused resentment against the race that had so conspicuously allied itself with the Big Bill Thompson faction of the Republican Party.

Another sphere in which Negroes have had a great deal of difficulty in making adjustments is the realm of daily personal contacts. From an extremely simple set of rural relations in the South, Negroes were transported to more complex relations based on a more elaborate distribution of responsibilities. Thus it happens that contacts in the public schools, politics, business, industry, sport, colleges, clubs, and housing, were points of contact making for friction, comment, antagonism, resentment, prejudice, or fear.

Chicago has not been without its open racial clashes. The first of any moment to occur was in Feb. 1917. Its cause was the resentment felt by whites over the coming of Negroes into a contested neighborhood. A mob of young whites stoned several Negro families from their homes.

Another clash ensued in July of 1917 when a party of white men in an automobile fired into a group of Negroes. No one was hit. However, earlier that day a white man had been found dead in the rear of a saloon in the Negro district. It was thought that the whites were trying to avenge the death of the slain man.

In July and August of 1917, there were many outbreaks of a minor nature between Negroes and recruits from the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. In some instances the recruits and in others the Negroes were the aggressors.

A saloon brawl which almost developed into a riot of serious proportions occurred on May 27, 1919. A Negro attempted to be served in a saloon catering to white trade. He was refused, and kicked out of the

door. The Negro armed himself and gathered about him some friends and attempted to regain entry to the saloon. Negro plain-clothes policemen stopped the trouble before it spread.

On July 27, 1919, there was a clash of major proportions between white and black. It began as a brawl at a bathing beach and resulted in the drowning of a Negro boy. This, in turn, led to a race riot in which 38 lives were lost – 23 Negroes and 15 whites – and 537 persons were injured. After 3 days of mob violence, affecting several sections of the city, the state militia was called out to assist the police in restoring order. It was not until Aug. 6, that the danger of further clashes was regarded as past.

There is no doubt but that the greater part of the fury manifested in this race riot had been long gathering momentum over a period of years. The multitude of maladjustments resulting from housing and labor troubles now had an opportunity to vent their pent up energies.

Of late, however, the Negro has ceased to invade Chicago in great numbers. A measure of relative stability has been attained. The decline of migration has tempered the anxiety of the whites.

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II. THE CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE (8 January 1936)

The Chicago Urban League (3032 South Wabash Avenue – Telephone: Calumet 6828 – 6829) was organized in 1916 to deal with problems arising from the rapidly growing Negro population, many of whom had never resided in a large city. The League faced the task of aiding these people to become an integral part of the metropolitan area, by minimizing the difficulties arising from race prejudice, and developing the best possible interrelations of white and Negro population.

The Chicago Urban League is the only permanent agency in Chicago dealing exclusively with social and economic aspects of race relations. As such, it serves as a coordinating body or clearing house for the interracial activities of many organizations. The work is directed by a full-time professional staff, the members of which are selected for special abilities in the field of industrial relations, community organization, and social service.

The League is not primarily a relief agency, but serves the self-supporting as well as the dependent groups. Its activities permeate every phase of urban life, namely, employment, housing, community, self-development, and civil rights and duties. The Chicago branch of the Urban League is affiliated with the National Urban League, which has branches in forty-eight urban areas in various parts of the United States.

The purposes of the Urban League are achieved through a continuous process of education of both white and Negro concerning the problems of living together. Facts are accumulated on matters of employment, social and civic improvement, and race relations. In some instances the data are obtained through special study and report; in other cases they are available as common knowledge. The facts are then placed before individuals or community through interviews, written reports, public addresses, and newspaper accounts.

A short survey of this data over a period of about twenty years runs as follows: There are on file hundreds of letters, accounts of investigations, surveys, bulletins, etc., relating to the efforts of the Urban League to raise the economic status of the Negro in Chicago. Most of this material is direct correspondence between the Urban League and the heads of various industrial, civic, political, social, health, labor, and business organizations. The bulk of this correspondence relates to industry. The rest relate to numerous incidents of abuse and discrimination suffered by Negroes in Chicago.

II

MATERIAL ON RACE RELATIONS AND 1919 RACE RIOT

All of this data, directly and indirectly, relate to the 1919 race riots and the housing, industrial, and political conditions out of which they grew. In part the data consist of statements of the governor; reports of individuals; questionnaires; records of conferences held with various civic and public organizations; memoranda on housing; census data; surveys relating to the Negro in industry, labor, and housing; complete records of the proceedings of the anti-Negro housing clubs; hundreds of letters from individuals expressing their views of the race problem and the riot; newspaper clippings of the riot; files of the *Interracial Messenger*, a publication issued by the Urban League; records of correspondence between the mayor and the governor relating to the calling of troops to suppress the riots; data relating to crime, the conduct of the troops, etc., etc.

III

NEGRO MIGRATION

This material consists of thousands of letters written to the Urban League by Southern Negroes asking for transportation to the North. There are also many newspaper clippings of the migration period.

IV

THE SPRINGFIELD RIOT

The Urban League also has data on the race riots that took place in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908.

V

DELINQUENCY

There are many reports, surveys, charts, maps, etc., relating to truant school children and their parents.

VI

HEALTH

Data relating to the efforts of the Urban League to improve the health standards of the Negroes living in Chicago. There are also reports of other organizations.

At certain times emphasis of the Urban League is placed upon broad considerations, namely, the importance of equal rights and duties for white and Negro and groups. At other times attention is centered upon specific cases where public interest is jeopardized through discrimination against the Negro. In the last analysis, the object of the Urban League is

interracial co-operation, and it is pledged to the promotion of harmonious community life based upon understanding and mutual respect.

The following departments are maintained for service:

- I. The Department of Industrial Relations
 - (a) Free Employment Bureau
 - (b) Vocational Guidance Division
 - (c) Readjustment Service
- II. The Department for Social and Civic Improvement
 - (a) Neighborhood Improvement
 - (b) Social Service Division
- III. Department of Research
 - (a) Free Speakers' Bureau

Some of the outstanding achievements of the Chicago Urban League have paralleled the history of the Negro in Chicago. The League aided greatly in helping the migrant Negro to adjust himself to urban conditions. It secured jobs for thousands of Negro men and women. It played a leading role in unearthing the facts, political, economic, and social, which lay back of the 1919 race riots.

III. ON THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE NEGRO (ADDITIONAL) (13 January 1936)

The general aspect of black and white relations in Chicago took a turn for the worst immediately following the World War and the race riots. Though no violence was evident, a deep change in the basic attitudes of the Chicago Negro population began to express itself in social, political, and economic terms. The World War and the race riots had accomplished two outstanding facts: (1) They had aided the emergence of a Negro middle class which depended for its existence upon the residentially segregated laborer; (2) They served to bring sharp disillusionment to the hopeful Negro migrant who depended almost entirely upon white industry for livelihood.

This disillusionment of the laboring Negro migrant became accentuated when the 1920-depression swept the country. The depression, coupled with the memories of the recent race riots, laid the ground for the rise of an intense race consciousness, that is, the Garvey Movement. This movement, half racial, half economic, half political, fostered a vicious anti-white feeling to its utmost. At its highest development it is estimated that the Garvey Movement had no fewer than five thousand Negroes working in its behalf. However, with the conviction and imprisonment of Garvey, a decline set in.

Between 1920 and 1929 the inner class divisions of Negro life grew sharper. The rise of several Negro individuals to places of political power coincided with the attempt of various labor and radical political parties to organize the black laborers. Save for a short period in 1931 and 1933, when evictions and industrial unrest were at their highest, no great headway was made by these radical groups.

At present the relations of black and white in Chicago have reached a degree of partial stabilization. Just how long this can be maintained in the face of widespread want, inadequate housing, etc., is a matter for speculation. And, too, the present state of race relations cannot be properly evaluated without recourse to events of a national nature.

(The above remarks are taken from Harold F. Gosnell's The Negro Politician, and from the data of the Urban League.)

The following addresses are points of contact for data and general information concerning Negro history in Chicago:

Miss Josephine O. Matson
4547 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago

Mr. Sam Stratton
3558 South Parkway
Chicago

Miss Blanche Shaw
The Chicago Public Library
3rd floor
Chicago

Miss T. Kirpatrick
YWCA, 46 & South Parkway
Chicago

Mr. A. Foster
The Chicago Urban League
3032 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago

Miss V. Harsh
The George Cleveland Hall Branch Library
49th & Michigan Avenue
Chicago

IV. WHITE CITY – RECREATIONAL CENTER (c.1936)

Chicago's South Side houses the second largest recreational center in the city, the White City Amusement Park at 6300 South Parkway. It stands between the two flourishing business and residential areas: Hyde Park to the east and Englewood to the west. It is bounded by South Parkway on the east, Prairie Avenue on the west, 63rd Street on the north, and 66th Street on the south. It covers four square blocks of territory and its activities range from bowling to basket ball. It is served by three main arteries of transportation: the Elevated Railroad, the Surface Lines, and the Chicago Motor Coach Company. For automobile tourists there is free parking facilities furnished by courtesy of the establishment. It is opened the year round. White City is thirty-five years old and enjoys a wide reputation for wholesome sport.

The most popular feature of White City is its skating rink. It is reputed to be the largest in the world, accommodating 2,000 skaters. The floor is in excellent condition and music is supplied for the skaters by a pipe organ. The rink is opened nightly except Monday. The admission is 40¢ and the hours are from 8 P.M. to midnight.

White City offers to dance-lovers one of the finest dance floors in the city, accommodating 3,000 dancers. It is open on Tuesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Thursdays. The admission is 40¢ and the hours run from 8 P.M. to 1 A.M. Music is furnished by nationally known orchestras. A very popular feature of this ball room is the free dance instructions given on Tuesday nights.

The Bowling Alley has twelve regulation alleys. There are also billiard and pool tables. The alley is open daily from 12 to midnight. Bowling instruction is featured.

On 63rd Street is the entrance to the White City Sporting Arena which features professional wrestling bouts each Monday night. There are amateur and professional boxing bouts at frequent intervals. The seating capacity is 4,000.

The White City Indoor Basket Ball Arena features amateur professional, and semi-professional games. Its seating capacity is 3,500. There is no regular schedule announced.

There is also an outdoor stadium which features in season foot-ball, baseball, and auto racing. Its capacity is 15,000.

The most popular summer feature of White City is the outdoor dancing floor with a capacity of 5,000. Popular orchestras are employed. The floor is splendid for this purpose, being made of maple.

Large parts of the grounds of White City are given over to many types of mechanical amusements, such as Bobs, Shoot-the-Shoots, Dips, Caterpillars, Merry-Go-Rounds, etc. There is a profusion of shooting galleries, tattooing booths, lunch stands, etc. These form the most lurid part of the attractions. However, this part of the park has not been in operation for some time. The management states that plans are under way to reopen these attractions to the public in the summer of 1936.

V. HOTELS (3 March 1937)

Leaving 26th Street going southward the first hotel that would likely be of interest to the tourist or traveler is the Oriental at 2735 Prairie Avenue. It is near State Highway number 42, and is served by surface lines, bus, and "L." There are free parking facilities. The neighborhood is a quiet, residential one. The rates scale from \$1.00 per day and upward.

The next hotel of any importance in this vicinity is the Bernice Hotel at 2945 Michigan Avenue. (Phone: Cal. 4670) It is also on State and Federal highways, and is served by bus, "L," and surface lines. There are parking facilities. The rates scale from \$1.00 per day and upward.

Between 30th Street and 36th there are no hotels of any importance. The first large hotel in the Black Belt proper is to be found at 601 E. 36th Street, the Vincennes Hotel. (Phone: Alt. 2222) It consists of 110 rooms, with rates scaling from \$1.50 per day and upward. There is dining room service, cocktail lounge, and tavern. Bell boy service, elevator service, parking facilities. It is centrally located and is reached by State and Federal highways, surface lines, "L," bus, I.C. electric railway. It is near the 43rd Street railway station. It is very popular with summer visitors on account of its nearness to the bathing beaches.

The Ritz Hotel at 39th and South Parkway is perhaps the most ornate of the hotels in the Black Belt. (Three trips there, however, did not get me any information concerning this establishment. Perhaps a communication directed to the management through the mails would be a better method).

A hotel which could be classed as second rate is the Tyson Hotel at 4257 South Parkway. (Phone: Oak. 2604) There are 100 rooms with scaling rates as follows: Sleeping rooms \$4.00 per week. Kitchenettes \$6.00 and upward. These can be had furnished or unfurnished. There are parking facilities. The hotel is served by "L," bus, surface lines, and a taxi station. It is on State and Federal highways. This hotel is situated near theatres, shops, bathing beaches; the patronage is entirely Negro.

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Oakwood Boulevard boasts the largest hotel in this vicinity open to white trade. This is the Delmonico Hotel at 752-4 Oakwood Boulevard. (Phone: Ken. 8496) It consists of 50 rooms, with rates scaling from \$3 to \$6 per week and upward. It is served by State and Federal highways, "L," bus, surface lines, and parking facilities. It is near the shopping center of the district: movies, schools, and bathing beaches. The hotel is in the center of a quiet, residential neighborhood.

Another second rate hotel catering to Negro trade is to be found at 649 E. 37th Street. This is the Huntington Hotel. (Phone: Alt. 3227-28) It has 67 rooms with rates scaling from \$1.00 per day and upward.

Across Cottage Grove Avenue are several large and exclusive hotels. One of the largest and most ornate of these is the Green Gables Hotel at 3920 Lake Park Avenue. (Phone: Alt. 1605) It consists of 75 rooms with rates scaling from \$1.00 per day and upward. It is served by State and Federal highways, "L," bus, surface lines, I.C. electric railway. It has dining service, bell and hall boy service. It is near shopping centers, bathing beaches, theatres, etc. Its structure is very attractive, being of French chateau style.

Two blocks north of the Green Gables is the Du Lac Hotel at 3714-16 Lake Park Avenue. (Phone: Ken. 7000) It has 105 rooms, rates ranging from \$1.00 per day and upward. It has parking facilities, and is served by I.C. electric railway, bus, "L," surface lines. It is on State and Federal highways.

Further south is the Hotel Bernard, at 4170 Drexel Boulevard. (Phone: Dre. 3200) It has 200 rooms with rates scaling from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per day and \$5.00 to \$9 per week. It is served by bus, "L," surface lines, State and Federal highways, and the I.C. electric railway. It is situated in the heart of an exclusive residential neighborhood. It has parking facilities and is near the bathing beaches. Its services also include bellboy, hallboy, and dining room.

Further south on Drexel Boulevard is the Drexel View Hotel, enjoying like facilities. (Phone: Ken. 9000) It has 130 rooms with rates scaling from (for single rooms) \$1.50 and upward, and (for double rooms) from \$2.50 and upward.

The following hotels suggested that communications through the mail will bring information:

- (1) The Sutherland Hotel
4659 Drexel Boulevard

- (2) The Kenwood Hotel
1330 E. 47th Street
- (3) The Tudor-Ellis Hotel
4300 Ellis Avenue
- (4) The Graceton Hotel
4249 Drexel Boulevard

Other hotels in this vicinity possessing average facilities are as follows:

- (1) The Parkway Plaza Hotel
5014 South Parkway
(Negro)
- (2) The Spencer Hotel
300 E. Garfield Boulevard
(Negro)
- (3) The Tramor Hotel
740 E. 47th Street
(Negro)
- (4) The Claridge Hotel
5116 S. Michigan Avenue
(Negro)
- (5) The Harlem Hotel
5020 S. Michigan Avenue
- (6) The South Parkway Hotel
4714 South Parkway

VI. A SURVEY OF THE AMUSEMENT FACILITIES OF DISTRICT #35
(3 March 1937)

State Street, from 2600 south to 3600 south, is almost solidly lumpen-proletariat. The places of amusement are many, but of a single character. Numerically, the beer taverns predominate, there being about twenty-five.

Dingy cafes and restaurants are a close second, there being about twenty. There are eight pool-rooms, seven drug-stores, four smoke-shops, and two movies.

This section was once the high spot of the Negro Rialto district. That, however, was in the prosperous twenties. Since then the more well-to-do workers, gamblers, pimps, prostitutes, sports, and business men have moved southward to the vicinities of 47th and 55th streets. What this section once was can be seen from the numerous 'For Rent' and 'For Sale' signs hanging in store windows. Many of the establishments are now completely abandoned. Official notices of "This Building Is Condemned" are posted in many places. Crumbling walls and peeling paint are everywhere. Lurid advertisement posters are plastered on the sides and walls of buildings.

Most of the beer taverns are dark, dank places where the neighborhood drunks hang out night and day. The beer sells for five and ten cents a stein. The whiskey for twenty-five cents a drink. Usually a bowl of soup, crackers and shrimps, or a hot-dog, or an egg is given with a purchase of beer. Electric pianos are an added attraction. The larger places are owned by Jews, Greeks, and Italians. The smaller ones by Negroes. Each place employs from three to five people, paying them from five to eight dollars, per week.

The "day" business of these taverns is small. But they are crowded to capacity at night. The more pretentious taverns have small orchestras which play for customers. In the more ornate establishments a floor show is arranged. There are costumed cigarette-girls and waitresses. Dancing is permitted. Usually there is no cover-charge, for competition is keen. The cost of the entertainment is recovered through the sale of high priced drinks. The talent of the entertainers is nil. Most of them are amateurs, and are secured from nearby neighborhoods.

The ideological import of the entertainment is largely sexual. Blues and popular songs are sung. Dances, such as the Continental and Snake-hips, are performed. Fights are many and frequent.

All of these taverns, no matter how small or mean, strive to maintain a home-like atmosphere for their patrons. The names of the taverns run something like this: Jim's Place, Babe's Tavern, Bob's Beer Shop, etc. The customers know the proprietor and the proprietor knows the first names of many of his customers.

As strange as it may seem, a great many "bootleg" joints are still doing a rushing business in this area. The reason for this is not far to seek. The price of legal whiskey is still much too high for many of the poorer drinkers.

However, the old-time "beer-flats" have completely vanished. With the legalization of whiskey the alcoholics have transferred their patronage to the tavern. The hangers-on are for the most part habitual drunkards, unemployed workers, petty thieves, prostitutes, and a few young men still in high school.

Perhaps the most affluent of the State Street taverns is the Cabin Inn at 3353. The floor show is reputed to be the best on the South Side. It is what is known as a "black-and-tan" tavern, that is, it caters to Negro as well as white trade. Many of the jokes, songs, and dances of the entertainers find their way into the daily speech and actions of the people.

The next in popularity is the South Side Cotton Club at 3445 State Street. Its entertainment generally resembles that of the Cabin Inn.

Some of these taverns are literally "holes-in-the wall". They are about ten feet wide, forty or fifty feet long. The rent, it is rumored, runs from about forty to sixty and eighty dollars a month.

If the taverns are dingy, the restaurants are dingier. Some of them are huge places, reaching back to the alleys. Others are but shacks held together by rusty pieces of tin and old boards. Some handle a well-rounded menu while others specialize in unique dishes, mostly of Southern origin.

Perhaps the largest and most typical of these restaurants is Footes' Restaurant at 3032 State Street. Because of the low-priced food, this place is almost always crowded. Like the other it is dingy and unclean. A bowl of hot soup can be had for 5¢. Rice and gravy for 5¢. Coffee and doughnuts 5¢. Corn beef hash for 10¢. Etc., etc.

The next in esteem is Bud's Eat Shop at 3406 State Street. This place specializes in fish, tripe, and short orders.

The Lincoln Doughnut House at 3033 State Street is among the best in the neighborhood, serving food at medium prices. There are many chili parlors, selling chili at ten cents per bowl.

There are numerous lunch-wagons, shoe-shine and soft-drink parlors, red-hot stands, hamburger stands, and barbecue pits. Most of the ice-cream parlors are closed because of winter.

Vying for third place among the amusements spots is the pool-room. If it can be imagined, these sink in general character even below the tavern and restaurant.

The proprietors of most of them are Negroes. Each pool-room carries its own unique following. Some of these places are indeed vicious. Unsuspecting strangers are lured in and filched of their money through various schemes and rackets. Nothing is done to make these places physically attractive. The walls and ceilings are usually bare and full of cow-webs. The floor is bare and littered with cigar and cigarette butts. The plumbing

is bad. Many of them are heated with stoves. A typical description of a pool-room in this vicinity would run something like this: A store about thirty feet wide and from sixty to ninety feet long. Two, three, four, or five sagging billiard tables. A few rickety chairs lined along the walls. Stale air. One or two rusty spittoons. A short cigar counter behind which stand the owner and his cash register. That is all.

The smoke-shops have the air and character of smoke-shops everywhere. A straggling crowd files in and out of them. It is here that the neighborhood wiseacres congregate to dispute the merits of political and religious isms.

Only incidentally are the drug-stores places of amusement. They carry many "chance games" which attract crowds, Slot-machines, punchboards, and various other gambling devices lure many.

There are two main theatres on this section of State Street. At the lower end of the district is the State Street Theatre which is widely patronized. It specializes in sex, murder, gangster, adventure, and western films. It is an ill-smelling and dank house, seating about a thousand. It keeps the sidewalk littered with lurid posters. The other theatre is the Grand at 3110 State Street, and is of like calibre.

These two theatres employ bold means to lure their customers. When there is a red-hot murder mystery film, they hire "sound trucks" to patrol the streets of the neighborhood. Handbills and throw-aways are given to passersby. They also operate weekly and nightly contests to keep the interest of their customers. Cheap glassware, cheap cigarette cases, and other bits of tinsel are given to the holders of lucky numbers.

The influence of these two theatres reaches deeply into the everyday life of the community. The gestures and idioms of the movie stars are aped by the school children and adults.

Wabash Avenue presents a sharp contrast to State Street. From 26th Street to 36th Street there are no places of amusement worth mentioning. The neighborhood is of a peculiarly mixed character. There are laundries, dry-cleaning establishments, churches, barbershops, grocery stores, sign-painting shops, hotels, private homes – all jumbled together.

Also from 2600 to 3600 on Michigan Avenue one finds practically no places of amusement. The entire street in this vicinity is given over to private homes, kitchenettes, automobile clubs, law offices, hospitals, printing plants, etc.

Indiana Avenue offers but little more. Five or six beer taverns of a mediocre sort are to be found within the ten-block area. The best restaurant is Sam's Buffett at 29th and Indiana Avenue, selling medium priced

foods. It caters mostly to white trade. Of a like standard is the Trianon Restaurant at 3030 Indiana Avenue. It caters mostly to Negro trade.

There is one movie house, the Avenue Theatre, a cheap one, specializing in romantic films for the neighborhood housewives. A few dingy barbecue stands and pool-rooms account for remaining amusements.

Prairie Avenue is mainly residential. With one or two exceptions the entire area reveals nothing but decaying houses, vacant lots, and condemned buildings.

At 2641 Calumet Avenue one finds the first playground in the district. It is a very badly equipped and muddy place adjoining the John B. Drake Public School. Further south on Calumet Avenue is another playground adjoining the Douglas Public School. Here the grounds are a little better and the equipment tolerable. Both of these playgrounds are frequented by Negro children.

Rhodes and Giles Avenues offer nothing in the way of entertainment.

South Park is given over entirely to homes, churches, and business places.

It is not until we reach Cottage Grove Avenue that taverns and pool-rooms again become prevalent. And it is well to remember that this street is the so-called "dividing line" between the white and black neighborhoods. Naturally, some of the places are understood to be for white and others for Negro. The street is mainly commercial. Tin smiths, tailors, realtors, doctors, notion stores, etc., form the bulk of the business establishments. Most of the stores are owned by Jews and Greeks.

There are about ten taverns in the ten-block area. On the whole they are of a better character than those found on State Street.

31st and 35th Streets are the two main business thoroughfares running east and west through the district. The places of amusement have the same general tone of those on State Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. On 31st Street, the heart of the old Negro Rialto district, is Brown's Tavern at 352. This place is typical of others found in this vicinity. There is a bar which sells beer, whiskey, and wines. In the rear is a dim, curtained-off space for dancing. Across the street at 340 is the site of the old Plantation, the most popular dance and dine spot during the days of Prohibition. It is now completely abandoned and nailed-up.

Generally, this about covers the amusement, entertainment, and recreational facilities to be found in this district. There are, however, other places of amusement of a peculiar nature. That is, sponsored by various churches. But these are so mixed in character that I think it advisable to report on them separately.

VII. AMUSEMENTS IN DISTRICTS 38 AND 40
(c.1937)

After leaving 35th Street on South Parkway, the most attractive place of entertainment is the Grand Terrace Dine and Dance Cafe at 3955. It caters to a high-class clientele and is visited by those seeking good food and good music. This establishment is one of the most popular and best known of all Black Belt night clubs. It was opened in 1929 at a cost of \$1,000,000. Structurally, it is a very pleasing place. It is about fifty feet wide and reaches in length back to the alley. A huge red electric sign covers its facade.

It possesses a splendid dance floor, accommodating about two hundred. Its seating capacity is five hundred and fifty. The interior is excellently arranged. The orchestra is far to the rear, fronting the cafe and dance floor. The tables are in front, facing the door. The lighting is very diverting. It is next door to the 40th-street "L" station, and enjoys remarkable parking facilities for automobile tourists. There is no cover charge at any time, and good food is served at medium prices. There is courteous usher service.

The most distinctive feature of the Grand Terrace is Earl Hines' NBC orchestra which is known the nation over. Hines' is known in music circles as the "Peer of Modern Jazz". Four floor-shows are given nightly; it is an all-Negro revue. The place opens at 10 P.M. and runs till 5 A.M.

Further south, at 4418 South Parkway, is the Poro Tea Room. It is housed in an old brown-stone mansion. The furnishings, even to the wood-work and lighting, are the same as when the original owners occupied it. This tea room serves the best food to be found on the South Side at very reasonable prices. The tea room itself consists of two large rooms, in one of which is a very entrancing water fountain. The place is quiet, clean, and is frequented by those seeking seclusion and privacy.

After leaving 43rd Street on South Parkway we enter what is popularly known on the South Side as the "promenade." This name comes from the fact that this section, reaching from 43rd to 51st along South Parkway, houses the most fashionable shops and stores. On holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, Negroes parade up and down here, dressed in their best finery.

At 4644 South Parkway is the Metropolitan Movie Theatre, the second most popular movie palace in the Black Belt. The front is of white stone, a large part of which is covered with bright electric signs. It specializes in first-run pictures, like "G-Men," "Top-Hat," and "Imitation

of Life." The interior is spacious and comfortable. The usher system is polite and efficient. The parking facilities for tourists are good. The price of admission is 25¢ for adults and 15¢ for children. In summer there is a "cooling system."

Diagonally across the street from the Metropolitan Theatre is the Regal Theatre, at 4723 South Parkway. This is the largest and finest of the movie palaces to be found in the Black Belt area. It was erected in 1929 at a cost of \$1,000,000. It, like the Metropolitan, specializes in first-run pictures. They also carry occasional stage shows, starring such stage, dance, and music celebrities as Ethel Waters, Cab Calloway, the Mills brothers, Bill Robinson, Duke Ellington, and others. The parking facilities are excellent and there is an efficient usher service. In front, covering the entire facade, is a gigantic electric sign, shedding a red haze for blocks around.

The interior is actually beautiful and is agreeably lighted. The whole architectural structure of the interior is Far-Eastern in design, producing an enchanting Moorish-atmospheric effect. The dome, huge and high, is tent-like in character and gives the spectator the sensation of being seated out of doors under a clear sky.

The admission is 40¢ and the hours are from 2 P.M. to midnight. The theatre is surrounded by candy-shops and lunch counters. There is an excellent "cooling system" in summer.

(There is in the inner-lobby of the Regal Theatre a bronze statue. It was made by an Italian artist named Rondoni in the year 1873. It bears the inscription, Sirma. This statue was imported by the management when the theatre opened. No one, however, seems to know whether the statue has any artistic significance or not.)

A few doors south of the Regal Theatre is the Savoy Ballroom. In the late twenties this was the most popular dance hall on the South Side. Louis Armstrong used to play here to huge crowds. There are no regular dances at the Savoy; the floor is rented out to various clubs, societies, etc. On holidays it is open for business.

Next door to the Savoy Ballroom is the Savoy Outdoor Boxing Arena, seating about five thousand. Here on Tuesday nights are given boxing bouts, mostly amateur. The admission runs to about 40¢, plus tax. This amateur boxing is followed by the athletic-minded on the South Side. The usual "card" consists of ten boxing bouts and two wrestling matches. Adjoining the arena is a training headquarters. Joe Louis, contender for the World's Heavyweight Championship, trained here for his bout with King Levinsky. It is also used by Joe Louis for training purposes when he is in the city.

Walking southward along South Parkway we pass the homes of wealthy Negro publishers, doctors, bankers, lawyers, and business men. Turning westward at 49th Street and walking to Wabash Avenue we find Bacon's Casino Dance Hall at 4859 South Wabash Avenue. This hall, though not as ornate as the Terrace Garden, is very popular among the so-called "social set" of the South Side. No regular dances are arranged by the management. Clubs, societies, etc., rent the hall for various affairs. The place is busy almost every night. The parking facilities are good. The price of admission varies from time to time.

Returning again to South Parkway and continuing to 51st Street we find the Grand Hotel which houses a very popular beer tavern, the Grand Hotel Tavern at 5044 South Parkway. Its clientele is mostly of a sporting, theatrical, and travelling character. On 51st Street there are many taverns of a mediocre sort.

It is not until we reach Garfield Boulevard that we see the heart of the Negro Rialto district. Along Garfield Boulevard, from South Parkway to State Street, are dozens of beer gardens, restaurants, shops, policy stations, "chicken shacks," horse racing, bookies, pool rooms, and small hotels. Here is the center of gambling, prostitution, and "high-life."

Perhaps the most popular of all night clubs in this area is Dave's Cafe at 243 East Garfield Boulevard. The exterior is rather unattractive, but within it vies the Grand Terrace in ornateness. There is a large dance floor, and a very novel lighting system.

The parking facilities for automobile tourists are excellent, and its location is but a block from the intersection of State and Federal highways. Unlike a great many night clubs, it maintains an open lunch-counter at all hours. There are three floor shows on Saturday nights. The admission is 50¢ for week-day nights. On Saturday nights it is \$1.00. There is food at medium prices.

The most distinctive feature at Dave's Cafe is the 9-piece orchestra of Francois. It broadcasts twice a week over WIND. Of all the night clubs on the South Side carrying the old-time atmosphere, Dave's Dine and Dance Cafe is the most typical. There is no cover charge.

Vying for second place in popularity is the Panama Cafe just a few steps west of Dave's Cafe at 307 Garfield Boulevard. There is no admission and no cover charge. The clientele here is a "rougher" calibre than that at Dave's Cafe. It is quite lively.

Still further west on Garfield Boulevard, at 317, is *Ciro's Cocktail Lounge*. This bar specializes in drinks, and has quite a reputation in this area. Floor entertainment is also featured. Each Sunday afternoon, between

the hours of 5 P.M. and 7:30 P.M., is known as "Cocktail Hour." Drinks can be had as cheap as 20¢. The clientele is predominantly Negroid.

Walking still further west on Garfield Blvd. till we reach State Street, we find a night club of the old 1920 variety – the Club Delisa at 5516 S. State St. There is an average bar, and a huge dance floor. The place is Italian owned, and caters, it is rumored, to "gangster trade." It is very popular with the more daring "nighters-out." The exterior is very attractive, being a design of white and green coloring. The bar is open all day; the dance floor opens around 10 P.M.

VIII. WASHINGTON PARK (27 March, [c.1937])

([N]amed for George Washington), Cottage Grove Ave., 60th St., South Parkway, 51st St. The Park is a recreational and educational playground for the residents of Chicago, particularly those living on the south side. It is supported by the Chicago Park District, an independent taxing body, the members of which are appointed by the mayor of Chicago.

The park may be better described by dividing it into halves: the south half, to 55th St.; and the north half, to 51st St. In the south half, the tourist entering from 60th St. and Cottage Grove Ave. sees to his left a large lagoon, at the northern end of which is a boat house. Here for 25¢ an hour he may rent a boat. West of the boat house, and a little to the south is the first bank of tennis courts. These are between 59th and 58th Sts., along South Parkway Ave. and, with a similar bank between 56th and 55th Sts., make up the park's tennis courts. At the northern end of the lagoon and to the right (E.) of the boat house are a casting pool and six roque courts. To the right (E.) of the roque courts, a series of 1-story, yellow-brick buildings, runs from 59th to 57th St. They are used in the maintenance of the park: tool rooms, workrooms, a laundry, and a stable. Walking beside them and continuing north, one reaches the administration building, at 56th St., just west of Cottage Grove Ave.

It is a 2-story building with a central section and balancing wings. Immediately in front (N.) of it, the ground is landscaped into a formal plaza, interlaced with walks, to the right and left of which are two circular fountains. To the north two lovely sunken gardens stretch into the distance, the first enclosed on three sides by a white marble balustrade, and the second set off at each entrance and corner by red-brick columns.

To the right (E.) of the administration building, and along the entire eastern border of the first sunken garden, is the Washington Park Conser-

vatory. Walking toward it we see on the way a lovely pergola, delicately trellised and covered with twining vines. We now enter the conservatory, a large glass structure of three units with connecting runways. We are in the south palm room. In its center, among tropical flora, are large palm trees. These are surrounded, in the form of a horseshoe, by retaining brick walls, which lead into the center of the conservatory closes in another palm room. On each side of the walk are flower displays. In the heart of the conservatory is a lovely rock garden, in the center of which is a goldfish pool. The water for this pool flows over rustic stone steps, and makes a pleasant sound as it trickles down over the steps. Walking N. the tourist proceeds through a vista of flowers into the northern palm room, identical in exhibit and arrangement with the one to the S. Emerging, he sees to his left (W.), and in front (N.) of him the second sunken garden. In the center of its eastern side is a statue of the German writer, Lessing. The figure is that of a student, holding in his left hand a book and in his right, a pen.

The tourist now turns W. and crossing to the South Parkway side of the park, comes to a concourse which faces the refectory building, the center of the Park's educational and recreational activities. Here the community programs are arranged. They include: marble, baseball, and softball tournaments; boys' athletic clubs; Boy Scout clubs; outdoor musical and theatrical programs; community singing by Negro church choirs; a baseball school; baseball and sporting talking pictures; civic parades and celebrations; ping pong clubs; nation-wide tennis tournaments on grass tennis courts, with Negro players competing; picnics; classes in boxing, handicraft, art craft, dramatics, speech, singing, and dancing. These activities are open to the public without charge.

To the rear (S.) of the refectory is a playground for children, with children's equipment and attendants. Nearby is the site of the "Bug Club." Here on summer afternoons and evenings, the tourist may hear speeches and debates on any conceivable topic, by speakers representing every conceivable opinion. This club is a Chicago open forum.

Retracing his steps through the children's playground and onto the concourse, the tourist sees before him (N.), the playing fields of the park. They comprise, perhaps, a third of the acreage of the park, and take up most of its northern half. There are 12 baseball fields, 3 football fields, and 15 softball fields. Access to them is through the superintendent's office in the administration building. Skirting the playing fields on the E. and W. are the bridle paths.

Proceeding N. along the bridle path, we come to the 51st and South Parkway entrance of the park. Here is a large statue of George Washington,

by Daniel Chester French, a replica of one presented to the government of France by the D. A. R. It is mounted on a large pedestal, and shows Washington on horseback, holding in his right hand an unsheathed sword, and under his left arm his tri-pointed hat. It is one of the largest pieces of statuary in Chicago.

The tourist next walks E. toward the Cottage Grove Ave. side of the park. At St. Lawrence Ave., in the center of the park at 51st St., he comes upon the Washington Park open forum. Here in summer a stand is built for speakers and benches for the audience, and from morning to night open discussions are held.

A short distance to the east, the Armory of the 124th Field Artillery, 33rd Division, Illinois National Guard extends a block and a half along Cottage Grove Ave. with its main entrance on 52nd St. It was completed in 1931, and is one of the largest and finest buildings of its type in the country.

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Personal observation: C. L. Towne.

Field worker: Richard Wright.

IX. AGRICULTURE AND FARM LIFE

(n. d.)

For thousands of years wind, wave, and slow-moving ice-sheets pulverized the mid-western soil and made it ideal for sustaining life. The first agriculturists to taste the fruits of this soil are not known. The only definite facts are that many generations of Indians had lived here and had passed on long before the coming of those Indians discovered by the earliest white explorers. Wild berries, fruits, edible roots, and game were so abundant, the effort to live so easy, that a type of natural communism was practiced; the lands were owned in common and the products thereof consumed in common.

The white man discovered in Illinois wooded lands and streams replete with deer, elk, bears, wolves, foxes, opossums, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, wild turkeys, prairie chickens, quail, wild geese, herons, swans, black bass, pickerel, lake trout, white fish, cat fish, and red horse. Illinois and the surrounding country were referred to as "God's meadow." Tales of munificence, carried back to the crowded and strife-ridden cities of the old world, incited many to try their fortunes here. But the first settlers in Illinois were not deeply interested in agriculture; they were priests, traders, and trappers. Many of them came from France and were excited

by visions of quickly-attained wealth. It was the English who first built the foundations of a firm agricultural colonization. For a century and a half the white man's contact with Illinois resulted in no improvement over and above that gained by the Indian.

The first emigrants into Illinois came from the over-populated South where large sections of the soil had been long robbed of its fertility. But in the 1830's the emigration from the northeast was so great that the Southern influence soon became negligible. In 1825, after the completion of the Erie Canal, the emigration from the east became enormous. Despite this, as recently as 1832, farming still lagged in Illinois, for most of these pioneers settled near wooded streams where such problems as transportation, fuel, and water were most easily solved.

Farm life in 1832 was arduous. Shelters consisted of one-room log cabins with dirt floors. All activities took place in this room: cooking, eating, sleeping, bathing, open court for the conviction of criminals, and prayer meetings. These harsh conditions – constant warfare with Indians, the unremitting toil in fierce winters and blazing summers, the simple Puritan religion which enabled the pioneer to endure all this – moulded the character of the frontiersman.

The first great stimulus to agriculture in Illinois was the improvement of the old-fashioned wooden plow and the invention of the steel plow. Just where to place the honors for the invention of the steel plow is doubtful. It is claimed that Harvey Henry May invented the first steel plow in Galesburg, Illinois, before 1833. A counter claim, however, is put forward to the effect that John Lane of Lockport, Illinois, invented the steel plow in 1833. In the spring of 1834 Asabel Pierce commenced the manufacture of the old-fashioned "Bull" plow with wooden moulding board. Later he made the first self-scouring steel plow in the West in a blacksmith shop on Lake Street in Chicago. In Grand Detour, Illinois, John Deere manufactured his first steel plow in 1837; the next year he produced eight. Owing to the texture of western soil which was hard-packed and full of tough prairie grass, the plow of the East was practically useless for large-scale farming. The invention of the steel plow was the first step in the progress of Northern agriculture.

After 1850, farming was definitely under way in Illinois as a major pursuit. To save the soil's fertility, crop rotation was early introduced. The crude wooden plow and oxen were replaced by the horse-drawn shear-plow. During these early years the abundant prairie grass proved a blessing as well as a curse; it fed the farmers cattle and tided them over difficult periods, but forest fires were frequent and destructive.

In 1847, Cyrus H. McCormick came to Chicago from Virginia, and by 1856, was producing mechanical reapers at the rate of fifteen per day and furthering the revolutionization of agriculture. One of the stimuli was McCormick's selling methods. Farmers could purchase machines for as low as \$35 down and pay the balance within one and one-half years after the date of purchase.

Still another stimulus to agriculture was the improvement in transportation which provided outlets for surplus crops and cattle. It also brought the first fundamental change in the life of the farmer; farm machinery and household equipment could be imported from remote places.

The railroads were foremost among those agencies which served to build up a flow of emigration contributing to the settlement and progress of the state. Illinois was pictured as a haven from oppressive landlords, religious persecutors, and political tyrants. The railroads were granted lands from the Federal Government and in order to succeed they widely advertised that nowhere was there a "region in the world which can be cultivated more economically than the prairies of Illinois." From 1854 to 1900, one railroad made between 40,000 and 45,000 individual sales in disposing of a grant of 2,595,000 acres of land. By 1890, however, the railroads concluded that they had exhausted their "drawing powers" as land agencies.

The number of new farms in the state increased to 59,000 in 1859 and the corn crop increased from 115,000,000 bushels in 1859 to 210,000,000 bushels in 1870. As this corn was not readily marketable, and in proportion to its bulk showed much less in returns than wheat, the farmers found it more profitable to feed it to the cattle and hogs than ship it to market. Because of this, by 1860 Illinois ranked second to Texas in hog production. The production of wheat jumped from 24,000,000 bushels in 1860 to 33,000,000 bushels in 1864, the latter figure comprising 1/5 of the entire wheat production of the nation. This phenomenal increase in wheat production was general throughout the wheat producing states of the West and large exportations of this wheat wrought marked changes in the economic life of Europe. Also the sale and exchange of this wheat for war materials greatly strengthened the Union forces in their struggle against the Confederacy.

Another boon to the growth of agriculture in Illinois, particularly in the northern part of the state, was the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848. Stock raising was greatly stimulated by the importation of salt from the salines of New York, since it could be brought from New York through the Great Lakes and the canal much more cheaply than from the Ohio River salt works via the Mississippi and Illinois

Rivers. The differences made by the canal in the day to day life of the farmer were tremendous. Woven goods of all kinds were shipped in and released the farmers' wives from the toil of the spinning wheel and loom. A greater choice of foodstuffs was possible, increasing the efficiency of the pioneer and adding to the comforts of his life. Even the population "strain" was somewhat changed by the canal. Large numbers of Irishmen, who had been imported to work on the construction of the canal, became permanent settlers. In time, of course, the railroads replaced the canal in importance. Having served its purpose in the development of the agriculture of the state, the canal fell into decay.

Land companies played no small part in the development of agriculture in Illinois. Naturally, there was the usual history of "swindling," "kiting of prices," of selling farms near railroads which did not exist. But many land companies did give valuable service, despite the Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingford atmosphere of the times. In their selling activities the land companies operated on the same general principles as did the railroads, and were prepared to furnish everything from the settlers' homes, barns, and outbuildings to seed and stock. And, like the railroads, they did not hesitate to use odious comparisons to lure farmers from other states to Illinois.

The immigrant and migrant farmer brought with him to Illinois a knowledge of agriculture which soon, under new and expanding conditions, became outmoded. The rapid growth of industry and manufacture gave rise to competition between city and farm. Meetings on how to dredge a ditch soon widened into meetings on how to meet the broader problems of farming, such as those rising out of railroad construction and legislative enactments. One of these organizations which spread and became national in scope, but which suffered a rapid decline, was known as the Patrons of Husbandry, and was referred to as the Grange. As an educational force, it was powerful in its early days. In March 1872, 75 units (Granges) were started under the initiative of an Eastern organizer. In 1873 there were 431 units. In 1875, 1,533 units. Its work in urging such measures as federal regulation of railroads made farmers realize their need their need for concerted action, and, what was more important, their need of exact knowledge before action. The present practice of cooperative buying was given an impetus by the Grange. For years it purchased for its members supplies and food at wholesale prices.

Another organization, the Illinois State Farmers' Association, rose in 1873 under the leadership of William C. Flagg. It came into being as a response to the widespread feeling among farmers that merchants in the cities were "juggling" prices paid for farm commodities, and that the farmer

did not get his fair share of the profits of production as compared with the retailers of the city. This organizational idea has persisted in various forms up to the present, and today manifests its activities in a powerful organization called the Illinois Agricultural Association. It sponsors cooperative marketing; it has a department of finance to study and handle questions of revenue, transportation, taxation, farm finance, and farm credit.

The Agricultural College and Experimental Station at Urbana (University of Illinois), developed to foster the idea of scientific farming. The Experimental Station, under the supervision of the Agricultural College, has made its influence felt in almost every part of the world. It is as frequently consulted as are the specialists in the fields of law and surgery. Briefly, it functions as a disseminator of knowledge through publications.

The state university itself serves as a center from which many types of agricultural activity emanate. Over a period of years, the extension department has sponsored much education away from the campus. One of its earliest steps was to place in each agricultural county a representative known as the "county agent" or "farm advisor," to provide first-hand contacts between the farmers and the college. In time this movement grew into what is now known as the American Farm Bureau Federation. This extension service encourages potential leadership for agriculture from boys and girls now on the farm. Into the crossroad school house, the community church, the community house, go leaders who so encourage and inspire the youth that now it is not unusual for mother, daughter, father, and son to exhibit in their respective departments at local fairs, to attend shows together, and enroll in the short courses given by the University.

During the last decade there has been a growing application of the work of specialists and scientists to agriculture. The farmer now follows advice as to seed selection, poultry culling, soil rebuilding, and ditch-dredging. All of this has manifested itself in two ways in the lives of farmers: (1) in monetary reward, (2) in the changed feeling which the farmer has toward his work and the increased self-respect that comes from the knowledge that he is an indispensable part of the community. In place of the old method of "hit or miss" the farmer now uses methods of modern accounting.

Some of the results of the scientific method of farming have been to reduce the number of farms and the size of farms. Those which consisted of 20 acres or less remained more or less unchanged. At the present time farms of this size constitute only 7.8% of all the farms in Illinois. It seems that the size of a modern farm is limited by the intricacy of the financial matters involved. It is much easier and more profitable to subdivide

a huge plantation and let individual farmers work it on shares than to attempt to operate it under one management. Tenant farming grew up with the passing years and introduced a note of modern capitalism into agrarian culture.

A third very important force in Illinois agriculture today is the State Department of Agriculture, which was made an executive branch of the state government in 1917 and is under the supervision of a Director of Agriculture appointed by the Governor. Naturally, the three – the Illinois Agricultural Association, the Agricultural College and Experiment Station, and the State Department of Agriculture – work in close harmony. But the latter organization acts in a more or less supervisory capacity, and is the clearing house for settling and providing the necessary recognition for carrying out many projects which might otherwise be impossible.

The application of science to farming, the gradual industrialization of farming through the introduction of tenant farming and well-financed plantations, have created a new agriculture, if not a new civilization in the Middle West. It is hoped that Chicago will soon be an inland ocean port (via the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Waterway), and as such it will become the chief shipping center of farm produce for the world.

Of the 35,000,000 acres of productive soil in Illinois, more than 9/10 is in improved lands operated by progressive farmers, the total value of which, including land, buildings, implements, machinery, and livestock amount to approximately \$4,000,000,000. In total acreage of principal field crops for 1934, Illinois ranked fifth among the states of the Union with 15,688,000 acres. In aggregate value of livestock, Illinois ranked fourth among the states of the Union with \$146,039,000.

In the extreme northwestern section of the state, in the counties of Jo Daviess, Carroll, Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, and Whiteside, dairying is the chief pursuit. In the northwestern section, surrounding Chicago, in the counties of Lake, Du Page, Kane, De Kalb, are truck farming and dairying. In the central part of the state, including the counties of Vermilion, Champaign, Piatt, De Witt, McLean, Woodford, and Marshall, is the very heart of the prairie farming country where cash grain is raised. In the western section, in the counties surrounding Knox, is the livestock region. The southern portion of the state is given over to mixed farming. In the southwestern central counties much fruit is grown.

It is a far cry from days when oxen first broke the virgin prairie to the new puffing tractors which now till Illinois soil! Gradually, the city and the farm are drawing closer together, having common aims and common methods of attaining those aims. Via newspaper and radio – Prairie Farmer

and WLS – the voice of the farm is carried to the city, and vice versa. The time is perhaps foreshadowed when the ideologies of the farmer and the city worker will be better fused into one national psychology, which in turn will find unification in one national economy and civilization.

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Oklahoma	Oklahoma Eagle, 1932.
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Tennessee	Nashville Globe, 1929.
Washington, D.C.	Washington Tribune, 1928-1929.

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Materials, such as leaflets, programs, clippings from newspapers, old photographs, relating to Chicago's early history, especially Negro history. She has complete files of magazines; notes concerning the origin of Negro clubs and organizations. She lists the following contacts for further information:

Joseph Hudlin (Negro, ex-head janitor) Chicago Board of Trade, Jackson & La Salle
Ed. Morris, Jessimine Farm, Benton Harbor Mich. (Documents)
Maud George
Margaret Bonds

NOTES

¹The entries in Wright's original bibliography have been corrected, and brought to modern bibliographic citation standards. Special thanks to our graduate assistant, Kyle Ainsworth, for correcting and standardizing these entries.