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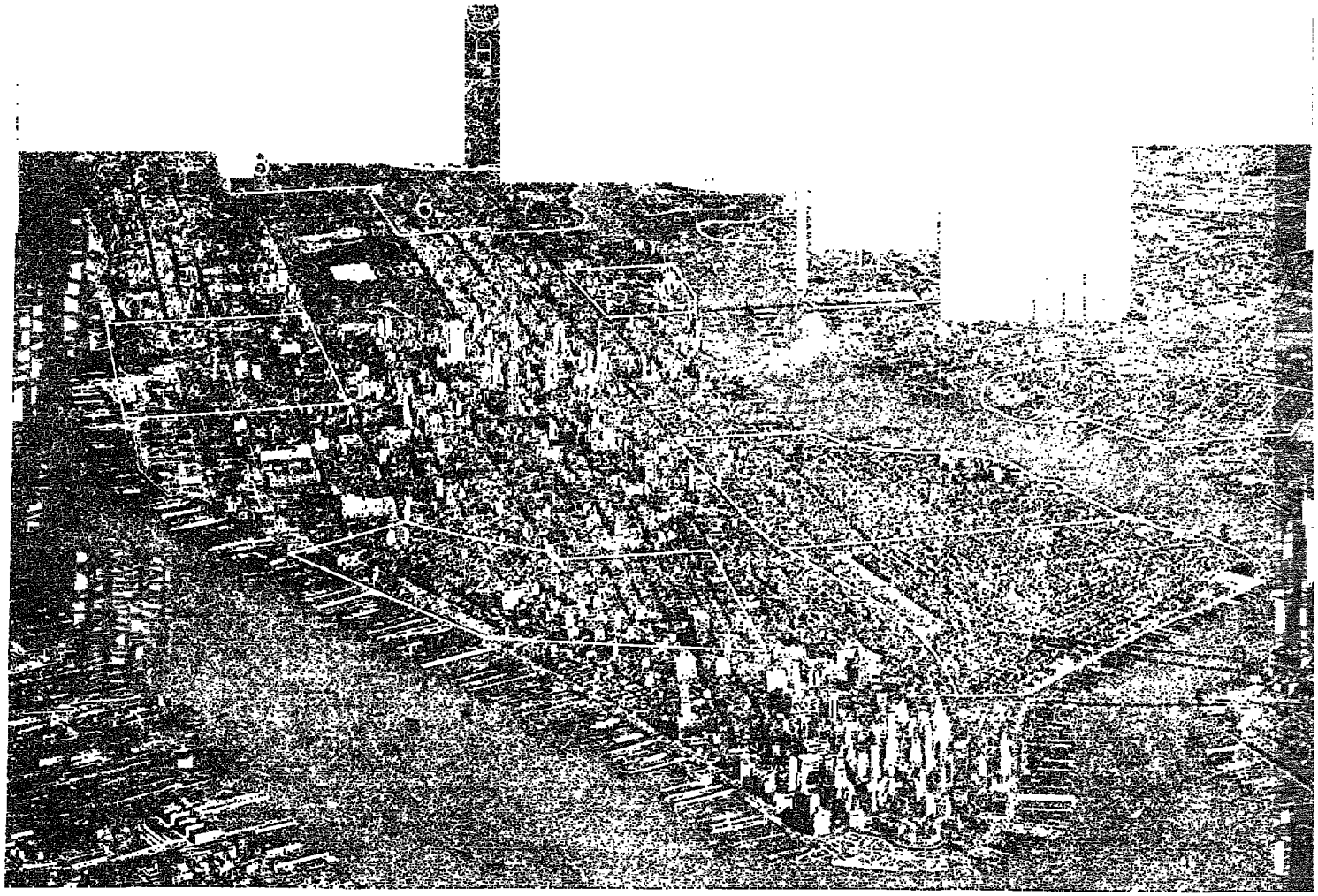
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SLUMS AND HOUSING

VOLUME I



Aerial Surveys, Inc.

Manhattan Island, Brooklyn, and The Bronx, showing principal areas selected for slum and housing studies by the Slum Clearance Committee, 1933–1934. Site of Hillside shown by a circle. The Williamsburg development (included in district No. 10) is off the picture, southeast of No. 10. See also Fig. 23.

SLUMS AND HOUSING

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEW YORK CITY

HISTORY · CONDITIONS · POLICY

by

JAMES FORD

with the collaboration of

Katherine Morrow and George N. Thompson

and

AN APPENDIX

MAINLY ARCHITECTURAL

by

I. N. PHELPS STOKES

Prepared and Published under the Auspices of the

PHELPS-STOKES FUND

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IT IS HOPED THAT THIS BOOK WILL PROVE OF REAL SERVICE, AND THEREBY A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MISS CAROLINE PHELPS STOKES, FOUNDER OF THE PHELPS-STOKES FUND, WHOSE INTEREST AND ACTIVITIES IN HOUSING REFORM BEGAN AT LEAST FORTY YEARS AGO WHEN, IN 1896, SHE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE IMPROVED HOUSING COUNCIL, WHICH RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF THE CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY, IN WHICH SHE BECAME A STOCKHOLDER. IN 1907 MISS STOKES, WHO HAD ALWAYS BEEN PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE COLORED RACE, JOINED HER ELDER SISTER, MISS OLIVIA EGLESTON PHELPS STOKES, IN BUILDING THE TUSKEGEE TENEMENTS FOR NEGROES, IN WEST 62ND STREET. MISS STOKES DIED IN 1909, AND BY HER WILL FOUNDED THE PHELPS-STOKES FUND, FOR TWO MAJOR PURPOSES: "THE ERECTION OR IMPROVEMENT OF TENEMENT HOUSE DWELLINGS IN NEW YORK CITY FOR THE POOR FAMILIES OF NEW YORK CITY," AND FOR "EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN THE EDUCATION OF NEGROES BOTH IN AFRICA AND THE UNITED STATES." IN 1911 THE DUDLEY HOMES COMPANY, OF WHICH MISS STOKES HAD BEEN AN ORGANIZER, BUILT TWO MODEL TENEMENTS IN 32ND STREET NEAR FIRST AVENUE, ON THAT PART OF THE OLD KIP'S BAY FARM WHICH HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN 1805 AS A COUNTRY RESIDENCE BY HENRY A. COSTER AND WAS LATER EMBELLISHED WITH A FAMOUS GARDEN BY DR. DAVID HOSACK. FROM 1835 TO 1857 THIS WAS THE HOME OF ANSON G. PHELPS AND HIS SON-IN-LAW, JAMES STOKES, WHOSE DAUGHTER CAROLINE WAS BORN HERE IN 1854. THESE TENEMENTS WERE LATER TAKEN OVER BY THE PHELPS-STOKES FUND. THE FUND HAS HELD TWO ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS—IN 1921 AND 1933. AS A RESULT OF THE FIRST OF THESE, TWO 50-FOOT UNITS, ON 97TH STREET EAST OF MADISON AVENUE, WERE BUILT. ALL THREE OF THESE PROPERTIES ARE NOW OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY. IN 1933, SHORTLY BEFORE THE FORMATION OF THE U. S. HOUSING ADMINISTRATION AND THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, THE FUND INVITED DR. JAMES FORD TO UNDERTAKE A SURVEY OF HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS IN NEW YORK CITY, AND TO PREPARE A REPORT THEREON TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE FUND. WORK WAS STARTED IN AUGUST, 1933, AND ALTHOUGH THE ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK OF THE FEDERAL AND LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES, WHICH BEGAN A FEW MONTHS LATER WITH A VERITABLE ARMY OF INVESTIGATORS, RENDERED UNNECESSARY MUCH OF THE FIELD WORK ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED, DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE MULTIFARIOUS FACTS AND FINDINGS GENEROUSLY MADE AVAILABLE TO OUR STAFF AS THE WORK PROGRESSED, AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF SUCH OF THESE AS SEEMED SIGNIFICANT, MADE UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE DEMANDS UPON DR. FORD AND HIS SMALL STAFF, WHICH WERE ONLY IN MINOR PART OFFSET BY THE ASSIGNMENT TO THE FUND'S OFFICE FOR HOUSING RESEARCH OF A SMALL GROUP OF PWA DRAFTSMEN. THIS AND OTHER CAUSES HAVE DELAYED THE COMPLETION OF THE WORK BY MORE THAN A YEAR, AND HAVE RESULTED IN A CONSIDERABLE ENLARGEMENT OF THE PROJECTED SCOPE AND VOLUME OF THE REPORT, WHICH, IN ITS FINAL FORM, IS A COMPREHENSIVE BOOK, DEALING PRIMARILY WITH HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY BUT INCLUDING ALSO, VERY BRIEFLY TREATED, OTHER IMPORTANT AMERICAN CITIES, AS WELL AS THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF EUROPE. ALTHOUGH THE TRUSTEES OF THE FUND GREATLY REGRET THIS LONG DELAY, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE BOOK APPEARS AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT—JUST AS IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE AND NEW POLICIES FORMED. IT IS HOPED NOT ONLY THAT IT WILL PROVE A VALUABLE RECORD OF THE HISTORY OF HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY, AND OF THE SUCCESSIVE EFFORTS MADE DURING THE PAST SIXTY YEARS TO IMPROVE HOUSING CONDITIONS, BUT ALSO THAT THE EXTENDED DISCUSSION, UNDER TOPIC HEADINGS, WILL HELP TO CLARIFY THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANY FACTORS WHICH ENTER INTO THE COMPLICATED AND PUZZLING PROBLEM OF HOUSING THOSE FAMILIES WHICH ARE UNABLE TO PAY RENT SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE A FAIR RETURN ON THE COST OF ADEQUATE HOUSING. I. N. PHELPS STOKES, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE.

TRUSTEES OF THE PHELPS-STOKES FUND

REV. ANSON PHELPS STOKES, PRESIDENT; JAMES H. DILLARD, VICE-PRESIDENT; I. N. PHELPS STOKES, SECRETARY; FRANCIS LOUIS SLADE, TREASURER; MISS HELEN PHELPS STOKES; RT. REV. WILLIAM T. MANNING; JOHN SHERMAN HOYT; ROBERT RUSSA MOTON; MRS. RANSOM SPAFORD HOOKER; HARRY WOODBURN CHASE; THOMAS JESSE JONES; MISS OLIVIA PHELPS STOKES.

PREFACE

NEW YORK has had longer and more varied experience with problems of housing than any other American city. These volumes have attempted to interpret and analyze that experience for the benefit of other cities as well as New York. Future policies have their roots in the past, in failures as well as in successes, in human limitations as well as in human capacities. Consideration of these factors, and of needs, standards, aspirations, and the objectives which grow out of them, should serve to rid future policies in some degree of waste of energy and resources and of many needless errors.

It may be said that New York is individual—even though none of her problems is unique. The same may be said of any other city. Yet each urban community, if discriminating, can borrow profitably from the experience of others. Each city is a problem in itself and should be studied with reference to an immense number of variable local features, such as history and tradition, past growth and its causes, dominating personalities and their attitudes, local commercial and civic organizations and their traditions, and the interplay of the myriad factors in the economic, political, and social process.

New York, having faced a housing problem earlier than other American cities, has a longer history of legislative precedent and has usually coped with each housing problem long before it was faced by other communities. This book will help to visualize origins. It is hoped, however, that other communities will realize that it is not necessary to do as New York has done merely because New York is America's largest and most experienced city in this field. They could, with greater profit, make fresh starts or improve upon New York's methods if applying them to their own problems.

Certainly few American cities need house many of their wage-earning population in multiple dwellings. In most cities the lot and block layouts, the accessibility of the heart of the city from the outskirts, lower land values, and tradition, facilitate the construction of either detached single-family housing, or row housing in community groups.

This study is not essentially historical—there are, doubtless, many reports, laws, and statements of importance that have been missed. It does, however, indicate progress and will facilitate the work of future historians of housing and city planning.

In the historical sections it should be noted that the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in quoted matter conform to the originals, even when they do not seem to make sense or are ungrammatical or ambiguous.

The purpose of this study has been to take one of America's most urgent problems and subject it to analysis. It is difficult to see contemporary problems in perspective. Nevertheless an attempt has been made to show the housing conditions of New York City in the perspective of history, ethics, sociology, and the other social sciences and also to arrive at a synthesis of pertinent data from fields of study ordinarily remote from one another — medicine, law, architecture, education, engineering, criminology, economics, and political science. If means had permitted such a task could doubtless better have been performed by a committee of specialists, each representing but one of these many fields of learning. Until such a method of procedure may prove possible this preliminary, explorative survey may serve to indicate the complexity of our problem, the ramifications and interrelations of its multitudinous factors, and the dangers of oversimplification. By its tentative evaluation of conditions, causes, and measures it is hoped that it may contribute to the clarification of objectives and the framing of a social policy comprising well coordinated measures, adapted to contemporary conditions and fundamental needs. If such objectives, policies, and measures are viewed as merely experimental and if their results are closely studied and wisely interpreted, mistakes can be quickly remedied and rational progress will be facilitated.

Hoping to avoid the insular view that New York — which with its environing region houses one tenth of the population of our nation — should set standards for all of America, a small staff of collaborators was assembled for the study, each of whom had previously dealt with housing on a nation-wide basis and no one of whom was a New Yorker. These volumes should reflect the perspective of that earlier experience.

George N. Thompson who was the first to act as my associate director for this study, was in charge of local field investigations. Years of experience in real estate and as Assistant Chief of the Division of Building and Housing of the Bureau of Standards in Washington, and as Secretary of the Building Code Committee of the U. S. Department of Commerce, gave him an invaluable background both practical and analytical. When, in October 1934, he was obliged to resume his work in the Bureau of Standards, he had completed the first draft of nine of the chapters of this book. These, in spite of subsequent editing and amendment, are published here substantially in the form in which he drafted them — Chapters X, XI, XIV, XXV, XXVI, XXXI, XXXII, XXXVIII, and XXXIX.

His successor, Katherine Morrow, while serving as executive of a national housing organization, had collaborated in the preparation of the original draft of this study. When, in the summer of 1935, she became associate director she brought to these volumes an insistence upon high standards, and a challenge, from which each chapter has materially benefited.

Both of these collaborators, as well as Dr. Arthur J. Mertzke, who wrote the first draft of the chapter on European housing, had served as secretaries of committees of the Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership called by President Hoover in 1931, and had cooperated with me in editing the twelve volumes which contain the reports of the committees of that Conference.

Our small staff included, in addition, Arthur J. Frappier, architect, who helped Mr. Thompson in local field studies and the preparation of graphs and estimates. Mr. Frappier also drew some of the illustrations for these pages. Ellen C. Ahern rendered invaluable aid in historical research and in the preparation of the bibliography.* Gladys E. Campbell, as my secretary, cooperated ably in the preparation of manuscript for the printer and, together with Miss Ahern, assisted in the verification of references and the reading of early proofs.

Throughout this study we have had the benefit of the continuous interest and suggestions of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Chairman of the Committee on Housing of the Fund, and actively associated in many of the leading movements for improved housing in New York City since 1896. His intimate knowledge of New York, its history and personalities, and his housing experience as well as his experience as an architect, have greatly facilitated this study. The photographs, maps, and plans which illustrate these volumes and their captions, were for the most part selected and prepared by him. His belief in the value of honest differences in opinion has made it possible for the author to express his own conclusions from his data, without restraint or interference at any point — even when such conclusions have run counter to those held by him as a representative of the foundation which has sponsored the work.

Most of the book was read in early manuscript by Dr. John M. Gries, whose searching questions have helped to eliminate some, at least, of the initial crudities. Dr. John Nolen also kindly read many of the chapters in their first draft and assisted our work by his encouraging comments.

In the later months of the study the Committee on Research in the Social Sciences of Harvard University made me a grant which supplemented the appropriation of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, thus making possible the continuation of

* Miss Ahern's notes and excerpts have been bound in twelve volumes and deposited, for reference, in the Manuscript Division of The New York Public Library.

the staff for further research and verification as well as for the preparation of bibliography and index.

To all these and the many others who have helped, and especially to authors and publishers who have permitted us to quote from their works, to executives and librarians who have given us of their time to facilitate our studies, I wish to express sincere appreciation.

Above all we are grateful to the Phelps-Stokes Fund for making possible the first extensive urban study of housing in its many aspects. The deep interest displayed by Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, President of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and by other members of the Board, has grown out of a profound sense of social responsibility. It is our hope that this book may contain enough of significant data and wise suggestion to assist definitely in bringing about concrete improvements in housing conditions, and thus justify their confidence in this undertaking.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Cambridge, Massachusetts
March 3, 1936

JAMES FORD

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To the *Iconography* by I. N. Phelps Stokes, and *The Tenement House Problem* by Robert W. deForest and Lawrence Veiller, we are indebted for a large number of quotations and illustrations and particularly for the infinite care and skill with which they summarize the early history of housing and of legislative policy for New York City.

The following individuals have been very helpful in answering queries and in supplying illustrations and other data: Horatio B. Hackett, A. R. Clas, and Horace Peaslee, of the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration; George Gove and Asher Achinstein of the State Board of Housing; Langdon W. Post, Frederick L. Ackerman, and William F. R. Ballard, of the New York City Housing Authority; John Ihlder of Washington, D. C.; Grosvenor Atterbury, Alexander M. Bing, Norbert Brown, Roscoe Conkling Bruce, Joseph Fink, Ernest Flagg, Rudolph P. Miller, Joseph Platzker, Alice Flexner Rothblatt, and Henry H. Saylor, of New York City; and various officers of the American Society of Planning Officials and the National Association of Housing Officials.

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The generous cooperation of scores of other individuals, associations, public departments, and editors and publishers has been freely given. Their valuable works, mentioned in text, footnotes, or bibliography, provide the nucleus of a library essential for the use of future historians or public servants concerned with the problem of housing. To these, as well as to those whose names are listed above, the reader is referred for elaboration of the subject matter quoted in these volumes.

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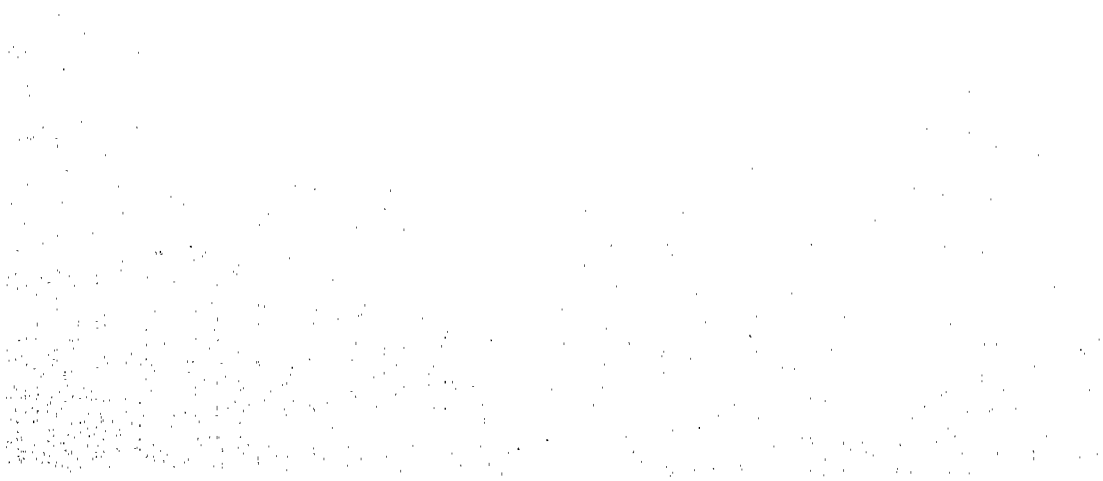
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SLUMS AND HOUSING



CHAPTER I

WHAT IS A SLUM?

Analysis of Definitions

In both England and America there has been agitation for slum elimination during nearly half a century. Even prior to that, in each country considerable effort was expended for the improvement of one aspect or another of the living conditions of the wage-earning class. Despite the wide use of the term "slum" in the extensive literature of housing, there has been no agreement as to how the term should be defined.

The earlier works in both England and America make use of definitions still to be found in our dictionaries in which the slum is stated to be "a foul back street of a city, especially one with a slovenly and even vicious population," also, "a low or squalid neighborhood." [1] Yet many of the areas selected for elimination as slums in contemporary housing policy cannot be defined as foul back streets, nor can the population properly be termed either slovenly or vicious; nor do contemporary housing authorities necessarily follow the definition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, which describes a slum as "a dirty back street, court or alley in the city." There may or may not be courts or alleys in districts designated as slums.

Recent definitions tend to stress density of population, congestion of population, and overcrowding of rooms. Yet there are areas designated as slums by both experts and public opinion in which the dwellings are detached and largely abandoned by their original population so that neither density, congestion, nor overcrowding is to be found. Moreover, by common consent there are also "rural slums."

With precision of thought, John Robertson, M.D., in 1919, in his *Housing and the Public Health* stated that "a town slum dwelling may be structurally good, and yet, from its darkened surroundings, its absence of free air-supply, its soot-laden atmosphere, and its filthy environment, it may be one of the most unwholesome of dwellings." His contribution, thus, was that poor construction is not necessarily characteristic of all slum dwellings. Darkness and obstructed air movements were added to filth as factors typical of the slum.

1. Webster's *New International Dictionary*, 1933 edition.

B. S. Townroe in his volume on *The Slum Problem*, published in 1928, enlarged the conception in this manner:

> In view of his experience, Mr. Duckworth's definition [of a slum] is of special interest. He states that "a slum is a street, court or alley which reflects the social condition of a poor, thriftless, irregularly employed and rough class of inhabitants." He owns that the inhabitants are not necessarily very poor or bad, but they are often poor through injudicious expenditure, and sometimes through vice. He thus describes the outward and visible signs of a slum district.
>
> "Bread and litter in the streets; windows dirty, broken and patched with white or brown paper; curtains dirty and frayed, and blinds half drawn and often hanging at an angle. The street doors are usually open, showing bare passages and stairways lacking bannisters, while the door jambs are generally brown with dirt, and rubbed shiny by the coats of the leisured class, whose habit is to lean up against them.
>
> "The site of a slum is generally a pocket off a main street, or a street or nests of streets where through traffic has been made impossible by the intervention of canals, railway embankments, or the determination of the original inhabitants or owners to regard their persons or their land as something select and inviolable."

This definition still tends to limit the slum to back streets. It is a descriptive definition more extensive than its predecessors, and in its final paragraph touches upon certain causative factors.

The best of the English definitions will be found in the Housing Act of 1930, which incorporated many phrases from the earlier Act of 1890. The term "slum" was not used in the later act, but it was stipulated that the Local Authority may declare an unhealthy area to be a clearance area under the following conditions:

> That the dwelling-houses in that area are by reason of disrepair or sanitary defects unfit for human habitation, or are by reason of their bad arrangement, or the narrowness or bad arrangement of the streets, dangerous or injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the area, and that the other buildings, if any, in the area are for a like reason dangerous or injurious to the health of the said inhabitants; and
>
> That the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in the area is the demolition of all the buildings in the area,
>
> The authority shall cause that area to be defined on a map in such manner as to exclude from the area any building which is not unfit for human habitation or dangerous or injurious to health and shall pass a resolution declaring the area so defined to be a clearance area, that is to say, an area to be cleared of all buildings in accordance with the provisions hereinafter contained: . . .

This definition reflects recognition of land crowding, lack of light and air, inadequate sanitation, and bad management as factors, in addition to filth, which was the dominating conception of earlier definitions. An area is noted as becoming a

clearance area at the point where the conditions above mentioned are injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the building or area.

Supplementing the definitions of housing specialists of America and England already outlined, significant contributions have been made in recent years by sociologists of the Chicago school. The essence of their contribution is contained in the following excerpt from *The City*, published in 1925 under the joint authorship of Park, Burgess, and McKenzie.

> Studies of urban growth reveal that the city grows outward from its central business district in a series of expanding zones. There is a zone of transition encircling the downtown area. This is the area of deterioration, the so-called "slum," created in large part by the invasion of business and light manufacture. A third area is inhabited by workers in industry who have escaped from the area of deterioration and who desire to live within easy access of their work. Beyond this zone is the "residential area" of high-class apartment buildings or of exclusive "restricted" districts of single family dwellings. Still farther, out beyond the city limits, is the "commuter's zone" of suburban areas or satellite cities within a sixty-minute ride of the central business district.

In this definition, the zone of transition is made synonymous with area of deterioration and slum, thus failing to distinguish the blighted area from the slum. The merit of this statement and its chief contribution lie in its suggestion with regard to the social process and its recognition of the slum as an area of deterioration and a zone of transition. One may further criticize this statement because of its over-simplification of the urban pattern. There are slums which give no evidence of transition. There are likewise slums scattered through the outlying areas of all large cities and in many of their suburbs.

America's major sociological contribution to slum definition and analysis was made in 1929 by Harvey Warren Zorbaugh in his Chicago study entitled *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. Extensive quotations follow in order that his contribution may be understood and appraised.

> The common denominator of the slum is its submerged aspect and its detachment from the city as a whole. The slum is a bleak area of segregation of the sediment of society; an area of extreme poverty, tenements, ramshackle buildings, of eviction and evaded rents; an area of working mothers and children, of high rates of birth, infant mortality, illegitimacy, and death; an area of pawnshops and second-hand stores, of gangs, of "flops" where every bed is a vote. As distinguished from the vice area, the disintegrating neighborhood, the slum is an area which has reached the limit of decay and is on the verge of reorganization as missions, settlements, play-parks and business come in. . . .
>
> The Near North Side, west of Clark Street from North Avenue to the river, and east of Clark Street from Chicago Avenue to the river, we may describe as a slum, without fear of contradiction. For this area, cut off by the barrier of river and industry, and for years without

adequate transportation, has long been a back-water in the life of the city. This slum district is drab and mean. In ten months the United Charities here had 460 relief cases. Poverty is extreme. Many families are living in one or two basement rooms for which they pay less than ten dollars a month. These rooms are stove heated, and wood is sold on the streets in bundles, and coal in small sacks. The majority of houses, back toward the river, are of wood, and not a few have windows broken out. Smoke, the odor from the gas works, and the smell of dirty alleys is in the air. Both rooms and lots are overcrowded. Back tenements, especially north of Division Street, are common. . . .

The slum harbors many sorts of people: the criminal, the radical, the bohemian, the migratory worker, the immigrant, the unsuccessful, the queer and unadjusted. . . .

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.

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 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.

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. . . .

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 ad-

joining 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.

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; and the law, symbolized by the "copper," the "bull," the "flivver" and the "wagon," is to the dweller in the slum a source of interference and oppression, a cause of interrupted incomes, a natural enemy.[1]

Zorbaugh's vivid description has the merit of originality and incorporates many observations that are shrewd and pertinent as applied to Chicago slums, to which his attention was confined. Yet virtually every statement may be challenged when the term "slum" is applied to communities other than Chicago. For the slum is not necessarily detached from the city; although it usually includes areas of extreme poverty, it may also comprise areas where poverty is less apparent; the rates of birth, death, and illegitimacy are not invariably high; it may not be on the verge of reorganization; and the life of the slum is not necessarily lived almost entirely without the conventional world. There are slums that are far from being "a backwash in the life of the city" and which are highly organized as factors in local political life. Moreover, cosmopolitanism would not be true of the slums of southern cities.

Niles Carpenter, in his *Sociology of City Life*, published in 1931, notes that "in such [transition] areas, community control is relaxed, building dilapidation is encouraged by the prospect of the super-session of residential by commercial construction; and stability of occupancy is difficult." It should be borne in mind, however, that a tendency to the relaxation of community control has not infrequently forced subsequent expansion of control. As is noted elsewhere in this volume, health departments and tenement-house departments may concentrate their efforts upon those areas that are most likely to be a source of high morbidity

1. Harvey W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, pp. 9, 11, 128, 151–152.

and confine their "original inspections" to such areas, visiting other districts of the city only upon complaint. In this way mortality rates from certain diseases have on occasion been kept lower in slum areas than in the city as a whole. Schools and police departments, similarly recognizing the dangers of loss of community control, may lavish their attentions upon slum areas, thus extending community control in these areas beyond the average. Dr. Carpenter's observation is, however, correct as a statement of tendency.

By 1930 a large number of valuable surveys of housing conditions had been made in America, each of them a local study and each revealing the individuality of the city and district examined. Some of the later writers had consciously abandoned the use of the word "slum" or had used it only in quotation marks because the prevailing connotations of that term might do possible injury to districts so designated and might thus interfere with the welfare and development of their inhabitants. The convenience of the term led, however, to its adoption by President Hoover's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership in 1931, and one of the thirty-one committees of that Conference was given the task of studying blighted areas and slums. The membership of this committee was selected with skill to comprise leading thinkers, each representing one or more of the many varied approaches to this subject.[1] Its report, with appendices, comprised only sixty-five printed pages but was definitely the most useful contribution that had been made up to that date to the analysis of this problem. Its definitions are essential background for contemporary studies and are, therefore, submitted here.

A blighted area is one that has become an economic liability to the community.

A slum is a residential area where the houses and conditions of life are of a squalid and wretched character and which hence has become a social liability to the community.[2]

The blighted area is not necessarily residential. The slum is, however, ordinarily a blighted area primarily residential in character. This definition distinguishes slum areas from other residential districts by their wretched conditions of housing and of living which have rendered them a social liability. If this definition is accepted, slums can be recognized only in terms of the consequences of bad housing and squalid conditions of life. An appendix to the President's Conference report elaborates this conception as follows:

When we speak of a slum the picture that comes to mind is a mass of more or less nondescript individual houses, tenements, stables, dilapidated shops; an absence of paint, accumula-

1. Its membership comprised the following: Abram Garfield, *Chairman*, Robert Adamson, Newton P. Baker, John Taylor Boyd, Jr., Harold S. Buttenheim, Herbert B. Dowd, Manuel C. Elmer, Edwin R. Embree, John M. Glenn, James Steele Gow, Dwight L. Hoopingarner, John Ihlder, Beecher Marquette, Roderick Duncan McKenzie, George Richardson, Miss Charlotte Rumbold, Murray Seasongood, Mark L. Thomas, Lawrence Veiller, Clarence Woolley, and Dan H. Wheeler, *Secretary*.

2. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Slums, Large-Scale Housing and Decentralization*, III, 1.

tion of dirt, tin cans and rubbish. The picture is scented with a dank, damp, moldy odor, intermingled with the smell of decaying matter. We think of the slum as the abode of half-starved, filthily clothed children, of diseased and crippled individuals; a place of poverty, wretchedness, ignorance and vice. We think of it as a recession from the normal standards of a sound society.

This concept has grown up as the result of many years of experience and study. . . . The slum has always been of interest to Americans because it is a phenomenon of the accumulated dregs of an old population such as may be found in some of the great cities of Asia, Northern Africa, and Europe. When we find the beginnings of such human Sargasso Seas, these backwaters of city life, beginning to develop in our midst, we are rightly disturbed. These slums which are the vortex of the city whirlpool are areas of deterioration usually with a numerically stationary or declining population. We find there great extremes and contrasts ranging from "old respectability" to "new vice."

The slums are checkered areas. We find business creeping in and supplanting places of residence. Land, as a consequence, is being held at speculative values. As a result house rents are low. The owners are hopefully waiting for a turn of affairs which will increase values for business prospects. The slum is a distinctive area of disintegration and disorganization. It is, however, not merely the decaying and dilapidated houses, the filthy alleys and streets, nor the number of uncared for children and poverty-stricken adults which make the slum. The slum is more than an economic condition. It is a social phenomenon in which the attitudes, ideas, ideals and practices play an important part. . . .

Slums usually originate in transitional areas — sections of the city where one type of activity is being supplanted by other lines of activity, where an established population and forms of social organization are receding before different types of people with different forms of organizations or more frequently with no forms of organization, in short, where the neighborhood is becoming socially unattractive to persons within the community as well as to persons outside of the community. Cheaper rents, absence of established organizations, the passing of agencies which formerly provided services to the residents but which with the passing of the older population lose vigor and likewise pass away, transform the area into a temporary alighting spot for "birds of passage." Like a migrating flock of blackbirds resting and feeding temporarily, so groups of immigrants as well as individual families and isolated individuals stop in this transitional area on their way up or down the social scale. Each of these waves of people leaves a residue of poverty-stricken, socially unadjusted, maladjusted defectives and delinquents which gradually accumulates into a slum population. . . .

Of the old population of an area that is deteriorating, there are always a considerable number of families who are marooned and thus unable to move into a more desirable area. Some factors which cause this condition are the ownerships of homes which cannot be disposed of without greater loss than the families can bear, nearness to place of work, certain established associations, and the lack of financial means to change the place of residence. We find marooned here also some families as well as some individuals who never have had much contact with community activities but who suddenly awake to the fact that the community has changed. Interspersed among this sprinkling of relatively adjusted individuals are numbers of unsuccessful persons who, because of illness, economic changes, loss of work, bad investments and numerous other factors have drifted down to the disintegrated areas. We find here colonies

of immigrants who have selected this area in part because differences of culture pass by unnoticed and uncriticized, but more largely because they are able through low rents to maintain a village life nearly like that to which they have been accustomed. . . . It has been accurately said that the slum is the "neighborhood of lost souls." The area which at first was blighted by some shift in industry, in business, in lines of communication or some other artificial physical change, has produced a change in the character of population and converted the blighted area into a slum. . . .

In a normal community with a considerable proportion of the population established and having agencies and organizations to meet their mutual needs, any crisis which may arise will be met by the established forces within the community. In a properly adjusted family where the different members of the family function within their respective spheres, situations which arise are handled satisfactorily and proper adjustments met by the family itself. In a deteriorating area this is not the case. Community needs, whether they relate to education, to religion, to recreation, to health, or to vice and crime, cannot be met by the community. There are lacking the social forces which are the result of mutually interacting and related interests of the persons affected. There is lacking an established culture pattern which will serve as a guide for the overt acts of the community. There is lacking any standard concerning group reaction. It is true that a slum is a genuinely cosmopolitan area where there is a minimum of intolerance, but the attitude has swung to the other extreme where anything is tolerated, hence combined community action is lacking. Any situation requiring concerted effort is out of the question. We find the extremes of tolerance and of accommodation with lack of established conventions, except in the case of the foreign villages which, because of their relative isolation, only increase the defects of the situation.

Normal family life is lacking in the slum. The same factors and lack of established order that are found in the community are reflected in the family life, hence the slum becomes the center of groups of families which, whenever an unusual situation arises, are unable to meet it and either go on the rocks or must be sustained by outside forces. Hence the slum without normal family organization, without established community controls and standards, becomes a flourishing seed-bed for substitutes. The gang becomes a substitute for the face to face relationship of a normal family or a normal neighborhood group. Gangsters, corrupt politicians, gamblers, human vultures, take the place of constructive leaders. We have along with the lack of self-reliance a breakdown of prejudices, a breakdown of customs, a breakdown of conventions. Groups, individuals, families, lose their identity and the various social patterns tend to blend into a mixture without any purposeful objective. With the absence of organizations that are constructive the people within the slum area tend to merge into a social culture that is recognized as the slum pattern. We have a slum population with slum attitudes, ideas, ideals and practices. The area becomes a fermenting vat from which emanate influences that modify the functioning of other areas. The slum sends forth individuals who carry their slum pattern to other groups and thus change already blighted areas into slums. In short, the slum flourishes in blighted areas, but it is the attitude and reaction of the individuals living in a blighted area that will turn it into a slum.

The disintegrating area or slum usually reaches the limit of deterioration and decay and practically ceases to be self-sustaining. The most obvious signs of deterioration are first noticed. Streets, alleys, rubbish, general accumulation of debris are forced upon the attention

of authorities. Social agencies now begin to pick up the loose ends dropped by the families and by the community. Because of general appeal and because there is little direct opposition by established destructive agencies, health and general relief agencies get started. Intermittent missions, and religious groups whose work is tied up with welfare work, get started. Settlement houses attempt to provide a permanently established group with neighbourhood interests. Public and private efforts are put forth to eliminate unsanitary houses.[1]

The Regional Plan Association defines a blighted area as

one which has deteriorated from an economic standpoint and therefore become less profitable to the city, the general public and the owners of its real estate. Depreciation has set in and the area is rapidly becoming a liability rather than an asset. Its characteristics are changing and its future is indefinite. When "blight" has progressed far enough to seriously affect social conditions, such as health, morality and standards of living, then the "slum" stage is reached and the section becomes not only uneconomic but also socially undesirable.

Re-housing may be justified in either case; in the first instance to re-establish the blighted area on a sound economic basis, and, in the second instance, to wipe out the nuisances resulting from a slum district and to substitute a healthy and useful development.[2]

Although this definition has many advantages over its predecessors, the public continues to apply the term "blighted area" to districts in which there is general structural depreciation. It is true of some slums, as of some blighted areas, that certain properties are economically profitable though badly run down. Within the same block, however, one may find properties some of which are carried at a loss and others at a substantial return upon the existing investment.

The fundamental difficulty with all of the above definitions is that they say too much. There is, moreover, too much emphasis, often mistaken, upon local peculiarities and upon factors social rather than physical. The slum tends to be defined in terms of more or less accurately observed consequences. To conform with contemporary usage, the emphasis instead should be upon conditions of structure, age, and upkeep.

We may, therefore, better define a blighted district as any area in which the large majority of buildings, whether commercial, industrial, or residential, are old, and in which fundamental repairs are no longer being made.

Any area of deteriorated housing in which there is poor upkeep of houses and premises is a blighted district and a potential slum.

Any area of old, neglected, and deteriorated housing or of new markedly substandard housing is a slum as soon as it becomes insanitary or otherwise injurious to its occupants.

The slum is thus characterized by age, neglect, and low standards or practices in sanitation.

1. *Ibid.*, Manuel C. Elmer, Appendix III, pp. 30–33.

2 Regional Plan Association, *Information Bulletin* No. 16, February 26, 1934.

The area may be a city block or less in size, or a large district covering scores or hundreds of blocks.

A large majority of its population are of the unskilled or semi-skilled labor type and poor in the sense that their incomes provide for scarcely more than the subsistence minimum. They live there mainly because they cannot afford to live elsewhere.

The slum is not necessarily an area in which land values are declining, but is rather an area in which there is so little new construction of residences that the tone of the area is little affected. Enhancement of land values in a slum might be caused either by increase of population or by speculation based upon potential future use either for commerce, industry, or government-subsidized housing.

Characteristic of slum areas are types of house design and construction of earlier periods — now outmoded — inadequate provision for sanitation, lighting and heating, obsolescent fixtures, dilapidation, and poor upkeep. Ordinarily, but not necessarily, there would also be overcrowding of rooms, and poor maintenance of apartments, premises, and streets, as well as of buildings. Often also there are present neighborhood nuisances, such as factory smoke and fumes, elevated railroads (especially in New York and Boston), railroad tracks, canals, dumps, swamps (usually in the smaller cities), crowded streets, small stores, and workshops with poor standards and poor upkeep. Often, but not invariably, the district is inhabited by immigrants and their American-born children, or Negroes or Orientals make up the major portion of the population.

Since slums are usually areas of lowest rentals (except sometimes in the case of Negro housing) the percentage of tenants with low income is high. In these areas, therefore, one might expect to find a relatively high percentage of persons who, because of physical or mental defects, are unable to earn a living wage, as well as a relatively high percentage of persons who have had inadequate schooling which has handicapped their economic efficiency and correspondingly their wage-earning capacity. One might come across the vicious circle: low mental or physical capacity, low income, low rent-paying capacity, poor housing, insanitation, reduced health, lowered income-producing capacity. In most of our slums, however, many persons, because of superior native physique, intelligence, or character, are able to resist the depressive influences and work their way to better neighborhoods. This may be especially true of the younger generation, trained in the public schools and helped by medical and social service clinics of one sort or another and by organized public recreation.

According to the studies of philologists, the accepted uses of words may change in accordance with human needs. As the prevailing definitions of the term

"slum," found in contemporary dictionaries, fail to accord with the best of contemporary purpose and practice in the field of slum clearance, the following definition is suggested:

The slum is a residential area (comprising one or more lots, city blocks, or rural plots) *in which the housing is so deteriorated* (through poor upkeep ordinarily combined with obsolescence, age, depreciation, or change in consumer demand), *so sub-standard* (owing to builders' or owners' ignorance of principles of construction, planning, equipment, and hygiene, or to the deliberate ignoring of such principles), *or so unwholesome* (owing to narrowness of streets, crowding of buildings upon the land, or proximity of nuisances such as noxious factories, elevated railways, overshadowing warehouses, railroads, dumps, swamps, foul rivers, or canals) *as to be a menace to the health, safety, morality, or welfare of the occupants.*

Such a definition puts slum clearance definitely under the police powers of the state. It avoids stigmatizing the inhabitants as "squalid" or "vicious" (which is not true of the majority). It avoids the confusion of the slum with the blighted area, and escapes thereby the necessity for demonstrating that there has been a decline in property values or that the area is an economic liability to the community (for though the latter is doubtless true, the case that is made for it involves a questionable use of the statistical method).

The merit of this definition is that it makes immediate action possible and provides alternative bases for such action. (Safety as well as health is a possible basis.) It follows approved British practice (Housing Act of 1930), but goes beyond it in the breadth of power conferred. It is furthermore consistent with the plans and housing practices of the United States Government and state or municipal governments of today.

One can roughly identify the slum districts of New York City by locating the areas of old-law housing — that is, the areas in which dwellings were constructed prior to the year 1901. There are approximately 67,000 old-law tenements in New York City and they contain approximately 500,000 apartments. Even if the average occupancy were only three persons to an apartment and twenty per cent of apartments were vacant, there would still be well over 1,000,000 persons living in these dwellings. Many of the old-law tenements, however, are survivals in districts in which newer construction now predominates. Under such conditions there is an incentive to keep the buildings in good repair, and they are likely to be inhabited by persons whose standards are as high or nearly as high as those who reside in the neighboring new-law tenements. Often, therefore, the district would not be designated a slum, though the scattered old-law tenements within it might in many ways be relatively injurious to the health and well-being of the occupants.

On the other hand, in addition to the old-law tenements of New York City, there are other buildings erected prior to 1901 occupied as rooming houses or as private residences, in which standards of upkeep by the landlord, and standards of maintenance by the tenant, are low. Areas in which such housing prevails would ordinarily also be designated as slum areas. Even new-law housing is not fully exempt, since undesirable neighbors, factories, warehouses, shops, railroads, or deteriorated neighboring houses may discourage proper upkeep and standards of maintenance. Shanty towns and squatter settlements, even though new, are also slums. It is, therefore, safe to assume that from one to two million people in New York City today are dwelling under conditions in one way or another inimical to health, safety, or reasonable standards of domestic life, and that a large majority of these are dwelling in areas that can properly be designated as slums.

One basic objective of every civilized country may be assumed to be continuous improvement in the status of its citizens as expressed in terms of health, safety, and opportunities for self-development and for sharing in civic responsibilities. The slum is an area where this objective is rendered difficult or impossible.

PART I

HISTORY OF HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY AND GENESIS OF MODERN HOUSING PRACTICE



CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY OF HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

CONTEMPORARY conditions grow out of past conditions, and contemporary practices, measures, and policies are likewise determined largely by past experience. For these reasons a study of the history of New York housing is appropriate and revealing.

Few of the current problems of New York City housing are new. Many of the same problems were prevalent in the days of imperial Rome, and were far more serious. Multiple dwelling is not a recent phenomenon. There are abundant evidences of this. Many prehistoric groups lived in congregate abodes of many stories. In some ways their modes of living approximated those in contemporary multiple dwellings. Early in history one finds high density, overcrowding of rooms, and lack of adequate sanitation, all of which are still problems of urban housing.[1]

The problem of social control of housing conditions likewise runs far into the past. Nomad groups solved their housing problems by means of periodic migrations. The simplest and most effective method of slum clearance for them was the abandonment of an area made foul by much living. Housing legislation assumed an elaborate form more than two thousand years before Christ, in the reign of Hammurabi,[2] and in China [3] probably by 1000 B.C.

It would hardly be necessary to pause to consider the tenement-house problem of ancient Rome were it not for the fact that one of the leading authorities of New York housing recently published the statement that "the earliest example of excessive crowding together of high buildings is found in the city of Edinburgh in the form of tenements." It is, nevertheless, true that Rome in the days of the Empire suffered a crowding together of high tenement houses under conditions much more dangerous to health and safety than New York City has ever witnessed. On streets from three to five meters wide (ten to seventeen feet)

1. Henry R. Aldridge, *The National Housing Manual*, Pt. I, p. 49.
2. Chilperic Edwards estimates that Hammurabi reigned from 2123 to 2080 B.C. and that the Code "must have been promulgated in his closing years, or, according to the chronology of Dr. L. W. King, between 2084 and 2081 B.C." Chilperic Edwards, *The Hammurabi Codes and the Sinaitic Legislation*, pp. 1–10; David G. Lyon, "The Structure of the Hammurabi Code," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XXV, 248–265; Robert F. Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi*; and Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, V, 599–607.
3. Aldridge, p. 37.

tenements were built to heights of six or seven stories and, according to some authorities, ten or eleven stories. The population of the city by the time of Cicero was estimated at a half million or more,[1] at the beginning of the Empire was not less than a million, and during the first two centuries was considerably more.[2] As the perimeter of the city was about twelve miles and much space was left open for public squares, public buildings, and parks, buildings of many stories were necessary.

The tenement houses known as "insulae" acquired their name, apparently, from the Code of the Twelve Tables, which decreed that every house must have around it a space two and one-half feet wide, thus giving it the appearance of an island.[3] It is stated that this law was increasingly infringed so far as tenement houses were concerned. Official statistics of a survey made between 312 and 315 A.D. indicate that there were "46,602 lodging houses" [4] and that they were found in all the fourteen regions of the city, though there was greater density near the center of the city.[5] The poor, as usual, lived in the valleys, while the villas of the well-to-do were on the hills.

There were variations in internal and external architecture of the tenement houses, and some were apartment houses for the well-to-do, well arranged and with water and sanitary facilities on each floor,[6] while the poorer tenement houses, as today, had dark staircases and many dark rooms.[7] Shops were usually found on the first floor,[8] and external balconies running along the façade permitted communication between rooms in the more expensive tenements.

The ground area covered by one of the insulae for the poorer classes might be only 200 square meters.[9] Augustus limited their height to 70 Roman feet (about 68 feet), which would allow for seven stories, and Trajan lowered this maximum to 60 Roman feet. These heights were, however, for the façade, and more stories were permitted in the rear as provided for under the modern New York zoning law.[10] Unlike the apartment houses for the well-to-do, the tenement houses of the poor were not built of brick-faced concrete, but largely of clay, plaster, and wood,[11] and were so unsubstantial that collapse was frequent. Seneca wrote that "the noise of a collapsing building often comes to my ears." [12] From time to time earthquakes caused widespread destruction, and houses in the hollows were also undermined by floods of the Tiber.[13]

1. W. Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, pp. 11–12.
2. Ludwig Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, I, 27.
3. Article entitled "Domus" in Smith, Wayte, and Marindin's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, I, 662–666.
4. Friedländer, I, 9.
5. Leon P. Homo, *Problèmes sociaux de jadis et d'à présent*, p. 33.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–36.
7. George La Piana, "Foreign Groups in Rome During the First Centuries of the Empire," *Harvard Theological Review*, October, 1927, pp. 209–210.
8. Homo, p. 35.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
10. "Domus," *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, I, 666.
11. Homo, p. 40.
12. Quoted by Homo, p. 61.
13. Friedländer, I, 23–24; Homo, p. 17.

There was continuous danger of fire and of conflagration, though the city had a fire brigade of 7,000 men.[1] Their fire-fighting apparatus was so primitive and they were so handicapped by the narrowness of the streets and height of houses and by wooden rear buildings that fires frequently got out of control. The tenement houses were lightly built for a quick profit, and from Plutarch's *Life of Crassus* we learn that the unprincipled rent profiteer made his fortune largely by buying up neighboring tenements at calamity prices in times of conflagration.[2] Subletting was practiced, and it is stated that profits were as high as 30 per cent.[3] Yet the tenement rooms would be described today as dark cubicles, unheated in winter, excessively hot in the summer, often imperfectly sheltered from rain, and sometimes with ceilings so low that it would be impossible for an adult to stand upright. Water was not piped to the tenement houses, and had to be brought from public fountains. There were no chimneys and the only outlet for smoke was the door, unless there happened to be windows.[4]

Attempts at beautification through window boxes were stopped by law because of the danger of pots falling on the heads of passers-by on the narrow streets below the overhanging balconies and protruding upper stories.[5] "How often cracked and chipped earthenware falls from the windows! with what a weight they dent and damage the flint-pavement where they strike it! . . ." [6] Evictions and confiscations of furniture were described also by Martial [7] in a vivid passage which would indicate that the low standards of tenants played their part in those days, as today, in producing the squalor and unwholesomeness of tenement districts.

Thus Rome, in the days of her greatest civilization and power, preeminent in administration, literature, and law, boasting engineering feats that exceeded the aqueducts of Assyria and sewerage systems not to be paralleled for centuries to come, suffered from absence of street planning and from a tenement problem which, in some aspects, has never since been equalled.

In the Renaissance period many European cities housed their poor in many-storied buildings with upper stories jutting over streets so narrow that vehicles could not pass. Wood was widely used in the construction of upper stories, water was not piped to the homes of the poor, and sanitary facilities were out-of-doors and primitive in type, so that, in many ways, the housing conditions of imperial Rome were reproduced. Apparently, however, the number of stories did not reach the Roman maximum, nor were rooms constructed with such low ceilings. Streets were filthy and the conflagration risk was great. High mortality

1. Homo, p. 16; Friedländer, I, 22.
2. Fowler, p. 31.
3. Friedländer, I, 18.
4. Homo, p. 40; Friedländer, I, 144–145.
5. Sir A. Geikie, *The Love of Nature Among the Romans*, p. 130.
6. Juvenal, Satire III.
7. Martial, XII, 32.

rates from plagues frequently reduced the tenement population. At no time, however, have all the extreme conditions of the tenement housing of ancient Rome reappeared in subsequent history.[1]

The earliest mode of living for white settlers in America was of the congregate type. During the colonization period it was necessary that the colonists live in barracks during their first months in this country, either for protection from the Indians, or to give them the necessary time to work out plans of settlement for their homes.

The second stage for many settlers was a type now proscribed, namely, cellar dwellings. Thus, Secretary van Tienhoven, on March 4, 1650, submitted the following "Information relative to taking up land in New Netherland, in the form of Colonies or private bouweries. . . ."

> Those in New Netherland and especially in New England, who have no means to build farm-houses at first according to their wishes, dig a square pit in the ground, cellar fashion, six or seven feet deep, as long and as broad as they think proper, case the earth inside all round the wall with timber, which they line with the bark of trees or something else to prevent the caving in of the earth; floor this cellar with plank and wainscot it overhead for a ceiling, raise a roof of spars with bark or green sods, so that they can live dry and warm in these houses with their entire families for two, three and four years, it being understood that partitions are run through those cellars which are adapted to the size of the family. . . .
>
> After the houses are built in the above described manner, or otherwise according to each person's means and fancy, gardens are made and planted in season. . . .[2]

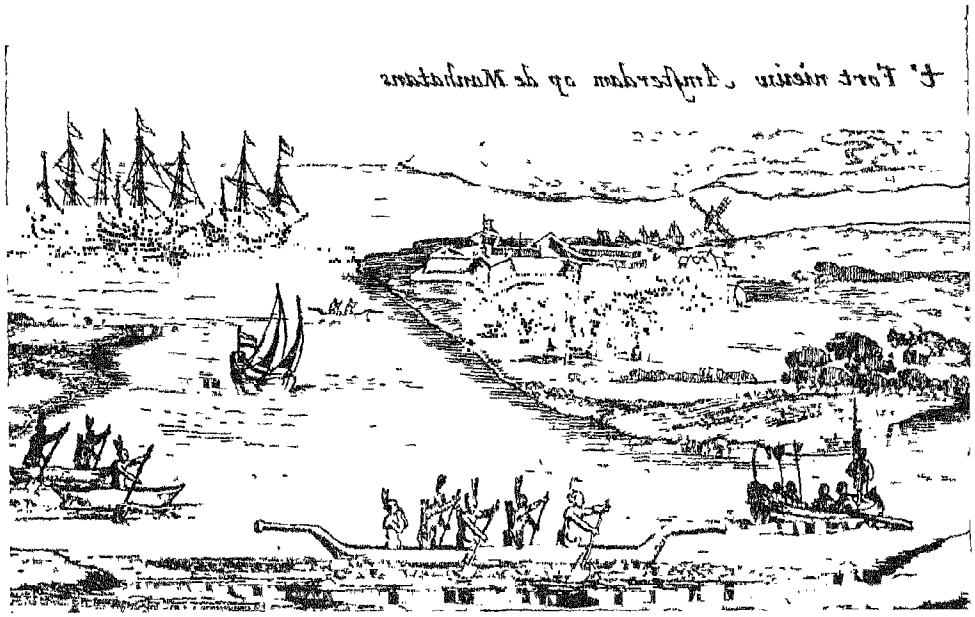
Although the Dutch East India Company had been established in 1602 and its representative, Henry Hudson, had entered New York Bay and explored the Hudson River in 1609, and various traders thereafter had probably built huts in New Netherland on territory of what is now New York City, there was probably no permanent settlement on Manhattan Island until 1624 to 1626.[3]

The Dutch West India Company had been chartered in 1621 and the first colony sent out by the new Company left Holland in March 1624, under the command of Cornelis May, first director-general, but, though a few of the colonists may have remained on Manhattan Island, most of them went to the site of Albany and to the South (Delaware) River. Two further expeditions were sent out in 1625, one in January, with Willem Verhulst, second director-general, and the other in April, commanded by Gerrit Fongersz and including Cryn Fredericksz, the engineer and surveyor who laid out the fort and settlement on Manhattan Island. Peter Minuit, who apparently came out with Verhulst in 1625

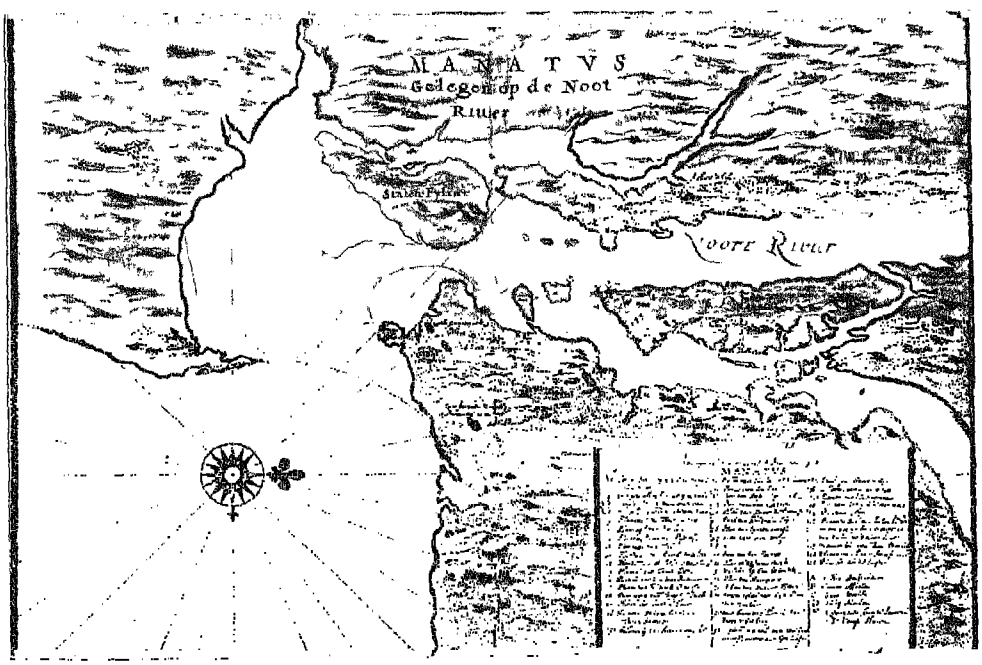
1. For general accounts of the history of housing see Albert F. Bemis, *The Evolution of the House*, vol. I, and Aldridge, Pt. I.

2. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, I, 365, 368.

3. I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, IV, 26, 63–64; V, pp. x–xx.



a. The Hartgers View, c 1626–1628 The first view of New York Reversed to show true topography This and Fig 3a give some idea of the earliest types of dwellings Reproduced from I N Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, Vol I, Pl 1-a



b. The Manatus Map, 1639 The first map of Greater New York. *Iconography*, Vol II, C. Pls 41, 42.

but returned to Holland, again reached New Netherland on May 4, 1626, and at that time he "was placed in command by the Council, on account of the bad conduct of Verhulst." [1] The English translation of a letter by Pieter Jansen Schaghen to the States General of the Netherlands on November 5, 1626, reports:

High Mighty Sirs: Here arrived yesterday the ship The Arms of Amsterdam which sailed from New Netherland out of the Mauritius [Hudson] River on September 23; they report that our people there are of good courage, and live peaceably . . . they have bought the island Manhattes from the wild men for the value of sixty guilders [$24]. . . .[2]

Provision was made for the layout of the settlement, including the street system and placement and construction of houses, in the detailed instructions dated April 22, 1625, issued for the

. . . Engineer and Surveyor, Cryn Fredericxsz, and for the Commissary and Councilors, according to which they are to regulate themselves in regard to the fortification and the building of houses. . . .

With regard to the dwellings of the farmers, we deem it advisable that ten houses be taken in hand first, according to plan A, to wit, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, all in accordance with the specifications of model D, and that for each house, including the courtyard and garden, back to the surrounding ditch, there be allowed 200 feet, and also 200 feet frontage on the esplanade of the castle, in all 200 feet square. The first five of these houses shall be drawn for by the five head-farmers, and the remaining houses may be used by the foremen of the commissary, the comforter of the sick, Cryeckenbeeck and Fongers. . . .

Between lands No. 1 and No. 2 there shall run a common thoroughfare, No. 14, 25 feet wide, exclusive of the ditches, each of which shall be 9 feet wide. This thoroughfare shall be ranging with the fifth bastion of the fort, so as to be protected thereby.

Between lands Nos. 3 and 4, between 5 and 6, as well as between Nos. 8 and 9 and between 10 and 11, there shall also be roads 12 feet wide, exclusive of the ditches, which shall be 6 feet wide. . . .

Thereafter, the buildings on streets No. 4 and No. 5 and on the market and thereabout shall be in hand, and first of all those on streets No. 4 and No. 5, to wit, all the houses adjoining one another, each 25 feet square according to the aforesaid model D, so that the water from the roof shall fall into the street and into the back-yard, but wooden gutters may be hung under it to prevent the drip. As to the roof-covering, care shall be taken to find out what is the most serviceable material. If no thatch, straw, or anything else can be found, wooden shingles will have to be taken at first. The second story of all the adjoining houses, 9 feet high and 25 feet square, shall throughout be reserved for the use of the Company, to store therein at first all the provisions belonging to the Company, as well as all the trading-goods and furs and whatever else belongs to the Company, and after other suitable places therefor shall have been found, they shall be used as grain-lofts which applies to all the houses in the entire fort, but the garrets above the second story shall be for the use of the respective houses. . . .

1. *Ibid.*, VI, 6–13. 2. *Ibid.*, IV, 67.

Nos. 31 are 20 lots, 20 feet in width and extending in depth 40 feet, to the ramparts, where single persons, such as sailors and others, may be lodged. By dividing the building into spaces of 10 feet each and letting two persons stay in each compartment, 80 persons may be lodged there. . . .

All farmhouses outside the fort shall likewise be made of one size, according to model E and the description thereof

The kitchens in the fort are planned to be 10 feet [deep], which we intend to apply to all lots which are 35 feet deep, but in connection with lots that are 40 or 50 feet deep, while the general construction of the houses must be the same as that of all other houses, the kitchens need not be precisely confined to 10 feet, just as the thickness of the beams need also not be taken so exactly.[1]

These highly specific instructions had been prepared in Holland and assumed a large tract of land. A much smaller site was used for the fort by Fredericksz. The extent of his planning of the territory outside of the fort is not known. Mr. Stokes, however, states that he probably laid out the old burying ground and the old Company's bouwerie, and that he possibly began the erection of the Company's five houses or at least surveyed the site, and Dr. F. C. Wieder, in his *De Stichting Van New York in Juli 1625*, attempts to prove that he plotted the whole settlement much as it appears on the Castello Plan of 1660 (See Figure 2).[2] The farms that he laid out followed the prescribed dimensions in respect to width but not to depth, and instead of twelve, one after the other, six were laid out on either side of a center road; they were located beyond the Fresh Water, or north of the present Canal Street. The virtual abandonment of New York's first city plan resulted in a much less formal development of lower Manhattan than had been originally contemplated. The first two roads were the present Broadway, which was called Heere Straet, and the other from the fort, following the East River. Houses were at first built near the fort and then along the East River. Home builders settled on land which was at first granted by permission of the Company, and later on leases which customarily ran for six years, frequently with a clause giving right of permanent tenure and ownership in case the land should not be needed by the Company at the expiration of the lease. The first informal land grant was made to Roelof Jansen in 1636 for what was subsequently known as "Anneke Jans' Farm."[3] The earliest ground brief recorded was one on July 20, 1638, to Andries Hudde for a tract of land in Harlem.[4] The first grants for lots within the wall, as distinguished from farms, were made in 1642.[5]

It is clear from the letter of the Rev. Jonas Michaelius on August 11, 1628, to

1 *Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624–1626*, pp 132–168
2 Stokes, VI, 12–13.
3 *Ibid*., I, 18
4 *Ibid*., II, 356.
5. *Ibid*., p. 235.

D. Joannes Forecst at Hoorn that there were difficulties with management and labor and that food was "scanty and poor."

They are meanwhile beginning to build new houses in place of the hovels and holes in which heretofore they huddled rather than dwelt. . . . And for building purposes there is a greater lack of laborers than of materials. . . . Thus we lead a hard and sober existence like poor people. . . . Some Directors and Heads, by bad management, have rather kept back than helped the people and the country, and many among the common people would have liked to make a living and even to get rich, in idleness rather than by hard work, saying they had not come to work; that as far as working is concerned they might as well have staid at home, and that it was all one whether they did much or little, if only in the service of the Company. Such expressions were the burden of the song one heard all day long. And this sort of people are all, in course of time, reshipped home as useless ballast. . . .[1]

It was not until 1638, when the "free people" petitioned for title deeds, that streets were laid out and the land sold or leased in small parcels.[2] The houses erected followed rather closely the traditional Dutch style of the period.[3] Examples of early building contracts make this clear. On July 18, 1641,

Isaac de Forecst registers at the office of the provincial secretary a contract made between him and two English carpenters, John Hubbesen [Hubbardson or Hubertson] and John Meris [Morris or Maurice], for building for him "a dwelling house thirty feet long and 18 feet wide with 2 transom windows and 2 round windows 4 girders with brackets and 2 free girders, one partition, one passage way tight inside and outside, and the entire house tight all round, to construct in the said house a pantry and three doors. Together with a tobacco house 60 feet long with the inside work: 1 small kitchen 20 feet long and 16 feet wide covered with clapboards, also an English chimney. Likewise to cover the dwelling house in such a manner as to be secure against water and snow." The carpenters are to be paid 300 Carolus guilders for the job, finished to De Foreest's satisfaction. The location is not known, but it may have been on a plantation somewhere up Manhattan Island.[4]

The words "transom window" are O'Callaghan's usual translation of *cruys cosyn*, meaning literally cross-casing, the typical Dutch window of that period; and "round windows" stands for *bol cosynen*, meaning windows having two swinging sashes below and one stationary sash above. The word *bol* in this connection is of uncertain derivation and does not mean round, or convex, as usual.[5]

On December 6, 1642,

Jeuriaen Hendricksen from Osenbrugge [Osnabrück] acknowledges that he has agreed, as he hereby does [agree], to build for the Hon. Willem Kieft, director-general of New Netherland [several words destroyed here in the original] a house at Otterspoor, as follows: the house [to be] one hundred feet long [This evidently refers to the entire building, including the so-called *voorhuys*, or dwelling part, as well as the barn or stable, in the rear, which is called

1. Diegman Versteeg, *Manhatten in 1628*, pp. 62-65, 68-71.
2. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, *History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 185-186.
3. Bemis, vol. I; Aldridge, Pt. I.
4. Stokes, IV, 94.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 951.

the "scheur." Strictly speaking, the *voorhuys* included the entire fore part of the house, which was used for dwelling purposes, the rear part being used as a thrashing floor, cattle barn, wagon shed, etc. It does not seem to be generally realized that most of the early houses in New Netherland were of the Dutch farmhouse type, with the dwelling and stable under one roof. In many cases the chamber was partitioned off from the *voorhuys*. In this case, the chamber may have been in a corner of the rear part of the building, or in the attic.]: the barn fifty feet wide, [namely] twenty-four feet in breadth between the posts, with two aisles extending throughout [meaning the rows of bays and stalls outside the posts], one nine and the other ten feet in width. A dwelling house [*voorhuys*] in front, fifty feet long and twenty-four feet wide, with a partition in the middle and a double chimney, which shall all be of brick, and in which he, Jeuriaen Hendricksen, shall make and lay the cellar and garret beams with the boards needed thereto; together with the window and door casings, and further all that shall be necessary for the aforesaid building.[1]

On October 2, 1648,

Jeuriaen Hendr[ick]sen agrees [to build] for Jan Damen a house 60 feet long, with on both sides a passage way throughout; width, twenty-four feet beam; in front 11 feet high and in the rear 12 feet high, the floor being raised one foot in the rear and two feet in front. The front room 24 feet square, with a cellar underneath it. To lay and groove the attic floor; to wainscot the front room on all sides; 2 bedsteads, one in the front room and one in the chamber; a winding staircase, so that one can go from the cellar to the attic; the front gable to be perpendicular, the rear gable sloping; a window with mullion and transom in the front room; also a mantlepiece. Jeuriaen Hendricksz must provide the roof frame of the house with split rafters and nail the laths. On each beam a loft bent.[2]

Mr. Stokes further says:

This contract was for building Damen's so-called "great house," whose modern site would be in the bed of Cedar St., immediately east of Broadway. This is one of the most detailed building contracts for a private individual which has been handed down from that period in New Amsterdam.[3]

Originally the houses were largely of wood, but by the time of the British occupation in 1664 brick houses with tiled roofs prevailed. Many houses, following the Dutch tradition, had the gable end to the street,[4] with shops on the first floor, reached by the typical Dutch stoop, and front shutters that let down so that by day they might be used for the display of goods; within would be found large fireplaces of stone, tile-bordered, beds built into the walls, and circular staircases to the second story.[5]

In the last decade of the Dutch control a palisade was built from the Hudson to the East River, where Wall Street is now situated. At first the only opening in

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 952.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
3. *Ibid.*
4. See Figure 3b, p. 35.
5. Bemis, I, 283–285; Van Rensselaer, I, 455–456, 459; Stokes, IV, 129–130.

this barricade was the "Water-Gate," at the East River, now Pearl Street; later another entrance, the so-called "Land-Gate," was made at the Heere Straet (Broadway).[1]

It was not until 1653 that New Amsterdam became a city, with a municipal government consisting of a schout, two burgomasters, and five schepens. At first the provincial fiscal acted as schout or prosecutor, but in 1660 the two offices were separated, and the city was granted its own prosecutor.[2] Although there had been several previous surveys — in 1656, 1657, and 1658 — the earliest map that has come down to us is the Castello Plan (see Figure 2), drawn in 1660, probably by Jacques Cortelyou, which shows about 300 houses. The Directors at Amsterdam, criticizing this plan on December 24, 1660, said:

> we noticed, that according to our opinion too great spaces are as yet without buildings, as for instance between *Smee Street* and *Princes Gracht* or between *Prince Street* and *Tuyn Street*, also between *Heeren Street* and *Bevers Gracht*, where the houses apparently are surrounded by excessively large lots and gardens; perhaps with the intention of cutting streets through them when the population increases, although if standing closer together, a defense might be easier.[3]

When the first white colonists arrived there were, within the three hundred and eight square miles included in the boundaries of what is now New York City, not less than ninety-four Indian stations, settlements, and villages. These sites were almost all on the shores of the adjacent waters, indicating, as does also a study of the habits and customs of these Indians, that they were chiefly fishermen.[4]

The population of the colony was becoming cosmopolitan at least two decades before the termination of Dutch control. Most of the colonists in the "Nieu Nederlandt" expedition of 1624 were Walloons,[5] and Michaelius mentions "Walloons and French" in his letter of August 11, 1628.[6] In 1641 "a considerable number of respectable Englishmen with their Clergyman" applied for permission to settle and reside in New Netherland, and on June 6 of that year Director-general Kieft and his council drew up articles for granting them certain freedoms and privileges.[7] Father Isaac Jogues, a Jesuit missionary, who visited New Amsterdam in 1643, said, "On the island of Manhate, and in its environs, there may well be four or five hundred men of different sects and nations: the Director General told me that there were men of eighteen different languages; . . ." [8] In 1654 the first Jews, who had been exiled from Brazil by the Portuguese, arrived on Manhattan, twenty-three persons in all.[9] At first they were not permitted to

1. Stokes, I, 84.
2. *Ibid.*, IV, 131–137.
3. *Ibid.*, II, 229 *et seq.*
4. R. P. Bolton, *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*, pp. 130–156.
5. Stokes, IV, 55.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 152.



Redraft of the Castello Plan of 1660, by Jacques Cortelyou. Earliest plan of New York. *Iconography*, Vol. II, Frontispiece.

hold real estate and it was suggested by the Company that they live close to one another. They were also obliged to support their own poor, and were relieved of service in the burgher guard by payment of a commutation tax. They were permitted to worship "in all quietness" in their own homes, and in 1656 were granted land for a Jewish burial ground outside of the city, near what is now Chatham Square. A Jewish quarter, however, was not established. They were permitted to purchase the small burgher right in 1657 and discriminations against them apparently disappeared.

There were Negroes in New Amsterdam almost from the very beginning of the settlement. Rev. Jonas Michaelius, in his letter of August 11, 1628, says "the Angola slave women are thievish, lazy, and useless trash," [1] and Jacob Stoffelsen made a deposition on March 22, 1639, in which he stated that during the administration of Van Twiller (1633–1638) he was employed as overseer of the Company's Negroes "in building Fort Amsterdam, which was completed in the year 1635." [2] Between 1643 and 1647 a number of emancipated Negroes were given patents for land west of the Bowery and between Canal Street and Astor Place.[3]

In 1655 the inhabitants of New Netherland began to import Negroes direct from Africa. The colonists at Manhattan had petitioned for this privilege in 1652; it was finally granted by the Directors at Amsterdam in 1654, and the first such cargo of Negro slaves arrived at New Amsterdam in the summer of 1655.[4] Three hundred Negroes were imported by the Company in 1664. Except for those in the employ of the Company, virtually all were in domestic service.[5]

There were also some Italians in New York at this time. The number is not known, but the following account published under the auspices of the Italian Historical Society gives a few specific references.

> One of the first Italian names recorded in New York is that of one Catelina Trico who in 1684, when she was about eighty years old "declared that she came to the province either in the year 1623 or 1624 to the best of her remembrance and that four women were married at sea and that they and their husbands stayed about three weeks at this place (New Amsterdam) and then they with eight seamen more went in a vessel by order of the Dutch Governor to Delaware River and there settled." One Matthys Capito was a clerk in the Book-keeper's office in 1655 and 1657. Other Italian names in New Amsterdam are those of Jews — Salvatore D'Andradi, Abraham de Lucina, David Frera, Joseph Dacosta. They were the forerunners of other Italian Jews in the New World, like Sabato Morais and Montefiore.[6]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 89.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 158.
5. "The Negro quarter of the slaves of the West India Company is laid down on the Manatus Maps of 1639. Its location, apparently, was on the East River shore, just north of the Saw Kill, at about the present 29th St. No mention has been found of this Negro quarter [illegible] works of the period." Stokes, IV,
6. Giovanni Schiavo, *The Italians in America before the Civil War*, p. 293. Regarding Catelina Trico, see also Stokes, IV, 62–64; V, xi–xii, xv.

The village of New Harlem was incorporated in 1660; it comprised the region north of the present 74th Street at the East River and ran to what is now 129th Street and the North River. It boasted twenty-three families in 1661; the thirty-two men registered in the first enumeration comprised only seven from the Netherlands, four Walloons, eleven French, three Germans, four Danes, and three Swedes.[1]

After more than thirty years of settlement (1656) New Amsterdam comprised one hundred and twenty houses and the population numbered 1,000.[2] Even prior to this time, social control of housing had become necessary. In 1647, surveyors had been appointed to superintend houses and fences; owners of land were required to build thereon within a period of nine months of residence in New Amsterdam or forfeit their land — a significant recognition of the primacy of the community's interest in land.

As we have seen and remarked the disorderly manner, hitherto and now daily practised in building and erecting houses, in extending lots far beyond their boundaries, in placing pig pens and privies on the public roads and streets, in neglecting the cultivation of granted lots, the Director General Petrus Stuyvesant and Council have deemed it advisable to decide upon the appointment of three Surveyors, to wit: the Honble Lubbert van Dincklagen, the Equipage Master Poulus Leendersen and Secretary Cornelis van Tienhoven, whom we hereby authorize and empower, to condemn all improper and disorderly buildings, fences, palisades, post, rails etc. and to prevent their erection in the future. We therefore command and warn all and everybody of our subjects, who henceforth intend to build or put palisades around their gardens or lots in or near the City of New Amsterdam, that nobody shall dare do or undertake it without previous knowledge, consent of and inspection by the above named appointed Surveyors, under a penalty of 25 Carolusguilders and destruction of what may have been built or set up. Likewise we warn all and everybody, who may heretofore have been granted lots, that they must erect on their lots good and convenient houses within 9 months, according to order, or in default thereof such unimproved lots shall fall back to the Patroon or Landlord, to be given by him to such, as he pleases.[3]

The removal of wooden and plaster chimneys was enforced by an appointed inspector of chimneys. January 23, 1648:

It has been noticed and seen by the Director General of New Netherland, Curaçao and the Islands and by the Honble Council, that some careless people neglect, to have their chimneys properly swept and that they do not take care of their fires, whereby lately fires broke out in two houses and further troubles may be expected in the future, the more so, as most of the houses here in New Amsterdam are built of wood and roofed with reeds, also as in some house the chimneys are of wood, which is very dangerous. Therefore the Honble General and Council have deemed it advisable and very necessary, to consider this matter and they command and

1. E. B. O'Callaghan, *Register of New Netherlands*, p. xix; C. H. Pierce, *New Harlem*, pp. 25, 30; H. B. Woolston, *A Study of the Population of Manhattanville*, p. 17.

2. Stokes, IV, 163.

3. *The Records of New Amsterdam*, I, 4.

forbid, that henceforth no wooden or merely plastered chimneys shall be put into any house between the Fort and the Fresh Water; the chimneys, already in use, may remain until further orders and at the discretion of the firemasters. That the foregoing may be well observed, there are appointed for this purpose as firemasters: from the Honble Council Commissary Adrian Keyser, from the community Tomas Hall, Marten Krigier and George Wolsey, to visit, whenever they please, the chimneys in all houses between this Fort and the Fresh Water, wherever in the City they may stand and to ascertain, whether they are kept clean by sweeping and if they find them neglected and foul, they shall immediately, without contradiction, levy and collect a fine of three guilders for each chimney so found foul and condemned, this fine to be applied to the purchase of fireladders, hooks and buckets, which are to be procured at the first convenient opportunity. And if anybody's house is burned either by negligence or his own fire, he shall pay a fine of 25 fl., to be applied as above.[1]

In the same year, regulations with regard to hogs, the public scavengers of the period, were brought into effect, and ran with little change throughout two centuries. In the year 1648, it was required that hogs and goats south of Fresh Water (at Reade Street) be kept within fences, whereas those north of Fresh Water must be placed in charge of a keeper for the purpose, for which a small tax was imposed.

Whereas the Honble Director General and Council of New Netherland daily see, that the goats and hogs here are doing great damage in orchards, gardens and other places around Fort Amsterdam, which not only prevents the cultivation of fine orchards and the improvement of lots, but is also an injury to many private parties, —

Therefore wishing to remedy it, the Director General and Council order, that henceforth no hogs or goats shall be pastured or kept between Fort New Amsterdam and its vicinity and the Fresh Water, unless within the fences of the owners, so made, that the goats cannot jump over and damage any one. Also the goats beyond the Fresh Water shall not be pastured without a herder or keeper, under the penalty, if the goats are found outside the fences on this side of the Fresh Water or without a keeper beyond it, of their being impounded by the Fiscal and declared a prize by the Director General and Council. Let everybody hereby be warned and guard against loss.[2]

In the same year (1648), stores and shops were managed and owned only by those who swore to remain for at least a period of four years. Shippers and traders also had to promise to remain in active business for four years, and to erect "burgherlike" buildings.[3] Strict regulations for tavern keepers were enforced because it was reported that one-quarter of the city was composed of brandy, tobacco, and beer houses. There were regulations in 1651 to prevent "usurious profits," to establish fixed price grades for bread and wine, and to require the baking of rye bread as well as white, for the accommodation of the poor.[4]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
3. *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638–1674*, pp. 86–92.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 119–122.

The provisions for social control of housing through legislative means developed under burgher government through the period between 1653 and 1664. In 1655 there were reenactments by the citizens of the earlier council orders for the appointment of fire-masters to inspect all houses and chimneys and the prohibition of the erection of buildings without the approval of the surveyors.

February 26, 1656:

Whereas the Burgomasters of this City of Amsterdam in New Netherland find, that many people within the City pay little attention to their fireplaces and chimneysweeping, which has already caused fires several times and will create further difficulties from conflagrations, especially as most of the houses are built of wood, some are roofed with reeds, have wooden and plastered chimneys, which is very dangerous, and which we must prevent as much as possible, —

Therefore with the approval of the Honble Director General and Council we have appointed as firemasters Hendrick Hendricksen Kip, Gouert Loockermans, and Christian Barens, who are hereby authorized, pursuant to the orders of the Director General and Council heretofore published, to inspect, whenever they please, all houses and chimneys in the jurisdiction of this City and there to do for the prevention of fires what is necessary and to collect such fines, as are prescribed by the said published orders and the custom of our Fatherland.[1]

September 25, 1656:

Whereas it has been found, that in this City of Amsterdam in New Netherland many houses, corners, fences, gates, and other structures are made and erected without the knowledge and approbation of the Surveyors, whereby a great deal of bad building has been done not only to the disadvantage of the public but also to the disreputation of the City, —

Therefore to prevent it the Burgomasters and Schepens of this City, in pursuance of former orders, ordain, that nobody shall erect houses, corners, fences, gates, or such like, before first having called the Surveyors to the place and received their survey and approbation, under the penalty formerly fixed.[2]

There were provisions also in regard to the differentiation of the "great and small burgher rights." [3]

A new type of sanitary legislation appeared in 1657, prohibiting the throwing of rubbish and filth into the streets or canal, and requiring the householders to keep the streets clean and orderly.

It has been found, that within this City of Amsterdam in N. N. many burghers and inhabitants throw their rubbish, filth, ashes, dead animals and such like things into the public streets to the great inconvenience of the community and dangers arising from it. Therefore the Burgomasters and Schepens ordain and direct, that henceforth no one shall be

1. *The Records of New Amsterdam*, I, 21–22.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638–1674*, pp. 301–303.

allowed to throw into the streets or into the graft [a canal, running in the middle of the present Broad Street] any rubbish, filth, ashes, oyster-shells, dead animal or anything like it, but they shall bring all such things to them most convenient of the following places, to wit the Strand, near the City hall, near the gallows, near Hendrick the baker, near Daniel Litsco, where tokens to that effect shall be displayed, but not on the public streets under a penalty of 3 fl. for the first offence, 6 fl. for the second and arbitrary punishment for the third. Furthermore everybody is ordered, to keep the streets clean before his house or lot under the preceding penalties and that this be done, we herewith charge and command our Officer to execute this order after publication and to proceed against all transgressors, as in duty he is bound.[1]

Building also was prohibited within range of cannon shot of the city wall.[2]

In the same year more provisions for the prevention of fires were initiated and all thatched roofs and faulty chimneys had to be removed within four months of notice or else a tax would be levied. The purchase of fire buckets was required.

December 15, 1657:

The Director General and Council of New Netherland to All, who shall see these presents or hear them read, Greeting!

Know ye, that to prevent the misfortune of conflagrations, the roofs of reeds, the wooden and plastered chimneys have long ago been condemned and Fire masters as well as Surveyors have been appointed for that purpose. The Director General and Council have several times published and renewed the pertinent orders, but nevertheless these orders are obstinately and carelessly neglected by many of the inhabitants, either because the fines and penalties are either too small and lenient or because they are not levied and executed. This negligence has now and then caused various mishaps and troubles by fires and it is even to be feared, that it may lead to the ruin of this City, considering that the houses are being built closer together. To prevent this the said Director General and Council have decided it to be necessary, not only to renew their former ordinances, but also to amplify the same and to increase the fines as well as to have them promptly collected. They now order, that all roofs, covered with reeds, all wooden chimneys, all hay ricks, shall be taken down and removed within the next four months after the publication hereof under the penalty of 25 fl., which are to be promptly collected for every house large or small, every hay stack or wooden chimney, found in this City after the expiration of four months, including herein also chickenhouses and hogpens; of the fine one third to go to the Officer, who is to collect it, two thirds into the City treasury. If in the meantime a fire breaks out in any chimney or house, the respective owner is to pay a double fire fine, to wit 100 fl., to be used according to former ordinances. Furthermore, as it is usual in every well regulated town, that fire buckets, ladders and hooks are kept at the corners of the city or streets and in public houses, easily reached in time of need, which is here more necessary, than anywhere else, because for want of stones many wooden houses in this City are built one adjoining the other, therefore the Director General and Council hereby authorize and order the Burgomasters of the City, that they or their Treasurer shall promptly levy for each house, large or small, a tax of one beaver or 8 fl. in wampum, according to the

1. *The Records of New Amsterdam*, I, 31. 2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

rating of the office, and with this revenue order from the Fatherland by the first opportunity 100 or 150 leathern fire buckets and to have some fireladders and hooks made with the surplus, also to levy a yearly tax of one guilder for every chimney for keeping these in good condition.[1]

It is well to note that these provisions for the forced improvement of housing were very drastic. The present laws do not give such explicit powers for the removal of dangerous roofs or chimneys at the owners' expense.

Another striking item in the social legislation of 1658 provided for the taxation of vacant lots, because of the many large lots which for so many years had remained unimproved. It was noted that those lands which were vacant were detrimental in that, as population increased, they caused a crowding of the population in small areas, thus retarding the "advance of trade and injuring the advance of the city." It was stated that there were hundreds of such lots within the city walls. The new legislation also provided for lists of such lots and put them up to be appraised and taxed — a yearly tax of "the 15th penny." Owners were given the privilege of specifying the value of the lot, and in the "case of opposition and refusal to pay," the officials "are to reprove the refractory person and tax his lot according to the value and circumstances, under the condition, that the owner shall have the choice of keeping the lot, taxed by the Burgomasters, if he will pay as aforesaid the 15th penny, or of surrendering it to them for the behoof of the City at the price, put on it by the Burgomasters," and with no opposition on the owner's part, to sell the property to anyone who promised to build upon it. The building of houses under the city walls or near the city gates was prohibited until all of the above-mentioned lots had been properly improved.[2]

The significant factors in this legislation were (1) the recognition of the vital importance of the land in its relation to public benefit; (2) the system of condemnation and forced purchase; (3) the promotion of orderly growth by means of restrictions on buildings and undeveloped lots; and (4) the prohibition of the construction of dwelling houses where it was socially disadvantageous to have them built.

The remaining housing legislation of 1658 was a miscellany of orders for the carrying out of the legislation previously conceived. On April 18 of that year two months were given for the removal of straw roofs,[3] and on August 12 a special officer was appointed to warn house-owners on the removal of thatched roofs and plastered chimneys, which clearly indicated the slowness with which the original orders were executed.[4]

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.
3. *Ibid.*, VII, 184.
4. *Ibid.*, II, 419.

Further regulations were issued in regard to the disposal of filth, the removal of privies on land laid out for street use, and the keeping of hogs. As these were characteristic of the legislation of that period, they are quoted here:

May 2, 1658:

Burgomasters resolve, to renew the Placard regarding the disposal of filth, and further to add thereto, the removal of the privies on the street having their outlet level with the ground, and that within eight days under a penalty of fl. 6 for the first time; double the sum for the second time. Further, to propose to the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens at the next Court day, that no Burgher shall keep any hogs within this City.[1]

August 19, 1658:

Whereas many, even the greatest part of the burghers and inhabitants of this City build their privies even with the ground with an opening towards the street, so that hogs may consume the filth and wallow in it, which not only creates a great stench and therefore great inconvenience to the passers-by, but also makes the streets foul and unfit for use, — therefore to obviate it the Burgomasters and Schepens herewith order and command, that all and everybody, whoever they or he may be, shall break down and remove such privies coming out upon the street within 8 days after the publication hereof, rebuilding them in such places, that they give the least offense to the community under the penalty of 6 fl. for the first time, double as much the second and arbitrary correction the third time.

Furthermore as the roads and streets of this City are by the constant rooting of the hogs made unfit for driving over in wagons and carts, the Burgomasters and Schepens direct and order, that every owner of hogs in or about the City shall put a ring through the noses of their hogs, to prevent them from rooting, within 8 days under a penalty of 2 fl. for each time, that this ordinance is not obeyed and that it may properly be carried out, we charge and direct hereby our Officer to see to it and proceed against the transgressors after the publication hereof.[2]

Apparently the first recorded attempt at providing what we now call "use zoning" was in 1664 and was unsuccessful. On July 8, 1664,

Willem Abrahamzen van der Borden and Daniel Verveelen appearing represent, that a tannery is established between their houses and lots and as they fear their water shall be thereby spoiled and they shall also have to endure great stench from the tanning of skins, they request, that such be forbidden, especially the digging of a pit, in which the skins are soaked and washed. Burgomasters and Schepens decree as others have been allowed to make a tannery behind their house and lot, such cannot be forbidden.[3]

The matter of greatest interest here is that the undesirability of having certain industries close to houses was recognized early. Yet after nearly three centuries of complaint and sporadic activity, New York City is still plagued with these same problems, as for example on First Avenue in the midtown district.

1. *Ibid.*, VII, 187. 2. *Ibid.*, I, 38–39. 3 *Ibid.*, V, 87.

In 1664 Stuyvesant was forced to surrender New Amsterdam and New Netherland to the English. The small, new-world city now became New York and the Dutch West India Company ceased to own or control the settlement. The Dutch form of municipal government by schout, burgomasters, and schepens gave way, in 1665, to the English form of mayor, aldermen, and sheriff. Except for a brief interval when Holland reoccupied this territory, between August 1673 and the Treaty of Westminster in November 1674, the English rule was continuous up to the time of the Revolutionary War. The Dutch colonists in the local population continued to outnumber the English until the close of the century.

In the decade beginning in 1670 one finds reiteration of many earlier orders, with few changes. Thus an order on December 5, 1671, that filth was not to be thrown in front of houses on penalty of fine, read as follows:

Uppon the Complaint Made to the Court by Severall of ye Inhabitants Concerning ye Abuse Committed by Some Persons, in Casting of ye filth before their houses, Itt is Ordered that John Sharp shall uppon sight hereof, make Knowne to the Sheriff, the Names of persons wch Carried the dirt from his house, or that otherwise the Court shall Looke uppon the S^d^ Sharp himselfe, to be guilty of ye same.[1]

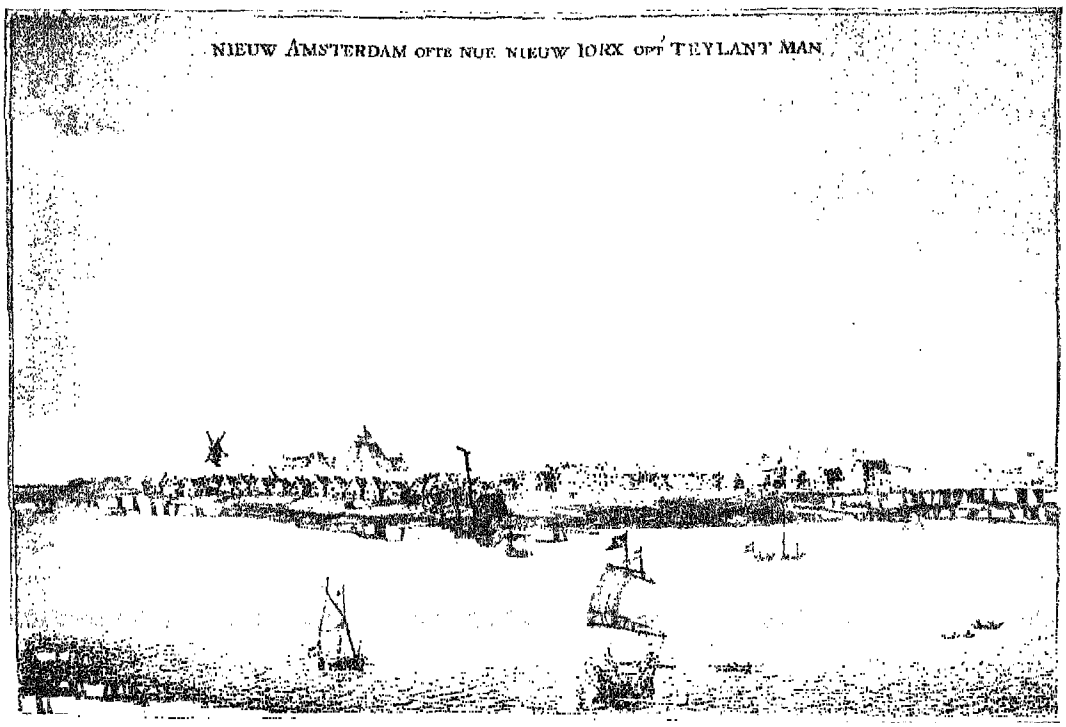
In April 1674, during the brief period of Dutch reoccupation, the laws of New Netherland forbade under penalty the running of hogs in streets and the pasturing of horses and cows without a keeper within the walls of the city.

Whereas daily experience hath shown that notwithstanding previously published Ordinances and Edicts, serious damage is done to the fortifications of this city by Cattle and particularly by Hogs which run and are kept in herds along the public streets, and also cause great stench and filth within this City, which being infected therewith serious sickness is engendered [illegible] to prevent and obviate which as much as possible, I have therefore thought it [illegible] and forbid, three days after the publication hereof, the running of any Hogs, be they big or little, within this city along the public streets, but they shall run and be confined in inclosed and fenced places; also the allowing of Horses or Cows to feed within the walls of this city; or to go along the public streets without a person to drive them to and from pasture, under the penalty of the forfeiture of the Hogs which will be found after said time within this City's walls along the public streets; and in case any Horse or Cow shall be found along the public streets without a keeper, the owner thereof shall, for each time his cattle are taken up, be fined in a penalty of Twenty-five guilders, Wampum value, which fine, if not forthcoming and paid within 24 hours, shall be paid and made good from the proceeds of the sale of the Horse or Beast which shall be publicly sold by the Officer; and the Officer of this city is required and commanded to take care that these presents be duly executed without distinction of persons, as I have considered the same to be for the advantage of this city and its inhabitants.

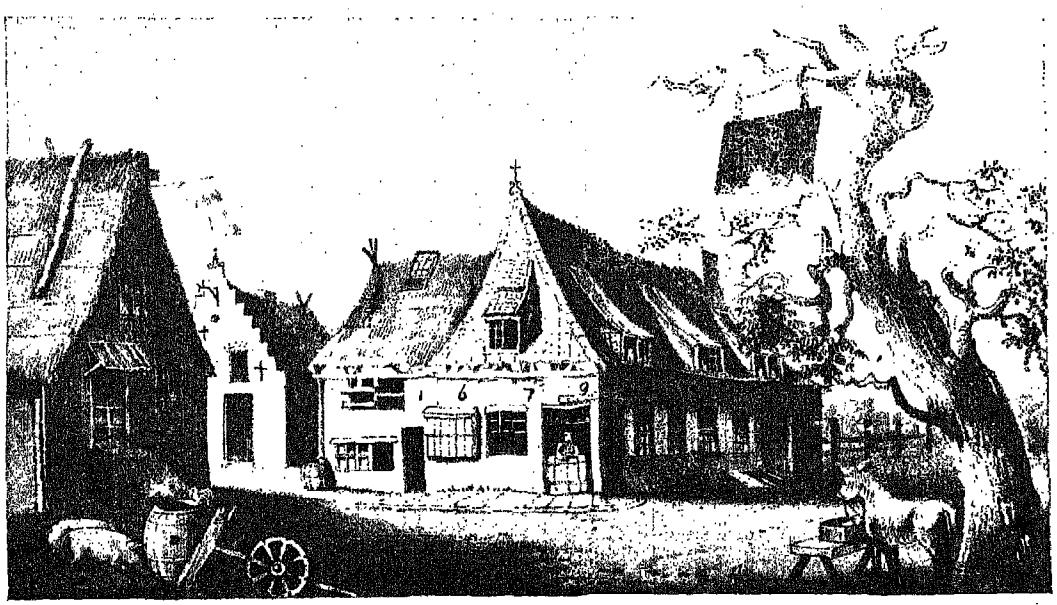
Done, *Fort William Hendrick*, this 16th April, 1674.[2]

1. *Ibid.*, VI, 349.

2. *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638–1674*, pp. 523–524.



a. The "Prototype" View of New Amsterdam, *c.* 1651.
The *Primitive Settlement* at the south end of the island. *Iconography*, Vol. I, Frontispiece.



b. Dutch Inn in Beaver Street, 1679.

The Common Council on November 24, 1675, after the return of English rule, reenacted orders against the straying of cattle and horses through the streets, and the inhabitants were also ordered to sweep the streets in front of their houses every Saturday or oftener.

Whereas Severall orders have beene heretofore made, and published within this Citty to prevent the ranging or Straying of Cowes, horses, Mares, hoggs and other cattle in and about the Severall Streets of this Citty: And they not haveing beene observed; It is therefore ordred to Lett the Said orders bee fully and duely observed by the Inhabitants and Dwellers in this Citty, under ye Penaltyes therein expressed, and to bee further proceeded against for contempt as the Case may require.

The Sherriffe of this Citty, is likewise to put the Said order in Execucon, at his perill.

It is likewise ordered that the former orders made for cleanying the Streets, bee alsoe fully observed, and that the Inhabitants doe on every Saturday or oftiner, if occasion bee, Sweep the Dirt or filts before their doores into heapes, on the forfeiture of 3^s^ for each neglect and that ye carmen doe carry the s^d^ dirt or filts away to Some convenient place by the water Side, as hath been formerly accustomed: under the penalty for refusall or neglect to forfeite their priviled[g]e of being Carmen.[1]

New proposals for regulation of lodging houses appeared in the *Minutes of the Common Council* for January 1676:

1 That there bee 6 houses appointed to Sell all Sorts of wines and Brandy & Rume etc. and Lodging

2 That there bee 8 houses appointed to Sell beere Syder, Mum and Rum; and to provide for Strangers as the Law directs, to Sell Brandy Rum Strong waters & Tobacco

3 That 2 of the wine houses bee Ordinaryes and 4 of the Beere houses.[2]

Prices for wines and liquors followed, and the price for "Lodgeing at ye wine house" was listed at 4*d.* per night and at the "Beere house," 3*d.* per night.

On January 20 of the same year one finds beginnings of social control of the reception of immigrants, for it was

Ordered that all and every Master of vessels Shall at his or their arrivall at this place as soone as hee or they come on Shoare give an account to the Mayo^r^ or Deputy Mayo^r^ of all and every Passenger which hee or they Shall bring in their vessels into this Place upon paine of Every Master Soe offending to forfeite for every Passenger hee or they bringe, and not give an account off as aforesaid, a Merchantable Bever.[3]

[It was further] Ordered that all persons that keepe publicq houses, Shall Sell beere as well as wyn and other Liquors, and keepe Lodginge for Strangers.[4]

This appears to be a serious attempt to make sure that shelter would be pro-

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, I, 13.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
4. *Ibid.*

vided for all newcomers. The quantitative but not the qualitative aspects of the lodging-house problem were thus the first to be recognized by law.

Further invasion of private rights to property was presented in an exceptionally vigorous measure likewise passed in this fertile year, 1676, for the *Minutes of the Common Council* of February 2 recorded that

> Upon applicacon made to us by Severall p[r]sons who are willing to repaire and build houses in this Citty for their conveniency and accomodacon: And wee being informed, that there are Severall Lotts, and parcells of Ground in this Citty convenient to build on: and Severall houses ruinated and decayed: The Owners whereof being either absent, or unwilling to build or repaire the Same: The which wee having taken into our consideracon, for the generall good of this Citty; doe order that all the Land convenient to build on; and all the ruinated and decayed houses which are untenentable within this Citty, bee fortwith viewed, apprized and valued by persons by us thereunto chosen and desired on their oathes: And to bee disposed off to those who are willing to build or repaire the Same.[1]

It should be noted that this order clearly recognized that the public interest was paramount. There had been previous rules concerning the public interest in vacant lots, but this order went farther and recognized "ruinated and decayed houses" as a detriment to the public welfare and provided a medium for getting such houses into the hands of persons who would repair them for use. Possibly this was the first equivalent in early New York history of the slum-clearance programme with which our generation is concerned. Yet the city at this time (1678) was a community of only 343 houses, within the city walls of which the northernmost boundary was our present Wall Street; and there were only six houses and a windmill outside of the wall.[2]

Comprehensive laws with regard to housing were enacted by the Common Council on March 15, 1684. These included strict search for all strangers to be made by the constables of each ward, and a listing, under penalty, by keepers of public houses of all their lodgers, giving names, profession, and place of work for each. A reiteration occurred of the prohibition of throwing filth into the streets, under penalty; a fresh requirement was that inhabitants should each Saturday morning sweep the dirt before their houses into heaps to be carted away. There was also a provision for annual appointment of viewers and searchers of chimneys and fire hearths, with power to order those which were defective to be repaired on penalty of 20*s.* for each default; a prohibition of the storage of hay, straw, and other combustible matter within dwelling houses; a requirement that hooks, ladders, and buckets be kept in convenient places, and a fine of 15*s.* "if any person shall suffer his chimney to be on fire." [3]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
2. Stokes, IV, 314.
3. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, I, 133–141.

The most progressive legislation from the point of view of contemporary housing was, however, the requirement

That there be Sworne Survey^rs Apoynted for this Citty by whose Advise And Directions, the ground within this Citty Shall be Built And that none doe Build Before the front of their ground he [be] Rec^d & And Layd out by them, And as they Shall Direct That A Regular Ordor, And Uniformity may be kept and Observed in the Streetes. And Buildings And y^t none Paue before their houses, but in Such manner, As Apoynted by the Sayd Surveyo^rs, And that for Laying out of Each house Lott, And giueing Certificate thereof the Sayd Surveyo^rs Shall haue and Receiue from the Owner, thereof the Summe of Six Shilling. . . .[1]

It is striking that at this early date provision was apparently made for a lot-and-block plan; an equivalent of setback legislation may be implicit in the requirement that "Uniformity may be kept and Observed in the Streetes." Uniformity of paving is likewise apparently implied, and the city's service is paid for by the individual owner.

Except for an ordinance in 1691 requiring owners to provide fire buckets in their homes, there appears to be no further housing legislation of importance until 1695. By this time the city had a population of about 5,000 persons.[2] The colonists had been passing through several years of hard times and extensive poverty. To meet the conditions the Legislature authorized the Common Council on July 3, 1695, to appoint five good and sufficient citizens to be called Overseers of the Poor and Public Works and Buildings. They were given the power

to Raise a reasonable Tax upon all and every the Inhabitants, freeholders and Sojourners within the said City toward's defraying the Publick and necessary charges of the said City and the necessary reliefe of the Same Impotent, old blind and such others, being Poor and not able to work &c. . . . And be it further Enacted . . . that the Mayor Alderman and Assisstants aforesaid shall appoint A scavenger Raker or other officer to be Imployed in cleansing the streets, Lanes, Alley's and other places aforesaid within the said City and at Least once in every week shall carry or cause to be carryed the Ashes, dirte filth and Soyle of the said Street's, Laynes, Alley's and other places unto such Place or Places where he shall think convenient. Provided that it shall not be Noisome or hurtfull to any of the Inhabitants of the said City. [This was done because] the Publick building's belonging to the City of New York are much out of repair, the Poor in great distress the highways streets and Lanes so 'Mirey and foul that they are Noysome to the Inhabitants of the said City as well as of his Majesties Liege Subjects resideing and travelling to and from the same, . . .[3]

This was clearly an attempt to establish and maintain high standards of municipal housekeeping, both with regard to public buildings and the street system. New York had apparently become self-conscious with regard to its primitive

1. *Ibid.* 2. Stokes, IV, 387. 3. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 348–351.

standards, and wished to put up a good appearance for foreign visitors, as well as to protect its own citizens.

The seventeenth century closed upon a vigorous small town at the foot of Manhattan Island. Its population in 1698 was listed as "1,019 men, 1,057 women, 2,161 children, 700 negroes, a total of 4,937; . . ."[1] Yet this small community, whose population might have been housed two centuries later in a single city block, had developed devices for social control in the field of housing that have influenced all subsequent legislation. Much of contemporary legislation displays the weight of the early tradition; there is very little that is new in principle. Later laws largely amplified earlier methods of control.

Private ownership of land, a tradition and practice brought by the colonists from Europe, had been recognized from the outset, but on many occasions through the century it was subjected to invasive social control through primitive types of condemnation and qualified expropriation. Special taxes on proprietors had been levied; the power to inspect and the right of entry by public authority had been established. Tenants, as well as owners, had been subjected to special controls in their use of both house and premises; public health and safety had been protected by restrictive legislation with regard to sanitation and fire risks. Already there had been sporadic attempts to direct the use of land to general social advantage.

No legislation is self-enforcing. The writing of a law does not mean universal conformity to its provisions. Public officials had been met with ridicule when they attempted to enforce laws to confine hogs and other domestic animals to the premises of the owner, or to remove thatched roofs and plastered chimneys.[2] Throughout the century there was constant complaint of the unclean condition of streets and premises, of stenches and obnoxious industries not adequately controlled by the periodic reenactments of law. So, side by side with legislative progress we find a developing habit of resisting unpopular laws. Both of these traditions have an unbroken history of development from that day to this.

1. Stokes, IV, 404.

2. *The Records of New Amsterdam*, II, 424.

CHAPTER III

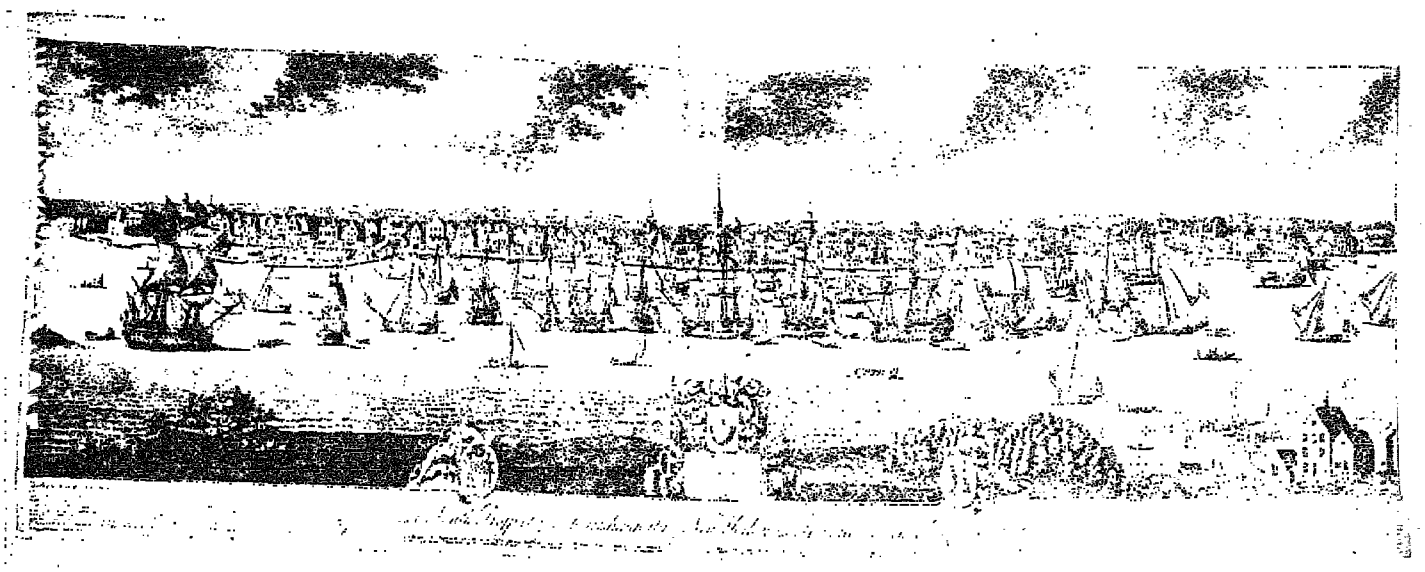
HOUSING PROGRESS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE eighteenth century for the American colonies was marked by economic and political vicissitudes which at times interfered seriously with local progress, though ultimately facilitating it greatly. The various wars with the French and Indians involved New York. The forced use of paper money periodically affected local economic enterprise. Boundary disputes, wars and treaties (1713, 1748, 1763), resistance to British taxes (1764 to 1775), conferences of colonial delegates (1754, 1765, 1774, 1775), and then the War of Independence (1775 to 1783), the occupation of New York by the British (September 15, 1776 to November 25, 1783), peace with Great Britain (1783), the signing of the Constitution of the United States (1787) and the meeting of the First Congress under the Constitution in New York (March 4, 1789), the inauguration of Washington in New York (April 30, 1789), the removal of the seat of government to Philadelphia (1790) and to Washington (1800), all had their effects upon local thought, activity, and well-being, and for long periods precluded concern with the problem of housing.

At the opening of the eighteenth century New York was a prosperous small community of detached houses. Governor Bellomont had written on May 16, 1699, "I believe there is not a richer populace any where in the King's dominions than is in this Town." Labor in 1700 was available at three shillings per day. Food and clothing were costly. "This country is dear for diet, and taking one thing with another (that is the price of cloathing with that of diet) 'tis full twice as dear living here as in London." [1] But according to Robert Livingston, this was "as healthfull a country as any of all His Majesty's dominions, and abounds with wholesome provisions. . . ." [2]

In spite of the above statement on prosperity the *Minutes of the Common Council* provided in 1699 for the establishment of a hospital for the poor, and five hundred people were reported to have been killed by smallpox in 1702,[3] so that on November 27 of that year, since "it please Almighty God to afflict the Inhabitants of the said City, the number and necessitys of the Poor were much increased," the Overseers of the Poor were authorized in the *Colonial Laws* to

1. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, IV, 720.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 875.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 972.



The Burgis View of New York from Brooklyn, 1716–1718. *Iconography*, Vol. I, Pl. 25.

FIG. 4

impose an emergency tax for their needs not to exceed three hundred pounds a year.[1]

Meanwhile the population of the city grew from 4,436 persons in 1703 [2] to 7,248 twenty years later, of whom 1,362 were "Negroes and other Slaves." [3]

Of the social conditions of Negroes, Governor Bellomont had written in 1699 that

> A Bill for facillitating the conversion of Indians and Negros (which the Kings instructions require should be endeavoured to be pass'd) would not go downe with the Assembly; they having a notion that the Negros being converted to Christianity would emancipate them from their slavery, and loose them from their service, for they have no other servants in this country but Negros. . . .[4]

Thus economic interests were permitted to overshadow religious and humanitarian interests in the colonists' crude hierarchy of values.

The English colonists by this time were in the ascendancy, and apparently English modes of thought and traditions predominated. There were, however, survivals of the Dutch architecture in all the older parts of the city, and the traditions of the Dutch period of housing control clearly persisted. Many of the new laws of the eighteenth century were reaffirmations of principles established prior to 1664, and modified earlier legislation only in detail. This is perhaps as well exemplified by the ordinance of June 27, 1702, for the "better Cleaning of the Streets, Lanes, and Allyes of the said Citty" as by any other ordinance of the first decade of this century. There was little new in this ordinance save its elaboration. The principle of "forfeiture" outlined in the last paragraph had also been established for other ends in the Dutch period.

June 27, 1702:

> An Ordinance of the Mayor Recorder Aldermen and Assistants of the Citty of New Yorke Convened in Common Council for the better Cleaning of the Streets, Lanes and Allyes of the said Citty.
>
> Forasmuch as the former Laws Orders and Ordinances of this Citty which have been made and published for the Cleaning & Keeping Clean of the Streets of the said Citty have been much Neglected And in many things are deficient whereby they will not Answer the End for which they were designed to the great Damage Annoyance and prejudice of all the Inhabitants of the said Citty. To the Intent therefore that all the Dunghills heaps of Dirt, Rubbish and Other filth and soil, which lies in the Respective Streets Lanes and Allies of this Citty be forthwith Removed and Carryed Away and for the better Keeping Clean the streets Lanes and Allyes of the said Citty for the future.
>
> Be itt therefore Ordained by the Mayor Aldermen & Commonality of the said Citty Convened in Common Council and itt is hereby Ordained by the Authority of the same That all

1. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 507–508.
2. Stokes, IV, 405.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
4. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, IV, 510–511.

and Every the Cittizens Freeholders house Keepers and Inhabitants living within the five Wards of this Citty on the southside of fresh water Shall on Every fryday in the week Either by themselves or servants Rake and sweep all the Dirte filth and soil before their Respective houses upon heaps & On the same day or on the saturday following Shall Cause the same to be Carryed Away and thrown into the River or some Other Convenient place under the Penalty of six Shilings for each Neglect Refual or default.

And itt is further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that if Any person or person Whatsoever Shall att any time hereafter throw or lay in any of the Streets Lanes and Allyes of this Citty any Carrian Gutts Garbidge Oyster Shells Ashes Dung Rubbish Grains or any Other Kind of filth or Dirt Whatsoever that may be Noisome to any of the Inhabitants of this Citty such person or persons soe offending Shall forfeit and pay for Every such Offense the sum of Six Shilings Currant Money of New Yorke and in Case such Offence Shall be Committed by Any servant or slave the Master or Owner of such servant or slave Shall pay the said forfeiture.

And be itt further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that the Respective Carmen within this Citty Shall have take and Receive for Carting every load of Dirte Rubbish filth or soyle out of the Streets of this Citty the sum of three pence Currant Money of New Yorke and if the said Carmen will load their Carts themselves. with the said Dirte Rubbish filth or soyl and Carry the same away that then the said Carmen Shall have take and Receive the sum of Six pence Curr^{t} Money of New Yorke for Each Cart Load of Dirte Rubbish filth or soyle which they Shall fill and Carry away as Aforesaid to be paid them by the person or persons who Shall Imploy them to fill and Carry Away the same.

And be itt further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that if any Carman within this Citty Shall Neglect or Refuse to Carry Away out of any of the Streets Lanes or Alleys of this Citty on the south side of fresh water Any Carrain Guts Garbage Oyster shells Dunghills ashes Dirte soyl and filth being thereunto required by Any of the Inhabitants of this Citty Shall for Every such Offense forfeit and pay the sum of ten Shillings Current Money of New Yorke.

And be itt further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that all the Pains Penalties and forfeitures above Mentioned Shall be Recovered by Plaint before the Mayor Recorder or any of the Aldermen of the said Citty and Levyed by distress upon the goods and Chattells of the Defaulters and dispose of and paid to him or them who shall give Information of the Defaults Aforesaid Any former Law or Usage of this Citty to the Contrary hereof in any wise Notwithstanding. And the Sheriff High Constables and Petty Constables of this Citty Are Commanded and Required to take Effectual Care that this Law be forthwith put in Execution as they will answer for their Contempt att their Perills.[1]

Progress in sanitary standards was exemplified also in the following extract from the *Minutes of the Common Council* two years earlier, namely, on April 9, 1700.

Whereas Severall Illdisposed persons doe make A Common Practice of Emptying Tubbs of Odour and Nastiness in this Citty to the Great Nusance and Inconveniency of Ye Inhabitants of the Same. Itt is therefore Order'd that if Any person within this Citty doe throw or Empty any Tubbs of Odour in Any of the Streets of this Citty the Inhabitants of Such house from

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, II, 195-197.

whence the same is brought Shall be fined for ye. Same att the discretion of the Mayor Not Exceeding fourty Shilings for each Offence One halfe to the Informer & the Other halfe to the Citty And that all Persons within this Citty doe Empty their Odours into the River & no where Else On ye Penalty Aforesaid.[1]

Use zoning is revealed in the law passed by the Provincial Legislature on June 19, 1703,

That from and after the Publication of this Act no person or persons whatsoever, shall presume to distill any Rum, Molosses or other Such like Liquors, or to burn any Oysters, Oyster shells, or Stone into Lime in any House shedd, or other place or places within the City of New York aforesaid, or within the distance of half a Mile from the City Hall of the said City,[2]

under penalty of five pounds for each such offense.

Except for a law by the Provincial Legislature in 1730 providing for repair of public buildings and purchase of fire engines, there appears to have been no legislation new in type with regard to housing in the first half of the eighteenth century. There were, however, several laws, including the appointment of firemen,[3] and the control of hogs, reiterating or expanding previous legislation.

November 18, 1731:

"A Law for Cleaning the Streets Lanes and Alleys of the Said City," passed by the Common Council on this day, contains the following new provisions:

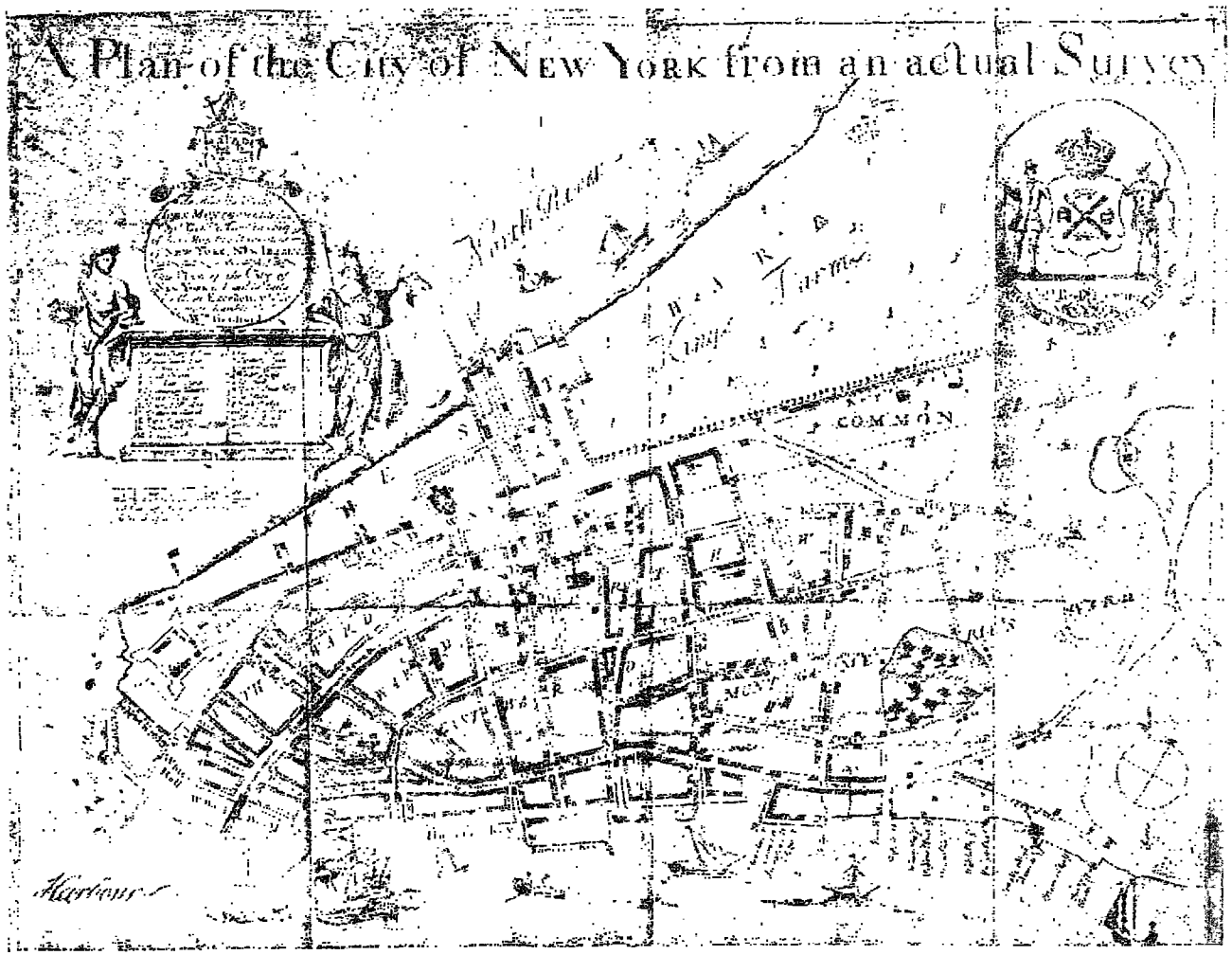
And be it further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that no Person whatsoever shall Encumber the Streets with Timber, Beams, Planks Boards, Stones, Bricks or any Other Lumber, or Pyle or leave the same in any of the Streets or Highways within this City without leave from the Mayor of the said City for the time being under the Penalty of Six shillings for each Offence, one half to the Informer and the Other half to the Treasurer of this City for the use of this Corporation

And be it further Ordained by the Authority aforesaid. that if any Person or Persons within this City do Cast, throw or Empty any Tubs of Dung, Close Stools or Pots of Ordure or Nastiness in any of the Streets of this City, the Inhabitant of such House from whence the same is brought shall be fined for the same, at the Discretion of the Mayor of the said City not Exceeding forty shillings for each Offence. one half to the Informer and the Other half to the Treasurer of this City for the use of this Corporation and that all Persons within this City do Empty their Ordures into the River and no where else, on the Penalty aforesaid.

And be it further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that no Person or Persons within this City do Cause their Ordures to be Emptied or Carried through any Street, till after Eleven of the Clock at Night from the twenty fifth day of March to the twenty Ninth day of September and till after Ten A Clock at Night from the twenty Ninth day of September to the twenty fifth day of March under the Penalty of Six Shillings for each Offence, and that no Person Carrying such Ordure Shall Spill the same in any Street, under the like Penalty.

and be it further Ordained by the Authority Aforesaid that if any Person or Persons within

1. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
2. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 538–539.
3. *Ibid.*, II, 1061–1067.



The Lyne Survey (Bradford Map), 1731. *Iconography*, Vol. I, Pl. 27.

FIG. 5

this City Shall hereafter in the time of Rain or Floods, Sweep the soil or Dirt of the Streets into, or near the Channel of any of the Streets of this City, so as the same may be Carried away by the Stream thereof, such Person or Persons so Offending shall for Every such Offence forfeit and pay the sum of Six shillings Current Money of New York; and if Such Offence shall be Committed by any servant or slave such forfeiture shall be paid by the Owner Master or Mistress of such servant or slave, One half to the Informer and the Other half to the Treasurer of this City for the use of this Corporation.[1]

The problem of Fresh Water Pond (see Figure 7c) and the swamp to the south of it had been continuously before the colonists. The city had by now grown up to the very edges of the swamp, on the borders of which dwelt some of the poorer laboring men. Its elimination appeared too large a problem for public action. Captain Anthony Rutgers, in December 1730, petitioned the King for a grant of the land in fee simple, in return for which he would drain and fill the swamp. That petition was granted on December 31, 1733.[2]

There was continuance of serious illness and a smallpox epidemic in 1739; a "bilious plague" in 1743; and a fever epidemic in 1745.[3] These plagues were cited in the attempts at use zoning, as it was believed at that time that bad odors caused illness. In 1744, in the *Minutes of the Common Council*, "Tan pitts" and the storage of undressed hides were prohibited south of Fresh Water.[4] Use zoning thus found its basis in public health.

The Negroes of the city, shortly before the middle of the century, constituted over one-fifth of the total population. They were largely descendants of Negroes brought by slave traders in the preceding century. The men were employed at heavy manual labor. Men and women were also engaged in domestic service. Ill feeling between Negroes and whites led to mob action in 1741.

It is little wonder that many blacks were at times restless and discontented because of harsh treatment, and, observing this, the whites naturally had to maintain a constant watch against uprisings. The so-called "Negro Conspiracy" of 1741 was a product of this continual anxiety. . . . The trouble started with several robberies, in February 1741, when suspicion fell upon certain negroes who frequented the house of John Hughson, a white man of bad repute. Soon after, he was accused of having received stolen goods, of harboring negroes, and of permitting them to use his house for their drunken orgies. In the following month several buildings in the Fort at the lower end of Manhattan were destroyed by fire. Within the next few weeks several small fires started here and there, but they were quickly extinguished. Certain individuals of excitable nature now believed they saw a connection between the robbery of the previous month and the recent fires. Was not Hughson seeking vengeance for his arrest? Perhaps the

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, IV, 102–103.
2. Stokes IV, 535, citing *Liber Patents*, XI, 227.
3. Noah Webster, *A Brief History of Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases*, I, 256, 258, 341; John H. Griscom, *A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York*, p. 3.
4. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, V, 118–121.

blacks were being supported in their mischief by the Spanish, who were supposed to have as their aim the implanting of popery in the colony of New York. This senseless hysteria was easily increased to the proportions of an epidemic. Indeed, even persons of calm judgment were fully convinced that the blacks intended to destroy the city and murder the whites. Any negro whose actions were in the least degree suspicious was immediately arrested, so that in a short time the jails were overcrowded. A proclamation offering a reward to informers soon brought forward a white woman, Mary Burton, who was willing to manufacture such evidence as the magistrates were obviously eager to secure. Her wild and impossible stories added to the consternation. The militia was called out. Hundreds of inhabitants moved their household belongings from the city, which in their minds was doomed to destruction. These panic stricken persons then sought safety in the Bowery and in Harlem, and nightly awaited the dread outbreak of a servile insurrection. Meantime the negroes, the cause of all this groundless fear, were being huddled into jail and terrorized into confessing the most improbable crimes. Upon this conflicting testimony several persons were condemned, after trials which conformed to all legal requirements of the day. . . . Hughson, his wife, and another white woman were hanged for participation in the supposed conspiracy. For several weeks, negroes were hurried to the stake, begging for mercy until their shrieks were silenced by the crackling flames. For days, the bodies of blacks hung in chains from the gibbets until the stench of decomposition became a menace to public health. By summer the panic at last subsided, and once more reason was restored. . . .[1]

The city had grown by the year 1746 to a town of 11,718 inhabitants.[2] Visitors reported that the houses were high and built mostly of brick, and that oyster shells were burned into lime and used in the building. The streets were said to be irregular but spacious. The tile roofs impressed strangers. Water was poor, and no good water was available, because of the juxtaposition on crowded lots of wells and privies, except at the "tea water pump." It was in part to protect this water that the Negro riots had developed.

Many contemporary accounts of visitors described the city at the middle of the century. Their impressions were in the main favorable. The houses appeared substantial, but the streets called forth adverse comment.

On June 15, 1744, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, a Scotch physician residing at Annapolis, Maryland, wrote,

I found the city less in extent, but by the stir and frequency upon the streets, more populous than Philadelphia. . . . The houses are more compact and regular, and in general higher built, most of them after the Dutch model, with their gavell ends fronting the street. There are a few built of stone; more of wood, but the greatest number of brick, and a great many covered with pantile and glazed tile with the year of God when built figured out with plates of iron, upon the fronts of several of them. The streets in general are but narrow, and not regularly disposed. . . .

1. A. E. Peterson and G. W. Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, p. 313.

2. Stokes, IV, 613.

On July 9,

They have very bad water in the city, most of it being hard and brackish. Ever since the negro conspiracy, certain people have been appointed to sell water in the streets, which they carry on a sledge in great casks and bring it from the best springs about the city, for it was when the negroes went for tea water that they held their cabals and consultations, and therefore they have a law now that no negro shall be seen upon the streets without a lanthorn after dark. . . .[1]

November 2, 1748, Peter Kalm, "Professor of Oeconomy in the University of Aobo in Swedish Finland," wrote:

Besides the different sects of christians, there are many Jews settled in New-York, who possess great privileges. They have a synagogue and houses, and great country seats of their own property, and are allowed to keep shops in town. They have likewise several ships, which they freight and send out with their own goods. In fine they enjoy all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province. . . .

The streets do not run straight as those of *Philadelphia*, and have sometimes considerable bendings; however they are very spacious and well built and most of them are paved, except in high places, where it has been found useless. In the chief streets there are trees planted, which in summer give them a fine appearance. . . .

Most of the houses are built of bricks; and are generally strong and neat, and several stories high. Some had according to old architecture, turned the gable-end towards the streets; but the new houses were altered in this respect. Many of the houses had a balcony on the roof, on which the people used to sit in the evenings in the summer season; and from thence they had a pleasant view of a great part of the town, and likewise of part of the adjacent water and of the opposite shore. The roofs are commonly covered with tiles or shingles; the latter of which are made of the white firtree. . . . The walls were whitewashed within, and I did not any where see hangings, with which the people in this country seem in general to be but little acquainted. The walls were quite covered with all sorts of drawings and pictures in small frames. On each side of the chimnies they had usually a sort of alcove; and the wall under the windows was wainscoted, and had benches placed near it. The alcoves, and all the wood work were painted with a bluish grey colour.

There is no good water to be met with in the town itself, but at a little distance there is a large spring of good water, which the inhabitants take for their tea, and for the uses of the kitchen. Those however, who are less delicate on this point, make use of the water from the wells in town, though it be very bad. . . .[2]

On October 29, 1750, James Birket, a merchant and sea captain of Antigua, wrote:

Neither their Streets nor houses are at all Regular Some being 4 or 5 Story high & Others not above two, Not any of the Modern houses are built with the Gable End to the Street as was

1. Dr. Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium: being a Narrative of a Journey from Annapolis, Maryland, through Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire from May to* [illegible]

2. [illegible] *Translated* [illegible] 250, 252.

formerly the fashion amongst all the old Dutch Settlers, but are many of 'em Spacious Genteel houses Some are built of hewn stone Others of English & Also of the Small white Hollands Brick, which looks neat but not grand, their houses are Generally neat within and well Furnished, Notwithstanding there Still remains too many of the Old Dutch houses which prevents its Appearing to Advantage, The Streets (as above) are very Irregular & Crooked & many of 'em much too Narrow they are Generally pretty well paved which adds much to the decency & Clean-ness of the place & the Advantage of Carriage. . . .

The People here are very gay in their dress but more perticularly in the furniture of their houses &C. . . .[1]

By 1749 the population had grown to 13,294, of whom 10,926 were whites. By this time there were 1,834 houses.[2]

Further legislative invasion of the rights of private property owners appeared in a provincial law of May 4, 1754, as follows:

WHEREAS there are Sundry uninclosed Lotts of Ground within the Said City to the Southward of the Fresh Water the True and Lawfull Owners and Proprietors whereof Cannot with any Certainty be Known or discovered many of which Lotts of Ground are become Common and publick Nuisances cheifly occasioned by throwing upon them all kinds of Filth and Dirt as also for want of Paving the Streets fronting the Same from which Noxious Vapours and Offensive Smells do proceed to the Endangering the Healths and Lives of the Inhabitants of the Said City in General but more especially the Inhabitants living Near the Same [the Legislature authorized the Common Council to prevent and remove such nuisances and to pay for the work by renting the premises] to any Person or Persons untill the True Rightfull and Lawfull owner or Owners Proprietor or Proprietors Shall Appear or be discovered. [The owners are not to reenter into possession of their lots until they have reimbursed the city for its expenditures.][3]

This law recognized the dangers of public dumps and unpaved streets; it clearly provided for public removal of nuisances, and seizure of property by the city, to be rented by it with full reimbursement from the owner, in case he should reenter into possession.

Protection from fire was provided in a municipal ruling of November 4, 1757, that hay and straw should not be kept in yards or gardens south of the Fresh Water or within ten feet of a chimney or fireplace.

Be it ordained by the Authority in the said Law mentioned that no person or persons, shall from and after the Publication hereof Have Keep or put any Hay or Straw in Barracks or piles in his her or their Yard or Yards Garden or Gardens, or in any other place or places, to the Southward of the Freshwater, Except in Close Buildings proper for the purpose, and also that no person or persons shall have, keep or put any Hay or Straw, in any House Stable or other Building to the Southward of the Freshwater that is or shall be within Ten feet of any Chimney Hearth or fire place, or place for Keeping ashes under the penalty of Twenty Shillings for Every

1. *Some Cursory Remarks Made by James Birket in his Voyage to North America 1750–1751*, pp. 43–46.
2. Stokes, IV, 616.
3. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, III, 996–998.

offence, to be Recovered one half thereof for the Church wardens of the said City for the use of the Poor thereof and the other half, to the person who shall Sue or prosecute for the same, before the Mayor or Recorder or any one of the Aldermen with Costs of prosecution, and that Every person or persons, shall be Subject to the Like penalty as often as he she or they shall Continue to keep Hay or Straw in any or Either of the Houses, stables Buildings or places aforesaid above forty Eight Hours after Every Conviction to be Recovered in the manner and for the uses aforesaid.[1]

Progress was made in the principles of legislation on December 31, 1761, when the Provincial Legislature ordered partial fireproofing and established fire limits — the beginning of an almost unbroken series of such laws. All buildings erected to the southward of the Fresh Water after January 1, 1766,

shall be made of Stone or Brick and Roofed with tile or slate, and if any dwelling house or Building Whatsoever either public or private shall be built or roofed Contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act the proprietor or proprietors thereof and the Workmen who shall build or roof such house or Building Contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act shall each of them forfeit lose and pay for Every Such Default the sum of Fifty pounds . . . and every such Dwelling house or other Building . . . shall be and hereby is adjudged Deemed and taken to be a publick Nusance.

The Act also decrees that if any building erected before January 1, 1766, shall need a new roof after that date and "the Body or Walls of such Building shall not be sufficient to bear a roof of Tile or slate," the owner may, if a jury testifies to such conditions, "roof the same with Board or shingles or in such other way and manner, or was Customary before the making of this act." The law also orders that after May 1, 1761, "no pitch, Tar, Turpentine or shingles shall or may be put in any place to the southward of Fresh water other than in such proper place or places to be appointed and approved of by the Mayor Aldermen and Commonalty . . . under the penalty of Ten pounds for Every offence." The fines imposed by the act "are Recoverable for the use of the Poor of the said City."[2] By a law passed on December 23, 1765, the time for covering the buildings with slate or tile was extended to January 1, 1768. This was done because "a sufficient Quantity of Slate or Tile cannot at present be had or procured to Cover or Roof the Houses and Buildings that are yearly Erected within this City to the Southward of fresh water."[3] By another law, passed on December 31, 1768, the provisions of the act of 1761 were suspended until January 1, 1774.[4] On April 1, 1775, the Act of 1761 was suspended entirely, the following new regulations being enacted:

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, VI, 116.
2. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, IV, 571–573.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 869.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1046–1048.

That it shall be lawful any Thing in the said Act to the contrary notwithstanding, to erect any Building in the said City with Wood or other Materials and cover the same with Shingles or Boards, that shall be situated to the Northward or North Eastward of a Line. Beginning on the Easterly Edge of Hudson's River in the Middle of Partition Street and running South Easterly through the Middle of the said Street, and through the Middle of Fair Street to the Middle of Nassau Street; thence North Easterly through the Middle of Nassau Street until it comes opposite to the Middle of Frankford Street, thence South Easterly through the Middle of Frankford Street till it comes opposite to the Middle of VendeWater Street, thence Easterly through the Middle of Vande Water Street till it comes to the Middle of Queen Street, thence Southerly through the Middle of the same till it comes to the Middle of Saint Georges Square, thence Easterly through the Middle of Cherry Street till it comes opposite to the Middle of Saint James's Slip, thence Southerly through the Middle of the said Slip to the East River, *Provided* such Buildings shall not exceed fourteen Feet in Height from the Level of the Street on which the same is erected, to the Eaves of the Roof, and that the Elevation of such Roof do not exceed one third Part of the Span or Breadth thereof, and that the upper Part thereof be nearly a Flat of at least two equal fifth Parts of the whole Span of such Roof.

. . . That any Thing in the said Act to the contrary notwithstanding, it shall be lawful on the Southward and South Westward of the Line above mentioned to cover the Flat of any roof with Boards or Shingles, provided such Flat do not exceed two equal fifth Parts of the Span of such Roof and there be erected around the same Flat a substantial Balcony or Balustrade and a Platform and Steps to the top of every Chimney, and that all Roofs, Coverings of Steeples, Cupolas and Spires of Churches and other Public Buildings may be also made of Boards and Shingles . . . And if any Dwelling House or other Building whatsoever shall be erected or roofed contrary to the true Intent and Meaning of this Act, the Proprietor or Proprietors thereof shall forfeit and pay for every such Offence the Sum of fifty Pounds . . . And the Workmen who shall build or roof such House or Building contrary to the true Intent and Meaning of this Act, shall each of them forfeit and pay for every such Offence the Sum of five Pounds . . . and every such Dwelling House or other Building whatsoever so built or roofed . . . shall be and hereby is adjudged deemed and declared to be a Public Nuisance.

And Whereas it may be expedient to erect Houses and other Buildings on new made Ground in divers Parts of the said City where no sufficient Foundation can be laid for heavy Edifices of Stone or Brick.

Be it therefore Enacted . . . That no Person shall incur any Penalty for erecting any Wooden Buildings on such new made Grounds if Previous to the Erection of the same an Inquisition be filed in the Town Clerk's Office, and the Sheriff of the said City and County, and a Jury of at least twelve Freeholders who have had a View of the Place, therein Certify that so sufficient Foundation could be laid in such Place for a Building of Stone or Brick without exposing the Proprietor to the Expence at least of the Sum of one hundred Pounds.[1]

This was the first drastic fire prevention legislation since the prohibition of thatched roofs and plastered chimneys. In a sense it marked the beginning of the modern period in housing legislation, for it not only used the principle of fire limits, but also provided for new construction and enacted provisions for improve-

1. *Ibid.*, v, 743–746.

ments of buildings already constructed — each subject to penalty and enforcement. With this legislation New York emerged from the class of small towns to that of large cities — large for its period — for by 1771 the population had grown to 21,863.[1]

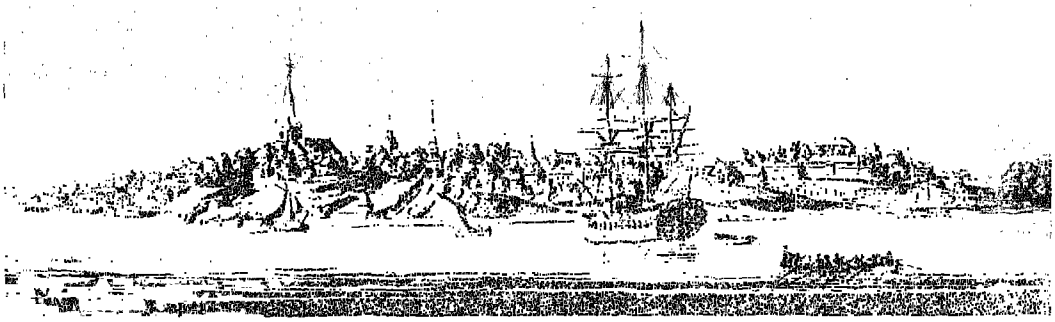
The storage of pitch, tar, turpentine, rosin, and shingles south of the Fresh Water was prohibited on December 30, 1769, under penalty of ten pounds for every offence, though ship chandlers were permitted to keep a limited quantity of these materials in the open street near their doors. The act also prohibited the discharging of "any Gun, Pistol, Rocket, Cracker, Squib, or other Fire Work in any Street Lane or Alley, Garden or other Inclosure or from any House or in any other Place where Persons frequently walk to the Southward of Fresh Water," under a penalty of twenty shillings for each such offence.[2]

This was followed in 1772 (March 24) by a prohibition of the storage of more than six pounds of gunpowder within two miles of City Hall, except for shopkeepers and retailers of gunpowder, whose methods of storage were outlined by the law. There was further provision concerning transportation of gunpowder through the streets.[3]

These provisions reflected a fear of conflagration, but were not adequate to accomplish their purpose, for on September 21, 1776, nearly one-quarter of the city was destroyed by fire.

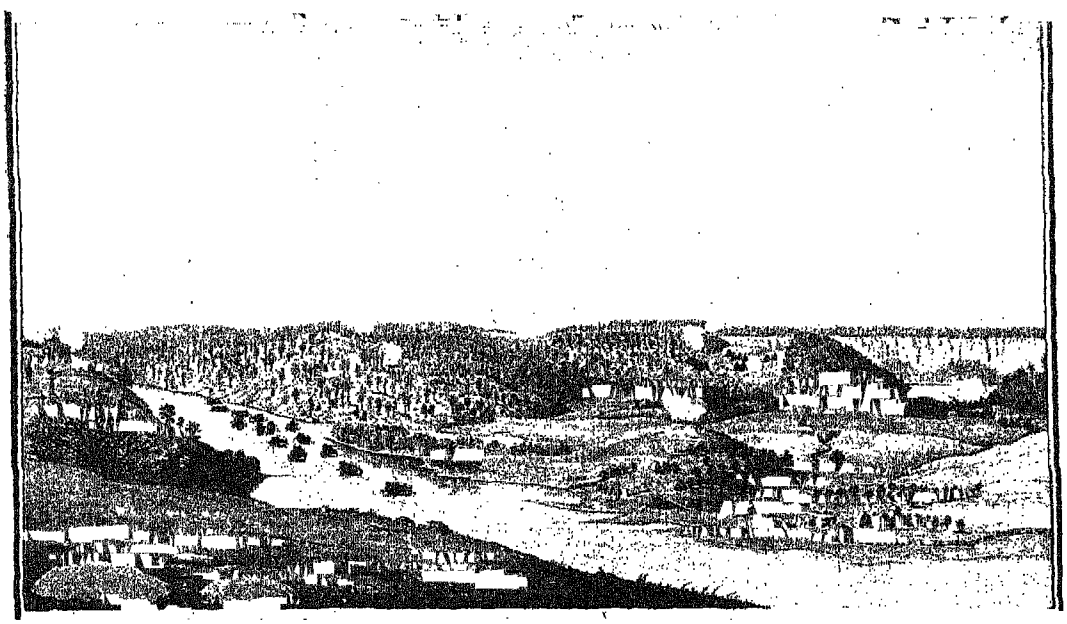
> On Saturday the 21st Instant, we had a terrible Fire in this City, which consumed about One Thousand Houses, or nearly a fourth of the whole City. The following is the best Account we can collect of this melancholy Event. The fire broke out first at the most southerly Part of the City, near White-Hall; and was discovered between 12 and 1 o'Clock in the Morning, the Wind blowing very fresh from the South, and the Weather exceedingly dry. The Rebel Army having carried off all the Bells of the City, the Alarm could not be speedily communicated; and very few of the Citizens were in Town, most of them being driven out by the Calamities of War, and several of the first Rank sent Prisoners to New England, and other distant Parts. A few Minutes after the fire was discovered at White-Hall, it was observed to break out in five or six other Places, at a considerable Distance. . . .
>
> The Fire . . . swept away all the Buildings between Broad Street and the North-River, almost as high as the City-Hall; and from thence, all the Houses between Broad-Way and the North-River, as far as King's College, a few only excepted. Long before the main Fire reached Trinity Church, that large, ancient and venerable Edifice was in Flames, which baffled every Effort to suppress them. . . . Several Women and Children perished in the Fire, their Shrieks, joined to the roaring of the Flames, the Crash of falling Houses, and the wide spread Ruin which every where appeared, formed a scene of Horror grand beyond Description, and which was still heightened by the Darkness of the Night. Besides Trinity Church, the Rector's

1. Stokes, IV, 816.
2. *The Colonial Laws of New York*, V, 11–13.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 363–368.



A View of New York from the North West.

a. The Atlantic Neptune View from the North River, *c.* 1773. Fort George at right; City Hall second cupola from right; Trinity Church at left. *Iconography*, Vol. I, Pl. 44.



A View of the Attack against Fort Washington and Rebel Redoubt on New York on the 16th of November 1776 by the British and Hessian Brigades

b. Attack on Fort Washington, showing the north end of Manhattan Island from the site of the present campus of New York University, 1776. *Iconography*, Vol. VI. Frontispiece.

House, the Charity School, the old Lutheran Church, and many other fine Buildings were consumed. St. Paul's Church and King's College were directly in the Line of Fire, but saved with very great Difficulty. After raging about 10 Hours the Fire was extinguished between 10 and 11 o'Clock, A.M.

. . . several Persons were discovered with large Bundles of Matches, dipped in melted Rosin and Brimstone, and attempting to set Fire to the Houses. A New-England Man, who had a Captains Commission under the Continental Congress, and in their Service, was seized with these dreadful Implements of Ruin. . . .

The Officers of the Army and Navy, the Seamen and Soldiers greatly exerted themselves, often with the utmost Hazard to themselves, and shewed all that Alertness and Activity for which they are justly celebrated on such Occasions. To their vigorous Efforts in pulling down such Wooden Buildings as would conduct the Fire, it is owing, under Providence, that the whole City was not consumed; for the Number of Inhabitants was small, the Pumps and Fire-Engines were very much out of Order. . . . Many Hundreds of Families have lost their all; and are reduced from a State of Affluence to the lowest Ebb of Want and Wretchedness — destitute of Shelter, Food or Cloathing. . . .[1]

David Grim, a New York merchant, gave the following account:

This fire of 1776 commenced in a small wooden house, on the wharf near the White Hall Slip, it was then occupied by a number of men and women of a bad character; . . .

It burned all the houses on the E side of the White Hall Slip, and the W side of Broad Street to Beaver street; . . . and burned both sides of Beaver Streeet, to the E side of Broadway, then crossed Broadway, to Beaver Lane, and burned all the Houses on both sides of the Broadway with some few houses in New Street to Rector Street, and to John Harrison, Esqr, three story brick house, which house stopped the fire on the E side of the Broadway; from thence it continued burning all the houses in Lumbard Street, and those in the rear of the houses on the W side of Broadway to St. Pauls Church there continued burning the houses on both sides of Partition Street, and all the houses in the rear of the W. side of the Broadway to the N. River.

The fire did not stop, untill it got into Mortkill Street, now Barclay Street. The Colledge yard and the vacant grounds in the rear of the same, put an end to this awful and tremendous fire. . . .

The number of Houses, that were burned and destroyed, in the city at that awful conflagration were thus: vizt

From Mortkill Street to Courtlandt St.	167
" Courtlandt Street to Beaver St.	175
" Beaver Street to E. river,	151
Houses	493[2]

Another conflagration followed on August 3, 1778.

About 1 o'Clock this morning, a most dreadful Fire broke out, in the Store of Mr. Jones, Ship Chandler, on Cruger's Wharff [now Front Street], in this City, which, notwithstanding the utmost Efforts of the Navy, Army and Inhabitants, soon consumed all the Buildings on the

1. Stokes, V, 1020–1021, citing the *New York Mercury*, September 30, 1776.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 1021, citing the New York Historical Society *Collections* (1870), p. 275.

East, South, and West End of said Wharff, and every House on the South Side of Little Dock Street. The Street being narrow, the Flames soon communicated to the North Side of Little-Dock-Street, and consumed the whole (five Houses excepted) at the W. End. The Fire soon caught the Back Buildings in Dock-street [now Pearl Street], and burnt every House to the East of Mr. Isaac Low's as far as the Old-Slip, and three opposite the Slip. . . .

The Loss . . . is great, there being no less than 64 Dwellings Houses, besides Stores, consumed.[1]

The problem of providing adequate water for homes had become quite serious before the third quarter of the century. The "tea water pump" was still in use. It was on April 22, 1774, that the first proposal for a municipal water supply was made to the Common Council by Christopher Colles. In July of that year Colles' proposal was adopted by the Council. By April 1776 the engine for Colles' water works was completed and in operation, but the project had to be discontinued later because of conditions growing out of the War of Independence.[2]

The Revolutionary War was a period of much suffering from high prices. Baroness Riedesel, wife of General Riedesel, wrote during her stay in New York:

I gave our cook ten guineas to purchase all kinds of provisions. But when he very soon came back and asked for more money, I learned to my surprise that the money I had given him would scarcely last for two days — so dear was every thing, even the commonest thing. For example, one pound of meat, reckoning according to our money, cost twelve groschen [a groschen being a fraction over three cents]; one pound of butter, eighteen groschen; one turkey, four rix-thalers; a fowl, twenty groschen; an egg, four groschen; a quart of milk, six groschen; a bushel of potatoes, two rix-thalers; a half bushel of turnips, two florins; ten oysters, eight groschen, and six onions, one rix-thaler. [She described the suffering caused by the cold and the scarcity of firewood, which cost £10 a cord.] I have myself paid one piaster (which is a crown with us) for a single stick. The poor were obliged to burn fat, in order to warm themselves and cook their meals.[3]

In 1780 fences and sheds were torn down for use as firewood.

Fuel was so very scarce, that garden fences, old sheds, &c. were taken down to supply the want of cord-wood. . . . Provisions were as scarce as fuel. Everybody, except the rich and the dissolute, was put upon short allowance. Potatoes were sold for a guinea a bushel! while biscuits, made of oatmeal, as coarse, and containing as little nourishment, as ground straw, were served out to the troops.

Early in the spring the Cork Fleet arrived, and brought provisions in abundance. Fine rose-butter was sold immediately at 2*s.* 2*d.* per lb. and almost everybody was soon relieved and made comfortable.[4]

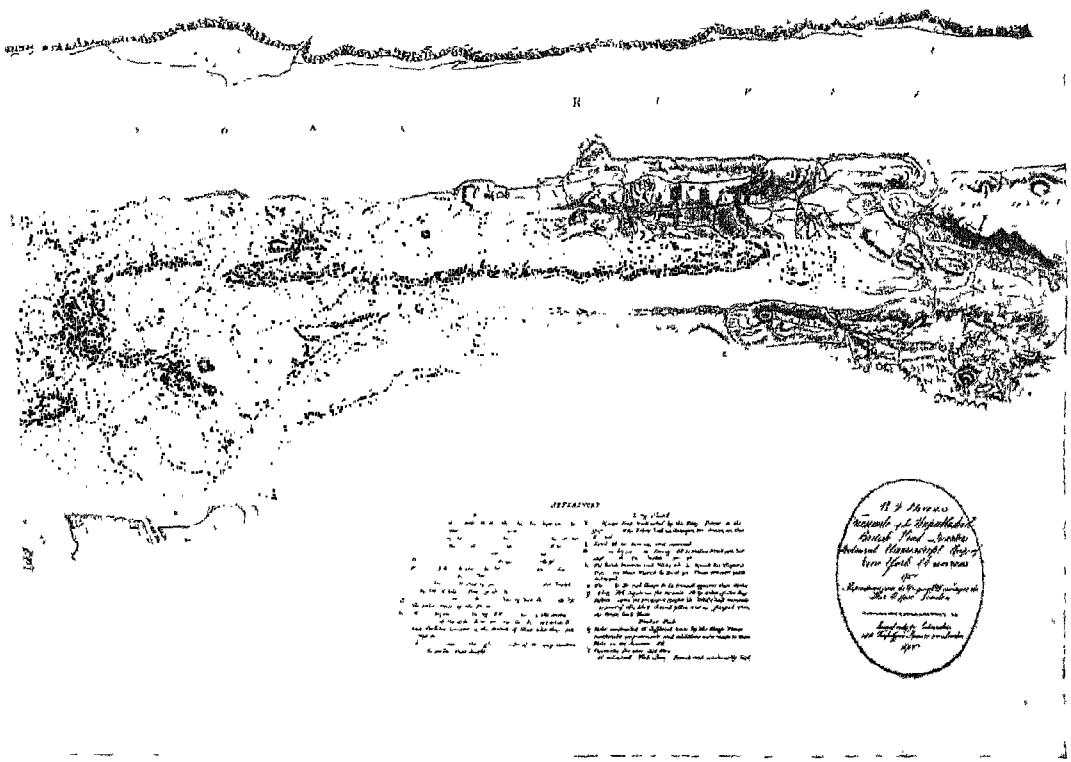
1. *Ibid.*, p. 1072, citing the *New York Mercury*, August 3, 1778.
2. *Ibid.*, IV, 851, 860–861, 917–918, 926.
3. *Ibid.*, V, 1096, citing Baroness Riedesel's *Letters and Journals* (translated by Stone, 1867), pp. 169–176.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1105, citing an account of the life of one Thomas Gardner in pamphlet vol. no. 238, p. 58, in New York Historical Society.



a British Headquarters Map, showing Manhattan Island during



b. Broad Street and Federal Hall, corner of Wall and Nassau Streets, 1797.
Iconography, Vol. I, Pl. 67.



the British occupation, *c* 1782. *Iconography*, Vol I, Pl 50



c. Collect (Fresh Water) Pond from north, 1798. St. Paul's Chapel and Bridewell at extreme right, Trinity and Brick Church center. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Frontispiece II.

Queen (Pearl) being in some places too cramped to allow the building of sidewalks. . . . In August 1784 the Common Council had also expressed its determination to strictly enforce the city ordinances with regard to the care of the streets, but in May 1788 the Grand Jury reported them to be dirty and many of them impassable, and an ordinance published in April 1789 added several new requirements in this regard. The footpath on each side of the street was to be one-fifth the width of the street, paved with brick or flat stone, and curbed; the other three-fifths were to be a cartway, properly arched, and to be paved and kept in repair by the householders under a penalty of forty shillings fine. Driving, sawing wood, and leaving coal on the sidewalk, or otherwise obstructing it, were strictly forbidden; no posts were to be erected except at the intersection of streets, and a penalty of £5 was attached to the offence of planting trees south of the Fresh Water and of Catherine St. except in front of churches and other public buildings. Another important provision of this ordinance was that on every Friday between the first day of March and the first day of December each householder should cause the dirt from his yard, cellar, and the street in front of his premises to be gathered near the gutter before ten o'clock in the morning, and have it removed before twelve o'clock the next day under a penalty of five shillings fine. . . . the sewerage system of the city was extremely primitive. It consisted of the negro slaves, a long line of whom might be seen late at night wending their way to the river, each with a tub on his head. . . . The most elevated street in the city was Broadway, . . . extending from the Bowling Green to St. Paul's Chapel, above which it was called Great George Street. . . . in 1789 the portion of it called Great George Street extended only to the present Broome Street and was very sparsely built upon. . . . To the west of Great George Street, above Reade Street, there were few buildings east of Greenwich Street. Church Street ran, as a lane, about to the present Anthony Street, and there ended. No other streets were laid out between it and Greenwich Street, the land being largely a swamp. . . .

Broadway in 1789 was of less importance both as a place of business and of residence than were the streets to the east of it. It was paved from the Bowling Green to Vesey Street but its grading was probably very bad. . . . Public pumps stood in the middle of Broadway for many years after 1789, it being the usual custom for the householders to dig the well and for the city to contribute £10 toward the building of the pump. . . .

. . . The house occupied by Gen. Knox, the Secretary of War, which was advertised for sale in the latter part of 1789 was probably a fair representative of the better class of dwelling houses at that time. It was described as a four story brick house on the west side of Broadway, 31½ feet wide by 60 feet deep, containing two rooms of thirty feet in length, one of twenty-six feet, three of twenty-three feet, and two of twenty feet, besides four other rooms with fireplaces, and four smaller ones without them. On the ground-floor there was a large servant's-hall which communicated with the area, and a kitchen 20 ft. by 30 ft. in dimension. In the rear of the house there was a piazza thirty feet long by ten feet wide and the back yard contained a good well, cistern, and ash-house. The lots ran back about 500 feet to the end of a wharf on Greenwich Street, and upon one of them, fronting upon Greenwich Street, was a coach-house twenty-eight feet four inches wide.

No houses were allowed to be erected in the city unless the property was previously surveyed by a city surveyor, the penalty for disobedience of this rule being a fine of £5, and by ordinance of April 15th, 1789 no stoop was to extend more than six feet nor any bow-window more than twenty inches into any street. . . .

Of the cross streets below Wall Street, one was the Hebrew centre of the city. This was Mill or Duke Street, which extended in the form of an elbow from the east side of Broad Street south into Stone Street, but now forms a part of South William Street. . . .

. . . The dirtiest street in the city was apparently Ferry Street, as on the 12th of August 1789 its inhabitants petitioned the Common Council that the sand and filth brought into the street by every heavy storm might be removed at public expense; but the Aldermen decided that the application was improper and that no such relief could be granted. . . .

The most important street in the city was Wall Street, which was the most fashionable place of residence, and in 1789 was the centre of the political life of the United States. . . . The value of real estate on Wall Street in 1789 may be judged by the sale for £1800 of two lots on the south side of the street near Pearl Street, being about 57 feet front and rear by 106 feet on one side and 135 feet on the other. . . .

Many of the residences in the suburbs of the city had been ruined during the Revolution and but few of them were sufficiently near to the closely inhabited portion of the city to appear on the city map of 1789. . . .[1]

Much of the housing legislation of this period was clearly an outgrowth of the pressure of population, of the recognition of the unsatisfactory results of unguided development, and of the growing realization of the need of anticipatory planning. Thus, the Legislature on April 16, 1787, prefaced its authorization to the Common Council to build sewers with the words "the buildings, streets, wharfs and slips in the city of New York, should be regulated with uniformity. . . ."

Whereas for the encouragement of the trade and commerce of this State, it is necessary, that the buildings, streets, wharfs and slips in the city of New York, should be regulated with uniformity, for the accommodation of habitations, shipping and transportation, [the common council is authorized] to make such bye-laws, ordinances, rules and orders for the better regulating and arranging with uniformity, such new buildings, as shall, after the passing of this act, be erected for habitations, or for the purposes of trade and commerce; and also for regulating and altering the streets, wharfs and slips in such manner as shall be most commodious for shipping and transportation.

And whereas in the laying out of new lots of ground for buildings, controversies may arise, by reason that a lot or lots, if built upon to their full extent, would incommode and obstruct some street of the said city, and be hurtful to the trade and health of the inhabitants thereof, [the common council is authorized] to hinder and prevent any building or buildings, that may narrow or encroach upon any street within the said city.

And whereas the dirt and soil lying in the streets, doth often prove a common nuisance, and very prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants of the same city, [the common council is authorized] to cause common sewers, drains and vaults to be made and constructed in any part of the said city, and to order and direct the pitching and paving the streets thereof; and the cutting into any drain or sewer already made or to be made; and the altering, amending, cleansing and scouring of any street, vault, sink or common sewer within the same city.[2]

1. Thomas E. V. Smith, *The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration 1789.*

2. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Sessions of the Legislature Held in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788, inclusive*, pp. 543–546.

Similarly the fire limits were extended on March 24, 1791, and the principle of the party or fire wall was established. The Legislature passed "An Act for the more effectual prevention of fires and to regulate certain buildings in the city of New York." This provided

That every dwelling house, or other building whatsoever, which shall be erected or built within the said city, to the south and west of a line beginning at the outlet of a meadow of Anthony Lispenard into Hudsons river, and thence running to and along the north side of the dwelling house of Nicholas Bayard, thence to and along the north side of the dwelling house of Richard Platt, and thence to and along the north side of the dwelling house of Abraham Cannon to the East River, consisting of three or more stories, shall be made and constructed of stone or brick, with party or fire walls rising twelve, inches above the roof, and shall be covered (except the flat roof thereof,) with tile or slate or other safe materials against fire, and not with board or shingles: And that the flat of any roof may be covered with boards or shingles; provided such flat do not exceed two equal fifth parts of the space of such roof, and there be erected around the same flat, a substantial balcony or balustrade.

If any building was erected contrary to the Act the owner was to be fined fifty pounds and the workmen twenty-five pounds. The law also provided that if any building erected south and west of the line before January 1, 1792, should need a new roof after that date, the owner might

roof the same with boards or shingles, or in such other way and manner as was customary before the passing of this act. [And] *whereas* it may be expedient to erect dwelling houses and other buildings on new made ground, in divers parts of the said city, where no sufficient foundation can be laid for heavy edifices of stone or brick. . . . it shall be lawful to and for any person or persons, to erect and build any wooden building or buildings on such new made ground,

if a jury of five disinterested persons should declare that a brick building could not be erected on the site.[1]

Equal breadth of vision was displayed on April 6, 1792, in the laws governing the filling in of vacant lots so as to provide for proper drainage.

Whereas . . . in the city of New York, in that part commonly called and known by the name of the Meadows, in the fifth ward of the said city, there are many vacant lots of land, which through the inattention of their owners have become deep sunk holes, the receptacles of water in the rainy seasons, and the source of many unwholesome and noxious stenches, [the Legislature authorized the Common Council] to order the filling in with earth, and raising the lots of ground and streets in all the aforesaid tract of land called the Meadows . . . to such heighth as to convey into the East river all the water which shall from time to time fall on the said tract of land, or run thereon from the adjoining lots and streets.[2]

Fire prevention merited and received considerable attention in the last decade.

1. *Ibid., 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1795 and 1796, inclusive*, pp. 253–254. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 343–344.

There was special legislation on March 31, 1795, to restrict the storage of sulphur, hemp, and flax, and it required that any building more than 28 feet in height should be construed as a building three or more stories in height, thus coming within the Act of 1791. An interesting provision was that rendering a building erected contrary to the latter act "liable to and chargeable with double taxes during so long time as such dwelling house or other buildings shall so continue."[1]

This was followed on April 3, 1797, by an extension of the fire limits to Montgomery and Cherry Streets on the east, through Pearl and Beekman Streets to Chatham Row, thence along Partition (now Fulton) Street to Hudson River and including houses on both sides of the streets mentioned.[2]

Population growth had been rapid. In 1786 there were only 23,614 people living in 3,340 houses,[3] but by 1800 that population had grown to 60,515.[4] The pressure of population was accompanied by many epidemics. One of the more serious of these was the yellow fever epidemic of 1791. This led in turn to a considerable development of health legislation. Jonas Smith Addoms, writing on the yellow fever epidemic of this year, noted that it began in a crowded district of small, ill-ventilated, unclean houses.

About the middle of August, 1791, a contagious fever appeared in the city of New-York, which first discovered itself near Peck's-slip, a part of the city thickly inhabited, its houses generally small, and badly ventilated: many of the inhabitants were in indigent circumstances, which is a frequent cause of the want of cleanliness. Here it raged a considerable time; it then began to spread, as some attendants on the sick became affected, who lived in other neighbourhoods. . . . Thus at length it spread through the city, until about the middle of October, when the weather growing a little cooler, the disease greatly abated, and in a short time nearly disappeared. . . .[5]

There was also a yellow fever epidemic in 1795, a bilious plague from 1796 to 1797, and another yellow fever epidemic in 1798. In 1795, we find that Dr. Valentine Seaman criticized low land, crowding, uncleanliness, cellar lodgings, and narrow streets in relation to yellow fever.

The increasing prevalence of the epidemic at the upper part of Water-street and in Cherry-street, and in all the neighboring low ground between them and Chatham and the lower part of George-streets, in the forepart of the *ninth month*, became so alarming as to drive most of the opulent of their inhabitants to the country, while the less prudent and the more indigent remained exposed to a disease, which, from this limited spot, in less than three months, carried as many as five hundred to their graves.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 580–581.
2. *Ibid., 1797, 1798, 1799 and 1800, inclusive*, pp. 132–133.
3. Stokes, V, 1227.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1514.
5. Jonas Smith Addoms, *An Inaugural Dissertation on the Malignant Fever, which prevailed in the city of New-York during the months of August, September, and October, in the year 1791.*

The disease was not, however, confined *entirely* to this part of the city, for in every other situation, favoring the accumulation of filth and stagnation of putrefactive materials, there it was no stranger: it raged with peculiar violence in the vicinity of a most intolerable pent up sink, to the west of Peck-slip, which is the receptacle for all the refuse kitchen articles, and yard wash of a number of lots fronting Pearl and Water-streets, that back upon it; it was likewise very prevalent in the neighborhood of the Fly market, also in and about Skinner-street, as well as in some of the unregulated grounds on the north side of the town.

If an account of the epidemic, as it pervaded the different parts of the town, could be accurately ascertained, . . . there can be no manner of doubt, but that the low ground in the south-east of the city as above mentioned, would appear as the grand center of the calamity, diffusing its effects, like diverging rays, to the adjacent parts; aiding by its most powerful influence, different secondary centers, already smoking hot, to flame out its pestiferous operations. The many solitary cases of the disease that have occurred in distant healthy situations, appear to have been kindled up by imprudent individual exposures too near these sources of infection.

The black people appeared to be as subject to the disease as the whites, but it was not so fatal to them; . . .

Several circumstances tended to render the disease particularly fatal to the more indigent part of the community: 1st. The higher prices of house-rent in the other parts of the city, having concentered a great proportion of them in the epidemic neighborhood, and crouded them in very small confined apartments; a number of houses contained as many families as it had rooms in it. 2d. Their poverty not permitting them to quit their place of residence when disease came around them. 3d. The great difficulty of getting nurses, and their exorbitant prices preventing them from getting proper attendance before their situation became known to the Committee of Health, . . . 4th. The neglect of obtaining early medical assistance, from a hope that their disease was not the prevailing one; and 5th. The refusal of many, after they were taken ill, thus miserably situated, to go to Belle Vue, "lest (to use their own expression) they should catch the Yellow-Fever and die."

Foreigners who came from a more temperate climate, as the English, Irish, Scotch, &c. and people from the country, who had not long resided in town, were particularly obnoxious to this complaint.

The French from the West-Indies, seemed proof against the influence of this epidemic, a numerous family of them continued in the midst of it, and viewed without danger the death of a great many, and the disease of nearly all their neighbors who remained in town; not one of them suffered the least indisposition: In another boarding house of them, containing at least thirty or forty persons, not far from Peck-slip, not any of them took the complaint, although numbers of the other inhabitants were dropping away with it, on every side of them. . . .

. . . I am led to believe according to my best judgment, that four fifths of all the lots in this affected part of the city, were situated below the level of the streets they fronted, whence from our regular rains, they very generally became stagnant, putrid mud puddles. . . .

The most probable means of preventing a like calamity in the future will be — 1st, To have all the lots, particularly in the low parts of the town, filled up, so as to afford a sufficient descent to carry off the water into the streets, and not permit any of it to stagnate in them. 2d, To have the dirt and filth in the streets and yards more carefully and frequently cleared away. 3d, To have the docks repaved and regulated in such a manner, as not to permit the mud to

gather and be exposed to the sun at the ebb of the tide. 4th, To have the spaces under the granaries and storehouses on the docks, properly filled up or walled in. 5th, To prevent great quantities of street-dirt and manure from being collected in heaps, and left for any time on the vacant lots, in and about the city. 6th, To have the streets properly paved with a sufficient descent to prevent any water from standing in them; and 7th, To have the common sewers, in good order and well covered. . . .

Dr. E. H. Smith wrote on the same subject as follows:

A line, drawn from the corner of Ferry and Pearl-streets, up the latter, to where William street enters it; then down William to Franckfort, and through that, a part of Gold and Ferry-streets, to Pearl-street again, will form the ridge of a new cavity (included in the principle boundaries above mentioned) which seems contrived, by art, for the dwelling place of fever. This court-yard of the palace of death, is divided by several dismal lanes, courteously denominated streets; such as Vandewater, Rose and Jacob-streets, &c. which form the borders to innumerable tan-vats. The whole is one vast tan-yard, the firm parts of which seem to have been constructed by art in the midst of an extensive quagmire. To this place, as far as I can discover there is no outlet. Think what must be the condition of it, in the months of August and September! — Yet human beings live here; and habit renders its noxious exhalations, in some part, harmless to them. It is remarkable that few persons, regularly inhabiting this hollow, died of the fever last year. To those, whose evil destiny led them to seek a new dwelling place there, it proved highly pestilential.

Dover-street is a short, narrow street, running from the beginning of Cherry-street, down to the East river; and contains near twenty buildings. — The descent, from Cherry into Water-street, is very rapid. . . . The descent makes it easy to keep the surface of the street clean; though it prevents a free ventilation. But it has been raised, several feet, since the buildings, which are mostly low, were erected; so that the road is, in many instances, up to the middle of the lower story windows; leaving the cellars to the houses, and cellar kitchens, without a communication with the street. The yards remaining as before, are, of consequence, much lower than the street; without vent; and, of necessity, all the water and filth of every kind, which gathers in them, must there stagnate, ferment and putrify. Add to this, some of these yards are capacious, and contain little, decayed, wooden huts; sometimes built directly on the ground; and containing, oftentimes, several families. . . .

. . . I have, in a former letter, given you some account of the condition of that part of the town, where the Fever most prevailed; it is now to be noticed that it is in that district that the greatest number of the poor, especially the emigrant poor, reside. In those numerous miserable dwellings, were these wretched people crowded together; many families in one house; and not infrequently many families of different nations. In some instances, a single room in one of those half-under-ground huts, served as bedroom, kitchen and shop, to a whole family; while underneath them, a cellar, half filled with mud and water, sent up its pestilential steams, and under their window, a yard in the same condition, was rendered still more noxious, by receiving the offals cast out from every part of the house.

. . . But, if the sordid and almost unavoidable filthiness of their dwellings were promotive of the disease, under which the wretched inhabitants languished or suffered, still more so, in some instances, must have been their inattention to personal cleanliness. . . .

As methods for preventing similar epidemics, Noah Webster suggested:

To remove the sources of the evil, infinite care should be taken in building cities, to leave no low grounds or hollow places among the buildings, as receptacles of water and filth. The back yards should, in every case, be raised above the pavement of the streets, and the streets should be so raised, as to give a considerable descent into the adjoining river or sea. . . . It should be an article of the police of every city, that no man should erect a house, without at the same time raising the back yard, to give a descent into the street. The yard should also be paved, if among other buildings in a compact part of the city; and no filthy water from the house should be suffered to lodge in back yards. . . .

The streets of a city should, if possible, be strait. . . . Crooked or winding streets tend to break the force of the wind; . . .

. . . wide streets, if kept clean, are doubtless the most healthy as they admit a larger quantity of pure air, and a more free circulation. . . .

Another article in constructing a city for health, is, that as few streets as possible should terminate within the city; that is, inclosed, at the ends as well as sides, by ranges of buildings. Wherever a street terminates by a block of houses, the circulation of air is obstructed. . . .

In the construction of dwelling houses, equal attention is required to the form and position, in order to promote ventilation. Under ground stories for the habitation of families it would be well to prohibit altogether. As work-shops they are less pernicious; but are generally unfavorble to health. In some cases, rooms partly below ground are so situated, as to admit a current of air through them. In such cases, they may be occupied with more safety.

The circumstance of admitting fresh air through rooms by opposite corresponding windows or doors, is one that ought never to be neglected, in low situations and crouded places. The difference in the circulation of air, is immense, when the air can pass through a room in a direct line. Side doors and windows do not effectually answer the purpose; and when there is no opening into a room, but on one side, there can be very little circulation. . . .

The total number of deaths from the fever was 732.

Of these, about 150 only were citizens of New-York. The rest were emigrants, many of whom arrived during the sickness. Four hundred and sixty-two of the number belonged to the Catholic Congregation, under the Rev. Mr. O'Brien; most of whom were so recently from Ireland, that Mr. O'Brien did not know one twentieth of them.[1]

Reverend O'Brien is quoted by Bayley in a paragraph describing the cellar dwellings of recent immigrants.

". . . I found in most places, a total want of every necessary of life. Numbers of poor sufferers, confined in subterraneous apartments, which admitted no light, but from their hatch-doors; so that when shut down at night, it might literally be said of them that they were buried alive. In the progress of visiting the sick, I was much disgusted at the abominable, uncleanly state of their miserable habitations, and a total want of necessaries: for in most places, they had

1. Noah Webster, *A Collection of Papers on the subject of Bilious Fevers prevalent in the United States for a few years past*, pp. 4–7, 35–36, 39, 70–71, 88, 207, 210–212, 246.

not even a stool to sit on, nor a bed to lie upon. On inquiry, I found the much greater part of them to be emigrants of that very summer; insomuch that out of four hundred and sixty-two of my congregation, who sunk under the disorder, nineteen twentieths were totally unknown to me."[1]

Matthew L. Davis, writing on the same subject, thus explained the conditions which forced some of the poor people to live in underground apartments:

New York was, doubtless, one of the most increasing and flourishing cities in the United States. Some idea may be formed of its rapid population, by remarking, that in the year 1791 it contained about 4,700 families, and in May 1795 about 9,000. . . . Since the commencement of the present war between France and the combined despots, the necessaries of life had progressively risen, till they arrived at an enormous price, and in many particulars beyond what was ever remembered before. . . . What was still more distressing, the rise of mechanical labour had by no means been equal, or bore a just proportion to the former. The one had arisen, in many instances, an hundred per cent. While the other, generally speaking, had not rise more than twenty-five to thirty. The rent of houses had also nearly doubled, particularly those which were situated in the most public streets. . . .

In consequence of the enormous price of rents, many families, particularly among the Irish emigrants, were reduced to the necessity of living, or rather existing, in damp cellars, and among this class of people it will be found that the disorder was most prevalent, and operated most powerfully. . . .[2]

Griscom said of the epidemic of 1797:

Yellow fever . . . appeared to a moderate extent in New York, causing 23 deaths. Its chief locality then was East George (now Market) Street, and its vicinity. The first case occurred July 1. The patient was removed to the Lazaretto, on Bedlow's Island. Two of his next-door neighbors next fell under its power, and thence it extended itself through the most offensive parts of that offensive street; 10 of these cases occurring in the compass of 17 houses, and 12 around Fly Market, at foot of Maiden Lane.[3]

James Hardie described the epidemic of 1798 as follows:

The malignant Fever which committed so dreadful havoc amongst the inhabitants of New York, made its appearance towards the end of July. Its first victim, in all probability was Mr. Melancton Smith, who died on the 28th or 29th of that month, after an illness of a very few days. . . . Mr. Smith is said to have been taken sick at his store, in Front-street near Coenties-slip, and a few days after his death, several persons were attacked with sickness in that vicinity.

Whether any cases of pestilential fever existed in the earlier part of August, remote from the place where it was believed to have originated, I have not been able to ascertain: But of this I am certain, that about the 20th of the month, cases of a highly malignant nature appeared in various parts of the city, and in particular it began to range with great violence at the

1. Richard Bayley, *An Account of the Epidemic Fever which prevailed in the City of New-York during part of the summer and fall of 1795*, pp. 89–90.

2. M. L. Davis, *A Brief Account of the Epidemical Fever Which lately prevailed in the City of New York; . . .*, pp. 6–7.

3. John H. Griscom, *A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York*, p. 8.

New Slip, in Cliff-street and John-street, but more especially in Eden's-Alley and Rider-street, where not a family escaped it. . . . About the same time it likewise spread its ravages in Ann-street, Fair-street, Cherry-street, Augustus-street, and also at the ship yards, and about the beginning of September, I know of few places in the city where there were not some solitary cases. . . .

On the 12th, 13th, and 14th of August, there was heavy showers of rain; . . . The streets were covered with water, in many cases knee deep, and a vast number of cellars were filled with it . . . from this day it almost immediately began to spread in every direction. . . .

The result of the whole number of deaths, during this awful calamity, was two thousand and eighty six, viz. eleven hundred and ten men, five hundred and eighty-nine women and eight hundred and eighty-five children. Of these, if we admit that one hundred died of the fever in August, its victims would amount to one thousand five hundred and twenty-four. . . .

In a calamity so terrible and unexpected, the distress of the labouring poor were unavoidably great. The general stagnation of business had deprived them of their ordinary means of support and rendered them unable to remove where employment and subsistence might be had. To add to their difficulties, their employers, and more affluent acquaintances, who might have been disposed to relieve their wants, had in general fled.[1]

A report to the Common Council on January 21, 1799, ascribed the yellow fever epidemic to cellar lodgings, water lots, slips, privies, etc.

The following REPORT was read and ordered to be published, for the information of the public, viz.

WE the Subscribers, a joint Committee from the Common Council, from the Chamber of Commerce, and from the Medical Society, with the Commissioners of the Health Office, being appointed to investigate the causes of the PESTILENTIAL DISEASE which has lately prevailed in this City, and to suggest the best means to prevent its return — respectfully submit the following

REPORT.

Among the more obvious causes which contributed to produce the Disease, and the means of preventing its return — are,

I. DEEP DAMP CELLARS AND FILTHY SUNKEN YARDS

A number of such Cellars in different parts of the City, and particularly along the East River, are used for sailor's boarding places and tippling shops, and during the last summer proved as so many graves to those who frequented them; and many yards are so situated as that the water, and fluids of all other kinds collecting therein, are not carried off by drains either over or under ground, thus becoming a source of noxious exhalations:

The Committee, therefore, recommend that a law may be passed authorizing any person or persons, for that purpose appointed by the Corporation, to enter into any buildings and grounds suspected to be in the state beforementioned — that a report thereof may be made to them and that they may be furnished with power to pass ordinances for the filling up, draining and regulating of such grounds, yards and cellars; and, in case such ordinances are not com-

1. James Hardie, *An Account of the malignant fever lately prevalent in the city of New York.*

plied with, to cause the same to be done by persons appointed for that purpose, the expense of which to be considered as a claim upon such property prior to all others whatsoever — And in cases where there are more than one lot of ground affected by such regulations and filling up, that five freeholders be appointed to assess upon each of such lots, such proportion of the said expense as equity and good conscience may dictate to them.

II. Unfinished Water Lots

There is good reason to conclude that the unfinished state of the water lots upon the front of the city, contribute to produce disease: The Corporation ought therefore to have full power to cause all such water lots to be filled up with wholesome earth or other solid materials, to the outermost permanent line, as soon as possible. And in cases where the Corporation find it improper to improve to the said permanent line immediately, they ought to have the power of compelling proprietors to make sufficient bulkheads, and to raise and fill up the same with wholesome earth or other solid materials, so high as to cast the water collecting thereon, over the surface into the streets or river; and if the proprietor or proprietors of such lot or lots, refuse or delay complying with any ordinances that the Corporation may pass relative to either of the above cases; then and in that case, the Corporation ought to have the power of causing the same to be done in the manner that improvements are now made in the streets by assessment.

III. Public Slips

The quantity of noxious air arising from foul slips, and the annoyance thereby experienced among the inhabitants in their vicinity, makes it necessary that some measures should be taken to correct this increasing evil. The Corporation therefore ought to have full power to cause to be filled up, altered and amended, all public slips, at such times and in such manner as they think proper; one third of the expenses attending the same to be paid by themselves, and two thirds to be assessed by five freeholders appointed for that purpose, upon the property in the neighbourhood of such slip or slips, in proportion to the benefits the respective proprietors thereof may receive.

IV. Sinks and Privies

The noxious exhalations arising from sinks and privies in this city, have afforded just cause of complaint, and require that the Corporation should have power to correct this growing evil, by directing the filling up, altering or amending of those now in use, and the mode of constructing them in future; and causing subterraneous drains to be made from them in all cases where they may think it necessary; the expense thereof to be paid by assessment upon the proprietors in the manner that assessments are made for improving streets.

V. Burial Grounds

The interment of dead bodies in the compact part of the city, between the first of May and the first of November, should be prohibited; and all graves should in future be dug at least six feet deep.

VI. Narrow Streets

It is found that new streets are frequently laid out in various parts of this city and its suburbs, so narrow as to prevent the free circulation of air: and that the borders of such streets are generally crouded with small wooden houses, with very small, and in some cases, no yards. It is therefore desirable, that in future, no street should be laid out within the city of New York or its suburbs, but such as shall be first approved of by the Corporation. Experience has shewn, that during the prevalence of pestilence in this city, it has proved particularly fatal in such streets.

VII. Sailors Boarding Houses and Tipling Houses

These are the resort of sailors and the lower class of emigrants, and other disorderly persons; where drunkenness and debaucheries of every kind are committed, which often produce diseases of the most serious nature, especially during the summer months. Every necessary power to correct this evil, ought to be lodged in the Corporation.

VIII. Digging up Made Ground

The ground gained out into the river being composed in a great measure, of materials collected from the streets, is found, if dug up between the first of June and the twentieth of October, to produce noxious exhalations: It is therefore recommended that no such ground be permitted to be dug up, during the above period, without permission first obtained from the Corporation, under heavy penalties.

IX. Putrid Substances,

Whether Animal or Vegetable

The practice of re-packing and storing salted provisions in the city of New York, very much annoys the inhabitants in the vicinity of yards and store-houses where such re-packing and storing is done; and there is no doubt that the pickle necessarily collected upon, and absorbed into all grounds where provisions are repacked, together with provisions themselves very often becoming putrid in the course of the hot season, have furnished exhalations not only calculated to spread diseases, but from the most unequivocal evidence, did produce it in the course of the last season. Dried and pickled fish, hides and skins, are articles that produce similar injury; for although these, as well as pickled provisions, may be in a sound state at the time of landing here, (which very often is not the case) yet, in the course of the hot season, they frequently become putrid, the first baneful evidence of which, is the sickly state of the inhabitants in their vicinity. Therefore, all salted beef and pork in casks, all dried and pickled fish, and imported hides and skins, now in the city, ought to be removed to the northward of a line drawn from Corlear's Hook to the North River, before the first day of May next: and no barrels of beef or pork, no [s]alted or pickled fish, nor imported hides and skins, should be stored to the southward of the said line after that time, except that any person be allowed to keep in a proper store, five barrels of beef and pork, three barrels of pickled fish, and four hundred weight of

dried fish at any time, and no more under the penalty of for every offence — And all beef and pork found by the Inspectors in a tainted or corrupted state, and unfit for use or exportation, ought to be destroyed by starting it out of the cask into the stream of the river, at a suitable distance from shore: and the stores or houses of inspection ought not to be permitted on the south side of a line drawn from the East River along Grand street and Bayard's Lane, North River, except on the margin of the Rivers, and then not on the south of Rhinelander's wharf, north of Reed street, nor of Rutger's slip on the East River.

X. Water

In suggesting the means of removing the causes of pestilential diseases, we consider a plentiful supply of fresh water as one of the most powerful, and earnestly recommend that some plan for its introduction into this city, be carried into execution as soon as possible.[1]

April 10, 1799:

The following Report of the Committee on the subject of cleaning the Streets & removing Filth & Dirt was read and agreed to by the Board viz. . . .

That the Corporation should take measures to Collect the Street Dirt and Manure at their own expence and sell the same and for the greater Convenience of Carrying into effect such an Arrangement

That the City should be divided into three districts each to be Swept and the Dirt Removed twice a Week in daily Rotation and that the following Division will be found the most Convenient

1st District — Broadway and that part of the City laying to the Westward of it.

2d District — That part of the said City laying to the Southward of Broadway and to the Westward [of] Beekman Street through Pearl Street to Peck's Slip including the last mentioned three Streets or such parts of them as this Boundary passes through and the Street at the head of the Slip.

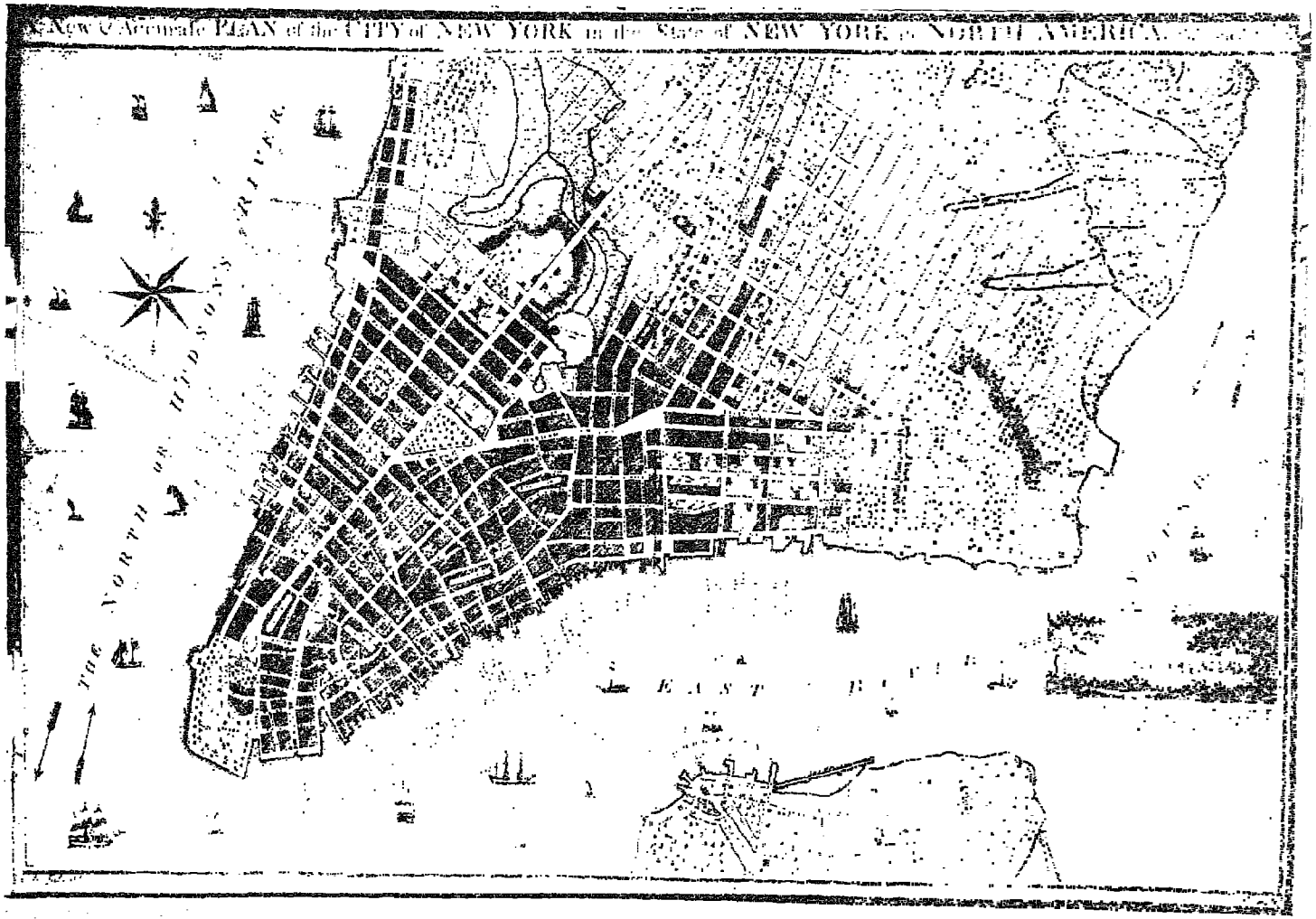
3d District — That part of the City laying to the Southward and Eastward of the other two Districts

That as many Carts as may be found necessary be hired to Remove the Dirt and Manure either to Vessels or to some place to be provided in or near to the City for the Temporary deposit of such parts as may not be taken away dailey by Vessels and as it may be expected at some Seasons of the year the Boats usually employed in Carrying Manure will be otherways engaged and at such times so much would be Collected in the said place of Deposit as to give uneasiness to them who may reside in the Neighbourhood.

They are therefore of Opinion it would be proper for the Corporation to buy two Pettit Augers to be employed Occasionally in Removing the Manure from the first place of Deposit to one more distant and when not engaged [illegible] they may be employed in delivering Manure at such Landings as may [illegible] of purchasers.

That two Men with Carts and Bells be employed to go daily through the two Districts that are not Sweeping for the purpose of Collecting the Garbage and Offals from Yards and Kitchens

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, II, 491–499. An additional report of much the same import was submitted on January 28, 1799 (*ibid.*, pp. 500–505).



The Taylor-Roberts Plan, 1796. *Iconography*, Vol. I, Pl. 64.

FIG. 8

for which purpose they should Ring the Bell at Suitable Distances to Notify the Inhabitants to bring out the same and put it into the Carts.

Your Committee further Report that two Street Commissioners should be appointed with an Annual Compensation whose duty it should be to Examine all Lots, Cellars, Sewers, Sinks and Yards and to Report from time to time such of them to the Corporation as in their Opinion should be filled up Altered or Cleansed and to Superintend and Carry into effect the foregoing regulations as well as all Bye Laws Relative to the same and Collect all Penalties incurred under them to hire a Superintendant and other necessary Persons for Accomplishing the said Work to Sell the Manure and keep all the Accounts Relative to this Department and at least once a year make up the same and lay them before the Corporation and to Suggest any Improvement to this System that may to them seem proper.[1]

It was a growing recognition of the intolerable nature of the housing so graphically described in the above quotations that probably precipitated the appointment by Legislature on February 10, 1797, of three Commissioners of Health for New York City. The first paragraph of the law which authorized their appointment required them "to make and execute rules and orders for cleaning and scouring the streets, allys, passages, curtilages, sewers, yards, cellars, vaults, sinks and other places within the said city. . . ." Obviously the primary concern was housing.[2]

Use zoning received further recognition in the third paragraph of the Act setting the northern limit at Grand Street and making it possible for the city authorities to make arrangements for removal of noxious industries.

And be it further enacted That from and after the first day of July next, no person shall dress sheep or lamb skins, or manufacture glue, nor shall any soap boiler or tallow chandler, or starch maker, or maker or dresser of vellum carry on any of their processes or operations of their said trades which produce impure air, or offensive smells, such as trying or melting of fat or tallow, boiling soap, fermenting grain or other substances for starch, washing, fermenting or oiling skins for vellum at any place within the city of New York, south of the south side of Grant [Grand] street, and of the south side of the said street, continued until it intersects the easterly side of Mulberry street, and south of the west line from the intersection aforesaid continued to Hudsons river, under the penalty of one hundred dollars for each offence. . . .

And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of the said city of New York to treat and agree with such of the owners or proprietors of the manufactories, trades [illegible] for the taking down, removal and replacing the vessels and [illegible] and trades, in such part of the said city in which such manufacturers and trades may by this act be established and prosecuted; . . .[3]

By the end of the century New York was thus suffering from overcrowding of rooms, cellar dwellings, inadequate ventilation, foul streets and alleys, inadequate

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 512–514.
2. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Sessions of the Legislature held in the years 1797, 1798, 1799 and 1800, inclusive*, pp. 14–16.
3. *Ibid.*

and dangerous water supply, foul privy vaults — the problems that were to plague it in ever-increasing degree during the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, the city was growing with great rapidity. The Duke De La Rochefoucault Liancourt, on his visit to New York in 1797, reported that 450 new houses had been built during that year. There had been such rapid recovery of the burned district that he reported it to be "now one of the handsomest parts." The streets in the burned district had been straightened and widened and in the newer part of the city by the Hudson River, the streets were stated to be "straight, broad, intersecting each other at right angles and with houses much better built." [1]

John Payne, in 1799, noted that the city was at that time two miles in length and that the north side on the banks of the Hudson was growing most rapidly. The whole number of streets in the city he reported to be 137, "the principal of which are Front, Water, Pearl, William, Nassau, Greenwich, Wall, Broad Street and Broad Way. . . ." [2] At the very end of the century the Manhattan Company was at last ready to supply certain sections of the city with water.[3]

There had been a beginning of construction of sewers, and thus through engineering developments New York was beginning to escape two of the most serious menaces to health, even though the correlation between impure drinking water and disease was still imperfectly recognized. Safety had been materially increased by fire-prevention legislation, and the amenities of life, by crude attempts at use zoning and street widening in the southern part of the city, and by street planning to the north and west. Transportation was still by stage-coach, but the spirit of the populace was definitely becoming progressive, and business once again was prosperous and full of enterprise.

1. Duke De La Rochefoucault Liancourt, *Travels through the United States of North America . . . in the years 1795, 1796 and 1797*, II, 456–461.
2. John Payne, *A New and Complete System of Universal Geography*, IV, 302–306.
3. Stokes, V, 1371.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE TENEMENT ERA

1800–1850

In 1800 the population of the entire United States was considerably less than that of New York City today; but during the first half of the century that population increased from a little over 5,000,000 to 23,000,000. For the first quarter of the century our presidents were men who had been conspicuous and effective statesmen during the period in which our Federal Government was founded. There was still much of the flavor of the colonial period in 1800, for there were only sixteen states in the Union, and the patriots who had founded our nation were still influential. The number of states nearly doubled in the next half century and many changes correspondingly occurred in prevailing attitudes. The economic life of America was much affected by the controversies with Great Britain — the blockade and subsequent embargo, which lasted from 1806 until the War of 1812 had been closed by the Peace of Ghent in December 1814. A protective tariff in 1816, the financial crisis of 1819, the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the "tariff of abominations" in 1828, the spoils system during Andrew Jackson's presidency, 1829 to 1837, the organization of Abolitionists in 1831, the tariff of 1832, the nullification proclamation of 1832 refuting state rights, the compromise tariff of 1833, the financial crisis of 1837 with its over-issue of paper money, the formation of an independent treasury in 1840, S. F. B. Morse's experiments with the telegraph, which resulted in the construction of the first experimental line between Washington and Baltimore in 1844, the Oregon Treaty of 1846, the war with Mexico, 1846 to 1848, were all events that affected for good or ill the internal economic and political life of New York City.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries New York had developed from a rough village colony of scattered houses to the largest city on the North American Continent. Yet at the close of the eighteenth century it was still a city of a little over 60,000 population — a population which could have been accommodated within only a dozen or so blocks a century later.

The New York of 1800 was a community with a population no larger than the 1930 census revealed for Davenport, Iowa; Charleston, West Virginia; Augusta, Georgia; Hoboken, New Jersey; Chester, Pennsylvania; or Mount Vernon, New

York. Yet the city's relative influence on the affairs of the nation and the world, particularly in the economic field, was incomparably greater than that of any American city of the same size today. As a seaport for international trade, as a financial center, New York's influence was destined to develop increasingly throughout the coming century. The sources of this power — the exceptional harbor and the ready access to all America's raw materials — were becoming increasingly apparent, and destined, in subsequent generations, to exploitation by genius in the field of economic organization.

In the field of invention, engineering, and transportation this half century witnessed remarkable developments. Transportation, and ultimately transit, as well as real estate values, were profoundly influenced by the report in 1811 of the commissioners for laying out streets, and by the map which they filed on March 22 of that year.[1]

The New York Gas Company was chartered on March 26, 1823.[2] The first franchise was issued in that year and in the following year the first New York house was lighted by gas. The Pennsylvania Railroad was incorporated in 1823, the New York and Harlem Railroad in 1831, and the Broadway Elevated Railroad was proposed in 1832. In that same year the New York and Harlem Railroad was opened, and extended in the following years, and in 1834 the Long Island Railroad was incorporated. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad was incorporated ten years later and opened in 1848 to New Haven. The Hudson River Railroad was incorporated in 1846 and opened to Poughkeepsie in 1849.

The water supply had been far from adequate, and the Manhattan Water Works on Chambers Street, organized in 1799, had but a limited service from its reservoir, which was supplied by water pumped from a well. The old "tea water pump" on Park Row was still a major source of supply until 1827.[3] Preparations for the Croton Aqueduct, however, began in 1832; after a municipal vote the survey was begun in 1835, and the completion of the aqueduct was celebrated in 1842. From this year on, water-closets were installed in the private dwellings of the more well-to-do families. The first stationary bathtub with plumbing was installed in Cincinnati in 1842. The report of the special Survey Commission for the laying out of streets in Brooklyn was made in 1839.[4] In the same year the contract was awarded for High Bridge over the Harlem River; it was completed in 1848.

The decade from 1800 to 1810 was one in which the struggles of the recently created nation were great in the economic, as well as the political, sphere. The

1. Stokes, V, 1531–1532; *Regional Survey*, VIII, 156–162.
2. Stokes, V, 1628.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 1664.
4. *Regional Survey*, VIII, 163.

embargo of 1807, which continued beyond this decade, was a source of serious limitation upon the economic aspirations of business leaders. There were families of wealth, but there was also much poverty, largely as a consequence of the struggles through the period of the Revolutionary War — for the influence of protracted wars is keenly felt for a full generation — and of the embargo and other international difficulties.

Between 1800 and 1810 the population of New York City grew from 60,515 to 96,373. Contemporary descriptions at the beginning of the century showed the fashionable sections of the city at "Wall and Pine streets, between Broadway and Pearl streets; and also on Pearl street from Hanover Square, (now Old slip) to John street; some along State street; and also in Broadway, from below Wall street to the Battery." [1]

Land prices had increased to the point where lots at Broadway and Maiden Lane reached $22 per square foot.[2] The *Spectator* reported in October 1800 that fifty three-story houses were being erected and an equal number of two-story houses.[3]

Contagious diseases caused much trouble. Fever broke out in 1800 near Pearl Street and the East River.[4] Again in 1801 a fever broke out in the vicinity of East Rutgers (now Rutgers) and Lumber (now Church) Streets and caused over 150 deaths.[5] In 1803 yellow fever broke out in "The streets lying near the margins of the two rivers, and those inhabited by the poor, uncleanly and dissolute classes of the community, suffered the principal ravages of the disease. The deaths amounted to between 600 and 700." [6] Another epidemic of yellow fever appeared in 1805, when damp cellar lodgings were again reputed to be one cause of the disease.[7]

> . . . Amongst the several nuisances which exist in this city, there appears to be none of a more serious and alarming magnitude, than the allowing people to lodge in low, damp cellars. Of a number of persons who were taken sick in such places, there is scarcely a single instance of any one having recovered, unless speedily removed to the Marine or Bellevue Hospital, or to some other place, where they could enjoy a pure and salubrious atmosphere.[8]

Miller, on January 12, 1806, reported:

> During the early period of the epidemic, nearly all the cases took place on the eastern side of the city, in Front, Water and Pearl streets, and principally below Burling-slip. They after-

1. Stokes, v, 1374, citing Watson's *Annals*.
2. Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *New York City in Olden Times, consisting of newspaper cuttings*.
3. Stokes, v, 2380, citing the *Spectator*, October 8, 1800.
4. John H. Griscom, *A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York*, p. 10.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. Robert Sutcliff, *Travels in Some Parts of North America in the Years 1804, 1805 and 1806*; John Lambert, *Travels through Canada and the United States of North America, in the Years 1806, 1807 and 1808*, vol. II.
8. James Hardie, *An Account of the Malignant Fever, which prevailed in the City of New-York during the Autumn of 1805*, p. 133.

wards became more generally diffused. About the 20th of September, they began to prevail near the North River. On the whole, the low grounds on the margin of the two rivers certainly produced a chief part of the cases. . . .

The sources of pernicious exhalation in this city are unhappily very numerous and difficult to correct. . . . The mode of constructing our wharves and slips would almost induce the belief that they had been designed for repositories of filth and nurseries of disease. The *made ground* on the East river is pregnant with almost annual pestilence; it is now become enormously extensive; it was originally composed of the most corrupt materials; from its relation to the river, and the condition of the wharves and slips, it must constantly remain moist; from its surface being nearly level, it receives and retains the collected filth washed down from the higher grounds; and besides all this, the offensive and putrid matter, which a crowded population must necessarily deposit, and which already underlays a great proportion of this part of the city, incessantly augments the mass of corruption. . . .

. . . Among the improvements of the most urgent and immediate necessity, I consider the following, to wit; *Water*, obtained from a distant source, of pure quality, and in quantity sufficient to allow a constant, plentiful, and increasing expenditure; *Sewers*, of such number, capacity and construction, as completely to drain all the low and marshy districts, to carry away all filth, and to be constantly washed by a brisk current of water; a new arrangement and construction of wharves, docks, &c. so as to face the margin of the two rivers with a stone quay, impervious to water; a prohibition to make a single additional foot of artificial ground on either of the rivers; a different modification of privies which are every day becoming more and more an alarming nuisance, and will soon underlay with filth a large portion of the city; a better plan of paving, more particularly as respects the construction of gutters, &c.; the draining of all stagnant waters in the town and neighborhood, the filling up, levelling and paving all low and depressed lots and places of whatever description; and a prohibition hereafter to inter dead bodies in any part of the city.[1]

One notes in the contemporary accounts of these epidemics that they originated among the poor and that, although the causes now ascribed by medical science were not then recognized, there are intimations in the medical literature of the correlation of certain diseases with bad conditions of housing. This meant, in turn, that efforts to improve housing conditions received support and contemporary justification from medical literature.

Thus the Board of Health addressed the citizens of New York on July 11, 1805, with a statement of the measures, external and internal, intended to guard against foreign and domestic causes of disease.

The *internal* precautions comprehend those laws and regulations, which respect the removal of nuisances, and the preservation of cleanliness in the city; the principal of which follow.

No dead animal shall be left exposed, in any place, within the first eight wards of the city, under the penalty of ten dollars. . . .

Boarding-houses shall be kept neat and clean, and no more lodgers shall be admitted than the City Inspector shall think proper, under the penalty of twenty-five dollars, for each person

1. Dr. Edward Miller, *Report on the Malignant Disease, which prevailed in the City of New York in the Autumn of 1805*, pp. 46, 48, 75.

exceeding such number. The City Inspector or his agent shall, likewise, examine them, at least once a week, during the summer. . . .

All dirt and filth shall be brought out from houses, cellars, alleys, yards and lots, (twice a-week), on sweeping days, before ten o'clock in the morning, under the penalty of two dollars. . . .

No privy shall be emptied during the summer, except between the hours of eleven at night and three in the morning, under the penalty of five dollars, nor shall any human excrements be thrown into any street, lane, alley, dock, &c. under the penalty of ten dollars.

No new made ground shall be turned up, during the summer months, under the penalty of twenty-five dollars.

Gutters shall be thoroughly sweeped out and cleansed on sweeping days, under the penalty of two dollars.

Noisome or offensive substances shall not be deposited in any place to the southward of Grand-street; nor shall any pit for tanners and skinners, or pool of stagnant water be allowed, except in Beekman's swamp, under the penalty of five dollars. Manufactories which emit offensive smells, may, likewise, be suspended by the Board of Health. . . .

Undressed skins, hides, blubber, &c. shall not be kept to the southward and westward of Catherine-street, and the Fresh-Water-Pond, under the penalty of five dollars for every twenty-four hours neglect.

Putrid and unsound provisions shall be destroyed by starting them into the river, and no salted or pickled fish, (except smoked) shall be kept to the southward of Grand-street, between the 1st of May and 1st of October, under a penalty not exceeding 500 dollars, or imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Nuisances of every other description must be removed or remedied, agreeably to the mode prescribed by the City Inspector, under the penalty of five dollars for every twenty-four hours neglect; . . .

Any physician, having a patient labouring under a pestilential or infectious disease, shall forthwith report in writing to one of the Commissioners of the Health-Office, under the penalty of fifty dollars.[1]

On January 20, 1806, "The Committee of the Board of Health, appointed to consider what preventive measures may be necessary to secure the health of the City of New-York," made a report that is rare in its breadth and in its anticipation of attitudes still considered "modern." Especially impressive in their relation to housing are the paragraphs relating to sewers, the planting of trees, and the employment of a "scientific and skilful engineer."

That the introduction of a copious supply of pure and wholesome water as well for domestic use, as for the purpose of sprinkling the streets and cleansing the kennels, during the summer season, is essentially necessary. . . .

That common sewers ought to be constructed in such streets of this city as are of sufficient

1. Hardie, pp. 28–34.

descent to the river, in order to drain cellars and low grounds, and to discharge kitchen and backwater under ground as much as possible. . . .

That the interment of dead bodies within the city ought to be prohibited. A vast mass of decaying animal matter, produced by the superstition of interring dead bodies near to churches, and which has been accumulating for a long lapse of time, is now deposited in many of the most populous parts of the city. It is impossible that such a quantity of these animal remains, even if placed at the greatest depth of interment commonly practiced, should continue to be inoffensive and safe. . . . But if it should be decided still to persist in the practice of interment within the city, it ought to be judged necessary to order the envelopement of the bodies in some species of calcareous earth, either quick lime or chalk. The present burial grounds might serve extremely well for plantations of grove and forest trees, and thereby, instead of remaining receptacles of putrefying matter and hot beds of miasmata, might be rendered useful and ornamental to the city. . . .

That the planting of trees and other healthy vegetables ought to be encouraged. There is good reason to believe, that frequent extensive and numerous plantations of trees, and cultivating with care, wherever room can be found, the smaller plants, would be an important step towards rendering the city more like the country, as to the condition of its atmosphere, and thereby diminishing the prevalence of pestilential diseases. It is believed, that ten or twenty times, or perhaps a greater proportion of vegetable growth, beyond the existing amount, might be introduced into this city, not only without inconvenience or injury to the public but so as greatly to conduce to its pleasantness, ornament, healthfulness, and the protection of its inhabitants from the effects of the direct rays of the sun in summer and in the beginning of autumn.

That a scientific and skilful engineer should be employed to assist in projecting and executing the several objects embraced in this report. It cannot be too frequently inculculated on the minds of our citizens, that in all the improvements to be undertaken in New-York, we ought as far as possible to avail ourselves of the examples exhibited in the old cities of the eastern continent, and to admit only such things as have been sanctioned by the award of time and experience. . . . It is only by providing in this manner, that the corporation of this city can hope to escape censure, to erect works and establish improvements of solid and lasting utility, such as will do credit to the city and themselves, and such as will endure the test of time and criticism of posterity.

That all cellars subject to the influence of tides or backwater, should be filled up level with the streets, and that all lots should be regulated in such manner as to discharge the water freely into the streets. That no cellars which may be found damp and obnoxious to health, should, on any condition, be inhabited. That all vaults of privies which may be deemed unwholesome, either from being situate in confined places, or from whatever cause, should be filled up, and tubs substituted in their place.

And whereas various houses, in different parts of the city, have on the recurrence of every malignant fever, proved to be the principal seats of disease, and the graves of their tenants, the committee suggest the propriety of prohibiting the same to be let or occupied as dwelling houses, that they be converted into warehouses, and that any injury sustained by the proprietors be defrayed by the public.

That no further encroachment be made into Hudson river, than what may be absolutely necessary for public basons and quays, and that no buildings be erected beyond the present boundary of Washington-street.[1]

To visualize New York at the opening of the nineteenth century one may turn to descriptions by contemporaries. John Lambert, an Englishman who visited America between 1806 and 1808, made the following observations on New York on November 24, 1807:

New York is the first city in the United States for wealth, commerce, and population; as it also is the finest and most agreeable for its situation and buildings. It has neither the narrow and confined irregularity of Boston, nor the monotonous regularity of Philadelphia, but a happy medium between both. . . . New York has rapidly improved within the last twenty years; and land which then sold in that city for fifty dollars is now worth 1,500.

The Broadway and Bowery Road are the two finest avenues in the city, . . . The first . . . is upwards of two miles in length, though the pavement does not extend above a mile and a quarter: the remainder of the road consists of straggling houses, which are the commencement of new streets already planned out. The Bowery Road commences from Chatham-street. . . . After proceeding about a mile and a half it joins the Broadway, and terminates the plan which is intended to be carried into effect for the enlargement of the city. Much of the intermediate spaces between these large streets, and from thence to the Hudson and East rivers, is yet unbuilt upon, or consists only of unfinished streets and detached buildings.

The houses in the Broadway are lofty and well built. They are constructed in the English style, and differ but little from those of London at the west end of the town; except that they are universally built of *red* brick. In the vicinity of the Battery, and for some distance up the Broadway, they are nearly all private houses, and occupied by the principal merchants and gentry of New York; after which the Broadway is lined with large commodious shops of every description, well stocked with European and India goods, and exhibiting as splendid and varied a show in their windows as can be met with in London. . . . The street is well paved, and the foot-paths are chiefly bricked. In Robinson-street the pavement before one of the houses, and the steps of the door, are composed entirely of *marble*. . . .

When I arrived at New York in November, the port was filled with shipping, and the wharfs were crowded with commodities of every description. . . . All was noise and bustle. . . .

The style of living in New York is fashionable and splendid; many of the principal merchants and people of property have elegant equipages, and those who have none of their own may be accommodated with handsome carriages and horses at the livery stables; for there are [illegible] . . . .

The inhabitants of New York are not remarkable for early rising, and little business seems to be done before nine or ten o'clock. . . . The servants are mostly negroes or mulattoes, some free, and others slaves; but there are many *white* servants of both sexes; and they who expect to see a *pure republican equality* existing in America will find themselves greatly deceived. . . .

There are several rich and respectable families of Jews in New York; and as they have equal

1. Miller, pp. 91–96.

rights with every other citizen in the United States, they suffer under no invidious distinctions. . . .

There are about 4,000 negroes and people of colour in New York, 1,700 of whom are slaves. . . .

April 13, 1808:

Every thing wore a dismal aspect at New York. The embargo had now continued upwards of three months, . . . Already had 120 failures taken place among the merchants and traders, to the amount of more than 5,000,000 dollars; and there were above 500 vessels in the harbour, which were lying useless, and rotting for want of employment. Thousands of sailors were either destitute of bread, wandering about the country, or had entered into the British service. The merchants had shut up their counting-houses, and discharged their clerks, and the farmers refrained from cultivating their land; . . .

I had engaged a place in Courtland-street, in the mail stage for Boston, and on Wednesday the 20th of April I took my departure about eight in the morning. We proceeded through Chatham-street, and along the Bowery-road. This avenue is remarkable for its width, and the handsome appearance of its buildings. About two miles from the city all the houses are built in an elegant and tasteful manner of wood, painted white, and ornamented with green venetian shades, neat railings, and small gardens. They stand apart from each other, and serve as summer retreats for the gentry and merchants of the city, particularly during the sickly season. They are built on a rising ground along the road, and command an extensive and beautiful view of the surrounding country.[1]

John Melish, a Scotchman visiting America, made the following observations about the city on August 4, 1806:

It consists of about 15,000 houses, including public buildings and warehouses; and the inhabitants are estimated at about 80,000. . . . The houses are generally built of brick, with slated or shingled roofs; and many of them are handsome. . . .

That part of the city which has been recently laid out on East river, is constructed on a handsome plan, the streets crossing one another at right angles, and there are several public squares. . . .

The situation of New York I should reckon very healthy; yet it is sometimes dreadfully afflicted with sickness; which circumstance, I am rather inclined to think, arises from a defect in the police, which does not seem to be conducted in a manner becoming the wealth and splendour of this fine city. The buildings are, in many places, too crowded. Many of the wharves are ill constructed, and some of the docks project into the city, especially from the East River, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants. The common sewers are incomplete, and there is no supply of fresh water to sweeten and purify the streets; but, beyond all, they have adopted the system of sinking necessaries, which accumulates such a collection of latent filth, that the steams of it are sometimes perceptible at two miles distance.[2]

Developments of legislation of the earlier types already recorded in this ac-

1. Lambert, vol. II.

2. John Melish, *Travels in the United States of America, in the Years 1806, & 1807, and 1809, 1810, & 1811*, I, 57–61.

count are found in this as in other decades. The more significant new phases of legislative practice included a petition on February 3, 1800, from the Common Council to the Legislature, to prohibit buildings on small lots without yards.[1] The Legislature on April 4 of that year passed a law for purchase of such lots by the city and the demolition of the buildings, with the provision that the property should be resold "as they shall think will best conduce to the health and welfare of the said city." The terms of the act were as follows:

Whereas the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of the city of New York in common council convened have by petition under their common seal represented to the legislature that among the various other causes which probably tend to promote disease in the said city during the summer and autumnal seasons, are the buildings erected in many parts of the said city, upon lots of ground so short, as to deprive such buildings of the free circulation of the air, and to compel the occupants of them to make the cellar or other parts thereof receptacles of filth and dirt; and that the buildings on each side of Moore street and on the west side of Broad street in the neighborhood of the Exchange slip, in the first ward of the said city, and those between Front street and South street on the west side of the Fly market, and its slip, in the second ward thereof, are of the said description, [the legislature authorized the common council to purchase, either with or without condemnation proceedings], all and every of the said buildings and the lots of ground thereunto belonging and also of the lots adjoining to the said lots. . . . And thereupon the said mayor, aldermen and commonalty may regulate, divide and dispose of the said buildings and lots of ground, and every of them, as they shall think will best conduce to the health and welfare of the said city." [2]

This is clearly one of the earliest precedents for contemporary practice in slum clearance, and anticipated the *Lex Adickes* [3] in its provision for redistribution of lands, but not in the latter's *pro rata* return of land so divided to former owners. Instead, the land so taken was to be used in the manner which "will best conduce to the health and welfare of the said city" and with a latitude which recognized the paramount nature of the public interest, too frequently forgotten in subsequent legislation in this field.

This was the period also in which ponds of standing water were filled in and streets extended. Collect Pond (Fresh Water) was a striking example of this practice. Other city planning developments for this first decade, as described in the *New York Mirror* of July 6, 1839, were as follows:

New-York thirty-six years ago. We are reminded by the reminiscences of an antiquarian in the Express of the rapid advances of New-York in wealth and population during the last twenty or thirty years. From this source we learn that a successful effort was first made in 1802 to extend Broadway through to intercept the Bowery. The ground above Spring-street

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, II, 609.
2. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Sessions of the Legislature held in the Years 1797, 1798, 1799 and 1800, inclusive*, pp. 541–543.
3. A law for replotting land proposed in Prussia in 1902 by Dr. Adickes and first tried out in Frankfort on Main.

was nearly all fields and gardens. The road out of the city was through the Bowery. The Sand Hill Road, which is now Sixth and Art-streets, commenced at the Bowery, and ran across that part of the city now known as Waverley Place, on the north side of Washington-Square, then Potter's Field, the great cemetery of the poor. This improvement was considered an outrage on private rights; the owners of the property resisted it with great zeal, but the corporation ordered the opening. It is needless to say that this is now the most fashionable part of the city. Lots could then be bought for twenty pounds or fifty dollars, which at this day are worth from ten to fifteen thousand dollars. This was a year of considerable improvements. Beckman-street was ordered to be opened through from Pearl to Water-street, which was a great affair. Buildings were torn down to effect the alteration. Spring-street, then called Bammon-street, extended but a very short distance out of Greenwich-street, then the boundary of North River. Here Bammon kept a celebrated garden, near the corner of Greenwich and Spring-streets; it was the great resort of the citizens in the summer. There was then no street above Sugar Loaf, now Franklin-street, running across from Broadway to the North River, all above being meadows and fields. Nearly all the Eighth Ward was then under water, being known as Lispenard's Meadows. Spring-street was ordered to be opened to Broadway, and was opened. Since then Canal-street, and all the streets between Franklin and Spring, and Greenwich-street and Broadway, have been opened and the ground filled in. This section of the city, which was then mostly under water, now contains one of the most dense portions of our population, and has within its limits at least fifty thousand inhabitants.[1]

Then followed, between 1801 and 1804, fines for fire violations and a minor extension of the fire limits.[2] Possibly the sanitary laws of 1803, especially the regulations for emptying privies, were precipitated by the yellow fever epidemic.[3] A place was established this same year for depositing street dirt,[4] and a petition against houses of ill fame was considered by the Council.[5]

Most important of all housing legislation of this decade was a law of June 25, 1804, for regulating taverns and boarding houses, which required boarding- and lodging-house keepers, as well as tavern keepers, to take out a license from the Inspector's office for this purpose.

> [Such license] shall express the total number of lodgers which such Tavern keeper, victualler or other person shall be allowed to entertain, and the number of lodgers authorized in each house so licenced shall be fixed by the Inspector, in conjunction with the alderman and assistant of the ward in which such house shall be situated or a majority of them.[6]

Here we note provision for permanent inspection and report, the express limitation of room-crowding, discretionary power lodged with the inspector, and the establishment of right of entry, thus anticipating by nearly a century the Tenement House Act of 1901.

1. *New-York Mirror*, XVII, 15.
2. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Sessions of the Legislature in the Year 1801*, pp. 166-170.
3. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831*, III, 352.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 550-552.

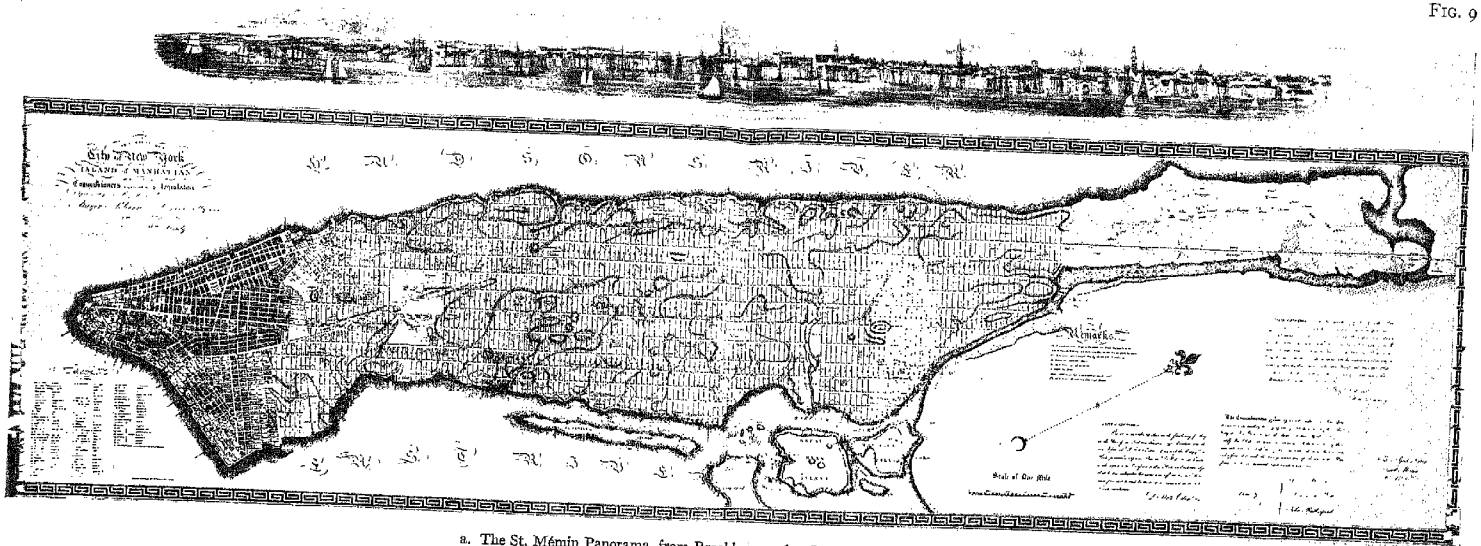
The remaining housing legislation of the decade included an ordinance in 1805 appointing a street commissioner for the paving of streets, and detailed rules to prevent street obstructions,[1] and in 1807 the appointment of a Commission to prepare a city plan for Manhattan, discussed later in this chapter. There were also many orders making work for the unemployed, which anticipated the measures so freely practised in this same city in the winter of 1933–1934. Unemployment had been created by the embargo of 1807, and city planning improvements, such as the opening of Broadway from Art Street to the Bowery, were passed by the Common Council primarily on the excuse that they gave work to the unemployed.[2] On January 11, 1808, the Committee on Ways and Means of the Common Council urged the employment of unemployed laborers to fill the Collect (Fresh Water) and to reduce Inclenberg Hill on the Boston Road (a little above the present City Hall) and to raise lots in the vicinity of Corlear's Hook.[3] A subsequent report of the Committee on Ways and Means on January 25, 1808, showed that fifty-nine laborers had been employed at the Collect and that contracts had been made by the Street Commissioner with seventy-five carmen to deliver earth at the Collect at the rate of five cents per load.[4] On February 15, 1808, the same Committee reported that laborers employed at digging mud out of the Collect had been discharged.[5] Apparently conditions of unemployment were not properly met, for the Commissioners of the Alms House and Bridewell in 1809 reported the "lamentable fact that our Streets swarm with beggars." [6]

Further evidence of the piecemeal process of housing improvement was the resolution of the Common Council on October 19, 1809, authorizing the Superintendent of Repairs "to take down and remove the Building in Henry Street heretofore reported by him to be in a ruinous and dangerous state." [7]

On April 9, 1810, the Council extended its requirements of street cleaning by owners of any buildings or lots, and provided further for collection of such sweepings, not only from streets, but from cellars, yards, and kitchens. This same act provided for snow removal by owners "to the breadth of one foot opposite such house, building or land. . . ." [8]

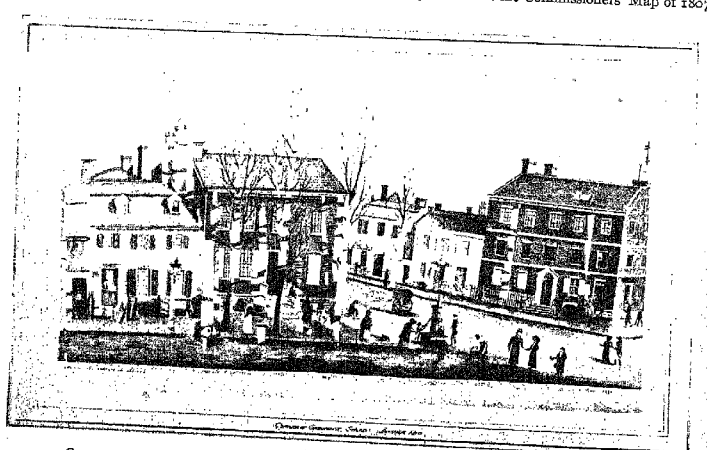
To protect the streets from encroachments by owners of private property the Common Council had passed on January 17, 1805, "A Law For the appointment of a Street Commissioner, and to regulate the Paving and keeping in repair, and to prevent Obstructions in the Streets of the City of New-York." It included the following provisions:

1. *Laws and Ordinances ordained and established by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of New York . . . Passed and published the 15th day of January 1805, in the Mayoralty of DeWitt Clinton*, pp. 51–53.
2. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, IV, 693–694.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 702–704.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 728–729.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 751–752.
6. *Ibid.*, V, 494–495.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 702.
8. *Ibid.*, VI, 158–164.



a. The St. Mémin Panorama, from Brooklyn, 1796. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 80-a.

b. The Bridges Map or Randel Survey, engraved from the Commissioners' Map of 1807–1811. This map was responsible for the gridiron plan of the city. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 80-b.



c. Corner of Greenwich and Dey Streets, 1810. Steeple of St. Paul's Chapel at extreme right. *American Historical Prints*, E 17-b.



d. John Street and First Methodist Episcopal Church in America, *c.* 1817. *American Historical Prints*, E 118.

. . . That no cellar-light in any street shall extend from any house more than one-fifteenth part of the width of the street; and no canopy, awning, shed, porch, portico, cellar-door, platform, stoop, or step, in any street, in any part of this city, shall extend more than one tenth part of the width of the street; and that no stoop, porch, or platform, other than with open backs or railing, and for the mere purpose of a passage-way into the house or building, shall hereafter be built or continued in any street of this city, under the penalty of two dollars for each offence. . . .[1]

In the next decade population increased from 96,373 in 1810 to 123,706 in 1820. Contemporary accounts of social conditions from this time on are too voluminous to quote. The conditions of living of this period were, however, described by Haswell,[2] Hall,[3] Montule,[4] Cobbett,[5] Stafford,[6] Palmer,[7] Fearon,[8] Blunt,[9] Klinckowström,[10] Duncan,[11] Darusmont,[12] and Dalton,[13] and by Dwight, for Harlem and Manhattanville.[14]

The Commissioners appointed by the Legislature in 1807 to lay out the streets and avenues of the upper part of Manhattan Island reported on March 22, 1811. The members of the Commission were Gouverneur Morris, Simeon DeWitt, and John Rutherford. Their appointment had grown primarily out of the difficulty which private owners experienced in conveying land. They had been ordered to lay out the leading streets and avenues "of such ample width as they may deem sufficient to secure a free and abundant circulation of air among city streets and public squares when the same shall be built upon." [15]

The Commissioners, after consideration of alternatives, drew up a rectangular plan with avenues running north and south, 100 feet wide, with east-west streets usually 60 feet wide. This plan extended from Astor Place and Gansevoort Street on the south to 155th Street on the north. Reservations were made for small parks, public places, and markets.[16]

When the Commission estimated that the population of the city would be

1. *Laws and Ordinances ordained and established by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of New York . . . Passed and published the 17th day of January, 1805, in the Mayoralty of DeWitt Clinton*, pp. 34–42.
2. Charles H. Haswell, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian of the City of New York*, pp. 84–90.
3. Lieutenant Francis Hall, *Travels in Canada, and The United States, in 1816 and 1817*, p. 10.
4. E. Montule, *A Voyage to North America, and The West Indies, in 1817*, pp. 1–4.
5. William Cobbett, *A Year's Residence, in the United States of America*, Pt. II, pp. 332, 336–338, 377–379, 421–423.
6. Ward Stafford, *New Missionary Field. A Report to the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New-York and its Vicinity, at their quarterly prayer meeting, March, 1817.*
7. John Palmer, *Journal of Travels in the United States of North America, and in Lower Canada, performed in the year 1817*, pp. 6, 175, 293–334.
8. Henry Bradshaw Fearon, *Sketches of America. A Narrative of a Journey of five thousand miles through the Eastern and Western States of America; contained in eight reports . . .*, pp. 5–61, 86–87.
9. Edmund M. Blunt, *The Stranger's Guide to the City of New-York*, pp. 34–43, 176–177, 182.
10. Baron Axel Leonhard Klinckowström, *Bref om de Forenta Staterna*, pp. 104–145.
11. John M. Duncan, *Travels through part of The United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819*, I, 27–29; II, 239–249, 279, 321–324, 375–376.
12. Frances Darusmont, *Views of Society and Manners in America, in a series of letters from this country to a friend in England, during the years 1818, 1819, and 1820*, pp. 5–31.
13. William Dalton, *Travels in the United States of America, and Part of Upper Canada*, pp. 4–5, 9–12, 252.
14. Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New-England and New-York*, III, 448–450, 481–482, 484.
15. Stokes, V, 1457. 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 1531–1534.

quadrupled within a period of fifty years, it met with some ridicule. Yet by 1860 the city's population was double their estimate. Altogether 11,400 acres of land were covered by the Commissioners' maps — six times the area that had been previously planned.

The rectangular plan was justified by the Commissioners on grounds of housing — arguing that the city was "composed principally of the habitations of man and that strait sided and right-angled houses are the most cheap to build, and the most convenient to live in."[1]

City planning was not new to America,[2] but the New York Commission profited little from the radial plan drawn by Major L'Enfant for Washington, and provided for only one major radial street, namely Broadway, which had long been a highroad. Since, at this period, all land transit was by horse-drawn vehicles, it was assumed by the Commissioners that traffic would run primarily from river to river. Their plan was dominated by economic considerations and disregarded topography. As a result, New York City sacrificed its opportunity for distinctive use of its natural beauties, and likewise lost for good its chance to pre-plan for life's amenities.[3] It gained, however, an orderly development.

In the same period occurred the conflagration of May 19, 1811, in Chatham Street, in which 100 wooden buildings were destroyed by fire.[4]

> While on my way to the alms-house, on the morning of this holy day, the cry of fire resounded from a thousand tongues. The wind was unusually boisterous for a clear day, and the buildings in the vicinity of the fire were of wood. In a few moments, many houses were enveloped in the general conflagration, and before one o'clock, more than one hundred tenements were reduced to ashes. Most of these were inhabited by two or three poor families. The whole scene was dreadful.[5]

This doubtless led to the petition by the Common Council for the extension of the fire limits, adopted on February 10, 1812, and to the law extending the fire limits, passed on June 1, 1812. This act prohibited the erection of any wooden buildings (with exceptions cited in the 7th Section) south of Chambers Street on the west and Montgomery and Cherry Streets on the east.[6]

The widening of Nassau Street was recommended in the *Minutes of the Com-*

1. From facsimile of the first page of the Report of the Commissioners of 1807, reproduced on p. 157 of vol. VIII of the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*. For the best brief account of this plan and its limitations, see pp. 156–162 of that volume.
2. See Thomas Adams, *Outline of Town and City Planning*, especially Chap. III. Adams also submits in this volume a useful outline of ancient city planning and of that in Europe in the Middle Ages and during and after the Renaissance.
3. Further criticisms of this plan will be found in Chapters VIII and XXIII. Its effects upon the health of the population in slums and elsewhere is shown in Chapters XIV and XV.
4. Stokes, V, 1534.
5. *Visits of Mercy, or the Journals of the Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D. written while he was stated preacher to the hospital and alms-house, in the City of New York*, I, 100.
6. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Thirty-fifth Session of the Legislature*, pp. 405–407.

mon Council on April 6, 1812, and passed on June 11, 1813. The recognition of the social purpose of street-widening was clearly manifest in the petition:

That in their opinion every opportunity to improve the old part of the City ought to be embraced and, that whenever circumstances authorise an expectation that the Inhabitants are willing to contribute to the expence of widening or straightening Streets, this Board should by every means in their power facilitate the measure. The application for widening Nassau Street presents in the opinion of your Committee a case of as much importance as can perhaps arise in relation to improving Streets. The present arrangement of that part of the Town is confined, inconvenient and dangerous, and as the Corporation when making a disposition of the ground on which the old City Hall stands can comparatively with little expense remove these difficulties and render this street both elegant and commodious. Your Committee feel it their Duty earnestly to recommend the measure.[1]

The resolution for the widening of Nassau Street between Wall and Cedar Streets provided for the removal of all buildings from adjacent premises. The widening of Mott Street was recommended by the Street Commissioner on September 25, 1815, as a result of the "ravages made by the late fire."

Mott St from Chatham St to Pell St is at present but 36 Feet wide, the Lots on the East side are from 113 to 127 feet deep, he would therefore recommend that the Street be widened to 50 feet wide which would leave an average to the lots of about 100 feet — it is a known fact that property generally bears a value in proportion to the width of the Street on which it is situated and the Street Commissioner has no doubt, but the lots on Mott St would be enhanced by the proposed improvement to more than the loss sustained by the late fire, being in the center of a flourishing & healthy part of the City, it would become the residence of the more wealthy part of the Community & consequently command an advanced price to the proprietors.[2]

The remaining legislation covered subjects previously treated at length, and ranged from a requirement in 1812 (reminiscent of the year 1658) that hogs running at large should have rings in their noses to prevent rooting,[3] to regulations concerning street encroachments,[4] the licensing of chimney sweeps,[5] an ordinance prohibiting the removal of buildings through the streets,[6] a report on the extension of dormer windows contrary to law,[7] and regulations concerning the foundations of buildings.[8]

The next ten years saw an increase in population from 123,706 in 1820 to 202,589 in 1830.

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1789–1831*, VII, 351. 2. *Ibid.*, VIII, 297.
3. *Laws and Ordinances ordained and established by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of New York . . . Passed and published during the Mayoralty of DeWitt Clinton*, pp. 150–152.
4. *Laws and Ordinances ordained and established by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of New York, passed the fifth day of May, 1817*, pp. 56–57.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–123.
6. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, IX, 205. 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 225–226.
8. *Laws of the State of New-York passed at the Forty-first Session of the Legislature*, pp. 101–102.

Contemporary accounts include Haswell's comments on real estate values in 1820,[1] the Common Council's report in 1821 on the obstruction of streets by areas, railings, and storage vaults,[2] the Common Council's report on houses in Lispenard Street,[3] Holmes' observations,[4] Cooper's comments on houses,[5] Bernhard's discussions of boarding houses, streets, and Negroes,[6] Beaufoy's comments on lack of sewers and palatable water,[7] and references, in the "A" letters, to boarding houses.[8] Norcross' discussion of the conditions of tanneries around the swamp,[9] written eighty years later, pictures the development of industrial nuisances.

A fever epidemic in Bancker (now Madison) Street led to a report by the Medical Society which referred to crowded houses and rear dwellings.[10] A discussion of deaths from this fever epidemic among the Negro cellar population of Bancker Street in the *Minutes of the Common Council*[11] was confirmed by Dr. Pennel's study, which attempted to show a relation between the fever and contemporary housing.

"Out of the whole number of blacks in this district, viz. 562, 119 lived in cellars, of whom 54 were sick of the prevailing fever, 24 of whom died at their homes; while, of the remaining number of black inhabitants, viz. 443, 101 were sick, of whom 46 died at their homes. From which it appears that out of 443 who were better lodged, only 101 were sick of this disease; while, out of 119 living in unwholesome *cellars*, that *nearly half were taken down with the disease*, and that nearly one half of that number died at their places of dwelling.

"Out of the 48 blacks, living in ten cellars, 33 were sick, of whom 14 died; while, out of 120 whites, living *immediately over their heads* in the *apartments of the same houses, not one* even had the fever."[12]

The yellow fever epidemic from July to November 1822 drew forth many contemporary comments, which in part traced the epidemic to conditions of housing. Among these were Haswell,[13] Hardie,[14] Neilson,[15] Blane,[16] and Griscom.[17]

1. Haswell, pp 109–130.
2. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, vol. XII.
3. *Ibid*, XI, 24.
4. Isaac Holmes, *An Account of the United States of America, derived from actual observation, during a residence of four years in that republic*, pp. 265–269, 361, 370–371.
5. James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans picked up by a Travelling Bachelor*, I, 129–130, 135, 143–144, 149–150.
6. Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels through North America, during the years 1825 and 1826*, I, 118–121, 126, 133.
7. Mark Beaufoy, *Tour through parts of the United States and Canada*, pp. 10–16.
8. "A," "Letters from New York," in the *Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, Pt. II, p. 450.
9. Frank W. Norcross, *A History of the New York Swamp*, pp. 108–109, 200–202, 240.
10. *Report of the Committee of the Medical Society of the City and County of New-York, explanatory of the Causes and Character of the Epidemic Fever, which prevailed in Bancker-Street and its Vicinity, in the Summer and Autumn of 1820.*
11. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, XI, 440–441.
12. *Annual Report of the Interments in the City and County of New-York, for the year 1822, with remarks thereon, and a brief view of the Sanitary Condition of the City. Presented to the Common Council by John H. Griscom, M.D., City Inspector*, pp. 165–166.
13. Haswell, pp. 130–137.
14. James Hardie, *An Account of the Yellow Fever, which occurred in the City of New-York, in the Year 1822.*
15. Peter Neilson, *Recollections of a Six Years' residence in the United States of America*, pp. 4–7.
16. William Newnham Blane, *An Excursion through The United States and Canada during the years 1822–23. By an English Gentleman*, pp. 9–12.
17. Griscom, *A History, Chronological and Circumstantial, of the Visitations of Yellow Fever at New York*, pp. 17–19.

In the flowery language of the *New York Mirror and the Ladies Literary Gazette* the conditions of New York housing were frequently referred to, and irritation was expressed at the lack of a proper housing and city-planning policy, at poor enforcement of existing legislation, and at overcrowding of the land and the lack of foresight displayed in the newer regions of the city.

September 24, 1825:

It is astonishing how carelessly buildings are erected in this city. — Six houses which were nearly finished in Reed-street, fell to the ground, and broke three ribs of one of the workmen — this is the second time these houses have fallen . . . we understand that the thickness of the walls was only that of *one brick*! — Does the law authorize such houses to be built, to the danger of every person near them? . . .[1]

August 5, 1826:

Side Walks. — It is ridiculous to say the new side walks will be nineteen feet wide, when the door steps of many of our citizens (we might mention those of His Honour the Mayor in particular, but we will not) are allowed to occupy nine feet of that space, leaving only ten feet for the convenience of pedestrians. If in former times the Corporation permitted porches to be built so large as to intrude upon the street, the street should now be sufficiently widened to restore to the public the space of which they have been robbed.[2]

February 2, 1828:

The city now extends nearly three miles on each river, and is almost wholly deprived of every charm that has relation to public grounds connected with embellishments. From the Battery to the Dry-Dock, on the East-river, is full three miles. In its whole extent there is not a foot of land, beyond the streets, set apart for public purposes. All the streets are narrow, and many of them crooked; the lots, in a multitude of cases, only large enough for the bare accommodation of the buildings erected on them, and the streets universally the receptacles of filth. To add to the evils, a very large portion of this division of the city stands on what, in common speech, is denominated *made ground*; that is, so much gained from the water, by casting in earth and other masses of loose materials. This will for ever remain of a very porous nature, and the exhalations arising from putrid matter collected in such places, must consequently be a continual annoyance to the inhabitants, and a prolific source of disease. All these things show how extremely improper, nay, how utterly unjustifiable, was the policy which allowed the entire ground to be covered with buildings, without the least regard to future consequences, and without taking into consideration the health and comfort of a numerous population thus huddled together. We are aware that nothing could be expected from that foul spirit of avarice, and that grasping propensity, which pervade a certain class of people in every part of our country; but knowing these things, [illegible] they ought to have interposed a seasonable and salutary [illegible], when exercised within the bounds of their authority. But it is now too late; the evils are irreparable.

With all becoming respect, we would beg leave to remark, that our corporation ought to be admonished by past misfortunes, and those which are found to be incurable. A more enlarged

1. *New-York Mirror*, III, 75. 2. *Ibid.*, IV, 75.

and liberal policy ought to prevail with respect to those new parts of the city now in a rapid state of advancement, and which, in a very few years, will be so far increased and extended, as to place every attempt at reform beyond the reach of hope or possibility.[1]

February 7, 1829:

It appears that the number of paupers in New-York, has increased, during the past year, to an alarming extent, viz. from sixteen hundred and sixty-five to two thousand one hundred and twenty-nine, or twenty-eight per cent. a ratio truly astonishing, when we consider the general state of the country. This surprise will abate much of its force, however, when we investigate the local condition and history of our city for the last twelve months. The number of strangers who arrived in the port, during that period, has been eighteen thousand nine hundred and forty-five, a number which, of itself, was sufficient to furnish the addition made to our pauper list. When to this fact are added the great depression of commerce, stopping up the avenues to employment among the lower classes — there being no houses, or but few, erecting; no ships on the stocks, and few coming in or going out — we shall have sufficient means to account for the increase of distress and suffering, without having recurrence, as many of our contemporaries have had, to the dram-shop and the theatre. . . .[2]

February 28, 1829:

That indefatigable philanthropist, acute political economist, and good citizen, Mathew Carey, has been investigating the amount received by the industrious females who labour for the government and for tailors, and he has ascertained, to his own astonishment, and to the mortification of the public, that the utmost exertion of industry on their part, can barely secure for them a dollar, or a dollar and an eighth per week! To penetrate into their abodes of wretchedness, to witness the intense distress, and want and misery, produced by this scanty allowance, is enough to harrow up the soul, and make it turn with loathing from the picture. For this trifle, too, they are constantly employed from six in the morning till eleven at night![3]

May 9, 1829:

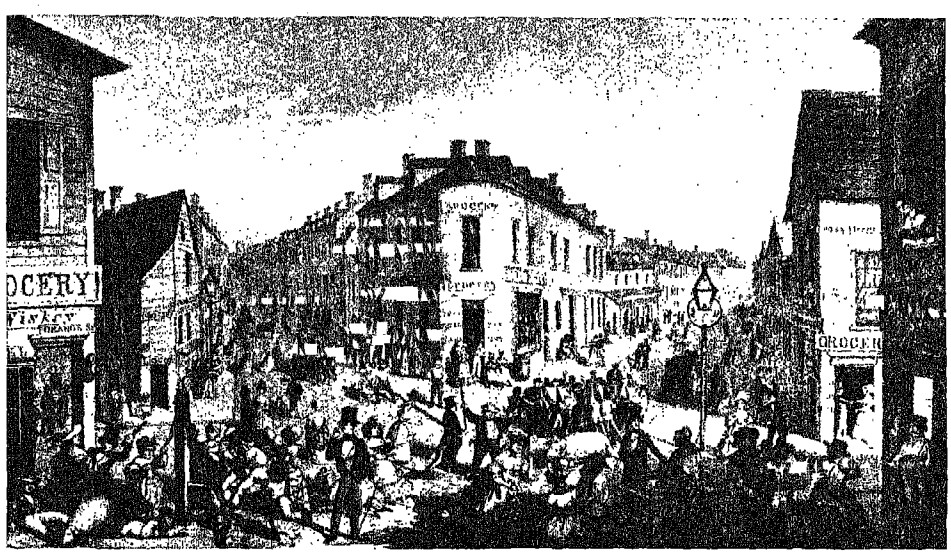
Cross-street [now Park].—A plan originated with the common council, not long since, to extend this street, and convert it from a receptacle of vice and misery to a decent and handsome thoroughfare. We trust the project will not be suffered to lie dormant, but be pursued in right good earnest, until it is completed. It would be a source of ample credit to the board, of real interest to the possessors of property in that neighbourhood, and of pride to the city at large. This street has long been viewed with horror and disgust by the community, and to pass it, especially after dark, is a matter of some risk to both life and limbs. . . . We are aware . . . that the interests of a few are at war with this object, as they must be with every one that redounds to public improvement at their own supposed cost. Those few might be convinced, by sound argument, that their property would increase in value if the street was once cleared of the moral stain which is lying heavily upon it, and that the gain to their pockets, now brought in by the wages of sin and corruption, is a reflection upon themselves and a disgrace to the city. . . .[4]

[This was one of the streets of Five Points.]

1. *Ibid.*, V, 238–239. 2. *Ibid.*, VI, 247. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 271. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 351.



a. Broadway from Bowling Green, 1826. The Center of Wealth and Fashion. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 98.



b. Five Points, 1827. The Center of Poverty and Squalor. Valentine's *Manual* (1855).

March 27, 1830:

Despite of the awfully dull times, the depression of trade, and the scanty circulation of money, the external aspect of this metropolis continues daily to receive new features, which replace its more ancient gloomy character, and approximate it, in our conceptions at least, to the splendid capitals of Europe. Streets, formerly narrow, short, and dingy, are widened and prolonged, and the light of heaven made to shine upon quickly rising ranges of new and lofty edifices. . . . the opening and widening of Ann, Cedar, and Liberty streets, which formerly threaded their sinuous courses between piles of rookeries, but are now enlarged and graced by splendid rows of stores and dwelling-houses . . . and sundry other improvements, . . . attest the advancement of New-York in architectural decoration and beauty.[1]

The housing and sanitary legislation of the period provided in 1821 for forfeiting of swine found running at large south of Grand Street,[2] the granting of a fire engine to Manhattanville in 1821 because of its sixty wooden houses,[3] the extension of the fire limits to Harman Street (now East Broadway) in 1822,[4] an ordinance by the Common Council in 1822 permitting swine to run at large in the Seventh and Tenth Wards,[5] prohibition of interments south of Canal Street in 1823,[6] extension of the fire limits in 1823 to include Montgomery Street on the east and Canal Street on the west,[7] regulations concerning privies and interments in 1823,[8] further extensions of the fire limits in 1827 to include Grand Street,[9] and extension of the fire limits in 1829 to include Gouverneur Street on the east and Houston Street on the west.[10]

For half a century the most frequently mentioned slum in New York City was at Five Points, near what is now the financial district of the city. Haswell wrote that in 1817

Anthony Street (Worth), had been extended to Orange (Baxter), making at the intersection with Cross (Park) Street, five angular corners; these were designated and known as the "Five Points"—a locality that attained a national reputation as the resort of the abandoned of both sexes and of all nations. . . .[11]

In the *Minutes of the Common Council* for April 20, 1829, we find a suggestion for slum demolition at "Five Points" either by taking land there for a prison, which was disapproved because of the "disease-breeding" locality, or for a public

1. *Ibid.*, VII, 303.
2. *Laws and Ordinances ordained and established by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City of New-York, in common council convened; during the mayoralties of Cadwallader D. Colden, and of Stephen Allen, Esqrs.*, p. 152.
3. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, XI, 738.
4. *Laws of New-York passed at the Forty-fifth Session of the Legislature*, pp. 200–201.
5. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, XII, 447.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 811.
7. *Laws of the State of New-York, passed at the Forty-sixth session of the Legislature*, p. 142.
8. *Laws and Ordinances . . . of the City of New York . . . 27th day of October, 1823*, pp. 84–86.
9. *Laws of the State of New-York, passed at the Fiftieth Session of the Legislature*, p. 73.
10. *Laws of the State of New York passed at the Fifty-second Session of the Legislature*, pp. 523–524.
11. Haswell, p. 84.

square in place of the worst tenements, which was disapproved because of the high cost of land, owing to the large number of liquor stores.

The report of the Police and Jail and Bridewell Committees, read as follows:

That your Committees agree in opinion with the Petitioners that the Five Points is a place of great disorder and crime, and that it would be particularly desirable to rid the City of the Nuisance complained of, and were it a suitable place for a Bridewell, they would be willing to see the Corporation make some sacrifices for the improvement of the part of the City referred to.

But when the Board reflect that all the Avenues to this place are narrow and its situation low they will conclude that the Five Points would not be a proper location for a Prison particularly for the Bridewell which is a prison for persons accused, and not generally for those convicted of crimes.

The prison fever not unfrequently exists in our present Bridewell under all it[s] advantages of Location, and we should have reason to expect great Mortality in a crowded prison located at the Points

Your Committee Know of no public use which this Block if taken could be put to, and it would probably be valued very high to the Corporation as it produces a great rent on account of its being a good location for small retailers of Liquor, who have extensively located themselves in this vicinity. What may be considered as the Nuisance has in reality increased the Value of the property.

Your Committee have considered whether the Block ought to be taken as a public or open square or Grounds. If it is thrown open it must either be paid for by the Corporation, or by Assessment on the property in the neighbourhood adjacent.

Your Committee Know of no instance (and the precedent would be a bad one) of the Corporation taking ground to convert the same into a Square. . . .

They offer the following Resolution

Resolved that it is inexpedient to erect a Bridewell at the *Five Points*. [The report was approved by the Common Council.][1]

April 20, 1829:

The Street Committee to whom was referred the Petition of a large and respectable number of Citizens to have the Triangular piece of Ground in the Sixth Ward Bounded by Anthony Cross and Little Water streets and Known as part of the place called the "*Five Points*" opened Respectfully Report

That your Committee have examined the premises [illegible] subject, and as but one objection has been made thereto are of the opi[illegible] Petitioners ought to be granted they find that nearly all the buildings occupying the ground are in a ruinous Condition of but Little value and occupied by the lowest description and most degraded and abandoned of the human Species.

Enormities of every Kind (of which the public are but too well informed) are daily committed in that sink of iniquity, the which your Committee forbear to particularise. To remedy

1. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784–1831*, XVIII, 11–12.

which in part, if not wholly to remove the existing evil, they propose the following Method Viz[t]

That the whole of the Triangle be taken by Commissioners of Estimate and Assessment, that so much thereof as may be necessary to make *Cross Street* and *Little Water Street* each 40 feet wide to be assessed on persons deemed to be benefitted and the remainder of the ground to be appropriated for Public purposes either to the erection of buildings or such other manner as future exigencies may require.

[The report was disapproved.] [1]

On June 15, 1829, the *Minutes of the Common Council* included a petition for the removal of four houses in Elizabeth Street which were occupied by Negroes.[2]

In the decade 1830 to 1840 the population increased from 202,589 to 312,710. This period was characterized by changes in building practices with the construction of the first tenement house designed for the purpose, and the recognition of the slum as an evil with serious social consequences. There was a considerable increase in the number of statements concerning housing conditions and in the range of specific comment upon such conditions. Immigration, though mentioned as a factor in producing the social problems of the period, was less frequently mentioned than conditions of living, low wages, crowding, and poverty. The first serious criticism of high buildings appeared in this decade, and there were many recommendations for the widening of streets and demolition of some of the most dilapidated and crowded dwellings. "The Great Fire" of December 16, 1835, which destroyed 530 buildings at a loss of $15,000,000, as well as the fire of September 6, 1839, which destroyed forty-six buildings at a loss of $1,000,000,[3] were responsible for projected improvements in street layouts, but for no marked improvements in fireproofing of construction. The fire limits had been extended several times prior to the Great Fire, but not at all in the last five years of this decade.

Five Points became the symbol of bad housing and slum conditions. Characteristic is the *New York Evening Post's* article of May 13, 1830.

> In going over our city, we see every where old houses taken down and new ones building up. In that place only which stands in most need of improvement — I mean the Five Points — nothing is done. Our city is beautified in all quarters except in the very middle, where this nuisance remains as a shameful mark of distinction. On the necessity of removing that nuisance there cannot be a dissenting voice. Not only the inhabitants and proprietors in the sixth ward have again petitioned for this purpose, but the grand jury of last month, men of all parties, have declared on their oath that the place is a public nuisance. It depends, therefore, on the report of the street committee, to decide what shall be done. . . . Several have, in the expectation that the improvement would soon be made, left their houses unlet, with the inten-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
3. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 213.

tion of taking the old wooden ones down, and erecting brick buildings. Several estates are to be sold, but the executors and administrators have delayed to advertise them, as, under the present state of things, no fair offer could be expected. . . .

Immorality was more freely discussed. Mathew Carey commented that low wages paid to seamstresses led to prostitution.[1] George B. Arnold, Minister at Large, reporting on moral conditions among the poor, ascribed immorality to bad housing conditions.[2] The New York Magdalen Society's report on prostitution referred to Five Points and "Coerler's Hook" as "sinks of degradation" attributable to high rents, overcrowding, and low wages paid to women.[3] The *Mirror* in 1831 expressed horror at the frequent assaults on women,[4] and complained at length against high rents.[5]

Mrs. Trollope commented on the extreme uniformity of the houses of the "higher classes" but also on their quality.[6] Weston described boarding houses.[7] Hone remarked on the building activity "to make every inch of ground productive to its utmost extent," [8] and mentioned the "nooks, and corners, cellars and brothels" in Five Points,[9] and the strike in 1833 of journeymen carpenters, who were demanding $1.50 a day.[10] Haswell discussed the cholera epidemic of 1832, which caused over 3,500 deaths. He also recorded the paving of 129th Street in Harlem, the first to be paved north of Clinton Place and Greenwich Avenue, and entertainingly described the "Bowery Boy" of this period.[11]

The cholera epidemic of 1832, in which most deaths were stated to be at Five Points, was described by Hone,[12] Halliday,[13] and Dr. Reese. The blame was put largely upon conditions of housing.

. . . it may be remarked, that in nearly every case occurring in the first fortnight of its prevalence, the houses were small, filthy, and crowded with inhabitants, and the intemperate were its first victims almost without exception. The locations most severely affected were on the borders of the rivers, where the ground is low and marshy, as Roosevelt, Cherry, and Water-street; at the foot of Reed-street, Duane-street and vicinity; the neighbourhood of the Five Points, the house in Broad-street, with an old common sewer under it, in which ten fatal cases occurred; Laurens-street, Corlaer's Hook, Yorkville, Harlem, Bellevue, and Greenwich Village. These were the parts of the city where the pestilence raged in all its violence, and where fatal cases occurred in the greatest numbers; . . .[14]

1. Mathew Carey, *A Plea for the Poor, An Enquiry how far the charges against them of improvidence, idleness, and dissipation, are founded in truth. By a Citizen of Philadelphia*, p. 14.
2. *Mr. Arnold's Second Semi-annual Report, of his service as Minister at Large, in New-York*, pp. 4–16.
3. *First Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the New-York Magdalen Society. Instituted, January 1, 1830*, pp. 3–22.
4. *New-York Mirror*, VIII, 207.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 270–271.
6. Mrs. Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, II, 159–161.
7. Richard Weston, *The United States and Canada in 1833; with the view of settling in America. Including a voyage to and from New-York*, pp. 56–82.
8. *The Diary of Philip Hone 1828–1851. Edited, with an introduction by Allan Nevins*, I, 41.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–74.
11. Haswell, pp. 264–271.
12. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, pp. 68–74.
13. Samuel B. Halliday, *The Lost and Found; or Life Among the Poor*, pp. 199–201.
14. David Meredith Reese, M.D., *A Plain and Practical Treatise on the Epidemic Cholera, as it prevailed in the city of New York, in the summer of 1832: . . .*, pp. 53–54.

Many aspects of housing, by this time, were matters of popular interest and concern. Characteristic attitudes were expressed in the *Mirror*, which assumed the rôle of public conscience. As examples, one may mention the *Mirror's* semi-humorous article on boarding houses in 1832,[1] its report in May 1833 that Five Points was to be cleared out (unfortunately the plan failed),[2] its discussion of foreign immigration,[3] and its remarks on the clearing of Brooklyn streets of swine.[4]

The *Evening Post's* editorial on architects and building, in 1833, offered an aesthetic comment so unusual for the New York of that period as to deserve reprinting in full.

The improvement which has recently taken place in the domestic architecture of this city, as respects external form and symmetry, has been the subject of remark by strangers. A style less tawdry and more in consonance with the rules of good taste has been introduced. Those ugly projections from the roofs, called dormant windows, which in many streets disfigure almost every private building, have been generally banished from the new edifices. No one can hesitate as to the fine effect which results from a simpler construction of the roof, who gives a single glance at those noble blocks of buildings which have been erected around Washington Square and elsewhere within a short time, and which from their ample dimensions and uniformity of structure, derive an aspect of majesty and magnificence. There is still in many places too much disposition among those who put up houses to build in a different style from their neighbors. To variety in architecture, in itself considered, we do not object — but it may be carried too far. A modern dwelling of three stories in height, and of the ordinary width, is out of all proportion for a single building. Standing by itself it is a steeple rather than a house, and should be connected in a block with two or three others of the same height and of a uniform architecture, in order to possess a proper symmetry. Nothing therefore has a more disagreeable effect than a street of tall houses each of which differs from its neighbor in height and style of building. Another improvement which we should be glad to see carried into effect, is the employment of a nobler and more durable material in building. It is recorded to the honor of Augustus that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble. We have numbers of private houses upon which no cost has been spared, except the cost of erecting them of a material which defies the tooth of time, the material of which the "eternal hills" themselves are built. There is scarcely any kind of stone, the effect of which in building, even when rudely hewn, is not superior to brick. But to erect public buildings, intended for the use of successive generations, of such a frail and perishable material as brick, is decidedly in bad taste. Perhaps, however a sufficient excuse for this will be found in the uncertainty how long a given edifice will be permitted to stand in our city before the corporation direct it to be pulled down in order to open some new street or widen some old one.[5]

The *Mirror's* articles included comments on the replacement of old buildings on Ann Street,[6] a discussion on the immigrants and ragged beggars who came into

1. *New-York Mirror*, x, 188.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
3. *Ibid.*, xi, 7.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
5. *Evening Post*, August 7, 1833.
6. *New-York Mirror*, xi, 87.

the city from the suburbs each morning,[1] and a note in November 1833 that old wooden buildings were being replaced by six-story stores, making use of poor materials and careless methods of construction.[2]

A resolution for the licensing of houses of prostitution was offered to the Board of Aldermen by John J. Boyd, but

> The community at large were so wholly unprepared for such an acknowledgment of the existence of these houses, and displayed so much puerility and mawkish sentiment, that his essay was ignored, and socially he suffered for it.[3]

A report of the number and height of buildings erected in New York in 1834 revealed that

> The number of buildings of all descriptions erected in the city of New-York, during the year 1834, was eight hundred and eighty-three, . . . Three hundred and eighty of the above buildings are two story brick dwellings, 122 three story do.; 34 four story do.; 53 two story brick and wood dwellings; 67 two story wood do.; 28 two story brick stores; 17 three story do.; 17 four story do.; 63 five story do.; 10 six story do. Three churches, and the remainder of a variety of different descriptions.[4]

Although many private dwellings had been occupied simultaneously by many families, or specifically converted for such use, the first tenement house originally designed for occupancy by several tenant families was constructed in 1833, according to Haswell, and was situated in Water Street.

> In October, 1833, James P. Allaire had constructed in Water Street, a short distance east of Jackson Street (site now included in the Corlears Park), by Thompson Price, a builder, a four-story house designed for many tenants. It was the first house constructed proper or exclusively for tenants in this city. It is what is now termed a "single-decker," that is, but one suite of rooms on a floor.[5]

Haswell may have been in error, for the *Plumber and Sanitary Engineer* of December 15, 1879, stated:

> At No. 65 Mott Street stands a tenement house. It is seven stories high, contains twenty-eight families, and has been occupied some *fifty-five* years. There is a rectifying distillery on the first floor. Dark interior rooms are abundant. The owner is a rich man. He complacently says, "the building don't owe me anything." But what does it and its self-satisfied owner owe its occupants and the community?

High mortality rates became a subject of public attention. In 1835, Gerret Forbes, City Inspector, reported to the Common Council that 9,082 persons died in the city during the preceding year, of whom 817 were Negroes. This was an excess of 3,336 over the number reported for 1833. He ascribed the increase in

1. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
3. Haswell, pp. 291–292.
4. *New-York as it is, in 1835*, pp. 22–23.
5. Haswell, p 332.

deaths to intemperance, crowded and filthy living quarters, and poor water supply.

Some cause should be assigned for the increase of deaths beyond the increase of the population, and none appears so prominent as that of intemperance, and the crowded and filthy state in which a great portion of our population live, and apparently, without being sensible of their situation; and we have serious cause to regret that there is in our City so many mercenary landlords, who only contrive in what manner they can stow the greatest number of human beings in the smallest space.

There is another cause that must have a tendency to produce disease, and consequently increase the number of deaths, that is the impure water that many of our population have to use — although most of the wells of our City when first dug, produced good water, they have become from the filth that must necessarily filter into them from the streets, especially in the vicinity of cow stables, slaughter houses, dye establishments and factories, very unwholesome.[1]

The excessive height of buildings was a matter of increasing concern. The *Mirror* remarked on the "towering" houses and other buildings being erected.

Modern buildings. The babel style of buildings is reviving in our city. In every quarter we see new houses towering up to a height that reminds us of the presumptuous architects of the plain of Shinaar. We pass many of those unfinished edifices with an instinctive dread of their falling; for their appearance is truly threatening. . . . When we look upon their fearful altitude, we call to mind the disaster which occurred a few years ago from the falling of a seven story warehouse, . . . We almost sigh for the days when our then quiet and unenterprising city was made up of those humble, yet substantial fabricks of Holland brick, two of which till lately remained in Broad-street, . . . Those venerable but unpresumptuous dwellings, whose notched gable fronts looked without frowning upon the passer-by, and never threatened him with an avalanche of marble and granite.[2]

Hone wrote that the $200,000 fire in Pearl Street on July 8, 1834, was due to the great height of stores, which could not be reached by fire ladders or water.[3] But adequate measures were not framed to avert the danger of conflagration, and in the following year occurred the Great Fire.

The total number of buildings erected in various wards was reported for 1835 as 1,259 and for 1836 as 1,621. Of these 143 were five or six stories in height.[4] Real estate prices rose correspondingly in this period. The increased height of buildings may have been either cause or consequence.

April 23, 1835:

A piece of ground in the rear of the Bank of America, fronting on Wall [illegible] Wall Streets, with no building on it, 30 feet front and 75 feet deep, [illegible]

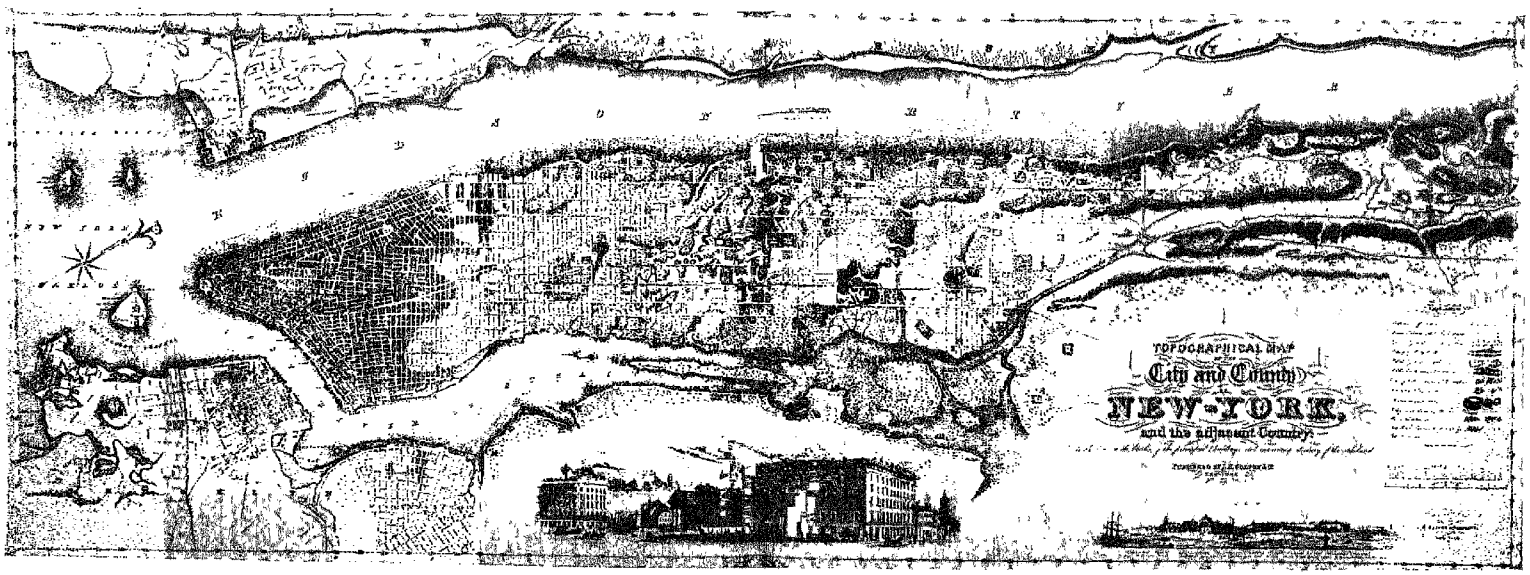
1. *Annual Report of Deaths in the City and County of New York, for the Year 1834*, pp. 15–16.
2. *New-York Mirror*, xi, 205.
3. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 133.
4. *New-York as it is, in 1837*, p. 22.



a Wall Street from Trinity Church, 1834 *Iconography*, Vol III, Pl 111



b New York from Brooklyn Heights, 1837 *Iconography*, Vol III, Pl 117



c. The Colton Map, 1842. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 124.



tion by P. and S. L. Crary for $51,500. Francis B. Cutting and Robert Bayard bought two or three years ago the country place, as it then was, of the late William B. Bayard for a sum between $50,000 and $60,000 (a great price at the time) and sold it at auction in lots the day before yesterday for $225,000. . . . Real estate is high beyond the calculation of the most sanguine speculators.

April 30, 1835:

The rise of lots in the upper part of the city goes on without interruption from any cause, foreign or domestic. Mr. Kane has sold his large home, corner of St. Mark's place and the Second Avenue, to Charles Graham for $35,000. . . . Mr. Boardman offered me about three months since the price I asked for my house, $55,000, but I was to take in part payment seven lots of ground on the Second Avenue, below St. Mark's Place, at a valuation of $35,000. This I declined, for I could not imagine then, nor can I now, that they were worth so much money. He has, however, sold them since for $38,000, and the speculators say they are a bargain.[1]

The use of slum land for public parks is shown to be at least a century old, for a petition is found in the documents of the Board of Aldermen for May 22, 1835, that land at Christopher and Grove Streets, recently occupied by filthy, overcrowded, disease-breeding houses, be made into a public square. Apparently this petition was successful.

[About 90] freeholders and inhabitants of the Ninth Ward [presented a petition to the common council stating] that a gore or strip of land situated at the junction of Christopher and Grove streets, extending about one hundred and twenty feet on each of the above streets, and about thirty-nine feet in width at one end, and terminating at a point four feet in width at the other, . . . has been for a considerable time so occupied as to render it a public nuisance, and very great annoyance to the citizens residing in its immediate vicinity. The buildings on the ground referred to were destroyed by fire on the morning of the 16th instant, and although containing a superficial surface equal only to about a lot and an eighth, afforded, previous to the fire, a receptacle (such as it was) for forty-one families, about the usual number that were crowded together on the premises. That the whole ground was occupied with one continued building, without yard in front or rear, or intervening space of any kind; with privies and pantries — cispools and bed-rooms — kitchens and pot holes — all in common or interchanging use.[2]

The need for more houses was outlined in the *Mirror* in 1835.[3] Haswell and Hone described in some detail the twenty blocks in the First Ward destroyed by the Great Fire.

This was a season of very great apparent business prosperity in New York, with inflated prices for every sort of commodity. City real estate, in particular, showed unheard of values,

1. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 156, 158.
2. *Documents of the Board of Aldermen of the City of New York*, II, 151–152. The gore referred to was evidently the triangle at Christopher, West 4th, and Grove Streets, which the city acquired by condemnation proceedings on April 5, 1837, and laid out as the present Christopher Street Park. Stokes, V, 1746, citing Prendergast, *Record of Real Estate* (1914), p. 49.
3. *New-York Mirror*, XIII, 15.

some considerable transfers being made at prices four times as high as were paid for the same property but few years earlier. . . .

On the evening of the 16th of December, the great fire, as it was then and since has been termed, broke out between eight and nine o'clock at No. 25 Merchant Street, now Hanover Street. The area covered by it was computed at fifty acres, being bounded by South Street, Coenties Slip, Broad and Wall streets, including twenty blocks of buildings, the Merchants' Exchange, the Post-office, and two churches. . . . The loss was estimated at fifteen millions of dollars; . . . The insurance companies were all (or very nearly all) made bankrupt. . . . Yet such were the enterprise, the courage, and elastic temper of the city that, only in the next February, twenty lots in the burned district were sold by auction for more than they would have brought before the fire, when occupied by valuable buildings.[1]

Hone approved the prohibition of party walls and the limitation of the height of buildings. This is one of the first recommendations for height limitation, and apparently did not meet with action.

December 22, 1835:

This evening there was an excellent report from the committee on the erection of buildings, which I understand was prepared by Dudley Colden. The two most important points are the prohibition of party walls — each store is to have independent walls of at least twelve inches thickness — and no stores are to be higher than forty feet from the flagging of the walks to the gutters, nor more than 32 feet in height on streets less than 40 feet wide.[2]

The rebuilding of the burned district and the extension of the city to the north were described by Haswell for the year 1836. The whole district was rebuilt within the year, profiting by the fire only in adjustments of street lines and in the replacement of old buildings by new ones.

In this year [1836] the "burned district," as the area of the great fire of the year preceding was termed, was improved in some of its street lines. . . .

During this year the up-town movement made great advances, the dwellings below Chambers Street commanding so high prices for purposes of constantly expanding business that the occupants could scarce afford to retain them for domestic use. Thereupon, up-town property increased greatly in selling value, and rents rose enormously; in fact this was a period of high prices for every thing, with all the marks of a speculative era. . . .

Such was the enterprise of New York that it was observed this year, on the anniversary of the great fire of 1835, that the whole burned district had been rebuilt in handsomer style than before. . . .[3]

Descriptions of the movement of commerce and the consequent changes in various residential sections, and disapproval of the neglected condition of streets, were found in the *Mirror* in 1836.[4] The increase in prices of real estate, wages, and provisions, and a 50 per cent rise in rents in 1835 and 1836 were mentioned

1. Haswell, pp. 309-310.
2. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 186-192.
3. Haswell, pp. 320-324.
4. *New-York Mirror*, XIII, 231, 247.

by Hone.[1] Comments on changes and improvements in various sections of the city, on the filthy conditions of streets, and on immigration were to be found in the *Mirror* in 1835 and 1836.[2]

May 28, 1836:

City improvements. New-York is New-York no longer. Call it Pekin, or Alexandria; call it any thing but New-York. A large portion of the lower section of Broadway below Wall-street, lies dismantled, transformed, torn down, converted to new uses. The Bowling-green is an *omnibus stand*! The boarding-houses are all gone or going. You can scarcely get along for dust, piles of brick, bales, boxes and vehicles of business. The proposed pier in the North river will cause the whole southern end of the island to be abandoned to business more rapid, thronged and extraordinary than has ever before been witnessed on this side the Atlantick. While this, to a New-Yorker, most striking and incredible transmutation is going on, the upper parts of the town are assuming a beauty and grandeur equally novel to American eyes. Splendid squares and streets are opening on every side like some brilliant vision. New-York in wealth, population, business resources and beauty, will equal any city in the world. . . . It approaches every year to the dignity and grandeur of Paris and London. *But* with all its glorious advantages — it is the filthiest, dustiest, muddiest, worst-managed and most-neglected city extant. Under the control of proper authorities, it would be equally lovely as a place of residence, and amazing as a mart of business.[3]

July 16, 1836:

City improvements. The alterations that are daily taking place in this good city, are so extensive and of such importance, that a personal inspection alone can enable any one to realize their magnitude. Indeed, when they are completed, a new map will be necessary, as the face of the localities is entirely changed, some streets having disappeared altogether, and others having been materially altered and enlarged, and what is better, immeasurably improved. In the first place, Gold-street has been widened on one side from Spruce to Fulton-street, of nearly fifteen feet, by which means the value of property has increased greatly in that quarter, and when the enlargements are carried through into Maiden-lane, and thence to Wall-street, it will form one of the main arteries through which the current of business and wealth will flow. Fulton-street is scarcely recognizable, one side having been taken down from Broadway to Ryder's Alley, and several new buildings have already been reared, being the main thoroughfare by which the connexion with Brooklyn is carried on. A most important improvement is now rapidly progressing on the other side of the city. Chapel-street, from Leonard-street to College-place, has been widened to ninety feet, and this which was but recently one of the most squalid and contracted streets, now presents one of the finest avenues on the island. There is a talk of carrying it through Barclay into Fulton-street at one extremity, and to continue it on the same scale through Laurens-street up to the Washington Parade-ground. There is no city in the world which affords such a spectacle as New-York at this moment — the burned district is resuming its former aspect within six months of the disaster which laid it prostrate — the limits of the town are being extended every day, and New-York is walking into the country with rapid

1. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 185, 201–203. 2. *New-York Mirror*, XIII, 327, 383, 399. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

strides, while the old quarters are being improved and rendered more suitable to the wants and tastes of the present generation.[1]

Progress in the construction of sewers between Bleecker and 31st Streets in November 1836 was recorded, with the significant indication that connection of houses with sewers was becoming general "among all builders of new houses." [2]

In 1837 the financial panic broke, involving immense contraction in real estate values, hundreds of local failures of commercial firms, and widespread unemployment. Haswell commented on prices and food riots,[3] and Hone on high prices.[4] The typhoid epidemic among the poor population of the Sixth Ward, which occurred the same year, was discussed by Griscom,[5] and in the subsequent United States Industrial Commission report.[6] Dr. John A. Swett noted that all cases brought to his attention occurred in cellar or basement residences (one family to a room) or on the first floor of houses that had no cellars, and attributed the disease to "ground emanations." [7]

The "Old Brewery" at Five Points was converted into a tenement house in 1837,[8] and figured largely in subsequent accounts of Five Points. The *Mirror* urged a public square at 14th Street and Tenth Avenue.[9]

Mrs. Felton, an Englishwoman who lived in the United States for two years, included in her remarks about New York in 1838 an attempt to explain the causes of high rents and land values:

> Rents are here much higher than in London. On investigation, I suppose, the value of building ground in the lower part of this city, would be exceeded in price, by no area of equal dimensions in England — perhaps not in the world. The whole of the mercantile business is transacted in that part of the city, which lies below the Park. . . . The value of land, in this section, being exorbitantly increased by competition, and the desire of all, who have business to transact, to be as near the market as possible; joined to the scarcity of room; conspires to raise the price of land to an extravagant height, in every part of the city. . . .[10]

The *Mirror*, in commenting upon improvements in various parts of the city, displayed a vision, rare for its period, in recommending a waterfront park for the upper part of the city.

March 24, 1838:

> *City improvements.* As the spring advances one may observe that, notwithstanding the number of houses still to let, building begins to go on with some vigour at the upper end of the

1. *Ibid.*, XIV, 23.
2. *Ibid.*, XIV, 151.
3. Haswell, pp. 324-31.
4. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 243-244, 252.
5. John H. Griscom, *The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York, with suggestions for its improvement. A Discourse [with additions] delivered on the 29th December, 1853, at the repository of the American Institute*, pp. 15-16.
6. *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration, . . . and on Education, . . .*, XV, 452.
7. Griscom, pp. 15-16.
8. *The Old Brewery, and the New Mission House at the Five Points. By Ladies of the Mission*, p. 20.
9. *New-York Mirror*, XIV, 377.
10. Mrs. Felton, *Life in America. A Narrative of Two Years City & Country Residence in the United States*, p. 43.

town. The regions contiguous to Washington-Square and Stuyvesant-Place are becoming more and more densely settled; while the style of the houses in these neighbourhoods is infinitely superiour to that of the old ones in the lower parts of the city. Whatever we may have lost in solidity and permanency in our mode of building, we have certainly gained vastly in taste and convenience of late years. The great want in the upper part of the town, which is sufficiently ornamented with publick squares dotted here and there, is an airy promenade by the water-side, to prove a substitute for the Battery with those who live far from that delightful resort. . . .[1]

Real estate prices, following the financial crisis of 1837, continued to advance. Hone mentioned the sale of a house on the corner of Wall and Hanover Streets in 1838 for the sum of $223,000,[2] and the prices of lots at 22nd to 24th Streets.[3] The *Mirror* called attention to the increase in rents, and to new buildings and improvements in various parts of the city in 1839.

February 9, 1839:

Rents in Wall-street have advanced for the next year about one hundred per cent, in consequence of intended improvements. The Merchants, Union, and Manhattan Banks, are all to be torn down in the spring, and splendid granite buildings to be erected in their places. The Bank of the United States paid for their lot about one hundred and eighty thousand dollars, which is the greatest price a lot has been sold for in this city. The building on it is nearly finished — and, already, two of the rooms for a small size are rented to an Insurance Company, for four thousand dollars per year. The old house, formerly occupied by Daniel Bahr, the tailor, was leased by him some four years since, at an annual rent of two thousand dollars, for twenty-one years — the lease was sold within a few days, having seventeen years to run, for a profit of twelve thousand dollars.

March 9, 1839:

. . . Around Union-Place new blocks of houses, capacious and stately, are springing up with surprising celerity. At the corner of Broadway and Eighth-street, a beautiful square, extending to the Bowery, and occupying some acres of ground, is soon to be enclosed. On the East River, the wharves from Coffee-House Slip to Corlaer's Hook are to be enlarged and improved in a manner that will much enhance the value of property in that direction. It is proposed to extend Broadway some miles beyond Union-Place — a proposition, which must convey an imposing idea of the rapid *filling-up* of the gigantick outline of New-York. As the business of the city creeps (we should rather say strides) farther up Broadway, the fashion and wealth of the city is retreating nearer to the centre of the island, and Fourteenth-street will doubtless be considered the heart rather than the extremity of the town in the course of a few years.[4]

Between 1840 and 1850 the population of New York City grew from nearly one-third of a million to over a half-million souls, that is from 312,710 to 515,547. This was a period of growing recognition of the tenement house as a problem, with

1. *New-York Mirror*, XV, 311.
2. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 360.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
4. *New-York Mirror*, XVI, 263, 295.

many useful studies of conditions of living in tenement houses, mostly in the reports of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. There was, however, relatively little legislative activity for the improvement of the conditions described or decried.

Hone's *Diary* and Haswell's *Reminiscences* called attention once again to the decreasing prices of real estate, the increase of foreign immigration, and the notorious conditions of Five Points in the years 1840 and 1841,[1] and Charles Dickens in his *American Notes* of 1842 commented likewise on Five Points, the conditions of the streets, and the ever-present hogs as scavengers.[2] But the most specific housing study is in an admirable discourse by Dr. Griscom in 1844. In it he quoted, among others, the annual report of Dr. McCready for 1842, as follows:

> In the summer of '42, a number of cases of Typhus fever, of a very severe type, occurred in a building in the rear of No. 49 Elizabeth street, under circumstances which left no doubt as to its local origin. The front building, a small two story frame house, was partly occupied by the proprietor, or lessee, of the building, as a liquor store, and partly sub-let to several Irish families. A covered alley-way led to the rear building. This was a double frame house, three stories in height. It stood in the centre of the yard. Ranged next the fence, where [*sic*] a number of pig styes and stables, which surrounded the yard on three sides. From the quantity of filth, liquid and otherwise, thus caused, the ground, I suppose, had been rendered almost impassable, and to remedy this, the yard had been completely boarded over, so that the earth could nowhere be seen. These boards were partially decayed, and by a little pressure, even in dry weather, a thick greenish fluid could be forced up through their crevices. The central building was inhabited wholly by negroes. In this building there occurred, in the course of six weeks, nine cases of Typhus fever. The two first taken, resided on the ground floor, and both died. The others residing on the second and third floors, finally recovered. . . . The disease would undoubtedly have spread farther, but the inhabitants took the alarm, and the house for a time was deserted. At my solicitation the Alderman of the ward visited the building, the number of pigs about the establishment was reduced to that allowed by law, and chloride of lime, whitewashing, etc., liberally, and assiduously employed.[3]

Cellar lodgings, courts, and rear buildings and their effect on health and morals were described by Dr. Griscom while he served as City Inspector in 1842, with suggestions for improvements. Griscom was the first outstanding figure in American housing reform — scientific in habit of thought, and direct, practical, and farsighted in his recommendations for future policy.

> Compelled as we are to live in houses, whereby we are cut off in a great measure from the enjoyment of the air in its greatest freedom and purity, it is incumbent upon all, as they would partake of the great gift so lavishly expended for us, to change and renovate the atmosphere of

1. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 466; Haswell, pp. 367–380.
2. Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation*, I, 191–218.
3. Griscom, *The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York*, pp. 18–19.

their dwellings as often as possible. . . . the infrequency of a free ventilation of dwellings, and the consequent repeated respiration of the same air, for days and weeks together, indicate either a profound ignorance, or a culpable carelessness, of health and life. We seem, generally, to be too fearful of the presence of fresh, pure air. . . .

One of the most potent causes of the disease and mortality of this, as it is of every other city, in a greater or less degree, is the residence of a considerable part of the population in cellars and *basements*, and in *courts and alleys*. A large proportion of these, is subjected to the most trying of all the circumstances of pauper life, except, perhaps, that of being asbolutely houseless; and in many instances that have fallen under notice, the latter would almost seem to be the preferable condition, for a portion of the year at least. . . .

A due regard for the health of the citizens and residents, would justify the City Legislature in prohibiting cellars as dwellings, in requiring the owner or lessee to keep all the out and indoor premises clean, and free from everything likely to prove injurious to public health, and an immediate stop should be put to the practice of crowding so many human beings in such limited spaces as we often see them. The wise prohibition to carry more than a graduated number of people, in sea-going vessels, should be extended to dwellings on land. If there is any propriety in the law regulating the construction of buildings in reference to fire, equally proper would be one respecting the protection of the inmates from the pernicious influence of badly arranged houses and apartments. The power given to a magistrate to pull down a building, whose risk of falling endangers the lives of the inmates or passers-by, may with equal reason be extended to the correction of the interior condition of tenements, when dangerous to health and life. The latter should be regarded by the legislator and executive, with as much solicitude as the property of citizens. . . .

To contrive means by which the filth of the City may be removed as fast as possible, is obviously a point of primary necessity, and there is abundant evidence to show, that the most *efficient*, as well as *cheapest* mode of removing noxious refuse is by sewers. . . .[1]

Regulation of private building by law should be supplemented, according to Griscom, with the building by philanthropists of new dwellings with higher standards. He thus anticipated some aspects of the present movement for model housing, equipment, and management by nearly a century.

The melioration of the condition of these classes, with respect to their dwellings and modes of life, presents a large field for the exercise of philanthrophy, by the benevolent capitalist. Blocks or rows of substantial buildings, in open spaces, where the air would have free access, with the internal arrangement such as would conduce to the well-being of the tenants, and with the facilities for warming, washing, drainage, and storage of fuel and food, which science has so greatly improved, might doubtless be made to yield a good interest for the investment, while a return would be received in the increased happiness, health, morals and comfort of the inmates, and good order of society, which cannot be estimated in money. The example would compel an improvement in tenements already erected. A system of tenantage might be established, at so moderate a rent, as would form an inducement for the poor to live under it, even with such re-

1. *Annual Report of the Interments in the City and County of New-York, for the year 1842, with remarks thereon, and a brief view of the Sanitary Condition of the City. Presented to the common council by John H. Griscom, M.D., City Inspector*, pp. 161–163, 175–176, 188.

strictions and supervision, as might be deemed necessary to maintain uniform cleanliness and good order. There are hundred of families in depressed circumstances, who would gladly embrace such opportunities, even at higher rents than they are now compelled to pay, to escape, with their children, the contagion of immorality and licentiousness, to say nothing of disease, which almost uniformly pervades the densely populated courts and wynds of the City.[1]

Conditions in Five Points and the Battery, lodging houses, the Negro quarter in West Broadway, and the German quarter were discussed for the years 1843 to 1845 by Willis. As Five Points represented the worst conditions of housing New York has ever known, a quotation here is pertinent.

. . . This is called "murdering alley," said our guide. We entered between two high brick walls, with barely room to pass, and by the police-lantern made our way up a broken and filthy staircase, to the first floor of a large building. Under its one roof the officer thought there usually slept a thousand of these wretched outcasts. He knocked at a door on the left. It was opened unwillingly by a woman who held a dirty horse-blanket over her breast, but at the sight of the police-lantern she stepped back and let us pass in. The floor was covered with human beings asleep in their rags; and when called by the officer to look in at a low closet beyond, we could hardly put our feet to the ground, they lay so closely together, black and white, men, women, and children. The doorless apartment beyond, of the size of a kennel, was occupied by a woman and her daughter, and the daughter's child, lying together on the floor, and covered by rags and cloths of no distinguishable color, the rubbish of bones and dirt only displaced by their emaciated limbs. The sight was too sickening to endure, but there was no egress without following close to the lantern. Another door was opened to the right. It disclosed a low and gloomy apartment, perhaps eight feet square. Six or seven black women lay together in a heap, all sleeping except the one who opened the door. Something stirred in a heap of rags, and one of the party removing a dirty piece of carpet with his cane, discovered a new-born child. . . . I had never before any adequate idea of poverty in cities. I did not dream that human beings, within reach of human aid, could be abandoned to the wretchedness which I there saw — and I have not described the half of it, for the delicacy of your readers would not bear it, even in description. And all these horrors of want and abandonment lie almost within sound of your voice, as you pass Broadway![2]

Hone commented on low rents and high taxes[3] for 1843. In this decade sewers, water-closets, and tenements, as well as slaughter houses and other nuisances were discussed annually in the reports of the City Inspector.[4]

Griscom's address on December 30, 1844, on the sanitary conditions of the working classes, with suggestions for improvement, was one of the outstanding events in the history of tenement reform of New York City. The burden of his argument was as follows:

The system of lenentage to which large numbers of the poor are subject, I think, must be regarded as one of the principal causes, of the helpless and noisome manner in which they live.

1. *Ibid.*, 276.
2. *The Complete Work. of N. P. Willis*, pp. 582–583.
3. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, II, 647.
4. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New-York for the Year 1844*, pp. 675–685.

The basis of these evils is the subjection of the tenantry, to the merciless inflictions and extortions of the *sub-landlord*. A house, or a row, or court of houses, is hired by some person of the owner, on a lease of several years, for a sum which will yield a fair interest on the cost. The *owner* is thus relieved of the great trouble incident to the changes of tenants, and the collection of rents. . . .

The tenements, in order to admit a greater number of families, are divided into small apartments, as numerous as decency will admit. . . . These closets, for they deserve no other name, are then rented to the poor, from week to week, or month to month, the rent being almost invariably required in advance, at least for the first few terms. . . .

Another very important particular in the arrangements of these tenements must here be noticed. By the mode in which the rooms are planned, *ventilation is entirely prevented*. . . .

But the most offensive of all places for residence are the *cellars*. It is almost impossible, when contemplating the circumstances and conditions of the poor beings who inhabit these holes, to maintain the proper degree of calmness requisite for a thorough inspection, and the exercise of a sound judgment, respecting them. You must descend to them; you must feel the blast of foul air as it meets your face on opening the door; you must grope in the dark, or hesitate until your eye becomes accustomed to the gloomy place, to enable you to find your way through the entry, over a broken floor, the boards of which are protected from your tread by a half inch of hard dirt; you must inhale the suffocating vapor of the sitting and sleeping rooms; and in the dark, damp recess, endeavor to find the inmates by the sound of their voices, or chance to see their figures moving between you and the flickering blaze of a shaving burning on the hearth, or the misty light of a window coated with dirt and festooned with cobwebs — or if in search of an invalid, take care that you do not fall full length upon the bed with her, by stumbling against the bundle of rags and straw, dignified by that name, lying on the floor, under the window, if window there is: — all this, and much more, beyond the reach of my pen, must be felt and seen, ere you can appreciate in its full force the mournful and disgusting condition, in which many thousands of the subjects of our government pass their lives. . . .

There are two features of a cellar residence which more especially render them objectionable; 1st, the dampness, and 2d, the more incomplete ventilation. In *any* cellar the impossibility of access for the heat of the sun to the parts of the soil adjacent to the floor and walls, and the absence of currents of air through the room, keep it much more damp than rooms above ground, where the heat and air have freer access.

Is it astonishing that the Dispensary is called upon, very frequently, to extend its aid to these inmates? and should there not be some remedy for this dreadful state of things? The whole of these premises, besides the cellar, is in a condition unfit for human habitation, and yet crowded to a melancholy degree. A sanitary law that would reach this case, and be well applied, would save a large amount of life, health, money, and morals. The same may be said of hundreds of other places, of which this is a fair average sample. There are many places still worse. . . .

If the habitation of damp, dark cellars, and of narrow alleys and courts, and the breathing of a vitiated atmosphere, are *rightly* asserted to be promotive of disease, then those most subject to these causes breathe a totally different air through the day, at their labors in the streets, along the rivers, or upon buildings, and *only at night* are they subject to the worse atmosphere. Thus more than half their hours are passed under more healthful circumstances. Even the

boys who spend several hours at play, or even in a partially ventilated school-house, follow an improved regimen in this particular. On the other hand the *females, both night and day*, inhale the polluted atmosphere of the dwellings, and are more continually under all the other bad influences of their unfortunate situations. . . .

It will be seen upon examining the Dispensary returns, that in some years the proportion of females to males, prescribed for at the Dispensaries, has been as 12 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ — in others, 12 to $8\frac{1}{2}$, and in one instance as 19 to 11. This comparison is rendered more striking when we take into account the greater amount of intemperance among the males.

The Annual Reports of the City Inspector show that nearly one-half the deaths by consumption are of the *foreign part of the population*, and that more than *one-third* the whole number of deaths are of foreigners. . . . Now it is a pretty well ascertained fact, that a large majority of the cellar and court population of this city consists of persons of foreign birth and their children. Of the Dispensary patients, about 60 *per cent.* are natives of other countries, . . . Put these facts, then, side by side, and we are confirmed in the conclusion that the domiciliary condition of these poor beings, the confined spaces in which they dwell, the unwholesome air they breathe, and their filth and degradation, are prolific sources of an immense amount of distress and sickness, which in their turn, serve, by the loss of time, of wages, and of strength, to aggravate the miserableness of their condition, to increase the danger to the public health, and the burden of public and private charity. . . .

The tide of emigration which now sets so strongly towards our shores, cannot be turned back. We *must* receive the poor, the ignorant, and the oppressed from other lands, and it would be better to consider them as coming filled with the energy of hope for happier days, and more useful labors, than they found at home. . . . whose fault is it that they live here in cellars more filthy than the cabins of whose wretchedness we hear so much, and for whose existence, half the blame is thrown upon the government they have left.

Let us first cast the beam from our own eye. *We are parties to their degradation, inasmuch as we permit the inhabitation of places, from which it is not possible improvement in condition or habits can come. We suffer* the sub-landlord to stow them, like cattle, in pens, and to compel them to swallow poison with every breath. They are *allowed*, may it not be said *required*, to live in dirt, when the reverse, rather, should be enforced.

This depressed physical condition, and bad moral and social habits and propensities, to my mind, have an intimate relation to each other — they stand clearly in the attitudes of cause and effect. . . .

It follows, therefore, that a correction of the physical, will tend to abate the moral, evils of the community. . . .[1]

Dr. Griscom had addressed a number of questions to the Tract Missionaries, who were supported by the City Tract Society and visited the poor. In answer to these queries Reverend George Hatt, missionary of the first and second wards, made the following observations:

. . . In my opinion constraint by law ought to be on the landlord. No landlord ought to be allowed to let a place which is known to be unhealthy under a heavy penalty. There are thou-

1. John H. Griscom, *The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York*, pp. 8–14, 23–24.

sands in this city who are pent up in cellars, with ground for the floor, into which I would not put a hog, if I wanted him to thrive. Last winter I visited a place in Washington-street, where in one such hole, thirteen persons were staying, four adults, and nine children. At times the tide came in; it was always damp, and there was a woman sick with Pleurisy. . . .

. . . I would recommend that the corporation build, and encourage the building of houses suitable for the poor, so constructed that each family may have at least two rooms; do this, and many of those evils which now exist will be done away, . . .[1]

In addition, J. B. Horton, missionary of the Seventh Ward, commented as follows:

. . . I can see no good reason why a State and City that have *legislated so immensely*, and sacrificed so much public and private property to establish and execute Quarantine Laws, (many of them of more than doubtful utility,) to prevent the importation of Yellow Fever, Cholera, and the Plague, into our populous city, should by any means judge it absurd or unnecessary, to enact a few laws, and appoint a few officers to inspect certain persons and places within the city, (with power to remove) where and by whom all those infectious and contagious maladies may be *manufactured*, . . .[2]

After quoting these letters, Dr. Griscom continued:

It cannot be denied that from within the confines of the city, more serious danger is to be apprehended than from without. In the pent up courts, the crowded tenements, the narrow streets and alleys, the damp dark cellars, in the destitution, filth, and misery of a large part of our population, are the germs of disease, which will readily account for a large proportion of the weekly average of nearly 200 deaths, announced in the bills of mortality. . . .

From what has been related respecting the effects of the habitations of the poor, upon their health, lives, and morals, the evils are attributable to three things, viz., 1st, the living in damp, dark, underground, and other ill-ventilated apartments. 2d. The dirty and injured condition of the floors, walls, yards, and other parts of the premises. 3d. The crowding too many persons in single rooms of inadequate size and accommodations. To correct the first two of these evils, there appears but one way, and that is to place all the dwellings of the city under the inspection of competent officers, who shall have power *to enforce a law of domiciliary cleanliness*. For this purpose, those places known or suspected to be kept usually in improper condition, should be visited periodically, say once in one, two, or three months. The law should be so arranged as to make the cleansing bear upon the owner or lessee, and not upon the tenant directly, who is generally so poor, as to be unable to perform the necessary purgation and rectification of the premises.

The provisions of such a law should be similar to these.

1st. Every dwelling, or house, or room, court, alley, or yard, or other place used as a dwelling in the City of New York, shall be subject at any time, between sunrise and sunset, to the inspection of the Health Inspector in whose district it may be situated. If in opinion of said officer, it shall be deemed unfit for the purposes of a residence, by reason of dampness, darkness, dirt, filthiness, too low ceiling, ill-ventilation, being under ground, or any other good cause, he

1. *Ibid.*, p. 26. 2. *Ibid*, p. 29.

shall immediately report the same to the City Inspector, who shall, upon being satisfied that such report is true, serve a notice to that effect upon the owner, agent, or lessee, stating the reason therefor, and directing the same to be put in proper order and condition, within a specified time; said room, house, or premises, to be outlawed, and forbidden to be occupied as a dwelling, until said order is complied with to the satisfaction of the Health Inspector.

2d. Should any room, cellar, dwelling, or premises, be found by the Health Inspector to be in a condition dangerous to the public health, by reason of emanations from the soil, or other places, or from any other cause, said officer shall report the same to the City Inspector, who shall upon being satisfied of its correctness, notify the owner, agent or lessee thereof, directing him to cleanse and purify said place or premises, within a reasonable time; in default of a compliance with such order, it shall be the duty of the Health Inspector to cause such place to be purified and cleansed forthwith, and all the costs to be assessed upon the property so cleansed, and in addition thereto, a fine of fifty dollars.

3d. Should any owner, lessee, or other person feel aggrieved by the action of the Health Inspector or City Inspector, appeal may be made to the Mayor, or Board of Health, (sufficient time being allowed for the purpose,) who may reverse or confirm the decision of the City Inspector. . . .

. . . To raise from the depressed and poor, the heavy necessity of living crowded in single rooms, the source as I have endeavored to show of great moral, as well as physical, evils, much aid cannot, I fear, be found in any legal enactment. If a family are so numerous as to require separate rooms, and so poor as to be unable to procure them, no law on the subject could be enforced, which would effectually prevent the evil. The remedy lies with the humane and philanthropic capitalists, by whom houses might be erected with all the comforts and conveniences of separate chambers, &c., which would yield a fair interest on their value, and make thousands of people happy. . . .[1]

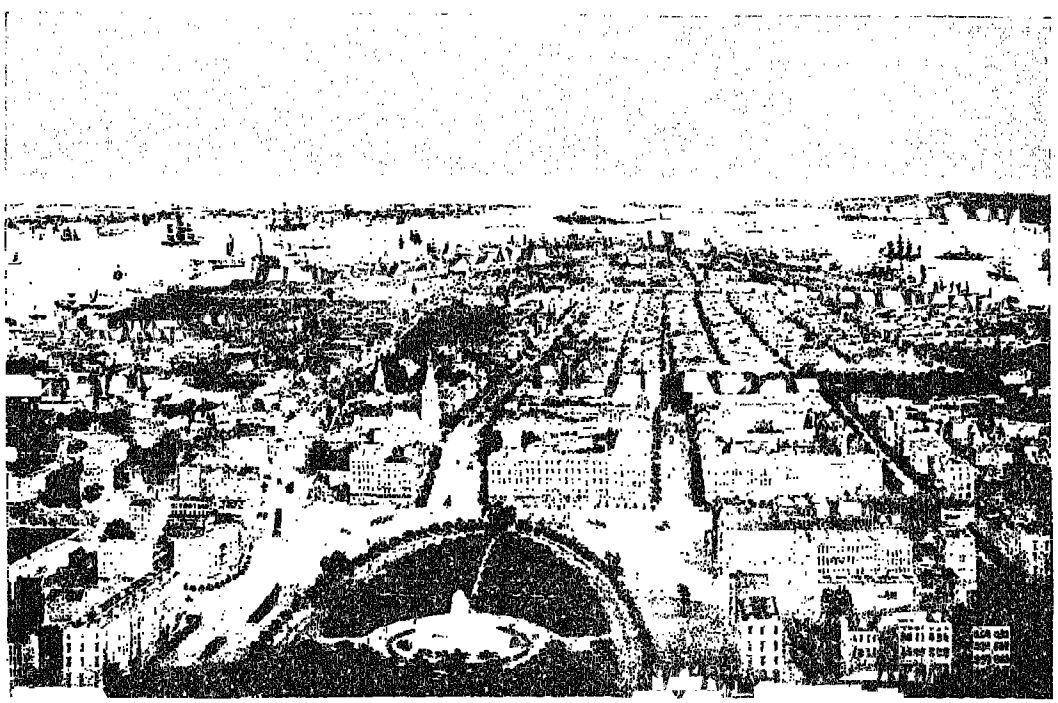
This was New York's first comprehensive document on housing. The extracts quoted indicate reasonably thorough knowledge of the subject matter. Its recommendations have in recent years been largely met, but for fully a dozen years following Griscom's statement there was no significant action, and no publication on housing of equal importance. Its reception and its fate are indicated by the following quotation from Griscom's Preface:

The subject matter of the following pages was originally addressed, in the form of a letter, to the Chief Magistrate of the city. . . . Appreciating the importance of its facts and suggestions, the Mayor transmitted it to the Common Council, a legislative branch of the City Government, recommending it to their serious attention. After several weeks' deliberation upon it, the committee to whom it was referred arrived at the conclusion, embodied in the following language quoted from their report: "Your committee do not profess to be judges of the subject, or in other words, they do not think it proper at this time, to go into such a measure," and they recommend that the paper be returned to its author. Under these circumstances no other course remained, in order to obtain for the subject its merited attention, than to lay the communication before the public, as was done in a free lecture.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 46, 48.



a. View from St. Paul's Chapel, looking South and East, 1848. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 132.



b. Union Square, looking South, 1849. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 135.

Attention was switched from sanitary evils to conflagration dangers by a fire on July 19, 1845, in which 450 buildings were destroyed.[1]

Haswell commented upon that fire as follows:

> July 19, the great fire of 1845 began about daybreak in a warehouse on New Street. It was apparently well under control when a vast explosion occurred, by which several lives were lost; neighboring buildings were overthrown, and flames were communicated in every direction. In two hours 150 buildings were aflame, and before the devastation could be checked almost the whole district bounded by Broadway from below Stone Street to above Exchange Place, inclusive of a part of the west front above Morris Street, the fronts on Exchange Place to beyond Broad Street, the fronts on Broad Street down to Stone Street, and the fronts on Stone Street from there to Broadway were destroyed. The loss was computed at six million dollars, and this involved the failure of some of the most approved insurance companies. Nevertheless, rebuilding at once began; new buildings rising while yet the flames were playing among the mounds of ruin and the old materials to be cleared away were too hot to be taken in the bare hands of the workmen. . . .[2]

Yet apparently there was no improvement in the legislation for fireproofing until the Act of March 7, 1849, "for the more effectual prevention of fires in the city of New-York, . . ." which extended the fire limits to "a line drawn one hundred feet north of Thirty-second street, extending from the East to the Hudson river." [3]

In the year 1846 Ruggles described the villages of Bloomingdale, Manhattanville, and Harlem, which were still remote from the city's outskirts:

> BLOOMINGDALE,
>
> A remarkably neat village of New-York county, situated on the left bank of the Hudson, five miles above the City-Hall. . . . The village consists chiefly of country seats, and contains some 400 inhabitants. About two miles beyond Bloomingdale, on the same side of the river, is
>
> MANHATTANVILLE,
>
> Containing about 500 inhabitants, an Episcopal church, and some extensive factories. . . .
>
> HARLAEM,
>
> Is situated two miles southeast of Manhattanville, on Harlaem river, near its discharge into Long Island sound. It is a flourishing village, with a population of 1,500, four churches, and a superabundance of hotels, besides a commodious depôt, belonging to the New-York and Harlaem Rail-Road Company, and several factories. The cars for Harlaem start every hour from the depôt, northeast of the City-Hall.[4]

1. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 213.
2. Haswell, p. 423.
3. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Seventy-Second Session of the Legislature*, pp. 118–122.
4. Edward Ruggles, *A Picture of New-York in 1846; with a short account of Places in its Vicinity*; . . ., pp. 22–23.

The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, in its third annual report in 1846, stated that it had devoted much inquiry to the dwellings for the poor.[1] Thus began an interest and activity which soon led to a variety of forms of leadership in housing. The City Inspector's report for that year revealed the need for reform in regard to slaughterhouses, the insanitary condition of the streets, sewers, tenement houses, and cellar lodgings.[2] The *Evening Post* on January 30, 1846, had an article on the conditions at Five Points which favored street widening as a means of improving that slum area.

> The attention of the public has been called often, of late, to the propriety of opening and widening Anthony street, and it has been urged in favor thereof that it would greatly tend to reform that sink of pollution known as the Five Points. Much as we are opposed to the revival of that system of improvements that has heretofore wrought so much evil in this city, yet if the widening and opening of every street connected with the Five Points would in any wise tend to break up that nest of vipers, and wipe away from the heart of the city that plague spot, we would not only lift up both our hands in favor thereof, but would be willing that every man, woman and child should be assessed to pay the damages. We know of no place on the earth where there are more wretched beings congregated together than at the Five Points, and what renders it still more abhorrent to the feelings of every philanthropist is that the number, instead of decreasing, is constantly increasing.[3]

The 1847 report of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor recommended that wealthy citizens interest themselves in building tenement houses for the poor.[4] The local press, in 1847, showed considerable interest in matters of housing, presumably reflecting the studies and recommendations of the Association. The *Morning Courier*,[5] after indicating the need of decent, low-priced houses, suggested that the wealthy men of the city erect such tenements.

> *Dwellings for the poor.* We have already urged upon public attention, the necessity of providing for the poor of our city, better habitations than a very large proportion of them now occupy. Further inquiry has furnished still stronger proof of the imperative demand for such provision; and we are rejoiced to learn that the subject has enlisted the efforts of some of our wealthiest and most influential citizens. No one who has not made personal examination, can fully realize the wretchedness and degradation into which thousands of our laboring population are driven, or the miserable tenements they are forced to inhabit, by their inability to pay the rent demanded for those which are better. Setting aside the old wooden rookeries which are fast falling to decay, and which still swarm with denizens, in various parts of the city, there are many houses of a better class in which poor families are crowded so densely, and so thoroughly

1. *The Third Annual Report of the New-York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1846, with the Constitution, and a List of Members*, pp. 22–23.
2. *Annual Report of the City Inspector, of the number of Deaths and Interments in the City and County of New York, for the year 1846*, pp. 397, 402–405.
3. *New York Evening Post*, January 30, 1846, cited in Stokes, V, 1796.
4. *The Fourth Annual Report of the New-York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1847, with the Constitution, and a List of Members*, pp. 23–24.
5. *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, January 13, 25, and 30, 1847.

deprived of all the means of health and comfort, as to render it almost surprising that life should be endurable, not to say desirable. In Prince-street, for example, near Broadway, there stands a two story house, containing *ten* families of from four to seven persons each, besides a barber's shop, grog-shop, and policy office; in the rear, stands a low three story house, with *six* rooms, some of them not over six feet square, and every one of them occupied by a family: adjoining is another wooden house of the same dimensions, similarly tenanted. — Here upon this single lot, twenty-five feet by one hundred, are crowded together *thirty* families, of more than one hundred persons — all wretchedly poor, filthy, destitute of good air, without furniture, and yet compelled to pay, each family for itself, *two dollars rent per week*, for their miserable accommodations! This is only one instance among many. We have no desire to exaggerate facts of this kind, but we have no doubt tens of thousands of our laboring poor are compelled to inhabit tenements equally narrow, filthy and uncomfortable, and to pay rents equally exorbitant when compared with the accommodations which they receive. Now, certainly, some remedy ought to be provided for this state of things. Houses ought to be erected, at once substantial, comfortable and cheap; provided with everything needed for health, and yet furnished to the poor at rates which they could pay. . . . Of course separate dwellings cannot be furnished to each, though this would be the most desirable provision, were it practicable. . . . Those who build houses to rent to the poor, should make the rooms of better size and more convenient shape; and should take especial pains to separate the rooms occupied by each family, as completely as possible, from all others. Let each family have an *isolated household* of its own. Nothing will conduce to its comfort, cleanliness, health and respectability more than that: . . .

We have already expressed the belief that buildings of this kind might be erected, which would afford the poor far better accommodations than they have at present, and at the same time yield a very handsome interest, in the shape of rents, upon the money invested. We are heartily rejoiced to learn, that the subject has engaged the earnest attention of the "*Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor*;" and that a committee appointed by that Society has been prosecuting for some time past a close and careful inquiry into the practicability of such provisions for the laboring poor of the city. The result of their investigation, we can state at present only in general terms. They propose to purchase, in some eligible part of the city, a plot of ground 200 feet square; to erect upon this a block of buildings four stories high, divided in one direction into two parts by a passage twenty feet wide, and in the other direction into *four* parts, by three passages, twenty, ten and twenty feet wide respectively; — each of the eight buildings thus made, consists of three houses; — each house having a single entrance, with a hall, piazza in the rear for each story, and upon each floor *two* rooms 15 feet by 11; each room [?] having two bedrooms 7 feet by 12½, with sink, water closet, &c. — Thus there would be, in the four stories of each house 24 rooms for as many families; — and the block would accommodate 192 families. Very admirable provisions have been made for ventilation, for securing a constant supply of Croton water, for keeping the apartments of each family separate from those of every other — each one having even a good *cellar* entirely by itself — and generally for securing the greatest possible degree of comfort which the requisite limits will allow. Plans of the buildings have been prepared [1] and the estimates made; and the result fully justifies the opinion we have expressed. It is found that these apartments may be rented for

1. Although plans for these buildings were drawn up, lithographed, and distributed to builders, we have been unable to find a copy of the print. But this description gives an idea of the arrangement. No model tenement was built by the Association until 1855. See Appendix.

one dollar per week to each family, and yield a handsome income to the owners of the building. . . .[1]

Suggestions were made for the erection of moderate-priced houses and published in the *Mirror* of February 13, 1847.

Houses for the Poor. — The Albion has an article written with the usual good sense and good taste of that journal, upon the necessity of houses at moderate rents, for that already large and increasing class of society, small-incomes (to coin a word). We have long seen the necessity of buildings in the European style, and last year re-published an article from Blackwood, which displayed the advantages of that system at length. We differ from the Albion as to the location of the proposed houses. Down town is built up; to tear down and re-build would be too expensive, but upon the cross streets between Broadway West to the Sixth Avenue, and East to the Avenue First, there are many vacant lots varying from $2500 to $4500 in price. Ten lots, which the Albion says it has plans to show can be admirably arranged into forty-eight flats, could be bought for $35,000; the building could be put up for $65,000 at the outside. If the flats rented for $300, which would bring the price of each room to a trifle above one dollar a week, the receipts on the one hundred thousand dollars of outlay would be fourteen thousand four hundred dollars — a good interest for money.[2]

An article on conditions of overcrowding at Five Points (200 people in one building at 7 Little Water Street), and the need for reform, was published this same year in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*.[3] The remaining contemporary comments included the report for 1848 of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, which again recommended "Model Dwellings,"[4] and a report on the success of private enterprise in housing reform, compiled by Ladies of the Mission.

Six years from the time of Dickens' visit passed in the old miserable way, without the putting forth of Christian effort. No sanitary influences reached this spot steeped in vice and wretchedness. The graphic picture of Dickens was still true to the life. We would faithfully chronicle however one improvement, . . . The improvement was an outward one. It was the purchase by the Corporation, . . . of a small triangular space intended for a park, which is now literally a green spot in this "wilderness of brick and mortar." An opening was thus made for more light and air, a movement heralding the light of truth that was soon to penetrate the darkness. In 1848, the regards of some Christian women were attracted to this place accompanied with an earnest desire to test the power of Christianity to give life even here. They were told by gentlemen whom they requested to survey the ground, that no suitable room could be procured, but they expressed their determination to send a missionary there, which they did in 1850.

A stranger, taking his position in Broadway, near the City Hospital, would find himself at one of the central points of the wealth, the fashion, and the commerce of the largest and most influential city of the Union. . . .

1 *Ibid.*, January 30, 1847.
2. *The New York Mirror*, New Series, V, 299.
3. August 23, 1847.
4. *The Fifth Annual Report of the New-York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1848*, pp. 18–19.

One minute's walk from that Broadway-point of wealth, commerce, and enjoyment, will place him in another world of vision, thought, and feeling. Passing down Anthony-street but two squares, a scene will be presented, forming so entire a contrast to that he has just left, that imagination would never have pictured, nor can language in its utmost strength portray it. Standing at the lower end of Anthony-street, a large area, covering about an acre, will open before him. Into this, five streets, viz., Little-Water, Cross, Anthony, Orange, and Mulberry, enter, as rivers emptying themselves into a bay. In the center of this area is a small triangular space, known as "Paradise-square," surrounded by a wooden paling generally disfigured by old garments hung upon it to dry. Opposite this little park stands, or rather stood, the "Old Brewery," so famed in song and story. Miserable-looking buildings, liquor-stores innumerable, neglected children by scores, playing in rags and dirt, squalid-looking women, brutal men with black eyes and disfigured faces, proclaiming drunken brawls and fearful violence, complete the general picture.

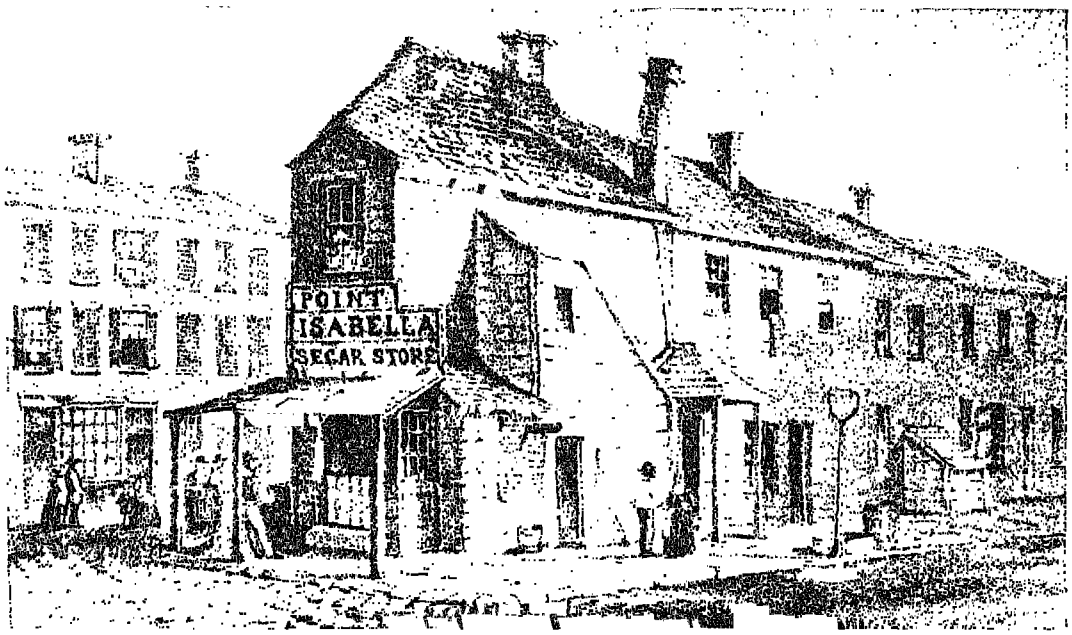
For several years the New-York Ladies' Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been anxious to include this point within the sphere of their operations. Their report of 1848 contains this language: — "We intend to make a new point in Centre or Elm-streets, in the vicinity of the Tombs. . . ."

. . . A room was found, the corner of Little-water and Cross-streets, some twenty by forty feet, thoroughly cleaned and seated, and thus made capable of accommodating about two hundred persons. The first Sabbath it was filled.

Intemperance prevailed so fearfully in this region that all immediately realized that nothing could be effected until this tide could be stayed. . . . Temperance-meetings were instituted, and held almost weekly in the mission-room. . . . In the first year one thousand had signed the pledge, including some of the very worst of the inhabitants. Since then there has been a steady increase, and the closest scrutiny reports that in the large majority of cases the pledge has been fully kept.

Next to intemperance, the missionary found the greatest hindrance to consist in the want of steady employment for the surrounding poor. The majority were vicious, and unused to work; many were anxious for employment, but could not get it, because the large establishments which give slop-work to the poor would not trust their material in the Five Points; and yet they were obliged to remain there because of the cheapness of the rents. The missionary, by becoming responsible, found one house willing to co-operate in his design. After many experiments and many difficulties a regular establishment was formed in which fifty or sixty men and women found constant employment, and boarded in the house of the missionary. . . .

During the year the mission-room became so crowded with children and adult listeners, . . . that the necessity of a larger place was painfully felt. While somewhat anxiously debating about ways and means to accomplish this, a path entirely unexpected opened before the Board. Mr. Harding, lessee of Metropolitan Hall, (the largest and most beautiful place in the city for a public meeting,) offered it to the Society for one evening free of expense. . . . The house was filled to overflowing; the interest manifested was great; and $4,000 were contributed toward that mission. Thus encouraged, the ladies called upon their Advisory Committee to redeem a former promise, viz.: that if, after two years' trial, the success should warrant the outlay, they would aid them in obtaining a more commodious place. After a thorough survey they concluded that the "Old Brewery" was the most eligible point. This place, celebrated for years as



a. Point Isabel, corner of Hester and Division Streets, 1843. Valentine's *Manual* (1857).



b. Old Brewery, Five Points, 1852. Valentine's *Manual* (1853).

the stronghold for crime in that dark region, whose avenues were familiarly known as "Murderer's Alley" and the "Den of Thieves," was inhabited at the time by at least three hundred wretched immoral beings. No language can exaggerate its filth or the degradation of its inmates; and the cleansing of this alone we deem missionary work. Believing that the renovation of a place like this, in the very heart of our great city, would prove a general benefit, the Society called upon the public to aid them still further in the arduous work. Promptly and nobly was that call responded to; ere six months had passed $13,000 were subscribed; and, although $3,000 of the required sum was yet needed, the committee felt emboldened to make the purchase.[1]

The account then gave a vivid description of the dilapidated condition of the Old Brewery, and of its vicious occupants, and continued:

This was the state of the "Old Brewery" in 1850, when the Society first entered the field, and for the two succeeding years. We learn from an old inhabitant of New York that it was erected in 1792, and then known as Coulter's Brewery; that it was changed to a tenement-building in 1837, and seems almost immediately to have attained its "bad pre-eminence."

On the first establishment of the mission at the Five Points, it was thought extremely hazardous for ladies to visit families in that neighborhood, and to gather in children for the schools. Two of the ladies of the Board, however, years before associated with the New York Clothing Society, were the committee of visitation to the Sixth Ward, which includes the Five Points, and they thought there was no ground for these apprehensions. The first year proved their views correct as nearly every house and family were visited by some lady of the Board, and no where did they meet with rudeness or incivility. Even the Old Brewery with its numerous cellars, dark passages and attics became familiar to a few who had moral and physical courage enough to bear the sight, inhale the air and hear the sounds. . . .

. . . in the middle of December, 1852, the demolition of the "Old Brewery" commenced, and in a week's time not one stone was left upon another. During the past year, though much hindered by want of room, and misjudged by many who did not understand the reasons which actuated the Ladies' Society in many of their actions, the Mission has nevertheless strengthened its stakes and enlarged its borders, and, judging from the results of the last great public meeting, obtained an increasing interest in the public mind. Mr. W. E. Harding renewed his offer of Metropolitan Hall for a public demonstration, free of expense; on the 17th of December, a concert was held in the afternoon and in the evening Mr. J. B. Gough addressed a crowded audience, after which $4,000 was again subscribed for the building to be erected on the site of the "Old Brewery." The Ragged School is in vigorous operation, containing already one hundred and fifty scholars. The Common Council not only granted $1,000 to the Society, but also the privilege of erecting a temporary building in the little park, in which to hold the day-school until the Mission Room is completed.

On the 27th of Jan. [1853] the corner-stone of the new mission building was laid. . . . [It was formally opened on June 18, 1853.]

The experience of four years has taught us that the idea of drawing off the population of the Five Points through the agency of any institution is chimerical in the extreme; both because of

1. *The Old Brewery, and the New Mission House at the Five Points. By Ladies of the Mission*, pp. 20–21, 31–33, 36–46.

the numbers who compose its population, and their unwillingness to enter into any plans which would restrain their liberty. In a vast majority of instances they cling to their own homes with a tenacity which is truly astonishing, when we consider their wretchedness. . . .

. . . The work of this Society is still untouched; for theirs is the high ambition to send abroad an influence which shall renovate the Five Points. Their design is, to visit the sick, to relieve the poor, to clothe the naked, to educate the children, to warn sinners to flee the wrath to come, to lead the penitent to an atoning Saviour, and never to consider their work complete until renewing grace has transformed these degraded outcasts, into obedient children of the living God. . . .

. . . We hope, when the debt on our Mission House is liquidated, to erect a back-building with more tenement rooms, where poor families can cultivate the virtues of cleanliness and sobriety — rooms where work can be given to the industrious — a hospital where the sick can be removed from low damp cellars, and where all needful care can be taken of the suffering body, while the wants of the undying soul are not unheeded; and a reading-room, made inviting by light, and warmth, and pleasant books, and kind words to those who have no cheerful friends or happy homes.[1]

Statements with regard to contemporary poverty, prostitution, immigration, boarding houses, wages of seamstresses, and the housing conditions of Five Points were contributed by Foster in 1849.[2] The cholera epidemic of 1849 was fully discussed by a committee of the Board of Health,[3] and commented on by Hone [4] and Haswell.

New York suffered in this year a severe visitation of cholera, which appeared first in the Five Points on May 14, and spread rapidly. The public-school buildings were turned into hospitals, and in them alone one thousand and twenty-one deaths from cholera occurred; the total mortality from the disease in this year being about five thousand.[5]

The report of the Council of Hygiene, in 1865, described the same epidemic,[6] and that of the City Inspector for 1849 attributed it to poor living conditions, intemperance, and the bone-boiling establishments.[7] This epidemic had been most serious at Five Points and in the hovels in the eastern and western sections of the city, and thus had called attention to shanty housing as well as to the congested conditions of the neglected tenement houses at Five Points.

Up to this point in this decade there had been no significant legislative activity with regard to housing except for the regulations concerning privies, in the by-laws and ordinances of January 31, 1845, which provided for annual inspection.[8]

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 55, 62–63, 68, 72, 301–304.
2. George G. Foster, *New York in Slices: by An Experienced Carver: being the Original Slices published in the New York Tribune*, pp. 4–5, 22–24, 50–52, 79–86.
3. *Report of the Proceedings of the Sanatory Committee of the Board of Health in relation to the Cholera as it prevailed in New York in 1849*, pp. 7–71.
4. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, II, 870–874.
5. Haswell, p. 456.
6. *Report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizens' Association of New York upon the Sanitary Condition of the City*, pp. lxiii–lxiv. Infra, pp. 142 to 149.
7. *Annual Report of the City Inspector, of the number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York, during the year 1849*, pp. 501–512.
8. *By laws and Ordinances of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City of New-York. Revised A.D. 1845*, pp. 358–361.

But the years 1848 and 1849 saw much legislative activity, including provision for the licensing of immigrant boarding houses and the protection of immigrants from exploitation in the laws of April 11, 1848,[1] the detailed act for the prevention of fires by semi-fireproofing construction, on March 7, 1849,[2] new legislation on the throwing of rubbish into the streets, on April 2 of that year, which required "suitable vessels" for refuse,[3] an amendment to the fire-prevention act, on April 4, 1849,[4] and amendments to the act for the protection of immigrants, on April 10 and 11.[5]

In Boston, meanwhile, a report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor was issued on June 2, 1846. A comparison of conditions in Boston with those of New York, in the 1840's, reveals many similarities. The report described the "present crowded state of the poorest class of citizens, and the consequent physical and moral degradation." Boston was situated on a peninsula and had at that time a limited area for expansion, as was the case in New York. There had been an influx of immigration, which caused a marked population growth in the most crowded quarters. New York was fortunate in having available the Croton water supply, opened October 14, 1842, but in Boston a physician who practised among the poor wrote:

> I am confident, that I have witnessed a vast deal more of suffering (both in health and comfort) among the poor, from want of water, in the hot season, than I ever have from the want of fuel and clothing, in the cold; and the *fatal* effects of the sick being confined in apartments which did not admit of ventilation have been, with me, matters of frequent observation.[6]

The Boston report also spoke of the influence of overcrowding on the moral health of the occupants. An important finding of the Committee, cited in the report, was that "rents paid for rooms, in the most crowded districts, amounts to a larger sum *per foot of land occupied* by the buildings, and yards, than any other rents in the city, excepting stores and shops in favorite situations." It was also difficult to find adequate housing for the laboring classes near their place of work. Because of this it was considered "highly important to establish properly constructed dwellings for the poor, near the present ground of their labor." The Committee's fourth recommendation was that

> . . . *This can best be done by the investment of considerable sums in buildings expressly designed for this class of tenants.* . . . Indeed it is evident that although great improvements might be made by fitting up old houses, the only effectual course, in such a crowded city, is to build new and *large* structures. . . .[7]

1. *Laws of the State of New-York, passed at the Seventy-first Session of the Legislature*, pp. 329–332.
2. *Laws of the State of New-York, passed at the Seventy-second Session of the Legislature*, pp. 118–122.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 296–297.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 463–464, 600 602.
6. *Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor*, pp. 10–11.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 16–17.

It was suggested that chartered companies be formed to finance such housing, but the arguments against such a company were that "the stockholders would give very little attention to the management, and that an agent would be apt, after a time, to become careless or extravagant." Under the heading, "*The best mode of construction*" appeared the following paragraphs:

The American laboring people would generally require rather a better finish to their rooms, than the Irish laborers, and perhaps some other differences would be desired; but as a general thing both would require a complete separation of each apartment from the others under the same roof; including separate out-houses, coal bins, yards or Piazza-room for hanging clothes, ash hole, ventilator, &c. The number of rooms to be given to each family should be either two or three, and in building a block, *where land is high*, the proportion of apartments with two rooms should be, we think, at least twice as great as that with three rooms, since there are few of the poorest families that can afford to pay for the latter.

The buildings should be of brick, with slated roof and copper gutters. The piazza frames in a large establishment had better be of iron; the floors of hard pine; the partitions plastered, colored, and varnished, without paper.

Buildings in the more crowded parts of the city should be four stories high, beside the attic, which last may have a piazza, and be in all respects as comfortable as the floors below: and indeed when water is delivered at the top of the house, the upper floors will be, in the crowded districts, more agreeable as well as more healthy than the lower ones. The cellar should be deep and dry, and partitioned off so as to give each tenant a portion to himself, lighted by a window. . . . We suppose it will be generally found that from sixty to eighty families are as many as can be conveniently accommodated, in one establishment, in the more crowded parts of the city, but at East Boston or Chelsea a much larger number might be brought together.[1]

The Boston report went on to describe certain plans which would be suitable for various sections of the city, dependent upon the price of land and the lot sizes, and commented on the removal of families from single houses, due to the encroachment of stores. These houses had become available at lower rents, and it was suggested that an association might hire blocks of such houses and let them to laborers at moderate rates. However, the report added:

We do not think any plan of this kind can take the place of building new houses; because, as we have seen, the proportion of inhabitants to the house, in Boston, is already immense, as likewise the number of persons per acre covered, and the great point therefore, is, to supplant the present small, and inconvenient houses, by large, lofty, and well fitted ones: *so that the same number of persons, now covering the crowded districts, may be well, instead of ill, accommodated.* Still the plan of hiring houses might be tried with advantage, we think, as a temporary measure, and it could be easily done as it would require little or no capital.

We would here call attention to one other plan which has been suggested within a few years, and which, perhaps, might be so applied, as to draw tenants from the crowded quarters into

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 24.

the country. We mean that of leasing buildings with an agreement that, after a certain number of years, the fee of the property, should fall to the tenant; he of course paying a proportionably higher rent. . . .

We believe . . . that the capitalist having once clearly put before him the benefits which he can confer in this way; having once received satisfactory proof that the investment he is urged to make has the security which we claim for it, will readily put a portion of his funds into this class of buildings. What is wanted is to accumulate this evidence, and place it before the public in all proper forms; and in this view we conclude by recommending to those now interested in the subject two measures.

First. To form a Company to hire buildings, and let rooms, under the direction of a paid agent, . . . and

Secondly. To take such steps as may seem to them best, by the establishment of chartered, or private companies, to procure the construction of large, and well fitted buildings, especially designed for the use of tenants by the week.

And in both cases to publish, every six months, the result of the experiments, so far as they shall have gone.[1]

In practically every way the conditions and the situations in Boston and New York were analogous. But from Boston, which had examined the model plan of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, came specific recommendations with regard to leasing and construction which may have influenced the subsequent projects of the New York Association.

In a half century New York had developed from a small city to a world metropolis. It was already as large as our nation's capital is today and was recognized the world over for its economic power and leadership. Accretions of population from smaller cities and rural communities of America, as well as from Europe, had outgrown the available accommodations for any reasonable use. Even before this century, dwellings erected for the use of one family had been converted for the use of two or more. The tenant population in 1850 was largely residing in crudely converted dwellings, ill adapted to the use of many families. But to supplement these, an unknown number of "tenant houses" had been constructed since their beginning in the 1830's, and the large families of the period were crowded ordinarily into two rooms each, but often in a single room. Stores, warehouses, and other buildings had, to some extent, likewise been converted for residential use. The poorest and most helpless of the population could find no better accommodation than cellars, and apparently tens of thousands of individuals were living under most primitive and insanitary conditions underground. Viewed in terms of contemporary standards, the housing conditions of New York City in 1850 were vastly inferior to those so loudly decried today.

Construction was poor and sometimes unsafe. The tenant houses were not

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29, 31.

fireproof and the fire risks and loss of life were great. Sanitation was exceedingly primitive and a protected water supply had only recently been made available.

Transit had reached the horse-car stage in 1832 and the northern parts of the present city, as well as the suburbs across the rivers, were still relatively unavailable for the overflow of the population. Crowding was constrained largely because invention in the field of transit had not kept up with population growth. The habit of crowded living had developed the prevailing attitude that such modes of living were inevitable for the poor. Congested, unwholesome living was taken for granted as the natural mode of living of the wage-earning population. From that there developed the feeling, and often the conviction, that the poor deserved no better or that they lived in this manner from choice. Such attitudes still persist.

The most enlightened reactions to the housing problems of the period were found in the reports and speeches of public health officers and in the publications of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The thoughtful observations of Dr. Griscom, amply bolstered by evidence from his associates, began to clarify the thinking of men of affairs and the more competent social reformers. The Association assumed leadership in the efforts for reform, not blindly but after judicious analysis. By 1850 it had already considered and acted upon most of the contemporary expedients for improved housing: (1) analysis of conditions accurately described, broken down into a long list of the contributory factors; (2) consideration of causes and the means of bringing them under control; (3) promotion of improved restrictive legislation, both for the construction of new dwellings and for the control of old and converted dwellings; (4) education of the tenant; (5) enlistment of architects to study the problem of the housing of the poor and to discover more satisfactory types of planning for use in new construction; (6) promotion of the construction of model tenements which should incorporate provision for privacy, sanitation, light, air, and open spaces. Though restricted in its social programmes by the limited scientific knowledge of disease-prevention, ventilation, and sanitation of the period, its recommendations were distinctly progressive.

New York was the first American city to be aware of the housing problem. No other American city has ever felt so acutely the problem of the pressure of population in so restricted an area. It is natural that out of such trying conditions New York should have elaborated the first devices for social control of housing conditions. The development was painfully slow, as was shown by the legislative attempts throughout the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, from bitter experience, policies and measures were developed which have largely dominated the thought and the practices of other American cities up to the present time.

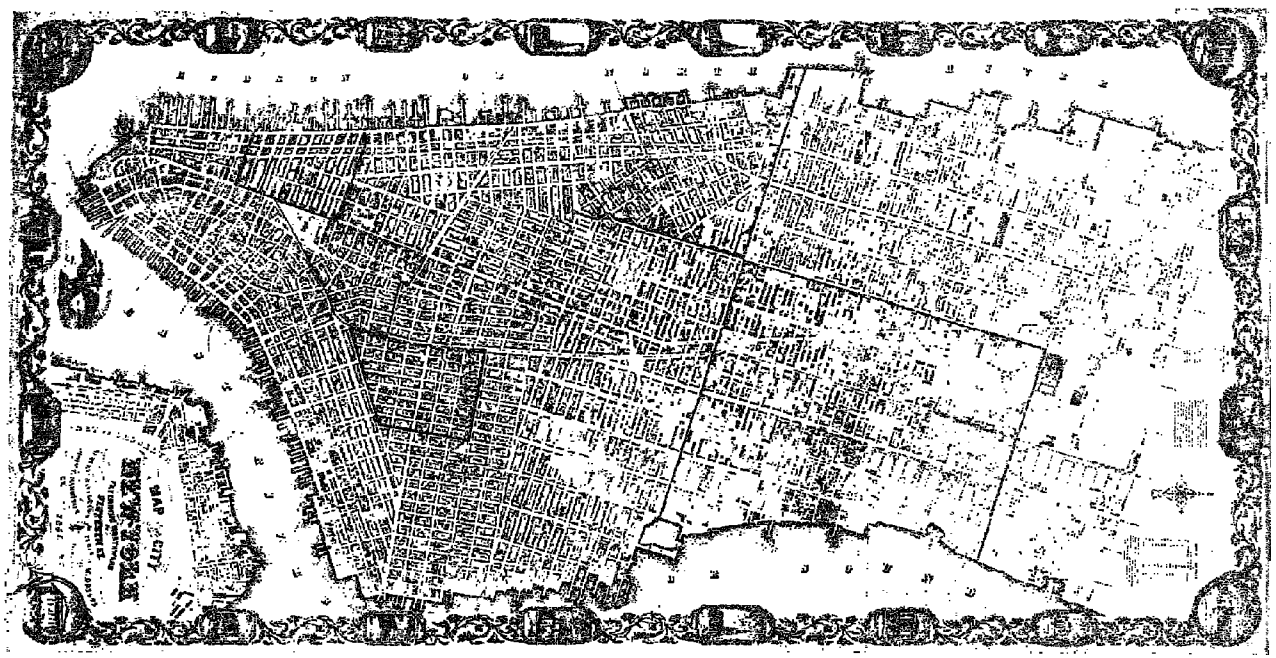
CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF TENEMENT-HOUSE REFORM

1850–1900

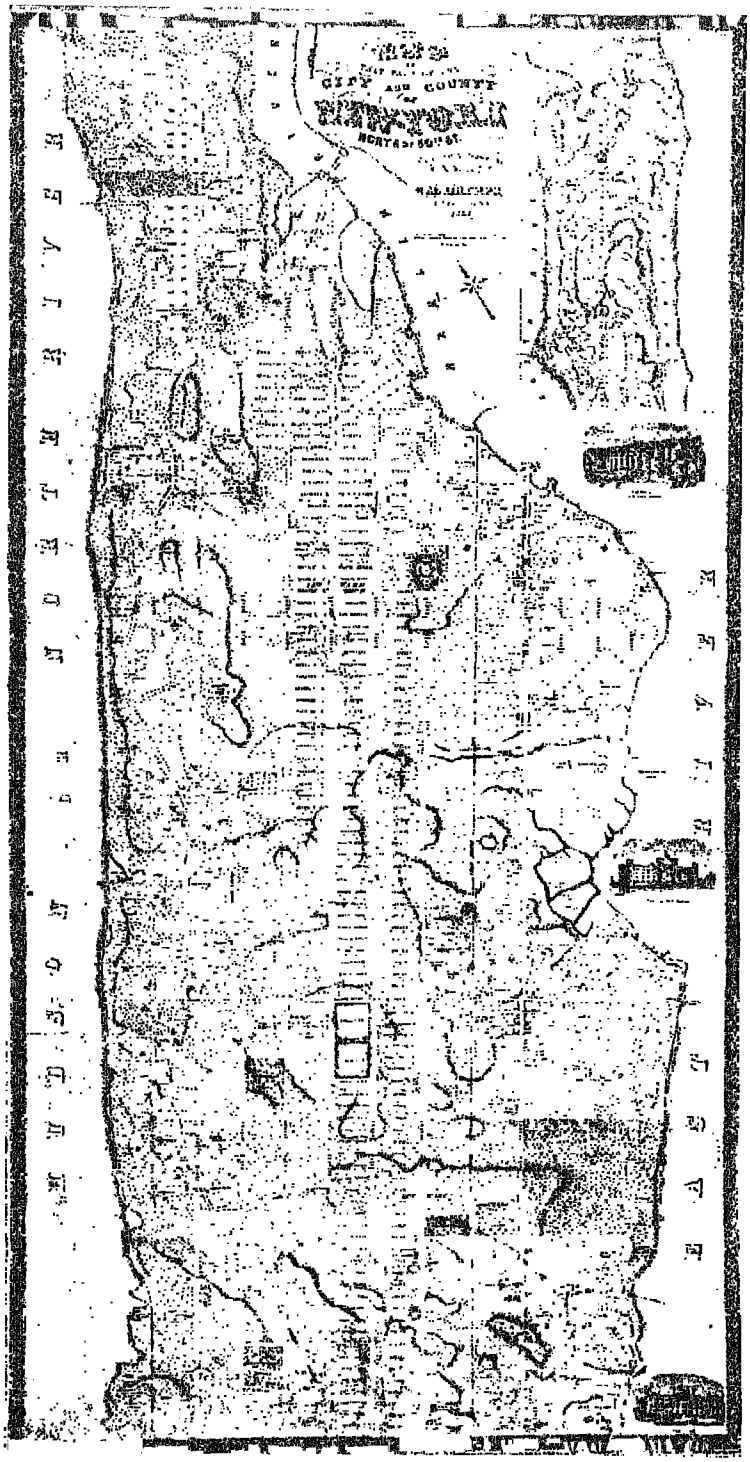
THE period from 1850 to 1900 was one of amazing national growth. Population trebled for the country as a whole, and the number of states increased from thirty to forty-five. The Negro problem occupied public attention in the first three decades and was a source of much bitterness, leading to the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period, both of which had important consequences not only in economic practices but also in the ultimate strengthening of the principle of nationalism. The national debt grew from $64,000,000 in 1860 to $2,773,000,000 in 1866. Commercial distress in 1857 and again in 1873, 1885, and 1893 materially affected our local history. Authorization of civil service in the Federal Government in 1871 and its improvement in 1883, through the Pendleton Bill, set standards which in time extended to municipal public employment. Business felt the effects also of the blockades of the Southern ports during the Civil War, the tariff acts of 1883, 1890, and 1897, and the Spanish-American War. It both precipitated and responded to the rapid development of railroads, and other means of communication. During the 1880's, inventions in agricultural machinery enormously increased output, and thus stimulated developments in international commerce. Labor troubles were a prominent source of difficulty in 1885 and 1886, and the disparity of interest between capital and labor became a matter of general discussion in the latter part of this decade. Conservative workingmen seceded from the Knights of Labor and formed the American Federation of Labor in 1886. South American trade was facilitated in 1890 as a result of the Pan-American Congress. By this time America had acquired general recognition as a world power.

These events, combined with the rapid development of invention in manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation, the establishment of monopolies and trusts, and the phenomenal growth of cities — both from internal migration and external immigration from foreign lands — made the America of the latter part of this period a nation quite changed in attitude and practice. New York City played an important rôle, and often one of leadership, in each of these undertakings.

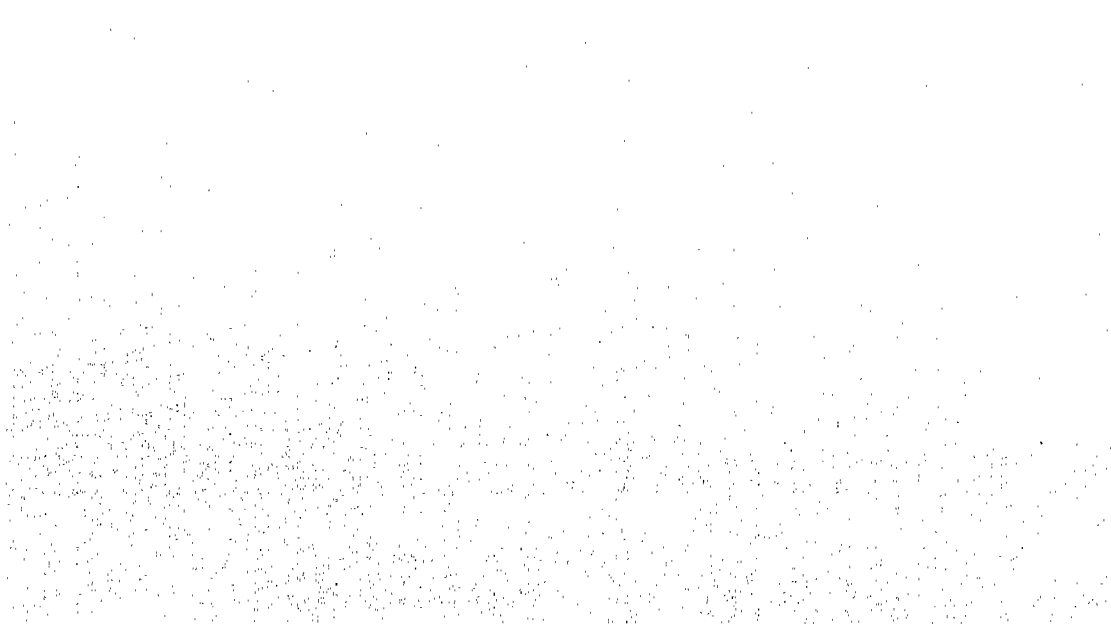


a. Dripps Map below 50th Street, 1850. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 138.

FIG. 14



b. Dripps Map above 50th Street, 1850. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 138.



The latter half of the nineteenth century contrasts sharply with early periods because of the growing tendency to recognize the tenement-house problem as a specific field for comprehensive legislative effort. In each of the five decades special tenement legislation was passed and three times commissions were appointed to study the tenement-house problem as such.[1] Notable advance was made in both the scope and the specific detail of the laws, though, by contemporary standards, the legislation was far from adequate to cope with the growing evils of heavy and unrestricted immigration, land speculation, and a prevalent desire for quick profits.

The need for better architectural planning of tenement houses became increasingly apparent, and led to a number of architectural competitions, each of which served to stimulate more efficient planning, and to reveal fundamental difficulties inherent in typical New York City building lots.[2]

Several groups organized to build model tenements, hoping not only to provide better conditions of living for their few fortunate tenants, but also to discover better ways of utilizing the typical city lot, to encourage scientific study of the problem by leading architects, and, if possible, to establish models of planning and equipment which speculative builders might find it profitable to follow. They were least successful in the last of these aims, since speculative building was not appreciably influenced by their efforts. The establishment of the City and Suburban Homes Company in 1896 — soon to become America's largest undertaking in the field of limited-dividend housing — served a further purpose by developing an understanding of the housing problem among men of affairs, who were destined to have much influence on subsequent activities.

Cooperating closely with these groups, and interpenetrating them at many points, were representatives of local settlement houses. The settlement movement began in New York in 1887, modeled on Toynbee Hall and other early settlements of London. Their residents were men and women of culture and university training, who elected to devote their lives to the service of their fellowmen by taking up residence in slum districts, identifying their interests with those of their neighbors, and providing leadership and coöperation in the solution of many social problems. Virtually all leaders in housing reform in the 1890's and early 1900's were persons with a settlement background. At first they were the resi-

1. DeForest and Veiller, *The Tenement House Problem*, vol. I.
2. *Improvement of the Tenement House System of New York. Extracts from a report to the Trustees of the Ascension Association*, by John Cotton Smith, D.D., President, 1879; *The Twenty-second Annual Report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1865; Some Results of an Effort to Reform the Homes of the Laboring Classes in New-York City*, 1881; Alfred T White, *Improved Dwellings for the Laboring Classes, The Need, and the way to meet it on strict commercial principles, in New York and other cities*, 1879; *The American Architect and Building News*, vols. V and XXIX; *The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer*, vol. II; *The Tenement Houses of New York City. A contribution to the study by the Tenement House Building Company*, 1891.

dents; but subsequently boys and girls of slum neighborhoods, who had enjoyed the advantages of settlement activities, became leaders in housing reform, cooperating ably with the earlier group. The influence of these latter was particularly strong in the 1920's.[1]

Many studies of housing conditions were made by settlement residents in this period. Books written in the 1890's by Jacob Riis — the first popular writer on the tenement-house problem to reach a national audience — grew largely out of settlement influence, and utilized materials from researches made by settlement houses. He, more than any other individual, succeeded in making apparent to the general public the needless horrors of slum life, and perhaps contributed more than any other to the public opinion which made possible the drastic reforms at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The ten-year period from 1850 to 1860 witnessed a population growth from 515,547 to 813,669, a gain of 298,122 or 57.8 per cent. The interest evinced during this decade in the reduction of evils in the tenement-house system was demonstrated in a number of useful statements from the City Inspector's office, in the *Report of the Select Committee appointed to examine into the condition of Tenant Houses in New-York and Brooklyn*, 1857, the *Report* of the Senate Committee on general health conditions, tenement houses, etc., 1859, the studies by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and others. The hard times of 1857 likewise fell within this decade, which meant a temporary upsetting of major trends in construction and land values. Legislative activity in housing was, however, relatively unimportant, though in one or two particulars improvements were made.

In 1853 New York was thus described:

> Of the whole area of Manhattan Island about one-fifth part, at the southern extremity, is occupied by the compactly-built portion of the city. Another fifth part is covered by the partially-regulated outskirts. Of the remaining portion, some parts are still covered with the primeval forests, or are under tillage; others are sites of suburban villages, or of gentlemen's country-seats, and of a variety of benevolent institutions. As far up as Fourteenth-street, or nearly three miles from the Battery, the whole area is densely occupied by buildings. From that line to Forty-second street — till recently the southern boundary of the rural ward of the city — the ground is only partially built upon, the population being less and less dense according to the distance up-town. In nearly all this portion, however, the streets are opened, and most of them regulated and paved. Above the last-named line the characteristics of the city gradually diminish; only a part of the streets are opened, and many of these are but partially regulated.[2]

1. See Chapter VI.
2. Daniel Curry, *New-York: A historical sketch of the rise and progress of the Metropolitan City of America. By a New-Yorker*, p. 209.

Haswell in his *Reminiscences* notes that there were many open spaces below Thirty-fourth Street in 1850 and that "Bloomingdale, Manhattanville, Yorkville, and Harlem were still remote and isolated villages." [1]

Poverty was very apparent in this period. Philip Hone, in his *Diary* in 1850, uses the term "slums" in referring to Corlear's Hook, and notes that there, as well as on the Bowery and in Five Points, one would see "swarms of ragged, barefooted, unbreeched little tatterdemalions, *free-born Americans* (free enough, in all conscience), . . ." [2]

Twice in this same year Hone remarked upon another peculiarity of the period — unstable construction.

May 31, 1850:

If they do not pull down the houses in the annual renovation of Broadway, they fall of their own accord. The large three-story house, corner of Broadway and Fourth Street, occupied for several years by Mrs. Seton as a boarding-house, fell to-day at two o'clock with a crash so astounding that the girls, with whom I was sitting in the library, imagined for a moment that it was caused by an earthquake. Fortunately, the workmen had notice to make their escape.[3]

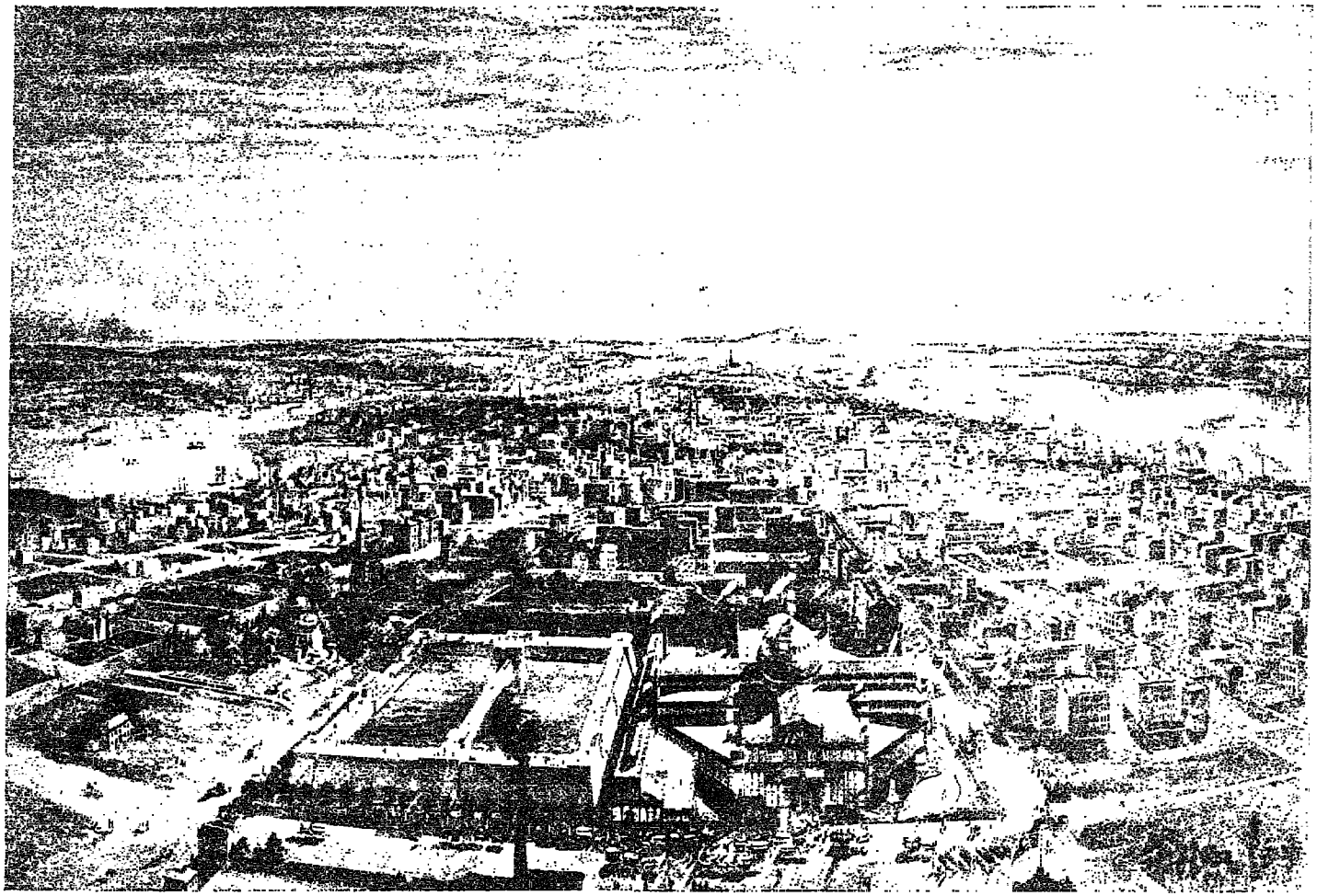
August 6, 1850:

Two new houses in the process of erection fell down yesterday, — one in Mercer Street, and the other in Spruce Street, near Gold Street. Both these disasters have been attended with loss of life, and dreadful mutilations of the workmen. The shameful manner of constructing houses for renting demands a remedy. Laws should be passed, and inspectors of buildings appointed with arbitrary power, to prevent the erection of these man-traps. I have noticed, especially in the eastern section of the city, blocks of new buildings so slightly built that they could not stand alone, and, like drunken men, require the support of each other to keep them from falling.[4]

Hone further noted the tearing down of houses on Broadway to be replaced with shops, and also the great rise in land values, especially in downtown business streets. His own house on Cortlandt Street, built in 1815, rented until 1847 for not more than $900 a year. He then leased it for four years at $1,300 per year. Twelve months prior to the expiration of that lease, he made out a four-year lease at $3,000 per annum.[5]

By this time Croton water had superseded supplies from wells,[6] and sewer systems were being extended to replace the insanitary privy. Streets were still described by the City Inspector as "the receptacle of all descriptions of filth." There was still "absence of any supervisory authority over buildings in the process of erection," which resulted in many calamities.

1 Haswell, *op. cit.*, p. 459
2. *The Diary of Philip Hone*, II, 884.
3 *Ibid*, pp. 896–897.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 900.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 912.
6. The Manhattan Water Works had supplemented the wells, selling water since 1800.



Looking South across 42d Street from Lafting Observatory, 1855. Distributing Reservoir (present site of New York Public Library) and Crystal Palace in foreground. *Iconography*, Vol. III, Pl. 145.

The Health Department, as constituted under the amended charter, has the statutory cognizance over these matters, but the non-existence of provisionary ordinances renders such authority entirely nugatory. It cannot escape notice, that within a few years past, it has become a prevalent system to erect what are generally termed "*tenant houses*," intended for the occupation of many families; some of which, number within their walls inhabitants by the hundreds! Over these habitations it is the duty of the City Inspector to have a vigilant eye; and in so many instances has it become apparent to him, that by a different construction, regarding ventilation, draining, and other points of architectural principle, the cause of health would be signally promoted, he has thus deemed it worthy of consideration, as affording another argument — if it be necessary — in support of the clearly proved propriety of supplying, in all cases, a protective inspection of buildings, as they progress in erection. The errors and mischief of misguided haste, and the vile promptings of pecuniary profit, would thus be despoiled of their injury and fatality — a consummation that would be hailed with universal gratification.

It not unfrequently happens, that application is made to this office, to adjust the difficulties that occur in the excavation of cellars; sometimes an unavoidable trespass is made upon an adjacent lot — houses, from being thus undermined, are in danger of falling, and in a recent instance, demolition actually took place, with loss of life. Interested parties, considering themselves aggrieved, make known their complaints to the City Inspector; he, however, from the void capacity of his powers, can extend no relief, nor point out any redress. . . .[1]

The *Evening Post* of August 20, 1850, commented on the beginning of a large tenement-house project, as follows:

Mr. Silas Wood has in course of erection in Cherry street, between Rosevelt street and Franklin Square, a large house which when completed will have no less than one hundred and forty-four residences. It is built with the design of supplying the laboring people with cheap lodgings, and will have many advantages over the cellars and other miserable abodes, which too many are forced to inhabit. The depth of the building is two hundred and forty feet, with a front of thirty-five feet. Each tenement consisting of two rooms and a hall; is nearly eighteen feet in width, and about twenty feet in length; giving twenty-four residences to each floor.

This is a praiseworthy enterprise and well worthy of imitation.[2]

This was probably Gotham Court,[3] later freely mentioned as one of the worst slums of the city. Although such a dwelling would have immediate sanitary advantages over cellars and other miserable abodes, a multiple dwelling of 144 residences in a building 240 feet in depth, comprising two-room tenements, with twenty-four apartments to a floor, is a type dangerous to health and welfare. The naïve praise of the building by the press was one of the factors that made of Manhattan the city of greatest congestion of population since imperial Rome. There was no intimation, in contemporary comment, of a recognition that new buildings of such huge dimensions, for the time being wholesome in their newness and

1. *Annual Report of the City Inspector, of the number of Deaths and Interments in the City of New York, during the year 1852*, pp. 283, 287–289.
2. Stokes, V, 1829
3. See Figures 19b and 19c, and Appendix.

isolation, would, when built to cover each block compactly, result in conditions vastly more serious than those which they displaced.

The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor appointed, in June, 1853, a special Committee on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Classes. Its report dealt almost exclusively with conditions of housing for each ward and determined that model dwellings were not an adequate solution of the problem, but that improved housing legislation and better enforcement were needed. They quoted, with approval, provisions in the housing law of England.[1]

The Eleventh and Sixteenth Reports of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, in 1854 and 1859 respectively, offered accounts, ward by ward, of the correlation of bad housing and sanitary conditions with mortality rates. Other contemporary items include the City Inspector's Report for 1853, which likewise dealt with mortality by wards. His report for 1856 discussed the "chiffoniers," or rag-pickers, who came daily downtown from their uptown shanties to collect refuse; the problems of slaughter houses, and of garbage collection "in uncovered wagons, in violation of the ordinances"; it urged prohibition of the keeping of swine and of accumulations of horse manure within the city limits. The Inspector also recommended an ordinance giving power to cause removal of the whole or part of "any house or premises which shall by competent judges, be deemed unsafe or dangerous." [2]

In the following year the Inspector protested emphatically against overcrowding of tenements, urged more extensive cleaning of the city, the ventilation of all buildings, and inspection and control of all stables. He anticipated our present movement for public recreation by recommending increase in the size of playgrounds and other free spaces "in rebuilding streets, or districts where many buildings must be removed," and emphasized the need "of making squares and free spaces as useful as possible, for exercise and recreation. . . ." [3] More progressive still were his recommendations for the institution of a college of architecture, for the

> diffusion of information as to the principles of hygiene, among the great mass of the population, . . . for securing the united cooperation of architecture and agriculture, with the views of the medical profession, and for promoting, from time to time, all those specific improvements which

1. Central Park had been established by law this same year, 1853. In its report the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor criticized the appropriation of so large a space for public parks, stating that it was self-evident that this would so diminish the space available for dwellings "as directly and indirectly to increase the intolerable grievances of high rents and crowded tenements which multitudes now suffer, without affording any compensatory advantages that will benefit the great mass of the population." For the history of Central Park, see *Forty Years of Landscape Architecture*, edited by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Theodora Kimball, vol. II.
2. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York, for the Year 1856. Document No. 11. Board of Aldermen, July 6th, 1857*, pp. 190–201.
3. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York, for the Year ending December 31, 1857*, p. 210.

their resources, assisted by the chemistry and the engineering of modern times may render it desirable to introduce. . . .[1]

City Inspector Daniel E. Delavan, in his annual report for 1859, recommended that "owners of tenement buildings be compelled, under penalty, to furnish to each tenement building a garbage-box of such size and construction as may be approved of by the City Inspector. . . ." He further recommended the elimination of fat-boiling establishments, and the passage of an ordinance making owners of tenement buildings personally responsible for each violation of ordinance by tenants; and advocated the requirement of certificates of compliance for water-closet construction.[2]

A cholera epidemic in 1854 caused 2,509 deaths — vaguely traced in contemporary accounts to conditions of housing.[3] Many articles and reports of this decade described Five Points, which was still, in spite of efforts at reform, the most notorious slum of the city.[4]

Commercial distress in 1857 made it necessary for the Common Council to distribute food to the poor, in order to prevent rioting. Public work was made available to the unemployed in the grading of Central Park and in tearing down the building on Chambers Street which had once served as an almshouse. The distress was so great that, according to Haswell, bakers' wagons were in some instances attacked in the streets.[5]

In its annual report of 1858, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor estimated that in 1857, near the end of October, there were not less than 25,000 unemployed who, with their families, represented approximately 100,000 persons in distress. Mass meetings, street processions, memorials to the Common Council, hunger meetings, intimidations, and threats of revolution were frequent. "'The rich must shell out to the poor, or the musket would be the resort.' . . . Our city, in short, presented a more appalling picture of social wretchedness than was probably ever before witnessed on this side of the Atlantic. . . ."[6] Yet lots bought by John Jay at $500 per acre were so enhanced in value that one sold in 1859 for $80,000.[7] Clearly New York had become a city of sharp social and economic contrasts.

An estimate of cellar population or underground tenements, made by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor in 1859, was 20,000, contrasting with 29,000, their estimate for 1850. They accounted for the decrease by

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 210–211.
2. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York, for the year ending December 31, 1859. Board of Councilmen. Document No. 4*, pp. 6–7, 9–11.
3. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York, for the year ending December 31st, 1854*, pp. 203–234.
4. See Chapter IV.
5. Haswell, p. 505.
6. *The Fifteenth Annual Report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1858*, pp. 17–22.
7. *Miller's New York as It Is, or Stranger's Guide-book to the cities of New York, Brooklyn, and adjacent places*, p. 21.

the gradual increase of tenement houses.[1] In commenting upon the 147 miles of sewerage which had been laid to date, they spoke of the city as "*one elongated cesspool,* throwing out its noxious gases at the extremities, and at every opening on the corners of the streets, to fill and surround the dwellings and be inhaled with every breath."[2] Of favorable factors, however, they noted that "The press has generally become the auxiliary of reform, and many of our most distinguished physicians, . . . have associated themselves for the purpose of collecting and diffusing practical information on sanitary matters."[3]

Appeals to the Legislature had, in 1856, resulted in the appointment of the first legislative commission to study the tenement-house problem. This "Special Committee" made a report in that year, recommending changes in the law. The appeal failed "through press of business,"[4] and the Legislature was again memorialized in 1857, in which year investigations were carried much farther. The resultant appeal, however, having passed the Senate, failed in the House, so that there was no codification or general improvement of tenement-house legislation in this decade.[5]

The resolution appointing the special committee on tenant houses, passed in Assembly March 3d, 1856, with its preamble, was framed as follows, and submitted by Mr. John M. Reed:

"*Whereas*, Complaints have been made as to the manner in which buildings known as 'tenant houses,' in the city of New-York, have been and are being constructed; that the same are often carried to a great height, without proper regard to the strength of the foundation walls; that said buildings are cut up into small apartments, which have very little ventilation; that the halls or passage-ways through said buildings are unproportionately narrow, and not constructed with proper care to the safety and lives of tenants; that these houses are mostly filled with the poorer class of persons, hundreds of whom are often crowded into a single building, without any means of egress in case of fire or sudden alarm, except through a single narrow passage; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That a committee consisting of five members of this House be appointed to make an examination of the manner in which 'tenant houses' are constructed in the city of New-York, and report the same to the Legislature; and also, if any, what legislation is requisite and necessary to remedy the evils and afford full protection to the lives and health of the occupants of such dwellings."

Subsequently, by resolution, the committee were directed to extend their investigation to "tenant houses" in the city of Brooklyn.[6]

At their first meeting at the Mayor's office on March 14, 1856, they heard testimony from citizens, landlords, agents, and builders. Somewhat later they

1. *The Sixteenth Annual Report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the year 1856*, pp. 47–56.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Documents of the Assembly of the State of New-York, Eightieth Session, 1857*, No. 205, pp. 1–2.

decided to make personal inspection in company with police captains, health wardens, and reporters.

> . . . they penetrated to localities and witnessed scenes which, in frightful novelty, far exceeded the limit of their previously-conceived ideas of human degradation and suffering. Each step made seemed to tread upon new fields of repulsive research; each startling fact of *misery* revealed was speedily paralleled by some close-following example of a kindred *vice* or *crime*, until the conclusion forced itself upon the reflection of all, that certain conditions and associations of human life and habitation are the prolific parents of corresponding habits and morals.[1]

Their report was signed by John M. Reed, A. J. H. Duganne, Eli Curtis, Wm. J. Shea, and Sam. Brevoort. Mr. Duganne served as secretary. Some attempt was made to arrive at the causes of the conditions which so appalled the committee. The causes which they listed may be summarized under the terms "neglect" and "exploitation."

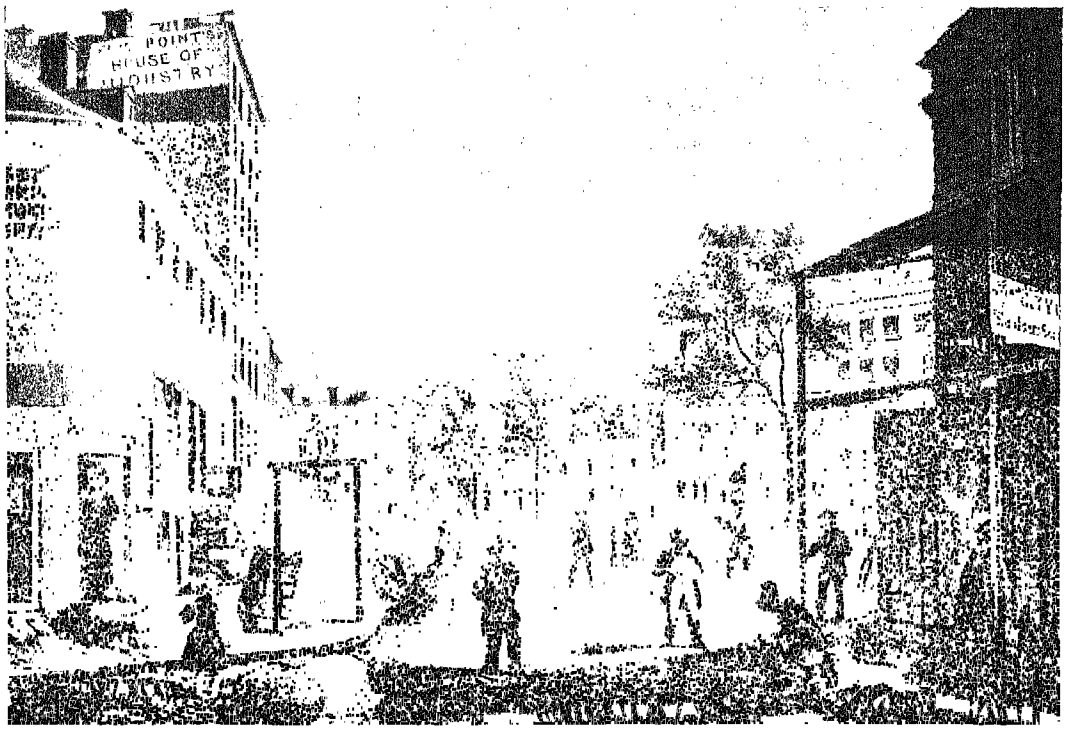
> The tenant house is the offspring of municipal neglect, as well as of its primary causes, over population and destitution. As a city grows in commerce, and demands new localities for traffic and manufacture, the store and workshop encroach upon the dwelling house and dispossess its occupants. At first the habitations of citizens are removed to a limited distance, because, with an industrious population, time is money, and neighborhood of residence and business secures both economy and convenience. The merchant and master, then, find it for their interest to dwell in the vicinity of their active operations; and so, likewise, do the mechanic, laborer, and all dependent on business life. It is at this stage of a community's growth that proper regulations and restrictions, looking to the ultimate well-being of the city, are of paramount necessity; and herein the authorities of former years were unmindful of future public good, precisely as we, in our day and generation, are pertinaciously regardless of our posterity's welfare. Had the evils which now appal us, been prevented or checked in their earlier manifestation, by wise and simple laws, the city of New-York would now exhibit more gratifying bills of health, more general social comfort and prosperity, and less, far less expenditure for the support of pauperism and punishment of crime.
>
> But legislation interposed not in its proper season, and hence the system of tenant-house leasing was soon begotten of the wants of poverty. As our wharves became crowded with warehouses, and encompassed with bustle and noise, the wealthier citizens, who peopled old "Knickerbocker" mansions, near the bay, transferred their residence to streets beyond the din; compensating for remoteness from their counting houses, by the advantages of increased quiet and luxury. Their habitations then passed into the hands, on the one side, of boarding house keepers, on the other, of real estate agents; and here, in its beginning, the tenant house became a real blessing to that class of industrious poor whose small earnings limited their expenses and whose employment in workshops, stores, or about the wharves and thoroughfares, rendered a near residence of much importance. At this period, rents were moderate, and a mechanic with family could hire two or more comfortable and even commodious apartments, in a house once occupied by wealthy people, for less than half what he is now obliged to pay for narrow and un-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

healthy quarters. This state of tenantry comfort did not, however, continue long; for the rapid march of improvement speedily enhanced the value of property in the lower wards of the city, and as this took place, rents rose, and accommodations decreased in the same proportion. At first the better class of tenants submitted to retain their single floors, or two and three rooms, at the onerous rates, but this rendered them poorer, and those who were able to do so, followed the example of former proprietors, and emigrated to the upper wards. The spacious dwelling houses then fell before improvements, or languished for a season, as tenant houses of the type which is now the prevailing evil of our city; that is to say, their large rooms were partitioned into several smaller ones, (without regard to proper light or ventilation,) the rates of rent being lower in proportion to space or height from the street; and they soon became filled, from cellar to garret, with a class of tenantry living from hand to mouth, loose in morals, improvident in habits, degraded or squalid as beggary itself. This, in its primary aspects, was the tenant-house system, which has repeated itself, in every phase, as it followed the track of population from ward to ward, until it now becomes a distinguishing feature of our social existence, the parent of constant disorders, and the nursery of increasing vices.

It was soon perceived, by astute owners or agents of property that a greater percentage of profit would be realized by the conversion of houses and blocks into barracks, and dividing their space into the smallest proportions capable of containing human life within four walls. The fact had become apparent to speculation that, in a climate subject to inclement change, as in the meridian of New-York, it is necessary, even for the poorest people, to dwell within doors and be sheltered by a roof, humble though it may be; so speculation immediately proceeded to provide walls and roof. Blocks were rented of real-estate owners, or purchased on time, or taken in charge at a percentage, and held for under-letting to applicants with no ready money and precarious means of livelihood. To such unfortunates it was not difficult to dictate terms or furnish habitations, for to them the mere sufferance of tenancy might appear like benevolence on the part of house-owners. To this class, then, entire blocks of buildings, worn out in other service, were let in hundreds of sub-divided apartments, and rates of rent were established, as well as seasons and modes of payment, which, while affording the wretched tenantry some sort of shelter within their scanty means, secured at the same time prompt payment of weekly dues, and an aggregate of profit from the whole barracks (risks and losses taken in account) of twice or thrice the amount which a legitimate lease of the building to one occupant would bring, if granted for business purposes at the usual rate of real-estate interest.

As no care-taking of premises could be expected from the majority of this class of tenants, collected, or rather herded together thus indiscriminately, the charges for occupancy by the month or week were fixed at a rate which not only covered all risks, and secured exorbitant interest on investment, but left wide margin for damage and abuse, allowing the buildings to decay or fall to pieces as rapidly as constant occupancy would permit. It is true that stipulations were usually made to secure the property from wanton or wilful demolition by tenants, and provisos to guard against accumulation of filth or insure precautions against accidents by fire, were generally indicated in the terms of contract, but no stringent regulations on the part of landlords, no provisions for the maintenance of health, and no convenience for securing neatness, cleanliness, ventilation or general order and comfort in the establishment, were ever dreamed of in connection with the tenant-house system, as it spread its localities from year to year. It sufficed that conservation of property in the aggregate, and a particular supervision of



a. Five Points from corner of Worth and Little Water Streets, 1859. This and the following six views are taken from Valentine's Manuals; also Figs. 21 and 64a.



b. Old houses in James Street, corner of Chatham Street, 1859.

the rent, remained as distinguishing characteristics of landlord or agent, while on the other hand reckless slovenliness, discontent, privation and ignorance among the tenants were left to work out their invariable results, in the gradual destruction of doors, shutters, windows, fences, ceilings, floors, until the entire premises reached the level of tenant-house dilapidation, containing, but sheltering not, the miserable hordes that crowded beneath mouldering, water-rotted roofs, or burrowed among the rats of clammy cellars.[1]

A few quotations from their report will serve to indicate how far New York has progressed in eighty years from the extreme misery of that period.

". . . We could tell of one room, twelve feet by twelve, in which were five resident families, comprising twenty persons, of both sexes, and all ages, with only two beds, without partition or screen, or chair or table; and all dependent for their support upon the sale of chips gleaned from the streets, at four cents a basket; of another department, still smaller and still more destitute, inhabited by a man, a woman, two girls and a boy, who were supported by permitting the room to be used as a rendezvous by abandoned women of the street; . . . of another, warmed only by a tin pail of lighted charcoal, placed in the centre of the floor, over which a blind man bent, endeavoring to warm himself, while three or four men and women were quarreling around him, and in one corner lay the body of a woman who had died the day before of disease, her orphan children sleeping near on a pile of rags; of another room, from which a short time before, twenty persons, sick with fever, had been taken to the hospital to die. But why extend the catalogue? or why attempt to convey to the imagination by words, the hideous squalor and deadly effluvia; the dim, undrained courts oozing with pollution; the dark, narrow strairways, decayed with age, reeking with filth, overrun with vermin; the rotted floors, ceilings begrimmed, and often too low to permit you to stand upright; the windows stuffed with rags? or why try to portray the gaunt, shivering forms and wild ghastly faces, in these black and beetling abodes, . . ."

At No. 17 Baxter-street, the Committee penetrated through an alley-passage, where the black mud was two inches deep, to a rear entrance under the building; the basement rooms, with floor five and a half feet below the street-level, was occupied as a dance-house and bar-room, the former 27 feet by 16, the latter 13 by 16, for which $13 per month was paid; two beds for lodgers were in the dance-room. The class of basement or cellar lodgers accommodated in such places pay from six-pence to a shilling per night; average number of lodgers to one bed is three, and no distinction is made between male and female. On the upper floors of this tenant-house, twelve families, comprising seventy-five persons, dwelt in twelve apartments; walls damp, rooms dark, passages filthy, and with no sort of ventilation. Rear of these premises was a collection of sheds built of rough boards, each containing four dark rooms, rent $3 per month, inhabited by poor people who subsisted by the sale of spearmint, which they grew in boxes on the roof, and disposed of to hotels and bar-rooms, a fact which suggested that certain fashionable beverages in vogue might be traced back for their constituents to the malaria and filth of the Five Point tenant-houses. The average rent of rooms in this locality, where are many houses of the same description, is $4 per month. . . .

At 39 Baxter-street, a rear building, the Committee found fifteen persons living in one room,

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

the height of which, from floor to ceiling, was seven feet, and the floor 15 feet by 14, rent $6 per month. To reach these premises it was necessary to pass through an alley, the widest portion of which was but two feet, the narrowest nineteen inches. In case of fires escape to the street would be a miracle. In the vicinity of this habitation were many other forlorn and squalid houses, let in the same way, at the average price of $7 per month.[1]

A system of sub-leasing had become highly developed through which enormous profits were made by heartless exploitation of tenants. One of many examples cited by the Committee follows:

. . . Sometimes a dozen narrow and dark apartments in a single house, but often a collection of mouldy walls, covering a space of from forty to two hundred feet square, with cramped, miserable apartments, scarce fit for dog kennels, may be discovered in the rear of some busy factory in our lower wards, or seen from the windows of a hotel, or overlooked from the roof of a marble store. To reach these tumbling and squalid rookeries, the visitor must sometimes penetrate a labyrinth of alleys, behind horse-stables blacksmith's forges, and, inevitably, beside cheap groggeries, till he finds himself in a dim close, thick with mephitic gases, and nauseous from the effluvia of decaying matter and pools of stagnant water. This close has been leased for a term of years from the owner, at a stated sum per annum, and the tenements contained in it are dignified by the title of alley, court, lane or avenue. The lessee becomes, by his lease, the agent, middle-man or sub-landlord; he is responsible for the aggregate rent, and must, for self-protection, underlet the premises to the best advantage. He, therefore, calculates to the smallest fraction, all that the speculation is capable of producing him as reimbursement and interest upon his invested risk. He measures the rooms, and estimates — not their capacities for accommodating human life in health and comfort — but their capability of containing human life to pay the rent. For a room twelve feet square and scarcely high enough to permit one's standing upright in it he estimates that from 75 cents to $1.25 per week should be charged. On this basis, modified by accessibility, gradations of darkness or suffocation, and other essential characteristics of the primary tenant-house, the calculation of aggregate rental is made, and the premises offered to all comers on the sub-landlord's terms.

Sometimes the agent or speculator is owner of a portion of the property; sometimes he depends upon such agencies, or investment, for his entire income, and contrives thereby to live in fashionable style, in up-town quarters, to educate his sons and daughters and leave them snug fortunes. Yet, in fact, he never owns a foot of land nor pays a property tax; inasmuch as all the public rates chargeable to the rows, blocks and single buildings which he leases and of which he collects the rent, are paid through the extortionate charges levied upon the veriest poor; the latter, as a general thing, paying for house rent much more, proportionately and in fact, than is paid by the rich who dwell sumptuously in their avenue palaces.[2]

The report proceeded to the discussion of "rag-picking and bone-gathering tenants" who lived in shanties north of the built-up areas of the city.

. . . At No. 88 Sheriff street, a rambling row of wooden tenements, called "Rag-pickers' Paradise," was inspected by the Committee. The locality was infected for squares around by

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14, 17–18. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

the effluvia of putrefying flesh, from numberless bone-boiling places, and bales of filthy rags stored in the cellars and sheds. "Rag-pickers' Paradise" is inhabited entirely by Germans, who dwell in small rooms, in almost fabulous gregariousness, surrounded by scores of dogs, and canopied by myriads of rags fluttering from lines crossing their filthy yards, where bones of dead animals and noisome collections of every kind were reeking with pestiferous smells. One establishment (which is devoted to the same purpose, situated on Third street, and owned by a former member of our State Senate,) contains more than fifty families. Though extreme squalor is apparent to a visitor, the Germans inhabiting these localities appear to be thrifty, and, in their way, comfortable. It is said that habits of economy and constant application to their wretched business enable nearly all, sooner or later, to accumulate sufficient funds to enable them to migrate to the west. We were told of a colony of three hundred of these people, who occupied a single basement, living on offal and scraps, and who saved money enough to purchase a township on one of the western prairies. . . .

. . . In the yards, where ferocious looking dogs greeted the visitors with threatening demonstrations, a number of bags of bones, just brought thither from slaughter-houses, with decaying flesh clinging to them, saluted our nostrils with noxious effluvia. These bones were to be boiled on the premises, and their stench, mingled with the fetid exhalations from wet rags, was to be sent abroad over the neighborhood, thence to ascend and be carried by the wind, with all their deadly particles, to the chambers of sick people and the parlors of wealthy residents upon our avenues. On the wooden piazzas, and choking up the narrow entries, were bags and baskets of calves' heads, offensive with putrid portions of the jowls and bones in every stage of decomposition. . . .

When it is recollected that the process of washing filthy rags, collected from gutters, sinks, hospital yards, and every vile locality imaginable, is conducted in the single apartment used for cooking, eating, sleeping, and general living purposes, by the tenants, (sometimes a dozen in one room) where, furthermore, bone-boiling, with its odors, is a constant concomitant; and where to these horrible practices are superadded the personal filth, stagnant water, fixed air, and confined, dark, and damp holes, all characteristic of the tenant-house system, . . . it is no wonder that these unfortunate people are yearly decimated; it is not strange that the cholera and other epidemics have, as we are told, made frightful havoc among them in past years.

But we must pass over without description hundreds of dilapidated, dirty and densely populated old structures which the committee inspected in different wards, and which come under the head of re-adapted, re-constructed, or altered buildings. In most of them the Irish are predominant, as occupants, though in some streets negroes are found swarming from cellar to garret of tottering tenant houses. . . .[1]

Next were considered tenement houses built for speculative profits.

. . . They consist usually of double buildings, the front one, with hall opening from the street or court, and having two suites of rooms from cellar to roof, with windows front and back, and dark bedrooms or closets in the centre; while the rear building, accessible through an alley at the side of the former, is pent within a backyard. Sometimes a lot of ground is built upon, to some distance from the street, penetrating back and forming two alleys or courts, one on each

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–22.

side of the block. Every foot of ground is built upon, and there are no yards, except the space between front and rear houses, where two are erected contiguously. The privies, in many cases, are below the dwelling rooms, in a cellar, or under the sidewalks or pavement; and the stench arising from them ascends in hot seasons to the open windows, tainting even the bad air of the unventilated apartments with yet more sickening and disease-engendering gases. As economy of space is the great desideratum with speculating house-owners, the passages and stairways are reduced in some instances to such dimensions that two can barely pass; and as they are commonly in the centre of the houses, all method of admitting air or light to them are dispensed with. In many buildings examined by the committee, not only were the stairways crooked and inordinately steep, but they were so dark that faces could not be distinguished, and so damp, chill and noisome, that respiration became difficult as soon as they were entered.[1]

Even the so-called "model" tenement houses were not much better and were criticised for poor ventilation and fire risk.

. . . In a few of them the necessities of ventilation seem to have been somewhat considered, and in others the passages and stairways do not present the same traps for human life in emergencies of fire as in the less pretending houses built to "hold" tenants; but in the important combined requisites of adequate drainage, abundant supply of water, separation of families, light, heat, dryness, ventilation, and appliances for health and cleanliness at all seasons, which *every* tenant-house, fit for human beings to dwell in, should be supplied with; there has been no building yet constructed which the Committee would endorse as a "model."

At 34 Baxter-street there is a tenant house, containing 101 families, called a "model" one, where a room 13 feet by 8 feet 9 inches, is let for $7 per month, and "accommodates" a family of five with sleeping room in a dark closet attached.

In Greene-street there is a new "model" house lately erected, in which the halls and stairs are of good width, water and gas in the house, and attempts made at ventilation, but the ventilators open upon dead walls; the rooms are exceeding cramped, and with dark closets for dormitories; and, though the building is seven stories high, with an imposing front, it is far from possessing improvements which the committee consider indispensable to tenant houses. It is an advance, very far, upon the "rookeries" of the same ward (the 8th), such as "Rotten-row," "Soapfat-alley," [2] and other shamefully neglected buildings, . . .[3]

Now, in the building, heretofore mentioned as Manhattan place, there are ninety-six apartments, and they were inhabited, when visited, by *one hundred and forty-six* families, numbering in all *five hundred and seventy seven* persons. Computing this aggregate of tenantry by the area of space occupied, we find an average of *six* persons to a room of 12 by 10 feet in dimensions. Out of *seventy-six* houses examined, in one district, (the 10th,) the average number of persons occupying them was *seventy* to a house, or *eight* to a room, 12 by 14 feet square. In one block or

1. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

2. "'Rotten Row' consists of fourteen houses, front and rear, 48 apartments in the front and 128 in the rear. There is not a single room, the wood work of which is not decayed and half the plaster rotted from the walls. The stairways are all dark, broken and filthy. Rent (for a single room) from $3 to $9 per month. . . ."

"'Soap-Fat Alley' (42 Hammersley street) received its name from the occupation of the principal portion of its occupants. The doors entering the building are built in a wall forming one side of the alley, and are reached by means of open stairways constructed on the outside. . . ."

3. "On Mission Place (Five Points) a four story brick building was visited, in which there were eight rooms on a floor, occupied each by a family; average number in a family, seven persons. The floors were covered with dirt, which had lain so long that, with occasional slops of water and continued treading on, it had the appearance of the greasy refuse of a woolen mill. There were sluggish, yellow drops pending from the low ceilings, and a dank, green slime upon the walls."

series of buildings visited, *two hundred families*, (averaging *five* persons to a family,) were confined, without ventilation, proper light, or conveniences for obtaining water. In another building examined, *eighty-five* apartments contained *three hundred and ten* persons, and all the rooms were not rented. . . .

Hundreds of the miserable occupants of these establishments, dwell in cellars, over five feet, as we have noticed, below the street level. In many parts of the city, on sunken lands, and where the sewerage is incomplete, these underground rooms are sometimes submerged by the drainage of heavy rains. In some, this annoyance is constant, and the bricks or wooden floors, (where flooring remains,) are continually oozing with mouldy damp. Constant rheumatic affections, hip complaints, and affections of the bowels, are prevalent among the occupants. Instances have been known of the confinement of females on beds raised by a few bricks from the water which flooded the floor beneath. Is it surprising that thousands of children die at the earliest period, in such wretched holes and burrowing places? [1]

Criticisms by the committee of the housing which they had studied were listed under the captions (1) want of air, (2) want of water, (3) want of room, (4) want of light and cleanliness, (5) want of plan, and (6) immigrant tenants. Most of these difficulties were traced to the prevailing desire to make quick profits from tenement property.

Although the committee's report was the most vivid and, at the same time, shocking account of conditions of tenement buildings that had, up to this time, been prepared by any governmental agency, it resulted in no immediate legislation. The first report was lost in "the hurry and disorder which marked the concluding sessions of the Assembly of 1856." [2] The bill proposed by the committee, "An Act to Improve the Condition of the Laboring Poor Residing in Tenant Houses in the City of New York, to Establish a Board of Home Commissioners in said City, and for other Purposes," [3] urged the appointment of a board of three commissioners who should have power to inspect tenements and to serve notice of violations of law, to forbid occupancy, to compel owners, agents, or lessees to cleanse rooms, stairs, etc., and to prohibit subletting except with the consent of the board.[4] Such powers were not, however, concentrated in a single administrative agency until forty-four years later, when the Tenement House Act of 1901 set up a Tenement House Department with ample authority. This is a striking example of cultural lag, for it took more than four decades for active public opinion to catch up with the reasonable recommendations of the first legislative committee on tenement houses.

Within a year the report of the Committee of 1857 was followed by the studies of a special committee of the State Senate appointed on April 3, 1858, to inves-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28, 32–33.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
3. DeForest and Veiller, I, 90.
4. *Ibid.*, 90–91.

tigate the Health Department of the City of New York.[1] Their report was submitted on February 3, 1859, to the Senate. The committee members were John C. Mather, Smith Ely, Jr., Richard Schell, John Doherty, and Benjamin Brandreth.

The purpose of this special study was to secure information from competent witnesses on the following three questions:

First. As to the alleged fact that the city of New York in proportion to its population, has a higher ratio of mortality than other large cities in this country and in Europe.

Second. If the alleged fact be established, to what general causes is the excess of mortality to be ascribed, and

Third. What remedies can be suggested for the removal of so great an evil.

It was found that New York City, in proportion to its population, had a higher ratio of mortality than other large cities. This excessive mortality was attributed

to the over-crowded condition of tenement houses; the want of practical knowledge of the proper mode of constructing such houses; deficiency of light; imperfect ventilation; impurities in domestic economy; unwholesome food and beverages; insufficient sewerage; want of cleanliness in streets and at the wharves and piers; and finally, to a general disregard of sanitary precautions; the imperfect execution of existing ordinances, and the total absence of a regularly organized, efficient sanitary police.[2]

Wards with high mortality were compared with those in which mortality rates were low. The committee noted that at least one-half of Manhattan Island remained to be built upon and that measures were desirable at once to prevent recurrence of the conditions which produced the existing high mortality rates. In addition to the recommendations that had been made by the committee of 1857, the testimony supplied a few novel suggestions among which were the following: provision for (1) widening of narrow streets; (2) drainage of yards; (3) ventilating of water-closet traps; and (4) ventilating of apartments by fireplaces.

The burden of the argument to be assembled from the testimony was for better lighting and ventilation of tenements through limitation of building heights, prohibition of underground dwellings, reduction of coverage of land, and education of tenants. The report was an important contribution, primarily because of the attitudes expressed by sanitarians and others in their testimony. In general, the measured judgment of specialists was presented, rather than the heated indignation of reformers. Doubtless future discussions and recommendations with regard to tenement reform were influenced by this report.

Housing legislation passed between 1850 and 1860 was relatively unimportant.

1. *Documents of the Senate of the State of New-York. Eighty-second Session, 1859*, No. 49 2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

It comprised, however, an amendment to the fire-prevention law in 1851;[1] the law of April 16, 1852, for the prevention of fires in Brooklyn;[2] the Amended Registry Act of 1853 establishing a Bureau of Statistics and of Sanitary Inspection;[3] regulations concerning excavations in New York and Brooklyn, January 24, 1855;[4] an act to provide against unsafe buildings passed April 14, 1856 — an outgrowth of the agitation quoted earlier — which, in conjunction with the fire-prevention laws already operative, provided extensive legislation to govern building;[5] an act relating to party walls, April 1, 1857;[6] and the establishment of the Metropolitan Police District in 1857.[7]

The decade of the Civil War was one in which urban growth slowed down appreciably, for the population of the city grew only from 813,669 to 942,292, a gain of 128,623 or 15.8 per cent. The notable events, from the point of view of housing, were the studies of the Council of Hygiene, which published its report — the most voluminous research so far made — in 1865, and that of the Committee on Public Health, published in 1867. These were followed by the passage of the Tenement House Law in May 1867, the first comprehensive legislation of its kind. The same decade, however, included regulations for the inspection of tenements, in the laws of 1860, and the establishment of a Metropolitan Sanitary District and Board of Health in February 1866. Thus, many of the difficulties noted at such length in the preceding decade were remedied, and the extensive efforts at reform were already showing lasting results in improved devices of social control.

New York was tardy in recognizing that its social and civic problems extended beyond its political boundaries, and that the solution was dependent upon adequate provision for quick action covering the entire urban area. Keen minds had recommended the establishment of metropolitan authorities of one sort or another in earlier decades, but it was in this decade that the practice was extended to include health and safety. On April 10, 1860, the Legislature passed "An Act to amend an act [1857] entitled 'An act to establish a Metropolitan police district, and to provide for the government thereof.'"[8] The District comprised the counties of New York, Kings, Westchester, and Richmond, and the towns of Newtown, Flushing, and Jamaica in the county of Queens.[9] Duties of the Metropolitan Police included — besides keeping the peace, quelling riots, arresting criminals, and suppressing houses of ill fame — certain limited powers in the field

1. DeForest and Veiller, II, 337.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Annual Report of the City Inspector of the City of New York, for the year 1853*, p. 185. 4. DeForest and Veiller, II, 337.
5. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Seventy-ninth Session of the Legislature, . . .* pp. 314–323.
6. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Eightieth Session of the Legislature*, I, 435–486.
7. *Ibid.*, Chap. 569.
8. *Laws of the State of New York* [illegible] *sion of the Legislature, . . .* [illegible].
9. *Ibid.*

of housing. Section 51 of that act established a metropolitan sanitary police company empowered to visit tenement houses suspected or charged with being unsafe, and to take all necessary legal measures for promoting security of life or health. Under Section 53 the police might

> cause any tenement house to be cleansed at any time after three days' notice for such cleansing shall have been served upon the owner, landlord or agent thereof, and within such time the same has been neglected. The expense of taking down any edifice, or of cleansing any tenement house, as aforesaid, shall be paid by the comptroller of the city within which the said edifice or house is situated; a copy of the order of the board in writing, together with the bill of expense, countersigned by the comptroller aforesaid, with a description of the premises and real estate thereof, being filed with the clerk of the county, shall become and continue to be a lien for the amount of such repairs, with interest upon said premises, to the same effect as a judgement of a court of record, until such time as the comptroller, on reimbursement of said expenses and interest, shall in writing authorize the said county clerk to discharge the same. . . .[1]

On April 17, 1860, there was passed an act to provide against unsafe buildings in the city of New York, extending the fire limits to 52nd Street, and another act for fire prevention in Brooklyn,[2] followed by an act of April 19, 1862, for the regulation of buildings and the prevention of fires, which created the office of Superintendent of Buildings.[3] This was amended on April 29, 1863.[4] The Brooklyn fire-prevention act was likewise amended May 2, 1864.[5]

Contemporary accounts for this decade included the City Inspector's reports, those of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and the comments of Harlow,[6] Harris,[7] Ewer,[8] James Dawson Burn,[9] Dr. Stephen Smith,[10] Van Wyck,[11] Orchard,[12] McCabe,[13] Stryker,[14] Dr. William F. Thoms,[15] S. A. Raborg,[16] Davenport,[17] and Browne.[18]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 452.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 905–933, 937–948.
3. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Eighty-fifth Session of the Legislature*, pp. 574–599.
4. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Eighty-sixth Session of the Legislature*, pp. 483–484.
5. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Eighty-seventh Session of the Legislature*, Chap. 509.
6. Alvin F. Harlow, *Old Bowery Days, The Chronicles of a Famous Street*, pp 372–374.
7. Charles Townsend Harris, *Memories of Manhattan in the Sixties and Seventies.*
8. *Public Health of the City of New York: Remarks of Rev. F. C. Ewer, before the Sanitary Association, November 21, 1861*, pp. 5–13.
9. *Three years among the Working-classes in the United States during the war. By the author of "The Autobiography of a Beggar-Boy"*
10. *Second Annual Report of the Board of Health of the Health Department, City of New York*, pp. 334–347.
11. Frederick Van Wyck, *Recollections of an Old New Yorker*, pp. 135–209.
12. Rev. Isaac Orchard, *Walks about New York. Facts and Figures, gathered from various sources. By the Secretary of the City Mission.*
13. James Dabney McCabe, *The Secrets of The Great City: A work descriptive of the virtues and the vices, the mysteries, miseries and crimes of New York City.*
14. *The Lower Depths of the Great American Metropolis. A Discourse by Rev. Peter Stryker, delivered in the Thirty-fourth Street Reformed Dutch Church, New York City, Sabbath Evening, April 29, 1866.*
15. *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of New York, for the year 1867*, pp. 299–312.
16. *The Catholic World, A monthly magazine of General Literature and Science*, VII, 553–561.
17. *Letter of John I. Davenport, Esq. on the Subject of the Population of the City of New York, Its Density, and the Evils resulting therefrom.*
18. Junius Henri Browne, *The Great Metropolis, A Mirror of New York. A complete History of Metropolitan Life and Society, with sketches of prominent places, persons and things in the city, as they actually exist.*

These, however, though illuminating as to contemporary interests and attitudes, are relatively unimportant when compared with the elaborate researches and precise information contained in the report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizens Association, which was made in 1864 and published in January 1865. New York was divided into twenty-nine districts for this study, and a leading physician appointed as sanitary inspector in each. Nine months were devoted to thorough inspection of buildings, streets, sewerage and soil, death rates and prevailing sicknesses, and to the consideration of the relation of these to the construction, condition, and use of dwellings. The temper of the investigation, unlike that of the Committee of 1857, was relatively scientific. The published report abounded in case records, tables, maps, and annotated illustrations. It was the foremost housing document of New York City prior to 1894 — superior in its quality of analysis and judgment to each of the previous studies, with the possible exception of those by Dr. Griscom, but much more comprehensive than the latter.

A statistical summary of the whole city revealed that there were over fifteen thousand tenement houses, a tenement population of nearly half a million, and a cellar population of 15,224. The following excerpts will serve to illustrate the conditions and problems of the period.

The tenant-houses of this city are unlike the habitations occupied by the poorer classes in any other city, and principally in the following respects, viz.: 1. That the occupants have less personal interest in and control over the character, cleanliness, and surroundings of their domiciles than is usual in other cities. 2. That the rate of crowding, both as regards the allowance of superficial area and of air-space to each person, far exceeds the ordinary degrees of aggregation of the poorer classes in other cities. 3. There is less concern and expenditure for the welfare of the tenants, and at the same time a higher rate of rental for domiciles, than prevails in other cities. 4. There is relatively as well as numerically a vastly larger population dwelling in crowded tenant-houses in New York than in any other great city. . . .

At the time the Council completed its Sanitary Survey of the city, December, 1864, *there were 495,592 persons in this city residing in tenant-houses and cellars; the total number of tenant-houses was 15,309, and the average number of families to each of these houses was 7 1/6, including the poor families that take boarders, keep lodgers, etc.* To these aggregate numbers the Sanitary Inspectors report that another element should be added, viz., all of the smaller habitations, attics, stable-lofts, etc., where poor families are found stowed away, and having too small an allowance of area and air-space. The Inspector of the Fourth District (4th Ward), for example, reports that in addition to the 462 tenant-houses proper in his district, there are 252 other buildings that possess the attributes of tenant-houses, and in a great proportion of which the highest degree of sanitary want prevails. Were all this class of habitations included with the tenant-houses and underground residences it would be found that far more than half the population of the city is to-day inhabiting a class of domiciles which invite and localize the most disabling and fatal kinds of disease.

. . . That the rate of crowding in particular localities, and even throughout the entire region occupied by tenant-houses is too great, is rendered evident by a simple estimation of the facts relating to the subject. If we take into consideration only the so-called tenant-houses, that is, houses in which there dwell three or more families who hire their domiciles by a monthly rental, it will be found that these houses, being 15,309 in number, have been built upon about 850 acres of ground, including all the courts, alleys, and areas pertaining to them, exclusive of the paved streets in front of them. Including a proper pro-rata of the entire area of the public streets, the total superficial area allotted to these 15,309 houses, the 111,000 families, and the 480,368 persons that dwell in them, is about *two square miles*. That is, the tenant-house population is actually packed upon the house-lots and streets at the rate of 240,000 to the square mile; and it is only because this rate of packing is somewhat diminished by intervening warehouses, factories, private dwellings, and other classes of buildings, that the entire tenant-house population is not devastated by the domestic pestilences and infectious epidemics that arise from overcrowding and uncleanness. As now distributed, the tenant-houses of the city are nearly all found within an area of less than four square miles. . . .

Such concentration and packing of a population has probably never been equalled in any city as may be found in particular localities in New York. In some entire districts, as in the Fourth, Sixth, and portions of the Eleventh and the Seventeenth Wards, the density of the population is far greater than in any parish or ward in London or any other European city of which we have definite knowledge. For example, in the Fourth Ward, the tenant-house and cellar population, as distributed throughout the whole Ward, is all included within an area of about sixty acres, including streets, etc. This gives a population of about 192,000 persons to the square mile. And to this number there remains to be added that portion of the population which is not included in the tenant-house class. At the same time there are twelve acres of the same area occupied by storehouses and factories. The results of our Sanitary Survey in the Fourth Ward show that the tenant-houses and tenant-house population proper, *i.e.*, the class that averages upwards of seven families to the house, are crowded upon a space of less than thirty acres exclusive of streets, or less than forty acres including street areas; and that this class, which, in that ward, out-numbers 17,611 persons, is now packed at the rate of about 290,000 inhabitants to the square mile. In that ward nothing is plainer than the fact that the overcrowding of the population is perilous to public health. . . .

. . . That the poorer classes in the city must, to a very great extent, now and hereafter, reside in *multiple domiciles* or tenant-houses, is only too evident and certain. . . .

A barracks "is commonly a structure of rough brick, standing upon a lot of twenty-five by one hundred feet; it is from four to six stories high, and is so divided internally as to contain four families on each floor — each family eating, drinking, sleeping, cooking, washing, and fighting in a room eight feet by ten, and a bed-room six feet by ten; unless, indeed — which very frequently happens, says Mr. Halliday — the family renting these two rooms takes in another family to board, or sub-lets one room to one or even two other families!

"Many houses used for this purpose of 'herding' families together, were built for other uses; more recently, however, others have been built especially for this use. One of the largest of these 'barracks' [Gotham Court] has apartments for one hundred and twenty-six families! It stands on a lot fifty by two hundred and fifty feet, is entered at the sides from alleys eight feet wide, and, by reason of the vicinity of another barrack of equal height, the rooms are so dark-

ened that on a cloudy day it is impossible to read or sew in them without artificial light. It has not one room which can in any way be thoroughly ventilated. The vaults and sewers which are to carry off the filth of the one hundred and twenty-six families have grated openings in the alleys, and door-ways in the cellars, through which the noisome and deadly miasmata penetrate and poison the dank air of the house and the courts. The water closets for the whole vast establishment are a range of stalls without doors, and accessible not only from the building, but even from the street. Comfort is here out of the question; common decency has been rendered impossible; and the horrible brutalities of the passenger ship are day after day repeated — but on a larger scale. . . ."

. . . It is not our purpose to present unnecessary details upon this subject, but simply to state what nuisances are to be regarded as injurious to public health and to individual welfare in our city. They may be enumerated as follows: (1) filthy streets; (2) neglected garbage and domestic refuse; (3) obstructed and faulty sewers and drains; (4) neglected privies and stables; (5) cattle pens and large stables in the more populous districts; (6) neglected and filthy markets; (7) slaughter-houses and hide and fat depots in close proximity to populous streets; (8) droves of cattle and swine in crowded streets; (9) swill-milk stables and their products; (10) bone-boiling, fat-melting, and their accompaniments within the city limits; (11) the sulphuretted, ammoniacal, and carburetted gases and offensive exhalations that are needlessly liberated and widely diffused in gas manufacture and purification; (12) the accumulations of dumping-grounds and manure-yards in vicinity of populous streets; (13) the present management of refuse and junk materials in the city; (14) the unreasonable overcrowding of the city railway cars, and the absence of all sanitary authority, permitting the unguarded transit and public exposure of persons with small-pox and other loathsome maladies in the public conveyances and otherwise in the streets; (15) the neglect of dead animals in the streets and gutters of the city....

The 173 slaughter houses in this city are too offensive to health and decency to be longer permitted in their present localities. These establishments are now thrust into the midst of the most crowded districts, and it is to be observed that a loathsome train of dependent nuisances is found grouped in the same neighborhoods. . . .

Facts like the foregoing are reported from all the fever-nests that afflict our city; and in the minutely detailed reports which the Sanitary Inspectors have made respecting them, there is constant and direct testimony confirming the following points: (1) that in many of the tenant-houses of the city there exist such excessive overcrowding, uncleanness, and utter want of ventilation, that typhus is liable to occur at any time; and when once infected with the virus of that fever, such houses will become sources of domestic pestilence and of danger to the public health; (2) that the number of localities which are already infected with the fever-poison (including both typhus and typhoid fever) in this city, is believed to be not less than *five hundred*, and (3) that the total number of insalubrious quarters which are particularly *liable* to an outbreak or endemic of fever, is not less than about one-fifth the total number of tenant-houses and inhabited cellars, or *not less than three thousand* houses and places; (4) lastly, that the causes which have localized fever in five hundred different places in this city, and which threaten its outbreak in thousands of other localities in the various wards, can be removed and prevented only by thorough ventilation of the houses in which the fever exists or is threatened, by cleansing and purifying, by thinning out the badly overcrowded buildings, and by the perpetual vigilance of an intelligently directed Sanitary Police. . . .

Dr. Joseph A. Monell, Sanitary Inspector of the First District, reported:

The most marked feature of the tenant-houses is the small size of their apartments, whereby ensues overcrowding in each family. The common mode of arranging them is as follows: On a lot of ordinary size, 25 × 100 feet, will be erected a front house 25 × 50, and a rear house 25 × 25 with a court 25 × 25, and frequently less, in which are usually located hydrant, cesspool, and privy. These houses are commonly five and frequently six stories in height above the basement. The principal rooms, of which there are four to each floor occupy the width of the building, front and rear, with small bedrooms between, one to each main room. This arrangement gives accommodation to four families on each floor, making in a six-story building twenty-four families. . . .

. . . Whether cesspools and garbage boxes are provided in the majority of tenant-houses or not, the refuse is thrown into the street, . . . In the rear, also, the inevitable but much-abused privy may be found, often at the very door of the house, and in nine cases out of ten in the worst condition possible.

Dr. William F. Thoms, inspector of the Sixth District, said in his report:

. . . Many of the tenant-houses are located over what was once the "Collect"; two-thirds of them are very old wooden structures. Some are quite small, containing from 4 to 8 families in as many rooms; others comparatively large, containing from 12 to 15 families. This class of houses is occupied by the lowest grade of inhabitants; many of them are used as lodging-houses, and as many as thirty persons are sometimes packed into one small room. . . . About a third of the number of buildings consist of the better class of brick tenant-houses, and contain from 10 to 50 families each.

An elevation and floor plans of "A Sixth Ward Fever-nest" are included in the report. The tenement population in this ward was said to number 23,000; 496 persons lived in damp, unwholesome cellars and basements. "Many of the cellars are occupied by 2 or 3 families, a number are also occupied as lodging-houses, accommodating from 20 to 30 lodgers. One near the corner of Elm and Worth Street, is now 15 or 16 feet below the level of the street." There were twenty-nine brothels, excluding those in tenement houses. "Prostitution has long been the most open and shameless of vices in the Sixth Ward."

Dr. James L. Little, inspector of the Twenty-first District, reported:

Within the space bounded by Tenth Avenue and the Hudson River, Fortieth and Thirty-seventh Streets, we have three large manure yards, a number of fat-boiling and gut-cleaning establishments, swill-milk cow-stables, and slaughter-houses, and to these may be added a dirty condition of the streets, with the gutters running with blood and filth, and the constant passage of offal and dead animals to the offal-dock. And scattered through the midst of these nuisances, which are constantly contaminating the atmosphere with their noxious exhalations, and surrounding them on all sides, are the crowded and ill-ventilated tenant-houses. . . .

Dr. Ellsworth Eliot, inspector of the Twenty-third District, testified:

. . . West from Third Avenue are the residences of the wealthy, unsurpassed in the city. East from this avenue tenant-houses predominate, inhabited chiefly by people of foreign birth. One locality in the northeastern section is given up to shanties, the occupants being squatters, also born abroad. The eastern limit of Dutch Hill (for so this place is called) is a precipice thirty feet or more in height, without any protection from falling; its almost perpendicular side corresponds to the line of First Avenue, and on its brink terminate abruptly East Thirty-ninth and East Fortieth Streets. These people find employment in the quarry and manure heap near their homes. . . .

Dr. J. Lewis Smith, inspector of the Twenty-fifth District, wrote:

Shanties. — The shanty is the cheapest and simplest domicile constructed in civilized communities. . . . shanties in this district are built mainly on rocky, elevated ground, or on lots sunken and too wet for tillage. There are in the district 552 shanties; and as a shanty accommodates but one family, this is the number of families living in this kind of domicile.

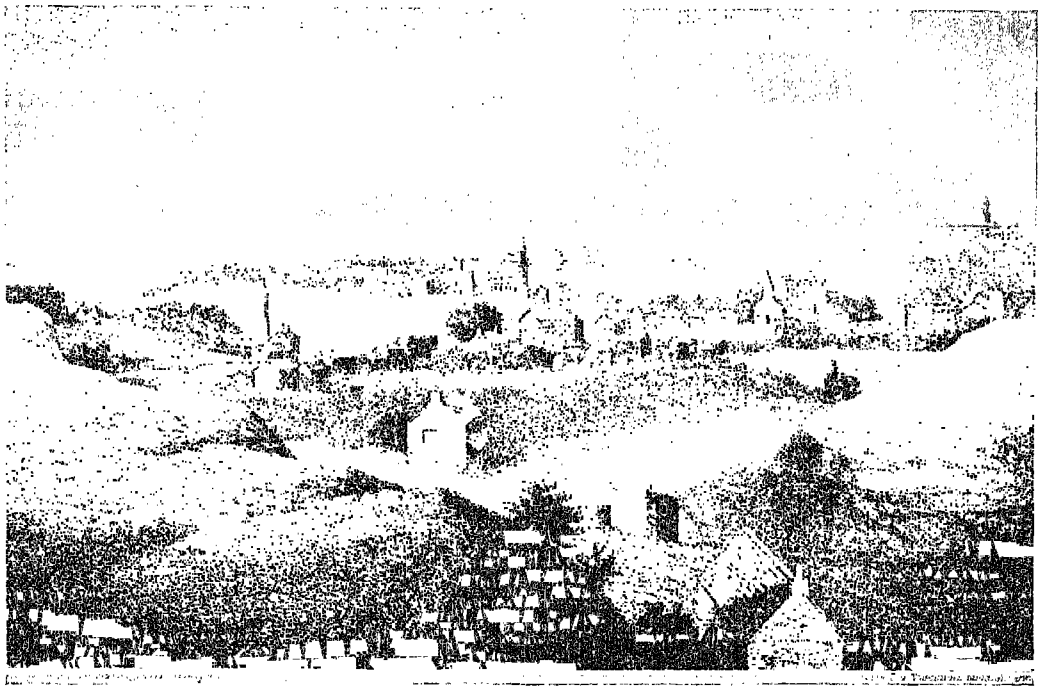
The preventable causes of disease in the district were said to be the large ponds of stagnant water, the lack of sewerage and house drainage, the filthy condition of the houses and privies, the large quantities of garbage, which was rarely collected, and the great number of pig-pens, dram shops, etc.

Those engaged in raising hogs reside, for the most part, in shanties, so that the pens are chiefly on those squares where the shanties are located. The largest number on one square, that between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, Fifty-first and Fifty-second Streets, is 18, and here the hogs feed in part upon the viscera of animals obtained from a slaughter-house near by. . . .

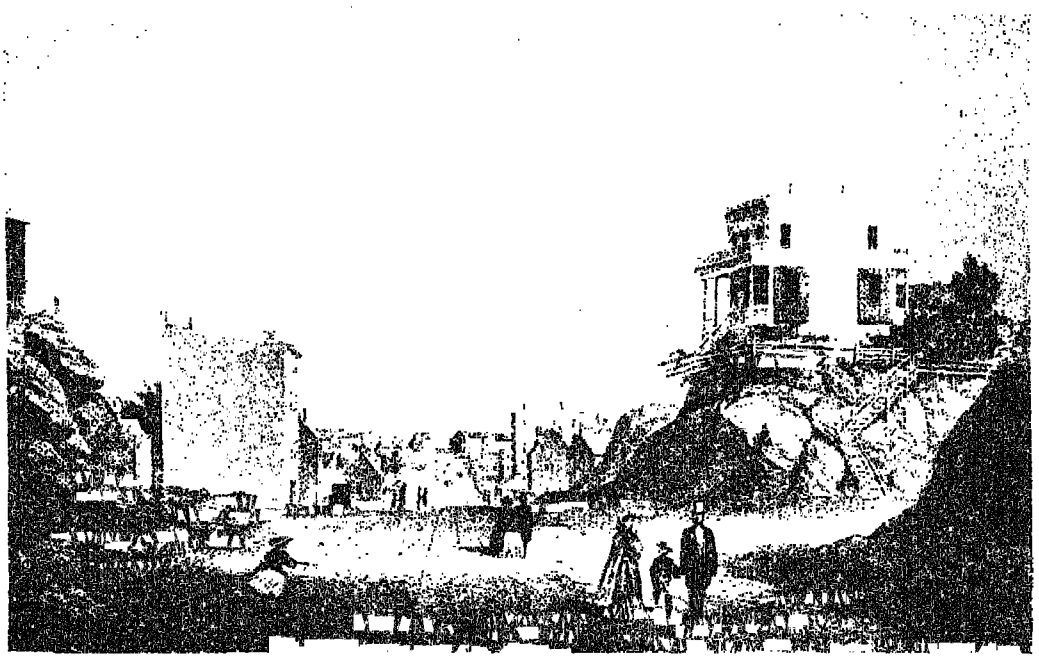
Drs. H. Mortimer Brush and Alexander Hadden, inspectors of the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Districts, respectively, stated in their joint report:

. . . The public and private nuisances in these districts are not as extensive and aggravated as in some other parts of the city. They may be summed up briefly as follows: The fat-boiling establishments in Forty-fifth Street, East River; the bone factory in Fifty-third Street and First Avenue; the ink factory in Sixty-first Street between First and Second Avenues; small pig-stys which we yet find here and there through the districts, . . .; filthy streets and gutters, rendered so by garbage and slops from tenant-houses; also, the modern wooden garbage boxes placed on the sidewalk; sunken lots with pools of stagnant water, and decaying animal and vegetable matters; and we may add with propriety, the "stench pipes" and tin leaders, which open on the tops of many of the first-class houses, and communicate directly with the sewer by way of the soil pipes. . . .

It is a humiliating fact that no complete examples of sanitary renovation can be found in the city of New York. The "Five Points" is still full of perpetual fever-nests, and it is the breeding-place of epidemic diseases. Yet the House of Industry, with its cleanly school-rooms and sunlighted dormitories for 200 redeemed children, has driven the demon of fever from the grim hiding-places of woe in "Cow Bay," and a Mission House, occupying the place of the infamous



a. Manhattanville from Fort Haight (Central Park below 110th Street), 1860.



b. Second Avenue from 42d Street, looking North, 1861.

"Old Distillery," has nearly terminated the sway of pestilence and beastliness in another dismal quarter. Individual enterprise and intelligence have developed a few examples of comfortable and decent tenant-houses: the "working-man's home" in Elizabeth Street, and a few respectable cottages for the laboring classes in the Yorkville and Harlem district, have given the best of sanitary results. But not a district nor a street has been redeemed from its filthiness and its endemic diseases. It is true that many sections present a new and more agreeable aspect than formerly, and particular blocks are entirely transformed, but there is no thorough reform. Nuisances of every kind are allowed to encroach upon the most select neighborhoods, new squares along the avenues and streets by the water-sides are being crowded promiscuously by lofty tenant-houses and abominable nuisances; and even the populated district about the Central Park, and the poor quarters of Manhattanville, are regions of endemic diseases and perpetual offences against health.[1]

The conclusions drawn by the Council of Hygiene with regard to the correlation of housing and disease were outlined in detail with many specific references. Its summary and recommendations follow:

. . . Typhus fever and consumption are found in the overcrowded tenant-houses, and in dark and noisome quarters excluded from sunlight and fresh air. Cholera infantum, dysentery, diarrhœal diseases, and various typhoid maladies are found to prevail in badly drained and neglected streets and alleys, and in cellars, or in damp and filthy domiciles surrounded by nuisances and poisonous effluvia. In such localities it has also been observed that scrofulous, rheumatic, and eruptive diseases prevail, and that the average or constant sickness-rate in the families and houses so situated is very high, the proportionate number of persons sick, or the total days of sickness, being three, five, or even ten times the ratio of sickness in the localities where better sanitary care prevails. . . .

In reference to the subject here presented, this Council would recommend:

First. — *That a system of faithful Medical and Sanitary Inspection should be maintained throughout the city, for the purpose of searching out and reporting to a central authority the existence and the sources of fevers, small-pox, and other pestilential diseases; and that, in the absence of a competent board of health, such duties of inspection, etc., should be maintained by voluntary organi-* [illegible], *that such sanitary inquiry should be accompanied by the needed personal ad-* [illegible] *influences as would tend most certainly to diminish the evils thus discovered and reported.*

Second. — *That either by public authority and a competent Bureau of Hygiene, or by voluntary and private enterprise, there should be instituted such a system of general Inquiry and Advice concerning the occurrence and spread of contagious and dangerous diseases, as will not only enable the people of the city of New York to protect themselves against dangers that now exist in their midst, but also more effectually guard against small-pox and fever from external sources, and at the same time intelligently provide adequate measures to prevent the spread of such infectious diseases from this city to other communities.* . . .

The Council would respectfully recommend, in view of the great importance of trustworthy

1. *Report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizen's Association of New York upon the Sanitary Condition of the City*, pp. lxviii–lxxii, lxxx, xcii–xciv, cvi–cvii, 7–8, 77–81, 265, 286, 300, 310, 331, cxiii.

and constant information and skilled advice respecting the local sources and the localizing causes of disease throughout the different sections of the city, that —

First. — *Physicians and all other classes of philanthropic and intelligent citizens should unite in the duty of maintaining a systematic effort to procure such stated and special inspections and reports of insalubrious quarters in the several districts of the city, as will furnish that definite and constantly revised knowledge of prevailing sickness and mortality, and the localizing conditions of disease, which will best enable the people to devise and apply means for the protection of the public health.*

Second. — *That all proper efforts be put forth to procure the establishment, and the successful operation, of an enlightened and efficient system of Sanitary Government and Advice.*

Third. — *That until such a system of Government and Advice shall have been established, as well as ever thereafter, physicians and all classes of the people in this city should use all practicable means and influences to induce the owners and lessees of tenant-houses and other property to remove and prevent the local causes of insalubrity pertaining thereto. . . .*

The time for action has come. The evils that characterize the present tenant-house system demand remedies which can be applied only by the wealth and intelligence of citizens, and by the interposition of well-administered sanitary regulations. . . . the Council would give a practical direction to deep convictions that are entertained by its members, by recommending:

First. — *That capitalists, architects, and builders should unite in devising and executing the construction of improving dwellings for the industrial classes in the city.*

Second. — *That effective measures be immediately undertaken to procure the introduction of needed improvements in the ventilation, lighting, and cleanliness of the tenant-houses of the city.*

Third. — *That citizens should put forth the requisite efforts to procure the enactment and execution of suitable sanitary laws for the better regulation of tenant-houses, and to enforce the necessary care and cleanliness of the same by the owners, lessees, and occupants.*

Fourth. — *That a Department of Social Statistics and Dwelling Improvement be maintained in connection with the plan of labors pursued by the Council of Hygiene and the Board of Engineers and Architects of the Citizens' Association of New York, for the purpose of acquiring and imparting needed information relating to the social statistics and improvements in dwellings which sanitary science and the public welfare require, and which will best conduce to the immediate development and execution of successful plans and examples of the dwelling improvements which are demanded for the physical and the social welfare of the industrial classes.*[1]

The next significant development was the creation of the Metropolitan Sanitary District and Board of Health on February 26, 1866. The Sanitary District comprised "so much of the territory of the State of New York, and of the cities, villages and towns thereof, as now composes the Metropolitan police district of the State of New York, . . ."

The powers of the Board over tenement houses were:

§14. *First.* — Whenever any building, erection, excavation, premises, business pursuit, matter or thing, or the sewerage, drainage or ventilation thereof, in said district, shall, in the opinion of said Board . . . be in a condition or in effect dangerous to life or health, said Board

1. *Ibid.*, pp. xlviii–xlix, lxi–lxii, lxvii–lxviii, lxxviii–lxxxiv.

may take and file among its records what it shall regard as sufficient proof to authorize its declaration that the same, to the extent it may specify, is a public nuisance, or dangerous to life or health; and said Board may thereupon enter in its records the same as a nuisance, and order the same to be removed, abated, suspended, altered or otherwise improved or purified, as said order shall specify; and shall cause said order before its execution, to be served on the owner, occupant or tenant thereof, or some of them, which to said Board, may appear most directly interested in its execution, . . .

Second. — Said board may order or cause any excavation, erection, vehicle, vessel, water craft, room, building, place, sewer, pipe, passage, premises, ground, matter or thing (in said district or adjacent waters) regarded by said board as in a condition dangerous or detrimental to life or health, to be purified, cleaned, disinfected, altered or improved; and may also order any substance, matter or thing, being or left in any street, alley, water, excavation, building, erection, place or grounds (whether such place where the same may be, be public or private), and which said board may regard as dangerous or detrimental to life or health, to be speedily removed to some proper place; and may designate or provide a place to which the same shall be removed, when no such adequate or proper place, in the judgment of said board, is already provided. . . . And it is hereby declared to be the duty of every owner and part owner and person interested, and of every lessee, tenant and occupant of, or in any place, water, ground, room, stall, apartment, building, erection, vessel, vehicle, matter and thing in said district, and of every person conducting or interested in business therein or thereat, and of every person who has undertaken to clean any place, ground or street therein, and of every person, public officer and board having charge of any ground, place, building or erection therein, to keep, place, and preserve the same, and every part, and the sewerage, drainage and ventilation thereof, in such condition, and to conduct the same in such manner that it shall not be dangerous or prejudicial to life or health. . . .

§16. And said Board shall use all reasonable means for ascertaining the existence and cause of disease or peril to life or health, and for averting the same throughout said district; . . .

§22. Said Board may, from time to time, engage a suitable person or persons to render sanitary engineering service, and to make or supervise practical and scientific sanitary investigations and examinations in said district requiring engineering skill, and to prepare plans and reports relative thereto. . . . and the members of said Board, the sanitary superintendent or assistant aforesaid, any of the aforesaid sanitary inspectors, and such other officer or person as may at any time be by said Board authorized, may, without fee or hindrance, enter, examine and survey all grounds, erections, vehicles, structures, apartments, buildings and places in said district, including vessels of all kinds in the adjacent waters, and all cellars, sewers, passages and excavations of every sort, and inspect the safety and sanitary condition and make plans, drawings and descriptions thereof, according to the order or regulations of said Board. Said Board may make and publish a report of the sanitary condition, and the result of the inspection of any place, matter or thing in said district so inspected, or otherwise as aforesaid, so far as, in the opinion of said Board, such publication may be useful. . . . But no more than five thousand dollars in any one year shall be expended for sanitary engineering service.[1]

Minor legislation of the following years included prohibition of throwing ashes

1. *Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Eighty-ninth Session of the Legislature*, 1, 114, 125–128, 131, 134–135.

and rubbish in the streets, April 4, 1866,[1] an act for the prevention of fires in Brooklyn, April 30, 1866,[2] and an act on May 4, 1866, for the regulation of buildings and the storage of combustible materials,[3] which at last extended the building regulations and fire limits to the "entire corporate City."

This latter act, which may be described as the building law for New York City, followed very closely the wording of the score or more of earlier acts establishing fire limits, which began with that of the year 1761. It had by now grown to comprise sixty-three sections. In §1 the building limits were extended to cover the entire city; §2 required party walls of stone and brick or iron. Then followed specifications for (§3) foundation walls; (§4) the footing or base course; (§5) party and outside walls;

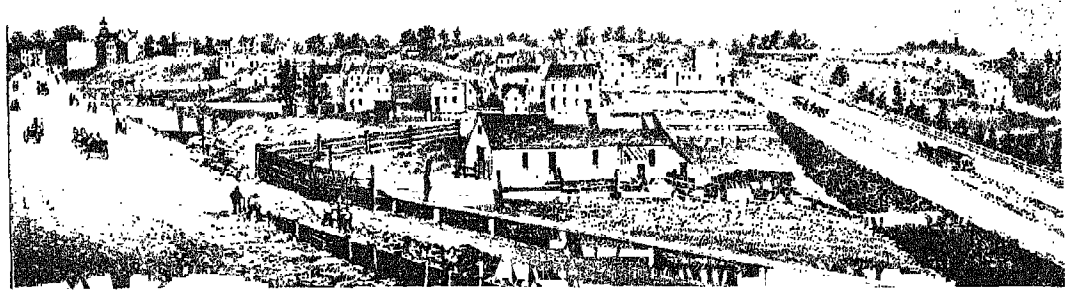
§5. *In all dwelling houses not above thirty feet in height, and not more than twenty feet in* width, the party and outside walls shall not be less than eight inches thick. In all dwelling houses from thirty to fifty-five feet in height, and not more than thirty feet in width, the outside and party-walls shall not be less than twelve inches thick; and if above fifty-five feet, the walls shall not be less than sixteen inches thick, to the top of the second story beams, . . .

(§6) wall thicknesses; (§7) partition walls; (§8) supports; (§9) headers; (§10) hollow walls; (§11) mortar; (§12) partition walls; (§13) piers; (§14) anchors; (§15) side or party walls, to be extended at least twelve inches above roof; (§16) compound beams; (§17) arches for doors and windows; (§18) fireproof metal doors, blinds, or shutters for stores and warehouses more than two stories or 25 feet in height; (§19) chimneys; (§20) smoke pipes; (§21) wooden beams or timbers; (§22) wooden cornices; (§23) roof coverings (slate, tin, zinc, copper, or iron required);

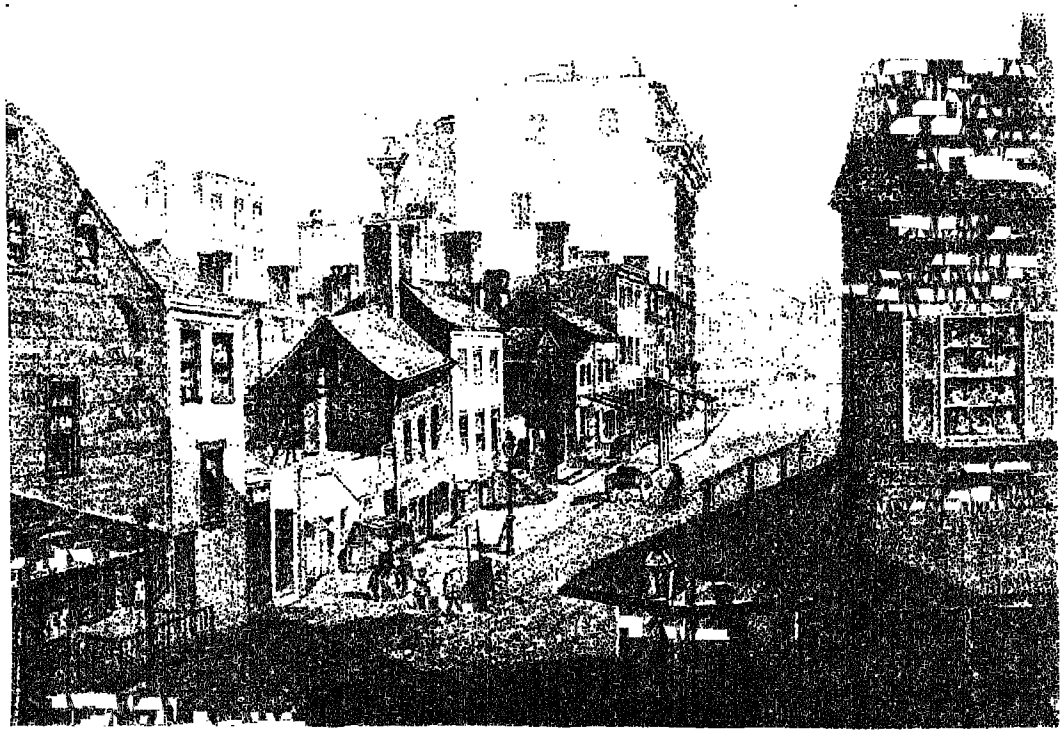
§23. The planking and sheathing of the roof of every building erected or built, as aforesaid, shall in no case be extended across the front, rear, side, end, or party-wall thereof, and every such building and the tops and sides, every dormer window thereon, shall be covered and roofed with slate, tin, zinc, copper or iron, or such other equally fire-proof roofing as the superintendent of buildings under his certificate may authorize, . . . And no wooden buildings hereafter erected or built, or already erected in any part of the said city more than two stories, or above thirty feet in height, above the curb level, to the highest part thereof, which shall require roofing, shall be roofed with any other roofing or covering, except as aforesaid. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the repairing of any shingle roof, provided the building is not altered in height. All buildings in the city of New York, whether already erected or hereafter to be built, shall have scuttle frames and doors, or bulkheads leading to the roof, made of or covered with some fire-proof material, and shall have stairways or stationary iron ladders leading to the same, and all such scuttles or stairways or ladders leading to the roof, shall be kept so as to be ready for use at all times, and all scuttles shall not be less in size than two by three feet.

1. *Ibid.*, Chap. 377. 2. *Ibid.*, vol. II, Chap. 858. 3. *Ibid.*, Chap. 873.

FIG. 18



a. Junction of Broadway and Eighth Avenue (Columbus Circle), 1861. Central Park can be seen at extreme right.



b. Baxter Street between Hester and Grand Streets, 1861.

(§24) gas, water, and steam pipes; (§25) bearing strength of floors; (§26) iron beams; (§27) frame structure;

§27. No frame or wooden building, shed, extension, stairway, stoop, balcony, piazza, platform, bay or oriel window, or wooden structure of any kind, in whole or in part wood, shall hereafter be built or constructed south of a line running from the East to the North river one hundred feet north of Eighty-sixth street in said city, unless the same shall first be authorized by the superintendent of buildings under his certificate, . . .

(§28) alterations and enlargements; (§29) fire damage;

§29. Every wooden building or frame building with a brick or other front, situated in the said city, south of the said line, which may hereafter be damaged by fire or otherwise, to an amount not greater than one-half the value thereof, at the time of such damage, may be repaired or rebuilt; but if such damage shall amount to more than one-half of such value thereof, exclusive of the value of the foundation, then such building shall not be repaired or rebuilt, but shall be taken down. The amount and extent of such damage by fire, or otherwise, shall be determined by one surveyor appointed by said superintendent of buildings and one surveyor appointed by the owner or owners; and in case these two do not agree, they shall appoint a third party, and a decision of a majority of them, reduced to writing, and sworn to, shall be conclusive in the premises; and such building shall in no manner be repaired or rebuilt until after such decision shall have been rendered.

The Act continued as follows:

§30. No building already erected or hereafter to be built in said city, shall be enlarged, raised, altered or built upon in such manner that were such building wholly built or constructed after the passage of this act, it would be in violation of any of the provisions of this act. . . .

§31. All plans and specifications for the erection, construction, alteration or repair of any building, or part of a building, in the city of New York, before execution thereof, shall be submitted for examination and approval to the department for the survey and inspection of buildings in the city of New York; and it shall be the duty of the superintendent of buildings, under said department, to examine the same without delay, and when found or made to conform to the requirements of the several provisions of this act, to certify the approval of said department to the same; and where such approved plans and specifications shall be strictly followed in the construction, alteration or repair of any such building, or part of a building, then the owner of such building, and all persons executing the work under such approved plans and specifications, shall be exonerated from all liability under the several provisions of this act; and in the construction or alteration of any building in said city, notice shall first be given to said department, by the owner, lessees or persons doing the work.

§32. All dwelling houses in any part of the city of New York, already erected, or that may hereafter be built, that now are or may be more than forty feet high, that shall be built to contain or be occupied by six or more families, above the first story, and all dwelling houses that shall be built to contain or occupied by eight or more families, above the first story, shall have a stairway, connected with a proper scuttle or other opening, leading to the roof, and all the rooms on each floor shall connect by doors from front to rear; and every such dwelling house

shall have placed thereon a practical fire-proof fire-escape, that shall be approved of by the department for the survey and inspection of buildings in the city of New York, and all front and rear tenement houses on the same lot shall be connected by an iron bridge; provided, that where any such building shall be built fire proof throughout, or where there are two or more dwelling houses adjoining, and of equal height and with flat roofs, the same may be exempt from the requirements of placing thereon fire proof fire-escapes; and no dwelling houses, such as are mentioned in this section, now built, or which may hereafter be built, shall have any hay, straw, hemp, flax, wood, shavings, burning fluid, turpentine, camphene, or any other combustible material stored therein, or kept on sale, except in such quantities as shall be provided for by law or by ordinances of the common council in said city.

§33. The department for the survey and inspection of buildings named under this act shall have full power in passing upon any question relative to the mode, manner of construction, or materials to be used in the erection, alteration or repair of any building in the city of New York, where the same is not specially provided for herein, to make the same conform to the true intent, meaning and spirit of the several provisions hereof; and shall also have discretionary power, upon application therefor, to modify or vary any of the several provisions of this act to meet the requirements of special cases, where the same do not conflict with public safety and the public good, so that substantial justice may be done; but no such deviation shall be permitted except a record of the same shall be kept by said department, and a certificate be first issued to the party applying for the same. . . .

From this point on the Act dealt with violations, penalties, unsafe buildings and their removal, the Department for the Survey and Inspection of buildings which was charged with the enforcement of most of the provisions of this act, the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Fire Department, salaries, the duties of the attorney of the Department, and the storage of combustibles and explosives.

The report of the Sanitary Superintendent of the Metropolitan Board of Health, dated January 27, 1867, listed the total number of tenement houses by wards and gave the number in bad sanitary condition in each. Criticism was made of rear tenement houses, deficient light and ventilation, cellar dwellings, and inadequate provision for water-closets, privies, and drainage.[1]

On March 8, the Report of the Committee on Public Health, Medical Colleges and Societies, relative to the Condition of Tenement Houses in the Cities of New York and Brooklyn, was published in the documents of the Assembly of the State of New York, 1867.[2]

New York's first tenement-house law was passed on May 14, 1867. It was entitled "An Act for the Regulation of Tenement and Lodging Houses in the Cities of New York & Brooklyn." It required for every room occupied for sleeping in a tenement or lodging house, if it did not communicate directly with the external air, a ventilating or transom window to the neighboring room or hall; a

1 *Documents of the Assembly of the State of New York. Ninetieth Session, 1867*, vol. VII, no. 156, pp. 3–8. 2. *Ibid.*

proper fire-escape on every tenement or lodging house; the roof to be kept in repair and the stairs to have bannisters; water-closets or privies — at least one to every twenty occupants for all such houses; after July 1, 1867, permits for occupancy of every cellar not previously occupied as a dwelling; cleansing of every lodging house to the satisfaction of the Board of Health, which was to have access at any time; reporting of all cases of infectious disease to the Board by the owner or his agent; inspection and, if necessary, disinfection, of such houses; and vacation of buildings found to be out of repair. There were regulations also governing distances between buildings, rear dwellings, heights of rooms, and dimensions of windows. The terms "tenement house," "lodging house," and "cellar" were defined.

The Tenement House Act of 1867 was said to have resulted in the reduction of overcrowding in densely populated areas, in improved sewerage, and in rendering the dwellings of the poor more healthy by the introduction of light, ventilation, and cleanliness. James Gallatin,[1] however, fourteen years later, specified the particulars in which the Tenement House Act of 1867 had failed: (1) it did not prevent the covering of the whole lot by the building; (2) it did not secure a reasonable amount of light and ventilation to the inside rooms of new houses; (3) nothing was said about overcrowding; (4) it failed to put a responsible person, either owner, janitor, or housekeeper, in charge of each house. It further overlooked the necessity of restricting the percentage of the lot which might be occupied by a new tenement house and left its requirements with regard to back yards so vague that they proved unenforceable.

In the decade 1870 to 1880 the population grew from 942,292 to 1,164,673, an increase of 222,381 or 23.6 per cent.

Discussions of the housing problem of this decade disclosed an increasing acknowledgment of the need of social control, in both the conversion of old tenements and the construction of new ones for the poorer classes of the population. No legislation of a high degree of effectiveness was added to the existing forms of special laws until the end of the century. It was not lack of recognition of the problem, but rather lack of vision, courage, or persistency, and skill in reform politics, that permitted the evils of congested living to become so deeply rooted in the life and thought-habits of the people. By 1870, New York had endured over a third of a century of tenement-house construction which supplemented the relatively uncontrolled conversions of private dwellings for use by many families. Each new large accession to immigration merely intensified the evils which grew out of inappropriate planning, and inferior construction and sanitation.

1. *Tenement-house Reform in the City of New York.*

Edward Crapsey, writing of "The Nether Side of New York" in August, 1871, described in detail the overcrowding and lack of sanitation of Gotham Court, and its social and moral consequences. This had become one of the worst examples of tenement-house living in New York.[1] Similar conditions, however, existed in portions of the Tenth, Eleventh, and Seventeenth Wards of the city.[2] Dr. Stephen Smith reported to the Board of Health in 1872 on the deplorable conditions of tenement-house dwellers, and recommended improvements in ventilation, sanitation, and cleanliness in existing tenement houses, by reconstruction of interiors, rearrangement of rooms, and installation of sanitary equipment. He further recommended the erection of model tenement houses "to prove that the poor, living in suitable homes, would be frugal, thrifty, and healthy," and dispersion of the tenement-house population both into the surrounding country and within the city.[3]

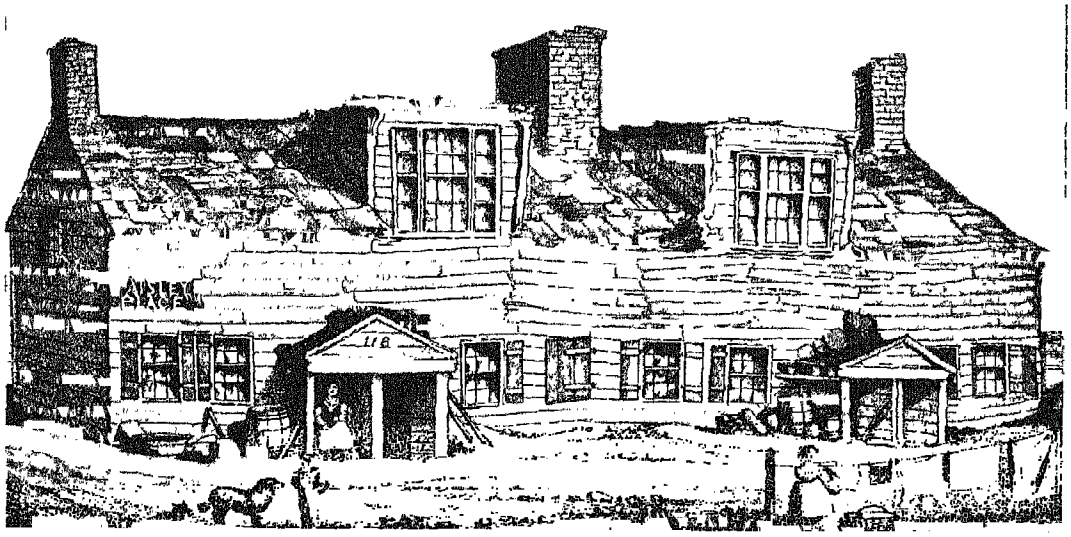
In 1871 the Association for the Improving the Condition of the Poor reported that "though greatly improved in late years, the tenement-house system was still the curse of the city. Half the inhabitants lived in this class of houses, from which proceeded three-fifths of the crime and three-fourths of the mortality." [4]

At about this time there appeared many recommendations for the installation of cheap rapid transit to relieve overcrowding in the tenement districts. It was reported that "down to the date of the opening of the Elevated roads, the earliest of which first carried passengers in 1872, the time required to travel from the lower portion of the city to Harlem was close on to two hours, while one could reach Elizabeth, New Jersey, just twice the distance, in half that time. . . ." [5]

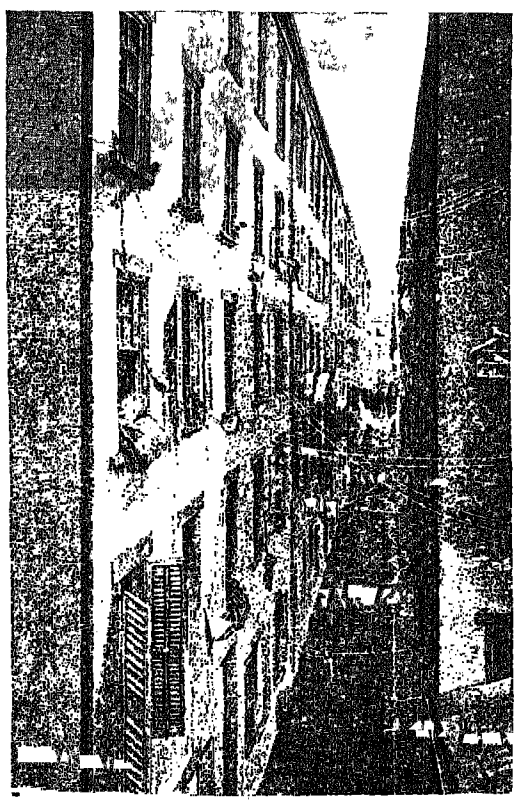
In 1872 Edward Crapsey described graphically the metamorphosis of the city, including Five Points, and also called attention to the Arch Block, an example of bad housing similar to Gotham Court. His early recognition of the zone of transition is worthy of note.[6]

> . . . Even less than a dozen years have elapsed since the Eighth Ward, which was the chosen home of middle-class good repute, was seized by shame and squalor. The wave of change has rolled even further, and in Bleecker and Amity streets converted the abodes of aristocratic respectability into dens of the lowest vice; but while this has been doing, Mercer street which lately had an infamous notoriety, has been nearly reclaimed by legitimate traffic. There seems to have always been in the city, between where reputable people live and where they do business, a region where only crime and poverty find refuge. This territory has shifted with the changes of the city, and it is my present purpose to give its present location and appearance,

1. Consult Index for other mentions.
2. *The Galaxy*, XII, 177–178.
3. *Second Annual Report of the Board of Health of the Health Department, City of New York*, pp. 335–347.
4. *The Yale Review*, V, 299.
5. *Letter of John I. Davenport, Esq., on the subject of the Population of the City of New York, Its Density, and the Evils resulting therefrom*, pp. 16–17. Davenport is in error in his use of the date 1872, as passengers were carried in the late 1860's. See Stokes, V, 1932.
6. See Chapter I.



a Paisley Place, 17th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, 1863



b Gotham Court, 1864. For plan see Appendix.



c. Gotham Court, Entrance, 1879.

supplemented with facts picked up in the colonies it has planted in other portions of the city.

There was a time, which has hardly yet passed, when the vilest region of the metropolis was known the world over as the Five Points. Located in the most depressed spot of the Sixth Ward, and getting its name from the fact that five tortuous streets there converged together, it once deserved its reputation. Only the vilest quarters of London could match it, and we fell to describing it over and over again, as though it was rather creditable to us to have crowded so much of vice and squalor into so small a space. Presently it became a generally accepted fact that all of outcast life which the city contained was to be found in the Five Points, and the delusion has continued to the present day. Once the worst locality in the city, it years ago became almost reputable. A sturdy, practical Christianity, getting hold of the spot, robbed it of its distinctive features, and now the Five Points Mission House, with other structures of similar character, occupy the site of the old rookeries that harbored the harlotry, thievery, and poverty by which the spot was made infamous. But the fact of this reclamation, which is of such great good cheer and excellent promise for the future of the city, does not appear to have even yet become known, and the Five Points is yet constantly and exclusively cited as illustrating the worst aspect of the nether side of New York; while the Arch Block, which is fast becoming entitled to that bad eminence, is never mentioned.

Life is a most undesirable condition as seen in the region bounded by Thompson, Sullivan, Broome, and Grand streets, with the ragged fringes of the adjacent territory. Like the Five Points the ground is low. Unless it is because the dregs must settle to the bottom, I do not know why it is that the vilest population of great cities is usually found in their most depressed areas. Certainly there appears to be something inimical to skulking crime and slothful poverty in the high, breezy table-lands of towns, and successful search is rarely made for either on the hill-tops. Whatever the explanation may be, the fact is beyond dispute, and has never been more plainly proven than in the Arch Block, a name which is due to an open archway under the houses from Thompson to Sullivan street, midway between Broome and Grand, which has often served thieves and brawlers a good turn in enabling them to escape the pursuing police. The Arch Block has always been subject to miasmatic odors from natural causes, but these have been multiplied and intensified by artificial means. The population is dense, and as little addicted to cleanliness as godliness. The streets, which until a short time ago were rudely paved with cobble-stones, are generally matted with the foulest garbage, thrown from the houses in defiance of law and decency. The sidewalks are strewn with the decaying refuse of green-grocers, and the arm of authority is so weak that even in the fetid days of midsummer the attempts to remove this death-producing filth or to prevent its accumulation are few and feeble. In winter huge heaps of ashes are added to the piles of kitchen and grocer garbage, both intermingled with fouler filth, so that the [illegible] are passable only to horses and vehicles specially adapted to scaling an infinite variety of short ascents; . . . In summer these heaps disappear only because the heat spreads them more evenly and thickly over the roadways, while at the same time it liberates the noxious vapors the cold had imprisoned, adding them to the natural miasmas of the place; so that the atmosphere during the close sultriness of later summer would enliven the undertakers but for the fact that the inhabitants who breathe their last of it are as undesirable customers in death as in life.

The houses enveloped in these rank odors, and crowded with a population as wretched and

debased as New York or any other metropolis can show, have seen much better days. Built many years ago, when the city had but little crime or poverty, and originally designed for respectable middle-class people, by whom they were first occupied, they were once as much a credit as they are now a disgrace to civilization. The majority of them being on the same plan, they are forcible examples of the simplicity of structure which answered all the needs of two generations ago. Few of them have more than three floors, and many of them not more than two with an attic. All of them have the first floor, which is raised only one or two steps above the pavement, divided into a hallway and two rooms; and the upper floors are on the same plan, except that half the hallway, front and rear, is partitioned off to make those last abominations of builders known as hall rooms. These houses will not average more than ten rooms each, but in many of them the ground floor has been taken for the petty trade of the quarter, leaving the average of living rooms not more than eight to each house. These may seem to be trivial facts, but they become important when the population which these rooms harbor is considered. So also do the other details that these domiciles, almost without exception, are destitute of water or gas; that they are dirty and dingy beyond description, that many of them have so lurched to the southward, owing to the settling of the ground on which they were built, that articles of furniture slide from one side of a room to the other; that the stairways have fallen into decay, and the floors are so worn that they are in many places thin and insecure. . . . Illuminated at night by kerosene, frowsy and repulsive in the glaring light of day, crowded day and night with people to be described, the Arch Block presents the most striking view which can now be obtained of the vice and squalor of the great city.[1]

Attention of tenement-house reformers was somewhat deflected from the framing of new legislation to the construction of model dwellings. Thus, in 1874, the Dwelling-Reform Association was organized; its objectives were "to improve, cheapen and render more accessible and more attractive, the homes of the masses of the people, and to promote the normal distribution of population in town and country." The *Evening Mail* commented on November 28 as follows:

We have not the space to-day to develop the purposes of the "Dwelling Reform Association," which was organized yesterday. . . . There are many methods of realizing this object, one of which has been put in practice the past year by Mr. Edward Matthews, who has leased the upper lofts of a fine store in lower Broadway, as dwellings. What he has done profitably could be imitated, with excellent results, by hundreds of owners of down-town stores, whose lofts — airy, healthy, spacious and comfortable — are now tenantless, while a single East Side block reeks with the filth of over three thousand wretched human beings. The general introduction of elevators will add tens of thousands of first-class rooms, now unused, to the facilities for quartering our poorer classes.

It is to direct public and private attention in this direction of humanitarian effort; to call out the suggestions of experienced architects, landlords, and travelers, and to supply hints for the owners of partly unoccupied stores and other business structures, that the "Dwelling Reform Association" is instituted. . . . We will only add to-day, that the President of the Association, Mr. Parke Godwin, has probably devoted more time and thought to the subject of

1. Edward Crapsey, *The Nether Side of New York; or the Vice, Crime and Poverty of the Great Metropolis*, pp 154–156.

"housing" the poor, and has investigated the foreign experiments more thoroughly than any other of our citizens.[1]

With exceptional vision, Mr. Alfred Treadway White of Brooklyn met this same problem by studying the model housing of London, and by developing plans for using the block rather than the lot as a unit for improved housing. He was impressed with the importance of decentralization, and so built his model tenements in Brooklyn rather than in Manhattan. The Home Buildings[2] were opened in 1877 and the Tower Buildings (see Figure 114b and Appendix) in 1878. The following extracts are from the careful description of the buildings, published in the Brooklyn Board of Health Report of 1878:

The first attempt to build Improved Dwellings for the laboring classes, on plans similar to those most successfully used in London and other English cities, was made in 1876, in this city, by Mr. Alfred T. White. These houses are models in their way, and would seem to combine all the arrangements necessary, both for the family privacy and the sanitary welfare of the occupants. For the complete accommodation and comfort of a large number of people on a small area of ground, we know of nothing to equal them, either in this country or England.

Mr. White first constructed a block of buildings on Hicks Street, at the corner of Baltic, which was opened for occupation February 1, 1877, and so successfully had its proprietor met the popular demand in its construction, that it was immediately filled. These buildings are 105 feet front and 38 feet 4 inches deep, besides the extensions (containing water facilities), which are 7 feet deeper. A second block was completed and opened in October 1877. A third block is now in course of erection near the first buildings. As the plan of this block combines the improvements suggested by the earlier experiences, it is given herewith.

In all of these buildings access to the upper stories is had by stair-cases *open to the front.* The stairs are of slate, and set in solid brick work. In rising from story to story a half turn is made, and at the top of each flight a slate balcony, protected by an iron railing, is reached. These balconies, in the first and third blocks, are about 30 feet long. From each end of each balcony a hallway or lobby runs back, and, . . . private halls admitting to the rooms of each dwelling, lead from this hallway. Thus every family has its dwelling, A, B, C, etc., entirely private and apart from, and with no room opening into another, while all the rooms have *direct sunlight.* The rooms are provided with closets with hooks and shelves, and the living room with a dresser, and coal box to hold a quarter of a ton. Both sitting and living rooms have fire places and mantels. The height of ceilings is 8 feet 3 inches in the clear. The windows of all the rooms are of unusual size, and extend up close to the ceiling. From the living room a door leads into the extension, a small room 7½ by 5 feet. This contains an ash-flue, a sink, a stationary wash-tub, a window, and a water-closet with separate outside window. All of these conveniences are furnished to every family *entirely apart from all others.* The ash-flues, one foot square and ventilated at top, discharge into large ash-rooms in rear of the cellars, separated from main cellars by a brick wall, and accessible only by doors in the rear. No ashes or refuse are ever exposed on the sidewalk or elsewhere. All refuse is burned, and the ashes are loaded directly from the ash-

1. *The Dwelling-Reform Association: Its Origin, Plans, Purposes, Incorporation, Constitution & Officers*, pp. 25, 29–30.

2. Consult Index for other mentions.

vaults into carts, which pass out by a rear gateway. The water-supply is ample, and is carried up in a corner of the living-room, where the pipes are out of the reach of the frost. The water can be shut off from the sculleries by faucets placed in each apartment. The water-closets are all provided with cisterns overhead to insure instant supply of water. The traps are ventilated, and siphoning prevented by vent-pipes carried above the roof. The wash-tubs and sinks are trapped separately from the water-closets. The soil-pipes are open at the roof, and serve as rain conductors. These pipes pass down against the back wall of the extension and out through the rear wall of the cellars into the sewer, avoiding any horizontal drains under the buildings. Every family has a large coal-bin and wood-bin in the cellar, numbered to correspond with its rooms. Hoisting tackle is provided for the use of the tenants. The buildings are all of good red brick, and all windows and outside doors are arched with brick. Floors are of the best yellow pine throughout. The flat gravel roof is used as a clothes-drying ground by the families in the upper three stories. For the occupants of the lower stories lines are provided in the yard. The slate stair-case extending from cellar to roof, is not only absolutely fire-proof, but cannot be reached by any fire that may occur in the buildings, forming an unequalled fire escape.

The front of the new block is much more ornamental and attractive than either of the others. Open towers rise from the ground to above the roof, to afford better protection to the stair-cases, and add greatly to the appearance. The stiff lines of iron in the first front yield to graceful arches, an ornamental railing replaces the plain one, the windows are better grouped, and broad flower sills with iron crestings break up the plainness of the front, and allow the tenants to cultivate their taste for the beautiful.[1]

There followed several concurrent movements of a philanthropic nature toward the improvement of tenement houses in New York, covering the education of tenants, establishment of trust funds, reconditioning of old tenements, and examination of the possibilities of residential decentralization.

There is an excellent work going on, in this city, under the charge of a lady, [Miss Ellen Collins] who has undertaken to do here what Miss Octavia Hill has so well done in London. This lady hires tenement houses, selecting those of a bad class, puts them in as good sanitary condition as possible, and then strives, by personal influence, to raise the character of the inmates. This is a noble form of philanthropic effort, but as an individual enterprise it requires too much of sacrifice and devotion to be extensively imitated.

One plan, on the philanthropic basis, and one which is already assured of no small amount of financial aid, is the establishing of a fund, to be held by trustees, and invested in new or improved tenement houses, the entire profits to be devoted to the extension of the enterprise. It is not unlikely that a very considerable amount might be raised for such a purpose, and that the desired reform on a large scale might be accomplished.[2]

Churches in the poorer sections of the city were urged to cooperate by forming associations "for the promotion of the social, moral and religious welfare of the

1. Alfred T. White, *Improved Dwellings for the Laboring Classes: The need, and the way to meet it on strict commercial principles, in New York and other cities*, pp. 25–28.

2. John Cotton Smith, *Improvement of the Tenement House System of New York. Extracts from a Report to the Trustees of the Ascension Association*, pp. 7–8.

poor of this city. Let this association hire, buy or build one or more tenement houses in the field of the Missionary labor of the Parish, and manage the property in the interest of the tenement house reform." [1] The Ascension Association, which had been formed about 1865, bought a large block of tenement houses on West 43d Street, built a chapel, and used certain rooms in the block for mission purposes. They also purchased a house on Greenwich Street which contained both tenements and a large chapel, with rooms for mission work.[2]

The following article from *The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer* of February 1879 showed that the working people themselves were taking some initiative in improving housing conditions.

> The workmen at R. Hoe & Co.'s printing press works in Grand Street, numbering some 400, have been much interested in the subject of model houses for working people. They have appointed a committee of seven to examine into existing houses, notably those of Mr. White in Brooklyn, and a number of conferences have been held to discuss the matter. It is quite possible that Messrs. Hoe & Co. may join with their workmen in building houses for the use of the latter. The only point to be decided is whether it is best to choose a site near their works, or in some suburban locality accessible by rapid transit. The works are situated on unusually high and healthy ground, where land is not extravagantly high, and it would seem as if it were wiser to build there than to seek a more distant location — even in view of the late extension of rapid transit to Yorkville and Harlem. The cost of living is quite as high in these places as in the city, and it is questionable if many men with small earnings can afford to pay even ten cents a day for car fare. There are many workmen with families who earn less than ten dollars a week, and who live decently on that sum, who could not afford the smallest additional outlay.
>
> The increased travel on all the New York elevated railroads, especially the Third Avenue line, is largely made up of workingmen. It is surprising how many apparently very poor men are able to travel during the five cent hours. So great is the crowd that many fastidious persons prefer to take more time and ride in the horse cars. From observation and inquiry, we should judge that nearly an hour per day is saved to thousands by the elevated roads, and this is something to be appreciated even more by the poor than by the rich.[3]

Recognizing the evils of the "railroad" type [4] of tenement house, which in recent years had become general, *The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer* organized a competition among architects in 1878 to develop an ideal plan for tenement houses to be constructed on an interior lot 25′ × 100′. The Committee of Award was particularly interested in promoting better fireproofing, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation.[5]

This competition, intended as a means to reform, resulted in the so-called "dumb-bell" tenement,[6] which in later years became almost synonymous with

1. *Ibid.*, p. 9. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
3. *The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer*, II, 56.
4. See Appendix.
5. [illegible] For further [illegible], c, and Plate

the worst of housing conditions. Nevertheless, the "dumb-bell" tenement was an improvement upon the "railroad" tenement in so far as it provided somewhat more light and air for upper-story rooms which did not face either street or yard. Nearly 200 plans were submitted, from many parts of the United States, Canada, and England, from which the judges made their selections. The winner was James E. Ware of New York City.[1] As a result of the competition it became more apparent that the lot $25' \times 100'$ was too narrow to provide adequate light and air for middle rooms of high buildings.

Compared with yards in other cities, New York yards are especially useless, because they do not give access even to the backs of the houses for carrying away their refuse, and the houses must have "areas" and basement doors in front, which demand that the street on which the *house fronts should be wider than is otherwise called for; while such areas present too often,* most often in fact, a slovenly appearance. All this uselessness of New York yards tempts to the forgetting of their value as an air-space, and tempts to encroaching on them with over-deep building. Little by little, as convenience requires it and the character of the occupation of houses alters, extensions are put out in the rear of houses, or new buildings deeper than the old take their place, and gradually fill up the space originally intended to be kept open as an air-space. Something of this kind is going on in all growing cities, but nowhere to such a degree and with so much detriment to the health of the inhabitants as is now the case in New York. This is owing to its system of deep, narrow lots with no means of access to the rear. The object of that system was to secure a very large open space in the centre of every block of houses, and so to give abundance of breathing places all over the city. The object is admirable, but the time is past when the system is adapted to secure any longer the ends intended. In fact, it gradually but surely comes to work in precisely the opposite direction.

In New York owners of real estate are forced by this system to buy a piece of land forming the rear of each lot, which it was intended, when that system of lots was adopted, should always be kept open and reserved for air and light space. . . . It must perforce be held by the owner of the front part of the lot, and, if he cannot make other use of it, it must be held vacant, and so serve as a ventilator. . . . In many cases, especially those of tenement-houses, wherever the population is densest and breathing spaces most needed, there it utterly fails, and for the most powerful of all reasons, — the interest of the real-estate owner, by the very conditions of the system, is against it.[2]

The legislation of the decade began with the transfer of all powers from the Metropolitan Board of Health to the City Board on April 26, 1870, and the enactment of the Sanitary Code on May 18, 1870.[3] Then followed an act, passed April 20, 1871, "to amend and reduce to one act the several acts relating to buildings in the city of New York passed May 4, 1866, May 17, 1867, and May 6, 1868." On

1. See Appendix.
2. *The American Architect and Building News*, May 24, 1879.
3. *The Tenement House Problem in New York. For the information of the Commission on Legislation affecting Tenement and Lodging Houses, provided for in Chapter 84, Laws of 1887. December 14, 1887.* This report, covering the two decades, 1866 to 1886, commented on tenement-house construction, room crowding, lack of light, air, and sanitation.

April 30, 1873, Article 11 of "an act to reorganize the local government of the city of New York" provided for the organization and duties of the newly constituted local health department. On May 22, 1874, the various building acts were amended and reduced to one act.[1]

The State Board of Charities report of 1876 contained a statement by Dr. A. N. Bell in which he discussed the effect of tenements on death and sickness rates, and of overcrowding upon physical and moral degradation. He concluded his study with recommendations for light and air space, limitations of building heights, rules for heights of ceilings and size of windows, and for sanitation — these regulations to apply to schools as well as to dwelling houses and cellar lodgings.[2]

Amendments to the Sanitary Code on January 14, 1879, required each lodging-house keeper to obtain a permit, and also allotted to each lodger an air space of not less than 300 cubic feet. A city report in 1879 on *The Tenement-House System in New York* called attention to the evils of overcrowding, and the filth of both tenement houses and streets.

On June 16, 1879, the Legislature passed "An Act to amend chapter nine hundred and eight of the laws of eighteen hundred and sixty-seven, entitled 'An act for the regulation of tenement and lodging-houses in the cities of New York and Brooklyn.'" This amendment made changes in sections 13 and 14 of the 1867 law. The former was modified to prohibit the building or conversion of any house to a tenement or lodging house if there was another building on the same lot, except where there was adequate air space. No new tenement house was permitted to occupy more than 65 per cent of the lot, except in the case of corner lots. Discretionary power was, however, left with the Board of Health, virtually nullifying the operation of this radical provision of the law. The 14th section was supplemented by the requirement that every room in a tenement or lodging house should have a window with an opening of at least twelve square feet, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Health — a discretionary clause which likewise nullified the law's effectiveness. A new section required at least 600 cubic feet of air space for each occupant of a tenement or lodging house. A Tenement House Fund of $10,000 per year was established for sanitary inspection of tenement houses. The appointment of not more than "thirty suitable officers and men of experience, of at least five years' service in the police force," as members of the sanitary police was made possible by this law. Penalties were made more effective by the requirement that every owner or other person who violated any provision of this act should pay a penalty of "ten dollars for each and every day that

1. DeForest and Veiller, II, 539.

2. *Ninth Annual Report* of the State Board of Charities.

such offense shall continue," this sum to become part of the Tenement House Fund.[1]

The decade from 1880 to 1890 saw the population increase from 1,164,673 to 1,441,216, or 23.8 per cent. In this period began the intensive development of the Upper East and West Sides. In 1880 the Third Avenue Elevated line had been extended to Bronx Park.[2] In the same year the Second Avenue Elevated line was finished as far as 129th Street.[3] The following year the New York and Putnam Bridge from 157th Street, Manhattan, to Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx, was opened,[4] and on May 24, 1883, Brooklyn Bridge was completed and opened to traffic.[5] Two years later passengers were carried on the Lexington Avenue Elevated line, which was the first in Brooklyn.[6] In 1888 Washington Bridge from 181st Street, Manhattan, to the Bronx was completed. Thus, the suburbs of the old city were rapidly opened up with means for fast transit, which facilitated the spread of population.

. . . In 1879 the new elevated roads contributed much to the increasing strength of the market. Particularly on the upper east side they stimulated the builder who was already busy in that district. It was early in that year that the New York Elevated R. R. Co. purchased the block, then used as the cattle-yards of Dutcher & Allerton, bounded by 3d and 4th avenues, 98th and 99th streets, paying for the property $120,000. At once a great number of tenements were erected in the streets adjoining 2d and 3d avenues, east and west, and between Madison and 4th avenues, and adjacent thereto as far north as 125th street the speculative builder was active putting up row after row of stereotyped brownstone residences. . . . Population was spreading into the East Side now that rapid transit was secured, and it was clear that in that section of the city was to be continued the expansion and development which had formerly been confined to the central district, south of 59th street. . . .

. . . The movement continued for four years until 1884, by which time further expansion was impossible. Prices had become stationary and a measure of collapse was then inevitable. . . .

. . . While the developments just described were in progress on the East Side the first steps towards opening up the great West Side were making. . . . the beneficial effect of the Elevated Roads begin to be felt powerfully. By the close of the year 1879 that system of transportation was in operation to 155th street and 8th avenue, and in the fall of that year people in large numbers commenced to enjoy on Sundays the rural felicities of the West Side much as they do to-day those of the 23d and 24th Wards. The great 'West Side movement' . . . may be said to have commenced in that year. At first, and indeed until the boom on the East Side was played out, the new activity was one of anticipation. The West Side was still very backward with its public improvements. The great avenues were in very poor condition, mostly unpaved, merely soft roads pleasant enough for fast driving in fine weather, but dusty as an Illinois county road, and during rain almost impassable for pedestrians. . . .

1. *Laws of the State of New York*, 1879, Chap. 504.
2. Stokes, V, 1973.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 1974.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1976.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1981.
6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XVI, 380

Despite advancing prices and notable building enterprises . . . the great speculative era for the West Side did not begin in earnest until 1885. Even up to as late as 1883 a total of less than $8,000,000 had been invested in improvements. . . . 8th avenue or Central Park West and *Riverside Drive were consecrated in the imagination of property-owners to the uses of millionaires*, and from the first the price demanded for lots on those thoroughfares was practically prohibitory so far as the speculative builder was concerned. Elsewhere the elevated road stations at 72d, 81st and 93d streets attracted the builder like magnetic points, although the early operators ever there were groping in the dark. No one could feel sure as to whether he was working in what would be a tenement district or a region of first, or second, or third-class residences. Indeed, in 1881, plans were filed for tenements to be erected on the north side of 72d street, 100 feet west of 9th avenue. They were never built, fortunately, but the circumstance shows in what great obscurity as to the future the builder was naturally enveloped. . . .

It was perhaps as early as 1880 that what may be termed the overflow from the East Side began to trickle into the northern part of the West Side. Rents in Harlem proper in that year were advancing rapidly and the beneficial influence of the 3d avenue elevated road was stimulating building at the northern end of the island, along 125th street and other adjacent cross streets. A demand for upper West Side lots arose and prices began to move upward. . . .[1]

Marcus T. Reynolds called attention to the excessive rents charged the very poor class of tenants:

In 1883 an estimate showed that there were 18,996 tenements, containing 50 or more persons, while many harbored as many as 150. . . .

. . . In New York the owner of a building destroyed by fire stated himself that it was fully insured for $800, though it brought him in $600 a year rent. Forty per cent. was declared by witnesses before a senate committee to be a fair average interest on tenement property. Instances were given of rates of interest being one hundred per cent. and over. . . .[2]

In a letter dated March 29, 1884, John I. Davenport compared New York's congestion of housing with the more open development of other American cities.

. . . in 1880, Boston had for its 363,000 inhabitants over 6,000 more dwellings than New York possessed in 1850 for its 515,000 population; . . . Brooklyn, in 1880, had but 61,000 more residents than New York contained in 1850, and yet had nearly 25,000 more homes for them; while Philadelphia, with its 129 square miles of area, housed, in 1880, its 847,000 population — nearly 400,000 less than that of New York — in 146,412 dwellings, or double the number which were inhabited in New York. It should be added that of the 146,412 dwellings occupied in Philadelphia, 110,000 thereof were owned by those resident therein, while in New York but comparatively a few of the occupants owned the houses in which they found shelter.[3]

The social conditions of tenement-house living were outlined at some length in contemporary accounts. The evolution of Gotham Court [4] was described in the following manner:

1. *Real Estate Record and Guide; A History of Real Estate, Building, Architecture in New York City, 1868–1898*, pp. 45–50.
2. *The Housing of the Poor in American Cities*, pp. 17, 31.
3. P. 5.
4. See p. 156; also Index for other mentions.

On January 1st, 1880, a lease was taken of the property Nos. 37 and 39 Cherry-street, known as Gotham Court. It consisted of sixteen five-story houses, opening on two long courts running back from Cherry-street, (Gotham Court and Single Alley,) and containing two stores and accommodations for about 140 families.

To those who are acquainted with the locality to which these dwellings belong, the difficulty of the undertaking and the significance of success will be apparent. Situated in the most dangerous quarter of the Fourth Ward, a district more densely populated than any other of its size in the civilized world, (several blocks housing human beings at the rate of 750 to the acre, while the most thickly peopled part of London contains less than 300,) these buildings had acquired a reputation as the abode of criminals and vicious persons of all descriptions, surpassed by but few others in the City. Such an agglomeration of human beings, existing under the aggravated conditions of Fourth Ward economy, is the inevitable progenitor of crime and degradation. . . .

The habitations themselves were in the most dreadful condition. The supply pipes, formerly carrying water to the fourth floor, had been torn out by the tenants and sold, the window shutters largely consumed as kindling wood, and the dirt and degradation simply indescribable. In some apartments, ashes and garbage were thrown into a corner of the room and suffered to accumulate there; the cellars had been made the convenient receptacle of all sorts of refuse. The appearance of the tenants justified the conditions of their homes. . . . The lessees were satisfied that, if reformation could be effected in such a place, the value of the system employed could be no longer a matter of opinion.

When possession was taken there were 53 tenants, paying an average of about $3.75 per month, and two stores rented for about $15 per month each. Here the immediate establishment of rules of cleanliness and decency met with considerable opposition, and were sometimes with difficulty enforced; there was, however, from the beginning, a slow but steady progress. At the very outset the lessees found it necessary to expend quite a sum in making the occupied dwellings fairly habitable, and in preparing those unoccupied for expected tenants. Several laundries for the use of the tenants were added, on the principle of the Waterloo Buildings, in London.[1]

In 1881, Miss Olivia H. Dow was selected to re-educate the tenants, and her efforts met with evident success.

. . . From the first of April . . . unto the first of November, sixty-eight new families have been received as tenants; the total number now occupying these formerly neglected houses being one hundred and eighteen. The original occupants, be it remembered, numbered fifty-three. A few of these it was necessary to dispossess as incorrigible, but nearly all have been retained. Both stores are now rented, and the receipts handsomely remunerating the lessees.

The improvement in the physical and moral tone of the tenants is manifest. Brawling among them is virtually extinct; their appearance is greatly changed; women with bare feet are rarely seen; ashes and garbage are carefully emptied into the proper receptacles; the hallways are scrupulously clean; House B., formerly known as the House of Blazes, is now the quietest in the alley; comparatively little liquor is taken into the tenements, and the practice of parents sending their children for it entirely stopped. The bands of young ruffians from the neighborhood, that were in the habit of constantly frequenting the Court, now find its atmosphere uncongenial, and have ceased their unwelcome visits. During the summer the laundry tubs were largely used as bathtubs for the children, to them a most unfamiliar luxury.

1. *Some Results of an Effort to Reform the Homes of the Laboring Classes in New-York City*, pp. 11–15.

Lastly, the hygienic condition of these houses is most worthy of special recognition. During the past summer, while the children of the neighborhood were dying like flies, no death occurred in Gotham Court, and there was scarcely a single case of dangerous illness. This out of a total of not far from 200 children. . . .[1]

In 1884, the New York Sanitary Reform Society reported on its efforts to abate nuisances such as fat-boiling, fertilizer, and varnish factories in Hunter's Point, by cooperating with the Board of Health in enforcing its requirements. Attention was also given to street cleaning and the removal of ashes and garbage. On December 20, 1880, the Society had drafted and approved an act "to create a Department of Street Cleaning, and to provide for removal of ashes and garbage, in the City of New York." After arousing the citizens and calling a mass-meeting, resolutions were presented to the Legislature, which later passed an act, somewhat changed from the original, greatly improving the condition of the streets. In 1881, the Society had drafted "An Act to secure the registration of plumbers and the supervision of plumbing and drainage in the City of New York." They secured the passage of this bill.[2]

The social conditions and racial succession in the Bowery and the Lower East Side were described by Harlow:

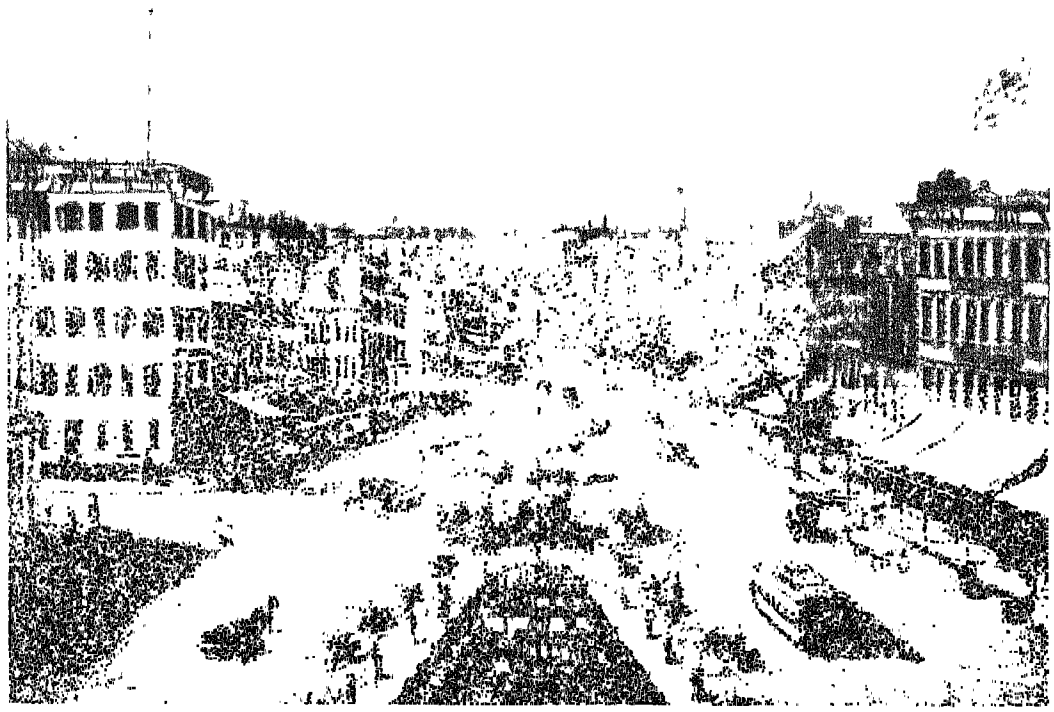
Despite the shadow of the L, the Bowery was probably at its gayest between 1880 and 1900. "The livest mile on the face of the earth," H. C. Bunner called it. More and more saloons, museums, dance halls, and dives came to crowd out legitimate business. Yet some of the businesses stuck at their posts all through the rowdy period, and some of them are there yet. . . .

A short alley in the Fourth Ward in 1885 had 140 families living on it, of whom 100 were Irish, 38 Italian, and 2 German. There was not a native-born individual in the court. It was a characteristic manifestation of cosmopolitan lower New York. . . .

A huge Italian quarter was growing up west of the Bowery, along Mulberry and Mott streets. Mulberry Bend was the center of Little Italy. The Jews were dotting the Bowery, Baxter, Division, Grand, and other streets with their favorite business — clothing, dry goods, jewelry, pawnbroking, auctioneering, and the like; coming in increasing numbers from Russia, Poland, and Galicia, they were filling the tenements of Bayard and Hester (which latter, with its pushcarts, its Yiddish signs, its utterly exotic atmosphere, might have been a street in Odessa or Kovno); stocking every tenement back yard with chickens, which, spasmodically cleared out by indignant police, promptly came back again; they were surging eastward, an irrestible wave, past Chrystie, Forsyth, Eldridge, yes, even past Essex Street, slowly crowding out the old German and Anglo-Saxon inhabitants. A few of the latter still clung to private residences in Delancey and Rivington streets, in Henry and other streets far over towards the East River; and from Houston Street north they held on grimly.

Crowded in between the Italians and Chatham Square that strange, exotic community, Chinatown, was growing rapidly. . . . In 1872 there were twelve Chinamen in the neighbor-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17. 2. *The Second Report of the New York Sanitary Reform Society, May 16th, 1884*, pp. 7-10.



a The Bowery, looking South from Cooper Union, 1864 *American Historical Prints*, Addenda Views 4.



b. New York and Vicinity from Elysian Fields, Hoboken, *c.* 1865. *American Historical Prints*, G 83.

hood, and by 1880 a Chinese village of seven hundred had almost taken possession of the two short streets, Pell and Doyers, and of two blocks of Mott Street. It was a more interesting sight then than now, for most of the inhabitants still wore the pigtail, silken blouse, baggy trousers, and thick-soled shoes of the old country. There were scarce a dozen women in the colony, and white women and girls took their places and became slaves of the opium pipe, furnishing a problem which police, missions, and rescue agencies sought in vain for years to correct. . . .

More immigrants were coming than our industry could decently support, and in the crowded slums many of them were driven to desperate, heart-breaking toil to keep soul and body together; Jews laboring day and night on trousers at a dollar a dozen pairs; Bohemians rolling cigars in their attic tenements at $3.75 per thousand; and a man and wife, by working from 6 A.M. to 9 P.M. might turn out three thousand — $11.75 — in a week. The children of such families began working as soon as their little fingers could master a detail; or they became newsboys, or bootblacks, or vagabonds of the streets, living by begging, thievery or — in the case of the girls — by prostitution. All this inevitably colored the Bowery picture. No wonder a few of the East Side tenement folk inclined an ear to the sinister preaching of anarchism in the eighties — to anything that promised a change from life as it was. . . .

The Germans, with their peculiar static stolidity, still clung to their old love, the Bowery. The East Side had become like a bit of the Fatherland to them, and they gave it up slowly and reluctantly. . . .[1]

For decades, squatters had occupied the fringes of New York. On November 20, 1880, *The American Architect and Building News* contained an article on the report of the Health Commissioners which indicated that removal of these casual slum settlements was ordered by the health authorities.

. . . One of the worst of the "shanty-towns" in the upper part of Manhattan Island, situated between Sixty-seventh and Sixty-eighth Streets, has been made the subject of a report by a special inspector, who finds that the condition of the district is extremely bad, the ground soaked with filth, and the huts unusually crowded and close. It appears that the effluvium which hangs about the place is so offensive that the officers of the neighboring foundling asylum are obliged to keep their windows closed on that side, and several of the rooms are considered uninhabitable. The Mount Sinai Hospital, also, which is situated on high ground near by, is so invaded by the pestiferous atmosphere that erysipelas, dysentery and diphtheritic troubles are constantly prevalent in the wards nearest the foul village. Under these circumstances the Board ordered the removal of the shanties as a public nuisance. . . .

Alarm at the excessive heights of buildings led to intelligent agitation. A report, published under date of July 1, 1883, called attention to the increase of building heights, and to the dangers to health, safety, and property values; it recommended that the "height of all houses hereafter to be built should . . . be regulated by the width of the street on which they front, and should be so regulated by law." This was probably the chief factor in bringing about the passage of the act of June 9, 1885.[2]

1. Alvin F. Harlow, *Old Bowery Days, The Chronicles of a Famous Street*, pp. 389–393. 2. See p. 181.



a. View from School House in 42d Street between Second and Third Avenues, looking North, 1868



b. Sixth Avenue between 55th and 57th Streets, looking West, 1868.

D. Willis James, Henry E. Pellew, S. O. Vanderpoel, M.D., George T. Hope, Thatcher M. Adams, and Frederick N. Owen, a committee appointed at a meeting of gentlemen, held on February 17, "to discuss the propriety of asking for the passage of a law restricting the height of buildings, especially where used as dwellings, in this city," made the following report:

Between the 11th day of July, 1881, and the 15th day of March, 1883, there were granted by the Department of Buildings in the City of New York permits for the erection of 103 buildings exceeding 80 feet in height.

Of these 44 were to reach an altitude between 80 and 90 feet; 15 between 90 and 100 feet; 20 between 100 and 110 feet; 4 between 110 and 120 feet; 5 between 120 and 130 feet; 4 between 130 and 140 feet; 9 between 140 and 150 feet; 2 between 150 and 160 feet.

Of these there were to be erected below the line of Fourteenth street: 25 of from 80 to 90 feet; 9 of from 90 to 100 feet; 6 exceeding 100 feet in height.

And above the line of Fourteenth street: 21 of from 80 to 90 feet; 6 of from 90 to 100 feet; 36 exceeding 100 feet in height. Thus showing that the great bulk of the very lofty houses, those in excess of 100 feet in height, are intended for residential and not business purposes. At least 50 per cent. of those erected below Fourteenth street are designated as intended for apartment houses, also, but it has been deemed best to draw the line at Fourteenth street as the boundary between business and residential property. . . .

Your Committee has not brought down its examination of the files of the Building Department since March, but it has come to its knowledge that within a month plans and specifications have been submitted to that department for the erection of a *fifteen-story* flat house on the northwest corner of Fifty-seventh street and Seventh avenue, to accommodate thirty-eight families. The total height from the curb line to the roof is fixed at 182 feet, and the roof is to be surmounted by a cupola 40 feet higher. This is a proof that not only is the disposition to multiply these lofty buildings on the increase, but that the struggle is now as to who shall pile up the loftiest mass of brick and iron, and discover at how exalted a point in the empyrean men may live and move and have their being.

Your Committee proposes to examine very briefly the dangers attendant upon these lofty dwelling houses, . . .

These dangers we may divide into two classes: First, those arising from fire, and second, those from defects in a sanitary point of view. . . .[1]

Gregory Weinstein, who emigrated from Russia to the United States in the early 1880's, in describing conditions in the Lower East Side wrote an immigrant's view of the social service activities observed during his youth.

. . . To provide better housing for wage-earners, a group of model tenement houses was built on Cherry Street in 1885 by a philanthropic corporation with Professor Felix Adler and Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman as its promoters. These tenements were in their day almost palatial in their equipment as compared with the dark, unsanitary tenements of the prevailing type. They had a combined assembly room, used as a free kindergarten for children in the day-

1. *Report on Elected Dwellings in New York City. . . July 1st, 1883*, pp. 1–4.

time and as a social meeting room for adults in the evening. There were also a roof garden and a co-operative supply store. While living here, I met Charles B. Stover, who was director of the model tenement enterprize.

The credit for founding the first "Settlement" in this country belongs to Dr. Stanton Coit, a remarkable man of fine idealism and broad vision. . . . On his return to America in 1886, he settled in New York and became associate leader of the Society for Ethical Culture, founded by Felix Adler. He took up his residence on the East Side, at 146 Forsyth Street, where he established the first Settlement in the United States. He first named it the Neighborhood Guild, but soon thereafter, on a closer association with universities and colleges, he renamed it as the University Settlement.[1]

Among the first to join Dr. Coit in his novel experiment was Charles B. Stover, . . . he found his "calling" in social work with Dr. Coit in Forsyth Street. . . .

Stover turned his attention to the cleaning up of the neighborhood both in a physical and in a moral sense. Under his direction appeals to the city authorities to close up the dives and to clean up the streets were successfully made. The Settlement became the headquarters for all neighborhood needs and activities. Petitions for new tenement house laws, for opening the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Sundays, for the People's Choral Union, for municipal ownership of subways and other civic enterprises, were promulgated from the settlement house. . . .[2]

In May 1885, Charles F. Wingate, writing on "The Moral Side of the Tenement-House Problem," revealed an exaggerated reaction, characteristic of many contemporary publicists. Unquestionably statements as unscientific as this helped to create an emotional attitude which was loosely termed "public opinion."

Probably seventy-five per cent. of the maladies of the cities, which often pass over into the better quarters, arise from the tenement-houses. Ninety per cent. of the children born in these dens die before reaching youth. The amount of sickness is proportioned to the death-rate. There is a gradual physical degeneracy. Wasting diseases prevail. Infantile life is nipped in the bud; youth is deformed and loathsome; decrepitude comes at thirty. . . .[3]

Allan Forman, with equal heat and still stronger language, excoriated tenements and their immigrant occupants, for the edification of his readers.

Whenever the question of restricting immigration is broached, there is a cry raised throughout the length and breadth of the country. . . .

By all odds the most vicious, ignorant and degraded of all the immigrants who come to our shores are the Italian inhabitants of Mulberry Bend and the surrounding region of tenements. Within a stone's throw of the City Hall, and the offices of the great newspapers, midway between two of the busiest thoroughfares of this busiest city of the New World, is an eddy in the life of the city where the scum collects, where the very off-scourings of all humanity seem to find a lodgment. In the great "dumbbell" tenements, in the rickety old frame buildings, in the damp, unwholesome cellars, on the sidewalks and in the gutters reeking with filth and garbage,

1. The first settlement building designed as such was erected by the University Settlement Society in 1898 at the corner of Rivington and Eldridge Streets, where it is still rendering valuable service.

2. Gregory Weinstein, *Reminiscences of an Interesting Decade, The Ardent Eighties*, pp 79-84.

3. *The Catholic World*, XLI, 162.

is a seething mass of humanity, so ignorant, so vicious, so depraved that they hardly seem to belong to our species. Men and women; yet living, not like animals, but like vermin! . . .

Though the Italian settlement in the Bend is perhaps the worst, it is hard to place it below — in point of filth, degradation and immorality — the great tenement-house district east of the Bowery, inhabited by Polish and Russian Jews and that nondescript medley of Slavonic and Teutonic races who know no religion and can hardly be said to claim any fatherland. . . . Our Italian fellow-citizens are contented with being allowed to stab each other when the fancy seizes them. But the Poles, Russians and lowest class of Germans come to us imbued with Anarchistic notions — notions which are fed by the misery and disappointment of their life in this country where they had looked for affluence without work, and fostered by the freedom of speech which is permitted by laws which were framed to govern a people of entirely different character to those who have been pouring in upon us from the slums of Europe. . . .

. . . it is almost a matter of congratulation that the death rate among the inhabitants of *these tenements is something over fifty-seven per cent, and the mortality among children* under five years of age is, in some localities as high as seventy per cent.[1]

A graphic picture of human degradation in the tenement districts of New York was published in 1887. Considerable allowance may be made for errors in the unsupported statistics offered and for the exaggeration that proceeds from moral indignation. Yet this, and similar writings of this decade, warrant the conviction that conditions of housing and living were far below present minimum standards.

A walk through the streets in the neighborhood of this Mission [Five Points] will show where the materials come from of which it is composed. Forty thousand vagrant and destitute children are in this field. Their parents are foreigners. They are too dirty, too ragged, and carry too much vermin about them, to be admitted to the public schools. Their homes are in the dens and stews of the city, where the thieves, vagabonds, gamblers and murderers dwell. With the early light of morning they are driven from their vile homes to pick rags and cinders, collect bones, and steal. They fill the galleries of the low theatres. They are familiar with every form of wickedness and crime. As they grow up they swell the ranks of the dangerous classes. Our thieves, burglars, robbers, rioters, who are the most notorious, are young persons of foreign parentage, between ten and seventeen years of age. The degraded women who tramp the streets in the viler parts of the city, who fill the low dance houses, and wait and tend in low drinking-saloons, graduate in this vile locality. Over a thousand young girls, between the ages of twelve and eighteen, can be found in the Water Street drinking-saloons. To this same character and doom these forty thousand children are hastening. All around this Mission, children can be seen who come up daily from the brothels and dens of infamy which they call their homes, where women and men, black and white, herd together, and where childhood is trained up, by daily beatings and scanty fare, to cruelty and blasphemy. . . . Nearly twenty thousand, since the Mission was founded, have been rescued from these hot-beds of wickedness, and placed in good homes here and at the West. . . .

Since the date of the conception of the word "dive" as applied to a disreputable place, de-

1. *The American Magazine*, IX, 46–52.

voted to lewd assemblages and the sale of poor liquor, New York has ranked par excellence as the home of the same. Its low quarters have been largely given over to such haunts of the criminal classes since the "Forties," and night was devoted to deeds of riotous revelry and dissipated darkness. But now all is changed, thanks to Mayor Hewitt. In the month of April of the present year, Mayor Hewitt said the dives must go. . . . The result has been wonderful. A great change has lately come over the Bowery, and greater changes are noticeable in other parts of Gotham, where for years the foulest and filthiest class of low groggeries, concert saloons, and dance-houses have thrived in the face of all opposition from the respectable elements of society. . . .[1]

Social workers increasingly recommended model tenements to supplement regulatory legislation. Thus Dr. Lucy Hall, in 1884, suggested four "remedies for existing evils."

1. The construction of a large number of sanitary dwellings for the poor in the suburbs of the city, and in connection with these special arrangements for much cheaper, or free transportation before and after working hours would be needed. . . .

2. The gradual demolition of old unclean and dilapidated tenements, their places to be taken by dwellings suitable for habitation.

3. Renovating and putting into sanitary condition all houses occupied by tenants, and placing them in the care of agents who will, by conscientious and painstaking surveillance, establish a code of good order, decency, and sanitary observances.

4. More careful inspection and rigid enforcement of rules by health boards, including the restrictions against overcrowding.[2]

Similarly, in June 1885 Alfred T. White, in a paper prepared for the Twelfth National Conference of Charities, held in Washington, said:

In the improvement of the conditions of tenement houses there are three plain directions in which work can be helpfully done, and in one or the other of these ways, almost everyone can lend a hand. They are briefly:

1. The erection of new and better dwellings.
2. The improvement of existing houses.
3. Legislative or municipal restrictions.[3]

Several groups became interested in the construction of model tenements. Mr. White had already erected the Home and Tower Buildings in Brooklyn.[4] Similar undertakings were promoted in Manhattan.

The first enterprise [Improved Dwellings Association—See Figures 38, 116d and Plate 51] of the kind in this city was started in 1882 when a block of improved dwellings was erected on First Avenue, extending from Seventy-first Street to Seventy-second Street, . . . with a capital of $300,000, . . . Every precaution was . . . taken that the building should be fireproof, and

1. Matthew Hale Smith, Prof. Henry L. Williams, Ralph Bayard, *Wonders of a Great City: or the Sights, Secrets and Sins of New York*, pp. 227–228, 854–855.

2. *Journal of Social Science, containing the Transactions of the American Association*, No. XX, pp. 95–96.

3. Alfred T. White, *Better Homes for Workingmen*, p. 3.

4. See Chapter XXXIV.

so far as possible it should be provided with means by which the tenants might obtain cleanly apartments under the best sanitary regulations.

The scheme of the company was to provide a revenue as dividends not to exceed 5 per cent per annum. It was announced that rents should range from $6.26 to $14.50 per month, for apartments in suites of from two to four rooms. . . .

The location of this building was something against its success in the start. It was not an easy matter to get tenants to move into that neighborhood from any distance, and those who were already living in the neighborhood were not able to appreciate the advantages extended to them. . . .

In the course of a year or two the provisions thus made for the better comfort of tenants began to have an educating effect, and slowly the building was rented out. The stockholders then had the satisfaction of getting their dividends regularly of 5 per cent and of seeing a surplus fund in their treasury with which to provide for alterations or repairs. . . .[1]

The Tenement House Building Company, another new limited-dividend association, organized in 1885, opened its first model tenements on Cherry Street in 1887. See Figure 117, and Plate 6B.

A number of citizens, not content to wait for state aid, determined upon the erection of several model tenement-houses, and for this purpose organized the Tenement-House Building Company.

The Tenement-House Building Company began work in 1885, confident that many of the wealthy citizens would emulate their example if the desired results could be attained: first, the erection of model houses in place of the old unsanitary tenements; second, the management of the model houses on such a basis as to yield a fair return for the capital invested. The following circular of the Company directs attention to this, as well as to the other aims of the Company: . . .

"The Tenement-House Building Company proposes to contribute to the solution of this problem by the erection of improved Tenement-houses. It is proposed to supply that class of the population who can afford to pay about from eight to fourteen dollars rent per month. It is not intended to reduce the rent, but to supply superior accommodation for the same rent which is being paid now.

"The dividends are limited to 4 per cent, and this, together with assurance against loss of rent afforded by the Reserved Fund, guarantees unusual security for investment. It is expected that the Company will be able to furnish comfortable accommodations to its tenants, and yet realize a considerable net income on the investment. Now, as the dividends are limited to 4 per cent, there will remain a surplus, which it is proposed to invest as a Reserve Fund for the protection of the stockholders and for the benefit of the tenants. It will be used primarily as a means of insuring the prompt payment of the rent, especially in times of financial depression, when many working people with the best of intentions cannot pay; while that part of the Reserve Fund which is not so used will be allowed to accumulate from year to year, with a view to ultimately extending the benefits of the scheme and erecting new houses.

"It is proposed to build the improved Tenement-houses in the lower part of the city, in

1. *The American Architect and Building News*, XXIX, 121, citing *New York Times*.

those very quarters where the need is greatest and where a large and decisive attempt to improve the dwellings of the poor has not yet been made."

The houses of the Company were opened December 1st, 1887.

The six houses of the Tenement-House Building Company, Nos. 338 to 344 Cherry Street, have a frontage of 116 feet 8 inches. They are six stories in height with a basement throughout, and are arranged with large courts, varying in width from five feet to thirteen and a half feet, so that every room opens to the outside, and has the advantage of ample light and air.

The houses contain one hundred and eight apartments in two and three room suites, but so arranged that they can be conveniently divided into suites of four, five or six rooms, to meet the requirements of large or small families. The two-room-suites vary in rent from seven to nine dollars a month, and the three-room suites from ten to fourteen dollars. There are forty-three two-room and sixty-one three-room apartments, and the kindergarten occupies the remaining four apartments. Wide entries, running the length of the building, with large windows in the rear, opening on the outside, separate the rooms.

The floors throughout are constructed in a manner which makes them practically fire-proof, and the first story halls and all water-closets have iron beams and tile floors. The fire-escapes are so arranged that an easy passage can be effected from house to house on the outside. The stairways are of iron and slate throughout, and the entries are of brick, with tiled floors.

The roofs are of brick, guarded with iron fences, and can be used by the children of the tenants as a play-ground. The view over the bay is beautiful, and on hot summer evenings the roof affords a cool and grateful retreat to the inmates.

The yards and basements are finished in granolithic and are thoroughly drained and perfectly dry. In the basement separate storage closets for fuel and provisions are provided for each tenant.

In the erection of these buildings, the subjects of ventilation, lighting and sanitary plumbing have received special attention, the object being to avoid dark rooms and corners, to insure a thorough circulation of air through every room in the house, and, as far as possible, to expose each room to the sunlight during some part of the day. There is no room in the house without a window opening directly to the air. The entries are all provided with windows, also open to the air, thus avoiding the dark entries and so-called air-shafts, which form so common a feature in New York tenements.

The plumbing is of a superior order, and is arranged so that all piping, fittings and apparatus are exposed to view. Running water is provided on each floor. In one of the houses, hot and cold water is supplied in each apartment, and in the other houses, hot water is to be obtained in each basement, and cold water in each living room.

In the basement are laundries and bathrooms with neat brick-faced wall and water-tight granolithic floors, for the free use of the occupants. There were originally four bath-tubs in the basement, and this number has since been increased to nine. They are free to the tenants every day of the week at certain specified hours. There is scarcely an occupant who does not use them regularly. The common laundry in the basement is provided with hot and cold water. From the laundry the clothes can be sent up in the elevators and dried on the roof.

The water closets are ample, one for each two apartments, and are constructed according to the most approved methods. In addition to an outside window, a large ventilating flue has been provided for each water closet, which insures a continuous circulation of air.

The main hall, the kindergarten and the water closets are heated with steam from low pressure boilers, which are also used throughout the year for making hot water for bathrooms, laundries and sinks. . . .

On the first floor of the houses is a large kindergarten. In this room, besides the kindergarten classes, sewing classes and small boys' clubs also hold their meetings. . . .

It will be noticed that the "model houses" have large courts, and that each room opens either on the court or on the street, while in the "approved houses" [new houses built for profit under the laws of 1887] the court is enclosed, and is much smaller, and the rooms opening on the enclosed court, especially those on the lower floors of the houses, cannot be effectually ventilated and lighted. In the "model houses" the halls run the entire length of the building, with a large window in the rear, as well as in the sides, assisting the ventilation, while the halls in the "approved houses" have windows only on the sides. The law does not insist that the "approved houses" be fire-proof, and that bathrooms and laundries be supplied, so that in these respects, as well as in lighting and ventilation, the "model houses" possess superior advantages. These advantages are shown in the death-rate, which is not only lower than the city's average death-rate, but is much lower than the death-rate in the tenement-houses erected since 1880. In 1888 (the date of the last census of the tenement-house population) the general death-rate was 26.33 per thousand throughout the city, 23.06 in the old tenements, 22.42 in the new tenements, and only 14.28 in the Company's houses. In 1889 and 1890 the Company's houses show the same very low death-rate.

Cherry Street was selected as the site for the houses because it lies in that quarter of the city "where a large and decisive attempt to improve the dwellings of the poor had not yet been made," in the neighborhood where the need of good tenements was greatest. . . .

It is gratifying that since then the character of the neighborhood has much improved. A number of improved dwellings have been built and owners of property have been stimulated by the example of the Company to erect a better class of tenements. Already three new houses have been built in Monroe Street, and four large dwellings have been erected in Montgomery Street, to replace shabby two-story houses of the lowest class.[1]

There was considerable legislative activity between the years 1880 and 1890. The Tenement House Act of 1879 was put to a test and its operations received considerable comment, both complimentary and adverse. In 1880, the law of 1879 was slightly amended. In the same year an act to amend "An act to reorganize the local government of the city of New York" abolished the Department of Buildings and transferred its powers and duties to the Bureau of Buildings of the Fire Department. In 1881, the general building law of the city was amended and reduced to one act. A law was also passed requiring the registration of plumbers and the supervision of plumbing and drainage in the cities of New York and Brooklyn.[2]

On October 11, 1881, the Sanitary Code was amended with regard to lodging houses and provided that every bed in such a house should be separated from its

1. *The Tenement Houses of New York City. A contribution to the study by the Tenement House Building Company*, pp. 10–18.

2. DeForest and Veiller, II, 339–340.

neighbors by a passageway not less than 2 feet wide and that 600 cubic feet of air space should be provided for each bed or lodger. It was, however, practically impossible to enforce this ruling. Permits generally allowed one lodger 400 cubic feet, but in some cases 300 cubic feet. On January 3, 1882, permits previously granted for lodging houses were revoked, and proprietors were notified to apply for new ones.[1]

The Consolidation Act of 1882 assembled the provisions of the previous general building and tenement-house laws and repealed all acts that were inconsistent. Again, on February 26, 1884, the Sanitary Code was amended by reducing the cubic air space required from 600 to 400 cubic feet per person, and this was usually insisted on for all permits. In exceptional cases, where facilities for light and ventilation were unusually good, one lodger was allowed for every 300 feet, "but never less, and where such facilities are inferior, 500 or even 600 may be required." [2] On May 12, 1884, the Legislature passed an act making it a criminal offence to manufacture cigars in a tenement house.[3] The Tenement House Cigar Law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court later in this month in a case in which Peter Jacobs was appellant.[4]

Inadequacies of earlier tenement-house legislation and prevalence of the shocking conditions above described led to the appointment, on June 2, 1884, of a second New York State Tenement House Commission, which made its first report, signed by J. W. Drexel as Chairman and Moreau Morris as Secretary, on January 14, 1885. Its supplementary report was published in the following month and contained the data upon which its recommendations were based.

Original inspections of 968 tenement houses were made by sanitary inspectors. It was estimated that there were in all 26,000 tenement houses in the city, including about 3,000 rear tenements. In several hundred of these the space between front and rear buildings "often" did not exceed 5 feet. A larger ratio of sickness and mortality was reported for these rear buildings, which were deemed unfit for occupation. The Commission found it difficult, however, to draw up standards which seemed to them scientific.

The 968 buildings which their survey covered housed 37,114 persons; 17.73 per cent were rated "bad"; 47 of these buildings housed 2,500 persons under conditions which were found to be "past remedy." There followed discussion of wet cellars; removal of refuse; inadequacy of fire-escapes; inadequacy of light shafts (which were found in 21 per cent of the buildings and provided neither light nor fresh air); plumbing statistics (which showed only 30.1 per cent of the tenements

1. *The Tenement House Problem in New York, December 14, 1887*, p 42.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
3. *Laws of the State of New York, 1884*, Chap. 272.
4. *The Tenement House Cigar Law, Decisions of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals of the State of New York, declaring said law to be unconstitutional.*

examined to be provided with water-closets); water supply (available to the upper floors of tenements in "only a small percentage of cases"); land overcrowding (which, in the case of 23 buildings, amounted to a 100 per cent coverage of the lot, with consequent total darkness for inner rooms); rents (which appeared as high for buildings of the worst sort as for decent apartments).

The Commission recommended: (1) elimination of all privy vaults within the city limits; (2) modification of the Consolidation Act of July 1882, to keep down the coverage of the lot to 65 per cent; (3) installation of water supply on each floor; (4) the requirement of a janitor for every house designed for eight families or more; (5) waterproofing of cellars; (6) direct light and communication with external air for all hallways and inner rooms of tenement houses; (7) definition of a tenement house so as to include all buildings occupied by three or more families; (8) fine or imprisonment for throwing filth into a waste-water sink; (9) house-to-house inspection twice each year of all tenement and lodging houses by the Board of Health; (10) increase of the number of sanitary policemen from thirty to forty, and confinement of their duties solely to the inspection of tenement and lodging houses; (11) reports by sanitary inspectors each month as to whether the orders of the Board had been complied with; (12) registration of the names and addresses of owners of tenement houses and of certain statistics with regard to the houses they own and the distribution to such owners of copies of all notices and orders of the Board of Health which affect tenement houses; (13) the posting of a notice with regard to a Board of Health order in the tenement house, supplemented by the mailing of such notice to the address of the owner to serve as sufficient notice under the law; (14) special funds to the Board of Health to facilitate the execution of its orders; (15) appointment of a special statistician or registrar for the Board of Health; (16) requirement of an annual report from the Board of Health; (17) an annual meeting of the Mayor and delegates from the Departments of Health, Public Works, Bureau of Buildings and Street Cleaning to recommend such improvements in the laws or the execution of the laws as may be deemed necessary; (18) the opening of Leonard Street through to Pell Street in order to get rid of one of the plague spots of the city, Mulberry Bend (in which over 630 deaths had occurred during a period of three and one-half years within two city blocks); (19) free municipal baths; and (20) electric lights, to be placed in the streets of tenement house districts.[1]

New municipal regulations for lodging houses were adopted in January 1885, and "a special inspection was made of all the lodging houses in the city, and they

1. "Report of Tenement-House Commission," in *Document of the Senate of the State of New York, One Hundred and Eighth Session, 1885*, vol. v, no. 36. See also DeForest and Veiller, I, 102–104.

were divided into three classes, according to their roominess, cleanliness and general sanitary condition. Every new lodging house since that time appears on the books of the Health Department as belonging to one of these classes. . . ." [1]

On June 9, 1885, amendments were made to the Consolidation Act of 1882.[2] On the same date, as a result of the studies and agitation previously noted,[3] an act was passed to regulate the height of dwelling houses in the city of New York, as follows:

Section 1. The height of all dwelling-houses and of all houses used or intended to be used as dwellings for more than one family, and hereafter to be erected in the city of New York, shall be regulated in proportion to the width of the streets and avenues upon which they front.

§2. Such height, measured from the sidewalk line and taken in all cases through the centre of the facade of the house to be erected, including attics, cornices and mansards, shall not exceed seventy feet upon all streets and avenues not exceeding sixty feet in width, and eighty feet upon all streets and avenues exceeding sixty feet in width. Nothing in this act shall be construed as affecting buildings for which contracts have been signed prior to the passage of this act, or for which plans have been filed and approved by the building department.[4]

It was not until March 25, 1887, that the Tenement House Laws were amended. The changes were the outgrowth of the findings of the Tenement House Commission of 1884. The new law provided for a permanent Tenement House Commission and for an increase in the number of the sanitary police, as recommended by the Tenement House Commission. It also contained an unenforceable provision that in tenement houses with more than one family to a floor and with halls that did not open directly to the outer air, occupancy should be forbidden. Owners of tenement houses were required by this act to file their names and addresses annually with the Board of Health. Semi-annual inspections of tenement houses by the Board of Health were ordered. The provisions of earlier legislation with regard to the percentage of the lot which might be covered by buildings were extended to apply to old tenement houses when altered. A toilet was required for every fifteen occupants instead of every twenty, as specified in the earlier act. Comparison of the legislation with the recommendations of the Commission shows that the latter were largely incorporated in the law.

To familiarize the public with its privileges and duties under the housing legislation of this period, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, in 1882, published a pamphlet entitled *Laws affecting Tenement and Lodging Houses, in the Cities of New York and Brooklyn.* It included the Tenement House Laws of

1. *The Tenement House Problem in New York. . . . December, 1887*, p. 43.
2. DeForest and Veiller, II, 340.
3. See p. 170.
4. *Laws relating to the Construction of Buildings in the City of New York*, 1889, p. 75.

1867 and 1879, with the amendments contained in the acts of 1880, and important sections of the Sanitary Code of the Board of Health. In 1889, there was published a pamphlet containing extracts from the *Laws relating to the Construction of Buildings in the City of New York*, taken from the acts of 1882, and amended by those of 1885 and 1887. These compilations, probably the first of their kind, proved to be a valuable device to familiarize tenants and owners with laws which by this time were too intricate and numerous for easy mastery.

The remaining housing legislation of this decade, though voluminous, was relatively unimportant. It included, however, an amendment to the Consolidation Act of 1882, passed on May 6, 1887; others on June 1 and June 15 of the same year, dealing with the appointment of sanitary inspectors; a further amendment on May 28, 1888, on the subject of water-closets; the Brooklyn Consolidation Act, passed June 9, 1888; provisions regarding water-closets, on May 2, 1889; and another law with regard to fireproof buildings, on May 23, 1889.[1]

In the decade from 1890 to 1900, population increased from 1,441,216 to 1,850,093, an increase of 408,877 or 28.2 per cent.

The chief sources of information on housing for the last ten years of the nineteenth century are the *Report* of the Tenement Housing Committee of 1894, Carroll D. Wright's *Slums of Great Cities*, E. R. L. Gould's *Housing of the Working People*,[2] and the United States Industrial Commission *Report*, 1901. Marcus T. Reynolds' *Housing of the Poor in American Cities*, 1892, and DeForest and Veiller's *The Tenement House Problem*, 1903, are likewise valuable general references. Other influential writers were Ernest Flagg, Jacob Riis, and Alfred T. White.[3]

Heavy immigration of this and earlier decades had crowded the slums with recent immigrants. The distribution of racial groups in New York City was described at length in the report of the United States Industrial Commission.

> The Austro-Hungarian group, and the Slavonic peoples comprised in the Russian group do not so especially concern New York City, for, while about three-quarters of all immigrants of these races land in New York, a large proportion of them pass directly to the interior. . . .
>
> . . . 73.3 per cent of all Hebrew arrivals at all ports landed at the port of New York, and 72 per cent of all arrivals at all ports gave New York State as their destination. This means that a very large number of the Hebrew immigrants settle down at once in the city.
>
> Of the third group — the Italians — no less than 97.4 per cent of the arrivals for 1899–

1. DeForest and Veiller, II. 340–341.
2. Seventh and Eighth Special Reports of the United States Commissioner of Labor. Washington, 1894 and 1895.
3. Contemporary accounts include many municipal reports, the annual reports of the various societies for improved housing, the reports of Trinity Church Corporation, the settlement houses, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and other charitable organizations, and periodicals, such as *The American Architect, Architecture, Scribner's, Harper's, The Arena, The Forum, Municipal Affairs, Yale Review, Review of Reviews, Catholic World*, and *Charities Review*.

1900 were received at the port of New York, and 54.5 per cent of the arrivals at all ports gave New York as their destination. . . .

By 1890 these newer peoples had become a considerable element in the city's population. In that year, according to the United States census, the foreign-born population of New York City made up 42.23 per cent of the total population, as compared with 39.68 per cent in 1880, . . .

It is also seen, incidentally, how much greater is the proportion of foreign born to the total population in the downtown than in the uptown wards. In the wards below Fourteenth street the foreign born were about one-half of the population, the native born of foreign parentage about three-eighths, and the native born of native parentage about one-eighth; above Fourteenth street, foreigners were a little less than two-fifths, native born of foreign parentage also a little less than two-fifths, and natives of native parentage somewhat more than one-fifth. . . .[1]

The Industrial Commission also covered the segregation and succession of the various nationality groups in various parts of the city.

. . . The Italians are seen mainly in former Irish districts, the Hebrews in former German districts; and wherever these newer peoples came the older races began to move out. . . .

The Hebrew population in the city already dense in 1890, . . . has increased tremendously since then. In 1890 they were seen within certain fairly narrow limits. No figures are as yet at hand to show their exact increase and dispersion, but observation of the different quarters of the city shows that they have extended their limits remarkably within the past 10 years. On the East Side they have pressed up through the Tenth and Thirteenth wards and through the Sixteenth and Eleventh, driving the Germans before them, until it may be said that all of the East Side below Fourteenth street is a Jewish district. As far as observation can tell the tale, the thickly compacted masses of Germans, seen in the map for 1890, are almost wholly dispersed from that region. Some went uptown to the neighborhood of Eighty-seventh street, on the East Side, and elsewhere, but most have gone to Brooklyn and the suburban districts. This fact shows that the city colony, however compact and hard to break it may seem to be, may, by some change in circumstances, be dissolved in a very short period of time, without any apparent effort and almost without public observation. The Germans did not like the proximity of the Jews, and so they left. A like influence may at any time scatter the Jewish and Italian colonies now so hopelessly, it seems, crowded together.[2]

Federal recognition of the problems of slums and housing virtually began with the reports of the United States Commissioner of Labor of 1894 and 1895. On July 25, 1894, Carroll D. Wright, then Commissioner of Labor, submitted to President Grover Cleveland a lengthy "special report relating to the slums of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago."

. . . According to the best estimates, the total slum population of Baltimore is about 25,000; of Chicago, 162,000; of New York, 360,000; of Philadelphia, 35,000. The districts selected

1. *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration, . . . and on Education, . . .* XV, 465, 469.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 471–472, 477.

are among the worst in the cities, and may be denominated as the centres of the slum population. . . .

. . . According to the eleventh census, the number of persons to a dwelling in Baltimore was 6.02; in Chicago, 8.60; in New York, 18.52; in Philadelphia, 5.60. The averages for the slum districts are about the same for Baltimore and Philadelphia, there being in the former city 7.71 persons to a dwelling, and in Philadelphia 7.34 persons; but in Chicago the slum population averages 15.51 persons to each dwelling, and in New York 36.79 persons. . . .

The foreign born population of New York constitutes 42.23 per cent of the total population of the city. . . . Glancing at the slum population we notice that with 62.58 per cent foreign born, the Germans and Irish constitute but a small proportion of the whole, the percentage being 2.49 and 5.21 respectively. Persons of Italian birth were most numerous, constituting 45.27 per cent of the total population of the slum districts. The next largest proportions were Irish with 5.21 per cent, Poles with 3.10 per cent, Germans with 2.49 per cent, and Russians with 2.41 per cent, those of any other nationality being less than one per cent of the total slum population. . . .

Persons of foreign parentage are largely in excess in the slum districts. The proportion for each of the cities is as follows: Baltimore, 76.53 per cent; Chicago, 90.09 per cent; New York, 95.23 per cent; and Philadelphia, 91 per cent. Taking into consideration the whole population of each of the four cities, Baltimore shows 41.67 per cent of foreign parentage; Chicago, 77.90 per cent; New York, 80.46 per cent; and Philadelphia, 56.58 per cent. . . .

. . . Reducing the average weekly earnings to the basis of earnings per family per week it is found that in the slum district canvassed in Baltimore 4,028 families earned on an average $15.99 each per week, in Chicago 3,881 families $21.60½ each, in New York 5,912 families $17.58 each, in Philadelphia 3,313 families $19.01½ each. . . .

The 4,028 families in the Baltimore slum district canvassed, comprising 8,996 males and 9,052 females, a total of 18,048 persons, occupy 15,195 rooms, showing an average of 1.19 persons to a room. Chicago shows an average of 1.37 persons to a room, New York 1.88, and Philadelphia 1.47. The greatest number of tenements to a house varied from 13 in Baltimore to 29 in New York, Philadelphia having as high as 15, and Chicago 24. . . .

In all four cities the families paying $1.00 or under $2.00 per week for rent form the largest group, constituting 41.28 per cent of total families in Baltimore, 34.91 per cent in Chicago, 36.47 per cent in New York, and 37.17 per cent in Philadelphia. . . .

. . . In New York the greatest number of tenements are classed as fair as regards outside sanitary condition, and good as regards light and air, ventilation, and cleanliness. . . .

The summary shows that in the Baltimore district but 7.35 per cent of all families, comprising but 9.21 per cent of the total population, have bath rooms, . . . The condition of the Chicago district is even worse, but 2.83 per cent of all families, comprising 3.79 per cent of all persons, having bath rooms. Worst of all is New York, with but 2.33 per cent of families having bath rooms. Philadelphia shows a greater proportion of families having bath rooms than any of the other cities, the per cent being 16.90. . . .

In the Baltimore district 87.93 per cent of the families have privies, and but 12.07 per cent water closets, the smallest per cent found in any of the cities. Chicago shows 73.54 per cent having privies, and 26.46 per cent water closets. Philadelphia comes next, showing 69.63 per cent of the families having privies and 30.37 per cent water closets. In New York the per cent

of families having privies is smaller than in any of the other cities, being 52.69 per cent, while 47.31 per cent have water closets. . . .

". . . The people in the tenements visited were compelled to get along with the least amount of heat, only enough to cook with, hence the temperature was very low. . . .

"Without any exception it was found that the air in the tenement houses was as pure as in any residence visited, but the air of theaters was not only overcharged with carbon dioxide, but was also of a higher temperature, more loaded with moisture, and contained pathogenic bacteria. . . ."

. . . As regards the number of outside windows, a very small proportion in Baltimore and Philadelphia are reported as having none in their sleeping rooms, the number being respectively 25 and 49. In Chicago 811 are so reported, while in New York 6,576 out of a total of 28,050 are reported as sleeping in rooms without an outside window. . . .

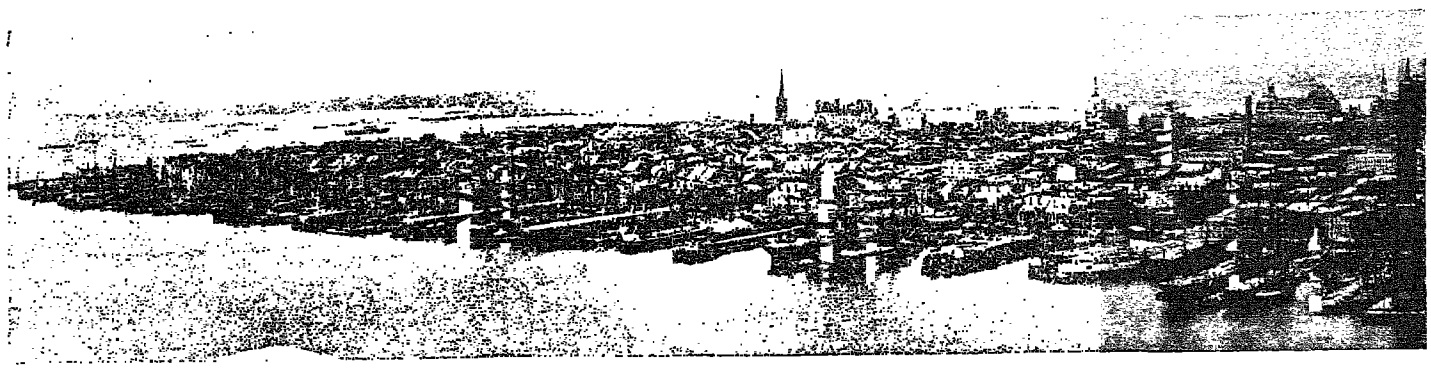
As regards the number of cubic feet of air space per individual in sleeping rooms, . . . In Chicago and New York the largest proportion had 200 or under 300 feet, . . .[1]

The third legislative commission, known as the Tenement House Committee of 1894, was appointed as the result of a bill promoted by one of New York's newspapers, *The Press*. Its bill became law on May 4, 1894. The Governor appointed to the Tenement House Committee, W. Bayard Cutting, Cyrus Edson, Roger Foster, R. W. Gilder, Solomon Moses, George B. Post, and John P. Schuchman. As Mr. Cutting was unable to serve, W. D. H. Washington was appointed in his place. Richard Watson Gilder served as Chairman of the Committee, and Edward Marshall, the Sunday editor of *The Press*, acted as Executive and Secretary. An appropriation of $10,000 was made for a careful examination of the tenement houses of the city with regard to construction, safety, rentals, and their effect on the health, education, savings, and morals of their residents.

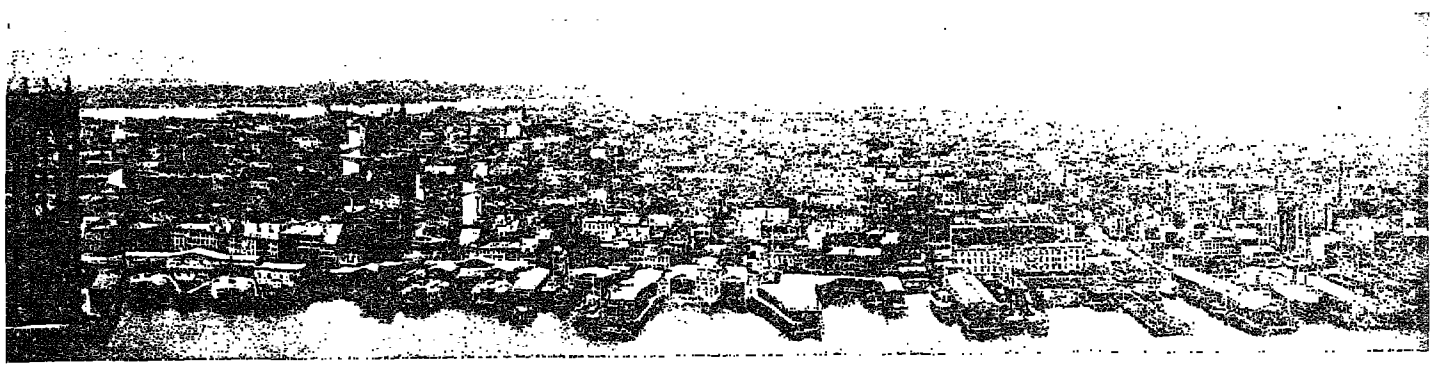
This Committee's researches were more comprehensive than those of its predecessors, for it examined 8,441 houses occupied by 255,033 persons, and intensively studied 3,984 houses with a population of 121,323 persons. But more important still were the specialized studies which it precipitated, and incorporated, with voluminous and well-prepared maps, graphs, and tables, in its published report of 649 pages.

A supplement, by the Secretary, Edward Marshall, contained general summaries, presented in a direct and unimpassioned manner, with well-judged comments. Then followed reports on the model tenements in existence in the city at that time, with detailed descriptions and financial data; school attendance, by Professor Franklin H. Giddings; public parks, by A. D. Parker; baths, by Dr. T. M. B. Cross; rentals and savings, by Adelbert L. Reynolds; tenement-house

1. Carroll D. Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia . . . Seventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 12, 19, 42, 45, 64, 85-86, 93-95, 101-102.



a



b

New York in 1875–1876 from Brooklyn pier of unfinished Brooklyn Bridge. a. Below Brooklyn Bridge. b. Above Brooklyn Bridge.
Iconography, Vol. III, Pl. 155–c.

fires, by Simon Brentano; fireproof construction, by David W. King; the sweating system, by Edward Marshall; comparative death rates, by Dr. Roger S. Tracy; population density and nationality, by Frederick E. Pierce; legislation of other states and countries, by Roger Foster and John P. Schuchman; and many others.

The Committee concluded that New York below Harlem had a greater density per acre than any other city in the world, namely, 143.2 per acre. Paris came second with a density of 125.2 per acre. But in Sanitary District A of the Eleventh Ward there were found on June 1, 1894, "as many as 986.4 persons to every one of its 32 acres."[1] The Committee could find only one part of the world which approached this congestion, namely, a part of Bombay which in 1881 had a population of 759.66 to the acre in an area of 46.06 acres. The densest small section of Europe which their researches uncovered was Josefstadt in Prague, with 485.4 to the acre, which might be compared with New York's Tenth Ward, which had a population of 626.26 per acre in an area of 110 acres.

Utilizing the Board of Health census of 1893, the population of New York City living in multiple dwellings was stated to be 1,332,773 persons, or 70.46 per cent of the population. Four-fifths of these were estimated to live in tenement houses, but one-fifth occupied those of the better type known as apartment houses. Thus, eight-fifteenths, or a little over one-half, of the total population of New York were found to be "tenement dwellers," as that term is ordinarily construed.

In spite of high densities per acre, the Tenement House Committee considered overcrowding to be less prevalent in New York than in many other cities, because of the greater height of New York tenements. They quoted figures from Glasgow in 1891 which showed nearly 18 per cent of the population living in one-room apartments, whereas New York tenements usually had two or more rooms per family. But New York they found to have an evil peculiarly its own. "The 'double-decker,' socalled, is the one hopeless form of tenement-house construction." These were tenement houses built since 1879 with apartments for four families in each story, occupying from 86 per cent to 90 per cent of the 100-foot lot, and sometimes even more.[2]

Fire danger was discussed, and it was noted that "while less than one-third of the buildings in New York are tenement-houses, among them occur annually more than one-half of the fires."

Nothing is more clearly proven than that elevators, light shafts, transoms and windows opening into halls, and wooden staircases, — especially those that lead upward continuously from the cellar or basement, — present all the conditions of rapid combustion. A fire started on

1. *Report of the Tenement House Committee as authorized by Chapter 479 of the Laws of 1894. Transmitted to the Legislature January 17, 1895*, p. 11.

2. See Appendix.

any floor of the ordinary tenement in New York passes easily from the room or cellar where it originates and leaps up the stairway, destroying the upper stairs completely, and burning out the bulkhead. On its way it may or may not destroy other apartments than those in which it originated, but at any rate the smoke and heated gas, products of the combustion, penetrate everywhere, and are more apt to destroy life than the flame itself. Meantime, if the occupants do not rush to the staircase and perish there, they flee to the nearly always encumbered fire-balconies and the steep iron ladders, from which they are rescued by the swiftly arriving firemen, or else they leap in their fright and are maimed or killed.[1]

The crowding of buildings in city blocks was studied and traced to the discretionary power which had been allowed the Building Department in earlier legislation.

. . . These exceptions have become the rule, and a block was discovered in which nearly 93 per cent. of the total area is covered by buildings; others running from 80 per cent. to 86 per cent. and a total average for 34 blocks showing 78.13 of the area built upon.

This greatly reduced the means of ventilation and the breathing space of those living in the rear apartments, particularly in view of the fact that the average number of stories throughout this section is nearly 4 1/2. . . .

To illustrate this condition, take the block bounded by Essex, Hester, Norfolk and Division streets, as an example. It has a total area of about an acre and a quarter (1.25), an acre and seven-hundredths (1.07) of which is solidly covered with buildings; or in other words in this block little more than one-fifth of an acre is left for the entire breathing space of more than half its population, and it is fair to say that in blocks containing rear tenements, of which this has ten, the worst overcrowded is in the cheaper rear apartments and particularly in the rear houses themselves. This block has an estimated population of 2,302. The narrow and insufficient air space is part of the time necessarily filled up with wet clothing hung out to dry.

Some of these rear buildings have but 18 inches of space between them, with windows opening from both buildings, from which garbage and all sorts of refuse are thrown into the intervening space until the air becomes foul with the accumulation of organic matter, which is almost impossible to remove. This further emphasizes the necessity of the elimination of rear tenements and the granting of power to condemn houses of a dangerous character.

. . . It may be added that in one block thus mapped, with over 2,000 population, there is not a single bathtub in the entire block.[2]

A study of the relation of house density to death rates revealed no correlation; hence the rôle of race and nationality was considered, and it was found that the wards with the greatest density and lowest death rates were largely populated by Russian and Polish Jews who obeyed the Mosaic law with regard to food, alcohol, and personal cleanliness, whereas the wards with the highest death rates were largely occupied by Italians. The next highest death rates were in Irish and German quarters. Low death rates were found, however, among these same races in

1. *Report of the Tenement House Committee, 1895*, p. 15. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

other wards, so nationality was ruled out as a major factor. Similarly, the character of the soil and drainage was studied in relation to death rates and ruled out. The high mortality rates were finally traced to the age and condition of buildings used as tenements. Although contemporary medical science would not accept their argument that the dwellings had become "saturated with the bodily emanations of those who have lived in them" and that they were culture beds of disease, it would incline to agree more fully with their subsequent statement that this "lower death-rate may have been due entirely to better light, ventilation and drainage of the newer houses." The higher death rates of rear houses were also noted and discussed in detail.

The failure of the city to provide parks in slum areas was again discussed and the inaction since the passage of the law of 1887 was criticized.

The law passed in 1887, during the mayoralty of Mr. Hewitt and commonly known as the Small Parks Act, empowers the board of street opening to select, locate and lay out such public parks as it may, from time to time, determine, south of One Hundred and Fifty-fifth street, and it provides that no more than $1,000,000 shall be expended in any one year, this amount not being cumulative from year to year. Up to date, the following expenditures have been incurred under the act:

	Land and buildings	Cost of taking	Total
Mulberry Bend Park	$1,476,557	$45,498	$1,522,055
East River Extension Park	503,825	18,294	522,119
St. John's Cemetery Park Estimated further cost	520,000	3,728 (to date) 300	524,028
Total			$2,568,202

Of the above there has been expended to date only the sum required for the East River Extension Park, $522,118.88, whereas, up to January 1, 1895, there might have been expended under the act $8,000,000.

The St. John's Cemetery Park contains 1.72 acres, the Mulberry Bend Park 2.74 acres and the East River Extension Park 8.6 acres; altogether 13.06 acres. But the work on one only of these has even been begun — the East River Extension. At Mulberry Bend the delay has been the means of placing the city itself in the unfortunate position of landlord of houses already virtually condemned, and in an extremely bad sanitary condition.

But supposing that the above parks were actually completed, what would be the situation of the most crowded part of the city as to breathing places? The area of the city below Fourteenth street is 2,528 acres, or nearly four square miles (3.95). The estimated population of this area on July 1, was 707,520. The park area is 64.654 acres, or but 2.55 per cent. of the whole area, while the proportion of the park area inside the city limits is a little over 7.5 per cent. of the whole territory.

There is an area in this same district which may be outlined as follows: Beginning at the corner of Delancey and Lewis streets and going north on Lewis to Fifth street, along Fifth street to Second avenue, Second avenue to Fourth street, Fourth street to Mercer street,

Mercer street to Bleecker street, Bleecker street to Carmine, Carmine to Varick, Varick to Houston, Houston to Hudson, Hudson to Canal, Canal to the Bowery, the Bowery to Catharine, Catharine to Monroe, Monroe to Montgomery, Montgomery to Ridge, Ridge to Delancey and Delancey to Lewis, to the place of beginning. This area contains 711 acres. The district is 750 feet distant from either river, and 500 feet from any existing, constructing or proposed park. Yet it is the home of about 324,000 people. This is nearly one-sixth of the total estimated population of New York on July 1, 1894; and much more than the number of inhabitants of the entire city of either Cincinnati or San Francisco, as given by the census of 1890. The density for the whole area rises to 476.6 persons per acre. Part of this area has double this density, and as a whole the district is the most crowded in the world.[1]

In its examination of rentals the Committee found some landlords receiving rentals of 25 per cent of the amount invested by them, but in these cases the houses were old and in need of repair. They classified New York tenement houses in four groups and ascertained the returns of the investment, demonstrating lower returns than the public had been led to assume from articles in the current press.

There are four distinct classes of tenement-houses in the city of New York: (1) The house with but one apartment on a floor. This class includes dwelling-houses which have been remodeled or converted to tenement-house purposes; (2) the house with two apartments on a floor, entered from a common hall running through the house at the side; (3) the house with three apartments on a floor, two in front and one in the rear, with the hall in the center of the house, between the two front apartments and leading to the rear apartment, and (4) the house with four apartments on a floor, with a hall running through the center of the house. This is the class known as the "double-decker," and usually has two stores or a store and liquor saloon on the ground or basement floor.

From such general information as this committee has been able to obtain, it seems that when a tenement-house is properly constructed in accordance with the present laws, kept in good repair and in excellent sanitary condition, one of the first class, namely, the single flat-house, produces a net profit to the owner of about nine per cent. upon the value of the equity; one of the second class, namely, the one with two apartments, such as baths, water-closets, ranges, boilers and stationary washtubs furnished by the landlord in each apartment, realizes a net profit to the owner of about eight per cent. on the value of the equity; a house of the third class realizes to the owner a profit of about nine per cent. on the value of the equity, and one of the fourth class, 10 per cent. on the value of the equity. It is the usual custom of almost all tenement-house owners to place a mortgage of about one-half the value of the premises on the property, at five per cent. interest, thus enhancing the value of the rents and profits on what remains — the equity. The old tenement-houses, without any improvements, such as have been mentioned, are the most profitable because they require the least repairs to plumbing, and pay a low water tax. The modern tenement-house, in which every apartment is furnished with a bath, closet, range, boiler and washtub, are less remunerative, because of the constant repairs to plumbing and the high water rate. These figures, however, as has been said above,

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

only apply to tenement-houses in which the owners observe all the requirements of the law, and maintain them in good repair and in good sanitary condition.[1]

Their review of the twenty recommendations made by the Tenement House Commission of 1884 is a useful document to show the variety of factors that retard reform through legislation. Some failed through granting discretionary power to the enforcing officer; others because there were too few inspectors; others because of opposition of the owners and tenants; and one — that requiring adequate water supply for domestic purposes on each story — was nullified by a ruling obtained by Trinity Church that it was unconstitutional, which led to severe public criticism.

This recommendation was enacted into law by chapter 84 of the Laws of 1887, in an amendment to section 663 of the Consolidation Act. Trinity Church resisted the enforcement of this law, upon the ground that it was unconstitutional, and succeeded in obtaining a ruling to that effect from the General Term of the Court of Common Pleas for the City and County of New York (Health Department v. Trustees of Trinity Church, 17 N. Y. Supp. 570). In consequence, the board of health has been unable to enforce this statute so far as it applied to tenement-houses built or used for that purpose before the passage of the statute. The board of health has appealed the case to the Court of Appeals; and unless that court differs from the Court of Common Pleas concerning the constitutionality of the act, the force of public opinion will be the only means by which tenement-house owners can be obliged to furnish their tenants with those facilities for cleanliness which, in the opinion of this commission, as well as of the former one, are needed for the sanitary protection of those who live in the neighborhood of tenement-houses, as well as the inmates of the rooms which suffer from the lack of water.*

* Decision reversed, February 26, 1895.[2]

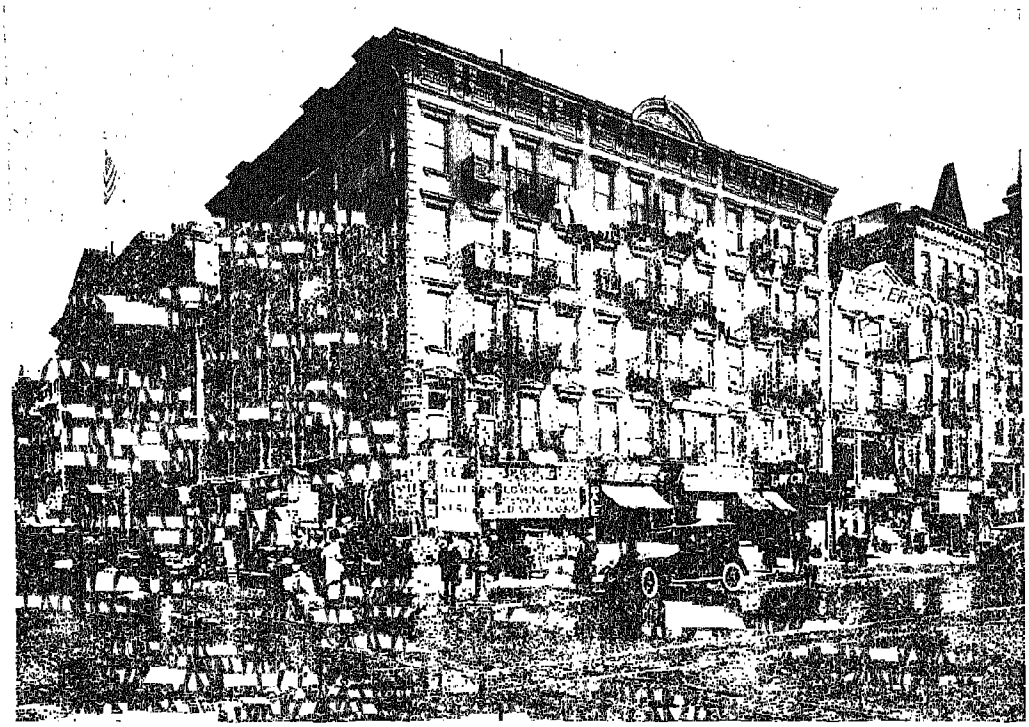
In 1895, the Vestry of Trinity Church published various documents relating to the sanitary condition of the tenements owned by the Corporation. The first statement, an address from the Corporation to the parishioners of Trinity Parish, contained the following:

A Legislative Commission, on the subject of tenement houses, held several meetings in the City of New York during the month of December, 1894, and certain evidence given before the Commission led to a series of sensational articles in some of the daily papers reflecting upon the management of its property by this Corporation. . . . And so, as the cause of Tenement House Reform appealed to the best sympathies of the public, the so-called organs of opinion did not deem it necessary to sift the material brought them by their reporters, and the grossest falsehoods were placed day by day before their readers. . . .

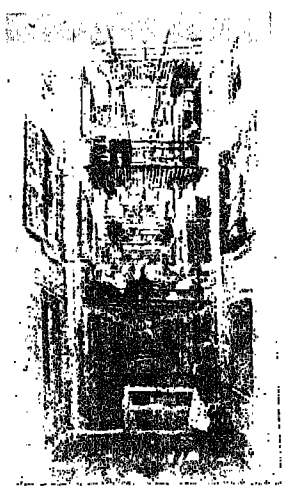
Rev. A. W. Halsey, in an article published in the *New York Observer*, January 24, 1895, said:

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53. 2. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

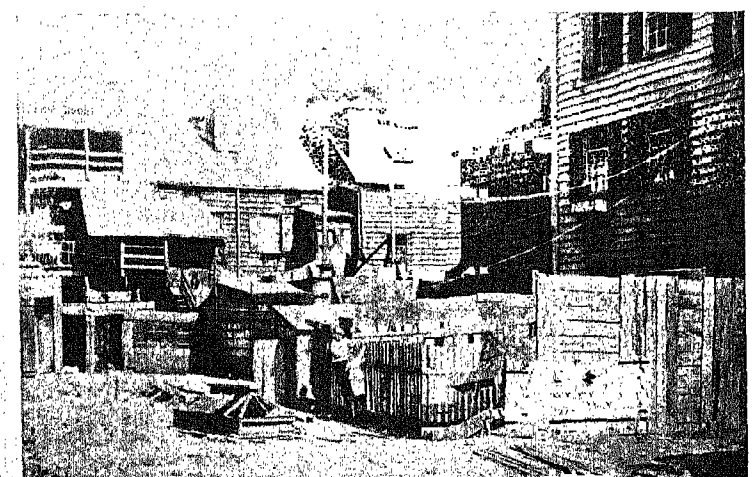
FIG. 23



a. Typical old-law tenement houses of the better class, corner of Chrystie and Delancey Streets. Probably erected during the early 1890's.



b. Mott Street "Barracks" before demolition in 1895.



c. Rear of tenements belonging to Trinity Church, 7, 9, 11 Dominick Street, *c.* 1900.

In the recent investigation conducted by the Tenement House Commission appointed by Act of the Legislature of 1894, testimony was given tending to show that some of the houses belonging to Trinity Corporation, or houses on land owned by Trinity, were not in proper sanitary condition. We take no exception to this charge; a corporation owning between six and seven hundred pieces of property, intrusted with vast interests requiring consummate business ability and attention to a thousand minute details, will in the nature of things neglect, overlook and even mismanage. No doubt some of the houses complained of were in a bad sanitary condition and need complete over-hauling, but that this is true of any considerable number of the properties under the care of Trinity, or that Trinity the church is governed by the law of righteousness and Trinity the corporation by the law of greed, I cannot for a moment believe. . . .

Trinity the landlord is not a charity organization; rents are not given away; tenants not paying have to be ejected; the business is conducted like any other business, . . . I can point to instance after instance of tenants remaining five, ten, fifteen, twenty-five and in one case forty years; this speaks well for the tenant, but does it not also say something for the landlord and the sanitary condition of his property? . . .

While many of the houses on land owned by Trinity are old, and very old-fashioned, without any of the modern improvements, they are eagerly sought after by tenants, and for obvious reasons; the houses are never more than three stories high, only one family lives on a floor, and the rents are reasonable.

One of the enterprising illustrated papers sent its photographer to obtain views of "Trinity's Tumbledown Tenements." In one instance he took a rear view of a most substantial house, refusing the request of the owner to take the front view. The part taken is old, and has a dilapidated appearance, yet, as a matter of fact, this house is roomy, clean, bright, and has as fine people living in it as are to be found in the city.[1]

The Tenement House Committee's recommendations were broad in scope and revealed a more thoroughgoing understanding of the problem of slums and housing than had been displayed in any previous report, public or private. An abstract of their recommendations follows.

1 — DESTRUCTION OF UNSANITARY BUILDINGS. That power be given to the board of health to institute condemnation proceedings for the destruction of buildings which are so unsanitary as to be unfit for human habitation; with provision for reasonable compensation to the owners in case of such destruction. . . .

Under existing laws the board of health is unable to compel the destruction of tenement-houses, which, in their opinion, are so unfit for human habitation that no repairs or renovation can remedy the evils which they cause. Such buildings can not now be thus destroyed unless they amount to a nuisance, in which case the owner received no compensation. This committee has consequently drawn a bill providing for the condemnation of such buildings, and for the payment of compensation to the owner thereof in case of their destruction. This bill has been modeled upon a similar statute which has worked satisfactorily in Great Britain. It expressly provides that no compensation shall be given on account of any increase in the rental of a building because of its overcrowding or use for illegal purposes; that in case such a building is in

1. *Report as to The Sanitary Condition of the Tenements of Trinity Church and other Documents. Printed by order of the Vestry, 1895*, pp. 3, 39–42.

a state of defective sanitation, or is not in reasonably good repair, the amount estimated as its value shall be what it would have been worth if put into a sanitary condition and reasonably good repair, after deducting the estimated expense of such improvement; and that in case the building is unfit and not reasonably capable of being made fit for human habitation, the amount of compensation shall not exceed the value of the materials.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF TENEMENT-HOUSES HEREAFTER TO BE BUILT. That the construction of tenement-houses be improved so as to afford more light and air to their inhabitants and safety from fire, and, therefore,

That the present law be amended by depriving the board of health and the building department of the power to dispense with the requirements concerning the amount of open space to be left on the lots where they are constructed; and

That no tenement or lodging-house subsequently constructed shall occupy more than 70 percentum of an interior city lot; nor more than 90 percentum of a corner lot; and that, in computing the amount of the lot covered by building, all shafts or courts of less than 25 square feet in area shall be considered as part of the solid building and not as part of the free-air space.

Also as to details as follows:

a. That no shaft or court hereafter constructed in a tenement-house, except elevator shafts or staircase wells, shall be covered with a roof, skylight or otherwise.

b. That the walls of all shafts or courts hereafter constructed in tenement-houses shall be fireproof.* (* This is in fact covered by requirements of the existing building laws.)

c. That in all tenement-houses hereafter constructed the first floor over the cellar or basement shall contain no openings into the body of the house and shall be fireproof.

d. That in all tenement-houses hereafter constructed, an open area shall be constructed from the level of the sidewalk in front of and extending the full width of the house, which shall contain a staircase to give access to the cellar from the street, with a proviso that these provisions concerning the openings in and access to the cellars and basements shall not apply to [illegible] nor to buildings of more than 25 feet in width, of five stories or less, with no [illegible] of rooms on a floor.

e. That dumbwaiters and elevators or lifts in all tenement-houses hereafter constructed which are not fireproof, shall be located on the exterior walls and shall have no opening into the cellar; and shall be separated from the cellar by solid brick walls and from the other stories of the house by fireproof walls. The openings to the elevators or lifts in the stories above the cellar to be provided with fireproof doors hung to metal frames; with a proviso that this shall not apply to elevators operated by a conductor stationed within the car, which, however, if they run to the cellar, must be inclosed there with fireproof walls and have their cellar-door fireproof, hung in a metal frame, and self-closing.

f. That in all tenement-houses hereafter constructed all partitions shall be solid; and all staircases fireproof, except staircases in buildings not more than 25 feet wide, which are not more than five stories high and which contain but one suite of rooms on a floor.

g. That no fanlight or window shall be hereafter placed in the partition or wall between the hall of any tenement-house which is not fireproof and any room in the same.

h. That in all tenement-houses hereafter constructed each room must have a separate window opening into the outer air; and

i. Each water-closet must have a window opening into the outer air; and the floor of each water-closet must be made waterproof, so that it can be washed or flushed without leaking. . . .

3. PREVENTION OF FIRE. That further precautions be taken to decrease the danger from fire in tenement-houses already constructed; that for this purpose a law be passed forbidding, after the first day of September, 1895, (*a*) the storage in any tenement-house of feed, hay or straw; (*b*) the maintenance after that date of any bakery or place of business in which fat is boiled in any tenement-house more than three stories in height, in which more than two families live on one floor, and which is not fireproof; (*c*) that after said date all openings into the halls or other parts of tenement-houses from bakeries or places of business in which fat is boiled shall be closed so as to prevent the escape of fire and smoke from them into other parts of the house; and (*d*) that after the same date all transoms and windows opening into halls from any portion of any tenement-house where paint, oil, spirituous liquors or drugs are stored or kept for sale shall be removed and closed up as solidly as the rest of the wall, and all doors leading into any such hall or room from a place thus used in a tenement-house shall be made fireproof. . . .

4. HEIGHT OF BASEMENT CEILINGS ABOVE GROUND. That ceilings of all basements occupied as human habitations be at least two feet above the level of the ground adjoining. . . .

5. REMOVAL OF WALLPAPER. That no wallpaper shall be used in any tenement or lodging-house subsequently constructed, and that wallpaper now on walls or ceilings of any tenement or lodging-house shall be removed within sixty days after the passage of an act for that purpose; the board of health to have power to make exceptions in certain specified cases. . . .

6. THE LIGHTING OF HALLS. That the owners of houses in which the halls are not sufficiently lighted from without shall be compelled to supply in such halls sufficient artificial light, and that the halls of all tenement-houses upon each floor shall be lighted until 10 o'clock at night. . . .

7. OVERCROWDING. That the law be amended so as to make it mandatory upon the board of health to prevent the overcrowding of tenement-houses, so that in case of insufficient ventilation at least 400 cubic feet of air shall be afforded to each adult and 200 to each child under 12 occupying a room in such tenement-houses instead of leaving the same discretionary with the board of health, as is the case at present. . . .

8. THE USE OF TENEMENT-HOUSES FOR LODGING HOUSES, STABLES AND FOR STORAGE AND HANDLING OF RAGS. That the board of health shall not be permitted, under any circumstances, to allow a tenement-house to be used as a lodging-house, stable or for the storage or handling of rags. . . .

9. DISCRETIONARY POWERS OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH. That the discretionary powers of the board of health in regard to tenements and lodging-houses be restricted so that they shall only apply to cellars and ventilation and permission as to private schools in tenement-houses; and, in certain cases, as to the use of wallpaper in tenement-houses, and only to regulations concerning these which are consistent with the other provisions of the act. . . .

10. THE FILING OF OWNER'S NAME. That the present law requiring the owner and every person having control of a tenement or lodging-house to file in the department of health a notice containing his name and address and description of property be amended so as to make the same more easy of enforcement. . . .

11. INCREASE OF THE HEALTH BOARD'S INSPECTION FORCE. That 15 additional sanitary inspectors be added to the force of the health department, and that 5 more sanitary police be detailed from the police department to the health department, and that all police officers hereafter detailed from the police department be selected for their peculiar fitness from amongst those who shall pass a civil service examination by the supervisory board of commissioners of the New York municipal civil service. . . .

12. SMALL PARKS, WITH PLAYGROUNDS. That within the next three years not less than two small parks, a part of each of which shall be constructed as public playgrounds, shall be laid out and begun in the district east of the Bowery and Catharine street and south of Fourth street, and that the city be authorized to issue its bonds to the amount of $3,000,000 for such purposes. . . .

13. SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS. That no school building shall be hereafter erected without the same being provided with a good and sufficient playground, or playgrounds, of a size proportionate to the number of scholars in said school; and that as rapidly as possible proper and sufficient open-air playgrounds be attached to the schools now existing. . . .

14. RAPID TRANSIT. That, as one of the principal means of prevention of over-crowding of houses and districts, rapid transit facilities be pushed forward as vigorously as possible. . . .

15. MUNICIPAL BATHING ESTABLISHMENTS. That, in addition to the free floating baths, maintained in the summer months, the city should open in the crowded districts fully equipped bathing establishments, on the best European models, and with moderate charges. . . .

16. DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND LAVATORIES. That numerous drinking fountains and sufficient public lavatories be established in the tenement-house districts. . . .

17. ELECTRIC LIGHTS. That the electric light be extended as rapidly as possible throughout all parts of the tenement-house districts. . . .

18. EXTENSION OF SMOOTH PAVEMENTS. That the system of asphalt pavements be extended as rapidly as possible throughout the streets of the tenement-house districts of the city. . . .

19. SCHOOLHOUSES AND KINDERGARTENS. That a thorough inquiry be made as to the condition of the older schoolhouses in New York, and as to the sufficiency of school accommodations in general; and that the number of kindergartens be largely increased in connection with the public school system. . . .

20. PROSTITUTION IN TENEMENT-HOUSES. That a law be passed making the offenses of soliciting and the maintenance of houses of prostitution in tenement-houses punishable with greater severity than when they are committed elsewhere. . . .

21. COMMISSION ON TENEMENT-HOUSES. That the present tenement-house board, consisting of certain city officials, be abrogated, and that special commissions, with full powers of examination and recommendation, be constituted by the Legislature at intervals of not more than five years.

The committee is informed that the board, which was created in pursuance of the recommendation of the tenement-house commission of 1884, has failed to meet regularly; and in fact few recommendations have been made by them; though an interesting report was by them

issued during Mayor Hewcitt's term. The individual ex-officio members of the commission can effectively improve tenement-house conditions simply by doing their duty in executing the existing laws The committee is of the opinion that a permanent commission for the purpose of recommending changes in the law, which they have no power to enact, is an anomaly in our jurisprudence; experience has proved its inefficiency; and it is consequently recommended that this law be now repealed; and the committee has prepared a bill to that effect. It suggests, in its place, that another statutory commission upon the subject be created by the Legislature every five years. There is no civic problem so difficult or of such vital importance to the health and morals of the people of the city of New York.[1]

Only a few of the Committee's recommendations became law in the Tenement House Act of 1895. Perhaps its greatest immediate contribution was the securing of two small parks for the Lower East Side and the provision of school playgrounds and recreation piers. The report itself is, however, a classic among housing studies, and its appearance presumably influenced profoundly the thought and arguments of specialists and civic leaders in housing. It is questionable whether the radical improvements achieved in the Tenement House Act of 1901 — passed only six years later — would have been possible except for the studies made for the Committee of 1894 and the infiltration of their findings in the writings of the intervening years and in the minds of citizens.

During this period Jacob A. Riis probably had greater influence than any other publicist in calling attention in a graphic manner to the evils of slum dwelling and in developing the public opinion which was necessary to bring about the drastic changes in tenement-house legislation that occurred in 1901. *The Children of the Poor*, *A Ten Years' War*, and *How the Other Half Lives* were widely quoted. Their readers felt the human tragedy of slum dwelling, so poignantly described by Riis. Civic leaders drew from him an understanding of the cost of slums in terms of disease and other evils, and the moral indignation which served as dynamic stimulus to reform.

The Riverside Buildings in Brooklyn (see Figures 114c and 115, and Plate 6c) were completed by the Improved Dwellings Company in 1890. These houses were largely modeled upon the Peabody Dwellings of London, for Mr. White had made a very careful study of the best of European experience before engaging in this new venture, and as a result contributed to housing reform one of the most valuable examples of model dwellings erected during nearly three centuries of New York history. He had foreseen the importance of treating the block as a unit. He departed far from the prevailing standards of coverage by building on only one-half of his land. He recognized that outside light should reach every room and therefore constructed a tenement that was only two rooms deep. To

1. *Report of the Tenement House Committee*, 1895, pp. 63-79.

obviate dangers of tenement fires, the buildings were of fireproof construction. He circumvented the serious problem of dark halls by building outdoor stairways and outdoor balcony entrances to each apartment so that the tenant might enter *his apartment from the street on any floor of the building without going through* enclosed space. He anticipated the present movement for park areas in slum rehabilitation projects by providing, in the middle of his block, a park which contained lawns, vines, a summer pavilion, band stand, and sandpiles for the children. He elicited the cooperation of tenants in his enterprise by the remission of one month's rent each year in case no repairs were needed — a device subsequently followed with slight modifications by several other limited-dividend housing companies. Above all, he provided all this for unskilled labor at a price within their reach, without room or apartment overcrowding, and made a reasonable limited dividend on the investment. It is the clearest example in New York history of model housing for the unskilled labor group.

Discussion of the elimination of slums, as distinguished from individual insanitary tenements, first became general in this decade. The most conspicuous leader of this movement was E. R. L. Gould. In an article on "The Only Cure for Slums," which he published in *The Forum* in 1895, he noted that American law permitted expropriation only for works of public utility and not for purely sanitary reasons, and commented favorably upon the recommendation of the Tenement House Committee of 1894 that the Board of Health be given power to institute condemnation proceedings for the destruction of buildings so insanitary as to be unfit for human habitation. Experience had demonstrated that the "closing order," utilized up to this point, was inadequate and that actual expropriation with reasonable compensation was necessary to get rid of insanitary premises that were beyond repair. English practice, under the Housing Act of 1890, was quoted with approval so far as expropriation and demolition of slums were concerned, but Gould considered municipal housing undesirable in competition with private enterprise. Further, he recommended parks and playgrounds in demolition areas.

> If authority were given to the New York Board of Health to expropriate insanitary buildings and areas upon conditions fairly similar to the English method, what should be done with the land? It seems to me that the very first thing would be to provide breathing spaces and playgrounds in congested districts. The rear-tenement has been an awful curse, destructive alike to health and morality. It should be the first to be destroyed, and its disappearance may be made the means of a positive benefit. If the proper thing is done, it may turn out a favorable circumstance for New York's future inhabitants that rear-tenements were so long endured. When certain structures are torn down, the land should, in the majority of instances, be paved over, a covering erected to shelter the rear part in rainy weather, and light apparatus, such as

parallel bars, swings, and poles for climbing should be set up. The legislature of 1887 meant well when it appropriated a million dollars annually for ten years for small parks in New York. Apathy little short of crime has prevented even a moderate realization of benefit so far. But even though the intentions of the act had been fully carried out, so that a large number of small parks had been created, the need would have been only partially met. Sanitary amelioration would have been effected, but recreative facilities would still be far too few. The crowded districts of our large cities need more than open squares, even though they be made, as the New York Committee of 1894 recommends, half park, half playground.

Few really appreciate the dismal dreariness of life to children in the tenements. There is no opportunity for legitimate play, no rational outlet for an excess of animal spirits. . . . Money spent for recreative spots of the kind mentioned means a smaller outgo for the maintenance of order and the protection of unoffending people, and, most important of all, it means the saving of human character. . . .

What about the cost? Sanitary awakenings are always expensive, and expropriation, even under the most favorable circumstances, is costly. But there is no help for it, if reform is to be undertaken in a rational way. The burden need not entirely fall upon the present generation. We cannot levy upon our forefathers, who are primarily responsible, but we can assess benefits upon our descendents. Long-term loans for this purpose ought to be easily floated by our large cities at 3 per cent or 3½ per cent, with provision for an annual sinking fund. Land re-sold ought not to entail very heavy losses. . . . Land in London has been acquired under the act of 1890 for much less than half what it would have cost if expropriated before that date. . . . Substitution of *real* for *rental* value has produced an altogether different effect, and the power to expropriate on this basis is the greatest sanitary need to-day of most of our large cities.

What is the promised compensation? In the first place we may expect lower death-rates. . . .

Secondly, the social utility of improved housing is simply enormous. It is a powerful factor in good citizenship. . . . Squalid shelters give birth to social discontent, to moral carelessness, to brutal indifference, and in some natures to an unconquerable grudge. The genesis of 'isms most often takes place in the miserable tenements of a great modern city. . . .

The first step in house-reform is to get rid of the bad houses.[1]

In the year 1896 the Improved Housing Council sponsored a competition for the design of model tenements.[2] Architectural and other journals devoted more space to articles on model tenements.[3] A review of the activities of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the progenitor of housing reform, appeared in November 1896 in an article by W. H. Tolman, entitled "Half a Century of Improved Housing Effort."[4] The organization of the City and Suburban Homes Company, from this point on the leading builder of model tenements in America, was succinctly described:

The City and Suburban Homes Company, which was organized July 6, 1896, promises to

1. *The Forum*, XIX, 498-500.
2. See Appendix.
3. *The American Architect and Building News*, vols. XXIX, LII, *The Tenement Houses of New York City. A contribution to the study by the Tenement House Building Company.*
4. *The Yale Review*, vol. V.

become the most extensive model building enterprise in this country. Its organization was the outcome of the Improved Housing Conference held in New York city in the spring of the same year. Its object is to supply to wage earners in New York city improved sanitary homes at current rates, and at the same time to offer to capital a safe and permanent investment. Its capital stock is $1,000,000. While a large number of the share-holders are among the wealthiest men in New York, the company is intended to become a thoroughly popular institution and to afford a depository for the savings of the masses, which may be utilized in benefiting their fellow-men. For this reason the denomination of the shares is fixed at ten dollars each. Thus far, the Company has purchased three sites. On one of these sites situated on West Sixty-eighth and West Sixty-ninth streets, between Tenth and Eleventh avenues, a group of buildings accommodating 375 families, is in course of construction, and will be ready for occupancy on February 1, 1898. These buildings, as already mentioned, contain all the advantages suggested by the experience of all other leading enterprises, in regard to economy of space, light, ventilation, comfort, privacy, etc. In addition to the construction of model tenement houses, this Company provides suburban homes for a better paid class of working people. These houses are to be purchased by the tenants and paid for in monthly installments during periods of ten, fifteen or twenty years, at the choice of the purchasers. The payments also cover the cost of life insurance, so that in case of the death of the purchaser the debt is immediately paid. . . .[1]

These houses of the City and Suburban Homes Company were destined to become the leading example of large-scale operations, and to set standards for other ventures for the next three decades.

An article by Gustavus A. Weber on "Improved Tenement Homes for American Cities," published in December 1897, contained another early suggestion for slum demolition, clearance, and improvement through model tenements and parked areas.

In regard to . . . the expropriation of crowded areas for sanitary purposes, the city of New York is the only one of the larger American cities that has done anything in recent years. In 1895, two acts were passed by the State Legislature authorizing the expenditure of $5,000,000 for the expropriation of propery [property] and the establishment of small parks in the most crowded sections of New York city. The following table, kindly furnished by Mr. Charles G. Wilson, President of the Health Department of the city, shows to what extent the provisions of these acts have been carried out: [see page 201]

In addition to the above there were condemned during the year 1896, eighty-seven separate pieces of property (rear tenements) for sanitary reasons. . . .

While in exceptional instances municipalities may be justified in providing healthy homes for the poorer working classes, the great work of furnishing improved homes for these people devolves upon commercial and philanthropic enterprises. . . . The great problem with respect to model tenement houses is how to secure the investment of capital on a paying basis in such enterprises.[2]

1. *Municipal Affairs*, 1, 759–760.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 750, 753.

PROPERTY EXPROPRIATED FOR PARK PURPOSES IN NEW YORK CITY

Location	Area in acres	Value of expropriated property	Population displaced
Mulberry Street Park Street Baxter Street Bayard Street	2.74	$1,476,557	2,643
East Broadway Canal Street Essex Street Hester Street Suffolk Street Jefferson Street	1.9	Not yet fixed	2,917
Pitt Street East Houston Street Sheriff Street Stanton Street	3.44	Not yet fixed	3,879
Cherry Street Jackson Street South Street Corlears Street	8.3	$1,370,421	Unknown, mostly small houses and many lumber yards and shops
East 111th Street First Avenue East 114th Street River	8.5	Not yet fixed	4,104
West 28th Street Tenth Avenue West 29th Street Ninth Avenue	3.67	Not yet fixed	1,763

Weber recommended convenient sites, construction to insure privacy, health, safety, and comfort to tenants, architecture not "so severe as to be uninviting," small tenement houses "whenever the cost of the land will permit," daylight in every room, orientation for sunlight, cross ventilation, storage space for tenants' fuel, self-contained apartments of from two to four rooms, and playgrounds for children. He thus anticipated many of the standards of public housing ventures of the twentieth century — standards already incorporated in many of the model dwellings constructed by Alfred T. White in Brooklyn, and the Improved Dwellings Association, the Tenement House Building Company, and the City and Suburban Homes Company in Manhattan.

Interest in improving housing through the construction of model tenements continued through this decade, largely precipitated and guided by the excellent results of the Home, Tower, and Riverside Buildings, but not always profiting as much as they might have from the better features incorporated in these model tenements.

Ernest Flagg faced the problem squarely when in July 1894 he published an article on "The New York Tenement-House Evil and its Cure."

> The greatest evil which ever befell New York City was the division of the blocks into lots of 25 × 100 feet. . . . for from this division has arisen the New York system of tenement-houses, the worst curse which ever afflicted any great community.
>
> The object of this paper is to show that all the evils of the system lie entirely in the plan; that with another plan, light, air, health, and comfort can be furnished at the same, if not at less cost than the great majority of the inhabitants of this town are now forced to pay for dwellings not fit for the lower animals. . . .
>
> When the city was first laid out, the division of the blocks into lots 25 × 100 ft. was entirely unobjectionable. The people generally built houses of moderate dimensions, lighted at the front from the street, and in the rear from the yard. . . .
>
> From the time of its first introduction, there has been no radical change in the plan of these houses. Acres upon acres have been covered by them, all constructed on the same general plan based upon the shape of the lot, 25 × 100 ft., . . . If an owner has a plot one hundred feet square, instead of building one house he builds four houses. It never seems to have occurred to anyone that this is an extremely extravagant and wasteful way of building; yet such is the case, for the system involves the erection of an unnecessary amount of wall, partitions, and corridor, also an unnecessary number of entrances, halls, etc., and consequent loss of room. So great is the loss of room from these causes, that it is possible to plan buildings of a different type which, while having the same amount of rentable space in rooms, shall cover so much less of the lot as to leave an abundant space free for light and air. The buildings, covering a smaller area, will cost less to erect, so that properly lighted and well-ventilated apartments can be supplied at less than it costs to build the dreadful affairs which we now have. . . .
>
> The philanthropic method of reform can accomplish practically nothing. What if a hundred or five hundred landlords erect model tenements and rent them at a low rate of interest, such relief would be only a drop in the bucket so long as the vast majority of owners continue the erection of houses of the kind we now have.
>
> Reform can only be brought about through the pockets of the landlords. Show them how they can build good houses for less than it now costs to build bad ones. Show them how they can get the same amount of desirable, properly lighted apartments at less cost than they have heretofore paid for undesirable, improperly lighted apartments. This is to strike at the root of the evil. Then let the Board of Health do its part to bring about the change. For twenty years this body has been pottering with the subject and has accomplished nothing; it is now high time to call a halt and to make use of the powers which years ago were vested in it for this very purpose.[1]

1. *Scribner's Magazine*, XVI, 108–109, 117. See also Appendix.

The actual volume of tenement-house legislation in the last decade of the nineteenth century was considerable, but relatively little of it was important.[1] The Tenement House Act was amended several times and so also was the General Building Law. In the Act of April 9, 1892, a new Department of Buildings was created, and powers previously lodged in the Fire Department were transferred to this new department; the powers of the Board of Health with reference to plumbing, drainage, light, and ventilation in new buildings were similarly transferred. On May 16 of that same year, an act was passed relating to the registration of plumbers and supervision of plumbing and drainage in the cities of the State of New York, and an Examining Board of Plumbers was appointed. This general state plumbing law was amended on March 21, 1893. The appointment of the committee to examine into the tenement-house question in the city of New York in 1894 [2] was the outstanding legislative event of this decade, and their act amending the Tenement House Act, passed May 3, 1895, as well as that of May 9, 1895, made some progress in improvement of existing tenement-house laws and in rendering them more enforceable.[3]

In June 1899 the Tenement House Committee of the Charity Organization Society made well-considered recommendations for improved legislation to supplement, but not to conflict with, the existing Tenement House Law. These recommendations, which influenced subsequent legislation, were: that no window, except in water-closets or bathrooms, should open on a court less than six feet in width; that no tenement house should exceed six stories in height; that every room except pantries, water-closets, and bathrooms should contain at least 600 cubic feet of air space; that every tenement house should be provided with one bathtub or shower-bath for every twenty families, or fraction thereof. There were provisions also for fireproofing, for railings around the roof to provide safe play space, and for the prohibition of wooden buildings on the same lot with a tenement house.[4]

Most significant, from the point of view of both housing and city planning, was the Greater New York Charter, which was passed on May 4, 1897, uniting into one municipality under the corporate name of the "City of New York" the existing city, the City of Brooklyn and County of Kings, the County of Richmond, and a part of the County of Queens. The metropolitan area, already definitely a unit from the social and economic point of view, was at last made a political unit. The consequences of the consolidation of this huge area under unified control may be traced in every line of civic endeavor. In the field of housing it made possible the

1. The amendments to previous acts are mentioned by date and chapter in DeForest and Veiller, II, 341–345.
2. See p. 185.
3. DeForest and Veiller, II, 343–344.
4. *Tenement House Ordinances proposed by the Tenement House Committee of the Charity Organization Society.*

extension of municipal standards and practices to areas still unbuilt, thus largely forestalling uncontrolled development and discontinuing the rather primitive practices of those areas which paralleled New York's early housing experience. Within two years the building code was completely revised and the new building law, which took effect December 20, 1899, under the Greater New York Charter, raised construction and fire-prevention standards and extended them throughout the metropolitan area. Two years later, in 1901, the new, radical Tenement House Act similarly protected the inhabitants of an area covering about 300 square miles.

Thus, this last decade, which contributed so little to real progress in immediate tenement-house legislation, was a pregnant period in the housing history of the city. In it there had occurred the most elaborate and scientific studies of housing yet made in America; striking improvements in tenement-house construction through the experiments of Alfred Treadway White and the City and Suburban Homes Company; lively and effective interest in tenement-house planning, led chiefly by Ernest Flagg; effective publicity on tenement-house conditions and problems through the highly human documents of Jacob Riis and the studies of Edward Marshall, Carroll D. Wright, and E. R. L. Gould; and lastly a rational medium for effective legislation in the future, the Greater New York Charter, which made possible the unification of the whole metropolitan area for consistent regulatory, preventive, and constructive activity.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENLARGING CONCEPT OF HOUSING

SOCIAL change, at least when consciously directed, proceeds by spurts. Progress is never made along an even front, but rather by seizing first one salient and then another. Timely leadership determines the point of attack. Whether influenced by personality, vision, argument, rhetoric, or fashion, followers mass their effort for the sponsored programme, often with an intensity and zeal that parallel the fervor of the religious zealot.

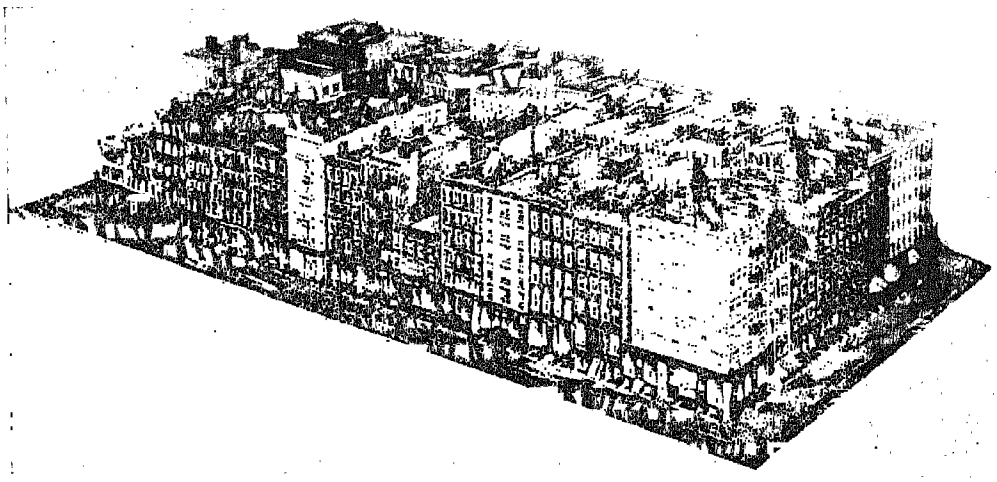
The twentieth century opened in a period when social reformers believed in the efficacy of restrictive legislation as the major device to cope with any social evil. It was a period of rapidly expanding statute law, designed to curb aggressive greed and to thwart types of behavior that, through exploitation, injure one's fellow-man. This trend was particularly noticeable in the field of labor laws, but operated with almost equal intensity in attempts to reduce disease and public corruption. Housing reform rode upon this same wave of popular enthusiasm, and developed the most drastic restrictions upon the exploitive processes that are to be found in three centuries of housing history.

The Tenement House Act of 1901 is the most significant regulatory act in America's history of housing. It progressed far beyond its predecessors in its scope, precision, and elaborate detail. It conferred more power upon administrative departments and severer penalties for infraction than had ever before been enforced. Although weakened somewhat in recent years, its principles and methods still underlie the housing legislation not only of New York City but of many other American cities. This would not have been possible, except for the vogue of restrictive legislation that so largely dominated American thought at the opening of the twentieth century.

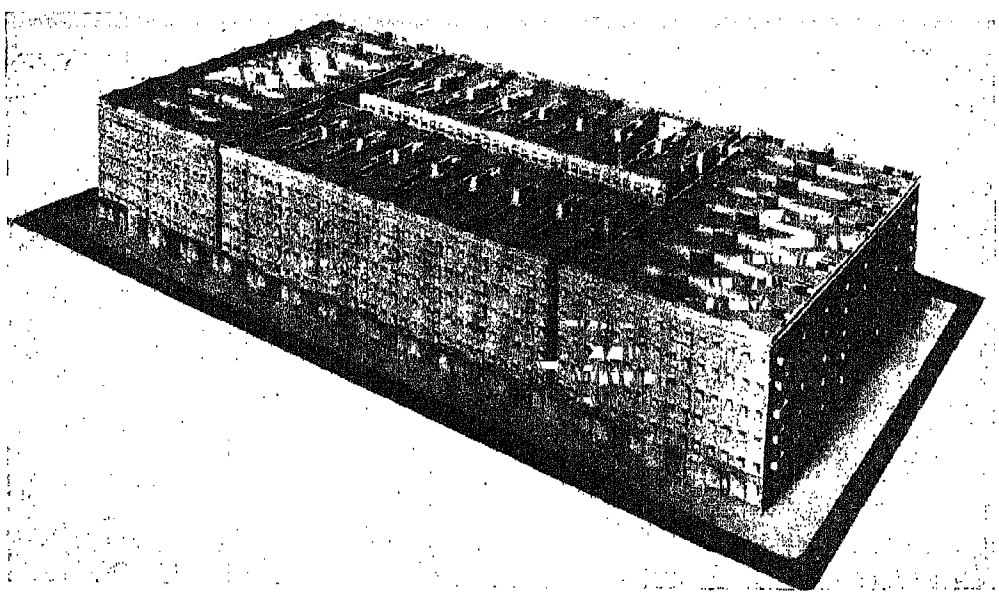
Another example of the rôle of vogue or fashion in housing in the twentieth century was the zoning movement of the second decade, in which New York City again took the leadership, to be followed largely, in principle and method, by hundreds of American communities in the following generation.

A third striking evidence of the operation of this factor was the movement for comprehensive city planning. It virtually originated, in its economic and social form, as distinct from the strictly aesthetic, with the city plan for Newark, New

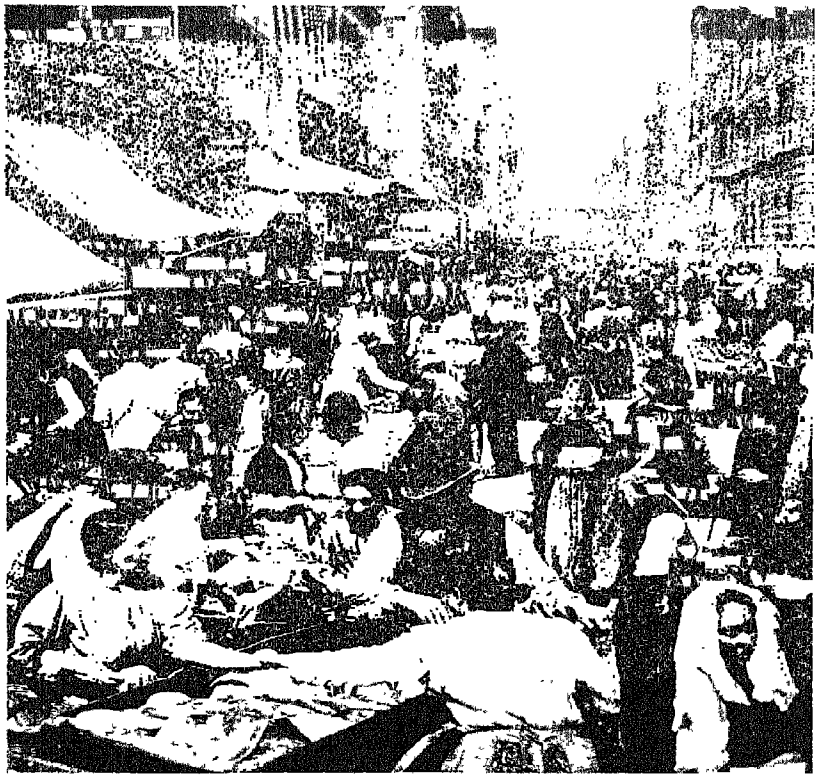
FIG. 24



a. Model of block of tenements, Chrystie, Bayard, Forsyth, and Canal Streets. Made for the tenement-house exhibition held by the Charity Organization Society, 1900. Reproduced from DeForest and Veiller, *The Tenement House Problem*, Vol. I.



b. Model of block of "dumb-bell" tenements as built under the laws in force before 1901. Made for the tenement-house exhibition held by the Charity Organization Society, 1900. Reproduced from DeForest and Veiller, Vol. I.



a. Hester Street, "the most densely populated spot in the world," *c.* 1900



b. A typical tenement neighborhood on the Lower East Side, *c.* 1900.

Jersey, and developed very shortly thereafter in New York through the reports of committees of the New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment in 1916. This was followed in the next decade by the Regional Survey of New York and its Environs, financed by the Russell Sage Foundation.

A fourth vogue was the unified planning of residential communities, which, though originating with industrial firms far back in the nineteenth century, became a recognized principle only when carried out by the United States Housing Corporation and the Passenger Transportation and Housing Division of the Emergency Fleet Corporation during the World War. Although this did not originate in New York, it might be noted that officers of each of these two government branches were New Yorkers. Residential planning was developed still further in three New York suburbs — Forest Hills, Long Island; Sunnyside, Queens; and Radburn, New Jersey.

The fifth and present fashion period is that of slum clearance and comprehensive rebuilding of planned communities, promoted, stimulated, supervised, and in large degree financed and controlled by the Federal Government. Although this present period is largely dominated by policies in Washington, it is of interest that it was precipitated by a President of the United States who is himself a New Yorker, and who as former President of the American Construction Council was largely responsible, in 1931, for its pamphlet on slum clearance. The first executive of the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration was Robert D. Kohn, a New York architect, who gathered about him a number of men who had been trained in housing from the New York angle and who had grown up in the field under all the influences previously mentioned.

Another phase of the present period is the growing interest in housing research. In this field, fashions are less apparent and emotions play a somewhat smaller rôle. Prior to the twentieth century there were relatively few researches in housing that would be accepted by contemporary scientists. For nearly three centuries decisions as to legislation and other policies were arrived at through the method of debate and compromise. Such evidence as was adduced was submitted by persons more or less well informed. Their statements were usually made on the basis of personal observation, rarely supplemented by case counting, and seldom subjected to critical analysis. The same method still commonly applies. For legislative advance or change remains largely a process of debates of protagonists and antagonists, rather than the logical outgrowth of scientific study. Nevertheless, an increasing volume of scientific data has been made available, chiefly during the past generation.

Except for census data, the statistics of municipal departments, and the re-

ports of engineers, architects, and physicians of the nineteenth century, research into the economic and social factors of housing virtually began with studies by university graduates made in settlement houses.[1] For the Tenement-House Commission of 1900 several important housing researches were initiated covering tenement-house fires, housing and tuberculosis, foreign immigration, statistics of New York's tenement houses, and the history of tenement-house legislation.[2] These were followed by the researches of the Tenement House Department, the Commission on Congestion of Population, the Heights of Buildings Commission, the Commission on Building Districts and Restrictions, and the State Board of Housing — to mention but a few of the more important published studies issued by governmental bodies.[3]

The establishment of the Russell Sage Foundation in 1907, devoted to the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States, led at first to a number of monographs bearing upon one phase or another of housing, such as Chapin's *Standards of Living among Workingmen's Families in New York City*, the West Side Studies, and Veiller's *Housing Reform* and *Model Housing Law*. In 1921 the Russell Sage Foundation began its Regional Survey, which is the most comprehensive economic and social study that has yet been made of physical, engineering, economic, and social factors to be considered in the planning of urban areas for housing and other uses.

Prior to 1900, local universities had encouraged a few studies of housing or urban problems among their graduate students, of which Weber's *Growth of Cities* still remains outstanding. In recent years, they have contributed increasingly to the amassing of useful data, through both sporadic graduate research and systematic programmes of study.[4]

Of late, housing has been separated into a large number of specialized approaches — economic statistics, social statistics, vital statistics, illuminating engineering, sanitary engineering, architecture, construction, home economics, and household management — and in each of these the universities, and commercial agencies as well, are making continuous contributions.

Noting the lack of synthesis in such studies, and the tendency of each specialist to conduct his researches unaware of pertinent findings in other fields, President Hoover, in 1929, outlined his plans for a national Conference on Home

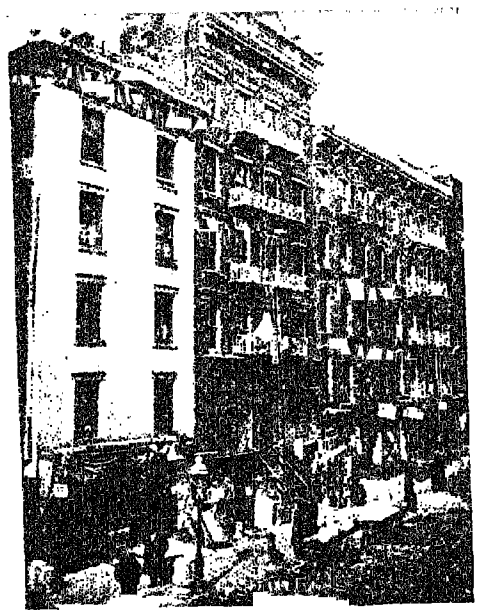
1. Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, *Handbook of Settlements*, and Albert J. Kennedy and others, *Social Settlements in New York City*.
2. These and the other studies are to be found in DeForest and Veiller, *The Tenement House Problem*, vols. I and II.
3. Additional references will be found in the Bibliography of Housing in New York City; see Vol. II.
4. Directed notably by Franklin H. Giddings, Samuel McCune Lindsay, Benjamin F. Andrews, Edward T. Devine, in earlier years, and more recently by Carol Aronovici, Edith Elmer Wood, Robert Murray Haig, Frederic M. Thrasher, and Samuel Joseph.

FIG. 26



TYPICAL OLD-LAW TENEMENTS: THE ABOVE SHOWS THE EARLIEST TYPES OF TENEMENTS IN NEW YORK CITY. AT THE LEFT A DWELLING OF COTTAGE TYPE BUILT ORIGINALLY FOR ONE OR TWO FAMILIES; IN THE CENTRE A HIGH-CLASS PRIVATE DWELLING CONVERTED TO TENEMENT USES; AT THE RIGHT, AN EARLY FORM OF THE "BARRACK," BUILT ORIGINALLY AS A TENEMENT.

a. Typical old-law tenements, showing some of the earliest types, *c.* 1900.



TYPICAL OLD-LAW TENEMENTS: BUILDING AT LEFT ERECTED IN 1880. FIVE-STORY BUILDING ADJOINING BUILT AS LATELY AS 1901. SIX ROOMS DEEP.

b. Typical old-law tenements, *c.* 1900.

Building and Home Ownership, which was held in Washington in 1931. The whole subject of housing was divided for study among thirty-one committees, which conducted their researches, in some instances, for more than a year. A variety of special fields of interest were represented on each committee and members came from all parts of the country. The result, as anticipated, was an enlarged conception of the problem and its ramifications. More than 100 New Yorkers (111) served on these thirty-one committees, and 300 or more persons from Greater New York attended the four-day conference. Its influence upon subsequent thought, practice, and action may be observed everywhere in New York City and throughout the nation.

As a result of the Conference, housing became "front-page news" and has remained so during the intervening four years, thus providing the backing of public opinion for projected reforms. One outgrowth of the Conference was the establishment of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, out of which, in the present administration, have developed the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and some of the activities of the Federal Housing Administration. Out of it also developed, during the Hoover administration, the slum-clearance and limited-dividend housing activities of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which have subsequently been elaborated through the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration. Its recommendations for synthesized research in housing may also have influenced the later developments in coordinated research in New York City as represented by the Land Utilization Committee of the New York Building Congress, out of which in the past three years have developed the Slum Clearance Committee, the cooperative housing studies assisted by the Civil Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration researches, and the Housing Study Guild of New York City.

Writing of contemporary history is hazardous, because closeness to the events may distort the perspective. Moreover, the mass of data on housing for the period from 1900 to 1935 is so great that space will not permit a historical record here as detailed as that of earlier chapters. There is value, however, in a brief mention of leading events which will serve to indicate some of the major sources of contemporary activity.

For the nation as a whole, the first third of the century was one of rapid development in arts, sciences, education, labor, international relations, and most other fields of human interest. A mere list of outstanding national events may help to give the setting for local attitudes, for the expansion of population and commerce, and for the incidental housing programmes. The year 1900 saw the passage of the Gold Standard Act and the consolidation of the United States Steel

Corporation and of the Union Central and Southern Pacific Railroads. Two years later the anthracite coal miners' strike, and the authorization of the construction of the Panama Canal, in quite diverse ways illustrated the new, broad scale of American life. The creation of the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903 and the "millionaires' panic" of the same year, the meat packers' strike of 1904, the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905, the Hepburn Rate Bill forbidding railroad rebates in 1906, the panic and commercial depression of 1907, which was also the year of the highest immigration record, the Payne-Aldrich Tariff of 1909, the admission of the forty-eighth state, Arizona, in 1912, the inauguration of the parcel-post system in 1913, the Sixteenth Constitutional Amendment providing for Federal income taxes, and the creation of a separate Federal Department of Labor, each illustrate, in one way or another, growing-pains, hard-headed conscious use of national power or equal hardness of attitude in the fields of capital and labor. The sense of power of individuals, groups, corporate bodies, and the nation had developed, often at the expense of cooperative idealism. Magnates, agitators, and politicians were more conspicuous than statesmen or leaders.

Then came the World War with its strange interplay of idealism and dominance, of constructive thinking and national aggrandizement, of radical political change and Federal appropriation of state functions, of hate, greed, and service.

In the Wilson administration there developed the Federal Reserve Act, the Federal Trade Commission, the Clayton Anti-Trust Bill, the Federal Farm Loan Bank Act, and the United States Shipping Board as examples of constructive governmental activity, as well as the punitive expedition to Mexico, the incredibly efficient and complete organization of the American Expeditionary Force, the control of industry and railroads, the Volstead Act, and the Versailles Treaty. It was in this strange crucible that the Federal housing activities began, and publicly financed, planned communities became a reality in the form of scores of industrial villages or suburbs, built first by the War Department, and subsequently by the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the United States Housing Corporation. In this period leaders in capital and labor began to understand one another somewhat better around conference tables at Washington and throughout the country. The period of regulation by law trails off in a developing period of constructive and preventive legislation.

The War had greatly stimulated American exports, and the United States by 1917 had become a creditor nation. After the Armistice, there followed the painful process of army demobilization, of reemployment problems, of the return of railroads to their owners, and of general commercial and industrial readjustment.

This brought America to the industrial slump of 1921, the drastic limitation of immigration in 1921 and again in 1924, the second industrial depression of 1924, the Teapot Dome scandals of the Harding administration, the insensate prosperity of the Coolidge administration which broke in the crisis of 1929, and the universal depression of the 1930's. In the early part of this latter period there appears to have been a rather general callousness, in business and public affairs. There was, however, an appreciable emergence from this condition during the period in which Herbert Hoover, first as Secretary of Commerce and then as President, called conferences new in type among competing commercial and industrial groups. These conferences led to a surprisingly general recognition of the service function of business and to the substitution of well-judged cooperative agreements for ruthless competition.

The research bodies, assembled one after another by Mr. Hoover in Washington, served also to bring together specialists from all parts of the United States for the interchange of ideas and ideals and for the formulation of common principles and policies. Thought in the fields of housing and city planning lost its earlier insularity, and it became possible to think on these subjects in the terms of a nation — not those of a city or district.

Then came the Roosevelt Administration, pledged to a "New Deal," backed in its early years by unusually wide popular support, utilizing in some branches of government keen and often altruistic young minds in positions of power — liberals who were eager for change, impatient with tradition, trusting brilliance, novelty, and speed more than experience and study. Two years have passed in which selfish interests may have gained over those primarily idealistic. Novices are becoming experienced. Some lessons have been learned, but unevenly. Many changes in policy have been made. From this medium have come housing policies — some admirable and others inconsistent and unwise. Either may still dominate.

The population of New York City, which in 1900 included practically the present boundaries, grew in thirty years from 3,437,202 to 6,930,446. Meanwhile the population of Manhattan increased between 1900 and 1910 from 1,850,093 to 2,331,542 and then declined again by 1930 to 1,867,312. The change is accounted for chiefly by the rapid development of bridges, subways, motor cars,[1] motor buses, and other transit facilities.

The "Rapid Transit Tunnel" or subway was begun in 1900. The construction of the Queensborough and Manhattan Bridges was undertaken in 1901. The Interborough Rapid Transit Company was incorporated in 1902 and the contract

1. The first American-made gasoline automobile was sold by Alexander Winton on March 24, 1898. Stokes, V, 2034.

was awarded for the extension of the subway to Brooklyn. The tunnel extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad was also authorized in that year. In 1903 the Williamsburg Bridge was opened, and in 1904 the subway from City Hall to West 145th Street. The 145th Street Bridge joined to Manhattan a new section of the Bronx in the following year, and in 1906 the Pennsylvania Railroad tunnel was completed. Two years later the subway was opened from Bowling Green, Manhattan, to Borough Hall, Brooklyn. By 1909 the Manhattan Bridge was available to traffic. In 1913 the contracts were awarded for the completion of the new Lexington Avenue and Seventh Avenue subways. In 1917 the New York, New Jersey Port and Harbor Development Commission was appointed. The Port of New York Authority was created in 1921. The construction of the Independent Subway System began in 1925, and the Holland Tunnel was opened in 1927. The construction of the George Washington Bridge, making northern New Jersey accessible for suburban development, was finished in 1931. These represent but a few of the important developments in transit in the period, but are sufficient to indicate the comprehensive manner in which the suburbs were rendered available for residential use by a population working in Manhattan.[1]

The rapid population increase of this period was accounted for in part by migration from other cities and rural communities of America, but in large part — up to the Federal Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 — by foreign immigration. The total volume of immigration to the United States in 1900 was 448,572, but in the years 1905, 1906, 1907, 1910, 1913, and 1914 the total of such accessions to our population was over 1,000,000 in each year. The highest volume of immigration was in 1907 (1,285,349) and the next highest in 1914 (1,218,480). The large majority of these immigrants arrived at the Port of New York, and hundreds of thousands were absorbed in the city population in the first two decades of the twentieth century. After 1914 there was a sharp drop in immigration to this country, and by 1931 the total annual increase from this source fell below 100,000.

The major sources of information concerning current housing conditions were the reports of the Tenement House Commission of 1900 and the annual reports of the Tenement House Department, particularly in the first decade of the century. The report of the Tenement House Commission was republished for popular consumption in 1903 by DeForest and Veiller, in their two-volume classic entitled *The Tenement House Problem*. It served as the most important general reference work in its field for nearly two decades.

1. For further elaboration of the development of highway and transit facilities, see vols. III and IV of the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*, which deal, respectively, with Highway Traffic and Transit and Transportation; also vols. I and II of the *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*.

a. Typical back-to-back tenements, *c* 1900. For plan see Appendix, Pl. 1, C.

b "Yard" between typical back-to-back tenements, showing accumulated rubbish

The Tenement House Commission was appointed on April 16, 1900,[1] and $10,000 was appropriated to meet expenses. Robert W. deForest was elected Chairman and Lawrence Veiller Secretary.[2] The act provided that the investigation and report should cover cities of the first class — New York City and Buffalo.

The Commission found that there were 82,652 tenement houses in Greater New York, and caused detailed inspection to be made of 1,046 new tenement houses in course of construction. Eight blocks, comprising 327 buildings, were subjected to analysis. Special study was made also of 644 "back-to-back" rear tenements, of fire escapes, of the seventeenth ward of Manhattan, and of selected districts of Brooklyn, Queens, Richmond, and the Bronx. Statistical data were compiled for 42,700 tenement houses in Manhattan. More than two-thirds of the population of New York City was found to be living in tenement houses — that is, in houses in which three or more families live independently of one another, doing their cooking on the premises. The major evils were summarized under the headings:

(1) Insufficiency of light and air due to narrow courts or air shafts, undue height, and the occupation by the building, or by adjacent buildings, of too great a proportion of lot area.
(2) Danger from fire.
(3) Lack of separate water-closet and washing facilities.
(4) Overcrowding.
(5) Foul cellars and courts, and other like evils, which may be classed as bad housekeeping.[3]

The solution of the problem was found to lie in the following types of action:

FIRST — To provide proper types of new tenement houses for the future by means of adequate restrictive legislation, and to forbid the erection of any others.

SECOND — To remedy the errors of past years by altering and improving old tenement houses so as to make them fit for human habitation.

THIRD — To maintain present and future tenement houses in sanitary condition by adequate supervision.[4]

The major scientific contributions of the Tenement House Commission of 1900 were their summaries of the history of tenement-house problems in New York,

1. *Laws of the State of New York*, 1900, Chap. 279.
2. The other members were Raymond F. Almirall, Hugh Bonner, Paul D. Cravath, William A. Douglas, Otto M. Eidlitz, George B. Fowler, F. Norton Goddard, Williams Lansing, William J. O'Brien, James B. Reynolds, I. N. Phelps Stokes, Myles Tierney, and Alfred T. White. Dr. Could was unable to accept the appointment and Charles S. Brown was appointed in his place. Mr. Stokes served as Chairman of a Special Committee on Tenement House Construction and was also a mem[illegible] B. Reynolds was [illegible] Social Influence [illegible] on Tenement Ho[illegible].
3. DeForest and Veiller, I, 6.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11. Because of the accessibility of this two-volume work, it has been considered unnecessary to outline in detail its findings, which are, however, referred to frequently in other parts of this book.

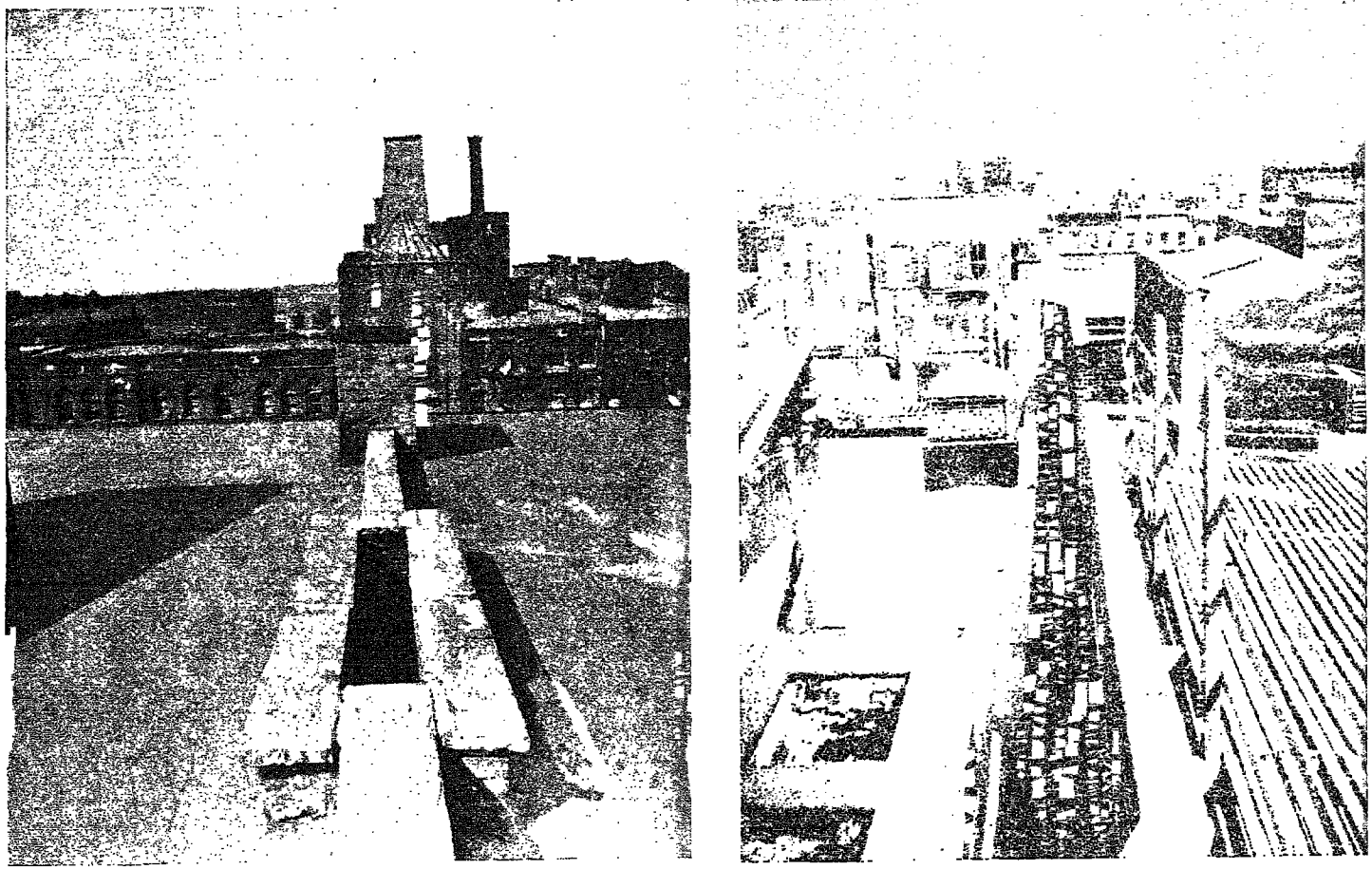
tenement statistics, law enforcement, tenement-house fires and fire escapes, speculative building, the relation of housing and tuberculosis, tenement-house rentals, and prostitution as a tenement-house evil.

In the fields of law-making and civic action, the Commission's contributions were of unique value. Recommendations, based upon detailed and well-judged study, were incorporated in the Tenement House Act of 1901, which has served, directly or indirectly, as the chief working model for most of the tenement-house legislation of America since that date.[1]

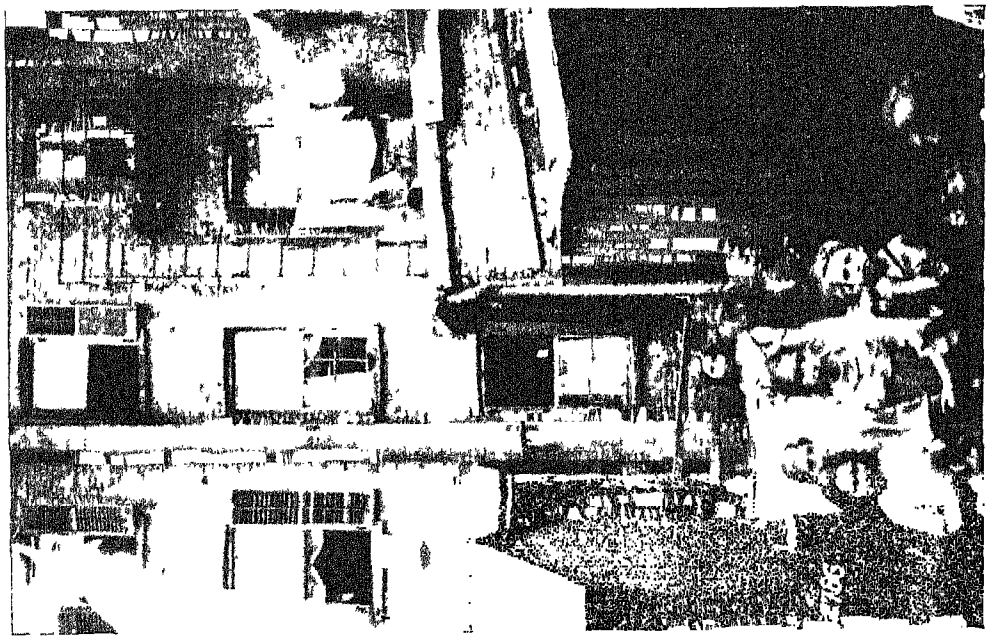
The arrangement of the provisions of the law was important as well as the detail. The Act began with a chapter of definitions of terms, e. g. tenement house, yard, court, shaft, public hall, stair hall, basement, cellar, fireproof tenement house. The value of this feature lies in the greater enforceability before the courts of a law in which all essential terms are specifically defined. The next section comprised general definitions with regard to conversion or alteration, time for compliance, and other procedural matters. The third dealt with protection from fire and required that every tenement house thereafter erected exceeding 60 feet in height above the curb level should be "fireproof." Highly specific provisions were made with regard to fire escapes for both new and existing houses, thus facilitating escape in case of fire. For tenements 60 feet or less in height the requirements with regard to fireproofing, though incorporating many features of earlier legislation, were new in that they rendered tenement houses constructed since the act fire-safe at the strategic points, and made escape from fires a virtual certainty. There are still few of the larger cities in America in which the occupants of new multiple dwellings five stories or less in height are as well protected from fire as they are in New York City.

The danger points of tenement houses had been revealed by special studies of tenement-house fires made for the Commission. Since cellars were a major source of danger, and since stair halls, light wells, dumbwaiter shafts, cellar ceilings, and hollow walls were the major sources of spread, this masterpiece of social legislation provided for the insulation of the cellar by means of fire-retarding construction of the first tier of beams and the closing of all openings to the floor above. It likewise required fireproofing of all shafts, wells, and stair halls, and fire-stopping in walls for all new tenements under six stories. Because of these provisions fire within a new-law tenement house cannot make much headway before the arrival of the fire department, and is usually confined to the place of origin. The tenants mean-

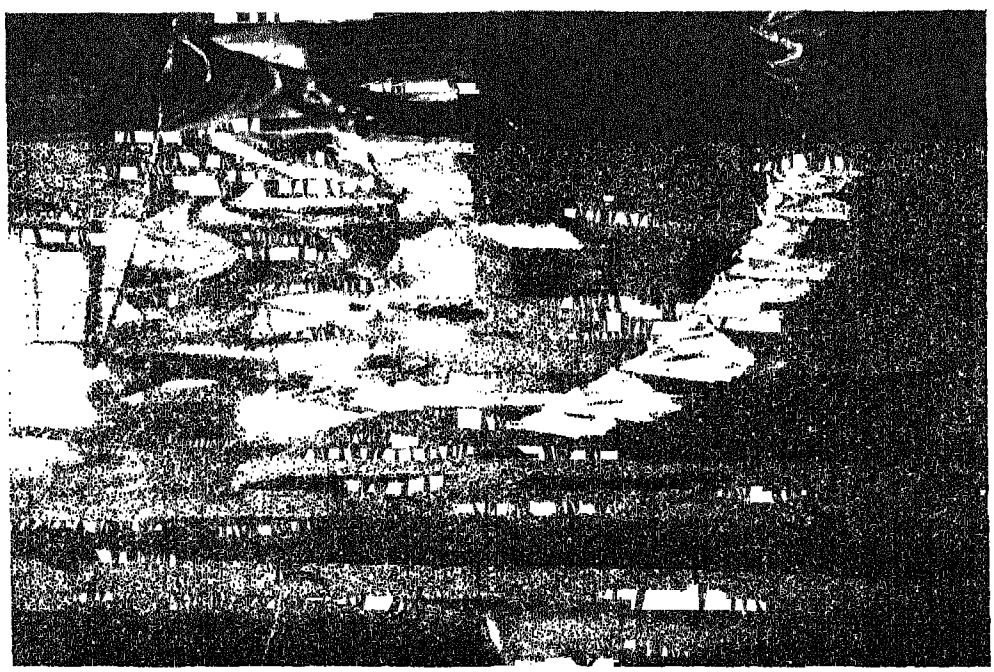
1. Though more recent legislation has been based upon Veiller, *Model Tenement House Law*, published in 1910, and Veiller, *Model Housing Law*, first published in 1914 and revised in 1920, these were modeled upon the Tenement House Law of 1901, which had been framed chiefly by Lawrence Veiller and, in so far at least as architectural and structural requirements were concerned, by I. N. Phelps Stokes; they departed from it in the increasing strictness of provisions, but little in fundamental structure.



Air shafts in old-law tenements. Views taken at roof, 1900.



b Typical back-yard playground, 1900

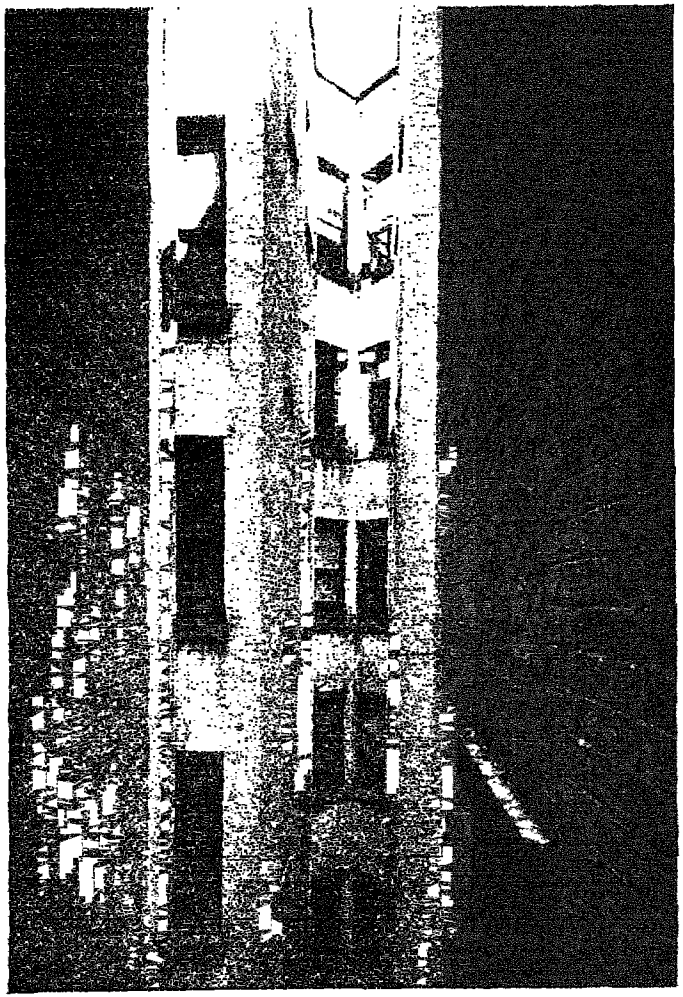


a. Typical back yard, 1900.

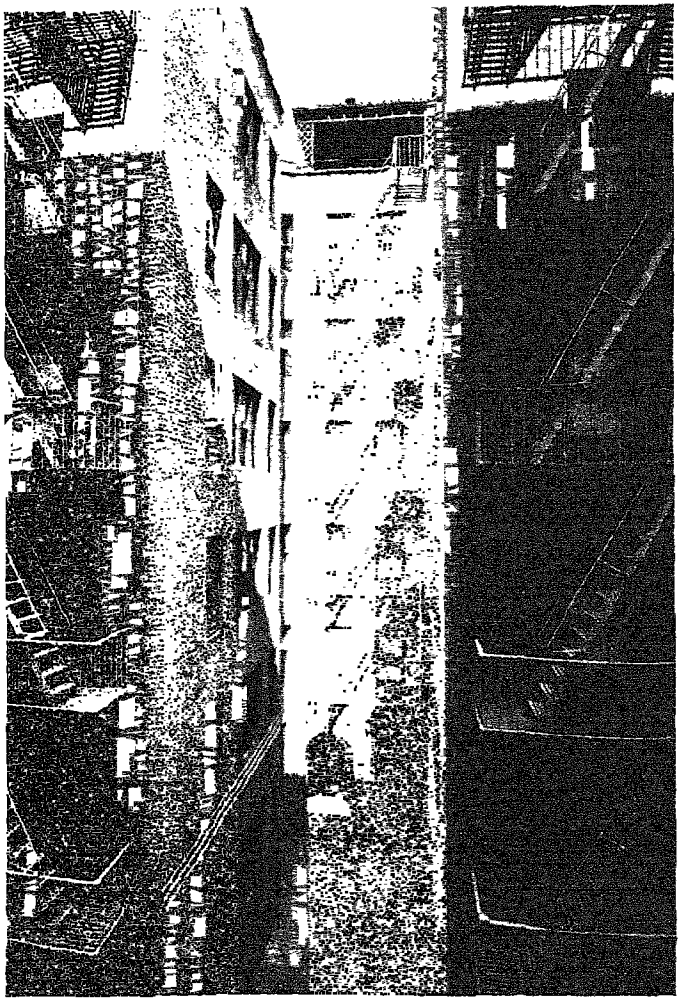
while can escape because each apartment is served by two means of egress remote from one another; one of these is a fireproof stair hall and the other usually an exterior fire escape of the stair (not ladder) type.

The next section of the law dealt with light and ventilation and restricted the area to be occupied by tenement houses erected after 1901 to 90 per cent of corner lots and 70 per cent of interior lots. Heights were not to exceed, by more than one half, the width of the widest street upon which the tenement house stood. A rear yard extending across the entire width of the lot was required, and for interior lots its depth was to be not less than 12 feet in every part, for buildings 60 feet in height, and increased by one foot for every additional 12 feet in height of building or fraction thereof. Outer courts on the lot line for 60-foot buildings must be not less than 6 feet wide at the curb level and increased 6 inches for every 12 feet of added height. Between wings their width must be at least 12 feet. Inner courts must be not less than 12 feet at the lot line and 24 feet in length. Further provisions dealt with buildings on the same lot with a tenement house, and with the requirement of at least one window of specified dimensions opening upon street, yard, or court, for every room, including water-closets and bathrooms. The window area had to be at least one-tenth the superficial area of the room. No room, except water-closets and bathrooms, might have less than 70 square feet of floor area, and each apartment was required to have at least one room of not less than 120 square feet of floor area. Public halls were required to have a window to the outer air, and stair halls, a window on each floor. To ensure privacy, each apartment was to be so planned as to give access to every living room, bedroom, and water-closet compartment without passing through any bedroom. In windowless rooms of old-law tenements (built prior to 1901), windows were ordered to be cut either to the outer air or to a neighboring room having a window opening upon the outer air. Artificial light was required for dark hallways in old tenement houses if the cutting of windows did not render them sufficiently light. These provisions were much elaborated in the law, and their special application to buildings, new and old and of varying heights, was outlined in detail, yet compactly and with remarkable precision.

The next section covered sanitary requirements, including permits for occupancy of basements and cellars in such a way as to ensure relative healthfulness for those which might thereafter be occupied; provision for running water and water-closets in each apartment in tenement houses erected after 1901; exposed plumbing pipes; removal of privy vaults and school sinks wherever connection with the sewer was possible, and hall sinks in old tenement houses; installation of water-closets — at least one for every two families — in every old tenement



a. Typical court of old-law "double-decker" (5′ 4″ × 40′). Before the law of 1901. For plans see Appendix, Pls. 3, C, and 29, A, B.



b. Typical court of new-law tenement. After the law of 1901. For plans, see Appendix, Pls. 9, 10, 11, 12.

FIG. 30

house; damp-proofing of basements and cellars and whitewashing or painting of their walls; sufficient water supply; repair and cleaning of buildings; whitewashing or light-color painting of walls of courts and shafts unless of light-colored brick or stone; removal of old wallpaper; suitable receptacles for ashes, garbage, and other waste; prohibition of certain animals on tenement premises; and the requirement of 400 cubic feet of air for each adult and 200 feet for each child as a device to prevent overcrowding.

The section entitled "Requirements and Remedies" made possible the enforcement of the Act through a remarkable series of powers and penalties. First, a permit to commence building might be granted only after determination that the plans and specifications conformed at every point to the law. Neither new construction, alteration, nor conversion was possible until such a permit had been granted; and occupation of the building was unlawful until a certificate of compliance had been granted after inspection of the completed building or alteration. The penalties for violation of the Act provided for imprisonment or fine — the latter being $200 if the offence was willful and, in every case, an additional $10 for each day after the first that such violation continued — or both fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court. The owner and his agents were subject to both penalty and costs. In addition, there were civil penalties and, under certain conditions, penalties were to become a lien upon property. Procedure for the prevention of violations was outlined in unusual detail.

The next section required registry of the name of the owner and outlined procedure for service of notice, order, and summons. The final section, which is still a novelty in tenement-house legislation and which proved most difficult of enforcement by the Tenement House Department, dealt with prostitution in tenement houses and made the house subject to a penalty of $1,000 if it, or any part of it, should be used for the purpose of a house of prostitution or assignation of any description, with the permission of the owner thereof or his agent. The permission of the owner was assumed if summary proceedings for the removal of the tenants in question had not been commenced within five days after notice of such unlawful use, served by the Department of Health in the manner prescribed by the law.[1]

One other major contribution of this law was the creation of a permanent Tenement House Department for the administration and enforcement of its provisions. So far as can be ascertained, this was the first permanent department of housing, amply empowered and financed, to be established in any American city. The department was charged with the supervision of both construction and

1. The above outline of the law of 1901 was made from a text which included all amendments up to the year 1909.

maintenance of tenement houses. It was headed by a Commissioner assisted by deputy commissioners. The Department comprised the Bureau of Records, the New Building Bureau, and the Bureau of Inspection. The first had charge of the records of all tenement houses in the city. The New Building Bureau was in charge of the approval of plans and inspection during the period of construction, and the granting of certificates of compliance. Its charter provided for not less than three plan examiners, and not less than sixteen inspectors of light, ventilation, and plumbing. The Bureau of Inspection was required to make monthly house-to-house inspections covering every tenement house in the city, to investigate and report upon complaints from citizens, and to make reinspections wherever orders for improvement had been issued. The law required that there should be not less than 190 inspectors, a number much larger than in any other city. Thus arrangements were made for complete, original, and continuing periodic inspections of all the tenements, new or old, of the city. It is still true that in most American cities original inspections are rare, as staffs are too small to permit them except upon complaint.[1]

By the end of the first decade, the reports of the Tenement House Department had become thin chronicles of routine details, though the work of the Department continued to be of a high order, as compared with other American cities.

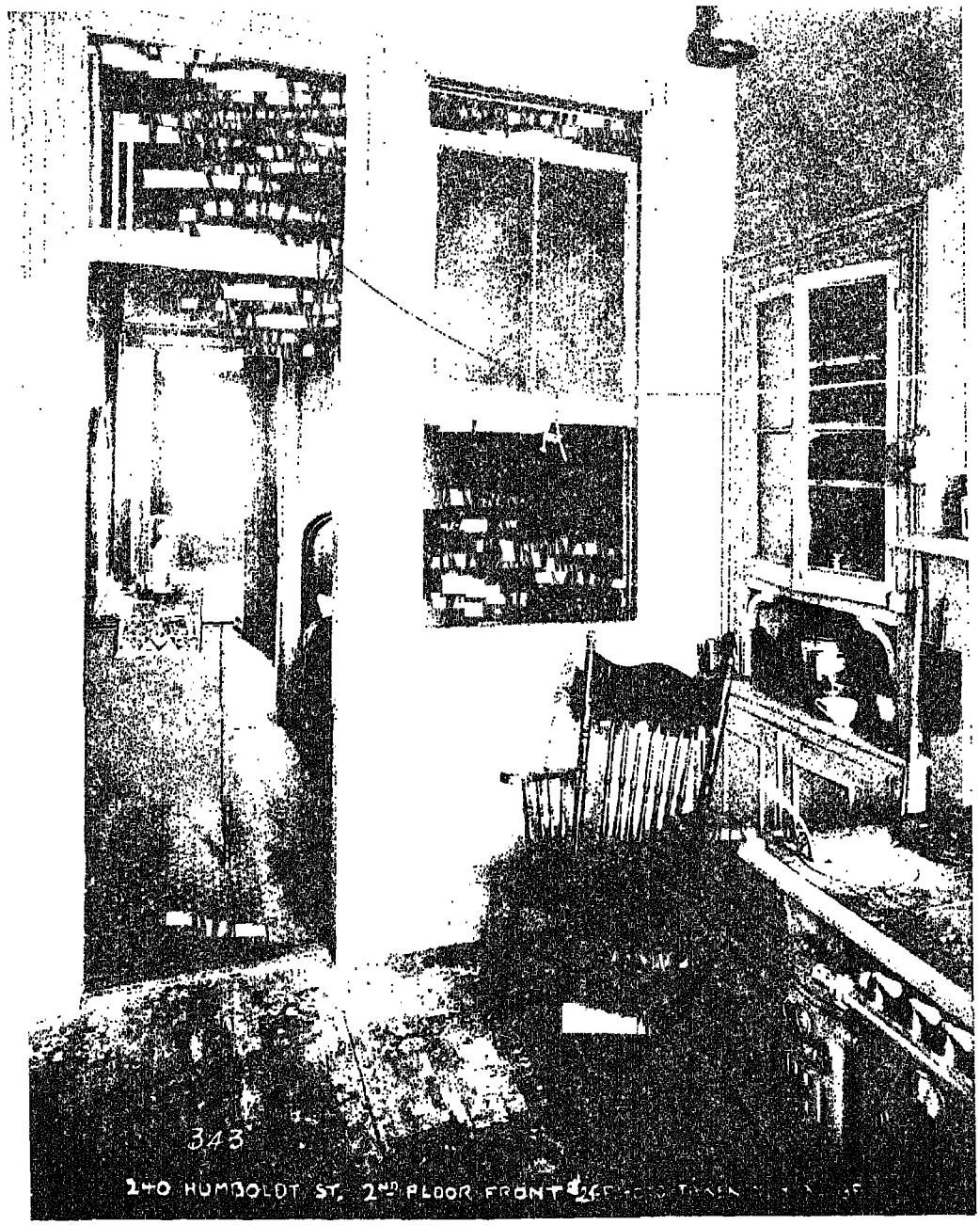
In 1909, the Tenement House Department was investigated by the Bureau of Municipal Research. This was a friendly investigation, made because of the difficulties in securing prompt compliance with the law, difficulties which persisted in spite of the fact that the Supreme Court, in 1906, upheld the Department in a bitterly contested case and declared its provisions as to school sinks constitutional.[2] The investigation undertook to present the needs of the Department in such conclusive form that ample funds might be secured for the prosecution of its work. It sought further to examine the lack of cooperation between the Department, on the one hand, and the builders and landlords on the other, to fix responsibility, and to improve such relations.

It was found that the Department had over 66,000 pending violations, many of which had been pending for years. Frequent reinspection of such violations had rendered impossible systematic house-to-house inspection. Over 58 per cent of the time of the inspection force was employed in reinspections of violations. The accumulation of violations was due to the failure of owners to record themselves and their property, as required by law, or their neglect to answer communications from the Department, or their failure to comply within reasonable time. Cases

1. For an outline of the work of the Tenement House Department in the latter part of this decade, see Dr. George M. Price, *Tenement-House Inspector, 2nd ed.*, 1910.

2. *Third Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York, 1906*, pp. 139–155.

FIG. 31



Courtesy New York City Housing Authority

Interior of typical "railroad" apartment. For plan see Appendix, Pl. 1, D and E.

had not been systematically referred to the Corporation Counsel, and the latter had failed to act promptly upon receipt of the cases which were turned over to him. There was much difficulty also from lost records.

Many recommendations of the Bureau of Municipal Research were put into practice while its report was being prepared. The Bureau's report on organization and procedure for a tenement-house department is the most valuable document of its type that has yet been written in this country. Though designed to meet an immediate problem, it serves to indicate the varieties of conditions and difficulties which may prevent adequate enforcement in any city.[1]

This report played a large rôle in bringing about better service in enforcing the Tenement House Act. John J. Murphy, in the *Sixth Report of the Tenement House Department*, for the years 1910 and 1911, stated that for the years under review, the school sinks and privy vaults had entirely disappeared from all sections of the city where sewer connections were possible, and that 35 per cent of the dark rooms had been lighted and made habitable. He reported also that a radical change in the method of handling violations of the law against tenement houses was carried into effect in 1911. The essence of the change lay in making the house, rather than the violation, the unit of filing. In that way the most delinquent owners were discovered and effort could be concentrated upon them. Considerable funds were made available in 1909 and 1910 to prosecute the work of the Department with more vigor — particularly the periodic inspection of all tenements. By 1920, nearly all the windowless rooms of the city had been opened to the outer air or to neighboring rooms by the cutting through of windows.

When the first census of apartments and tenements was made, in February 1909, it was found that there were over 840,000. This number was increased each year until January 1, 1930, when there were 1,368,691 apartments in buildings previously known as tenements, but designated now, under the new Multiple Dwelling Law, as class-A multiple dwellings. All of the additional apartments built in this intervening period had been built under the relatively strict provisions of the Tenement House Act of 1901. They were, however, largely for persons more well-to-do than the characteristic tenement dweller of the Lower East Side. There are relatively few instances in which the unskilled laborer has found it possible to reside in new-law tenements, and few such tenements have been constructed in the districts designated as slums.

The enactment of the Multiple Dwelling Law by the State Legislature in 1929 continued the Tenement House Department, though replacing many of the provisions of the 1901 law with new provisions less strict in character. The con-

1. Bureau of Municipal Research, *Tenement House Administration*, 1909.

stitutionality of the Multiple Dwelling Law was confirmed by the state Court of Appeals on August 8, 1929.[1]

Immigration had caused a degree of concentration of population probably not equalled in the world's history, unless in the days of Imperial Rome. Recognition of the seriousness of conditions led to the appointment of the New York City Commission on Congestion of Population, which reported to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen on February 28, 1911. The Chairman of the Commission was Jacob A. Cantor, and its Secretary Benjamin C. Marsh. Congestion of population was defined as "the overloading of land." The Commission found that 18.48 per cent of the total population of the city were living in 1.15 per cent of the total area in 1905.[2] In Manhattan there were 122 blocks with a density of 750 to the acre and thirty blocks with a density of 1,000 or over to the acre — counting in the acreage of such blocks one-half of the area of the bounding streets.

> . . . In 1905 the average density per acre of all these blocks was 967, in 1910 it had fallen to 952, a decrease of 15 per acre, the population of all the blocks had fallen from 308,396 in 1905 to 303,839 in 1910 — that is, 4,557. Fifty-four of the blocks showed a decrease in population, the most marked case being the block bounded by W. 61st and 62d sts., Amsterdam and West End aves., whose population fell in the five years from 6,173 to 3,501, a total reduction of 2,672, or nearly three-fifths of the total decrease in population of the entire 122 blocks. The density of population of this block fell from 1,145 to 649 per acre, a reduction of 496 per acre. The block with the largest increase in population is that bounded by Grand, Broome, Ridge and Pitt sts., whose population increased from 1905 to 1910 from 1,843 to 2,552 — that is, by 709, and whose density of population increased from 910 to 1,260, or 350 per acre. This block is in the centre of the congested East Side. . . .
>
> The reasons for the fluctuation of density in blocks are varied in some blocks, as has been noted; buildings were demolished to make way for public improvements, in others tenements have given way to factories and buildings for other business and commercial purposes.[3]

The causes of congestion were stated to be poverty, concentration of factories and offices, the recent consolidation of the five boroughs, the high price of land due to intensive use, immigration and the lack of control over aliens and citizens, long hours of work, cost of transit, the transit policy of the city, lack of a definite city plan, the system of taxation, the failure to prepare land for housing purposes, methods of administering public and private charity, and the failure of the city to adopt a policy to attract people to outlying boroughs. The Commission's recommendations were for: restriction of height or volume of buildings and of land coverage; changes in the general property tax in order to raise a larger percentage

1. *Eleventh Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York*, for the year 1930. The Multiple Dwelling Law was Chapter 713 of the Laws of 1929. Major amendments were made April 4, 1932, in Chapter 622 of the laws of that year, and in Chapter 210 of the laws of 1933, passed April 18, 1933. The law is described further in Chapter XXXI.
2. *Report of the New York City Commission on Congestion of Population*, p. 6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

of tax money from land as distinguished from improvements; education of city population for gardening in order to encourage residential decentralization; a transit policy to distribute population; municipal and copartnership housing; a garden-city movement; and attention to the distribution of immigrants. Specifically, they urged that no tenement house thereafter erected should exceed in height the width of the widest street upon which it was constructed; every tenement house exceeding four stories in height should be fireproof; no room in a tenement house thereafter erected should have a superficial area of less than 90 square feet, and there should be at least one room of at least 150 square feet; lodgers should not be permitted without notification to the owner of the building, who should report to the Tenement House Department under penalty; the rate of taxation upon all buildings should be half the rate of taxation upon all land. There were many additional recommendations, all of them rather obscurely presented. Yet this report was of definite consequence in the history of the city because of the personality of its dynamic Secretary, Benjamin C. Marsh, who, in vigorous language, condemned congestion and other forms of human exploitation, and called forcibly to the attention of the local populace, by lectures, exhibits, and hearings, the benefits of improved systems of land or increment taxation, and the merits of residential and industrial decentralization and the garden-city type of community planning.

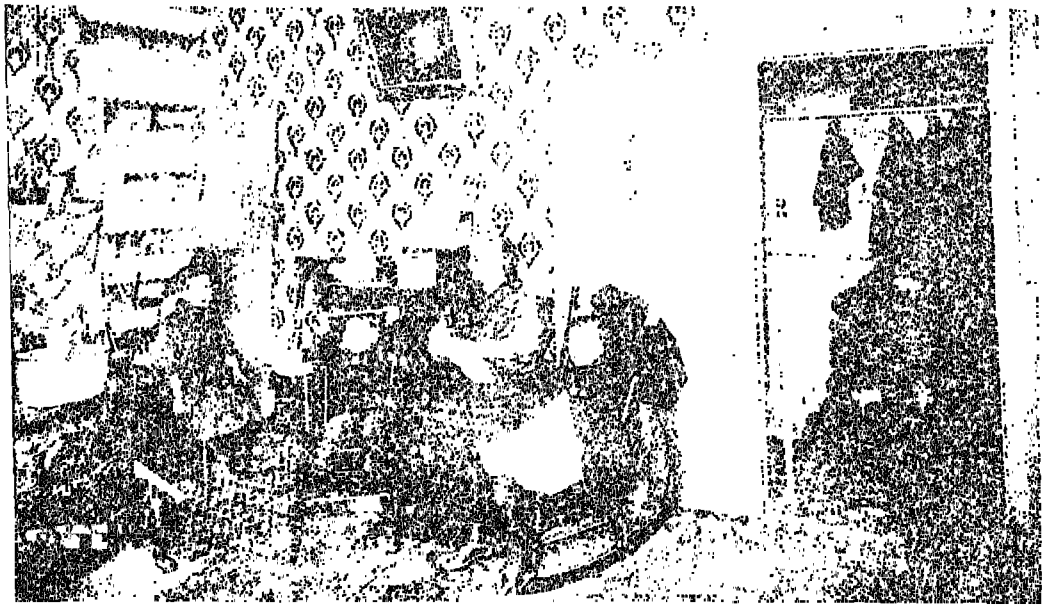
The report of the Commission had little effect upon immediate legislative practice, but it served a useful purpose in stimulating study of European methods of spreading population, which became matters of general knowledge during the next five years, thereby influencing the Federal ventures in war housing in 1918 and the city and community planning movements of the past two decades.[1]

In zoning, New York's contribution to American progress was quite as unique as that in tenement-house legislation. Zoning in New York for the first time united two hitherto diverse fields of study and effort, restrictive housing legislation and city planning. It was the application of the former principle to a new field, and at the same time the entering wedge for city planning conceived in its social and economic, as distinguished from its aesthetic, aspects.

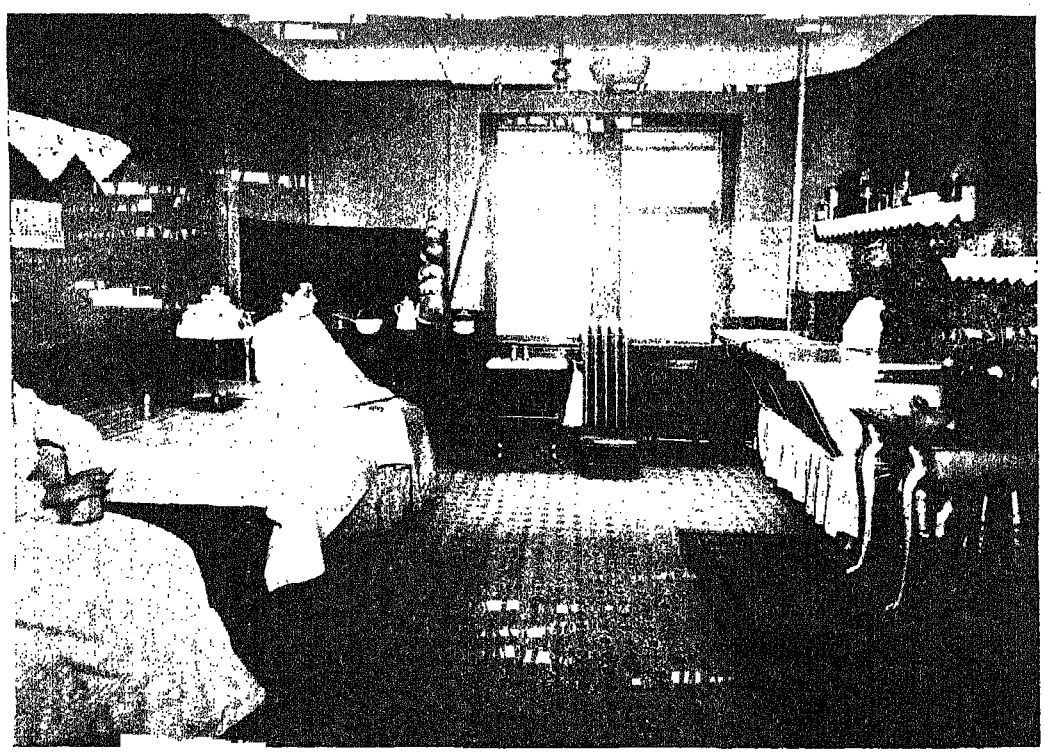
When, on February 27, 1913, on the motion of George McAneny, President of of the Borough of Manhattan, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the City of New York adopted a resolution to have a committee study the height, size, and arrangement of buildings within the city limits, it justified this resolution on economic and social grounds. It was undertaken "in order to arrest the seriously increasing evil of the shutting off of light and air from other buildings

1. The progress of this period in each of these fields is covered in later chapters.

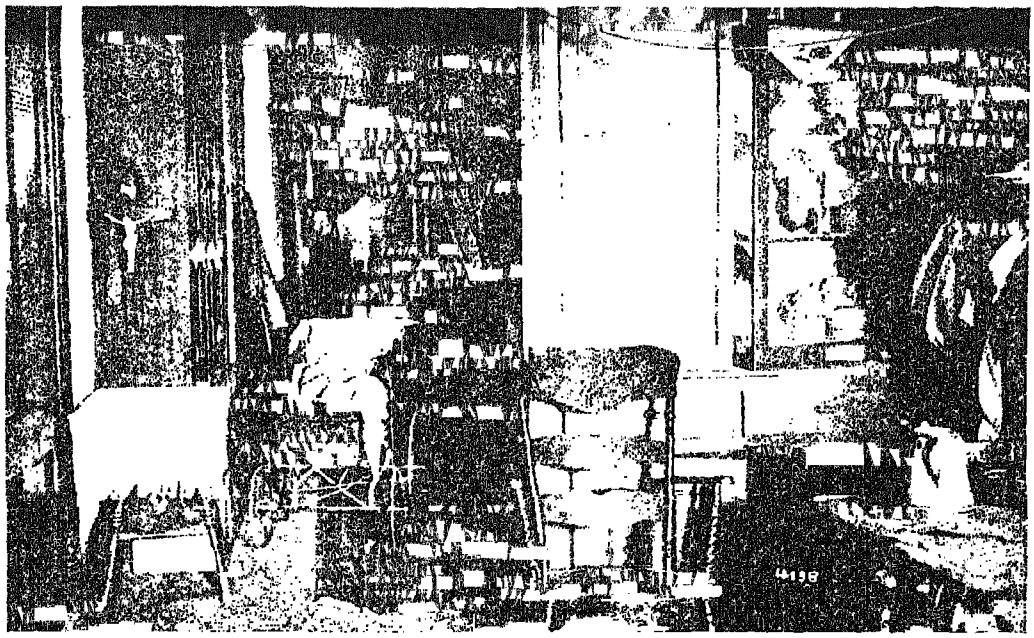
FIG. 32



a. Typical living room in old-law tenement, erected before the law of 1901.



b. Typical living room in new-law tenement, erected under the law of 1901.



a. Living room with adjoining "alcove" bedroom in old-law tenement. Before the law of 1901.



b. Typical bedroom in a new-law tenement, erected under the law of 1901.

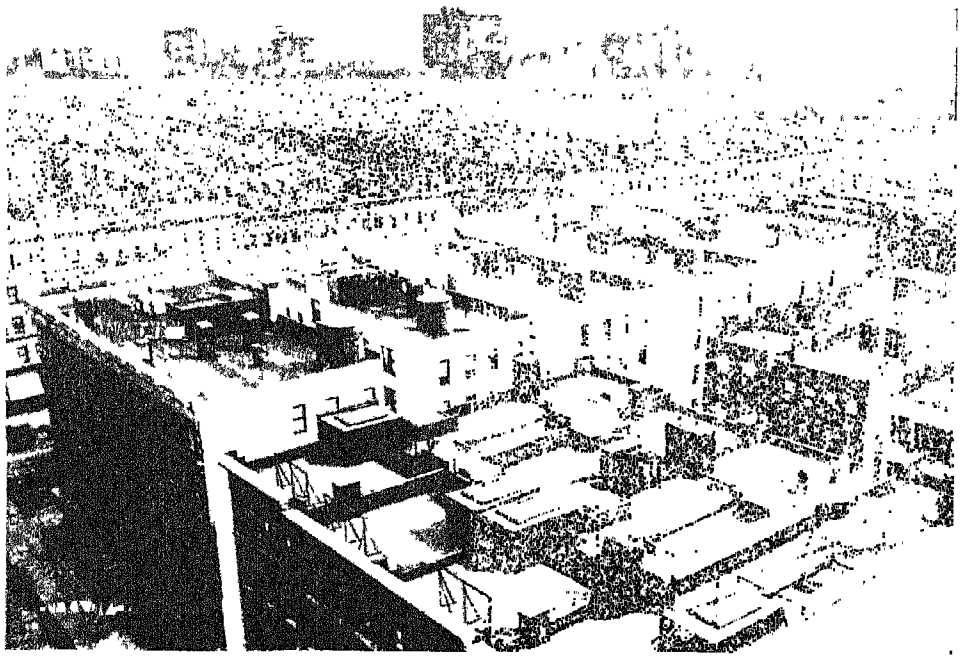
and from the public streets, to prevent unwholesome and dangerous congestion both in living conditions and in street and transit traffic and to reduce the hazards of fire and peril to life." [1]

Mayor Gaynor appointed the borough presidents as the Heights of Buildings Committee. They in turn appointed the Heights of Buildings Commission to serve in an advisory capacity. Edward M. Bassett was Chairman and George B. Ford, Secretary. Many new, able personalities first rendered conspicuous public service for housing through membership upon this Commission. Lawrence Veiller brought to it the experience of the Tenement House Commission of 1900, but the new group included Bassett, Nelson P. Lewis, and Lawson Purdy, as well as four who served subsequently as officers of the United States Housing Corporation: Otto M. Eidlitz, Burt L. Fenner, C. Grant LaFarge, and Allan Robinson. The staff included also Robert H. Whitten, Herbert S. Swan, and Frank Backus Williams. This distinguished group prepared a report of almost unique value in its study of comparative legislation, European and American, and in its understanding both of constitutional limitations and of possibilities.

The Commission found "conclusive evidence of the need of greater public control over building development." [2] Their recommendations [3] included the principles of height districting ("the application of different regulations to different parts of the city"), the use of setbacks and towers, and industrial segregation through the establishment of "use districts." Their "proposed charter amendments relative to districting" [4] urged that "The board of estimate and apportionment shall have power to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings hereafter erected and to regulate and determine the area of yards, courts and other open spaces. The board may divide the city into districts of such number, shape and area as it may deem best suited to carry out the purposes of this section. . . ." These amendments were passed by the Legislature and became law on April 21, 1914.[5]

On May 22, 1914, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment resolved that a commission on building districts and restrictions be appointed, and that the subcommittee of their Board on the City Plan, and various other public officers, be requested to advise with the Commission and to cooperate actively with it in the preparation and study of the necessary data. Edward M. Bassett was appointed Chairman of this new Commission; Lawson Purdy, Vice-Chairman; Robert H. Whitten, Secretary. George B. Ford served as Consultant and John P. Fox as Transit Expert.

1. *The Report of the Heights of Buildings Commission*, December 23, 1913, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 61 ff.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.
5. *Laws of 1914*, Chapter 470.



a. Block of new-law tenements showing through ventilation of block and wide courts in contrast with light shafts in adjoining old-law tenements.



b. Rear yards of new-law tenements showing through ventilation of the block.

This commission, like that on the heights of buildings, approached its problem courageously and with judgment. Both commissions secured testimony and employed experts to make special studies. The report of each contained a remarkable series of illustrations, maps, and graphs to exemplify the effects of unrestricted development upon health, safety, and convenience and to demonstrate suggested remedies and preventives.

The districting plan was justified on the grounds that it would prevent undue congestion of population, ensure better sanitary conditions, simplify traffic regulation and transit problems, prevent over-intensive development of property contiguous to the new transit lines under construction, render possible a more economical development of new city streets, ensure the permanency of the character of the districts when once established, and make the city a more orderly and convenient place in which to live and do business.[1]

In substance, the building zone resolution adopted July 25, 1916, after careful definition of terms, divided the City of New York into three classes of districts — residential, commercial, and unrestricted. Within each residential district new business and industrial operations were prohibited, from business districts a long list of specified industries was excluded, thus leaving industry to unrestricted districts. For the purpose of regulating and limiting the height and bulk of buildings thereafter erected, the City of New York was divided into five classes of districts: one times districts (height not to exceed the width of the street), one and one-quarter times districts (height may exceed width of street by 25 per cent), one and one-half times districts, two times districts, and two and one-half times districts. Then followed provisions for regulating the area of yards, courts, and other open spaces for buildings thereafter erected. The five classes of area districts, A, B, C, D, and E, ranged from the requirement of one inch of court in each dimension for each foot of height of building to the provision, in E districts, of a rear yard space of five inches in each dimension for each foot of height. All of the provisions of the zoning resolution were expressed in detail, not indicated in the above abstract, to make possible reasonable variations. The maps which accompanied the resolution, and which were an official part of it, showed the use, height, and area zone of each block in the city.[2]

Seldom in America's history has science been applied to a wide range of daily interests of an entire urban populace with greater vision and skill. The Commission avoided arbitrariness and high-handedness — which would have resulted in a nullification of the law through bitter organized protest — by the simple, highly democratic device of taking the public into its confidence and of seeking

1. Commission on Building Districts and Restrictions, *Final Report*, June 2, 1916, pp. 21; ff. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 232–280.

the judgment of all interested persons and groups in each detail of its plan. George B. Ford, as Consultant to the Commission, met local owners, merchants, architects, realtors, and any other interested groups in each quarter of each borough of the city, displayed the initial tentative maps for that district, and sought the advice of all present at such meetings — which had been freely advertised in advance — so that local judgment and understanding of peculiar local factors might be properly incorporated in the district limits. Many changes were made in the original tentative drafts as a result of such hearings, and the people of the city, having thus had opportunity to assist in the work of the Commission, accepted the ultimate zoning resolution as their own and defended it.

Ample provision was made in the resolution for subsequent change of districts wherever the effects of an established district might prove unfortunate or where future trends, unforeseen by the Commission, would justify change. Principles governing change have grown out of the experience of the Board of Standards and Appeals, created by Chapter 503 of the Laws of 1916, but have quite generally carried out the spirit and intent of the original zoning resolution.[1]

Side by side with the solid and continuing constructive work of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York, there developed in the third decade of the present century a number of housing movements, which at points conflicted, and at others interpenetrated, to general public advantage. The National Housing Association, established in 1910 with Robert W. DeForest as President, and Lawrence Veiller as Secretary and Director, precipitated surveys of housing conditions, promoted restrictive legislation throughout the country, and maintained recognized leadership in this branch of housing. Veiller's volumes on housing reform, and more particularly his *Model Housing Law*, as well as the annual conferences of the National Housing Association and their official periodical *Housing Betterment* (which in 1928 became a substantial quarterly under the title *Housing*), guided and informed housing specialists throughout America.

Interest in European methods, especially in forms of state subsidization, for model housing projects had been cultivated in the preceding decade by Americans who had attended conferences of the International Federation of Housing and Town Planning, and who had visited the European experiments. Among the more important publications which exercised such influence were *The Introduction*

1. Typical variations and conditions imposed by the Board of Standards and Appeals will be found on pp. 38–44 of George B. Ford, *New York City Building Zone Resolution*, 3rd edition, published by the New York Title and Mortgage Company, 1929. This is the best source of annotated comment upon the building-zone resolution and its amendments up to 1929, and includes useful diagrams on height and area restrictions, copies of forms used by the Board of Standards and Appeals, and maps of the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx showing use, height, and area districts. The authority of the Board of Standards as a Board of Zoning Appeals was conferred in Chapter 601 of the Laws of 1917. For discussion see pp. 10 and 11 of *Model Laws for Planning Cities, Counties and States* by Edward M. Bassett, Frank B. Williams, Alfred Bettman, and Robert Whitten.

to City Planning, by Benjamin C. Marsh, 1909; *City Planning Progress*, by George B. Ford, 1917; and the *Housing of the Unskilled Wage Earner* by Edith Elmer Wood, 1919. Their influence, combined with that of the war housing group in Washington, in 1918 [1] gave a quite new emphasis to the housing movements of New York State.

Governor Alfred E. Smith was quick to apprehend the possibilities of constructive housing legislation. His Reconstruction Commission [2] and the Joint Legislative Committee on Housing (the Lockwood Committee) concentrated attention largely on the physical shortage of housing accommodations and upon high rents. Professor Samuel McCune Lindsay, in a careful monograph entitled *Some Economic Aspects of the Recent Emergency Housing Legislation in New York*, demonstrated with abundant, well-analyzed evidence that the shortage was more apparent than real, and that rents had lagged far behind other items of the family budget in their post-war rise.

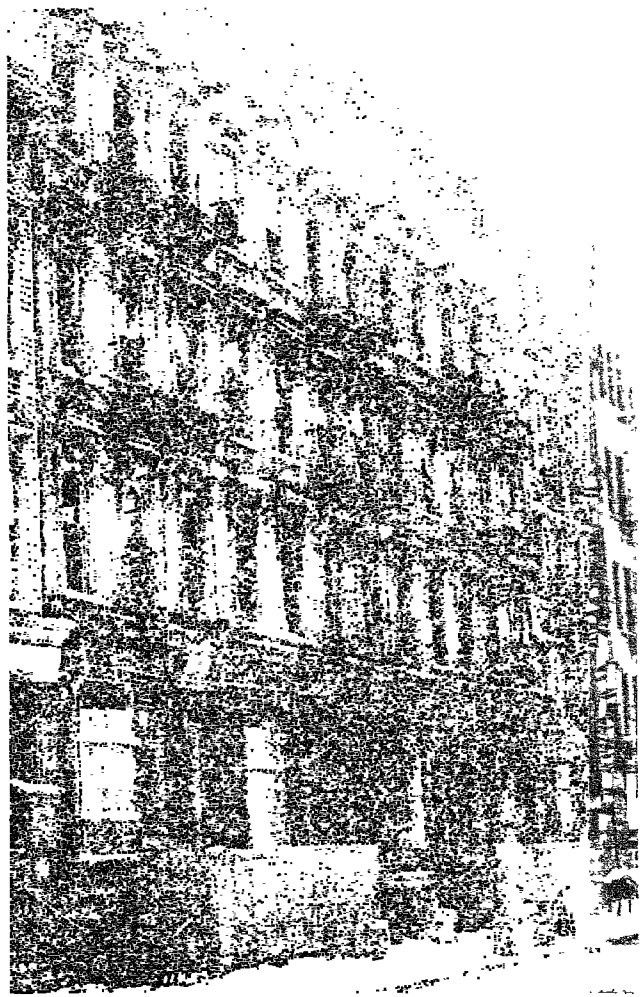
More constructive, however, was the creation of the Bureau of Housing and Regional Planning in the office of the State Architect, in 1923.[3]

The New York State Board of Housing was established in 1926.[4] The duties of the Board included the study of housing needs throughout the state, and the preparation of plans for the correction of such conditions; collection and distribution of information relating to housing; study of the means of lowering rents by securing economy in the construction and arrangement of buildings; preparation of legislation; cooperation with local housing boards; investigations of monopolies of building materials; encouragement of cooperative housing; and investigation of housing companies incorporated under the Act. Under specified conditions the Board was empowered to promote construction of buildings by limited-dividend corporations formed under this act, provided that average rents per month per room in the County of New York would not exceed $12.50, and $11 in the Counties of Kings and the Bronx. Approval of any limited-dividend housing corporation, under this act, was conditioned upon (1) submission of a plan to raise at least a third of the actual cost of the land and improvements through the investment of private capital, the balance to be raised by mortgage bonds; (2) acceptance of a designee of the Board of Housing as a member of the board of directors of such corporation; (3) approval by the Board of the plan, specifications, and estimated costs of the proposed housing facilities, in respect to their conformity to

1. Especially the U. S. Housing Corporation. See Index.
2. Laws of 1920, Chapters 136 and 911, and *Legislative Document* No. 78 for the year 1920.
3. Laws of 1923, Chapter 69; *Reports of the Commission of Housing and Regional Planning of the State of New York*, 1923–1926.
4. Laws of 1926, Chapter 823 entitled "An Act to promote the public health and safety, by providing for the elimination of unsanitary and dangerous housing conditions, to relieve congested areas, and the construction and supervision of dwellings, and for the letting of apartments at reasonable rentals; . . ."



a. Old residences, Milligan Place, W. side Sixth Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets, converted into apartments, *c.* 1900.



b. Abandoned tenements in Moore Street, Brooklyn, *c.* 1918.

FIG. 35

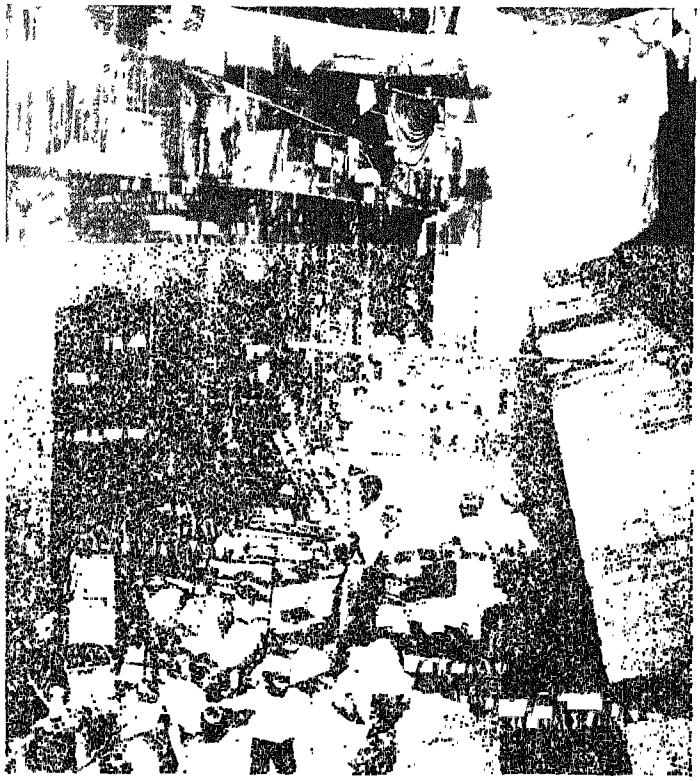
reasonable standards of health, sanitation, safety, and provision for light and air. The Board was given authority to order repairs, examine books, inspect properties, prescribe uniform methods of record-keeping, and require every such corporation to file with the Board an annual report. It was also given power to fix maximum rentals per room, determined upon the basis of the actual final cost of the building. Dividends of such companies were limited to 6 per cent per year. Public limited-dividend companies were authorized under the Act, and were to be exempt from state franchise, organization, income, mortgage-recording, and other taxes. Bonds and mortgages of all such companies were also made tax-exempt, as well as stock dividends. Private limited-dividend companies under the Act were not to have the power of eminent domain, but their securities and the income therefrom and their stock dividends are nevertheless exempt from state taxation.

On June 22, 1927, the Municipal Assembly of New York City enacted local law No. 9, providing for exemption from municipal taxation of the improvements of local State Board of Housing projects for a twenty-year period.

Throughout the past eight years the State Board of Housing has rendered excellent service, for its responsibilities and opportunities have been clearly visualized by the Board and its executives.[1]

Another concurrent trend, which because of its scope is of even more fundamental importance, was the movement for comprehensive city planning. Until the second decade of this century city planning was scarcely more than a branch of city engineering concerned with the layout of streets, parks, wharves, and transit facilities; or a branch of municipal aesthetics concerned with the location of civic buildings, monuments, and their environs. The new era, though it had many precursors, virtually began, for America, with the comprehensive plan for the City of Newark, New Jersey, by Ernest P. Goodrich and George B. Ford in 1913. The viewpoint of its protagonists was expressed by George B. Ford at the National City Planning Conference in Chicago in May 1913, in a paper entitled "The City Scientific," which urged the cooperation of several experts — an engineer, an architect, and a "social expert" - - in the framing of any city plan. He urged the recognition of the whole city as a laboratory, the inclusion of housing and recreation as well as streets, transit, transportation, factories, food supply, sanitation, parks, architecture, laws, and finances, in the process of planning. By means of surveys, maps, financial data, and expert witnesses "the best type of plan of street, block and lot units for any part of the city can be scientifically deter-

1. The Board consists of Darwin R. James, Chairman, Aaron Rabinowitz, Vice-Chairman, John Halkett, Louis H. Pink, and Oliver Cabman, Jr. An exceptionally high type of public service has been rendered by its Secretary, George Gove, ably aided by Carl S. Stern as Counsel, and Ascher Achinstein as Assistant Secretary. Their work is described in more detail in later chapters

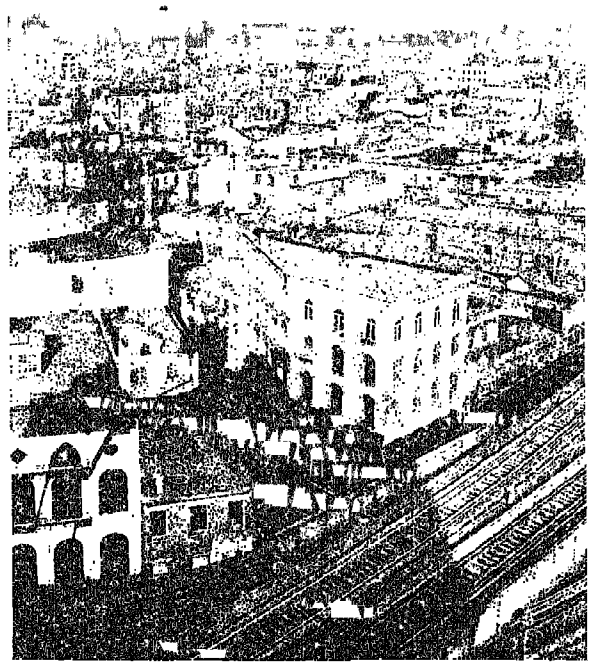


a Typical rear yard "school sink," 1900 Reproduced from DeForest and Veiller, Vol I, p 304



b. An East Side push-cart market, 1925. Reproduced from *Regional Survey*, Vol. VI, p. 50.

The present period is thus one of Federal domination. This is as true of the movement for private home ownership as it is of that for slum clearance. For the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, established in the Hoover administration, gave birth under President Roosevelt to the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the National Housing Act, and the Federal Housing Administration, sources of money power which dominate all forms of mortgage lending in the field of home construction and repair.

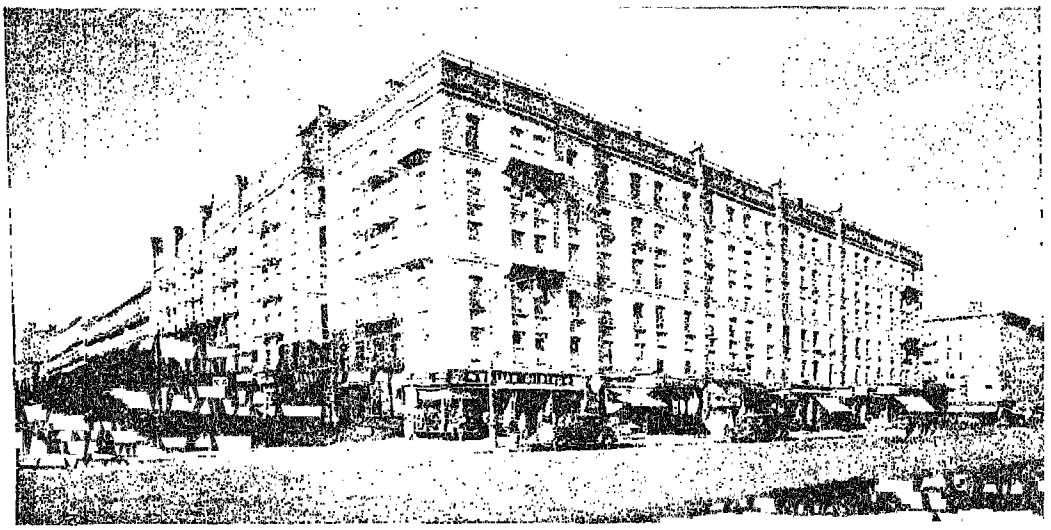


a Doyers Street (heart of Chinatown) from Chatham Square Elevated Railway in foreground

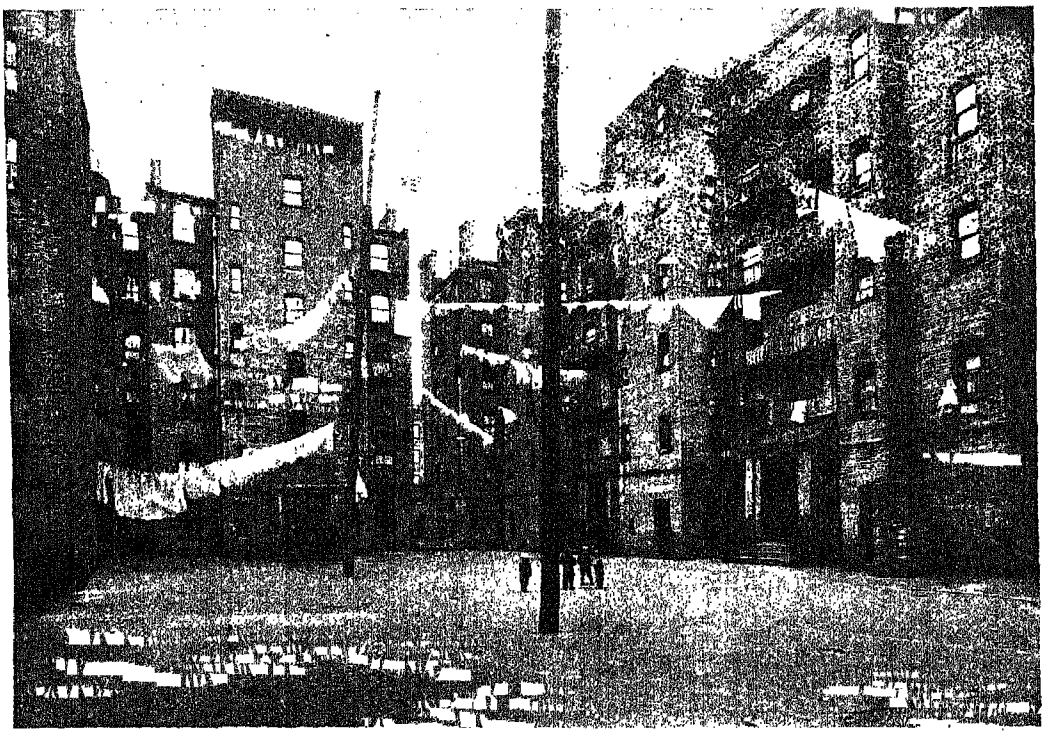


b. Oliver Street between New Bowery and Madison Street— an oasis in the slums. Residences built about 1820 and still in original condition. The Baptist Mariners Temple at right of Elevated Station.

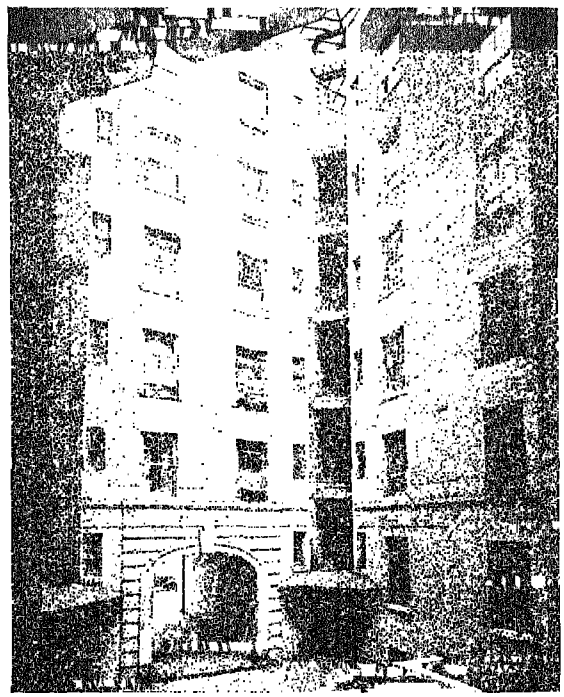
FIG. 38



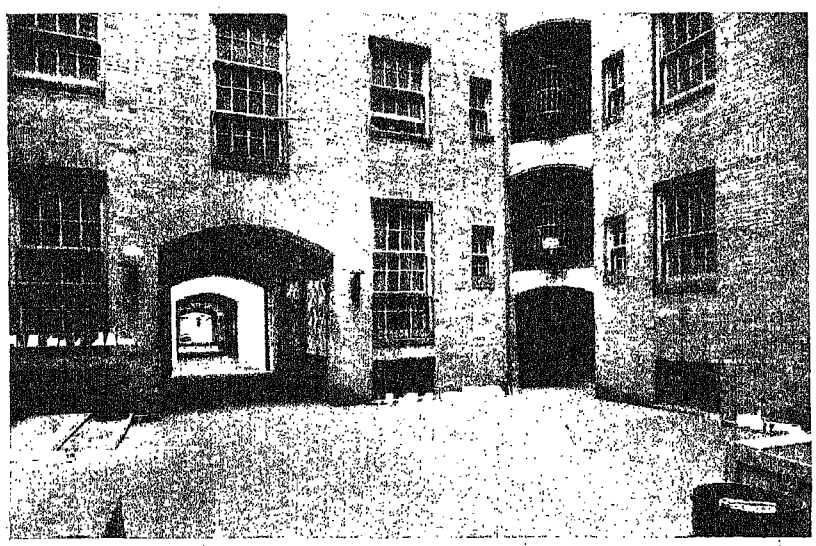
a. Exterior of first group of model tenements on Manhattan Island. Built by Improved Dwellings Association in 1879–1881 and still (1936) standing on First Avenue, 71st and 72d Streets. See also Appendix, Pl. 5, H, and Fig. 116d.



b. Court of Improved Dwellings Association buildings.

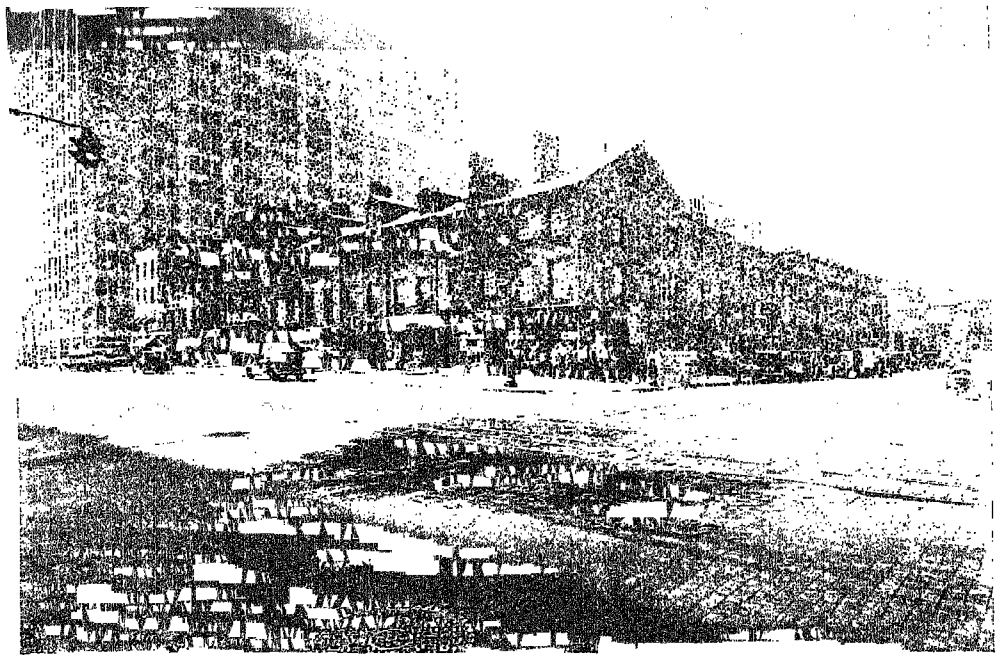


a. Court of William Bayard Cutting open-stair tenements, built by the City and Suburban Homes Company in E. 79th Street in 1913, showing open passage leading to street. A good example of the best derivative of the Flagg type. *Cf.* Appendix, Pls. 7, C–D, 9, A, 14, A.

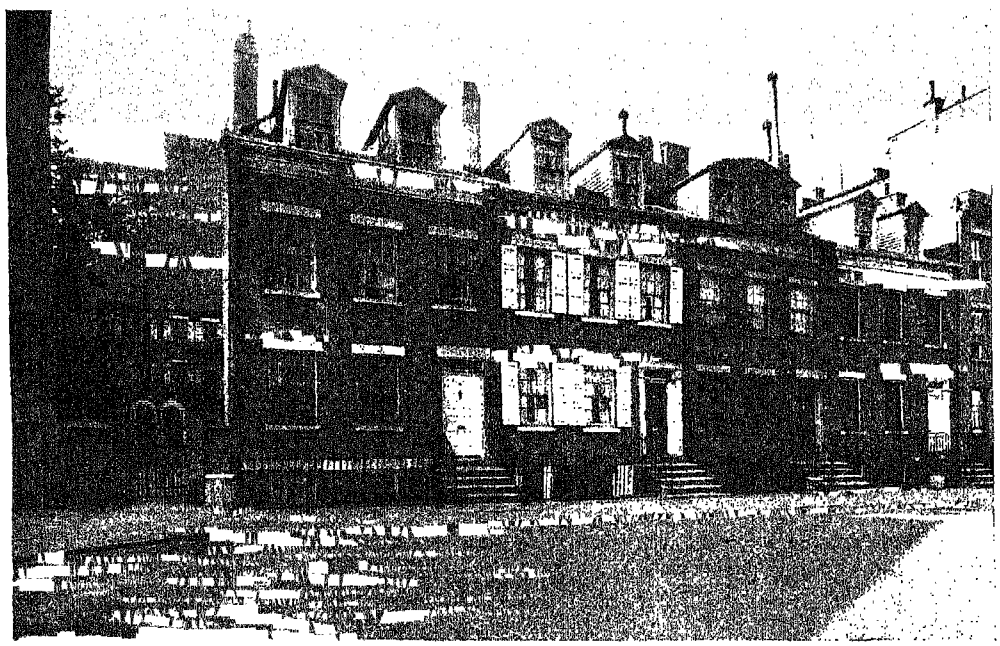


b. Court of one of the John Jay open-stair tenements on 78th Street east of York Avenue, showing passage connecting two units and running through to 77th Street.

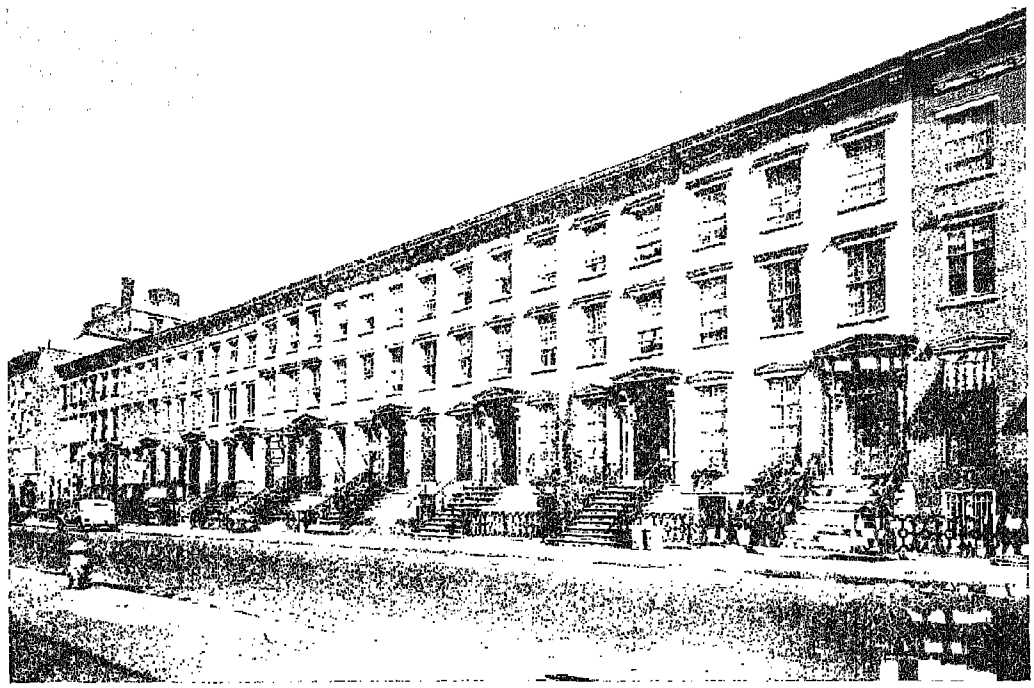
FIG. 40



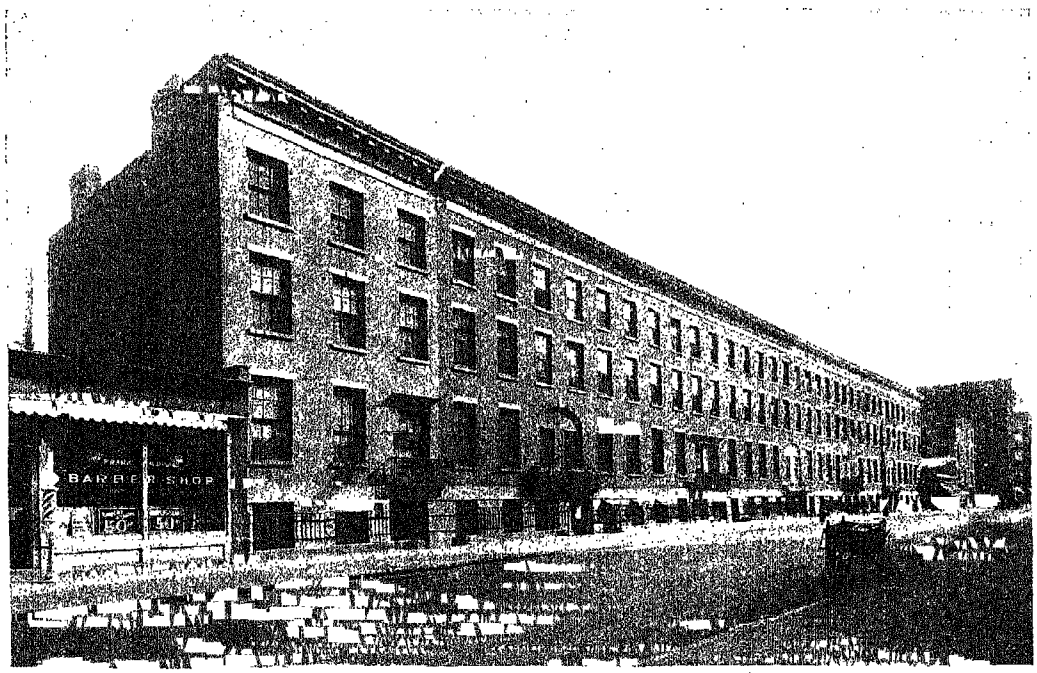
a. Group of Early Nineteenth Century private residences on s. w. corner of Hudson and W. Houston Streets, still standing and long since occupied as apartments.



b. Group of Early Nineteenth Century private residences, 4–10 Grove Street, long since converted for use as apartments. Typical of old Greenwich Village.

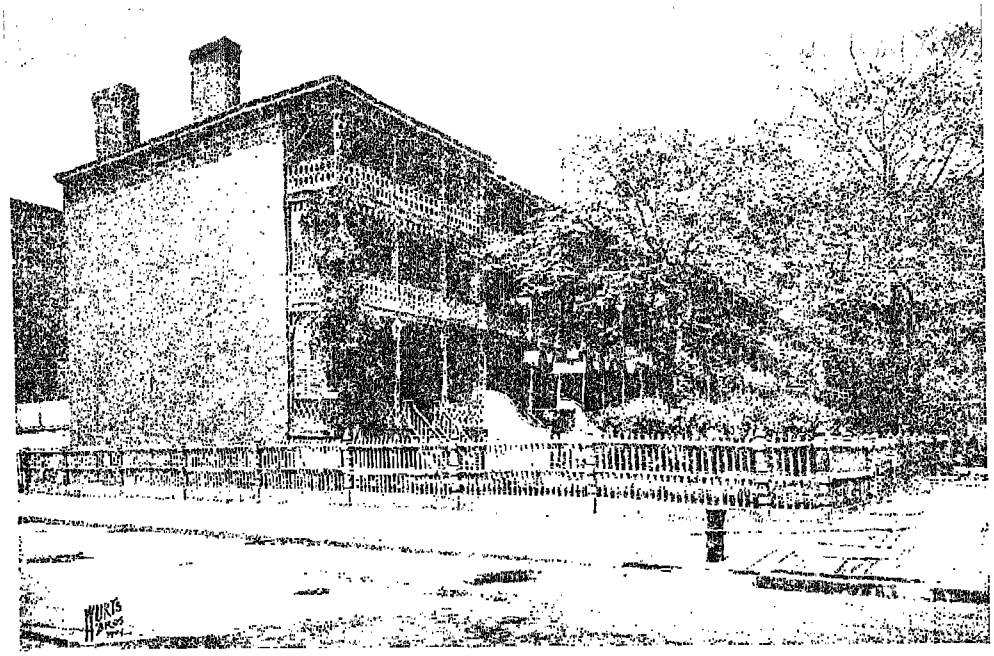


a. Typical block of private residences built before 1840 on the north side of Leroy Street opposite Hudson Park, and for the past quarter century at least occupied as apartments. *Cf.* Appendix, Pl. 1.

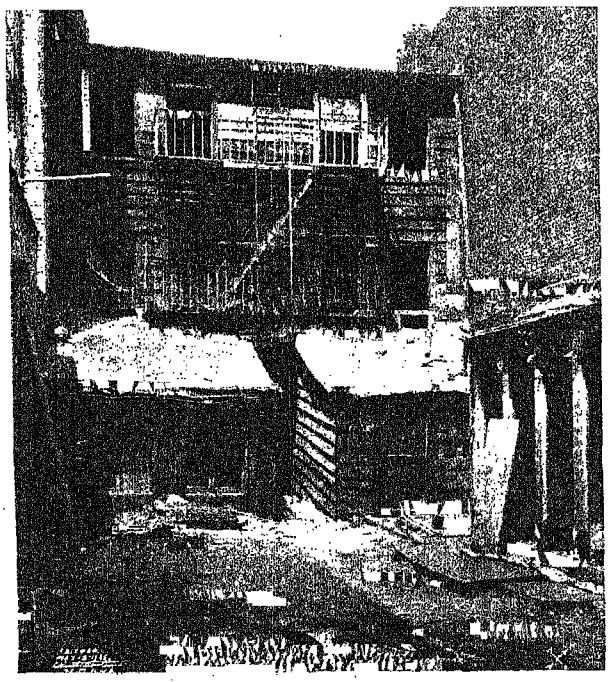


b. Group of private residences, 84–96 MacDougal Street. A large garden separates this from a similar group on Sullivan Street. Both blocks remodelled as apartments several years ago by William Sloane Coffin.

FIG. 42



a. Block of old houses, built before 1850 on the west side of Seventh Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets, and now rented as apartments and furnished rooms.



b. Rear of old house still standing at 520 Tenth Avenue, until recently used as tenements.

CHAPTER VII

HAS THERE BEEN PROGRESS?

MUCH social change has been witnessed in the three centuries which have elapsed since the first settlement of Manhattan. Whether or not such change shall be termed progress is dependent upon the criterion that is employed. If growth is the accepted criterion — as seems to be the case among many — then the increase in population, land prices, volume and speed of transit, and volume of commercial and industrial operations is proof of progress. But one may properly ask whether increases in land prices, which preclude decent housing within ready access to one's place of work, do not do more harm than good. One may equally question whether a massing of so large a population in so restricted an area, precluding as it does from most of the homes of Manhattan, fresh, wholesome air, sunshine, and an outlook upon nature's beauties of sea, sky, and land, can properly be termed progress. Growth, at best, is a mere instrumental value — certainly not an end in itself.

If the chief aim of man is self-realization through service, the development of native capacities through means that contribute to, and never thwart, the self-realization of others, many of the current gauges of progress must be discarded. It may be found that many of the superficially accepted criteria of progress do not merit recognition even as instrumental values.

Housing is not an end in itself, but may be a means to human well-being. If the housing on Manhattan of 1635 is contrasted with that of 1935, a gain in some values will be noted, and a loss in others. There has been a loss not only of sunshine and fresh air to all rooms of dwellings, but also of quiet and privacy, and of the many amenities of village life. There has been gain, on the other hand, in certain facilities that make for comfort and convenience — modern devices for heating, lighting, and cooking; a protected water supply; sanitary appliances; measures for the removal of all kinds of household waste; an almost universal sewerage system; improved means of communication from one dwelling to another; and rapid transit from home to work or to the environment that one may choose for one's leisure hours.

A comparison, in specific detail, of these two periods will reveal in each a portion of the population living underground. It will also show, in both periods,

families whose health is endangered by poor sanitation, unwholesome crowding of rooms, neighborhood nuisances, poor maintenance of homes and streets, fire hazards, imperfect construction, or lack of repair of dwellings. It is probable that in the first century of New York's history a larger percentage of the poor dwelt under wholesome conditions than in the present century. For then the servants and laborers lived, for the most part, in the homes of their employers, but now they are generally condemned to dwell in the relatively poor homes which they can rent with their meager wages.

The chief gains, therefore, have been in household water supply, sanitation and sewerage, heating, illumination, and the other artificial amenities which increase safety or convenience. There has also been in more recent years an elimination of many kinds of unwholesome industry. The shanty towns have been torn down — though there was a recrudescence of them among the unemployed in the winters of 1932 and 1933. Many of the epidemics that plagued New York during its first two centuries, and that were attributed in part to housing conditions, have apparently been eliminated. One no longer finds the numerous homeless children, who were a tragic feature of the last century. Many, but not all, of the obnoxious industries have been removed from residential areas. To this extent at least, the residents of Manhattan have gained in the removal of factors that thwarted or limited development.

There has been increase also in the amount and quality of social organization. Its fruits are found in the volume and detail of building, housing, and zoning legislation, and the safeguards of enforcement. Yet one may fairly question whether the legislation framed today by the people's representatives, through a process of compromise, is superior for its period to that which issued from the executive wisdom of the Dutch West India Company's governors in the early history of New Netherland. Even city planning and the recognition of the metropolitan region, important "new" principles and practices of recent times, had their equivalents in the earliest period. The gain rests, if at all, in the scientific quality of detailed provisions of law.

If, however, one contrasts the twentieth century, not with the seventeenth but with the nineteenth, one becomes aware of phenomenal improvements in conditions of living, particularly for the wage-earning group and the poor. For in the nineteenth century housing conditions got beyond control. Population grew more rapidly than homes could be built. Speculation and rent-profiteering developed greatly before adequate curbs were devised. Unsound structures of many stories, poorly planned, housed thousands of families under conditions of insanitation, misery, and degradation never since equalled. Five Points, Gotham Court,

and Murderers' Alley resembled the London of Hogarth, not the New York of today. The rags, filth, and wretchedness of the 1830's and 1850's, and the congested but picturesque immigrant babel of the Lower East Side in the 1890's and early 1900's, have slowly but surely succumbed to a social assimilation that is far from superficial and involves, for example, a levelling up of dress (due to better care of the poor and to the availability of ready-made clothing) and of behavior (due to exposure of all to public-school education, drama, and the press). Habits of thought in the fields of housing and sanitation have also changed, owing to progress in science and in education. The children of immigrants, educated in American schools, have been trained through standardized textbooks and classroom instruction to demand housing conditions and facilities which, to their parents and grandparents, were quite unattainable. The interplay of leadership, law-making, inspection and enforcement, social work, and public education, with progressively educated consumer demand, has produced, within two generations, genuine progress in housing conditions for families of low income.

It is pertinent to ask whether such gains will last. The world has witnessed many ups and downs in each field of culture. In architecture, New York City has seen the attractive and appropriate "burgher-like dwellings" of New Netherland superseded, for the well-to-do, first by the substantial dignity of the English Colonial, then by the vulgar ornamentation of the American Victorian, flanked by hideous box-like structures for the poor. But of late the city has been emerging into more rational and skillful consideration of line, material, bulk, form, and function. The substantial construction of the Dutch and English Colonial houses was followed, in the Victorian period, by shabby, skimped construction, from which — thanks to relatively sound building and tenement-house codes — we have recently emerged into reasonably rational construction of multi-family dwellings, still, however, fringed throughout the outlying boroughs with new jerry-built housing in the two-story class. In the making and enforcement of housing and building laws, one notes high points in the earliest period and in the first decades of this century, the lowest point having been reached, probably, in the middle of the nineteenth century. The minor fluctuations throughout are dependent chiefly upon the personalities of reformers, law-makers, and enforcing officials, and the influences to which these yield.

More fundamental to progress has been the growing recognition of the rôle of the economic factor in housing, and of social responsibility in regard to health. Means of curbing the profit-making motive when it endangers life, health, or safety have been highly elaborated in the last half century. There has been increasingly wide discussion of standards, principles, and policies, as distinguished

from random measures. Social control has developed through honest effort to arrive at a scientific understanding of conditions and of means to their improvement. Social relationships, on the other hand, may have been rendered somewhat less stable by the elimination of slavery, the virtual abandonment of apprenticeship, the increasing freedom of the worker, and by ignorant or self-interested leadership. The diffusion of civic responsibility, which is a consequence of the extension of the suffrage, without property qualifications, not only to women but to enfranchised Negroes and naturalized aliens — without preparatory training and irrespective of the degree of training each may have — may provide immediate opportunities for self-development of citizens; it certainly does not guarantee the perpetuation of any progress already made. Technicians and specialists, increasingly utilized as experts in government, still incorporate in social policy the findings of science. But improved housing and city planning are dependent for their continuation and development upon the effective solution by society of its larger problems: namely, the elimination of war, improved methods of industrial remuneration and of distribution of wealth, and such improvements in public education as will best build good judgment and sound character in our future citizens. Otherwise, at any moment our social system may get out of control and such progress as has been made in housing may be lost.

In substance, then, if progress is to be measured in terms of increasing opportunity for growth, there has been progress. Its evidences are to be found in the replacement of illiteracy by general public-school education; in the broadening of cultural opportunities and contacts through public recreation, libraries, museums, drama, and the press; in the diffusion of opportunities for active moral participation in public affairs through extension of the suffrage; and in increased opportunities for scientifically trained, personal guidance in development, made available through social work, health centers, vocational placement, and other professional services. There can, however, be no certainty that these will last. For they will remain unstable until coordinated and focused, until the continuous, well-rounded development of the character of all citizens is made central, and all other forms of education and opportunity are subordinated to such universal character training.

Progress in housing equally lacks substantiality. Unquestionably the homes of the poor in this generation are superior in structure, planning, upkeep, use, and particularly in sanitation and equipment, to those of a century ago. These are gains in immediate specific details. But this programme still lacks coordination, unity, and vision. Forces beyond the control of leaders in the field of housing improvement may wreck any or all details of their programme, in a world in which

success is rated higher than character. Persons whose character is untrained — whether they be politicians, law-makers, judges, realtors, builders, architects, reformers, or tenant voters — imperil the best of programmes.

The essence of character is wise organization of habits and effort, for the fulfillment of well-judged ideals. The aim is the well-rounded development of self, broadly construed to include the relations of the self, and thus all other selves. So character building may be interpreted as the provision of opportunities and incentives to all human beings to take the next steps in their own self-development and to participate actively in the service of their fellows. The progress so far registered in housing reform has been of value in removing some of the many factors in domestic environment that thwart individual development — crowding, insanitation, inconvenience, lack of privacy, and so on. There has been lacking in the housing programme the vision of a world in which each home will be a positive element in the self-development of its occupants and of the community — a home in which there need never be danger of fire, preventable accident or illness; a home of utmost convenience and comfort, with adequate provision for each of the many functions of household life, and for each of the interests of members of the family, and with opportunities for the entertainment of friends, on the one hand, and for complete privacy, an essential of growth, on the other; a home with abundance of sunshine and clean fresh air, with a cheerful and even inspiring outlook from its windows, readily accessible to work and to cultural opportunities, in a neighborhood which, because of its skilful plan and beauty of design, is a source of inspiration to residents or visitors.

This may be taken as the criterion by which housing progress is to be gauged. The movement towards this goal has been so slow as to make it seem hopeless of attainment. In this regard, however, housing is not different from each of the other fields of human effort, whether education, health, religion, or government.

Progress may be likened to mountain-climbing. There is a remote peak as the objective, but the path may wind and may take a man over one knoll or minor eminence after another, or through intervening valleys, before the ultimate direct ascent to the peak is possible. Housing reform is still among the foothills. Effective reform involves periodic contemplation of the ultimate objective and the best modes of approach. But, as in mountain-climbing, if a man keeps his eyes exclusively upon the peak, he may stumble over the roots or rocks in the immediate path. It is easiest and safest, while periodically contemplating the peak, to choose an immediately compassable objective which is on the way; and upon its attainment to pause, and carefully consider the best next objective on the path to the ultimate goal.

There is some evidence that this has been the method of our more successful housing reformers of the past century. It is implicit in the writings of Griscom, in the early work of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, in the personality of Marshall, and in much of the service rendered by Veiller, Adams, Gove, and numerous others of the present period.

There is abundant evidence that progress is a product of personality: that whatever has been achieved to date has been an outgrowth of wise leadership. The inscrutable factor is time, since programmes which are excellent on paper may, under given conditions, meet with no immediate response. The leadership which is effective may acquire that effectiveness, in part at least, because the "times are ripe." We do not know whether this time factor expresses divine guidance, the operation of an "inner teleological principle," or just plain "chance," which may be another name for the "unknowable" or merely the "not-yet-known." It would appear, however, that nothing is forgotten and that the untimely programmes infiltrate the thought of leaders or others, and in due course find their sponsors. History thus seems to indicate that no effort is wasted, and to justify continuation of all branches of housing research and policy framing.

PART II

CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS — CAUSES AND EFFECTS



CHAPTER VIII

PHYSICAL BACKGROUND OF URBAN HOUSING

CITIES have individuality. The housing conditions characteristic of each are, in part, an outgrowth of conditions geographical and topographical. Out of peculiarities of site there develop peculiarities of structure, expressed in terms of height, bulk, and materials. As a derivative of these, one finds characteristic plans and designs — a resultant of the exercise of the ingenuity and individuality of designers upon conditions fixed in large part by nature.

Ecology is the study of the interaction of man with his physical environment. We may extend the term to comprise the use of land and other physical facilities constrained by nature, as well as the opportunities created by nature. Man's reaction to his physical environment may be either active or relatively passive. Urban ecology is particularly well illustrated in terms of housing. Natural configuration determines the direction of urban growth, once the site has been selected. Thus New York City, founded originally at the southernmost point of the island of Manhattan, could develop only in a northerly direction. Other directions of growth were at first prevented by the presence of the North and East Rivers, which were insuperable barriers until man's active adaptation of given conditions to his own needs led him, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to provide outlets in other directions by means of bridges, tunnels, and subways. Exceptionally rapid population growth, combined with limitation of land supply, is primarily responsible for the unusual height to which residential buildings have been erected, and for the bulk, coverage, and high land values that are typical of New York City. Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia escaped this predicament, as each was able to develop in three directions instead of one. London, meeting no obstacles to its growth, was able to develop in four directions. Thus, in other large cities of western civilization, buildings of great height and bulk were not essential.

On the other hand, the topography of Manhattan is such that in the sections earliest built, land was relatively flat, thus differing from that of Pittsburgh, which early had to solve the peculiar problem of hillside housing, as did also Worcester, Fall River, and a number of smaller cities. The ponds and marshes of early Manhattan, though a source of difficulty to its inhabitants, were, within

two centuries, filled in and built over. The higher hills of lower Manhattan were levelled so that by a process of active adaptation reasonable building land was, with few exceptions, made available at all points south of Morningside Heights and Riverside Drive. The planning genius of the last century recognized the aesthetic values of ledges and steep inclines, which were reserved for parks. To these, in the middle of the last century, Central Park was added with its abundant natural beauties, largely unspoiled by cuts and fills. Central Park gives us a fair example of the type of raw land that man had to subdue for the development of New York City in its present relatively level form.

The natural resources of a region largely determine also the materials of construction. This was particularly true during the generations immediately following the settlement of Manhattan, in the early days before commerce with distant points was well developed. Large, nearby forests of hardwood led, at first, to the construction of frame houses. The presence of adequate and easily exploited clay pits later led to brick construction. Available sandstone, easily quarried, accounted for the "brown-stone fronts" of the nineteenth century. After the development of rail transportation, structural iron became accessible and facilitated skyscraper construction, with the use for veneer or trim of masonry or synthetic materials and other highly specialized products.

Paris is famed the world over for its unbroken street fronts of white stone. This type of beauty, characteristic of Paris, is largely traceable to the availability and comparative inexpensiveness of white limestone, quarried in the vicinity, and to the development of skill in its use. One reason why Paris still maintains a recognized leadership in the field of architecture is undoubtedly the accessibility of large limestone quarries, for limestone lends itself to monumental treatment, and to uses that involve dignity, simplicity of mass, and beauty in both form and texture.

So abundantly supplied with brick clay were Philadelphia and Baltimore that even private dwellings of the industrial classes were constructed of brick in these cities. The plentiful forests of New England and New York largely determined the more liberal use of wood in these sections — frame construction for inexpensive housing of the early days, and the continuing use of wood for interiors and for suburban housing. Even in the present century, brick exteriors in the more densely settled portions of northern cities were enforced by man-made law as a means of preventing conflagration, and thus represent man's adaptation of physical surroundings to his needs.

The exhaustion of forests in western Europe compelled man to economize in the use of wood, and thus the larger cities of England, France, and Germany are

of masonry, which renders them nearly conflagration-proof. Russia still has forests, and hence wood is used there in the same liberal manner as in America. The forest resources of America, with the consequent relative inexpensiveness of timber, have occasioned liberal use of wood, even where masonry exteriors are required by law. Every American city, therefore, has to maintain expensive fire departments to fight fires which occur daily. Each American city faces a conflagration risk and has, at one time or another, suffered disastrous fires which could not be confined to the place of origin. To the American visitor in Paris, the *pompes à incendie* are amusingly primitive, but they may safely be so, for Paris is a comparatively fireproof city.

Construction is determined by the available materials, the limitations established by the restrictive housing laws and building laws of the period, and the personal preferences of owners — modified by advice of architect, builder, realtor, mortgagor, and others. New methods get established slowly, both in law and in practice, and demonstrate cultural lag.

Design reflects the personality, associations, and training of the architect; tradition or fashion may set the major style within which he develops minor variations. The owner may choose among many plans, or may insist upon specified height, bulk, arrangement, or design. Few architects or owners break away from the traditions or fashions of the period in which they build. Leading architects seldom design tenements for the poor, so most accommodations for this class lack distinction and quality.

Residential location for the well-to-do is determined by choice, within narrow limitations, but the remainder of the population must usually be content with locations abandoned by the original owners. Since commerce and industry can better afford the sites that they prefer, the mass of the population has to take what is left.

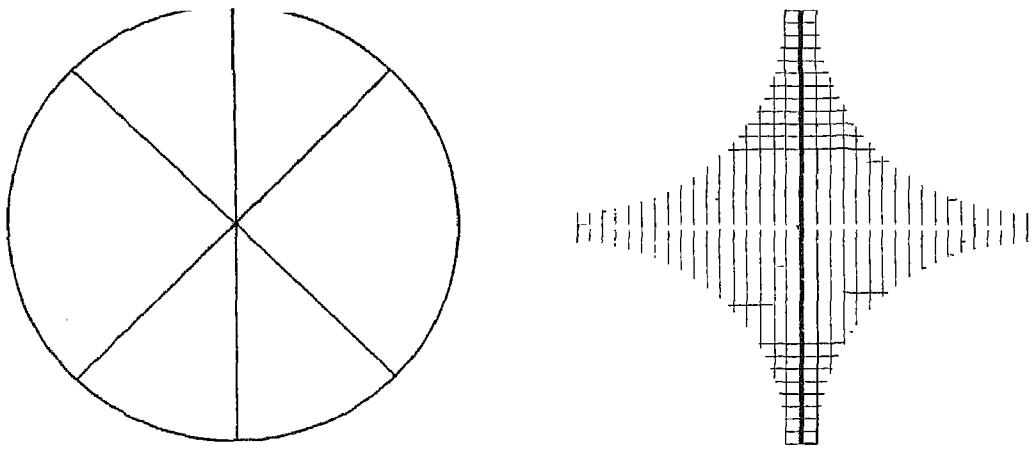
The city plan — including street, block, and lot layout — represents the crystallized thought of early planners. The heavy hand of tradition is felt throughout.

Next to the physical factors, therefore, the most important element in determining urban individuality is the influence of the city plan, or of its absence, upon prevailing structural types. Philadelphia was laid out by William Penn on a checkerboard plan with streets at right angles. This inevitably meant that not only the blocks, but the lots within each block, would be rectangular. The plan for Washington, by Major L'Enfant, superimposed diagonal avenues upon a rectangular plan and thus cut off corners of many rectangular blocks or passed through them transversely. This produced many lots in which the front and rear

lines are not parallel — conditions which make architectural design and planning difficult. The beauty of residential streets is thus reduced, though broad vistas to the monumental buildings and the parks at the ends of the diagonal avenues are facilitated.

In Boston, not only the original streets but many of those in the newer suburbs are adapted to the topography and configuration of land, so that rectangular blocks are rare except in the flat "made land" of the South End and in the unimaginative layouts of speculative suburban developments. Lots, as well as

FIG. 43



a. Radial Plan. b. Gridiron Plan.

blocks, need not be rectangular; and this stimulates a wider variety of architectural types in the attempt to bring a maximum yield from lots which have peculiar dimensions.

Western cities are largely laid out on the rectangular or gridiron plan, though some, like Detroit, have diagonal arterial ways, more or less adapted from the Washington model.

The advantage of the gridiron system is that it makes possible the effective utilization of all space upon the lot. Lots are of standard shapes and sizes, so that land may be sold by the front foot, rather than by the square foot. Difficulties in determining lot boundaries are reduced to a minimum. Streets may be so numbered that even a stranger may find his way readily about town. Land values are somewhat more easily stabilized. Lots are rather readily convertible from one use to another and may be combined in units of two, three, or more, to facilitate new uses.

The disadvantages of the rectangular plan are chiefly these. Each street is likely to become a through-traffic street. This leads commonly to uniformity in width, paving, and curbs. Residential streets suffer almost equally from continuous through traffic, and consequent noise and accident danger. Street architecture tends to be stereotyped, and individuality of design becomes a virtual impossibility; for even the best design may be practically ruined by the monotony or unattractiveness of neighboring dwellings. The gridiron plan also leaves certain suburban areas relatively inaccessible; for if the major streets run north to south and east to west, the suburbs to the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest can be reached only by following two legs of the triangle instead of the hypotenuse, which involves costly delays in reaching such areas. This means, in turn, that there will be less accessible suburban land competing for sale and relatively high land costs for the land in the accessible suburbs to the north, east, south, and west. The development of such a city would normally take the form of a four-pointed star, whereas the growth of a city with well-placed diagonals would be equal in all directions and take the form of a circle. The latter should have lower prices for outlying land, owing to the larger quantity of desirable suburban land competing for sale at any given time.

New York City combines some of the characteristics of the cities discussed above, but adds a number of quite individual factors. The earliest settlement in lower Manhattan was rather like that of Boston. Since the first lanes followed the contours of the land, blocks in lower Manhattan are often not rectangular.[1]

New York's first city plan was adopted in 1811. (Figure 9b.) The city, north of Astor Place, was designed on a rectangular plan which involved north-south avenues 100 feet wide, side streets, usually 60 feet wide from building line to building line, blocks of 200-foot frontage on each of two avenues and 400-foot frontage on each of the two streets running east and west. Within each block most lots have a 25-foot frontage and a depth of 100 feet. This plan of 1811 is chiefly responsible, when combined with the factor of immigration, for the peculiarly difficult and unwholesome housing conditions from which New York has suffered during nearly a century. The fundamental error of the plan lay doubtless in its failure to anticipate the city's rapid growth. The number of north-south avenues should have been doubled and the number of streets east and west should have been cut in half to facilitate the movement of traffic, which today is preponderantly north and south. The only possible residential regions for the mass of the population, prior to the construction of the elevated railroads and subways, were in Manhattan. New residences were always constructed to the north of the

1. See Chapter II.

built-up area of Manhattan. The principle centers of business and industry inevitably remained south of the residential areas.

Moreover, if the number of north-south avenues had been doubled, the vast majority of residences facing the north-south avenues would have had exposure to east or west on 100-foot streets and would thus have enjoyed the benefits of adequate sunshine and natural light. It is primarily because of the plan of 1811 that nearly one-third of the rooms of the city face north and thus lack sunshine. Only one diagonal street, Broadway, was provided in the original plan and no other significant diagonals are found on Manhattan today.

If the plan had been inverted as above described, all residences would, however, have been on through-traffic streets, which would have increased noise, dust, and accident danger. Hence an alternative — providing adequate central north-and-south traffic-ways, and peripheral residential quarters on the North and East Rivers, with parked riverways and roadways restricted to non-commercial traffic above the areas needed for wharves — would have increased the amenities in residential areas.

The difficulties faced by the Commissioners will, however, be apparent from their report:

> That one of the first objects which claimed their attention, was the form and manner in which the business should be conducted; that is to say, whether they should confine themselves to rectilinear and rectangular streets, or whether they should adopt some of those supposed improvements, by circles, ovals, and stars, which certainly embellish a plan, whatever may be their effects as to convenience and utility. In considering that subject, they could not but bear in mind that a city is to be composed principally of the habitations of men, and that strait sided, and right angled houses are the most cheap to build, and the most convenient to live in. The effect of these plain and simple reflections was decisive. . . .
>
> It may, to many, be matter of surprise, that so few vacant spaces have been left, and those so small, for the benefit of fresh air, and consequent preservation of health. Certainly, if the City of New-York were destined to stand on the side of a small stream, such as the Seine or the Thames, a great number of ample spaces might be needful; but those large arms of the sea which embrace Manhattan Island, render its situation, in regard to health and pleasure, as well as to convenience of commerce, peculiarly felicitous; when, therefore, from the same causes, the price of land is so uncommonly great, it seemed proper to admit the principles of economy to greater influence than might, under circumstances of a different kind, have consisted with the dictates of prudence and the sense of duty. . . .
>
> To some it may be matter of surprise, that the whole Island has not been laid out as a City; to others, it may be a subject of merriment, that the Commissioners have provided space for a greater population than is collected at any spot on this side of China. They have in this respect been governed by the shape of the ground. It is not improbable that considerable numbers may be collected at Haerlem, before the high hills to the southward of it shall be built upon as a City; and it is improbable, that (for centuries to come) the grounds north of Haerlem

Flat will be covered with houses. To have come short of the extent laid out, might therefore have defeated just expectation and to have gone further, might have furnished materials to the pernicious spirit of speculation.[1]

It is perhaps asking too much to urge, in view of our contemporary knowledge of New York City growth, that the Commissioners of 1811 should have provided more adequately for future development. If they could have envisioned New York's subsequent history, they might have included more frequent park areas throughout the island, so that an adequate park would be accessible from every residential quarter. They might also have planned for broad, two-lane traffic ways north and south, of the Park Avenue type, restricting commerce and industry to the areas between the north-and-south avenues, and confining residences to the areas north of the wharves on the East and North Rivers and between the rivers and the nearest north-south traffic lane. In 1811, however, one could scarcely have anticipated the phenomenal inflow of immigrants from Europe, which came in later decades, nor the equally phenomenal developments in transit and transportation. Similarly, the best of city planning science of today may fail to anticipate changes in population, tastes, attitudes, living standards, transit devices, and the individual social needs of the twenty-first century. The reform of housing conditions may thus always be a process of undoing, or patching up, the mistakes of the past to meet the needs of the present.

The typical New York City lot, with its 25-foot frontage and 100-foot depth, is at the bottom of a good fraction of the typical tenement-house evils of Manhattan today. The lot is too narrow and too deep for residential purposes. When used for private dwellings, this means dark, unwholesome areas between front and back rooms if houses are constructed more than two rooms deep. Where such dwellings were converted for occupancy by many families, it meant partitioned interior spaces which became windowless rooms. When the first tenement houses were built on such lots they were of the "railroad" type, covering usually 90 per cent of the lot and with no "light shafts," 75 per cent of the rooms being without outside light. The "dumb-bell" tenement of the late 1870's was hailed as a reform because it was a vast improvement upon the "railroad" type. It generally covered about 75 per cent of the lot and the vast majority of its rooms received their sole natural light from a slit between five- or six-story buildings that was usually around 40 feet in length and from 2 to 4 feet in width.[2]

The Tenement House Act of 1901 again attempted to mitigate this evil, so far as future construction was concerned, by the provision of a rectangular interior court, $12' \times 24'$, on the lot line, or $24' \times 24'$ in the interior of the lot or when

1. Stokes, I, 472–473.

2. See Appendix.

two such interior courts on adjoining lots were combined. This was as great an improvement as would be possible on a lot only 25 feet in width if commercially developed. It led to a vast improvement in living conditions for families so fortunate as to be able to find and dwell in a new-law tenement. Yet for six months of the year sunshine could not penetrate below the two top stories of such a court.[1] Outer courts, under the Tenement House Act of 1901 might be 6 feet wide or when combined with similar courts on the neighboring lots, 12 feet, and if they happened to face to the south might provide sun for rooms on the lower stories for a brief period each day. Wholesome conditions of living, however, remain an impossibility when buildings more than two rooms in depth are constructed on lots of these dimensions.

The concentration of population and high land values,[2] when combined with the typical dimensions of the New York City lot, have induced intensive building and have robbed New York City residents (except those occupying upper stories) of adequate sunshine and natural light. The majority of city dwellers are forced to live in comparative darkness, and the original city plan, with its east-west residential streets and its 25-foot lots, combined with factors of land speculation and heavy immigration, is primarily responsible.

1. See Figure 111.

2. See Chapter XI for detailed treatment.

CHAPTER IX

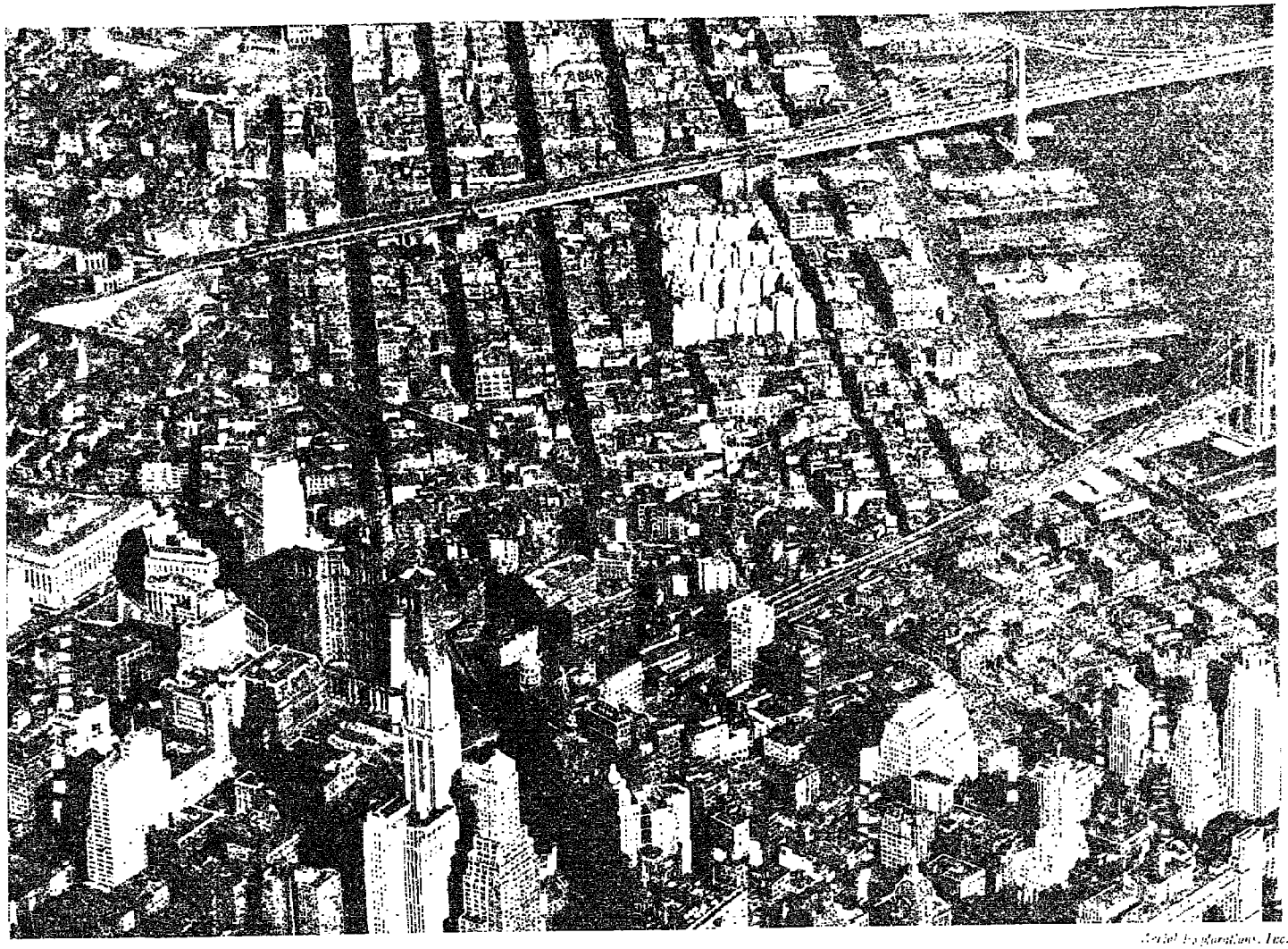
NEW YORK COMPARED WITH OTHER CITIES

WHAT most impresses the out-of-town visitor to New York tenement districts is *the unbroken line of five- or six-story buildings on paved streets, the tone of red* brick or brownstone fronts, the exterior iron fire escapes, the interspersion of warehouses and industrial plants in residential blocks, and the high frequency of shops on first floors or in basements. The congregations of men and women in doorways and of children playing in the streets among pushcart vendors, trucks, motor cars, wind-blown papers and dust, boxes and general clutter, and the rush of the elevated trains passing on the avenues complete the picture. These conditions have grown to characterize the slum in the minds of many persons. Congested, many-storied housing and crowded, confused, noisy streets are all of slum life that the average non-resident sees.

In no other American city save Boston, and in relatively few foreign cities outside of Italy, France, and Germany, are conditions of tenement residents much like those of New York. Boston slums are built less high in the main and have more interesting variety in tenement heights and fronts. In the industrial quarters of other American cities, the building heights are not usually over three stories, except perhaps for a few city blocks which simulate the New York slums in appearance. There is more open space in proportion to building height, but one is rather more impressed with drabness and disrepair, with dreariness or monotony, if not with actual insanitation.

Penetration of New York's tenements reveals conditions in some particulars worse than those of all other cities, and in some better. In the matter of sanitation, New York has profited so well by lessons of the past that conditions have been rendered much safer than they are elsewhere. Sanitary water supply is available indoors in every dwelling of Manhattan, whereas in cities of the South and West, many industrial families are still constrained to draw their water from taps, hydrants, or even wells, in the yard or at a distance from the residence. In the outskirts of numerous American cities, municipal water supply has not yet been made available and there is still danger of pollution of the domestic supply.

Similarly, with difficulty, New York City has nearly got rid of its yard toilets and school sinks. Toilet facilities have been made available within the building in all but a small percentage of tenements. The official figures are as follows:



Aerial Photographers, Inc.

The Lower East Side, between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. Knickerbocker Village in right center.

CLASS A MULTIPLE DWELLINGS WITH WATER-CLOSETS IN YARD[1]

Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond	New York City
442	16	838	19	13	1,328

A study of the slums of American cities, other than Boston, will show yard toilets in general use. In the South and in certain cities of the Central States many households are still served by privy vaults. Open surface sewers from such vaults are found in some cities north of the Mason and Dixon Line and in many cities of the South. It took New York City centuries to safeguard its water supply and to provide universal sanitary sewerage systems. It is to the city's credit that in this particular its slum conditions are less foul than those of most other cities. New York has fallen short of Boston, however, in piping water to every apartment within the dwelling and in making at least one toilet available on each floor. Boston's record is now nearly 100 per cent in these particulars, while in New York many families are still forced to make use of hall sinks and hall toilets.

CLASS A MULTIPLE DWELLINGS WITH WATER-CLOSETS IN PUBLIC HALLS[2]

Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond	New York City
11,123	417	11,446	957	120	24,063

New York's record is superior to that of most other cities in the elimination of dumps and marshy lands with standing water. Unsightly and unhealthy conditions of this sort are still to be found in outlying boroughs, but within Manhattan the few vacant lots are on the whole less unkempt and dangerous than those in most other cities.

The exterior iron fire escapes of New York City are a feature that is wholly individual. No other American city has so universally affixed iron fire escapes of the staircase type on the exteriors of its buildings. By way of contrast one may cite the building law of Boston which permits a horizontal balcony from the window of one building to the nearest window of its neighbor. Nevertheless, the New York fire escape of the 1901 law, though superior to the ladder type of the earlier laws, is not a wholly safe means of egress in case of fire, since it is difficult for even an athletic adult to use, and dangerous or impossible for aged men or women, cripples, and young children. Flames on lower stories may cut off escape. Ice or snow, or accumulations of boxes, refrigerators, or baby carriages on fire escapes, may make egress impossible. Thus legislation incorporates, throughout the tenement districts, the mistaken judgments of past lawmakers. On the

1. New York City, Tenement House Department, *Survey of Vacancies in Class A Multiple Dwellings, 1933.* 2. *Ibid.*

whole, however, so far as this feature is concerned, New York residents are safer than those in the tenement quarters of Boston, which is the city of most comparable building heights in typical industrial quarters.

From the point of view of structure, also, New York compares favorably with Boston, though not with the capital cities of Europe. New-law tenements constructed since 1901 have been fireproofed at strategic spots and make loss of life from fire rare.[1] Even the old-law tenements of New York City incorporated construction standards that were better than those of most other cities. For New York has faced a housing problem longer than any other American city and, in spite of the pressure of real-estate interests, has been forced to insist upon standards which, though far from adequate, are still relatively high.

The back yards of New York slums are smaller and darker than those of other cities, with the exception of portions of Boston. A back yard of 10 or 12 feet is usual in blocks where buildings are five or six stories in height. A dilapidated fence at the sides and rear, ordinarily separates such a yard from its neighbors. There may be much clutter and almost invariably there is much ugliness in this area, which serves no wholesome purpose save to provide light and air for rear windows. Clothes drying on pulley lines at many levels may add to the confusion. The roofs of sheds, outbuildings, and ells catch the miscellaneous accumulations thrown from windows and add to the general dreariness. In other cities it is the same. Usually the only outlook of any possible charm is from the front window upon the face of the opposite tenement house sixty feet away. For the beauties of nature and an attractive outlook the slums substitute interest in the behavior of one's neighbors and the excitement of kaleidoscopic street activities. Tenement dwellers become accustomed to this and probably derive some thrill from it, as the pillows on window ledges attest, and the many faces peering from the windows of each floor.

Turning to the problem of maintenance, whether by owner or tenant, one discovers rather less neglect in New York City than in most other cities. Since 1901 New York has had not only more tenement-house inspectors, but also a high percentage of inspection per million residents. This has served to keep up standards of general repair and cleanliness. The city averages considerably better in upkeep than others, in which tenement inspection is seldom made except upon complaint. Conditions, though intolerably bad, could be vastly worse, and credit is due to the Tenement House Department for doing as well as they have under such trying conditions.

In no other American city save Boston is so large a population per acre to be

1. See Chapter XV, p. 383.

found over large areas. It is a question whether density, *per se*, is socially undesirable, but the conditions of New York's density are such as to preclude adequate light, air, and outlook for tenement dwellings. Room congestion is much less serious than it was in days of heavy immigration, but many families still have to sleep with more than two individuals to a room. Lodgers may also be included in the family group. Kitchens and living rooms may still be used as sleeping rooms. Wholesome, clean quarters are not available. In no northern city does the speculative builder find it profitable any longer to build for tenement dwellers. An industrial family, seeking housing in Manhattan, has to tolerate an old-law tenement, with black, foul-smelling halls, and with rooms most of which receive only a dim natural light from shafts or courts, or look out only on a noisy street or group of narrow yards.

The contrast can be made clearer by a brief description of elements in the housing problems of other large cities in America.

Chicago has a population roughly one-half that of New York City, namely 3,376,438. It is two centuries younger. Its housing for wage earners is more largely of wood. The population is thinly spread over a large territory at a height which averages under three stories. City lots are deeper than those of New York but of the same width. Instead of one many-storied building on such a lot, two and even three frame buildings of not over three stories in height have usually been erected. Conflagration risk is greater than in New York City. Slums are less picturesque and give more external evidence of dilapidation. Light and air are not so much at a premium, but crowding of families in a house, or of individuals within a room, is as great or greater. The Chicago tenement-house law was passed in 1902 and revised in 1910 and is, in many ways, inferior to that of New York City.

Philadelphia had less than one-third the population of New York, namely 1,950,961, in 1930. From the point of view of age it is comparable with New York. It was pre-planned, and, in spite of its almost unbroken gridiron, shows that there is advantage in such foresight. It offers America's leading demonstration of the possibility of housing a large urban population in single-family houses, usually two stories in height and with brick exteriors. Its conflagration risk is much less than that of Chicago or New York. Slightly more than half of its homes are occupied by the owners. Its housing legislation is superior to that of Chicago, in the main. Its conditions of housing have been subjected, since 1909, to continual inspection, recommendation, and improvement by the Philadelphia Housing Association. Skillful measures for the improvement of conditions, framed by Bernard J. Newman and his associates, have given to Philadelphia wage earners

FIG. 45



Courtesy Housing Division, Public Works Administration.

Chicago. Chicago housing is characterized by a predominance of two- and three-story units, narrow, deep, and largely of frame construction. The deep lot predominates. View shows many examples of rear housing and serious conflagration risk of area between Ashland and Loomis Avenues. The site of the Jane Addams Federal housing project (see Fig. 133) is at extreme right, below Vernon Park.

FIG. 46

Philadelphia, showing gridiron plan originated by William Penn. The one radial way shown in upper left, is The Parkway, extending over a mile from the City Hall to Fairmount Park. Philadelphia's worst housing is in the older districts of the city, shown in foreground. The Carl Mackley Houses, Federal project in northeastern Philadelphia, do not appear, but would be some distance off to upper right.

a quality of service in the field of housing hardly equalled in any other American city. Philadelphia's unique style of city lot, from 14 to 20 feet in width, and often 50 feet in depth, has made its type of two-story row-house a possibility. Building and loan associations have facilitated home acquisition. Slum housing of the New York type, with its dark rooms and intensively crowded land, is almost unknown in Philadelphia, the nearest equivalent being the courts peculiar to the older part of the city (paralleled in Montreal, but seldom elsewhere) in which two- or three-story buildings, often with but a single exposure and but one room to a floor, still persist. In such courts one may find examples of dark rooms, outdoor toilets, and houses not yet supplied with water, which must be carried from hydrants. There are still many thousands of people living in houses of these and related types in the older part of the city. Philadelphia resembles Chicago in the percentage of houses that do not front upon a main street. It is like the cities farther south in the frequency of yard toilets. Except in the overcrowding of rooms, it offers few features similar to those in New York.

Detroit is a young city, with a population of 1,568,662, somewhat under one-fourth that of New York City. As in Philadelphia, more than half its families live in single-family houses, and over 40 per cent own their own homes. It is distinctive in having had, for approximately twenty years, a housing code based upon the Veiller Model Housing Law. Thus, indirectly, it was able early to profit from New York's experience. Mrs. Edith Elmer Wood reports that "One result is a practically 100 per cent sewer connection of all premises and city water installed in all dwellings. Neither cellar dwellings nor windowless rooms seem ever to have acquired a foothold."[1] The peculiar feature of Detroit's housing problem is the crowding of several families in bungalows and one-and-one-half-story frame cottages, usually of five rooms and bath. The building of two houses side by side on a lot from 40 to 50 feet in width, or of a rear dwelling on the same lot with the front house, has produced some rooms that are gloomy though not windowless. Disrepair and crowding are the characteristic housing problems of Detroit. Conflagration risk likewise is always present where frame dwellings are built close together, as they are in Detroit and Chicago.

Cleveland had in 1930 a population of 900,429, less than one-seventh that of New York City. Somewhat over 45 per cent of its families live in single-family houses and only 24 per cent in buildings containing three families or more. Over 36 per cent of the homes are occupied by their owners. For twenty years Cleveland has enjoyed the advantage of a housing ordinance (1915), designed to provide adequate light, air, and sunshine for rooms. Its undesirable housing was

1. Edith Elmer Wood, *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*, p. 47.



Courtesy Housing Division, Public Works Administration

Detroit Aerial view showing part of the twenty-eight-acre site which is to be replaced by the $5,500,000 Federal (PWA) Brewster low-rent housing project The new development will consist of three story apartments, two-story row houses, and flats, with 790 living units Chief architect, George D. Mason.

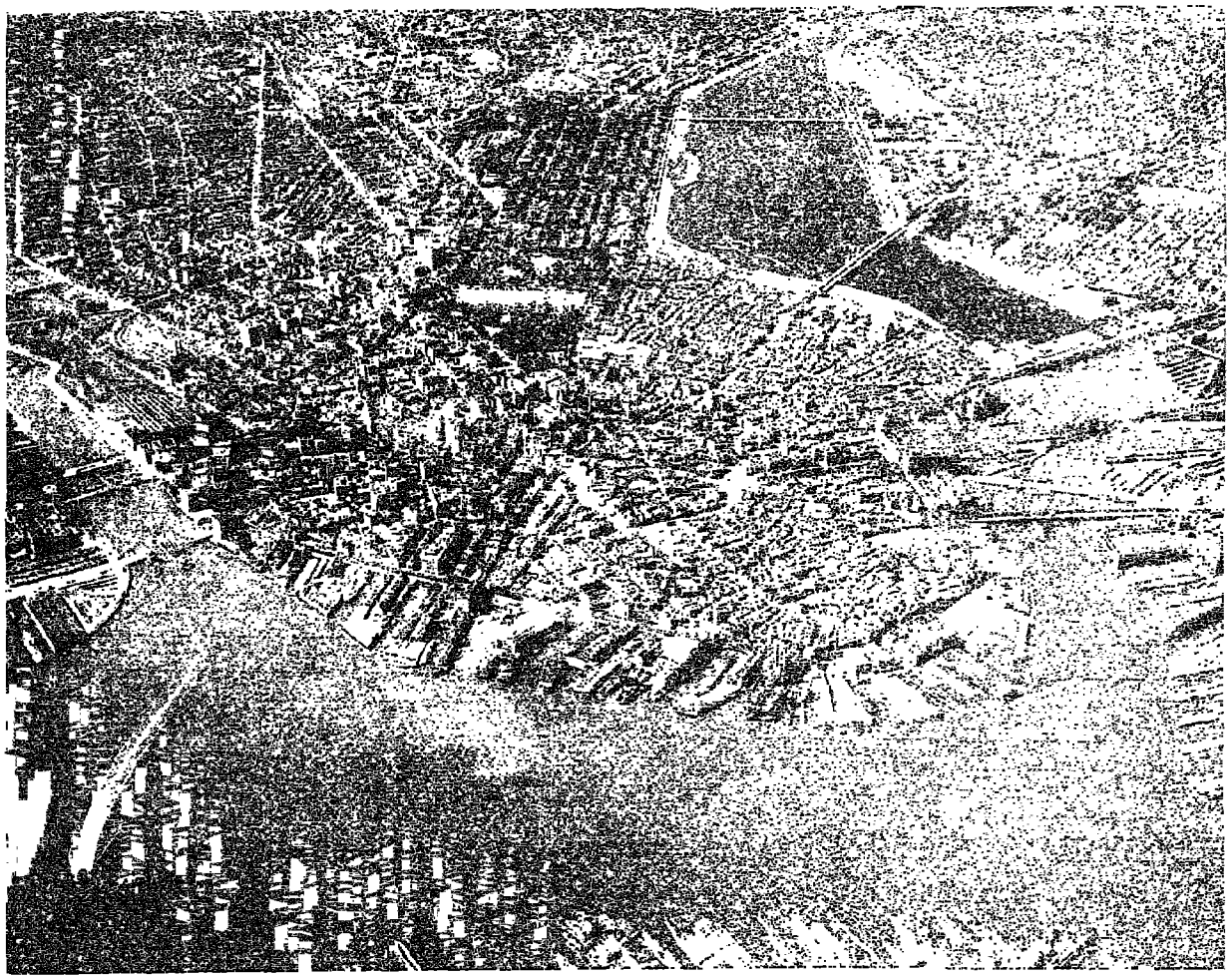
nearly all built prior to that ordinance. Dilapidation and crowding are the major problems. The Real Property Inventory found 23 per cent of its residential structures to be over forty years old and 18.6 per cent in bad condition. In 15.9 per cent of its residences persons were crowded — that is, there were more than 1.01 persons housed per room. Only one-third of 1 per cent of dwellings lacked running water, and 2.1 per cent had neither gas nor electric light; 3.9 per cent were not provided with a private indoor water-closet; 9.9 per cent had neither bath-tub nor shower. In each of these particulars the Real Property Inventory which covered sixty-four cities found Cleveland better off than the average, especially in the matter of sanitary facilities.[1]

St. Louis in 1930 had a population of 821,960, or over one-ninth that of New York City. Somewhat under one-third of its population are home-owners. Its problems include the crowding of the land in industrial quarters with two or more houses per lot, which makes many rooms gloomy; alley housing; outdoor toilets; and privy vaults.

Baltimore had a population of 804,874 in 1930. It resembles Philadelphia more than other cities because of the prevalence of two-story row dwellings and its high percentage of home ownership — just over 50 per cent. In recent years, Baltimore has largely got rid of the privy vaults and surface drainage which were its major housing problems a generation ago. At present, its characteristic housing problems are disrepair, dilapidation, and alley housing. The problem of conversion into rooming houses or tenements of homes erected for single-family use is also serious. Like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, Baltimore suffers from many survivals of dwellings three or four generations old that are ill-adapted to modern use.

Boston's municipal population was 781,188 in 1930, though that of the metropolitan area closely approximates Detroit in size. It shares with New York the problem of high, brick tenement houses, high land coverage, small, dark back yards, and narrow, dark shafts and courts. Streets in the older part of Boston proper are in many instances much narrower than those of New York, the relative land coverage is higher, and population densities are much the same. Half the people of Boston (50.1 per cent) live in tenement houses; but a good fraction of these live in the wooden "three-deckers," characteristic of Boston suburbs and New England industrial towns, but found also in Jersey City, Newark, Chicago, San Francisco, and several other urban communities of America. Boston's conflagration risk is greater than that of New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. Its provision of sanitary facilities ranks at least as high as that of New York, and

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.



Boston, showing irregular street layout and configuration. The worst slum is in the foreground and is known as the North End The South End, in upper left, contains lodging-house and slum districts. The Federal housing project for Cambridge is in upper right corner. Old Harbor Village (see Fig. 132), is not shown, but would be to left of upper left margin.

Fig. 48

compares favorably with that of Detroit. Boston's housing legislation is inferior to that of New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, or Cleveland, and original inspections are provided for less satisfactorily than in New York City. Comparisons are difficult where so many factors are involved, but it seems likely that the housing problems of Boston are more extensive and more serious per capita than those of New York though of much the same character.

Pittsburgh, with a population of 669,817, is less than one-tenth the size of New York City. It resembles Philadelphia and Baltimore in having a high degree of home ownership, namely 40.2 per cent. There is a great deal of frame housing of types more prevalent in mid-western cities than in those of the East. Sanitary conditions more nearly approximate those of the South in that the percentage of yard toilets and of privy vaults is high. It has a unique difficulty, as compared with the cities so far described, in its problem of providing safe, sanitary, and economic housing on steep hillsides. Overcrowding of rooms is a problem shared with most other industrial cities. The Real Property Inventory reveals extensive dilapidation, and uncovers the fact that 1,320 houses in Pittsburgh do not have water piped to the house.[1] The Pittsburgh Housing Association, similar in function to that of Philadelphia, has, under the direction first of John Ihlder, and later of Joseph P. Tufts, supplemented the inadequate inspection service of the municipal departments, and brought about many important improvements both in individual houses and in general housing policy.

Milwaukee's population in 1930 was 578,249. The city is plagued with problems of crowded and dilapidated frame dwellings, and still has a number of rear dwellings and houses fronting on alleys. As buildings of wood have been built within a foot or two of the side lot line, there are gloomy middle rooms and a serious conflagration risk. The privy vault has been practically eliminated, but there are still some yard toilets, and many indoor sanitary facilities are shared by two or more families.

Washington, D. C., had, in 1930, a population of 486,869. In its housing it resembles Philadelphia and Baltimore much more than it does other cities, for two-story row-houses of brick predominate. Like other eastern cities, it is afflicted with dilapidated survivals of houses constructed before the period of modern law. Even in the older homes of the well-to-do, the servants' sleeping quarters may be in the cellar, and there are many cellar kitchens. The major housing problem of Washington, however, is that of neglected, insanitary, and crowded alley dwellings, largely occupied by Negroes. Conflagration risk is relatively low.

Minneapolis, with a population of 464,356, has many survivals of tenement

1. *Ibid.*, p. 62.



Washington, looking west along East Capitol Street and showing L'Enfant's original radial plan superimposed on gridiron The district in upper right includes rooming-house areas The Southwest district, in upper left, contains 38 inhabited alleys The War College project, held up by the Louisville decision, is not shown being off to left. Anacostia Terrace and Langston projects some distance below lower margin

FIG. 49

houses of the New York "railroad" type, with interior windowless rooms. Its housing legislation, based upon the Veiller Model Housing Law, and passed in 1917, puts it, with Detroit, in the first rank so far as restrictive legislation governing the construction of new housing is concerned. The Real Property Inventory of 1934 uncovered 13,602 residential structures over forty years old. Crowding was found in 17,495 dwelling units, or 14.7 per cent. This means an average of more than 1.01 persons per room. There was no running water in 1,901 dwelling units, and 9,066, or 7.1 per cent, lacked private indoor water-closets.[1]

New Orleans, sixteenth city in size, is the largest city of the South. In 1930 its population was 458,762. It suffers from antiquated and dilapidated housing. As compared with northern cities, its major problem is that of outside toilets. There are a few tenements, alley dwellings, and rear dwellings, and some dark rooms.

Cincinnati, with a population of 451,160, has a percentage of home ownership higher than that of New Orleans and lower than that of Pittsburgh, namely 36.9 per cent. Its major housing problems are dilapidation, overcrowding, and lack of private toilets. The formation of the Cincinnati Better Housing League, in 1916, under the able guidance of Bleecker Marquette, has led to excellent supplementation of the municipal inspection service and has facilitated many valuable housing measures.

Seattle is the third largest city of the Pacific Coast. In 1930 it had a population of 365,583. Only 3 per cent of its residences are over forty years of age, but 17.4 per cent were listed by the Real Property Inventory as in bad condition; 9.5 per cent were crowded; 1.6 per cent without running water; and 6.6 per cent with no private indoor water-closet.[2]

Indianapolis, twenty-first city in size, had a population in 1930 of 364,161, and a percentage of home ownership slightly higher than that of Pittsburgh, namely 41.6 per cent. Actually 83.7 per cent of its population dwell in single-family houses, and only 11.5 per cent in multi-family houses. Except for Washington, Indianapolis is America's best example of a city built upon a radial plan. Housing legislation has been comparatively good since 1909. Characteristic problems are disrepair, outdoor water-closets, and room-crowding. Of its dwellings 21.6 per cent were found by the Real Property Inventory to be over forty years of age, and 20.7 per cent in bad condition; 12.8 per cent crowded; 13.1 per cent without running water; and 19.7 per cent with no private indoor water-closets.[3]

Atlanta is the thirty-second city, with a population in 1930 of 270,366. Only 10.7 per cent of its buildings were found to be over forty years of age, but 29.2 per cent were stated to be in bad condition, and 30.3 per cent crowded. The rate of

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 82. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 82. 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 80, 82.



Courtesy Housing Division Public Works Administration

Atlanta, showing part of slum district of twenty-five acres which is being replaced by Techwood Federal housing project for Negroes, containing 603 living units in two-story row houses and three-story apartments, and 109 units in three story dormitory for Georgia Institute of Technology. The University project, also in Atlanta, is shown on Fig 135

Fig. 50

crowding is exceptionally high, and was exceeded, among the sixty-four cities covered by the Real Property Inventory, only by Charleston, South Carolina, with 40.4 per cent; Columbia, South Carolina, with 32.4 per cent; and Santa Fe, New Mexico, with 35.4 per cent. The percentage of dwelling units without running water in Atlanta was 8.1, and 20.6 per cent of dwellings lacked a private indoor water-closet.[1]

The essence of the New York housing problem and the factor which distinguishes it most from other cities, except Boston, is the necessity of living in dimly lighted rooms reached through unlighted halls. There are still over 100,000 rooms which have no windows save to neighboring rooms.[2] There are still hundreds of thousands of rooms which have their only light from shafts not more than 4 feet wide. There are still over a million rooms into which the sunlight never penetrates effectively.

Such conditions cannot be obviated by piecemeal action. Fundamental changes and a colossal investment are necessary to get rid of evils which have grown out of past ignorance, selfishness, and neglect. The 25-foot lot can no longer be used as a unit of construction if sunlight and the amenities of life are to be brought within the reach of New York's tenement-house population. The block must become the minimum unit of multi-family construction, though better results can be secured through taking a group of blocks as a unit. The organization of leadership, public opinion, and planning to this end is covered in later chapters.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 82.

2. Mrs. Edith Elmer Wood's estimate is 290,000. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

CHAPTER X

LOCAL SURVEYS

SOMEWHAT paradoxically, New York has always known a good deal about itself but has not known that this was the case. Surveys for one purpose or another have been made for many years, but their contents have, in general, been known to and understood by only a few people particularly interested. At times, results of housing surveys such as those of 1865 and 1900 have been skillfully dramatized so that they made an impression on the general public, and led to remedial legislation. Meanwhile, studies undertaken for special reasons, but not correlated with other studies, have gone on. A vast store of information has also accumulated in the routine records of city departments.

The technique of housing surveys has received increasing attention as the years have gone by. Gradually it has been perceived that there are many factors — social, economic, and physical — which interlock and require attention. Essential features were recorded in the report on Housing Research of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.
These are as follows:

1. Historical development of the city and present rate of spread or recession of its slum areas.
2. Health map showing incidence of disease commonly attributed to or associated with bad housing.
3. Records of delinquency and crime, truancy, addresses of criminals caught in all parts of the city, malicious mischief, neighborhood gangs, vagrancy.
4. Racial characteristics, occupations, earning capacity of the inhabitants.
5. Reports of dangerous and unsanitary buildings, demolitions, vacant buildings.
6. Records of accidents, particularly street accidents to children because of lack of playgrounds.
7. Records of assessments, sales, and rentals over a period of years to determine trend of values.
8. Fire department and insurance records showing losses and city expenses due to fire hazards including proportion of suspicious fires.
9. Records of charity extended through social agencies of various kinds.
10. Discovery, analysis and evaluation of causation factors in order to ascertain whether improvement is possible without slum clearance by bringing such factors under social control.[1]

1. *Housing Objectives and Programs*, Vol. XI, Chapter XI, pp. 261–262.

The growth of interest in city planning, as well as the pioneer work done in Cleveland, Ohio, in devising a technique for gathering information through a Real Property Inventory,[1] has contributed greatly to our knowledge of what is useful as a basis for constructive work. Since the organization of the National Association of Housing Officials, that body has devoted much attention to factual surveys and has issued a bulletin giving suggestions for going about local investigations of this sort.[2] This is a document of value and helpful to those interested in organizing and prosecuting useful studies.

Up to 1933 numerous agencies had made excellent surveys, chiefly on a small scale, covering a particular district or recording conditions with respect to some special subject. The best of these up to the year 1930 are covered in a *Bibliography of Social Surveys* by Allen Eaton and Shelby M. Harrison, and in *A Guide to Statistics of Social Welfare in New York City* by Florence Dubois.[3] *A Survey of Surveys*, published by the New York Building Congress in 1933,[4] recorded some fifty local researches that had been completed recently or were in process. In a later publication, issued by the Housing Study Guild,[5] forty-eight studies were selected for tabulation, and reports on sixteen others were included. With the current emphasis on housing it was perhaps natural that some of these studies should be described as "conglomerations of inadequate statistics on small arbitrarily chosen areas throughout the city." Of course, a number were made for limited and specific purposes which met adequately the needs of their sponsors.

It was evident that if these studies could somehow be welded together, thus facilitating the interpretation of their combined data as a unit, much better appreciation of the general situation might be expected. Such a process, however,

1. Howard Whipple Green, *Real Property Inventory of the Cleveland Metropolitan District*, Report No. 1 of the Committee on Real Property Inventory, 1933.
2. *Public Housing Surveys: An Outline of Survey and Planning Procedure for Low Cost Housing*, March, 1934.
3. The Bibliography of Housing at the end of Volume II, comprises the most important references on New York housing both past and present. The major sources of statistical data are the Federal Census volumes, New York State Census volumes, and reports of city departments. Important supplementary work has, however, been done by Dr. Walter Laidlaw in the two volumes published for the Cities Census Committee, Inc., entitled *Population of the City of New York*, and by the Committee on Neighborhood Health Development, Department of Health, City of New York. Current studies since the publication of these volumes are listed shortly after they appear in the bulletin of the Welfare Council entitled *Housing Information Bureau, Monthly News Letter*. Economic, financial, and construction data are available from publications of the F. W. Dodge Corporation, the *Real Estate Record*, and the leading architectural magazines, especially the *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, and *Architecture*. Municipal studies are listed currently in the *American City*, and *National Municipal Review*; social investigations in *The Survey* and *Survey Graphic*; city planning data in the bulletin of the Regional Plan Association entitled *Information Bulletin*; district studies, within the city, in the publications of local chambers of commerce, of which the East Side Chamber of Commerce researches are most notable; health studies in the reports of the local health centers, of which Bellevue-Yorkville and East Harlem are most detailed. Current researches by university teachers and graduate students, if not published, may fail to be listed in the above sources, but can be located either through the *American Economic Review* and the *American Journal of Sociology*, or by consulting the heads of the university departments in question.
4. Research Bulletin No. 4, Land Utilization Committee, New York Building Congress, December, 1933.
5. *Analytical Study of Recent Housing and Planning Studies in New York City, 1934*, Bulletin No. 1, Housing Study Guild, June, 1934. The Guild was established in 1933 "to facilitate the study of current problems in our national housing program, and to serve as a clearing-house for information within its field of interest." It has published a number of investigations of special features of housing and issues a Bulletin containing information and discussions.

would involve almost insurmountable difficulties. If there had been a common object and a unified method in assembling all this information, some hope of fitting it together could be held out. But objectives, methods, and quality of results have varied so widely that only with considerable effort can the general picture be brought out, and even then with many qualifications.

The need for more unified attack was appreciated, and in 1933 work was undertaken that gave promise of producing a better picture of the current situation in those matters presumed to have some bearing on the housing problem. Among those early in the field was the Land Utilization Committee of the New York Building Congress, already mentioned, which devoted its attention largely to matters of changing population trends, rents, and vacancies.[1] In October 1933 the Slum Clearance Committee was formed. It undertook to locate the areas in the city most in need of clearance and to extend knowledge of prevailing conditions, especially in Manhattan and Brooklyn.[2] Social studies were undertaken by the Columbia University Housing Orientation Study [3] and technical features were investigated by the Housing Study Guild.[4] The Tenement House Department undertook surveys of the physical condition of tenements. Health conditions were summarized by the Neighborhood Health Center group,[5] and crime and delinquency were studied as a joint project by the Tenement House Department and the Probation Department of the Court of General Sessions.[6] A Steering Committee was formed in an attempt to coordinate these various researches, and reports were made to the newly constituted New York City Housing Authority for its guidance in determining slum-clearance activities. Finally, through the cooperation of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States Department of Commerce and the local Tenement House Department, an elaborate study of real property conditions, under the name of *Real Property Inventory*,[7] was undertaken, utilizing the services of thousands of emergency relief workers.

This ebullition of fact-finding furnished an unprecedented amount of information. The circumstances were peculiarly favorable for getting the work done, but unfortunately the facts related to an abnormal period. The same force — economic depression — that made large numbers of intelligent workers available at

1. Results are recorded in a number of Research Bulletins issued by the Congress in 1933–1934.
2. The report of the Committee is to be found in a large volume entitled *Maps and Charts Prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee of New York, 1933–34*.
3. This study was made under the direction of Dr. Carol Aronovici.
4. The Housing Study Guild has issued a series of bulletins dealing with various aspects.
5. Their maps depicting conditions are to be found in *Maps and Charts Prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee of New York, 1933–34*.
6. Report published under the title of *The Slum and Crime*, 1934.
7. *Real Property Inventory of New York City*, 1934, prepared under the direction of the New York Housing Authority, United States Department of Commerce, and Mayor's Advisory Committee.

nominal expense tended to distort many factors such as vacancies, extent of overcrowding, and tax arrears. Nevertheless a large amount of factual data was secured, requiring only proper interpretation to serve as a basis for constructive effort. Much of the material presented in graphic form, however, was based on census, health, and crime records centering around the year 1930, a period when the full effects of the depression had not been felt.

All such information needs objective handling. Distinction should be made clearly between the conditions found and judgments made concerning them. The shades of meaning frequently attached to terms also require careful scrutiny. One might thus describe Manhattan as a constricted area bounded by two enormous sewers flowing sluggishly to the sea, and over all a pall of smoke and dirt averaging over three tons to the cubic mile.[1] Its inhabitants might be pictured as trudging through air surcharged with dust, meeting occasional areas filled with carbon monoxide to a degree dangerous to health, while around about them there beats ceaselessly a blend of noises from which there is no escape.[2] This dismal description would be reasonably true so far as it goes, and yet the inferences conveyed by the use of words would be rejected by persons of common sense. Such inferences ignore the intelligence of human beings in dodging obvious health hazards when they can, and the surprising ability of the human mechanism to adjust itself to unfavorable conditions.

The New York depicted in these various surveys is a New York far different from that of the guide-books. Strident claims of commercial superiority and mere bigness are hushed and much that is ugly and depressing appears. Highly specific accounts of disease, crime, unpaid taxes, and dilapidated dwellings follow one another in rapid succession, producing in the mass a lugubrious effect as extreme in its way as that formed by glowing descriptions of tall skyscrapers, gay crowds, and generally stimulating atmosphere. The searcher for helpful, constructive suggestion must be on guard to preserve a detached viewpoint in estimating how far the conditions described are a cause or effect of poor housing. He must com-

1. Continuous records of the amount of solid impurities in the air are kept by the New York Meteorological Observatory. The following quotation from the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, January 1931, is pertinent: "The New York Meteorological Bureau in New York City measures daily the amount of dust suspended in the air, and it was found that over the Central Park Area, which is probably one of the most favored ar[illegible] dust and soot suspended aver[illegible] of air during 1930. On moist d[illegible] pall which deprives the city of much sunlight and, particularly, of ultra-violet rays. Aside from the injury to our eyes and to air passages which the impurities of the air create, the amount of economic loss caused, directly or indirectly, is considerable. A great deal of coal and oil is being wasted by improper combustion, and the destruction of fabrics and household effects runs into hundreds of millions annually, according to the estimates made. As has been well said, excessive smoke is not a necessity but a luxury of laziness and indifference." See also *Weather and Health Bulletin*, No. 75, of the National Research Council, 1930.

2. See *Building Height, Bulk, and Form*, by George B. Ford, Harvard City Planning Series, II, 1931, Appendix III, "Dust, Gas, and Noise"; also *City Noise*, final report of the Noise Abatement Commission, 1930. It is interesting to note that above the tenth- or twelfth-story level, even in the center of Manhattan, the air begins to compare favorably with country air as to dust content. From this it is apparent that concentrations much in excess of the cubic-mile average must be present at the street level.

pare the facts with other data obtained at different times and places to see whether there are any peculiarities, or whether the conditions found represent the common experience of mankind. He must decide whether apparent trends are real, or whether they are likely to be reversed with changing social and economic drifts.

Much of the discussion of contemporary conditions throughout the following chapters is based on the results of the recent surveys described, to which acknowledgment is freely made. It has been found necessary, however, to draw upon other sources, especially Federal and city departments, for further information in order to treat the subject comprehensively.

In viewing conditions of the present day, perspective is needed. The preceding historical account indicates that some progress has been made. We are, however, still struggling with acute problems. Mistakes and abuses of the past also add to present difficulties. In the midst of commercial expansion there have been individuals and groups who have, perhaps too quietly, pointed out crudities and social problems that were in process of development. But other housing reformers of past days have fought battles in comparison with which the activities of the present may appear mild. The conditions so graphically portrayed in charts today are to be viewed as the products of numerous forces, good and bad, that have been operating for a long time.

CHAPTER XI

POPULATION AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

NEW YORK is a community of some seven million people occupying an area of 191,681 acres. Its political subdivisions furnish a striking illustration of irregular distribution of population because of historical and geographical reasons.

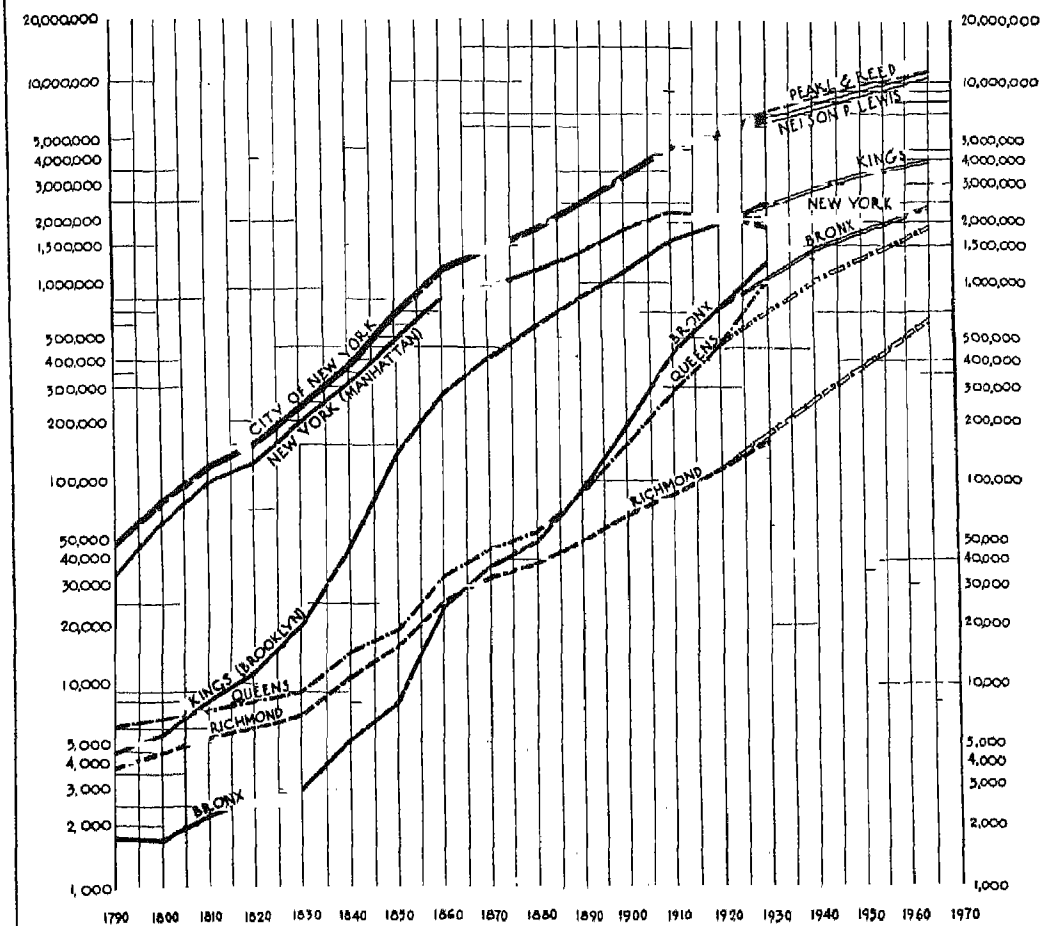
Borough	Area in acres	Population, 1930
Queens	69,075	1,079,129
Brooklyn	45,444	2,560,401
Richmond	36,600	158,346
Bronx	26,524	1,265,258
Manhattan	14,038	1,867,312

Beyond the political boundaries that separate its inhabitants from others, not fundamentally different from those within, extends a thickly settled region containing 4,500,000 more persons. The tongue of land, about 2 miles wide and 12 miles long, known as Manhattan, forms the starting point from which the city has spread. The story is a familiar one, an intolerable congestion relieved first by elevated railroads to the north, then by bridges to the Long Island communities, then by tunnels under each of the two rivers. Through these successive public improvements a portion of the population has been enabled to live in outlying territory, grouped closely along the rapid transit lines, and leaving behind a stubborn residue that still presents housing problems of the first importance. To the southeast lies Brooklyn, long an independent community containing numerous private homes, but possessed of a slum problem of its own as a result partly of migrations from Manhattan, and partly of the growth of manufacturing and shipping. To the north lies the Bronx, largely built up after the worst types of housing were outlawed. To the northeast lies Queens, thought at one time to present the best opportunities for drawing off surplus population, but unfortunately developed in some districts by monotonous rows of cheap housing. To the south lies Richmond, an island which, if provided with rapid transit and adequate guidance, may be spared some of the housing mistakes that have spoiled parts of other outlying areas.

Things are always happening to these 7,000,000 people: they are born; they marry; they move in and out of the city; they die. Such changes are reflected in the population growth lines shown in Figure 51. Up to 1930 the black lines show

POPULATION OF NEW YORK CITY AND ITS BOROUGHS, 1790 TO 1930 WITH ESTIMATES TO THE YEAR 1965

SOURCES — REGIONAL SURVEY OF NEW YORK, VOL. II, &
UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU



actual census counts. Beyond that are lines showing various estimates of what was expected to happen up to 1965, as published by the Regional Plan Association in 1932. It is indicated that in thirty years the population will reach 12,500,000. The census of 1930 revealed a slowing up in population growth for the city as a whole, and has brought about a feeling that stabilization may take place earlier than was expected. With the known decrease in size of families, this view appears to be well taken.

The lines of Figure 51 show by the steepness of their inclination the changes in rates of growth or decline. While for the whole city a slower rate is shown for the decade 1910 to 1920, a somewhat greater rate of increase than in the previous decade is revealed for Queens and Richmond. The Bronx has continued to increase, but at a reduced rate, while Manhattan has accelerated the decline started in 1910.

The slackening in rate of growth for the city as a whole is a tendency shared by other urban communities. Urbanization had not ceased when the 1930 census counts were made, for the population in cities was greater than in any previous decade. However, the rate of population growth was greater in smaller cities than in larger ones. Since 1930, this trend has apparently continued.[1]

The slowing down of population growth is deceptive in its bearing on the need for housing accommodations. Investigation of the situation in New York City discloses that the rate of increase in number of families declines less rapidly than that of the population. If housing accommodations are to be determined by the number of families, this will have to be kept in mind. The disparity is apparent in the table on the opposite page.

In 1930, New York had about 1,750,000 families, of which about one-fifth owned their homes. For the other four-fifths there are approximately 500,000 old-law apartments and over 900,000 apartments of later date, together with some rented homes or flats. Figure 52 shows how the relationship between families and housing accommodations has fluctuated over a period of years. The population line here appears on the same chart as the family line, so that the relationship may be studied. The cumulative number of apartments and of housing accommodations in one- and two-family houses is also given. The sum of all these classes furnishes the data for an apartments-and-houses line which runs close

1. For a discussion of population trends, see "The Population of the Nation," by Warren S. Thompson and P. K. Whelpton, constituting Chapter I of *Recent Social Trends*, vol. 1, 1933. More recent discussion is contained in a survey of population redistribution by the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce of the University of Pennsylvania, referred to in the *Herald Tribune*, January 27, 1935, under the title, "U. S. Cities Near End of Era of Rapid Growth." See also "Past Trends and Migrations of Population in New York," *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, August 4, 1934, p. 8, which summarizes changes from 1900 to 1930 and particularly the publications of the American Statistical Association.

to the family line, sometimes above and sometimes below it. When above, it indicates a surplus of accommodations; when below, a deficit. In hotels and other types of buildings there is a relatively small number of other accommodations which does not appear in the apartments-and-houses line; the number is not sufficient to affect the comparison appreciably. The increase in apartments between January 1932 and 1934, visible on some of the charts, is due largely to

PER CENT INCREASE IN POPULATION AND IN FAMILIES

(Source: U. S. Census)

Period	Place	Per Cent Population	Per Cent Families
1900–10	New York City	35.8	38.8
	Manhattan	26.0	26.0
	Bronx	65.0	122.0
	Brooklyn	40.2	38.4
	Queens	85.7	93.0
	Richmond	28.3	29.1
1910–20	New York City	17.9	25.2
	Manhattan	−2.3*	6.4
	Bronx	70.0	77.0
	Brooklyn	23.5	28.3
	Queens	65.0	76.8
	Richmond	35.6	34.2
1920–30	New York City	18.9	35.2
	Manhattan	−18.3*	9.1
	Bronx	73.0	93.4
	Brooklyn	26.9	36.2
	Queens	130.0	156.0
	Richmond	35.8	50.7
1900–30	New York City	102.0	135.0
	Manhattan	0.9	20.5
	Bronx	532.0	667.0
	Brooklyn	119.8	142.0
	Queens	605.0	773.0
	Richmond	136.0	162.0

* Loss.

NOTE. A "family" as defined by the census is a group of persons living together whether related by blood or not. One person alone is counted as a family. In 1910 and 1920 a hotel, institution, boarding house, or construction camp was also so counted. In 1900 and 1930, private families were listed separately. To make the figures comparable for all periods the more inclusive definition has been chosen throughout.

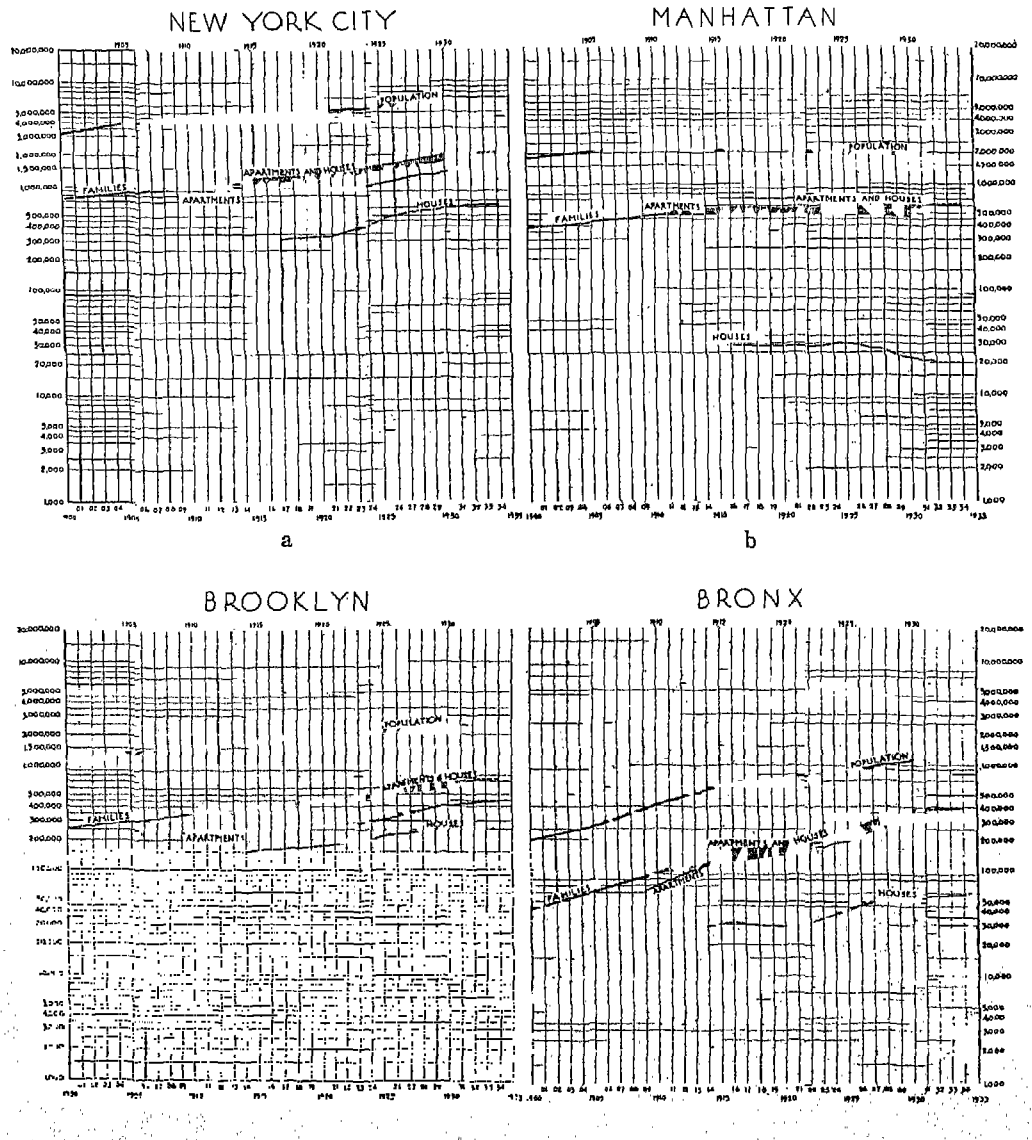
causes other than new construction, which was at a low ebb during this period. After the enactment of the Multiple Dwelling Law of 1929, changes in classifications of structures brought additional apartments within the total. This fact is reflected in the 1932–1934 figures.

The comparison of families and accommodations is by totals, and makes no differentiation between good and bad housing. It does, however, reflect the ups and downs of supply and demand. The post-war shortage and subsequent building boom appear, and indications of a repetition are to be seen in the way the lines appear to be converging again.

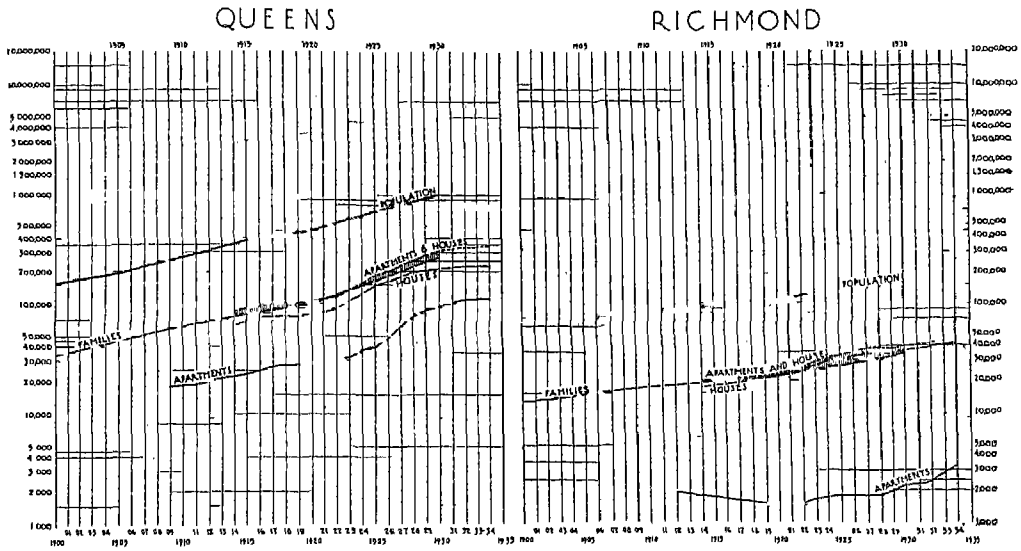
FIG. 52

RELATION OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS TO POPULATION

SOURCES
UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU
NEW YORK CITY TENEMENT HOUSE DEPARTMENT
AND DEPARTMENT OF TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS



RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY



Vacancies in apartments may signify several things: — that there is a genuine excess of accommodations; that families have "doubled up" because of financial necessity; or that, although vacancies do exist, they are in buildings so dilapidated that not even the poorest of tenants will occupy them.

In 1933 a survey made by the Tenement House Department reported vacancies of 17.8 per cent in Manhattan, 12.14 per cent in the Bronx, 11.8 per cent in Brooklyn, 13.4 per cent in Queens, and 17 per cent in Richmond.[1] In 1934, the Real Property Inventory obtained figures of 17.8 per cent, 10 per cent, 9.51 per cent, 10.37 per cent, and 14.47 per cent respectively.[2] Vacancies tend to be higher in old-law tenements, in low-rental apartments, and in the upper floors of walk-up buildings. The last has some significance in connection with current housing plans calling for four- or even five-story "walk-ups," for it indicates a growing reluctance on the part of tenants to climb the many steps necessary to reach upper floors. Not only as a matter of preference, but also in its relation to heart disease and other ailments, does this need more than casual attention. With the present trend, four-story buildings erected today for amortization over a long period — for instance, forty or more years — may be obsolete long before the period of amortization is over.

1. Results are recorded in a series of mimeographed bulletins entitled *Survey of Vacancies in Class-A-Multiple Dwellings*, issued by the Tenement House Department in 1933.

2. *Real Property Inventory of New York City*, 1934.

In common with other cities, New York has experienced a more rapid growth at the outskirts than in the central section, the latter having lost not only relatively, but in absolute numbers. This tendency has been so general that it has given rise to such expressions as "rotting at the core." The common error of regarding trends, once discovered, as permanent and irreversible has led to gloomy forebodings regarding the future of older sections. More deliberate thought has led to the conclusion that the numerous advantages still possessed by these sections would justify replanning them along modern lines. That some change may be in process is also indicated in the figures of the Real Property Inventory, which has disclosed 29,479 more families in Manhattan in 1934 than in 1930.[1] Provided the figures were gathered with equal care at each period, the city may be passing through the beginning of a new trend. For the present, however, this is speculation. The facts thus far established are clearly evident in Figure 53.[2]

Instead of spreading out uniformly over the area of the city, the population has tended to clot in particular sections, leaving much sparsely settled space within the limits of the largest city in the country. Just as a map of the country as a whole shows concentration at various urban points, so is the process repeated within urban areas themselves, and for much the same reasons. Transit facilities, nearness to work, and other causes have brought about a distribution that is slowly changing, as will be evident from Figures 54 to 57.

The danger of too great concentration of population has been emphasized so long that changes reducing some of the hazards of great density have been overlooked. Slum districts in New York have, to a considerable extent, been associated with the idea of great density. Earlier reports dwell with considerable emphasis on its bad effects. In the report of the Tenement House Department for 1902–1903 [3] a series of colored maps show density figures for many blocks. Where the present Knickerbocker Village stands there were at that time gross densities of 1,139 and 699 per acre in the two blocks concerned. It is of interest to note that with the blocks cleared of old buildings and provided with new twelve-story structures covering less than 50 per cent of the block, the comparable density is still about 750.

Density so troubled the city authorities in 1911 that a commission was appointed to study and report on it. The following citations show some of the extreme conditions of that time and the reaction of the commission to them.

1. Edith Elmer Wood, *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*, Bulletin No. 1, Housing Division, Public Works Administration, Washington, D. C.

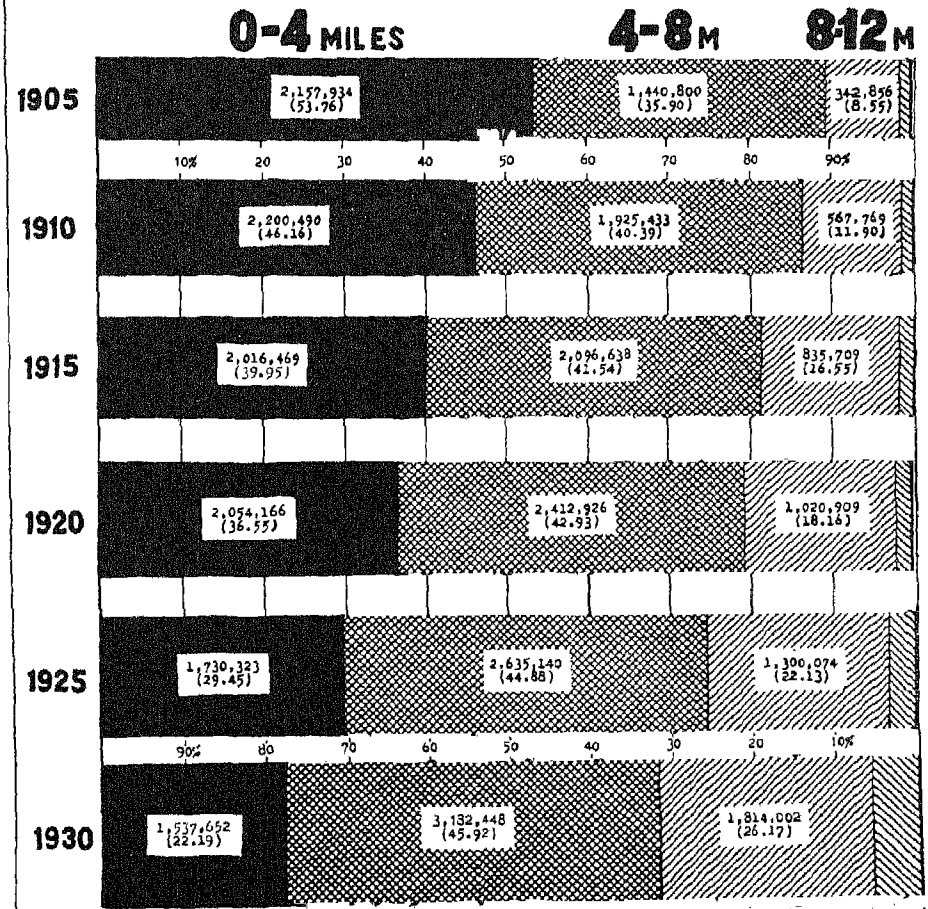
2. Walter Laidlaw, *Population of the City of New York, 1890–1930*.

3. *First Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York, 1902–1903*, I, 27 *et seq.*

TRANSIT FACILITIES AND POPULATION FLOW, 1905-1930

CHART 17

Population percentages, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930 0-4, 4-8, 8-12, 12-16, over 16 miles from City Hall, New York



12-16 MILES		Per cent of City's population
1905	56,248	1.25
1910	64,492	1.36
1915	89,038	1.78
1920	102,206	1.82
1925	195,194	3.34
1930	385,275	5.56

OVER 16 MILES		Per cent of City's population
1905	7,728	0.19
1910	8,699	0.19
1915	9,367	0.18
1920	9,734	0.18
1925	11,625	0.20
1930	11,069	0.16

INSTITUTIONS BOATS		Per cent of City's pop.
INST. 1905	14,215	0.35
BOATS 1920	20,107	0.36

Walter Laidlaw, "Population of the City of New York 1890–1930," p. 233.

FIG. 54

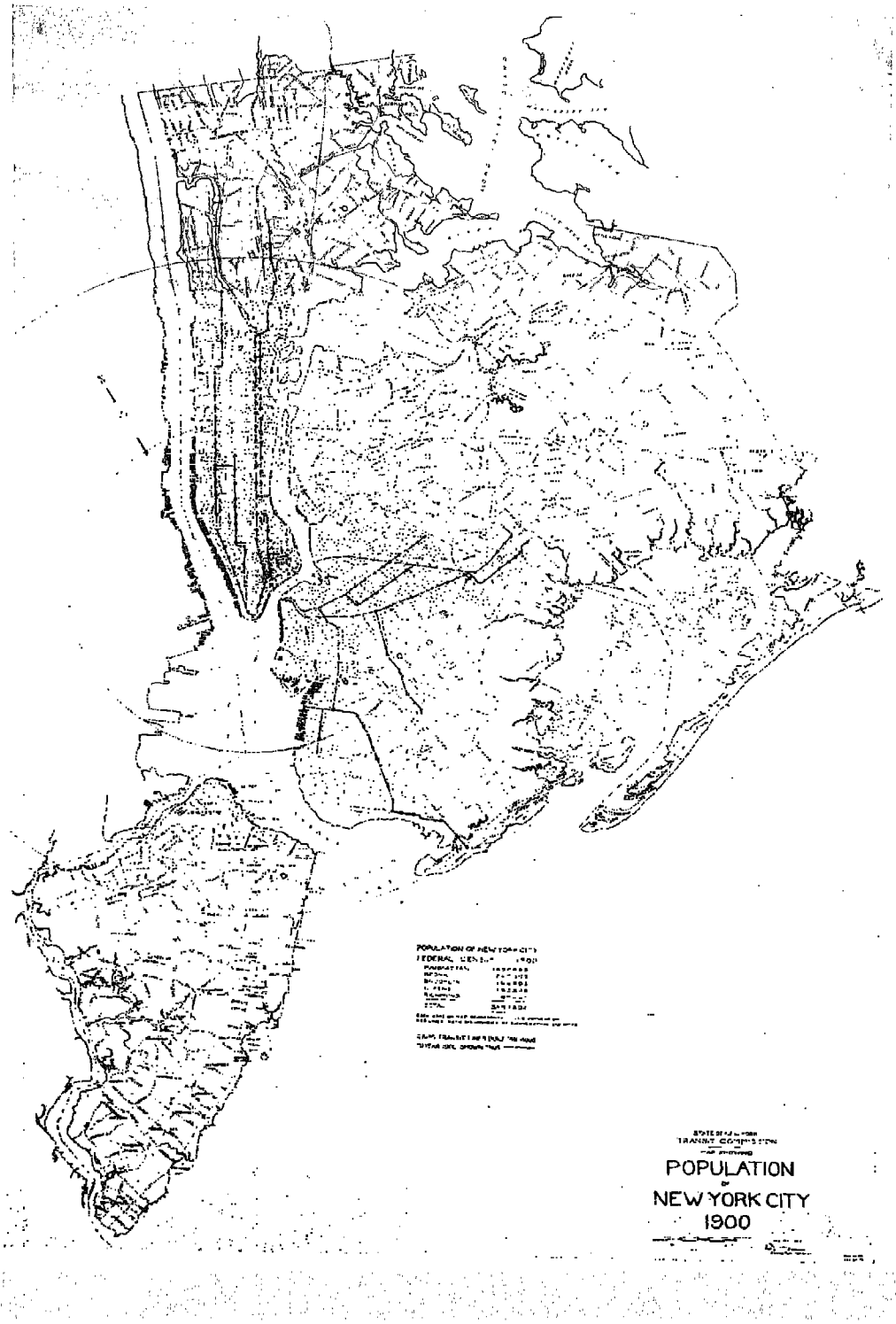


FIG. 55

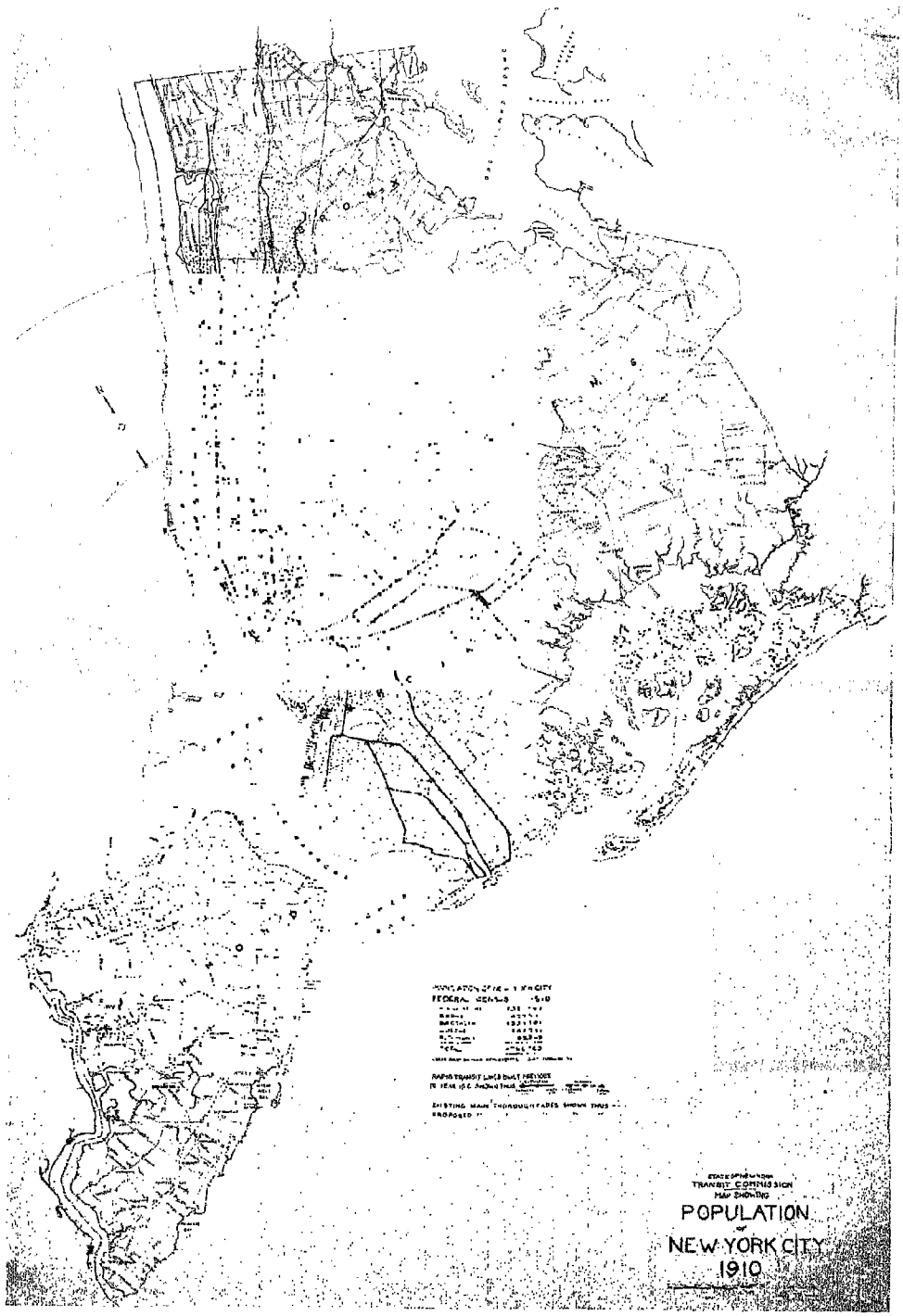

TRANSIT COMMISSION
MAP SHOWING
POPULATION
OF
NEW YORK CITY
1910

FIG. 56

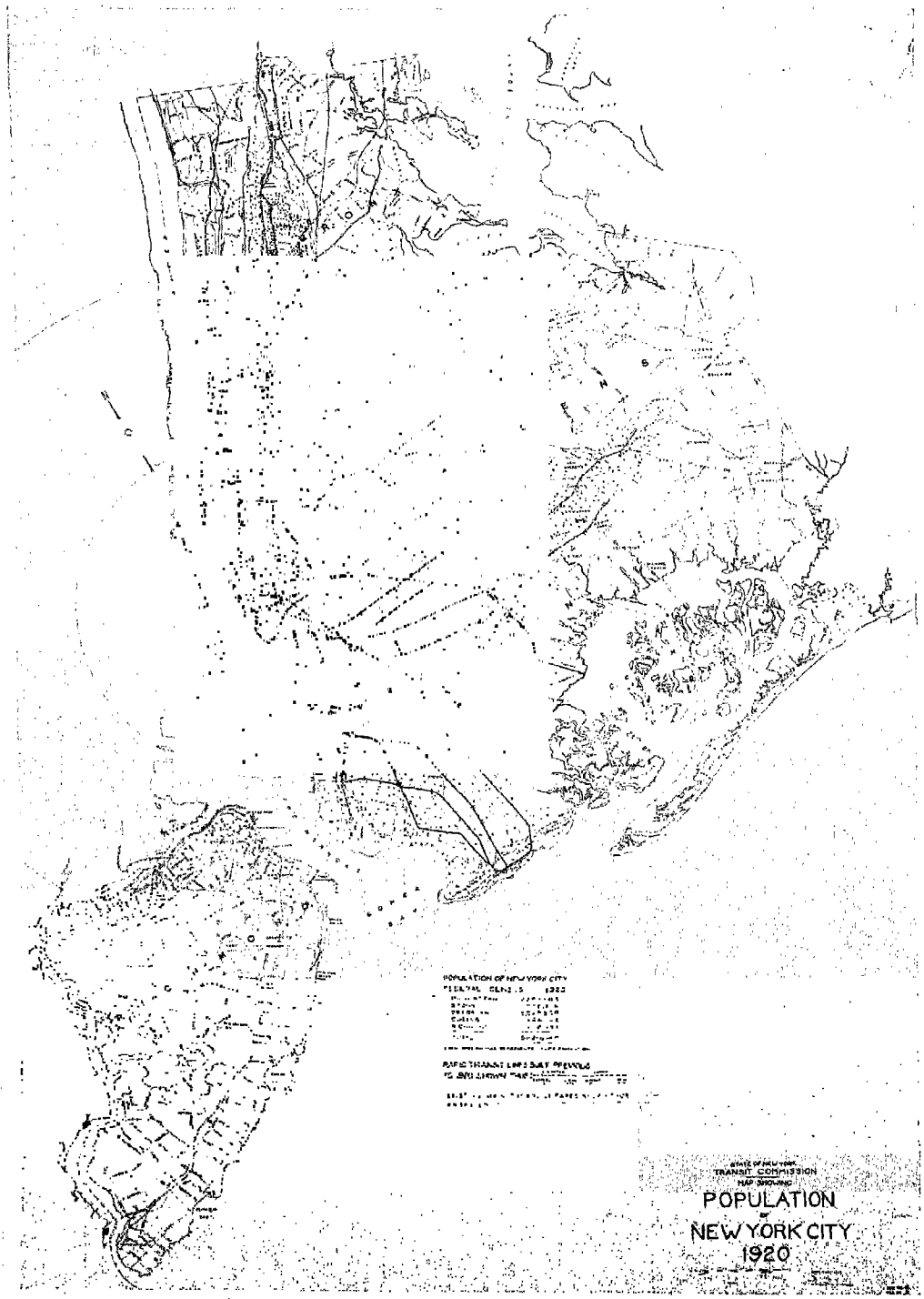
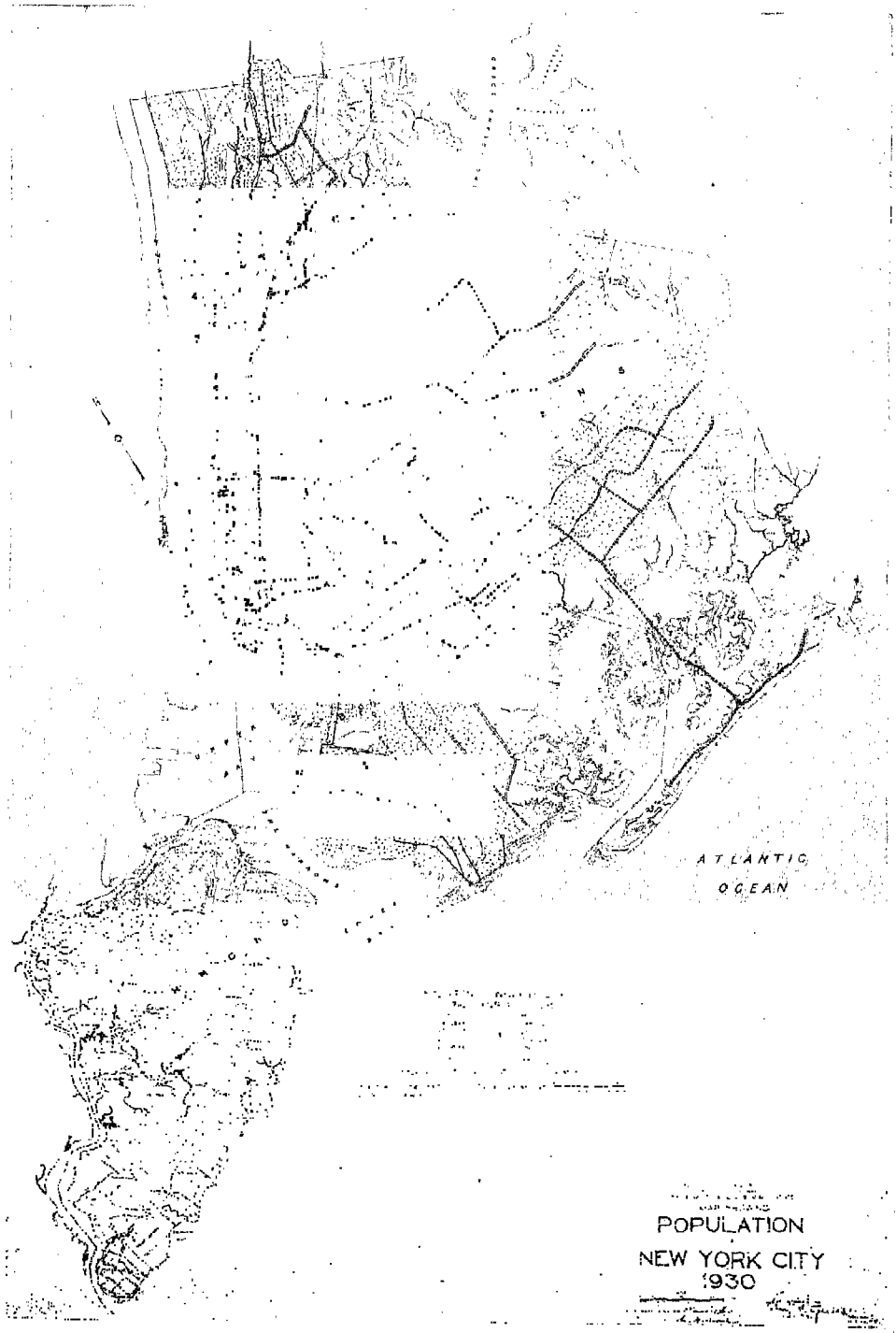


FIG. 57



Block Density Per Acre in Different Boroughs.

The density of population per acre of a ward or any large area may be extremely misleading, both because the areas of wards vary so greatly, as from 78 acres in the Second Ward of Manhattan to 36,600 acres in the Fourth Ward of Queens, and because a small part of a ward may be very closely built up with high tenements while the larger part of the ward is entirely unimproved, and this fact reduces the density for the entire area to a minimum most misleading.

The density of population per acre in blocks is probably the most accurate measure of actual density.

There were in Manhattan, in 1905, 122 blocks with a density of 750 to the acre, and 30 blocks with a density of 1,000 or over to the acre, counting in the acreage of such blocks one-half of the area of the bounding streets.

In 1905 the average density per acre of all these blocks was 967; in 1910 it had fallen to 952, a decrease of 15 per acre; the population of all the blocks had fallen from 308,396 in 1905 to 303,839 in 1910 — that is, 4,557. Fifty-three of the blocks showed a decrease in population, the most marked case being the block bounded by West 61st St. and 62d St., Amsterdam and West End aves., whose population fell in the five years from 6,173 to 3,501, a total reduction of 2,672, or nearly three-fifths of the total increase in population of the entire 122 blocks. The density of population of this block fell from 1,145 to 649 per acre, a reduction of 496 per acre. The block with the largest increase in population is that bounded by Grand, Broome, Ridge and Pitt sts., whose population increased, from 1905 to 1910, from 1,843 to 2,552 — that is, by 709, and whose density of population increased from 910 to 1,260, or 350 per acre. This block is in the centre of the congested East Side. . . .

A study of the changes in density of population from 1905 to 1910 of 28 important blocks in the lower part of The Bronx, which had in 1905 a population of 1,000 or over, is even more significant, because here many of these very blocks are blocks practically unimproved, and within walking distance of some are scores of acres of vacant land.

In 1905 the total population of these 28 blocks was 37,241; in 1910 it had increased to 42,897, a gain of 5,656. The average density per acre of all the blocks was 360 in 1905, and 414 in 1910, an increase of 54 per acre, or over one-seventh in the five years. The population of 20 blocks just three-quarters increased during this period; that of eight decreased.

Three blocks had in 1910 a density per acre of over 600 as follows: The block bounded by Kelly st., Westchester, Wales and Robbins aves., of 633; the block bounded by East 146th and 147th sts., St. Anns and Brook aves., of 610; the block bounded by East 136th and 137th sts., Willis ave. and Brown place, of 607. The population of the first of these increased in the five years from 1,227 to 1,633, and the population of the block bounded by 140th and 141st sts., Willis and Brook aves., increased from 1,601 to 2,298 — that is, by 697, or over two-fifths. The increase in density of only eight of the blocks was under 50 per cent.; of seven between 50 and 100; of four between 101 and 200, and of one over 200, while the decrease in density of six out of seven blocks was under 50 per acre. Several blocks in The Bronx are rapidly becoming as densely populated as the great majority of the congested blocks in Manhattan, and these Bronx blocks are also occupied chiefly by artisans and factory operatives and laborers.

The Sixteenth Ward of Brooklyn had in 1905 a population of 61,136, with an average density per acre of 249.3. By 1910 the population increased to 68,253; the density to 278.8 per acre.

There were in 1905 23 blocks in the ward with a density of 300 per acre or over. The average density per acre of all of these blocks in 1905 was 365; in 1910 it was 401, an increase of 36 per acre, or about 9 per cent. Six of the 23 blocks had a density of between 300 to 350 per acre; eight of between 351 and 400; five of between 401 and 450; two of between 451 and 500, while the block bounded by Boerum, McKibben and Humboldt sts. and Graham ave., had a density of 540 per acre, and the block bounded by Boerum st., McKibben st., Bushwick ave. and Humboldt ave., a density of 495 per acre. The same fluctuation in density of individual blocks occurred in this period as in the blocks in Manhattan which had in 1905 a density of 750 per acre or over, but the net density of population per acre of the 244.8 acres of the ward, the most densely populated in Brooklyn, nevertheless increased by nearly 30 people per acre.

Of the 23 blocks under consideration, nearly half decreased in density, but nine of them by under 50 per acre and only two by over 50; none by over 100. The block bounded by Boerum and McKibben and Humboldt sts. and Graham ave. increased in density by 174 per acre.

Six of the 23 blocks increased under 50 per acre, three between 50 and 100, and three between 101 and 200. A large proportion of most of these blocks have only a few high tenements, so that the maximum probable density of many is at least 600 to the acre if the present development continues.[1]

The Commission on Congestion of Population further pointed out that densities in terms of large areas might conceal concentrations in particular blocks. In any discussion of density this has to be kept in mind, along with the distinction between net and gross density — the latter including a proportion of the street area surrounding blocks — and the distinction between block and area density.

The Regional Plan Association, in a series of bulletins issued in 1934,[2] discusses the present spread of population in New York and the benefits that might accrue through a more even distribution. It arrives at a figure of 200 persons per gross acre as a desirable maximum in residential sections. This is a figure toward which some progress is likely to be made, at least for large areas, but when confined to particular blocks there is considerable doubt. Recent commercial and State Board of Housing projects show densities well above the recommended maximum, as will be seen from the following figures: [3]

Project	Persons per Gross Acre
Knickerbocker Village	750
Amalgamated Dwellings, Inc.	390
Brooklyn Gardens Apartments — 4th Ave.	360
Hillside Housing	260
Tudor City	677

More than half of the heads of families in the city are foreign born.[4] Only 17

1. *Report of the New York City Commission on Congestion of Population*, February 28, 1911, pp. 86-88.
2. *Information Bulletins* Nos. 18, 19, and 21, May 14, June 18, and November 19, 1934.
3. The figures for State Board of Housing projects are estimates made by the Regional Plan Association. That for Tudor City is calculated from the approximate known population and actual coverage.
4. For a detailed analysis of distribution by race and color, see *Heads of Families by Color and Nativity of Birth of Foreign-Born Heads, by Health Areas*, published by the Research Bureau of the Welfare Council, New York City, in 1934.

per cent of family heads are native whites of native parentage; 24 per cent are native whites of foreign or mixed parentage; and 5 per cent are either Negroes or persons of other color. The largest number of foreign-born heads of families are of Italian birth, and the next largest come from Russia. In view of the fact that most immigrants arrived here with meager resources and with limited educational background, the progress that they have made has been remarkable. Their difficulties with a new language, with different standards of living, and with the problem of getting a foothold in our economic life have, however, contributed greatly to the complexities of the local housing problem.[1]

As indicated in connection with the charts of housing accommodations, there are roughly 67,000 old-law tenements — "railroad," "dumb-bell," and variations — containing 500,000 apartments; about 53,000 new-law and Class A apartment buildings containing nearly 900,000 apartments; over 300,000 single-family dwellings; over 160,000 two-family dwellings; and a further supply of hotel and miscellaneous accommodations amounting to some 50,000 more.

In general the old-law apartments are decidedly inferior in their standards to those of today. In the "railroad" type, many interior rooms are lighted only indirectly by windows in partitions, if at all. In the "dumb-bell" type, windows on slot-like light courts are the only source of illumination for interior rooms. Toilets shared by more than one family are numerous, although by no means universal; hallways are not protected against the spread of fire; and lack of heat and hot water make it difficult or impossible to keep apartments comfortable and clean.

On the other hand some old-law buildings, erected originally for the well-to-do, exceeded the minimum requirements of the law, and provide reasonably livable quarters today because of the spaciousness and dignity of their halls and rooms. Others have been remodeled and rented at comparatively high rates to persons who apparently do not object to their structural deficiencies. There are also families in old-law tenements who manage to keep their quarters scrupulously clean and maintain a high standard of decency, indicating that the human factor is to be reckoned with. When weighed by present standards, however, the vast majority of the old-time buildings are so far below what we regard as adequate that they are justly condemned.

Standards of upkeep and maintenance of tenements reflect the type of ownership. Some tenements are owned and managed by large estates. Others are owned by individuals, some of whom belong to the Greater New York Taxpayers'

1. See Chapter XII.

Association.[1] A third class is owned by absentee landlords, many of whom take little interest in the condition of their property.[2]

The new-law apartments represent a decided advance in housing standards over the general run of their predecessors, but here again the quality of maintenance and the habits of the tenants enter in. Naturally more expensive because of larger light courts and better equipment, these have not been built with the object of providing accommodations for the low-rental groups. In Table IX of its annual report for 1933 the State Board of Housing shows that only .28 per cent of the new apartments erected in Manhattan in the previous five years rented for less than $12.50 per room per month. In the Bronx the figure was 1.68 per cent; in Brooklyn 2.04 per cent; and in Queens 1.82 per cent.

Degeneration is already observable in many new-law tenements. In some districts they were erected for people with comfortable incomes and with the expectation of a long renting life. It was doubtless assumed that they would continue to attract the original type of tenant. Nothing, however, is more certain than change; and with the passing years other districts have become fashionable, or smaller quarters have been desired. With the coming of a different tenant or with the cutting up of large apartments into smaller ones, always a difficult operation, the buildings may take their first step downward. Once the process is started, however, it tends to continue. The creation of new slums is a possibility. Any evidence of overcrowding or of possible creation of sub-standard housing through the partitioning of larger apartments should be watched with this in mind, in order that preventive measures may, if necessary, be applied.

The people who live in tenements, what they do, how they make a living, and what they have to pay for the sometimes doubtful privilege of habitation have a definite relation to housing policy. Their employment has a bearing on what they can pay.

The pageant of New York occupations is impressive. In the 1930 Census the broadly defined groups of workers were as follows:

Occupation	Number	Per Cent of Total
Agriculture	6,179	0.2
Forestry and fishing	698	
Extraction of minerals	697	
Manufacturing and mechanical industries	1,021,199	32.0
Transportation and communication	297,809	9.3
Trade	553,723	17.4
Public service (not elsewhere classified)	68,149	2.1
Professional service	254,852	8.0
Domestic and personal service	448,838	14.1
Clerical occupations	535,315	16.8

1. This association publishes a monthly journal, *Real Estate News*, reflecting the views of a large number of tenement-house owners.
2. Joseph Platzker, Secretary of the East Side Chamber of Commerce, an alert and painstaking observer, has compiled figures showing a large number of properties owned by absentee landlords on the Lower East Side.
3. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Occupation Statistics, New York*, Table 3.

The classifications reveal the composition of the city's activities, but a few more specific figures bring closer understanding of the vast numbers of employees in certain occupations. There were 21,567 longshoremen and stevedores who kept merchandise and foodstuffs rolling on and off the wharves of the largest seaport in the country. There were 105,749 male chauffeurs and truck and tractor drivers, and 85 women, whose skill piloted persons and freight through the city streets. There were 64,677 men and 76,525 women in the clothing industries; 40,537 men and 1,287 women were recorded as tailors.[1] Reference to the table shown on the preceding page will, however, show that manufacturing furnishes the bulk of work; that trade and clerical occupations each absorb about half as many as manufacturing; and that the opportunities afforded by domestic and personal service are surprisingly large.

"Low-income" and "white-collar" workers are sometimes referred to with apparent confidence that the terms are reasonably well understood. Actually our knowledge of what income groups make up the population of the city even in normal times is far from exact. There are estimates of income distribution for the country in general,[2] statistics of individual Federal income tax returns filed in the city,[3] inferences from the size of various occupational groups,[4] and other information.

The most direct evidence, so far as housing is concerned, is derived from the rentals actually paid. This must be checked back against available evidence as to income to determine whether an undue proportion of the family budget is being exacted for rent. Two surveys[5] made for the League of Mothers' Clubs in 1928 and 1932, dealing with more than a thousand tenement families in each case, throw light on this.

The median family was found to have an annual income of $1,570 in 1928. Out of this an annual rent of $316 was paid, representing a monthly room rental of $6.67. In 1932, the annual income for the same family had dropped to $1,049, while the annual rent had shown no tendency to decrease, being reported as $319, or $6.76 per room per month. The percentage of income used for rent had climbed from 19.23 per cent to over 30 per cent. There were, of course, considerable variations from the median, but the figures probably furnish a fair indication of the fortunes of a typical low-income family in good times and bad.

1. *Ibid.*, Tables 4 and 12.
2. Maurice Leven, Harold G. Moulton, and Clark Warburton, *America's Capacity to Consume*, The Brookings Institution, 1934.
3. U. S. Treasury Department, Bureau of Internal Revenue, *Statistics of Income, 1932*.
4. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *Occupation Statistics, New York*.
5. "What the Tenement Family Has and What It Pays for It, a study of 1,074 tenement families," prepared by Carey Batchelor, published in *Neighborhood*, June 1934; also *Tenements and Tenants*, a study of 1,109 tenement families, collated by Sidney Axelrad for the League of Mothers' Clubs, mimeographed, 1933.

A few years ago the goal of housing was to produce accommodations at average monthly rentals of from $11 to $12.50 a room. Today efforts center about rentals of $6 to $8. It is certainly important to get a clear idea of how many families come within these and other classifications. Fortunately, we have definite evidence in the United States Census for 1930, which for the first time took account of rentals paid.[1] These data are taken in preference to later ones obtained in the Real Property Inventory of 1934, because they are believed to represent a more nearly normal picture. Figures from the Real Property Inventory are given later for comparison.

Figure 58 shows the various rental groups for the city as a whole. Racial origin is indicated by distinctive cross-hatching, and the percentage of the whole which each group forms in any given bar of the chart is further indicated by figures identified by key letters at the bottom of each chart. A negligible group of "other races" has been omitted.[2]

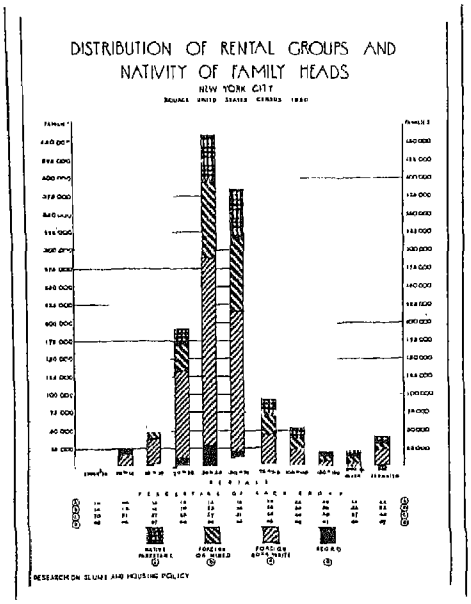
Charts serve a useful purpose only when they can bring out some point. In the present instance, it will be immediately apparent that the general run of people in New York City paid from $30 to $49 a month for apartment rental. This group often has to use housing that is deplorable from the standpoint of good design and equipment; but it is possessed of some bargaining power under ordinary circumstances. For the present it will be assumed that all above this group can fend for themselves under ordinary circumstances of supply and demand; that all below require intensive study as to their housing needs; and that a certain proportion of the group itself needs assistance and guidance of some sort in securing satisfactory accommodations.

If we take all of the families on the chart paying less than $30 per apartment each month, plus a small number of "other races" not shown, we have a total of over 277,000. Making allowance for increase in population since 1930 and for a small proportion of the next group inadequately housed would give a round figure of 300,000. It would, of course, be absurd to say that all these families need new housing, but, taking the figure as a maximum, we may form an estimate of the magnitude of the problem on that basis and then scale down the result to any extent desired.

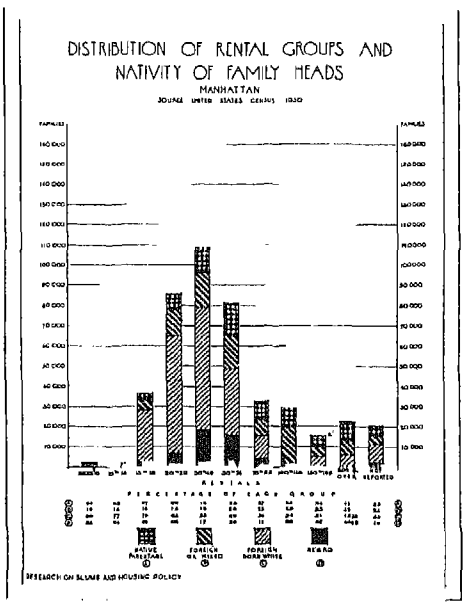
The several boroughs do not share alike in the distribution of these families;

1. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *Families, New York*.
2. The key letters appear beneath the legend identifying each nativity group at the bottom of the chart, and also at the left of four horizontal lines of percentage figures appearing above the legend. In these lines, the percentage which the families of a given nativity form of the total families in that group is indicated. Thus, in the bar showing families paying from $30 to $49 a month, the figure 14 appears in the horizontal line having the symbol (A) at the left. Reference to the legend at the bottom establishes the fact that, of all families paying $30 to $49 a month, those whose heads are of native parentage constitute 14 per cent. A similar system is employed in the group of Owner charts in Figure 59.

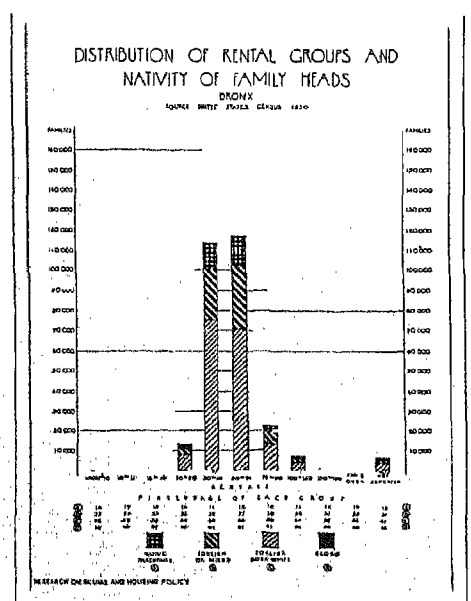
FIG. 58


DISTRIBUTION OF RENTAL GROUPS AND
NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
NEW YORK CITY
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

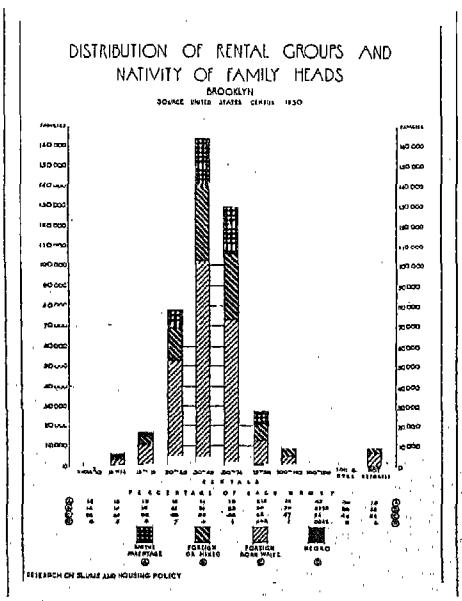
a


DISTRIBUTION OF RENTAL GROUPS AND
NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
MANHATTAN
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

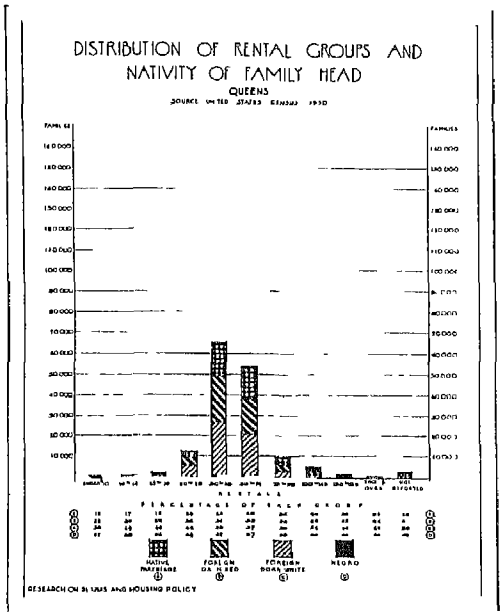
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DISTRIBUTION OF RENTAL GROUPS AND
NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
BRONX
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

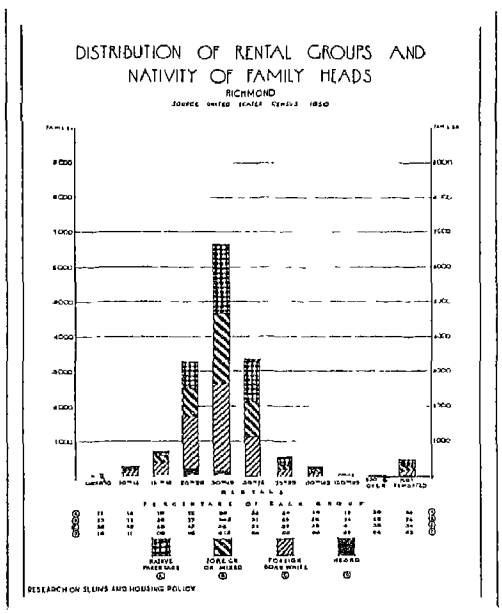
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DISTRIBUTION OF RENTAL GROUPS AND
NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
BROOKLYN
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

d



e



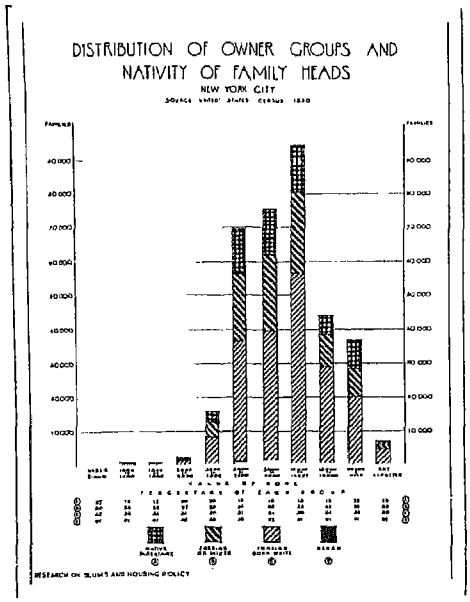
f

the latter are largely concentrated in Manhattan and Brooklyn, 51 per cent being in the former borough and 37 per cent in the latter. The much-talked-of exodus from the central areas of the city that has taken place in the last few decades apparently has consisted, for the most part, of those in comfortable circumstances. The families paying lower rentals must turn to old-law tenements or to aging new-law tenements in the two older boroughs for most of their housing accommodations.

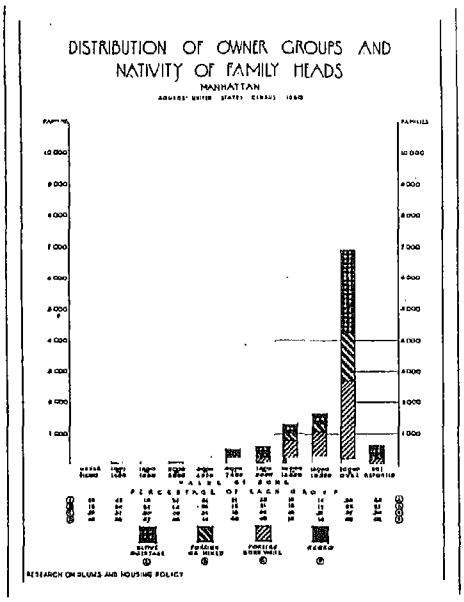
Of the entire low-rental group as described above, 63 per cent were of foreign birth and 6 per cent were Negroes. The housing problem is thus, to a considerable extent, one of persons that have not yet been able to adjust themselves to higher standards of housing because of handicaps of various kinds.

Attention has been so focussed on low-rental housing of late that the ownership of homes has been almost entirely ignored. On a percentage basis, New York City shows up rather poorly as to home ownership, only about 20 per cent of its families being listed as home owners in the census of 1930. From this it has been rather generally supposed that all emphasis is to be placed on renting, and that home ownership in a city having the characteristics of New York is of relatively little significance. Such a casual acceptance of percentage figures fails completely to take into account that, because of the bigness of New York, a percentage of

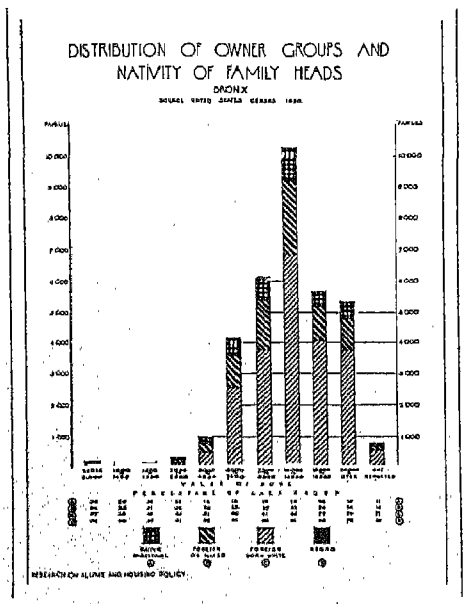
FIG. 59


DISTRIBUTION OF OWNER GROUPS AND NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
NEW YORK CITY
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

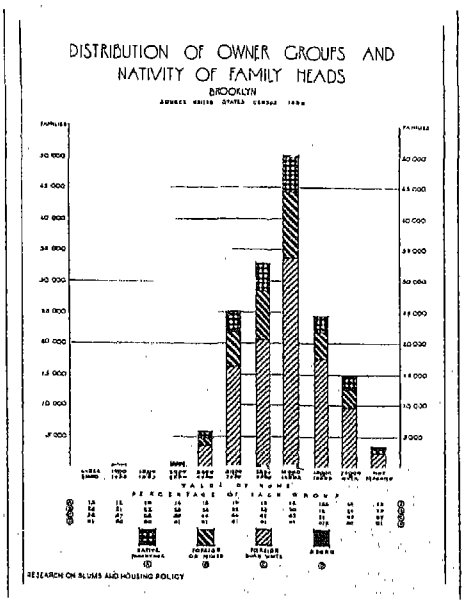
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DISTRIBUTION OF OWNER GROUPS AND NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
MANHATTAN
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

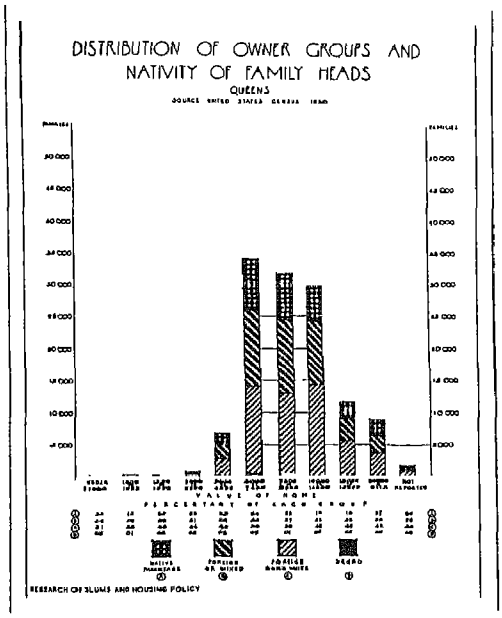
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DISTRIBUTION OF OWNER GROUPS AND NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
BRONX
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

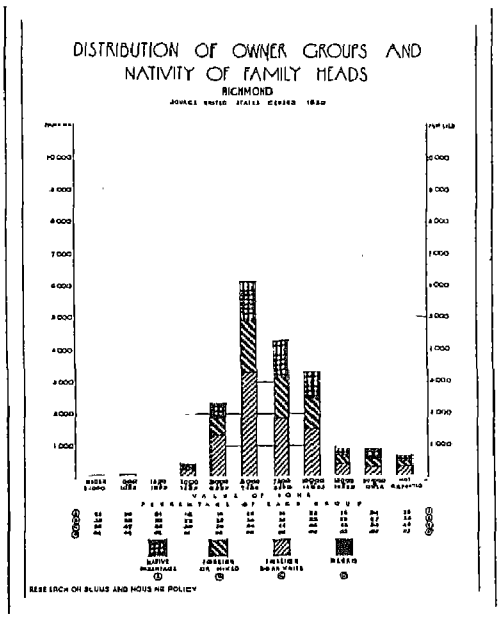
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DISTRIBUTION OF OWNER GROUPS AND NATIVITY OF FAMILY HEADS
BROOKLYN
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

d



e



f

only twenty can mean over 348,000 families, or over a million people. This is generally taken as a city of major size. Surely, in any really thoughtful consideration of the housing problem, some attention should be paid to the problems of these people.

Further scrutiny of the figures on home ownership brings out a widely varying percentage of owners in the different boroughs:

	Per cent
Manhattan	4
Brooklyn	26
Bronx	10.7
Queens	45.5
Richmond	54.8

The Negro home owners numbered 4,280.[1]

In order to determine just what the groups are, contained in the great body of home owners, Figure 59 has been prepared. It shows that the typical owned home falls within the group costing from $10,000 to $14,999. An interesting sidelight is that the majority of these houses are owned by persons of foreign birth. If a rather general impression is true that most of this group come with

1. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *Families, New York*, Table 5.

comparatively little wealth, here is a striking picture of what labor and sacrifice and self-denial can accomplish in those who meet the tests of character necessary in acquiring a home.

Particularly noteworthy is that group of homes valued at from under $1000, to $4,999, for the reason that the owners presumably fall within, or very nearly within, the same group as those to be benefited by low-rental housing — this on the assumption that the cost of the home at the higher figure represents about three times the yearly income of the owner. Altogether in 1930 there were 20,354 such families, a group whose histories would make interesting reading.[1] Within the last few years many of them have encountered trying experiences, some through loss of their investment. Others are comprised in the group of more than 35,900 whose ownership has been saved by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. As a group they have shared a vision of independence and stability through gradual building up of an equity. They are favored with no subsidies, benefit from no tax exemption, and yet somehow carry on gallantly for an ideal.[2]

That the exactions of second-mortgage financing and other expenses of acquiring a home are harsh, and sometimes unbearable, has been emphasized repeatedly.[3] The establishment of the Federal Housing Administration, with its function of encouraging guaranteed mortgages of a high percentage of the value, protected by amortization requirements, has brought about the beginning of a rational system of home financing that may be expected to give some help to home owners. Certainly this group, whose members have shown themselves desirous of meeting all the responsibilities of citizenship, is deserving of at least as much thought as the much larger renting group.

Any attempt to picture contemporary conditions would be incomplete without reference to the Real Property Inventory taken in 1934. Information thus far presented in these pages has been drawn from earlier sources, in particular the United States Census of 1930. The Inventory advances our knowledge of conditions four years and provides certain data not hitherto available at any time except in the form of scattered samples.

Taken in a time of acute depression, the Inventory presumably records things at their worst. Instead of some 277,000 families paying less than $30 per month rental for their living quarters, we now find 516,346. Superficially, we might con-

1. *Ibid.*, Table 7.
2. Home ownership in all its phases has received exhaustive discussion in the eleven volumes of the reports growing out of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1931. An earlier treatment appears in *How to Own Your Home*, published by the Division of Building and Housing, Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce, in 1923.
3. *Present Home Financing Methods*, published by the Division of Building and Housing, Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce, in 1926.

clude that the low-rental housing problem had been solved by placing twice the number of apartments within the reach of the low-rental group than formerly were available. Actually, we know that no real improvement has been effected and that the increase in supply of low-rental quarters is a temporary matter.

Selected data from the Inventory are presented below. They are especially valuable in establishing just what proportion of living accommodations are deficient with respect to structural condition and sanitary equipment.

SELECTED DATA ON RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES AND DWELLING UNITS IN NEW YORK CITY[1]

Residential structure and dwelling-unit * data	City total	Borough: Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond
Structure Data						
Total for area	594,437	56,498	58,862	246,897	196,904	35,276
A. Type:						
Single family	255,191	5,743	20,507	80,889	123,098	24,954
2 family	136,467	542	16,295	72,364	41,593	5,673
Multifamily	116,348	35,055	17,970	52,285	10,463	575
Other structures	86,431	15,158	4,090	41,359	21,750	4,074
B. Age:						
Less than 10 years*	188,437	2,290	22,337	57,512	94,842	11,456
10 years, under 20*	125,586	2,212	10,355	46,839	56,355	9,825
20 years, under 35*	90,294	6,209	11,923	40,695	26,514	4,953
35 years and over*	190,120	45,787	14,247	131,851	19,193	9,042
C. Condition:						
In good condition (first class)	277,347	14,077	25,959	95,828	127,821	13,662
Needs minor repairs (second class)	271,337	30,991	28,962	131,034	61,995	18,355
Needs major repairs (third class)	37,193	9,000	3,546	15,624	6,146	2,877
Unfit for use (fourth class)	8,560	2,430	395	4,411	942	382
*Dwelling Unit * Data*						
Total per area	2,067,065	590,767	376,637	713,928	341,033	44,700
D. Occupied:						
Total number	1,815,057	485,623	339,233	645,990	305,662	38,228
By owners	629,347	4,567	34,317	151,879	123,820	18,407
By renters	1,185,710	481,056	304,916	494,111	181,842	19,821
E. Vacant:						
Number	252,350	105,144	37,404	67,938	35,371	6,472
Per cent	12.20	17.80	10.00	9.51	10.37	14.47
F. Families:						
United States Census, 1930	1,728,709	472,620	322,367	616,875	280,318	36,016
New York City Real Property Inventory, 1934	1,889,574	501,099	355,113	675,758	317,582	40,022

* The term "dwelling unit," used for the sake of uniformity with other tables in this publication, is equivalent to the term "family quarters" used in the Real Property Inventory of New York City. Correspondingly "10 years, under 20," etc., are used instead of "10 to 19 years," etc. Also, "20 minutes, under 40," etc., are used instead of "20 to 39 minutes," etc.

1. Edith Elmer Wood, *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States*, pp. 34–35, citing Real Property Inventory of New York City, 1934, prepared under the direction of the New York Housing Authority, U. S. Department of Commerce and the Mayor's Advisory Committee.

SELECTED DATA ON RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES AND DWELLING UNITS IN NEW YORK CITY (*Cont.*)

Residential structure and dwelling-unit * data	City total	Borough: Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond
G. Rentals:						
1. Monthly rental (all occupied dwelling units):						
Under $10	22,939	16,046	843	5,499	442	109
$10 to $19.99	183,682	99,378	10,583	63,848	7,648	2,225
$20 to $29.99	309,725	101,834	46,138	121,260	34,603	5,890
$30 to $49.99	635,875	129,008	182,689	216,731	98,889	8,558
$50 to $74.99	210,950	61,637	50,828	65,196	31,019	2,245
$75 to $99.99	49,899	27,028	6,808	10,945	4,725	393
$100 to $149.99	27,464	20,547	1,675	3,367	1,752	123
$150 and over	20,695	18,509	214	1,239	689	44
2. Rent per room per month (all occupied dwelling units in multi-family structures):						
Under $3	26,240	15,771	3,236	6,659	522	52
$3 to $4.99	142,875	74,265	9,027	56,041	3,202	340
$5 to $5.99	132,493	68,321	13,281	43,061	7,490	340
$6 to $6.99	108,234	51,272	21,706	28,593	6,433	230
$7 to $9.99	228,058	81,610	66,583	68,091	11,502	272
$10 to $19.99	432,092	94,848	161,699	124,423	49,864	1,258
$20 to $34.99	70,701	47,427	4,994	12,410	5,674	196
$35 and over	30,150	27,515	291	1,779	543	22
H. Persons per room:						
1 and under	1,448,489	391,709	249,926	506,226	267,567	33,061
1.01 to 2	351,295	88,505	86,973	134,228	36,679	4,910
2.01 and over	14,745	5,202	2,334	5,536	1,416	257
I. Miscellaneous data (occupied dwelling units):						
1. With mechanical refrigeration	595,843	147,603	170,134	159,964	108,555	9,587
2. In fourth-class structures	25,458	15,400	616	8,395	775	272
3. Renting for less than $3 per room	33,201	16,453	3,762	10,742	1,596	648
4. Without central heating plant	387,664	158,303	15,787	166,457	38,646	8,471
5. Without hot water	244,358	61,477	3,059	150,045	22,017	3,440
6. Without tub or shower	235,871	122,194	5,966	95,496	8,482	3,733
7. Without electricity or gas for lighting	6,684	2,030	217	2,459	1,094	884
8. Without electricity or gas for cooking	26,319	6,368	1,406	7,991	3,431	7,123
9. Without private indoor watercloset	189,549	114,844	3,691	63,070	5,892	2,052
J. Time to get to work (principal income earner) (per cent of all reporting families):						
Under 20 minutes*	22	31	15	20	19	28
20 minutes, under 40*	35	49	28	38	27	32
40 minutes, under 60*	19	15	27	24	20	7
60 minutes and over*	24	5	30	18	34	33
K. Owned passenger automobiles:						
None	1,477,447	450,279	289,594	538,715	177,594	21,265
1	325,376	33,242	48,268	104,306	123,606	15,954
2 or more	11,913	2,102	1,371	2,969	4,462	1,009

Discussion of economic factors in the city, as they affect housing, must be undertaken with due regard to the fact that abnormal conditions should not be accepted too readily as indicating permanent trends. If the interest in housing that has now been generated had reached its present state a few years ago, altogether different maps would have been printed and perhaps altogether different opinions drawn as to probable trends of value, ability of properties to pay taxes, and so on. The present tendencies and assessed values have been brought out with great clarity and fidelity in the report of the Slum Clearance Committee. This shows a decline in assessed values in "slum" areas. Taken in connection with the known lag between assessments and market values, however, it probably gives a liberal picture of what property will bring today.

On every hand values have declined, as is evident by the precipitate drop of about two billions between 1932 and 1934 in total assessed valuation of the city. Little attention seems to be devoted, however, to the percentage decline of tenement property as compared to the percentage decline of other types of property not under reproach for sub-standard conditions. Nor do the remarkable recuperative powers of tenement-house values, as evidenced no longer ago than the post-war period, seem to be reckoned with. The fact that many of these tenements should be scrapped (but cannot be, under any principle that we have yet been able to devise) has not prevented them from repeated demonstrations of their capacity to endure, and to repair their market values, if not their place in public esteem.

The present facts are well known and hardly need the statistical confirmation that is on every hand. In the fourteen sub-standard areas studied by the Slum Clearance Committee, assessed values have declined, between the years 1904 and 1934, over many blocks on the East Side, but in the remaining areas only scattered blocks show declines. Others reveal but slight gain, however. The picture is one of arrested development in some spots and positive decline in others, while total realty values for the city have risen from $5,015,463,779 in 1904 to $19,616,915,429 in 1932, and have then receded to about $17,000,000,000 in 1934. Tax arrears show up badly in many of the areas, although the East Side, in contradiction to its record of loss in values, is better off in this respect than most of the other districts. Buildings in bad condition are seen to abound in each area. The varying standards of the observers make this a less reliable guide than is the record of Tenement House Department violations, which represent some definite legal deficiency. These latter are somewhat irregularly distributed over each district, with a tendency to concentrate near its center.

In brief, a housing program should recognize that the retardation of the city's growth, the contemporary decline in land values, and reduced population densi-

ties facilitate a more open type of construction and better provision for the space needs of families than has been possible heretofore for fully a century. The trend of population to the outlying boroughs, the increasing vacancies in old-law housing, as well as the growth of suburban ownership of low-cost homes, indicate changes in consumer demand. The weight of traditional housing of old-law types is heavy, and rent-paying capacity has been shown to be low. Such data reveal potentialities as well as the difficulties inherent in the framing of a housing policy.

CHAPTER XII

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION AND NEGRO HOUSING

NEW YORK is a city in which persons of foreign birth or foreign parentage predominate. In 1930, of the total city population of 6,930,446, the foreign born numbered 2,293,400; those of foreign or mixed parentage numbered 2,788,625; and there were 327,706 Negroes. There were only 1,505,200 persons who were native white of native parentage.[1]

Of the foreign born, the majority now live outside of Manhattan. For the latter borough now includes only 641,618 persons of foreign birth, while 868,770 reside in Brooklyn, and 477,342 in the Bronx, 266,150 in Queens, and 39,520 in Richmond. Manhattan has more Irish, Swiss, French, German, Czech, Yugoslav, Finn, Greek, Spanish, Turk, Canadian, West Indian, and South American residents than any other borough. But Brooklyn exceeds Manhattan in its number of English, Scotch, Scandinavian, Polish, Austrian, Russian, Lithuanian, Italian, and Syrian residents. Queens Borough leads in number of residents from the Netherlands, and the Bronx in Hungarians.

In Manhattan, Italians outnumber other foreign-born groups with 117,740. The Irish come second among Manhattan's foreign born, numbering 96,861. In Brooklyn there are 219,483 Russians, Italians follow with 193,435, and Poles come third with 106,714. Russians lead in the Bronx with 135,210, and Italians follow with 67,732. Germans exceed other foreign born in Queens, with 64,007, and Italians follow with 50,307. Italians likewise lead other foreign-born groups in Richmond, with 11,036.[2]

Natives of foreign or mixed parentage follow much the same distribution among the boroughs of New York City. Brooklyn exceeds Manhattan in gross number, and among the native sons of foreign races Manhattan exceeds Brooklyn in number of second-generation Welsh, Swiss, French, Czech, Hungarian, Yugoslav, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, West Indian, and South American. But these are minor categories, leaving Brooklyn with the ascendency in the number of native-born sons of each of the races of largest immigration — except for the Germans, in respect to whom Queens has the ascendency.

1. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *New York, Composition and Characteristics of the Population*, Table 12a.

2. *Ibid.*, Table 18.

The colored races other than the Negro have contributed only an insignificant part of New York's population, though representatives of each are to be found in all of the five boroughs. In 1930, there were only 391 Indians, 8,414 Chinese, 2,356 Japanese, and 2,152 Mexicans. Of each of these races the greatest number live in Manhattan.[1]

The percentages of foreign born in New York City have been shrinking constantly throughout the past generation. In 1900, Manhattan had 62.2 per cent of the foreign-born population of the city, but in 1930 only 29.2 per cent. Meanwhile, Brooklyn's share increased from 28 per cent to 37.4 per cent, that of the Bronx from 4.8 per cent to 20.3 per cent, and of Queens from 3.5 per cent to 11.4 per cent. Richmond's share, inconsiderable in each period, increased from 1.5 per cent to 1.7 per cent.[2]

In the Lower East Side marked changes have occurred in the grouping of native and foreign born. The native population was larger in gross number in 1905 than in 1930, but the percentage of native born was much higher in the latter year. Among immigrant groupings those from northwestern Europe predominated in 1855, for there were 105,318 from that region as compared with only 722 from southeastern Europe. In 1910, however, there were 14,324 from northwestern Europe, and 354,806 from southeastern Europe. By 1930, those born in northwestern Europe had decreased to 5,893 and those from southeastern Europe to 120,513. The total population of the Lower East Side in this twenty-year period had fallen from 542,061 or 542.6 per acre, to 249,755 or 249.8 per acre.

POPULATION OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE, MANHATTAN, BY COUNTRIES OF BIRTH, — 1855, 1905, 1910, 1920, AND 1930[3]

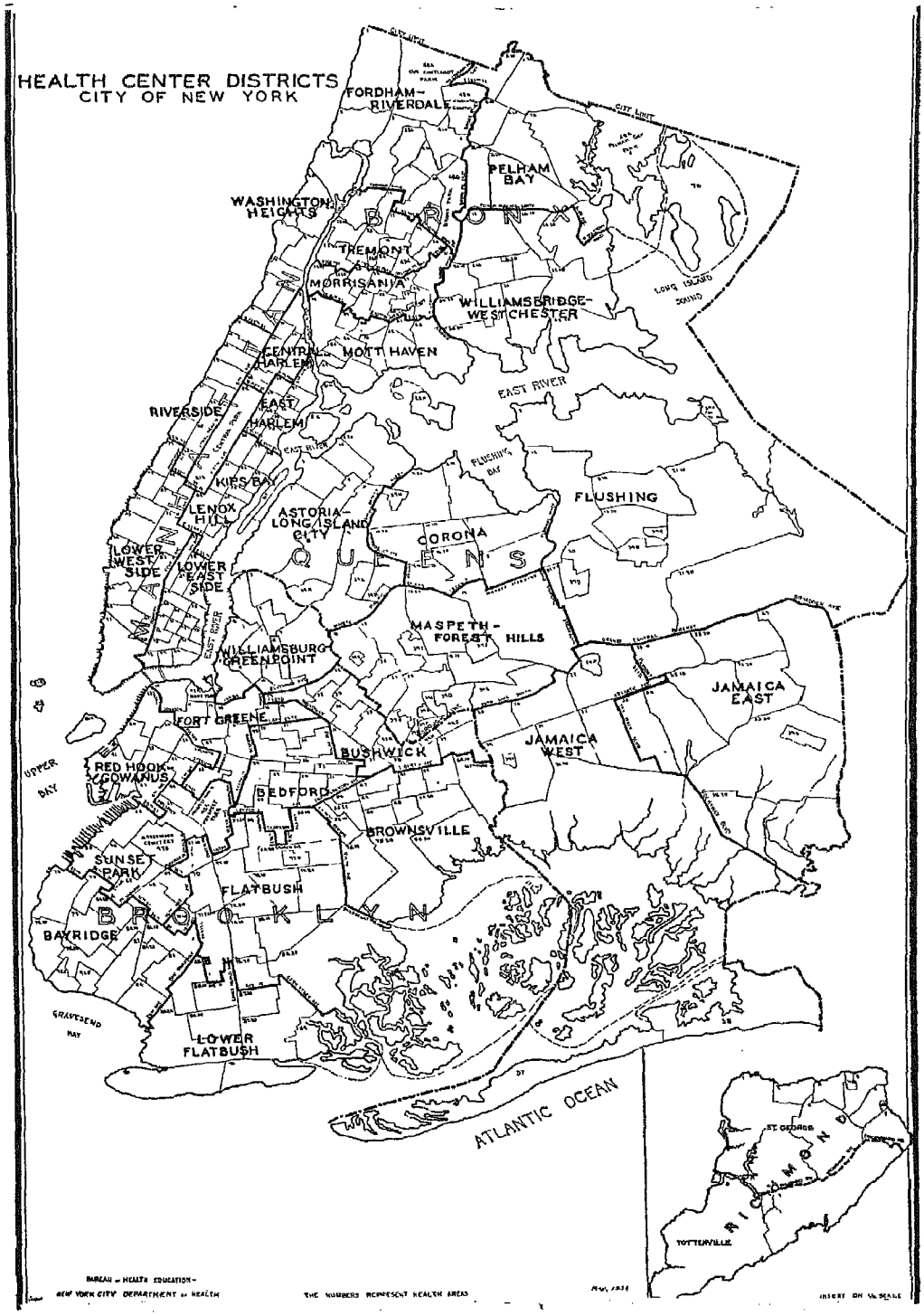
Countries of Birth	1855	1905	1910	1920	1930
United States	91,999	194,292	171,186	173,734	117,892*
Northwestern Europe	105,318	27,178	14,324	8,608	5,893*
Southeastern Europe	722	295,760	354,806	231,258	120,513*
All others	1,885	1,068	1,541	2,191	3,125*
Negro and other non-white	—	—	204	317	2,332†
Total	199,924	518,298	542,061	416,108	249,755
Persons per 999 acres	200.1	518.8	542.6	416.5	249.8

* Whites only for 1930. † Includes Negro and other non-white races.

The most useful comparison of the relative proportions of native white, foreign-born white, and colored for each of the boroughs of the city, and for each of the major communities within each borough, is presented in *Statistical Reference Data*

1. *Ibid.*, Table 17.
2. Walter Laidlaw, *Population of the City of New York, 1890–1930*, Chart 24.
3. *Ibid.*, Table 39.

FIG. 60


HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS
CITY OF NEW YORK
FORDHAM-RIVERDALE
PELHAM BAY
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
TREMONT
MORRISANIA
WILLIAMSBRIDGE-WESTCHESTER
CENTRAL HARLEM
MOTT HAVEN
RIVERSIDE
EAST HARLEM
KIPS BAY
LENOX HILL
ASTORIA-LONG ISLAND CITY
CORONA
FLUSHING
LOWER WEST SIDE
LOWER EAST SIDE
MASPETH-FOREST HILLS
WILLIAMSBURG-GREENPOINT
JAMAICA EAST
FORT GREENE
BUSHWICK
JAMAICA WEST
RED HOOK-GOWANUS
BEDFORD
BROWNSVILLE
SUNSET PARK
FLATBUSH
BAYRIDGE
LOWER FLATBUSH
ATLANTIC OCEAN
EAST RIVER
LONG ISLAND SOUND
UPPER BAY
GRAVESEND BAY
MANHATTAN
BRONX
QUEENS
BROOKLYN
RICHMOND
ST. GEORGE
TOTTENVILLE
BUREAU OF HEALTH EDUCATION
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
THE NUMBERS REPRESENT HEALTH AREAS
INSERT ON SAME SCALE

HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS, NEW YORK CITY [1]

COLOR, NATIVITY, AND PARENTAGE OF POPULATION, 1930 CENSUS

HEALTH CENTER DISTRICT	NATIVE WHITE		FOREIGN BORN WHITE	COLORED		TOTAL
	Native parentage	Foreign or mixed parentage		Negro	Others	
Manhattan						
Lower East Side	29,667	134,413	160,569	1,280	1,852	327,781
Kips Bay–Lenox Hill	63,500	77,038	99,512	1,600	564	242,214
East Harlem	32,755	87,666	84,029	22,360	560	227,370
Central Harlem	21,012	15,899	25,960	142,206	752	205,829
Lower West Side	81,705	104,734	99,072	12,087	4,392	301,990
Riverside	84,029	91,855	89,383	15,883	1,479	282,629
Washington Heights	63,842	91,660	75,076	27,745	1,228	259,551
Miscellaneous*	4,754	5,609	8,017	1,509	59	19,948
Borough of Manhattan	381,264	608,874	641,618	224,670	10,886	1,867,312
Bronx						
Mott Haven	34,184	98,198	96,407	3,106	137	232,032
Morrisania	36,364	125,641	123,631	4,594	141	290,371
Tremont	41,726	129,983	111,166	2,197	117	285,189
Fordham-Riverdale	46,479	82,792	57,200	869	106	187,446
Pelham Bay	19,943	47,655	34,517	1,342	31	103,488
W'msbridge–Westchester	34,451	76,588	54,132	528	47	165,746
Miscellaneous*	277	124	289	294	2	986
Borough of the Bronx	213,424	560,981	477,342	12,930	581	1,265,258
Richmond (Staten Island)						
St. George Division	39,086	48,820	30,326	2,197	146	120,575
Tottenville Division	12,911	15,257	9,194	379	30	37,771
Borough of Richmond	51,997	64,077	39,520	2,576	176	158,346
Brooklyn						
W'msburg–Greenpoint	36,460	118,509	93,149	2,790	244	251,152
Fort Greene	48,335	86,126	61,815	19,955	773	217,004
Red Hook–Gowanus	42,991	75,067	60,663	5,929	824	185,474
Sunset Park	38,252	98,031	88,233	277	204	224,997
Bay Ridge	51,465	133,654	104,177	651	133	290,080
Bushwick	66,096	103,436	70,044	1,189	144	240,909
Bedford	57,109	115,185	84,215	27,661	201	284,371
Flatbush	106,135	152,917	95,129	1,638	277	356,096
Lower Flatbush	28,414	102,562	79,744	1,353	123	212,196
Brownsville	17,468	141,466	131,601	7,478	109	298,122
Borough of Brooklyn	492,725	1,126,953	868,770	68,921	3,032	2,560,401
Queens						
Astoria–L. I. City	52,233	86,624	69,754	477	190	209,278
Corona	39,399	61,678	41,690	3,051	138	145,956
Maspeth	65,112	74,423	45,756	301	57	185,649
Flushing	48,802	44,967	26,410	2,883	186	123,248
Jamaica West	88,615	96,751	51,117	2,285	157	238,925
Jamaica East	71,629	63,297	31,423	9,612	112	176,073
Borough of Queens	365,790	427,740	266,150	18,609	840	1,079,129
City of New York	1,505,200	2,788,625	2,293,400	327,706	15,515	6,930,446

* Miscellaneous covers parks, cemeteries, islands, etc.

1. *Health Center Districts, New York City, Statistical Reference Data, Five-Year Period, 1929–1933.* Committee on Neighborhood Health Development, City of New York, p. 19.

HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS, NEW YORK CITY[1]

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION * ACCORDING TO COLOR, NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE

HEALTH CENTER DISTRICT	NATIVE WHITE		FOREIGN-BORN WHITE	COLORED		TOTAL
	Native parentage	Foreign or mixed parentage		Negro	Others	
Manhattan						
Lower East Side	9.0	41.0	49.0	0.4	0.6	100
Kips Bay–Lenox Hill	26.2	31.8	41.1	0.7	0.2	100
East Harlem	14.4	38.6	37.0	9.8	0.2	100
Central Harlem	10.2	7.7	12.6	69.1	0.4	100
Lower West Side	27.0	34.7	32.8	4.0	1.5	100
Riverside	29.8	32.5	31.6	5.6	0.5	100
Washington Heights	24.6	35.3	28.9	10.7	0.5	100
Miscellaneous†	23.8	28.1	40.2	7.6	0.3	100
Borough of Manhattan	20.4	32.6	34.4	12.0	0.6	100
Bronx						
Mott Haven	14.7	42.3	41.6	1.3	0.1	100
Morrisania	12.5	43.3	42.6	1.6	..	100
Tremont	14.6	45.6	39.0	0.8	..	100
Fordham–Riverdale	24.8	44.2	30.5	0.5	..	100
Pelham Bay	19.3	46.0	33.4	1.3	..	100
W'msbridge–Westchester	20.8	46.2	32.7	0.3	..	100
Miscellaneous†	28.1	12.6	29.3	29.8	0.2	100
Borough of the Bronx	16.9	44.3	37.7	1.0	0.1	100
Richmond (Staten Island)						
St. George Division	32.4	40.5	25.2	1.8	0.1	100
Tottenville Division	34.2	40.4	24.3	1.0	0.1	100
Borough of Richmond	32.8	40.5	25.0	1.6	0.1	100
Brooklyn						
W'msburg–Greenpoint	14.5	47.2	37.1	1.1	0.1	100
Fort Greene	22.3	39.7	28.5	9.2	0.3	100
Red Hook–Gowanus	23.2	40.5	32.7	3.2	0.4	100
Sunset Park	17.0	43.6	39.2	0.1	0.1	100
Bay Ridge	17.7	46.1	35.9	0.2	0.1	100
Bushwick	27.4	42.9	29.1	0.5	0.1	100
Bedford	20.1	40.5	29.6	9.7	0.1	100
Flatbush	29.8	42.9	26.7	0.5	0.1	100
Lower Flatbush	13.4	48.3	37.6	0.6	0.1	100
Brownsville	5.9	47.5	44.1	2.5	..	100
Borough of Brooklyn	19.3	44.0	33.9	2.7	0.1	100
Queens						
Astoria–L. I. City	25.0	41.4	33.3	0.2	0.1	100
Corona	27.0	42.2	28.6	2.1	0.1	100
Maspeth–Forest Hills	35.1	40.1	24.6	0.2	..	100
Flushing	39.6	36.5	21.4	2.3	0.2	100
Jamaica West	37.1	40.5	21.4	0.9	0.1	100
Jamaica East	40.7	36.0	17.8	5.5	..	100
Borough of Queens	33.9	39.6	24.7	1.7	0.1	100
City of New York	21.7	40.3	33.1	4.7	0.2	100

* 1930 Federal Census of population.
† Miscellaneous covers parks, islands, cemeteries.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

for the five-year period 1929–1933, compiled by Godias J. Drolet and Marguerite P. Potter for the Committee on Neighborhood Health Development of the Department of Health, City of New York. The tables (pp. 314, 315) indicate the actual number of persons in each of the above categories for each major district of the city and also their percentage distribution. It reveals that the Lower East Side is still the district of Manhattan with the greatest predominance of immigrants, serving as residence for 160,569 foreign-born whites who constitute 49 per cent of its population. It reveals, also, that Central Harlem is the primary center of the Negro race, comprising 142,206 Negroes, who constitute 69.1 per cent of the population of that district. Riverside is shown to have the largest percentage of population that is native white of native parentage, yet, although there are 84,029 persons in this group, they comprise only 29.8 per cent of the population of the Riverside districts.[1]

The Negro population of New York City has increased with great rapidity, from 67,304, including other colored races, in 1900 to 343,221, including other colored races, in 1930, or more than five times as many.[2] Of the latter number, 327,706 were Negroes. This increase can be accounted for only in part by the excess of births over deaths. Of the Negroes only 79,264 were born in New York State; 54,754 were foreign born. Those from the South numbered 150,616, and the remainder were scattered as follows: 6,114 from states west of the Mississippi; 4,558 from New England; 3,483 from the East North Central Division; 11,501 from New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and the remaining 17,416 from other states and from United States possessions. Clearly, the Negro housing problem of New York City is not that of a homogeneous group, but one of highly diverse origins and traditions.[3]

The religious composition of the Negro population in 1930 comprised 309,087 Protestants; 17,619 Roman Catholics; and 1,000 of Jewish faith.[4] The Jewish Negroes are reported to be largely from Ethiopia.

By boroughs the distribution is 12,930 for the Bronx, 68,921 for Brooklyn, 224,670 for Manhattan, 18,609 for Queens, and 2,576 for Richmond.[5]

A study of the distribution of Negroes within New York City shows that they live in every statistical area of all five boroughs.[6] Negroes are present also in the vast majority of census tracts which make up these statistical areas in Manhattan, in approximately half of the inhabited census tracts of the Bronx and Brooklyn, and in a somewhat lower percentage of tracts in Queens and Richmond boroughs.[7]

1. For location of districts see Figure 60.
2. Laidlaw, Table 57.
3. *Ibid.*, Table 56.
4. *Ibid.*, Table 60.
5. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *New York, Composition and Characteristics of the Population*, Table 23, pp. 72–73. Boundaries of statistical areas are given on pp. 75–76.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
7. Laidlaw, Table 20, pp. 86–178.

The highest point of Negro concentration is in statistical area M8B, bounded by West 159th Street, Harlem River, Park Avenue, 126th Street, Lenox Avenue, 130th Street, and Eighth Avenue. Within this area there were 101,257 Negroes in 1930. In the area just south of this,[1] M8C, there were 48,059, and 32,395 in area M7 immediately to the west between 126th and 155th Streets. In Brooklyn,[2] one district (K9A) had 18,375, and another (K7) 13,001. In Queens, area Q2B had 8,382 Negroes, and area Q3A had 3,100. The highest concentration in the Bronx was 2,681 in area B3A, and 2,497 in B3B. In Richmond there were 2,161 in area R1.[3]

Negroes form the highest percentage of the population in the following census tracts (odd numbers indicate West Side tracts, and even numbers East Side): 96.3 per cent in tract 212; 93.3 per cent in 214; 88.5 per cent in 230; 77.2 per cent in 228; 76.0 per cent in 151; 74.8 per cent in 210; 68.8 per cent in 226; 65.1 per cent in 232; 44.4 per cent in 147; 44.0 per cent in 208; 31.4 per cent in 206.

In the outlying boroughs the only concentrations as high as those already mentioned are as follows: 65.9 per cent in Bronx tract 61; 42.8 per cent Bronx tract 315; 44.6 per cent Brooklyn North Side tract 27; 47.0 per cent Brooklyn North Side tract 179, 39.8 per cent Brooklyn North Side tract 271.1.[4]

The following table[5] indicates the growth in the Negro population of New York City and each of its boroughs from 1920 to 1930, and shows an increase of more than 100 per cent in that ten-year period in every borough except Richmond. In Manhattan, although the general population declined 18.2 per cent in that decade, the Negro population increased by 105.9 per cent.

It cannot be said of New York, as of some other cities, that the Negroes are restricted to a few narrowly limited areas. Nor can it be said that they are confined to dilapidated areas "down by the tracks" or in the hollows. Nor are they limited, as some maintain, to interstitial areas or to zones of transition. Actually, so far as physical setting is concerned, the Negro districts compare favorably, not only with those of immigrant races, but also with those of the native population. There are relatively few Negroes in the region most famed for its slums, the Lower East Side, though there is said to be a recent movement out of Harlem into that area. The Harlem region is indeed better protected from the smoke and dust of the city, from narrow streets made dark by high buildings, from noise of industries, and from trucking and traffic dangers, than much of the rest of residential New York. The land is high enough above the rivers and sufficiently drained to be relatively sanitary and in the northern section many of the more well-to-do

1. See Figures 61 and 62.
2. Laidlaw, p. 110.
3. *Composition and Characteristics of the Population*, Table 23.
4. Laidlaw, Table 23.
5. P. 320.

FIG. 61

MANHATTAN STATISTICAL AREA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS

MANHATTAN BOROUGH

Area M2A.—Rivington, East River, Catherine Slip extended, Catherine Slip, Cherry, Catherine, Bowery.

Area M2B.—E. 14th, East River, Rivington, Clinton, Avenue B.

Area M2C.—E. 14th, Avenue B, Clinton, Rivington, Bowery, 4th Ave.

Area M4A.—W. 42nd, E. 42nd, 3rd Ave., E. 44th, 1st Ave., E. 34th, East River, E. 14th, W. 14th, 6th Ave.

Area M4B.—Central Park South, 5th Ave., E. 63rd, 3rd Ave., E. 64th, East River (West Channel), E. 34th, 1st Ave., E. 44th *3rd Ave., E. 42nd, W 42nd, 6th Ave.*

Area M6A.—E. 34th, East River (West Channel), E. 64th, 3rd Ave., E. 63rd, 5th Ave.

Area M6B.—E. 98th, 3rd Ave., E. 99th, East River, E. 84th, 5th Ave.

Area M6C.—Cathedral Parkway, W. 110th, 5th Ave., E. 112th, 3rd Ave., E. 109th, East River, E. 90th, 3rd Ave., E. 98th, 5th Ave., W. 84th extended, East line reservoir, W. 86th extended, Central Park West.

Area M8A.—Harlem River, East River, E. 109th, 3rd Ave., E. 112th, Park Ave., and Sunken Meadow Island.

Area M8B.—W. 159th, Harlem River, Park Ave., E. 126th, W. 126th, Lenox Ave., 130th, 8th Ave.

Area M8C.—W. 130th, Lenox Ave., W. 126th, E. 126th, Park Ave., E. 112th, 5th Ave., W. 110th, Cathedral Parkway, 8th Ave.

Area M10.—Randall's Island, Ward's Island, and Welfare Island.

Area M1A.—W. Houston, E. Houston, Bowery, Catherine, Cherry, Catherine Slip, Catherine Slip extended, East River, Upper Bay, Buttermilk Channel, Upper Bay, Hudson River, including Bedloe's Island, Ellis Island, Governors Island, and Oyster Island.

Area M1B.—W. 14th, E. 14th, 4th Ave., Bowery, E. Houston, W. Houston, Hudson River.

Area M3A.—W. 42nd, 6th Ave., W. 14th, Hudson River.

Area M3B.—W. 86th extended, East line reservoir, 84th extended, 5th Ave., Central Park South, 6th Ave., W. 42nd, Hudson River, W. 62nd, Central Park West.

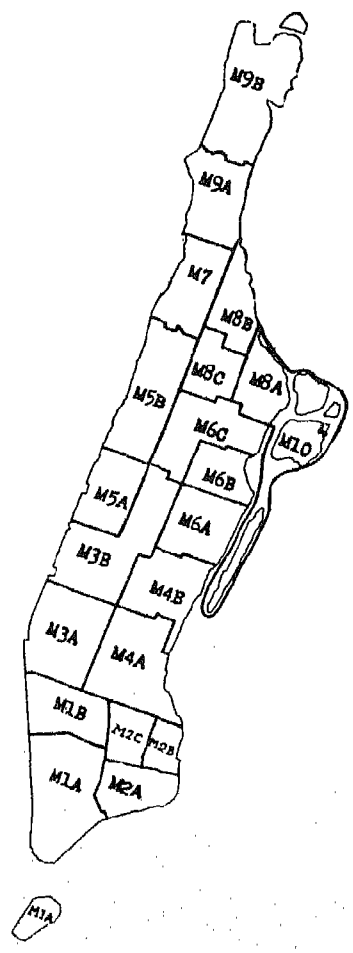
Area M5A.—W. 86th, Central Park West, W. 62nd, Hudson River

Area M5B.—Tiemann, Broadway, Moylan Place, Amsterdam Ave., Lawrence, W. 126th, 8th Ave., Central Park West, W. 86th, Hudson River

Area M7.—W. 155th, 8th Ave., W. 126th, Lawrence, Amsterdam Ave., Moylan Place, Broadway, Tiemann, Hudson River

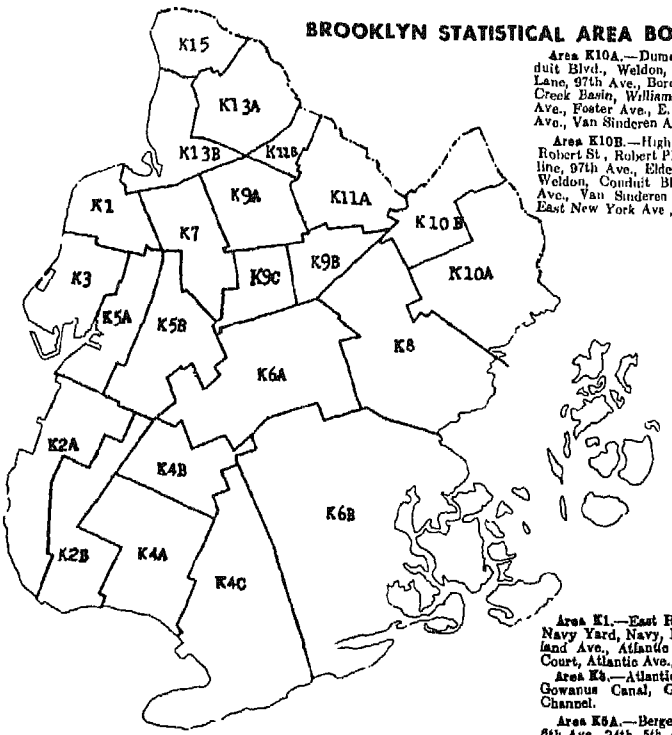
Area M9A.—Plaza Lafayette extended, Plaza Lafayette, W. 181st, Broadway, W. 180th, Amsterdam Ave., W. 181st, Harlem River, W. 159th, 8th Ave., W. 155th, Hudson River

Area M9B.—[illegible] ...rth line, Harlem River, W. ...roadway, W. 181st, Plaza ... Hudson River



5

Walter Laidlaw, "Population of the City of New York 1890-1930," p. 85.



BROOKLYN STATISTICAL AREA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS

Area K10A.—Dumont Ave., Berriman, Atlantic Ave., Conduit Blvd., Weldon, Autumn Ave., McKinley Ave., Elderts Lane, 97th Ave., Borough line, North line Jamaica Bay, Fresh Creek Basin, Williams Ave. extended, Williams Ave., Stanley Ave., Foster Ave., E. 107th, Avenue D, Stone Ave., Hegeman Ave., Van Sinderen Ave.

Area K10B.—Highland Blvd., Vermont Ave., Borough line, Robert St., Robert Place, Borough line, Elderts Lane, Borough line, 97th Ave., Elderts Lane, McKinley Ave., Autumn Ave., Weldon, Conduit Blvd., Atlantic Ave., Berriman, Dumont Ave., Van Sinderen Ave., Liberty Ave., Christopher Ave., East New York Ave., Broadway, Rose Place.

Area K1.—East River, Navy Yard Basin, West line U. S. Navy Yard, Navy, Flushing Ave., N. Portland Ave., S. Portland Ave., Atlantic Ave., Flatbush Ave., 4th Ave., Bergen, Court, Atlantic Ave., Upper Bay.

Area K3.—Atlantic Ave., Court, Bergen, Nevins, Carroll, Gowanus Canal, Gowanus Bay, Upper Bay, Buttermilk Channel.

Area K5A.—Bergen, 4th Ave., Flatbush Ave., Atlantic Ave., 6th Ave., 24th, 5th Ave., 36th, Gowanus Bay, Gowanus Canal, Carroll, Nevins.

Area K5B.—Atlantic Ave., Vanderbilt Ave., The Plaza, Vanderbilt Ave., Union, Prospect Park line, Flatbush Ave., Ocean Ave., Parkside Ave., Parade Place, Caton Ave., Coney Island Ave., Prospect Park Southwest, Seeley, Prospect Ave., Terrace Place, Gravesend Ave., Ft. Hamilton Parkway, 37th, 7th Ave., 36th, 5th Ave., 24th, 8th Ave.

Area K7.—Flushing Ave., Bedford Ave., Brevoort Place, Franklin Ave., Atlantic Ave., Rogers Ave., Eastern Parkway, Franklin Ave., Empire Blvd., Flatbush Ave., Prospect Park line, Union, Vanderbilt Ave., The Plaza, Vanderbilt Ave., Atlantic Ave., S. Portland Ave., N. Portland Ave.

Area K9A.—Flushing Ave., Broadway, Patchen Ave., Lafayette Ave., Reid Ave., Fulton, Utica Ave., Atlantic Ave., Franklin Ave., Brevoort Place, Bedford Ave.

Area K9B.—Atlantic Ave., Utica Ave., Fulton, Reid Ave., Marion Ave., Ralph Ave., Fulton, Rockaway Ave., Atlantic Ave., East New York Ave., Lefferts Ave., Troy Ave.

Area K9C.—Atlantic Ave., Troy Ave., Lefferts Ave., Flatbush Ave., Lincoln Rd., Ocean Ave., Empire Blvd., Franklin Ave., Eastern Parkway, Rogers Ave.

Area K11A.—Lafayette Ave., Patchen Ave., Kossuth Place, Bushwick Ave., Stockholm, Evergreen Ave., DeKalb Ave., Wilson Ave., Stockholm, Cypress, Ralph Ave., St. Nicholas, Gates Ave., Wyckoff, Elbert, Irving, Borough line, Vermont Ave., Highland Blvd., Bushwick Ave., Rose Place, Broadway, East New York Ave., Atlantic Ave., Broadway, Fulton, Ralph Ave., Marion, Reid Ave.

Area K11B.—Flushing Ave., Cypress Ave., Stockholm, Wilson Ave., DeKalb Ave., Evergreen Ave., Stockholm, Bushwick Ave., Kossuth Place, Broadway.

Area K13A.—Rodney, Metropolitan Ave., Union Ave., Driggs Ave., Humboldt, Meeker Ave., Newton Creek, Borough line, Onderdonk, Purdy Place, Flushing Ave., Broadway.

Area K13B.—East. River, N. 14th, Nassau Ave., Lorimer, Driggs Ave., Union Ave., Metropolitan Ave., Rodney, Broadway, Flushing Ave., Navy, West line U. S. Navy Yard, Navy Basin, East River.

Area K15.—Newton Creek, Meeker Ave., Humboldt, Driggs Ave., Lorimer, Nassau Ave., W. 14th, East River.

BROOKLYN BOROUGH

Area K2A.—36th, 7th Ave., 37th, 9th Ave., 48th, 7th Ave., 60th, 4th Ave., 90th, 5th Ave., 4th Ave., Lower Bay, Upper Bay.

Area K2B.—37th, Ft. Hamilton Parkway, 7th Ave., 79th, 14th Ave., Cropsey Ave., Bay 8th, Lower Bay, 4th Ave., 5th Ave., 90th, 4th Ave., 60th, 7th Ave., 48th, 9th Ave.

Area K4A.—58th, Bay Parkway, 78th, 23rd Ave., Cropsey Ave., 24th Ave., Gravesend Bay, Bay 8th, Cropsey Ave., 14th Ave., 79th, 7th Ave., Ft. Hamilton Parkway.

Area K4B.—36th, Church Ave., Dahill Rd., Ditmas Ave., Coney Island Ave., Foster Ave., E. 18th, Avenue G, Coney Island Ave., Avenue H, Ocean Parkway, Avenue J, Gravesend Ave., Bay Parkway, 58th, Ft. Hamilton Parkway.

Area K4C.—Avenue J, Ocean Parkway, Avenue H, Coney Island Ave., Atlantic Ocean, Lower Bay, Gravesend Bay, 24th Ave., Cropsey Ave., 23rd Ave., 78th, Bay Parkway, Gravesend Ave.

Area K6A.—Terrace Place, Prospect Ave., Seeley, Prospect Park Southwest, Coney Island Ave., Caton Ave., Parade Place, Parkside Ave., Ocean Parkway, Lincoln Road, Flatbush Ave., Lefferts Ave., E. 91st, Clarkson Ave., Remsen Ave., Church Ave., E. 54th, Kings Highway, Foster Ave., E. 54th, Glenwood Road, Albany Ave., Foster Ave., Coney Island Ave., Ditmas Ave., Dahill Rd., Church Ave., 36th, Ft. Hamilton Parkway, Gravesend Ave.

Area K6B.—Avenue G, E. 18th, Foster Ave., Albany Ave., Glenwood Rd., Paerdegat Ave., a line extending from intersection of Flatlands Ave. and Ralph Ave. to Paerdegat Basin, Paerdegat Basin, North line Jamaica Bay, Borough line, Rockaway Inlet, Atlantic Ocean, Coney Island Ave., and islands in Kings County in Jamaica Bay.

Area K8.—East New York Ave., Christopher Ave., Liberty Ave., Van Sinderen Ave., Hegeman Ave., Stone Ave., Avenue D, E. 107th, Foster Ave., Stanley Ave., Williams Ave., Williams Ave. extended, Fresh Creek Basin, Jamaica Bay, Paerdegat Basin, a line extending from intersection of Flatlands Ave. and Ralph Ave. to Paerdegat Basin, Paerdegat Ave., Glenwood Rd., E. 54th, Foster Ave., Kings Highway, E. 54th, Church Ave., Remsen Ave., Clarkson Ave., E. 91st.

Walter Laidlaw, "Population of the City of New York 1890–1930," p. 110.

Negroes now live in expensive, well-built apartments with an outlook over the lower city quite comparable to that of Morningside Heights — easily one of the most desirable residential locations in Manhattan.

In the early history of the city many of the Negroes who were not domestic servants in residence had to live in relatively undesirable areas. In the outlying boroughs, to some extent, they, like immigrants, are found today living in un-

POPULATION BY COLOR OR RACE, . . . 1930 AND 1920 [1]

City	Total Population			
	1930	1920	Increase	
			Number	Per cent
New York City ..	6,930,446	5,620,048	1,310,398	23.3
Bronx.....	1,265,258	732,016	533,242	72.8
Brooklyn.....	2,560,401	2,018,356	542,045	26.9
Manhattan....	1,867,312	2,284,103	−416,791	−18.2
Queens.....	1,079,129	469,042	610,087	130.1
Richmond.....	158,346	116,531	41,815	35.9

City	White					Negro			
	1930	1920 as reported	1920 adjusted	Increase		1930	1920	Increase	
				Number	Per cent			Number	Per cent
New York City ..	6,587,225	5,459,463	5,458,333	1,128,892	20.7	327,706	152,467	175,239	114.9
Bronx.....	1,251,747	726,990	726,966	524,781	72.2	12,930	4,803	8,127	169.2
Brooklyn.....	2,488,448	1,984,953	1,984,760	503,688	25.4	68,921	31,912	37,009	116.0
Manhattan....	1,631,756	2,168,906	2,168,024	−536,268	−24.7	224,670	109,133	115,537	105.9
Queens.....	1,059,680	463,661	463,637	596,043	128.6	18,609	5,120	13,489	263.5
Richmond.....	155,594	114,953	114,946	40,648	35.4	2,576	1,499	1,077	71.8

kempt and perhaps dilapidated dwellings. Nevertheless, the famous "shanty towns" of the period of New York City's heaviest growth in the nineteenth century were occupied by German and Irish immigrants rather than by Negroes, and although the degraded housing conditions of the Five Point section in the early half of the last century were shared by whites and Negroes, the Negroes did not predominate.[2] They then occupied crowded, unpaved cellars with whites, and shared in their vices of drunkenness and prostitution. But only a small fraction of

1. *Ibid.*, Table 78, p. 327.
2. See Chapters IV and V.

the Negro population of that period was represented in this, the most evil slum of New York's history.

No adequate study has been made of the problem of racial succession in New York slums. Apparently there is no large area of Manhattan in which Negroes have not at some time resided in quantity, except for more recently built areas.[1] In most parts of the Lower East Side they have preceded or followed other races in possession and have even returned again to areas inhabited in an intermediate period by other groups.[2]

The generalizations of certain urban sociologists thus scarcely apply to this group so far as New York City experience is concerned. The poverty of the majority of the members of this race has, however, constrained them, as it does other races, to live in regions where rents are within their paying capacity. It should be borne in mind, by way of comparison, that not more than 10 per cent of our whites possess incomes sufficient to give them much choice with regard to the location of their residences, and that nearly 90 per cent are forced by economic circumstances to put up with housing that, in some particulars at least, falls far short of their needs and ideals.

The Negro population in New York City may have reached its highest percentage at about the year 1746, when it was maintained by contemporary writers that it constituted one-fifth of the entire population.[3] Today they constitute

1. A contemporary historian complained in the middle of the nineteenth century:

"We should like to know, among other things, why the broadest, most accessible, most convenient street in New York, the noble avenue of WEST BROADWAY, is entirely given up to negroes? The *rage* is to move up town — but there are people who are not *rajahs*, who are willing to pay high rents — people who don't care where the fashionable people go to (while they live), and who simply desire to reside in broad streets for air and light, and above all, to be near, if possible, to their business. Now the narrowest part of this bestreeted island is of course the most wholesome, as the air from the two rivers comes over fewer chimneys and gutters. The broader the street the better, both for health and show. The access to a street should be good, and West Broadway, in its whole length, is parallel to Broadway, and approachable by Chambers street, Murray, Warren, and all the best short avenues of the city. It has, besides, near by, the beautiful 'lungs' of St. John's park, the hospital grounds, and College Green, and is crossed at its upper end by the broad ventilator of Canal street. Where, on the island, is there a street more calculated to be wholesome — dirty as it now is from the character of its occupants? It would require, it is true, an *entire* renovation, before any one person, desirous of good neighborhood, could live there — but that renovation (we prophesy it) will be done. Some speculator will buy lots in it, and call a meeting of proprietors to suggest a general turn-out and improvement, or some one of the Wall street Astor-hood will buy the street, from lamp-post to lamp-post, and fill it with fashionable dwelling-houses. The uptown tide will partly ebb, the natural advantages of the Battery and Lower Broadway will regain their ascendency, and the sandalled foot of the island will again wear jewels on its instep." *The Complete Works of N. P. Willis*, p. 691.

2. "Carter Woodson's compilation of free Negro heads of Negro families in 1830 shows New York City Negroes living on Wall, Nassau, Sullivan, Canal and Rector Streets, holdings now of prohibitively high value. Abyssinia Baptist Church remained in the old Negro center on 50th Street until a few years ago before it moved to Harlem. Of the homes now occupied in Harlem only a very few have been built by Negroes. They have been inherited and among these are rare examples of the architectural stamp of Stanford White. The Harlem dwellings are more habitable because they are relatively newer." Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization*, pp. 199–200.

3. "In keeping order the city authorities were confronted with a serious problem arising from the presence of large numbers of negro slaves. Most of them were the descendants of blacks brought to Manhattan by slave traders, either during the Dutch period or in the early years of British occupation. Comparatively few negroes were brought into New York in the later English period, as is evidenced by the census figures, which show that the negro population reached its maximum proportion about 1746, when it amounted to over one-fifth of the total population of the city. From then until the Revolution the blacks declined in relative importance, as their number was increased by only a few hundreds, while the number of whites was augmented by thousands.

"The slave population was located mainly in the settled districts of the city. Apparently very few were employed in

only 12 per cent in Manhattan and 4.7 per cent for the city as a whole. Nearly 250,000 members of this race lived in Harlem or contiguous areas in 1935.

The contemporary Negro population is made up of quite diverse population groups with very different cultural backgrounds. There are descendants of first settlers and of Negroes made free in the eighteenth century, or even the seventeenth. There are others who are descendants of the Negroes of New Jersey, Connecticut, or elsewhere whose families have had more than a century of freedom in northern communities. For a hundred years or more there has been an influx from the South which has grown materially with the general northern movement since 1910.[1] There are, however, among the colored population of New York City large numbers who have been British subjects in the British West Indies, chiefly Jamaica and the Bahamas; Spanish-speaking Negroes, largely from the West Indies and chiefly from Porto Rico, though some are from South America; Portuguese Negroes, largely from the Cape Verde Islands; Jewish Negroes from Ethiopia; and a few from other parts of the world. Many have a considerable infusion of non-Negro blood.

Cultural dissimilarities are as strongly felt as among the white population. There are aristocracies of birth and of wealth, as well as of education, among them. They include personalities who have acquired fame in literature and the arts, and the gamut of intelligence and aptitude may be quite as wide as among the white population, though deficiencies in training, irrespective of racial aptitudes, would presumably lead to a relatively lower percentage of distinguished or highly competent persons than among the white population. Many have acquired large fortunes and live upon a high cultural plane, as do others, especially in the professional groups — a matter very much to their credit as they have been left largely to their own resources and have suffered greatly from financial and social handicaps.

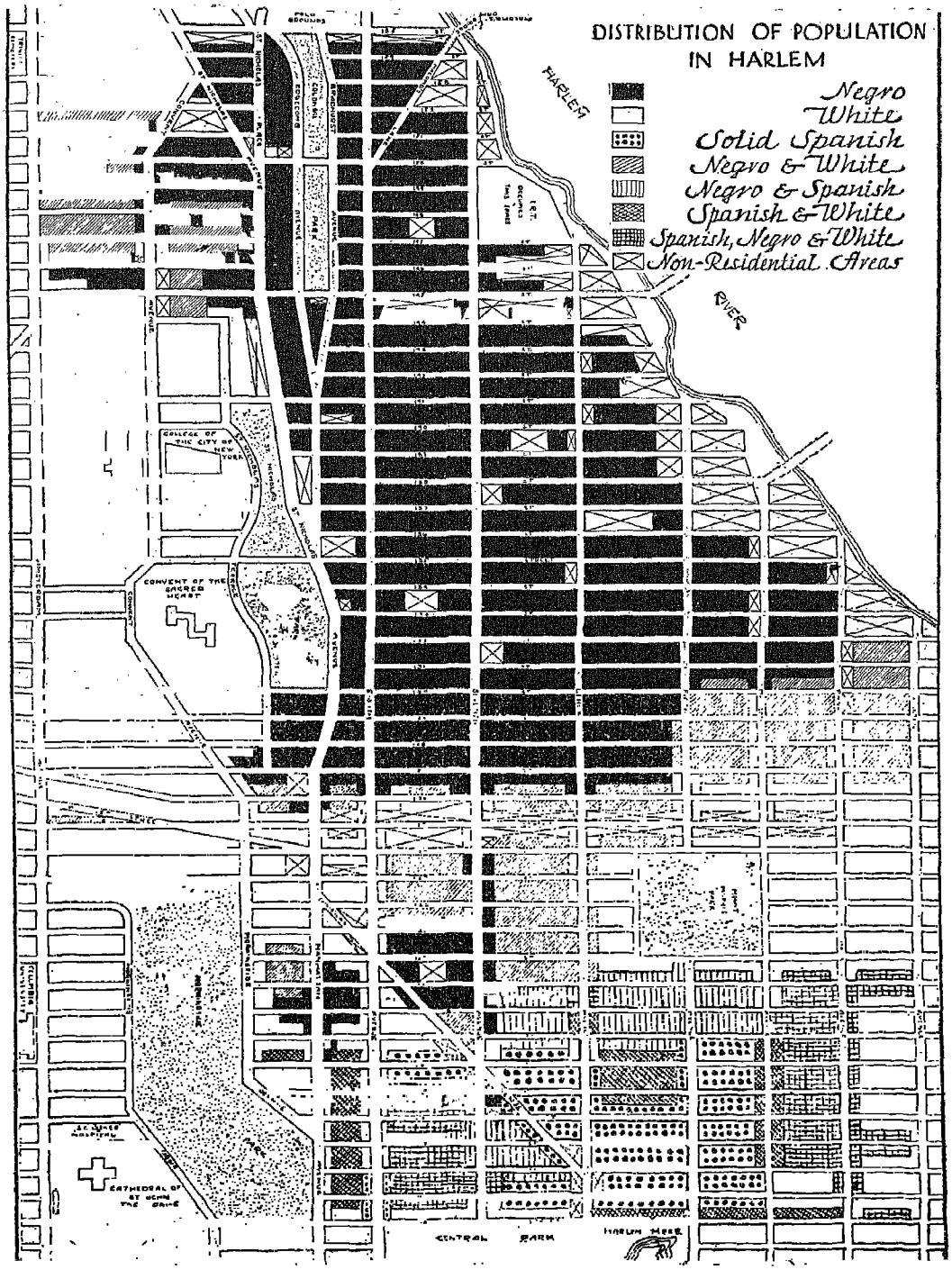
It has previously been stated that in its physical aspects the Negro housing of New York does not differ materially from the housing of other racial groups. Some Negroes are living under conditions as bad as can be found anywhere in the city. Slums in quarters exclusively for Negroes, like the other slums, are characterized in Manhattan by walk-up tenements of four, five, or six stories; narrow courts or air shafts; small back yards; dark, cluttered, sometimes insanitary cellars; dark hallways; hall toilets; and the other conditions prevalent in New York tenement-house areas. The Negro districts of Lower Manhattan and the West

farming, as one census for the Out Ward, the rural district of Manhattan, showed but forty-three slaves in that section. They were usually employed in operating ferry or market boats, driving carts, hauling water and performing general domestic services. . . ." Peterson and Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*.

1. Louise Venable Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, and writings of George Edmund Haynes.

FIG. 63

STREET MAP SHOWS DISTRIBUTION OF HARLEM'S POPULATION



"The New York Sun," March 22, 1935.

Side correspond in their housing to the other slum areas in their vicinity. On the whole, the building in Harlem is more open than in the older parts of the city and sunshine and daylight penetrate a large percentage of rooms. The buildings are not so old, seldom more than sixty years, and are thus less primitive and better adapted to contemporary uses. Therefore, from the point of view of physical structure, the characteristic housing of the Harlem Negro is, if anything, better than that of the residents of the Lower East and West Sides.

Harlem a century ago was a village built on the two sides of a small creek between Harlem Heights and the bridge. Timothy Dwight in 1811 reported that it contained about seventy or eighty houses, "most of them neat; and among them several country seats, belonging to citizens of New-York; together with a church of the Dutch communion." [1] In 1846 Edward Ruggles spoke of Harlem as "situated two miles southeast of Manhattanville, on Harlaem river, near its discharge into Long Island sound. It is a flourishing village, with a population of 1,500, four churches, and a superabundance of hotels, besides a commodious depôt, belonging to the New-York and Harlaem Rail-Road Company, and several factories. The cars for Harlaem start every hour from the depôt, northeast of the City-Hall." [2]

Harlem originally was a white settlement and had already developed considerably as such. Negro settlements did not begin there until a generation ago. They have developed rapidly.[3]

Twenty-four hundred Negro families in Harlem were studied by Ira De A. Reid for the New York Urban League in 1927. He found that they largely accommodated themselves to rentals beyond their reach either by taking lodgers or by crowding more than one family to a tenement. Within a small area there were 3,314 lodgers in 2,326 apartments. Over half these apartments housed from five to ten persons. Only 22 per cent of the houses studied were classed as in good condition. In the preceding eight years rentals in one area examined had doubled, and in cases where Negro and white families lived in similar apartments, he noted that the Negroes were made to pay more. This was a period of increasing rents for whites as well as for Negroes — a period of so-called "rent-profiteering." [4]

It is estimated that the market rent is 30 per cent higher than the rent which is paid by the old tenants. For three-room apartments in New York the market rent for December, 1925, was $30.55. Tenants who were in possession since 1919 were paying less than $20. In comparing the mean average for three-room apartments in New York, we find that, based on the length of tenancy, the Negro group continues to pay a much higher rent than any other racial group. Very few apartments are available for less than $10 a room. . . . In the mean average rent for

1. Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New-England and New-York*, III. 28;
2. Edward Ruggles *A Picture of New York in 1846*, p. 23.
3. See *Maps and Charts prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee*, 1933-34, p. 61.
4. See Chapter VI.



. Harlem Lane (from Central Park to Manhattanville), 1865 St Mary's Church, Manhattanville, above 125th Street, appears in upper right



b. Harlem looking northwest from 132d Street and Madison Avenue The site of the new Federal housing project for Negroes (see Fig 139b) is shown on the river just below the bridge in upper right.

the more popular apartments (i. e. those of three, four and five rooms), it is found that the Negro pays on the average of $8 more than the average for a New York three-room apartment, $10 more for the four-room apartment and $7 more for the five-room apartment.[1]

There is conflicting evidence on the subject of Negro rentals. Woofter [2] quotes figures showing Negro families paying much higher rentals than whites for similar apartments.

Carey Batchelor, in his study published in 1932,[3] covered 1,014 tenement families of whom 89 were Negro families in West Harlem. His findings, which were for the year 1928, based on these relatively limited data were as follows:

> The Negro families in the West Harlem section have undoubtedly the most serious housing problem in the city. These families in all the income levels show higher actual rentals and higher percentage of income used for rent than any other section of the city. The percentage paid for rent varies from 1 per cent to 20 per cent higher for West Harlem than for any other section. Although the income of the Negro family is about 17 per cent lower than that of the typical family for the entire city, it must pay almost $3 more per room per month. The West Harlem family pays nearly one-third of its income for rent, as compared with approximately one-fifth for the whole city. Conditions as to crowding in this neighborhood are about the same as in the city as a whole, although the percentage of families having two or more persons per room is somewhat higher (10 per cent rather than 8½ per cent) and the percentage of families having more than 1 and less than 2 persons per room is correspondingly lower.
>
> This section based on a survey of 89 families, shows the following comparisons:[4]

	Typical Family	
	Entire city	West Harlem
Annual income	$1,570.00	$1,300.00
Annual rent	316.00	480.00
Rent per room per month	6.67	9.50
Per cent of income used for rent	19.23	32.97

Sidney Axelrad in 1932 [5] covered 138 Negro families in Harlem with average annual incomes of $828, average annual rent of $314. The rent per room per month averaged $7.42 for this group, which was 45 per cent of annual income. For the relatively poor group studied in this and other parts of the city, a higher percentage was devoted to rent in only one of six districts, while among white families in the Lower East Side, the West Side, and Brooklyn the percentage of income devoted to rent was lower — respectively 39, 37, and 35.

Further data on Harlem rentals were submitted by Owen R. Lovejoy in 1932.

> That the Negro population in Harlem, Columbus Hill and other sections of our city is congested to the point of discomfort and frequently indecency (just as the lower East Side was in

1. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Negro Housing*, vi, 25, citing Ira De A. Reid, *Two Hundred Four Negro Families in Harlem*.
2. T. J. Woofter, Jr., *Negro Problems in Cities*, p. 127.
3. "What the Tenement Family Has and What it Pays for It," published in *Neighborhood*, vol. v, No. 2.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
5. *Tenements and Tenants*, a study of 1104 tenement families, League of Mothers Clubs.

the days before the recent migration to the Bronx) is an economic fact in reference to rents and property values. But it is much more than this. It is a sociological fact of the most diverse implications, particularly in its relation to children. It means high rates of infant mortality; it means widespread morbidity; it means the sacrifice of those delicate sensibilities which are regarded as essentials in social culture and are developed, if ever, during the years of infancy and childhood. . . .

This tragic situation [widespread unemployment] has been met by increased congestion as families living in three or four rooms have moved into one-room tenements, or filled their homes with lodgers, or doubled up with relatives or friends; by reductions in food and clothing; by the labor of women out of the homes (88% of the married women in Harlem and Columbus Hill are reported as working away from home or looking for work during the day), and other devices to keep the wolf from the door, but at what a cost to the child.

Mr. Julius S. McClain, Executive Director of the Columbus Hill Community Center, reports that the average size apartment per family is the three-room type with a few two- and a few four-room apartments; that the average rent per room is $3 to $4, and that "80% of these apartments are really not suitable for decent living purposes." He reports that few families in Columbus Hill take lodgers as their own families are too large and the quarters are too small.

On the other hand, John E. Nail, one of the leading Negro real estate operators in Harlem, says of that section that, "Most colored tenants take roomers. This situation has always prevailed and I should say the custom has increased with an increase in population. The Negro's producing possibilities have never been of such an order that he could afford to pay New York City rentals without being dependent on other sources to supplement his income. We find occasionally instances where a large apartment has been divided into two or more units, but this is not a general thing."

Mr. Nail says that the popular idea that Negroes pay higher rentals than former white occupants for the same apartments is mistaken. He explains that in communities that are beginning to be invaded by the Negro group, and while in the transition state, the white occupants continually demand of landlords a decreased rental, thus the prices are lowered. "When the landlord finally makes the conversion from white to colored he attempts to secure the rental as near the original as possible. . . . However, it has not been my observation that under Negro tenancy have Negroes ever paid the original rental paid by whites in a total white area."

Mr. Nail says that there is at present a marked movement of Negroes into the Bronx and believes it is because they can thus avoid the congestion in Harlem and because the new type houses available in the Bronx are superior to most of those in Harlem which are old and obsolete. However, he believes that the population in Manhattan is increasing faster than the exodus.

According to this authority, "There is a marked difference in rent between first-class apartments and very poor apartments with no modern facilities. In short, old-law tenements would rent from $4 to $6 per room; the so-called new-law apartments rent from $8 to $10 per room; the modern elevator apartments' rental level ranges from $15 to $21 per room."

These observations of Mr. Nail are more encouraging as to the cost of housing in Harlem than the information reported by the Tenement House Department a few years ago which showed an increase in the average rent from 1920 to 1924 of 32.2% in Harlem and 35.2% in Columbus Hill.

The houses in Harlem are generally of a better type than those built much earlier in Columbus Hill. Many of the Harlem houses were built about thirty years ago just before the heavy Negro invasion. Only a few of them have been built by Negroes. They were bought or rented from the original white owners and today it is estimated that Negroes own $65,000,000 worth of real estate in Harlem. Among these houses may still be found rare examples of architectural beauty conceived by Stanford White. Their destruction to make room for huge apartment houses would seem a pity as it would wipe out still another landmark of the real local art of former days. However, even this would be less serious than to perpetuate the congested occupancy of these houses originally designed for one or two families and now cut up into small tenements. In 1927, the New York Urban League conducted a study of 2,400 Negro families in Harlem in order to interpret the living conditions of small wage earners. The study extended from 110th to 150th Streets and from Lexington Avenue to Convent Avenue. The following summary presents a graphic picture of the conditions in which these people must live. "In the 2,326 apartments covered, there were 12,501 persons, 24% of whom were children under 14 years of age. There were in these apartments, 3,314 lodgers, an average of more than 1 per household. The high percentage of adults is thought to be due partly to the migration. Among the 2,326 homes studied, 45.0% had 4 persons, or less, per household; 52.1% had from 5 to 10 persons; and 2% more than 10 persons. The average size of the household was five." In commenting on this study Mr. Johnson says: "In New York 20% of the Negro families studied in 1926 lived in cold water flats, more than half of these had no baths, and many of those who did have tubs were unable to use them because they were in need of repairs. In all of these flats, coal stoves or gas heaters were used. As to the condition of the apartments of the 2,326 families, 22% were classed as "good," 18% "fair," 12% were not reported on, and 48% were grouped as "bad," "poor" or "needed cleaning."

It is estimated that between 1919 and 1927 the average rentals in New York increased about 10%. During the same period in one block selected as typical, the average rent for Negroes increased from $21.64 in 1919 to $41.77 in 1927. Elizabeth A. Hughes, in a study conducted for the Bureau of Social Surveys in 1925, makes the following comment on the relation of rents to earnings. "In New York it was found that of 2,160 Negro families, 4.07% were paying less than 20%; 21% were paying between 20 and 30%; 26% were paying between 30 and 40%; and 48% were paying over 40%."

However, in estimating earnings, the contributions of lodgers and of other members of the family are not included. But it does show the practical impossibility of maintaining normal family life in Harlem, even in normal times, without the wages of wife and children or the equally undesirable subrenting to lodgers. . . .

The boundaries of the Columbus Hill district are Eighth Avenue west to the River and from 58th to 69th Streets, consisting of 35 city blocks and covering an area approximately one-half mile square. Six of these blocks are solidly Negro and seven are occupied by both white and colored. The Negro population of the district, according to the Director of the Columbus Hill Community Center, is about 12,000. This means a dense Negro population because the houses in this section are in many instances old-law tenements only three or four stories high and with small, poorly lighted and poorly ventilated rooms. The average number of persons per acre in

New York is 223. The average for the Negro sections is 336, or 50% higher. It is probable that the number is much larger in Columbus Hill.

. . . In all the six solid Negro blocks there is not a single inch of playground space.[1]

On the subject of relative rentals one may criticize Batchelor and Axelrad because of the very limited number of cases studied and the fact that their cases were families known to social service agencies and thus almost certainly not typical. Reid and Woofter, on the other hand, with access to a larger mass of data, were studying the problem in the period following the World War when rents generally were going up but lagging far behind the rise in commodity prices. It was a period in which landlords, feeling the declining purchasing power of their incomes from real estate, naturally exacted from tenants, white or colored, whatever rental they could get. The observations of John E. Nail, above quoted, are on the other hand based upon close continuous observation but not upon scientific analysis. There is a presumption that a portion of the Negro population is forced to pay higher rentals than whites would pay for the same accommodations, even in the absence of improvements, but further study in normal as well as abnormal years is necessary to discover how far such a presumption is correct.

The essential problem of Negro housing is not, so far as New York citizens are concerned (and here New York differs from most American cities), the physical character of the house, but rather the relation of the family to the house. Negroes, being deemed by the white owners to be undesirable tenants or easy traditional victims of exploitation, may often be charged higher rentals than were charged to the whites who preceded them in occupancy. As Negroes do not, in most instances, have higher incomes than the whites whom they succeed, higher rentals mean room overcrowding. To meet the rent in such cases lodgers are taken or large families crowd into small quarters. But if there are several wage-earners in an apartment, still higher rentals can be exacted by the owner, justified in part by the increased wear and tear. The outstanding factor of Negro housing, as distinguished from the housing of whites, is apparently the relatively large part played by rent in the family budget and the corresponding adjustments that are made in family standards of living.

Meanwhile, enterprising Negroes have refused to accept exploitation supinely and have been acquiring property in the Harlem district, thus bringing conditions more under their own control. John E. Nail estimated that Negroes held real estate in Harlem valued at more than $60,000,000, including both apartment houses and private dwellings.[2]

1. Owen R. Lovejoy, *The Negro Children of New York*, pp. 15, 18–20, 40–41.
2. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Negro Housing*, VI, 216.

The following statement is indicative of the amount of real property that has been acquired in Harlem: "Fifteen years ago, apparently one-half dozen colored men owned real property in Manhattan, I am informed by John E. Nail, a successful colored real estate man in Harlem. Today, the Negro owned and operated realty, conservatively estimated, would amount to $60,000,000." However, the community faces a very unique difficulty. The neighborhood is confronted with the question of mortgages maturing. There is practically no opening to the community for replacement. Some time ago a local real estate manager informed the community that heads of large lending institutions are desirous of withdrawing their funds. When extensions are granted on mortgages, their terms are of such a nature that they make them burdensome for owners to carry the vital obligations. Years ago it was understood that mortgage accommodations could not be furnished in this section of the city, because in this community the colored tenant was not a reliable purchaser of property. In the past five years, however, he has become an owner and acquired more property. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the real estate in this community is under colored control. The prices paid, however, have not always been fair. The housing shortage affected the price of houses as well as the rental. Old and deteriorated houses shared in the increasing valuation, and found purchasers who will have to struggle for years before they will own their homes free from debt. Where at some stage in the process a building which has formerly been closed to Negroes has been offered to tenants of that race, the change in real estate rental rates receives added explanation.

Families have found that only by purchasing a home could they be at all assured of a place in which to live at a cost which would not be completely beyond their control or calculation.[1]

Efforts of Negro leaders to improve the conditions of housing for their race in the Harlem area have probably reached their highest distinction and quality in the work of neighborhood associations. Madge Headley describes a remarkable example of this on 136th Street, as follows:

The aptitude of Negroes for organization has led them into forming several kinds of housing associations. Blocks and neighborhoods are organized for improvements carried out by family and city activities. One of the most successful and active was found in 136th Street, Harlem, in a block of handsome houses, most of which were owned by resident families. The tact and persistency of a well-trained woman have had much to do with its success.

Her family bought at a fair price, in the slump of 1919, a fine old house that had been through many hands, and that had been used as a rooming-house until it was badly run down. Thorough repairs were made, and the house was equipped with modern conveniences, as were a number of other houses in the block. In 1923–1924, business houses, tailor shops, and hairdressing parlors commenced to creep down the block from Seventh Avenue, although restrictions in deeds to the properties so occupied limited their use to residence purposes only.

Mrs. G. wrote out a short invitation and left it personally with every family in the block. A meeting was held in her parlors and the block was organized. At the second meeting, $745 were collected to replace dead trees. All houses but six put out flower boxes. As the block ends on the west in the bluff of Morningside Park, a charming vista was created.

Well-organized, the association persuaded or forced owners to remove objectionable busi-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 232, citing Ira De A. Reid, *Twenty-four Hundred Negro Families in Harlem.*

nesses and signs, carrying one case through the courts. Through coöperation with the street-cleaning department, garbage is regularly removed, and families take in the cans from the sidewalks promptly. Owners are encouraged to keep homes in repair, both outside and in. Details are looked after, such as the keeping of window shades even, the polishing of brass railings, keeping awnings clean, back yards in order, fences painted. The Board of Health coöperated to have broken fences torn down, and the Fire Department makes inspections.

A committee called by appointment on the Mayor, and as a result a comfort station costing $30,000 was located in Morningside Park on a site selected by the association.

Loud talking or excessive hilarity on the street is discouraged. Boys are kept by the police from playing ball and breaking windows. At times, vice creeps in, but it is promptly eliminated. Any residents who fall below the standards of the association are reminded of the rules.

Other block organizations like this one are being formed throughout the district, and the movement will be encouraged to spread all over Harlem.[1]

The third method of escape from the conditions of crowding, rent exploitation, and neglect and disrepair that widely characterize the housing of Harlem is through the suburban movement and the ownership of private homes. The number of Negro home owners in New York City has increased from 545 in 1910 to 4,280 in 1930. Even in Manhattan there are 954 Negro owner families, and there are several blocks of owned homes in the vicinity of 138th and 139th Streets. But home acquisition by Negroes who combine thrift and high standards had resulted, by 1930, in the purchase of 1,551 homes in Queens, and of 1,511 in Brooklyn. There is also some movement from Manhattan to Westchester County and to New Jersey.[2]

One of the points of concentration for Negro home ownership in Queens is in South Jamaica. A study [3] of the housing of this area intimates that 70 per cent of the families were home owners, some coming from New York City and others from the West Indies. The colored colony is estimated at between 12,000 and 15,000 people, for Jamaica as a whole. There are three major residential groups. District A, between Merrick Road and Sutphin Boulevard from South Road to 111th Avenue, covers approximately two and a half square miles; lots have a frontage of from 20 to 30 feet; gable-roofed houses of six rooms are the rule. The Long Island Railroad crosses this area. There are many dumps on vacant lots and dead-end streets. So the values of home ownership and single-family housing have not carried with them high standards of community upkeep. District B, a small settlement known as Ghunsberg Place, consists of tenements "undesirable for human habitation. Two tenements observed in this district that house many colored families appear to be fire-traps and hotbeds for the breeding of menaces to

1. T. J. Woofter, Jr., *Negro Problems in Cities*, pp. 161–163.
2. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, *Families, New York*, Table 5.
3. Pearl Renfroe Grissom, *Some Factors Affecting the Lives of Negroes in South Jamaica*.

both the physical and the moral well-being of a fairly large group of colored children." [1] The third area is east of Merrick Road from Liberty Avenue to 111th Avenue. This is described as

> a new and improved section where architecture varies to some degree, and where many of the dwellings are of brick, thus rendering them less liable to destruction by fire. Two-thirds of the Negroes in this section are home owners, or have an equity in the dwellings in which they live. Somewhat unlike a large section of District A, and most of District B, homes are clean and obviously well kept, although as in the other districts, unpaved streets predominate. In sections A and B many streets are without sidewalks, and a number of streets throughout South Jamaica are without proper sew[er]age.[2]

The schools are of good quality for the children of these three settlements. There are said to be too many Negro churches to make adequate support possible. The number of social and civic organizations which these Negro suburban families maintain is large. A country club organized by this group failed in 1925. The South Jamaica Property Owners' Association, organized in December 1926 to work for better streets, sewers, lower assessements, and general improvement of the community, had seventy-three members and dues of twenty-five cents per month. They obtained some temporary improvements but went out of existence in 1928, "due to lack of interest, non-paying of dues, and non-attendance at meetings." [3] But other organizations, such as the Merrick Tennis Club, the Merrick Park Civic Association, and the Housewives' League, are still active.

This example of the movement toward suburban living and home ownership demonstrates both its possibilities and its difficulties. Community standards can be maintained only by means of continuous effort, judiciously applied. Dumps and railroad crossings, as well as inadequate streets and sewers, may be beyond the home owner's control, even though they affect both his investment and his welfare. But in this matter it is not clear that Negro owners are much, if any, worse off than white owners, as the ragged development of most of the borough of Queens attests.

Legal segregation does not exist in either New York City or its suburbs. Restrictive covenants based on color would probably not be sanctioned by the courts. Tacit understandings among owners not to sell or rent their properties to Negroes, or other races deemed by them to be undesirable as tenants or owners, doubtless exist, and if subsequently broken may lead to bitter feeling. There have been cases of intimidation in the New York area, and race feeling has been strong on the part of certain members of both the white and the Negro races. This problem has ramifications far beyond the scope of this volume. It was

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3. 2. *Ibid.*, p. 3. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

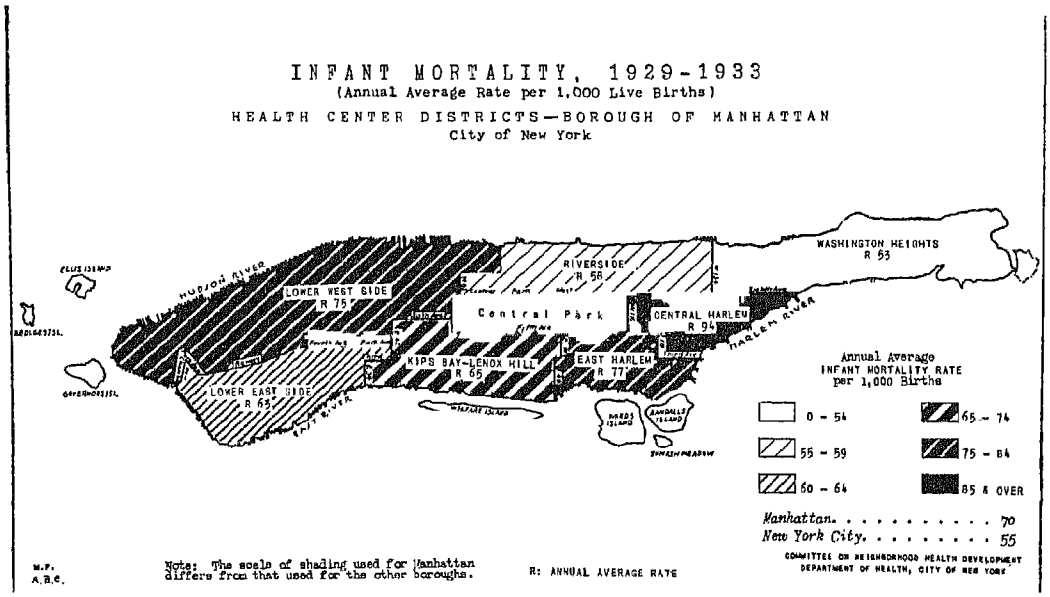
treated with relative impartiality by the Committee on Negro Housing of President Hoover's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.[1]

From the point of view of economics it is wise to protect one's investment by refusing to rent to any family whose presence would cause other tenants to withdraw. For that reason, if for no other, certain owners and landlords refuse to sell or rent to Negroes, and often to members of other races against which some of their tenants might feel a prejudice. Yet on grounds of ethics such discrimination is unjust, unless the ultimate welfare of the members of the white race in possession would be interfered with by the presence of persons of the alien group. The argument of the segregationists usually rests upon a fear of intermarriage, which may be an outgrowth either of traditions developed in the period of Negro slavery or of studies in ethnology and eugenics. Arguments for the defense of either position are not wholly convincing from a strictly scientific viewpoint, as the data on miscegenation are still far from adequate. In the meanwhile it is reasonable that persons of either race should insist, so far as practicable, upon dwelling among congenial neighbors. An interracial commission of competent representatives of the interests involved might accomplish this if appointed both to select sites for new developments of each needed type of housing and in each borough of the city and to extend, by agreement if necessary, the boundaries of existing districts of Negro concentration. Individual Negroes would still be free, as they always have been in this city, to move into any multiple dwelling or private house that will accept them — for a large percentage of New York's Negroes do not live in Negro districts. Those who prefer to colonize where they can maintain their own churches, social organizations, and shops would find districts available for their use. Although this suggestion is made here as a device for providing, in an orderly and satisfactory manner, for housing the ever-increasing number of New York Negroes, the principle involved is equally important for all other members of the population. Rational urban development involves selection, in advance of need, of sites for specific types of housing. This would be accomplished best, under the expert advice of city planners, by civic groups, in cooperation with the real-estate interests.

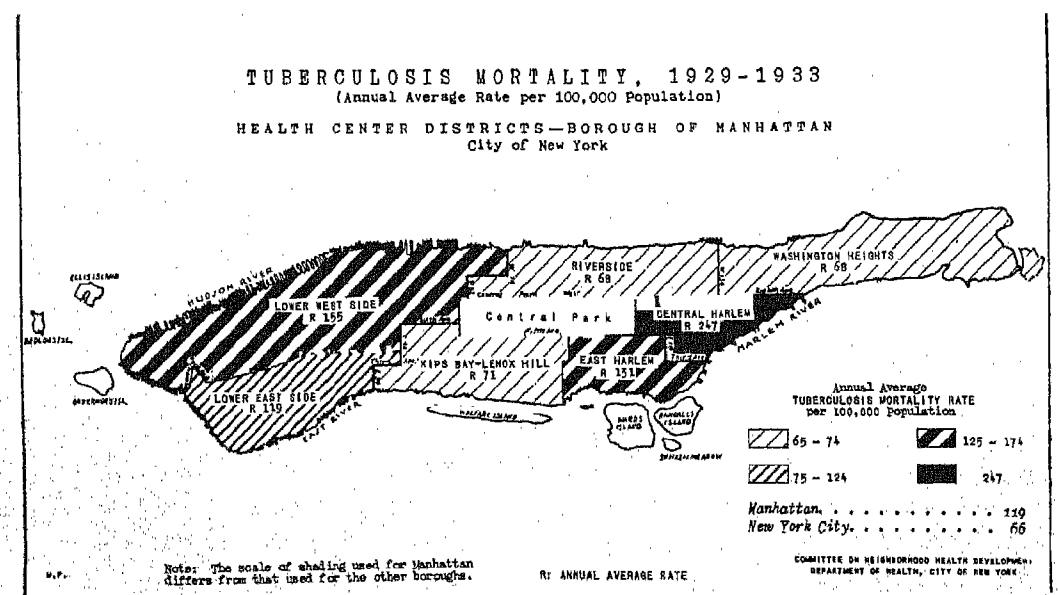
Negro housing in New York City, like the housing of all other groups, suffers chiefly from the haphazard nature of its development. There may have been rather more of discrimination and exploitation than in the housing of other groups. Yet the Negroes have escaped pretty generally the worst of the city's housing — the "railroad" type of tenement and the rear dwelling — and their major aggregations have been in regions where the dwellings are less than a half

1. *Negro Housing*, vol. VI, Chapter II, Appendix III, and Bibliography.

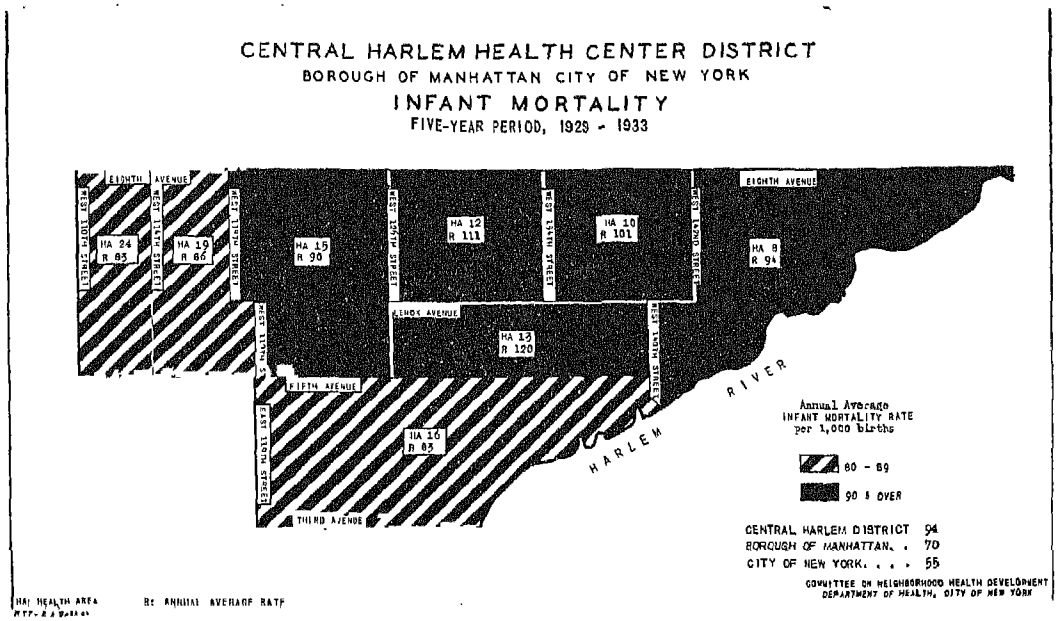
FIG. 65


INFANT MORTALITY, 1929-1933
(Annual Average Rate per 1,000 Live Births)
HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
City of New York
HUDSON RIVER
LOWER WEST SIDE R 75
RIVERSIDE R 58
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS R 63
Central Park
CENTRAL HARLEM R 94
HARLEM RIVER
KIPS BAY-LENOX HILL R 66
EAST HARLEM R 77
LOWER EAST SIDE R 63
EAST RIVER
RANDALL'S ISLAND
Annual Average INFANT MORTALITY RATE per 1,000 Births
0 - 54
55 - 59
60 - 64
65 - 74
75 - 84
85 & OVER
Manhattan. 70
New York City. 55
COMMITTEE ON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CITY OF NEW YORK
Note: The scale of shading used for Manhattan differs from that used for the other boroughs.
R: ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE

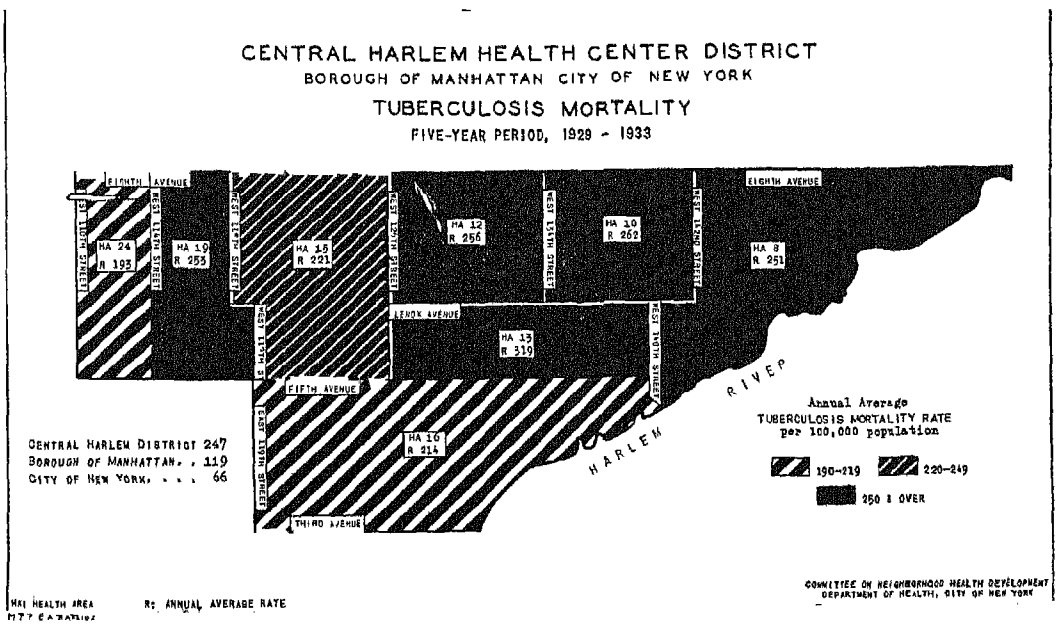
a


TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY, 1929-1933
(Annual Average Rate per 100,000 Population)
HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
City of New York
HUDSON RIVER
LOWER WEST SIDE R 155
RIVERSIDE R 68
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS R 68
Central Park
CENTRAL HARLEM R 247
HARLEM RIVER
KIPS BAY-LENOX HILL R 71
EAST HARLEM R 151
LOWER EAST SIDE R 119
EAST RIVER
RANDALL'S ISLAND
Annual Average TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY RATE per 100,000 Population
65 - 74
75 - 124
125 - 174
247
Manhattan. 119
New York City. 66
COMMITTEE ON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CITY OF NEW YORK
Note: The scale of shading used for Manhattan differs from that used for the other boroughs.
R: ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE

b


CENTRAL HARLEM HEALTH CENTER DISTRICT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN CITY OF NEW YORK
INFANT MORTALITY
FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, 1929 - 1933
EIGHTH AVENUE
WEST 155TH STREET
WEST 151ST STREET
WEST 145TH STREET
WEST 139TH STREET
WEST 135TH STREET
WEST 130TH STREET
LENOX AVENUE
FIFTH AVENUE
THIRD AVENUE
HA 24 R 83
HA 19 R 86
HA 15 R 90
HA 12 R 111
HA 10 R 101
HA 8 R 94
HA 13 R 120
HA 16 R 83
HARLEM RIVER
Annual Average INFANT MORTALITY RATE per 1,000 births
60 - 69
90 & OVER
CENTRAL HARLEM DISTRICT 94
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN . . 70
CITY OF NEW YORK. . . . 55
COMMITTEE ON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CITY OF NEW YORK
HA: HEALTH AREA
R: ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE

a


CENTRAL HARLEM HEALTH CENTER DISTRICT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN CITY OF NEW YORK
TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY
FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, 1929 - 1933
EIGHTH AVENUE
WEST 155TH STREET
WEST 151ST STREET
WEST 145TH STREET
WEST 139TH STREET
WEST 135TH STREET
WEST 130TH STREET
LENOX AVENUE
FIFTH AVENUE
THIRD AVENUE
HA 24 R 193
HA 19 R 253
HA 15 R 221
HA 12 R 256
HA 10 R 262
HA 8 R 251
HA 13 R 319
HA 16 R 214
HARLEM RIVER
Annual Average TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY RATE per 100,000 population
190-219
220-249
250 & OVER
CENTRAL HARLEM DISTRICT 247
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN . . 119
CITY OF NEW YORK. . . . 66
COMMITTEE ON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CITY OF NEW YORK
HA: HEALTH AREA
R: ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE

b

century old. The factor which most distinguishes their housing from that of other races, though it is a distinction in degree and not in kind, is overcrowding. Obsolescence, dilapidation, neglect, and poor maintenance they share with all others of the same income group. It is questionable whether in New York they are forced, as in other cities, to dwell more than other races do in the proximity of vice centers not of their own making.

Although the worst slums of the city are not to be found in Harlem, there are parts of that district in which old-law, "dumb-bell" tenements, and private dwellings converted for use by many families should be included in the city's developing policy for slum elimination. The evidence for this is, however, to be found in later chapters, which reveal an exceptionally high incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis, venereal disease, juvenile delinquency, and arrests of adult offenders in parts of the Harlem area; and, to a somewhat less degree, in the contiguous portion of East Harlem inhabited chiefly by Porto Rican and British West Indian Negroes, the Columbus Hill area in the West Sixties, and the Fort Greene and Red Hook areas of Brooklyn. It is, however, the incidence of disease and criminality, rather than race, that determines the areas first most wisely selected for reconstruction. The social facilities, which are an integral part of such new housing developments, will play at least as large a part in the reduction of disease and criminality rates as will the new housing itself.[1]

1. See Chapters XIV to XVII and Figures 65 and 66.

CHAPTER XIII

HOUSING CONDITIONS OF NON-FAMILY GROUPS

IN THEIR preoccupation with problems of tenement-house families, housing surveys have largely overlooked a problem of considerable dimensions — that of accommodations for single men and women. The census of 1930 revealed that 38.5 per cent of the male population of New York City, fifteen years or older, were unmarried, and of females 31.8 per cent. To these should be added the widowed, who constituted 3.5 per cent of males and 10.7 per cent of females. As will be seen from the accompanying table, the percentages in each of these classifications were higher for Manhattan than for the city as a whole. Altogether this chapter is concerned with the problem of 2,241,131 persons, single, widowed, or divorced, plus an unknown number of individuals who, though classified as married, are for one reason or another living apart from their families.

MARITAL CONDITION OF THE POPULATION 15 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY SEX, . . . 1930[1]

City	Males 15 Years Old and Over							
	Total	Single		Married		Widowed		Divorced
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
New York City	2,618,473	1,008,142	38.5	1,498,146	57.2	91,018	3.5	10,677
Bronx	468,337	166,540	35.6	286,273	61.1	13,624	2.9	1,173
Brooklyn	941,029	355,725	37.8	546,837	58.1	30,731	3.3	2,655
Manhattan	751,645	334,585	44.5	377,796	50.3	29,792	4.0	5,610
Queens	398,282	128,955	32.4	253,772	63.7	14,075	3.5	1,062
Richmond	59,180	22,337	37.7	33,468	56.6	2,796	4.7	177

City	Females 15 Years Old and Over							
	Total	Single		Married		Widowed		Divorced
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
New York City	2,623,789	834,159	31.8	1,485,155	56.6	279,741	10.7	17,394
Bronx	477,574	144,216	30.2	285,444	59.8	45,067	9.4	2,225
Brooklyn	942,458	297,550	31.6	542,845	57.6	94,047	10.0	4,512
Manhattan	743,605	268,300	36.1	369,985	49.8	94,286	12.7	8,541
Queens	405,985	108,214	26.7	254,389	62.7	41,097	10.1	1,919
Richmond	54,167	15,879	29.3	32,492	60.0	5,244	9.7	197

1. Laidlaw, Table 87.

The large majority of this group apparently live with immediate relatives, and in tenement houses or apartment houses of the city, or private residences of the suburban boroughs. The remainder are lodgers in private families, rooming houses, lodging houses, hotels, or clubs, or rent tenements or apartments of their own, either individually or in groups.

The 1930 census classifies families according to the number of lodgers by the color and nativity of the head of the family and distinguishes between families on the basis of ownership and tenancy.

Only 179,664 families, or 10.4 per cent for the city as a whole, have lodgers; but 72,040 of these have more than one. It is the practice of the census to classify as a "boarding or lodging house" a dwelling in which there are more than ten lodgers. The number and percentage of these are not large.

The total number of quasi-family groups for New York City in 1930 was given as 5,755 with a population of 227,014, of whom 28,083 dwelt in 374 hotels, and 84,110 in 3,855 boarding and lodging houses. The rest were unevenly distributed among schools, institutions, crews of vessels, military and naval posts, labor camps, and other quasi-family groups. The large majority of the residents of hotels and of boarding and lodging houses dwelt in Manhattan — 24,279 and 72,682 respectively; Brooklyn was the only other borough in the city in which the numbers are worthy of mention here, namely 3,070 and 9,249.[1]

The accompanying charts, (Figure 67, a, b, c, d), shows graphically the distribution of families having lodgers. For the city as a whole it will be noted that the majority have one lodger, and that the number of foreign-born families taking lodgers exceeds the number of those of native parentage. The large majority of families taking lodgers are tenant families. The distribution by boroughs reveals Manhattan's ascendency in this regard, and the relatively small rôle played by the Bronx.

Among Negro families the percent taking lodgers is larger than among white families. Although Negroes constituted only 4.5 per cent of the total families in the city, 15 per cent of the Negro families took lodgers. In Manhattan, the respective figures are higher, since 11.2 per cent of white families, or one family in nine, had one lodger or more, and 26 per cent of the Negro families, or one family in every four, met the somewhat higher rentals which Negroes pay by taking lodgers. Altogether there were lodgers in 26,884 Negro families for the city as a whole, and in 21,085 Negro families of Manhattan.[2]

The social significance of the above figures should be indicated. For the lodger in the home is often a cause of disruption of marital and family relationships. His

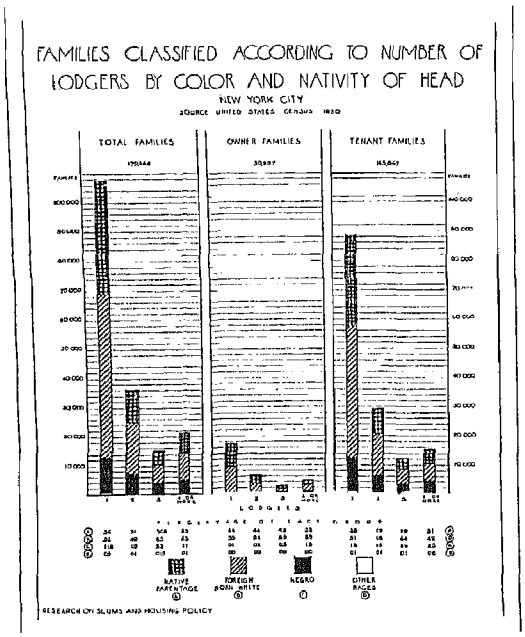
1. *Population Bulletin, Families, New York*, Table 15. 2. See Chapter XII.

FAMILIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF LODGERS, BY COLOR AND NATIVITY OF HEAD AND TENURE, NEW YORK CITY: 1930[1]

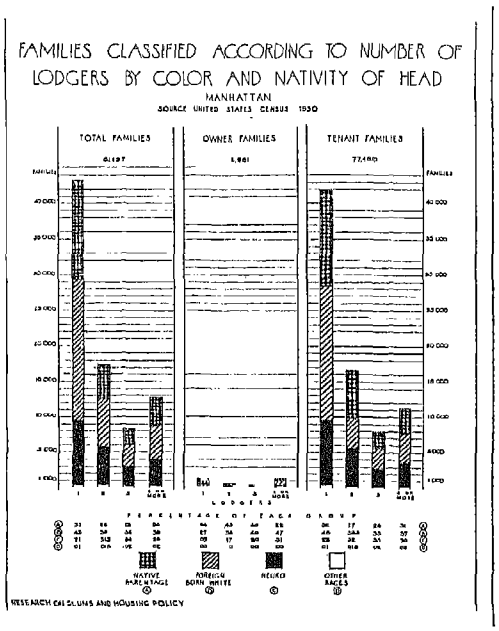
Area and Number of Lodgers	All Families								Owner Families			Tenant Families			
	All classes		Native white			Foreign-born white	Negro	Other races	All classes	Native white	Foreign-born white	Negro	All classes	Native white	Foreign-born white	Negro
	Number	Per cent	Total	Native parentage	Foreign or mixed parentage											
New York City	*1,722,954*	*100.0*	*708,941*	*290,809*	*418,132*	*932,829*	*77,077*	*4,107*	*348,778*	*151,432*	*192,986*	*4,280*	*1,354,470*	*548,222*	*730,589*	*71,687*
Families having — No lodgers	1,543,290	89.6	646,812	259,598	387,214	843,590	50,193	2,695	317,781	138,369	176,667	2,678	1,208,603	500,470	658,852	46,693
1 lodger	107,624	6.2	39,482	18,989	20,493	55,435	12,102	605	17,612	8,014	9,142	451	88,714	30,878	45,721	11,521
2 lodgers	36,121	2.1	11,302	5,843	5,459	17,610	6,883	326	6,046	2,523	3,201	320	29,584	8,562	14,203	6,495
3 lodgers	15,135	0.9	4,622	2,507	2,115	6,883	3,430	200	2,673	1,026	1,424	222	12,174	3,463	5,340	3,174
4 or more lodgers	20,784	1.2	6,723	3,872	2,851	9,311	4,469	281	4,666	1,500	2,552	609	15,395	4,849	6,473	3,800
Bronx Borough	*321,270*	*100.0*	*117,249*	*38,568*	*78,681*	*200,902*	*2,883*	*236*	*33,975*	*11,565*	*22,241*	*162*	*284,667*	*104,690*	*177,176*	*2,575*
Families having — No lodgers	298,167	92.8	110,558	36,019	74,539	185,019	2,405	185	31,040	10,600	20,296	137	264,780	99,058	163,399	2,147
1 lodger	16,395	5.1	4,967	1,859	3,108	11,089	309	30	1,729	623	1,088	18	14,478	4,289	9,888	272
2 lodgers	4,198	1.3	1,094	438	656	2,989	102	13	561	172	384	5	3,585	904	2,575	93
3 lodgers	1,340	0.4	340	131	209	962	32	6	261	73	188	..	1,060	256	767	31
4 or more lodgers	1,170	0.4	290	121	169	843	35	2	384	97	285	2	764	183	547	32
Brooklyn Borough	*616,875*	*100.0*	*235,247*	*90,248*	*144,999*	*363,766*	*17,016*	*846*	*158,070*	*53,557*	*102,970*	*1,511*	*449,437*	*177,642*	*256,078*	*14,929*
Families having — No lodgers	566,095	91.8	216,640	81,629	135,011	335,872	12,963	620	143,797	47,804	94,960	1,005	414,058	165,290	236,668	11,529
1 lodger	31,600	5.1	11,941	5,437	6,504	17,457	2,091	111	7,744	3,153	4,408	180	23,300	8,549	12,804	1,841
2 lodgers	9,812	1.6	3,353	1,558	1,795	5,417	993	49	2,862	1,188	1,565	109	6,732	2,074	3,761	850
3 lodgers	3,907	0.6	1,275	631	644	2,169	442	21	1,323	506	746	71	2,463	720	1,370	352
4 or more lodgers	5,461	0.9	2,038	993	1,045	2,851	527	45	2,344	906	1,291	146	2,884	1,009	1,475	357
Manhattan Borough	*468,956*	*100.0*	*174,330*	*83,334*	*90,996*	*239,540*	*52,387*	*2,699*	*11,689*	*6,193*	*4,532*	*954*	*453,909*	*166,464*	*233,608*	*51,166*
Families having — No lodgers	387,459	82.6	148,940	68,430	80,510	205,585	31,299	1,635	8,708	4,981	3,380	341	376,429	142,812	201,216	30,782
1 lodger	43,146	9.2	14,308	8,009	6,299	19,265	9,151	422	1,003	638	274	91	41,823	13,507	18,868	9,029
2 lodgers	17,314	3.7	4,833	2,908	1,925	6,820	5,414	247	405	184	152	68	16,749	4,573	6,605	5,327
3 lodgers	8,186	1.7	2,334	1,448	886	2,915	2,768	169	277	110	108	59	7,793	2,165	2,760	2,701
4 or more lodgers	12,851	2.7	3,915	2,539	1,376	4,955	3,755	226	1,296	280	618	395	11,115	3,407	4,159	3,327
Queens Borough	*280,064*	*100.0*	*162,715*	*69,275*	*93,440*	*112,823*	*4,237*	*289*	*125,932*	*70,443*	*53,913*	*1,551*	*150,705*	*90,267*	*57,599*	*2,583*
Families having — No lodgers	258,680	92.4	152,687	64,841	87,846	102,675	3,094	224	116,621	66,037	49,456	1,108	138,908	84,786	52,019	1,906
1 lodger	14,565	5.2	7,302	3,198	4,104	6,750	476	37	6,146	3,112	2,877	155	8,237	4,091	3,798	313
2 lodgers	4,222	1.5	1,760	817	943	2,102	344	16	1,917	835	946	135	2,257	902	1,138	202
3 lodgers	1,514	0.5	577	253	324	755	178	4	718	287	339	91	771	281	406	81
4 or more lodgers	1,083	0.4	389	166	223	541	145	8	530	172	295	62	532	207	238	81
Richmond Borough	*35,789*	*100.0*	*19,400*	*9,384*	*10,016*	*15,798*	*554*	*37*	*19,112*	*9,674*	*9,330*	*102*	*15,752*	*9,159*	*6,128*	*434*
Families having — No lodgers	32,889	91.9	17,987	8,679	9,308	14,439	432	31	17,615	8,947	8,575	87	14,428	8,524	5,550	329
1 lodger	1,918	5.4	964	486	478	874	75	5	990	488	495	7	876	442	363	66
2 lodgers	575	1.6	262	122	140	282	30	1	301	144	154	3	261	109	124	27
3 lodgers	188	0.5	96	44	52	82	10	...	94	50	43	1	87	41	37	9
4 or more lodgers	219	0.6	91	53	38	121	7	...	112	45	63	4	100	43	54	3

1. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population*, p. 213.

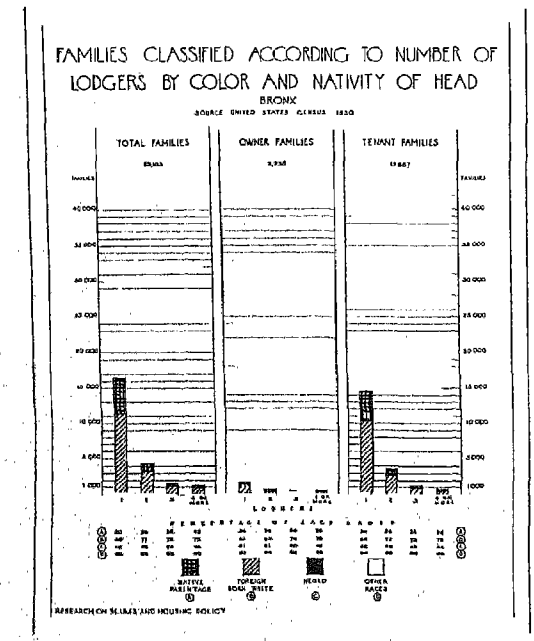
FIG. 67


FAMILIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF LODGERS BY COLOR AND NATIVITY OF HEAD
NEW YORK CITY
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
TOTAL FAMILIES
OWNER FAMILIES
TENANT FAMILIES
LODGERS
PERCENTAGE OF EACH GROUP
NATIVE PARENTAGE
FOREIGN BORN WHITE
NEGRO
OTHER RACES
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

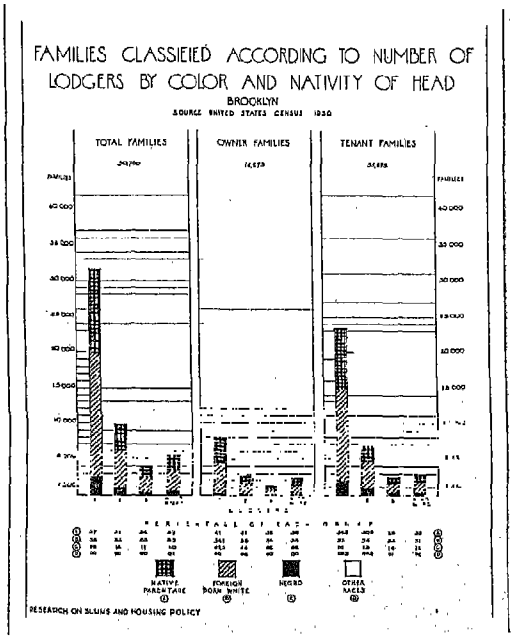
a


FAMILIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF LODGERS BY COLOR AND NATIVITY OF HEAD
MANHATTAN
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
TOTAL FAMILIES
OWNER FAMILIES
TENANT FAMILIES
LODGERS
PERCENTAGE OF EACH GROUP
NATIVE PARENTAGE
FOREIGN BORN WHITE
NEGRO
OTHER RACES
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

b


FAMILIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF LODGERS BY COLOR AND NATIVITY OF HEAD
BRONX
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
TOTAL FAMILIES
OWNER FAMILIES
TENANT FAMILIES
LODGERS
PERCENTAGE OF EACH GROUP
NATIVE PARENTAGE
FOREIGN BORN WHITE
NEGRO
OTHER RACES
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

c


FAMILIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF LODGERS BY COLOR AND NATIVITY OF HEAD
BROOKLYN
SOURCE UNITED STATES CENSUS 1930
TOTAL FAMILIES
OWNER FAMILIES
TENANT FAMILIES
LODGERS
PERCENTAGE OF EACH GROUP
NATIVE PARENTAGE
FOREIGN BORN WHITE
NEGRO
OTHER RACES
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

d

or her presence reduces the family's privacy and complicates the problems of daily living. Not infrequently the lodger's presence is a source of moral danger to growing children.[1]

Approaching the problem from the point of view of the single man or woman, the question "Where shall I live?" must ordinarily be answered in one of the following ways: first, one may live at home with one's family, if the home is within the city or its accessible suburbs. For many single adult workers this is a simple and satisfactory solution. For others it means reduction of freedom and opportunity. Second, one may live with relatives. This also is a frequent practice, but may involve limitations of freedom for the lodger and of privacy for the relatives. The third possibility is to live with some family with whom one has ties of friendship, and perhaps also of race and common background. One commonly finds in tenement districts that lodgers are referred to as "cousins" when they come from the same community in the immigrant family's native land. There is not unlikely to be some more or less remote blood relationship in such circumstances, and many interests and traditions may be shared. Such relationships are often congenial and worth while, but are not necessarily so. Fourth, one may live in a family of strangers, who may or may not be remote in race, religion, and interests. Both the economic motive and the desire for company may lead the family to take in such lodgers and the relationship may prove to be congenial, but is more likely not to be so. In many such instances there is no friendliness and no sharing of common interests, and not infrequently there is antagonism. The remaining possibilities are, fifth, the boarding or rooming house; sixth, the congregate lodging house; seventh, the hotel, whether residential or commercial; eighth, the club; ninth, the exclusive use of an apartment; and tenth, the sharing of an apartment with one or more other individuals.

The boarding or rooming house is characteristically an old building which was erected originally for use by a reasonably well-to-do private family. It may have been constructed fifty to one hundred years ago. With the growth of the city, the families of the owner class had moved out of the district and the house was rented, sooner or later, to an individual or family who might use it as their chief source of income by taking in boarders or lodgers. In a vast majority of instances the district is blighted in the sense that its houses are now being used by a lower economic group than that for which they were designed. Encroachments of business and industry nearby have created the presumption that in time the house will be torn down and replaced by a commercial building. The area is thus one of transition and of more or less confusion. The incentive for improvements and repairs is

1. See Chapter XVII.

lacking because the property is ordinarily being held in the hope of ultimate sale for commercial or other uses. Neglect and lack of standards are apparent on all sides. Both the district and the houses are usually uninviting.

Within, one is commonly impressed with the difficulties which have been faced in adapting a building erected as a private residence for use as a rooming house. Sometimes large rooms have been partitioned off to make two smaller ones. The bedrooms over the living and dining rooms may be large, but hall bedrooms or improvised rooms are too small. Cross ventilation is rare. Sanitary facilities are likely to be too few in number, or else new ones have been improvised in awkward locations and sometimes with peculiar or ill-arranged fixtures to adapt them to the space that was available. Old and outmoded types of fixtures sometimes persist, and unpleasant odors may pervade the entire floor. As the provision of fire-escapes accessible to each room is an economic impossibility under the conditions of construction, a decided risk is faced by the tenants of upper floors in case the main hallway is cut off by fire or smoke.

The rooming-house keeper and her family or servants may live on the first floor or in the basement. The front living room may not be available for roomers to receive their guests. The reception of guests of the opposite sex in rooms, which are perforce bedrooms, is the rule rather than the exception. Lodgers of both sexes are ordinarily taken, and supervision of their relations is virtually impossible. For many rooming-house keepers this is a matter of no concern, though others make a definite and earnest attempt to select and protect their lodgers, and to provide for their comfort.

One is impressed with the following undesirable conditions in a rooming-house district: (1) uninspiring, if not definitely ugly, appearance of neighborhood street, and building exteriors; (2) poor upkeep and repair; (3) absence of fireproofing; (4) inadequate means of escape in case of fire; (5) absence of through ventilation of rooms; (6) insufficient natural light (though here perhaps the lodger is better off than the tenement dweller in lower stories because rooming houses generally occupy a smaller percentage of land than is occupied by tenement houses); (7) antiquated plumbing; (8) insufficient provision for washing and toilet facilities; (9) lack of common rooms for the reception of guests of the opposite sex; (10) inadequate social supervision; (11) excessive heat in the summer; (12) poorly regulated temperature in the winter; (13) absence of outdoor recreational space in the form of attractive and ample yards, large roofs, or porches; (14) the utter lack of provision for absorption into the community life of the individual who finds it necessary to live in a rooming house.

A small collection of student questionnaires, filled out to cover their own ex-

periences as lodgers, revealed such special problems as uncongenial fellow lodgers, absence of shower baths, inability to close door or transom, noise of outside traffic, of radios, conversation, barking dogs, and other annoyances. Within the house were ugly or uninspiring furnishings, rooms that were too small for comfort, and the social problem of association with fellow-residents, many of whom displayed personal peculiarities and maladjustments.

Another questionnaire filled out by a few students whose families had lodgers revealed that they were taken in for two major reasons: either to eke out incomes or because of friendship for the lodger.

One reason why the problem of the lodger has to be considered in a slum-clearance project is that the present families of tenement-house districts frequently take lodgers who will have to find lodgings elsewhere when the slum is demolished. Ordinarily no provision has been made to rehouse them as lodgers in the new tenements. A study of rooming-house districts provides a second reason for the inclusion of this topic under slum clearance. For rooming-house districts have been shown to be blighted areas, and it is quite likely that slum-clearance projects will sooner or later include them. Their population should be provided for in rebuilding projects, though not necessarily on the land that is cleared, since new lodging houses, residential hotels, or clubs might be erected for this group outside of the cleared area.

The location of congregate lodging houses and the less expensive residential hotels and clubs in the past has been determined largely by the low land costs and rentals in the transition zones. The rentability of rooms to some specific occupational or racial group, owing to consumer demand — a combination of the lodger's rent-paying capacity and his accessibility to friends, recreation, and employment — provides economic justification for the venture. The present locations of men's lodging houses and other inexpensive residential units of the Y. M. C. A. type are on the edges of downtown and uptown commercial districts. The major points of concentration at present are the Bowery, for the cheapest type, and Twenty-third Street, with minor points on the West Side between Forty-sixth and Forty-ninth Streets and west of Eighth Avenue, and also in the vicinity of Washington Square. For women, the major concentrations are between Washington Square and Fourteenth Street, and on or near Third Avenue or Ninth Avenue. Relatively few for either group are in tenement districts.

Hotels are on or close to the avenues, which run north and south. The residential clubs, apartment hotels, and apartments for well-to-do members of the non-family classification are in the Washington Square district, the midtown area, or farther north.

The volume of published data on lodgers in families, on rooming houses, and on lodging houses to supplement the statistics and descriptions given above is surprisingly meager. Unquestionably there are thousands of specific references in the case files of social service organizations, the Board of Health, the Tenement House Department, and in other public and private records. It is, however, costly to assemble these and eliminate duplications. The same would be true of the files of room registries, since their files overlap.

Room Registries. In New York City, there are eight leading room registries for women active in sending persons to rooms for rent in houses which have been investigated and recommended for their cleanliness, rates, or location. The registries are listed as follows:

Manhattan:
Association to Promote Proper Housing for Girls, 108 East 30th Street,
Catholic Room Registry, 415 Lexington Avenue,
Room Registry for Jewish Girls and Women, 71 West 47th Street,
Travelers Aid Society, 144 East 44th Street,
Y. W. C. A. Room Registry, 610 Lexington Avenue.

Brooklyn and Queens:
Y. W. C. A. Room Registry, 30 Third Avenue,
Brooklyn Catholic Big Sisters, 257 Livingston Street,
Y. W. C. A. of Queensboro, 88-44 161st Street, Jamaica, L. I.

Most of these registries, all of which are active today, have been in existence for many years. They supply the necessary contact between the woman, young girl, and occasional male applicants and the woman who has an extra room or rooms for rent. Through interviews, it is easily determined what rent the applicant wants to pay, what neighborhood is most accessible, and the type of lodging desired, whereupon the applicant is sent with an introduction to one or more houses which offer the most suitable accommodations and rates. The room registry has records of the landlady, the standards and upkeep of her rooming-house, and the number of rooms available and the charges for them, and acts as a medium of contact between the applicant and the landlady. This is advantageous to the applicant, for she is being sent to a respectable and clean house through a reliable agency, instead of being forced to rent a room in a strange house with a "Furnished Rooms To Let" sign in the window. It is an asset to the landlady, for she does not individually have to advertise her rooms except through notifying the agency of a vacancy, and is reasonably sure that the applicant will be satisfied with the charges asked, since such details are taken care of by the registry before the applicant is sent to choose the room.

These eight registries have lists of over 1300 rooms in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Jamaica, L. I., and the rates of rooms range from $.75 to $2.00 per night; single rooms from $2.00 to $12.00 per week, and double rooms from $5.00 to $15.00 (and slightly higher) per week. Though the registries are largely located in offices in the midtown East Side of New York, the rooms on their various lists are scattered all over New York and Brooklyn, covering Manhattan, East and West, downtown and uptown, and many addresses in the Bronx. Though there is a small fee charged per year for the services to the landlady and payable by her, this is not insisted upon if her means are small; though many fees are collected, they represent a very

small total sum of money. The registries are, therefore, dependent on donations from the members of their boards of directors and friends. They make no profit at all and are, for the most part, purely philanthropic.

While most of the registries were organized to protect young women who find it necessary to live in furnished rooms, they now assist a large number of older women and an occasional man. Though one or two were organized especially for a certain specific religious group or race, they attempt to take care of anyone who applies for a lodging and seldom refuse an applicant.

A variant of the rooming house is the "opportunity home" which is quite definitely a result of conditions brought about by the current financial depression. An "opportunity home" is supplied by a small family which exchanges a room or sleeping quarters and food for services. No money is exchanged on either part; the young girl sleeps "in" with the young child or children of the family, or on a studio bed in the living room, assists with the preparation of food (not cooking), dusting, nursemaid service, or errands. She is thus housed and fed and is allowed practically all of every afternoon to follow her own interests, and two or three evenings a week as well. She does no heavy housework and the time she has for herself offers ample opportunity to seek employment or to study. This custom, followed chiefly by the Room Registry for Jewish Girls and Women, seems to be both successful and popular, but requires watchfulness to prevent exploitation.

Only a small percentage of the available rooms of the city are listed by the non-profit agencies above described. The furnished rooms listed by daily newspapers are subjected to inspection by some, but apparently the standards of inspection are not as high as those maintained by the philanthropic agencies. There is an organization of the keepers of rooming and boarding houses, established apparently for mutual protection and assistance, and the defeat of legislation inimical to their interests, but they have not so far proved cooperative to social workers in their studies of the contemporary problems of rooming houses.

The best surveyed quarter of the city in this regard is the West Side of Manhattan, for the basic occupancy chart issued in 1933 by the West Side Association of Commerce, Inc., reveals that, of 9,235 residential buildings in the nine districts which they covered, 1,738 were boarding houses and 115 were hotels. Out of a West Side population of 297,661, there were 21,355 living in boarding houses, and 36,568 in hotels.

Dr. C. G. Swanson, in a study of the West Side south of 14th Street, found no "typical rooming-house district as described by Zorbaugh;[1] that is to say there is no area of anomymity, of desolation, loneliness, and lost personalities. Quite the contrary seems to have been true, since Bohemianism [of Greenwich Village and the Washington Square area, where most of the rooming houses of this section are to be found] strictly tabooed the above qualities." He notes further that there is a

1. Harvey W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and The Slum.*

marked tendency in that district for non-family groups to rent apartments, rather than rooms.[1]

The number of lodgers in private families has been covered in several investigations of housing or standards of living.[2] In general it may be said that the taking of lodgers in private families is not so prevalent as it was a generation ago and is no longer a major source of overcrowding except among Negroes. Within tenement houses it has been kept under much better social supervision since the Tenement House Act of 1901. Its effects in one- and two-family houses can be gauged only from random data.

Turning to the problems of lodging houses and cheap hotels — for the dividing line between them is not sharp — one again finds no recent comprehensive study. Paul Kennaday,[3] in 1905, found, in addition to the Municipal Lodging House with its 300 beds, 101 lodging houses with a licensed capacity of 16,470 beds, two Mills Hotels with 2,154 beds, and a large number of cheap hotels, making a total lodging-house accommodation in Manhattan of "easily twenty thousand beds." Of the 101 lodging houses, 63 were on or close to the Bowery. The prevailing type was a five-story structure, one or two lots in width, with a store on the first floor. Of the total number, 34 were of the dormitory type, 36 of the cubicle or individual-room type, and 31 had both dormitories and cubicles. Dormitory beds were usually at 10 or 15 cents per night, and cubicles or rooms ranged from 15 to 30 cents per night. Cubicles lacked windows and were ventilated only by space at the base of the door and at the top of the open partition, from windows often only on the street or yard side of the building. Rooms were dark; the air was foul from unwashed sleeping occupants, blankets laundered but twice a year, and poorly flushed toilets on the same floor, with doors open to the dormitory or corridor.

Despite the continuous upward pressure of the Board of Health, still most inadequately backed by public opinion, the conditions of the old-law lodging houses continue far from creditable. The missions, and lodging houses and cheapest hotels of the old-law type, still draw among their patrons a large percentage of "homeless men" who live largely by begging, the most casual of casual labor, or petty criminality, with a sprinkling of unfortunates who have capabilities and character but who have been unable to find steady employment. Conditions of

1. The above quotation from Dr. C. G. Swanson is from a report he made for this study. His excellent detailed examination of social problems of the West Side will be found in the unpublished Ph.D. thesis which he prepared under the direction of New York University [illegible] *Social Backgrounds of the [illegible]*. It is available in the library of New York University.

2. John C. Gebhart, *Housing Standards in Brooklyn*, Tenement House Committee of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, October, 1908, especially p. 23; and J. M. Lonergan, "The Housing Situation in the City of New York," *Monthly Bulletin* of the Department of Health, City of New York, February, 1921, may be cited as among the best of such studies. The reports of Tenement House Commissions (see Chapters V and VI) and studies of Negro housing (see Chapter XII) also contain useful data.

3. "New York's Hundred Lodging-Houses," published in *Charities*, February 18, 1905.

upkeep, maintenance, and sanitation, where there is a clientele of this type, tend to sink very low, especially in commercial establishments. They cannot readily be improved until public opinion demands it and increases the inspection service of the Department of Health, on the one hand, while condemning hopelessly inferior lodging houses on the other.

The problem, however, is not one that belongs exclusively in the field of housing. A considerable fraction of the clientele of the cheapest lodging houses is made up of persons suffering from physical or mental handicaps, old age, inebriety, or chronic petty criminality. For their own good and that of the public, they require segregation until cured, or for life, either in hospitals, penal camps, or special colonies. In several European countries unemployable men are specially trained in accordance with their handicaps and capabilities for farm or industrial work, under close intelligent supervision, which distinguishes those who can be reclaimed and restores them under out-patient supervision or parole, to the outside world.

We are beginning to have an equivalent of this sort of programme in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and Federal, state, and city public works programmes, so far as the younger and more salvageable cases are concerned. The Department of Public Welfare of the City of New York maintains Transients Home Relief Units for Unattached Men, and a variety of special services for members of this group.

Supplementing the Municipal Lodging House, the State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration has organized Hartford House at 109 West 54th Street, with the aid of Federal funds. Medical and dental services are provided, as well as food, lodging, and clothes. But the clearing-house functions of such institutions require, for effectiveness, the development of a well rounded and well coordinated social policy which will meet the needs of the entire membership of the unemployed and homeless group and which, in reasonably inexpensive form, with precise reference to individual needs, will provide appropriate training, cure of curable ailments, hospitalization of the chronically unfit, and supervised restoration on an independent, self-supporting basis of those who can be cured or trained.

Legislative control over lodgings in New York City is relatively good for such lodgings as come under the Multiple Dwelling Law. The remainder are, to some extent, covered by powers allocated to the Health, Fire, and Police Departments; these are, however, seldom exercised except upon complaint. Thus, presumably, they fail to reach the majority of premises upon which unwholesome conditions of living exist.

The Multiple Dwelling Law, section 4, contains several pertinent definitions.

A "family" is either a person occupying a dwelling and maintaining a household, with not more than four boarders or lodgers, or two or more persons occupying a dwelling, living together and maintaining a common household with not more than four boarders or lodgers. . . .

A "class B" multiple dwelling is a multiple dwelling which is occupied, as a rule transiently, as the more or less temporary abode of individuals or families who are lodged with or without meals. This class shall be deemed to include and shall include hotels, lodging houses, rooming houses, boarding houses, boarding schools, furnished-room houses, lodgings, club houses and college and school dormitories.

A "hotel" is an inn having at least thirty sleeping rooms.

A "rooming house" or a "lodging house" is any class B multiple dwelling, other than a hotel in which persons either individually or as families are housed or lodged for hire or otherwise, with or without meals.[1]

Section 82 covers prohibited uses. In its recently amended form it states:

No apartment in any class A multiple dwelling [tenement house or apartment house] shall be used for a rooming or a lodging house or hotel, but this sentence shall not be construed to prohibit the letting of one or more rooms in any apartment in any class A multiple dwelling to lodgers if no room in such apartment is occupied by more than two persons. No such room shall be let to any lodger unless such lodger and every other occupant of the apartment in which such room is located shall have free and unobstructed access to each required exit from such apartment. Such access, if through any room, shall not be obstructed by any door or device capable of being locked or fastened, and such exit shall be deemed to include the opening to any required fire-escape, fire-stair or fire-tower directly accessible from such apartment. No multiple dwelling or any part thereof or the lot or premises thereof shall be used for the purpose of prostitution or assignation of any description.[2]

Virtually every paragraph in the Multiple Dwelling Law provides in one way or another for the well-being of lodgers in all but the smaller residences. Those who live in tenements or apartments are protected in health and safety by the provisions regarding construction, arrangement, and equipment for class A multiple dwellings, the others in similar provisions for class B dwellings. Fire safety has been materially increased for both groups as compared with the period prior to 1901. Certain conditions relating to health have been improved in so far as they are affected by the requirements of the laws on construction and sanitation. The major deficiencies lie in the lack of wholly adequate fireproofing in new buildings six stories or less in height, and in all old-law buildings, in the limited powers to force improvements in buildings erected prior to 1901, and in provisions regarding maintenance.

By increasing the force of tenement-house inspectors much more could be accomplished under existing powers, and all multiple dwellings erected since 1901

1. *The Multiple Dwelling Law of the State of New York, with All Amendments to April 25, 1931*, citing Chapter 712 of the Laws of 1929, Article 1, § 4.
2. *Ibid.*, § 82.

could be kept reasonably safe and wholesome if such an enlarged Tenement House Department, under competent supervision, could feel behind it the weight of an active and enlightened public opinion. Old-law tenements, hotels, or lodging houses could not, in most instances, be made wholesome places of residence without additional legislation. The deficiencies in contemporary conditions are due primarily to the deflection of public interest and opinion from this problem to that of slum demolition and rehabilitation. The place of lodging houses and non-family groups in such projects is discussed in a later chapter.[1]

1. See Chapter XXXVII.

CHAPTER XIV

DISTRIBUTION OF MORTALITY AND DISEASE

CONTEMPORARY conditions of health and disease, of vitality and mortality, have their origin in conditions of the past, already described, and in the present textures of social organization and the social process.

New York enjoys a relatively low mortality rate. The crude death rate in New York for the five-year period 1929–1933 was 10.70. By boroughs the ratios vary from 8.36 in the Bronx and 8.50 in Queens to 9.93 in Brooklyn, 10.92 in Richmond, and 13.41 in Manhattan.[1]

There are several factors that affect the death rate; among them are age, sex, race, and occupation. So interrelated are these factors that those who have studied the subject most hesitate to ascribe a major rôle to poor housing although they recognize it as contributing to the general effect. Without attempting any relative evaluation at this point, we may note that the matter of occupation has considerable bearing.

Figures recently released by the United States Public Health Service [2] give the following occupational death rates, based on deaths occurring in ten states [3] among males from fifteen to sixty-four years of age in 1930.

	Rate Per 1,000
General rate	8.7
Unskilled workers	13.1
Semi-skilled workers	9.9
Skilled workers and foremen	8.1
Clerks and kindred workers	7.4
Proprietors, managers, and officials	7.4
Professional men	7.0

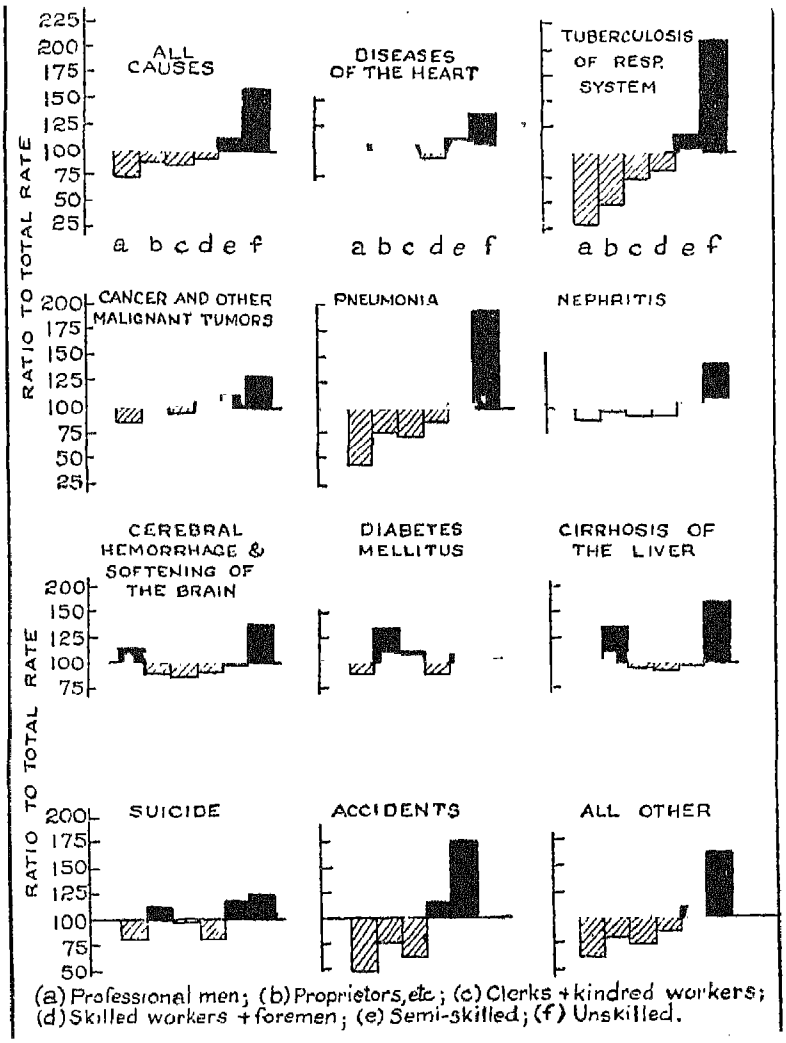
Figure 73 fortifies the statement that "The difference in mortality rates in the various [occupational] classes is truly astounding." [4]

Clearly, we must keep in mind whether specific areas that will presently be shown as having high death rates from various causes contain large numbers of particular occupational groups. Slum areas show a high percentage of unskilled workers in residence. This is not to minimize the importance of housing, but

1. *Health Center Districts, New York City: Vital and Morbidity Data, Five-Year Period, 1929–1933*, Bureau of Child Health Development, Department of Health, New York, 1935, p. 63.
2. Rollo H. Britten, "Mortality Rates by Occupational Class in the United States," *Public Health Reports*, vol. 49, no. 38, September 21, 1934.
3. Alabama, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, *Ibid.*, p. 1101.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1104.

rather to face the whole problem honestly. That there is something peculiarly evil about New York's slum areas seems almost undeniable when the per capita

FIG. 68



Relative mortality in different occupational classes, by cause, 10 states, 1930.

death rate from various diseases in those areas is compared with the worst rates in slum areas of other cities.

Before considering an analysis of health conditions today, it is well to give heed to the remarkable accomplishments of the last half century. In the period since 1872 the death rate has dropped from over 30 per thousand to under 11

(Figure 69). From 1881 to 1931 deaths of that part of the population under five years of age decreased from 116 per thousand to 16 (Figure 70).[1] Behind these descending curves pictured in Figures 69 to 72, lies progress in medical science, in public health measures, in control of occupational diseases, and in popular education toward those personal health measures that no one but the individual can control. Vaccination against smallpox, inoculation against typhoid, immunization against diphtheria, and better personal hygiene have all played a part.

FIG. 69

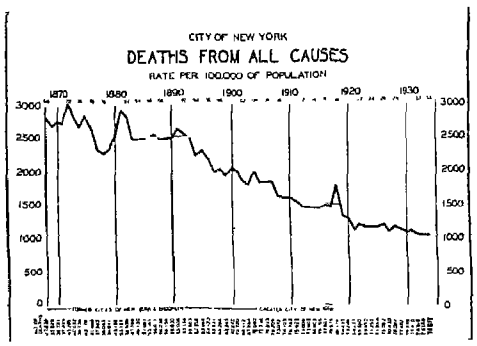
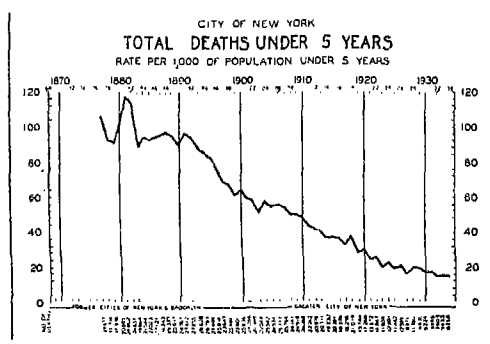


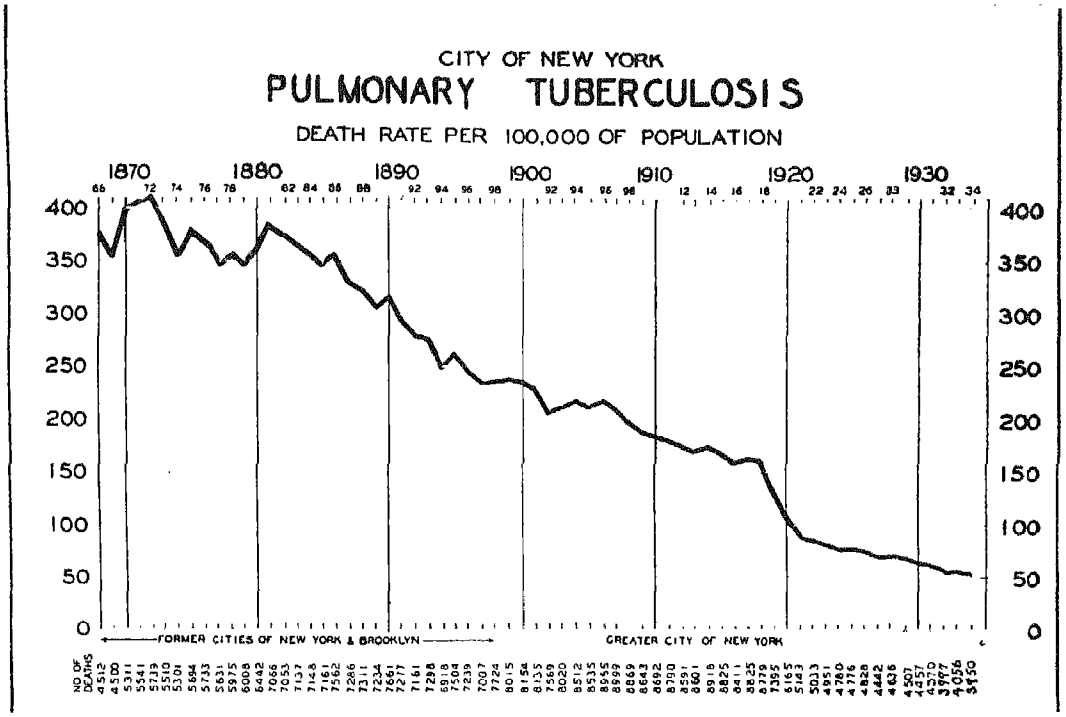
FIG. 70



It is well also to reflect on health activities which are applied impartially to the city as a whole. The city's water supply reaches the consumer only after a series of elaborate precautions that are applied with constant vigilance. An intricate system of sewers collects and carries away the wastes of some seven million people. Inspectors of the health department visit restaurants, barber shops, food-handling establishments, and numerous other places where disease might start and spread. The milk supply is guarded by a system of inspection extending back to the most remote farms where the milk is produced. Sanitary surveys of shell-fish fields and shucking houses are made. Not even dog bites escape the attention of the authorities. All this is the customary procedure by which a great city guards its citizens in ways which they frequently never suspect, but neglect of which makes it impossible for millions of people to live and work in close association.

In connection with the death rates of various occupations already cited, the activities of the State Labor Department, in watching over those in industry, deserve attention. Disease and accidents associated with various kinds of work have been studied and precautions rigorously enforced. Dangerous particles must be drawn off by suction before they lodge in workers' lungs and throats. Scaffolds and ladders must conform to standards of manufacture and erection. The humble

1. *Annual Report*, Department of Health, New York City, 1930–1931. Lines extended from official figures.


CITY OF NEW YORK
PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS
DEATH RATE PER 100,000 OF POPULATION
1870
1880
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
FORMER CITIES OF NEW YORK & BROOKLYN
GREATER CITY OF NEW YORK
NO OF DEATHS

a

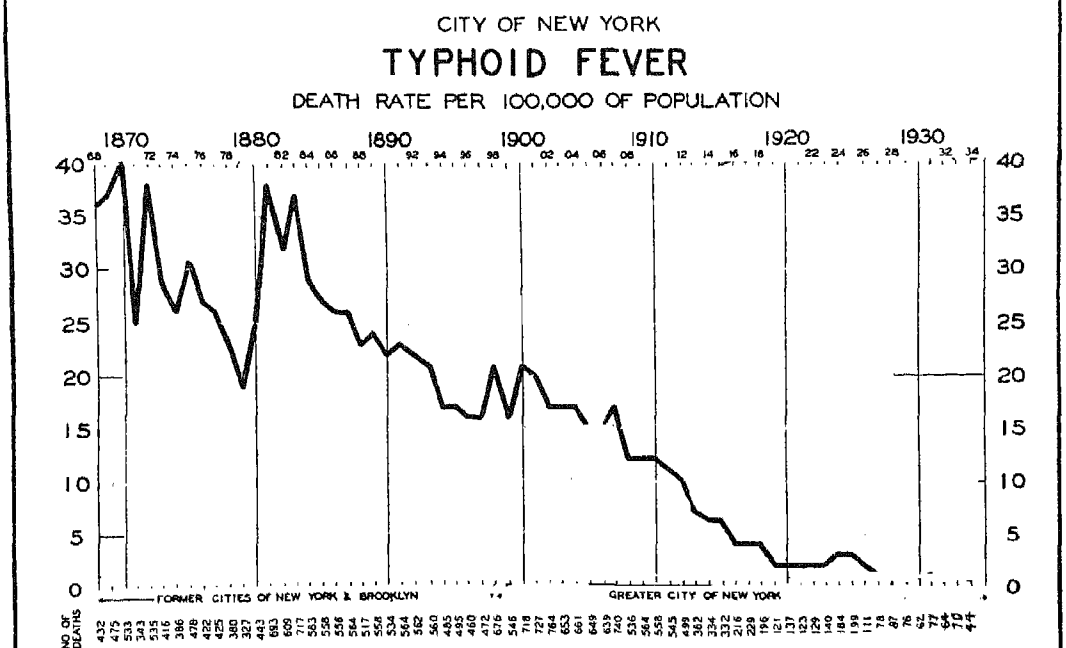
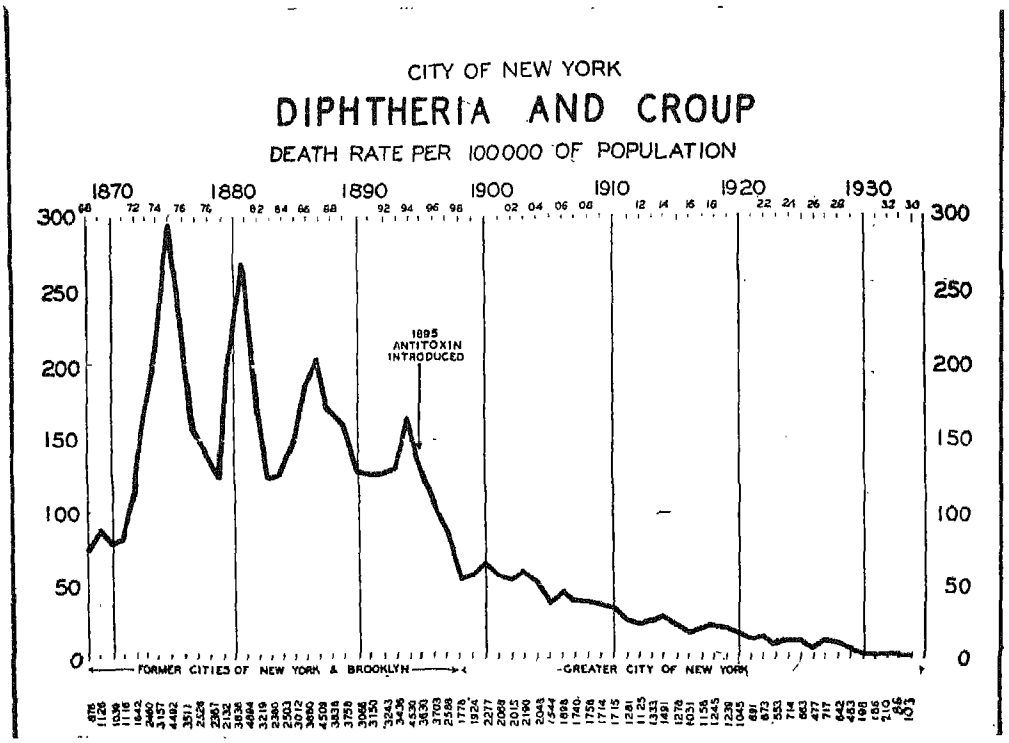

CITY OF NEW YORK
TYPHOID FEVER
DEATH RATE PER 100,000 OF POPULATION
1870
1880
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
FORMER CITIES OF NEW YORK & BROOKLYN
GREATER CITY OF NEW YORK
NO OF DEATHS

FIG. 72



window-washer must be supplied with safe devices for enabling him to perform his functions.

Since the passage of the Tenement House Act of 1901, there has also existed a Tenement House Department charged with the duties of seeing that the law, with regard to multi-family dwellings, is observed. Though bedevilled at various times by opposition and official indifference, it has done a work that has added greatly to the betterment of housing conditions within the city. The cumulative effect of its work, performed of necessity without the spectacular features that sometimes characterize campaigns for new housing on a grand scale, has gone far toward keeping the existing housing from becoming intolerable. Recently, its direct influence has been weakened through the transfer of some of its functions to the Department of Buildings, but its activities still have a strong effect on health conditions as affected by housing.

With all this elaborate network of precautions in mind, we may now turn to

closer inspection of the city to see whether there yet remain undesirable health conditions and to speculate on the possible causes for them.

The first impression conveyed is an indictment of Manhattan as an unhealthy area by comparison with the city as a whole. The rate of infant mortality per thousand live births during 1929–1931, inclusive, was 72 for Manhattan (Figure 73b) in contrast with 57 for the city as a whole. Tuberculosis mortality in all forms, for the same period, showed a rate of 123 per 100,000 (Figure 73a) as compared with 71. Diphtheria rates for the two areas were 59 and 53 per 100,000.[1] Venereal disease case rates, not mortality rates, (Figure 73c), showed figures of 1,265 and 517 per 100,000. While these are only representative of a long list of illnesses, they point, in connection with other health figures not cited, to a peculiarly significant condition so far as Manhattan is concerned.

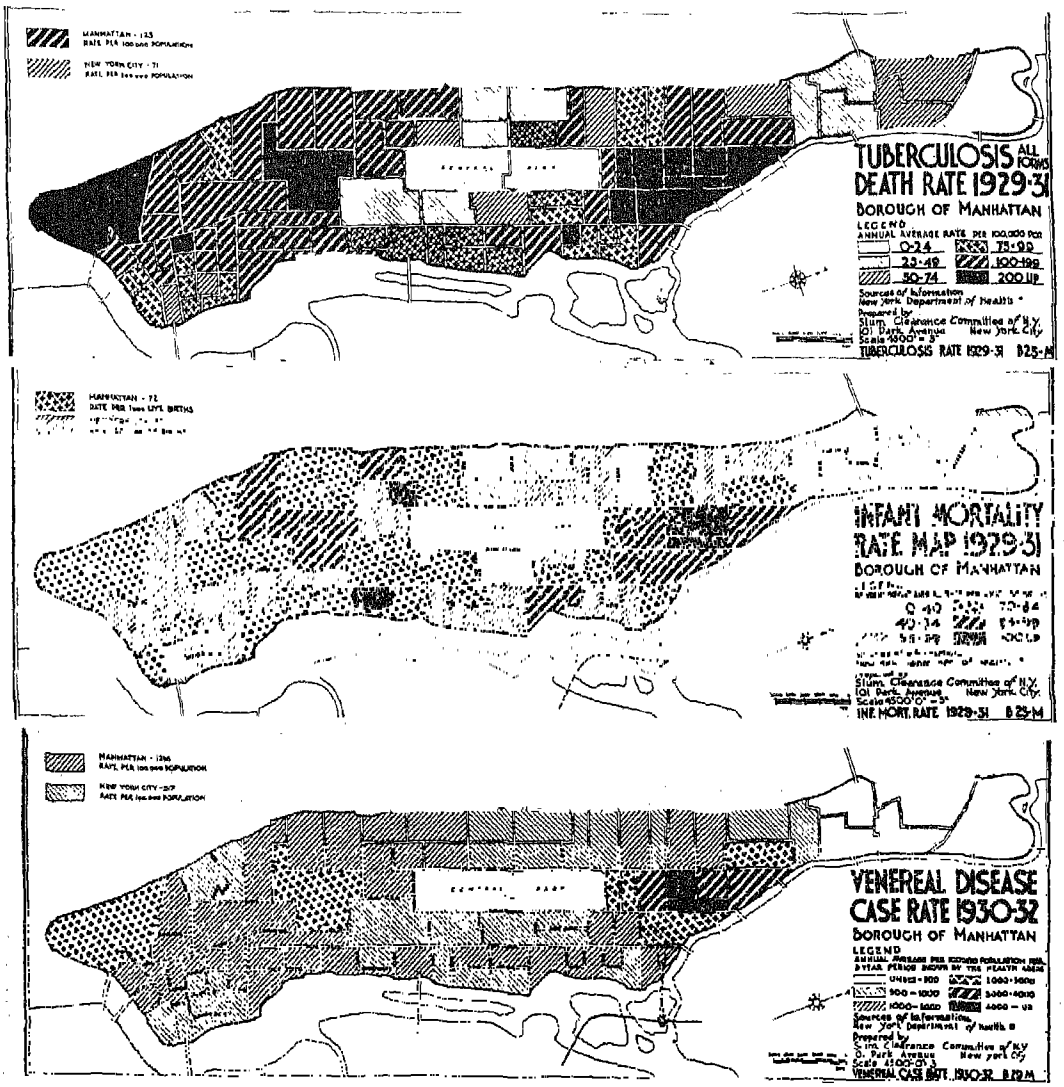
Still preferring to exercise caution in interpreting these figures, we ask whether, Manhattan being a rather large area in itself, there are not figures for smaller divisions both in that borough and elsewhere that will permit further analysis. We learn that there is in existence a complete system by which the city is divided into 370 Health Center Districts, which are in turn subdivided into nearly 4,000 Health Areas, and that comparisons for Manhattan are possible back to 1916.

Figure 74a, b, c, shows that within New York City there exists a wide variation in tuberculosis death rates, infant mortality, and venereal disease case rates, between different Health Center Districts. Even these districts conceal within themselves further variations that enable the observer to track down the location of the worst spots. Figures 73 and 75 to 77 indicate where these exist for Manhattan and Brooklyn. Maximum tuberculosis death rates of 245 and 104 per 100,000 furnish ample justification for the intensive Health Center work that is brought to bear constantly to improve conditions. The situation with respect to venereal disease will be evident in Figures 73c, 74c, and 77.

There are certain facts about the recording of health statistics that need to be known in any critical survey of improvement in conditions. For instance, prior to 1913 cases were not traced back and charged to the address of the patient when a death occurred in a hospital. As a result, the rate for pulmonary tuberculosis showed an astonishing figure in the Bronx, although that area probably had better conditions of housing and living than some other areas. The explanation presumably lies in the existence of a number of hospitals and sanitoria in the Bronx, a circumstance that would naturally result in the recording of a great many cases not originating in the borough.

1. *Maps and Charts, Prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee of New York, 1933–34.*

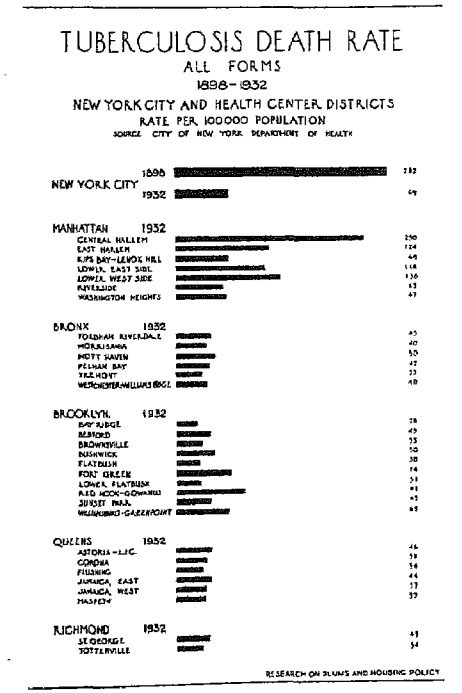
FIG. 73


TUBERCULOSIS ALL FORMS
DEATH RATE 1929-31
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
LEGEND
0-24
25-49
50-74
75-99
100-199
200 UP
Sources of Information
New York Department of Health
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
Scale 4000' = 1"
TUBERCULOSIS RATE 1929-31 B25-M
INFANT MORTALITY
RATE MAP 1929-31
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
INF. MORT. RATE 1929-31 B25-M
VENEREAL DISEASE
CASE RATE 1930-32
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
LEGEND
Sources of Information
New York Department of Health
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
VENEREAL CASE RATE 1930-32 B29-M

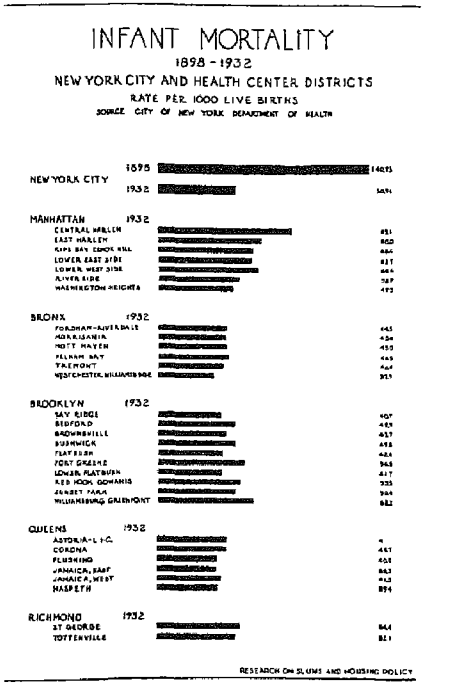
a

b

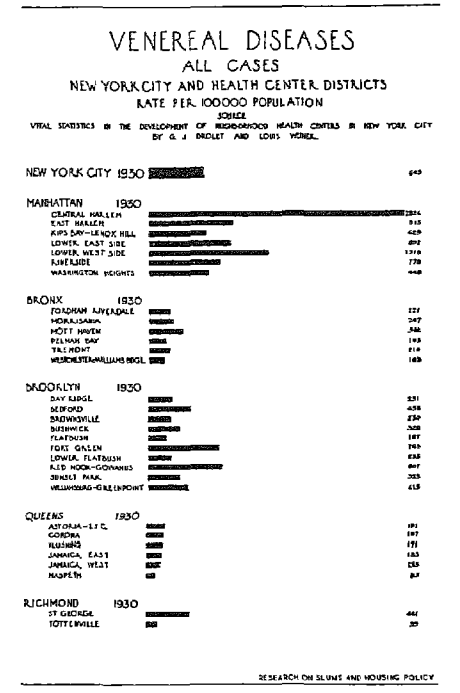
c


TUBERCULOSIS DEATH RATE
ALL FORMS
1898-1932
NEW YORK CITY AND HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS
RATE PER 100000 POPULATION
SOURCE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NEW YORK CITY 1898 1932
MANHATTAN 1932
CENTRAL HARLEM
EAST HARLEM
KIPS BAY-LENOX HILL
LOWER, EAST SIDE
LOWER, WEST SIDE
RIVERSIDE
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
BRONX 1932
FORDHAM-RIVERDALE
MORRISANIA
MOTT HAVEN
PELHAM BAY
TREMONT
WESTCHESTER-WILLIAMS BRGE
BROOKLYN 1932
BAY RIDGE
BEDFORD
BROWNSVILLE
BUSHWICK
FLATBUSH
FORT GREEN
LOWER, FLATBUSH
RED HOOK-GOWANUS
SUNSET PARK
WILLIAMSBURG-GREENPOINT
QUEENS 1932
ASTORIA-L.I.C.
CORONA
FLUSHING
JAMAICA, EAST
JAMAICA, WEST
RICHMOND 1932
ST GEORGE
TOTTENVILLE
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

a


INFANT MORTALITY
1898-1932
NEW YORK CITY AND HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS
RATE PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS
SOURCE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NEW YORK CITY 1898 1932
MANHATTAN 1932
CENTRAL HARLEM
EAST HARLEM
KIPS BAY-LENOX HILL
LOWER EAST SIDE
LOWER WEST SIDE
RIVER SIDE
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
BRONX 1932
FORDHAM-RIVERDALE
MORRISANIA
MOTT HAVEN
PELHAM BAY
TREMONT
WESTCHESTER-WILLIAMS BGE
BROOKLYN 1932
BAY RIDGE
BEDFORD
BROWNSVILLE
BUSHWICK
FLATBUSH
FORT GREENE
LOWER FLATBUSH
RED HOOK-GOWANUS
SUNSET PARK
WILLIAMSBURG-GREENPOINT
QUEENS 1932
ASTORIA-L.I.C.
CORONA
FLUSHING
JAMAICA, EAST
JAMAICA, WEST
HASPETH
RICHMOND 1932
ST GEORGE
TOTTENVILLE
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

b


VENEREAL DISEASES
ALL CASES
NEW YORK CITY AND HEALTH CENTER DISTRICTS
RATE PER 100000 POPULATION
SOURCE
VITAL STATISTICS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTERS IN NEW YORK CITY
BY C. J. DRIOLET AND LOUIS WIRTH.
NEW YORK CITY 1930
MANHATTAN 1930
CENTRAL HARLEM
EAST HARLEM
KIPS BAY-LENOX HILL
LOWER, EAST SIDE
LOWER, WEST SIDE
RIVERSIDE
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS
BRONX 1930
FORDHAM-RIVERDALE
MORRISANIA
MOTT HAVEN
PELHAM BAY
TREMONT
WESTCHESTER-WILLIAMS BGE
BROOKLYN 1930
BAY RIDGE
BEDFORD
BROWNSVILLE
BUSHWICK
FLATBUSH
FORT GREEN
LOWER, FLATBUSH
RED HOOK-GOWANUS
SUNSET PARK
WILLIAMSBURG-GREENPOINT
QUEENS 1930
ASTORIA-L.I.C.
CORONA
FLUSHING
JAMAICA, EAST
JAMAICA, WEST
HASPETH
RICHMOND 1930
ST GEORGE
TOTTENVILLE
RESEARCH ON SLUMS AND HOUSING POLICY

c

FIG. 74

FIG. 75

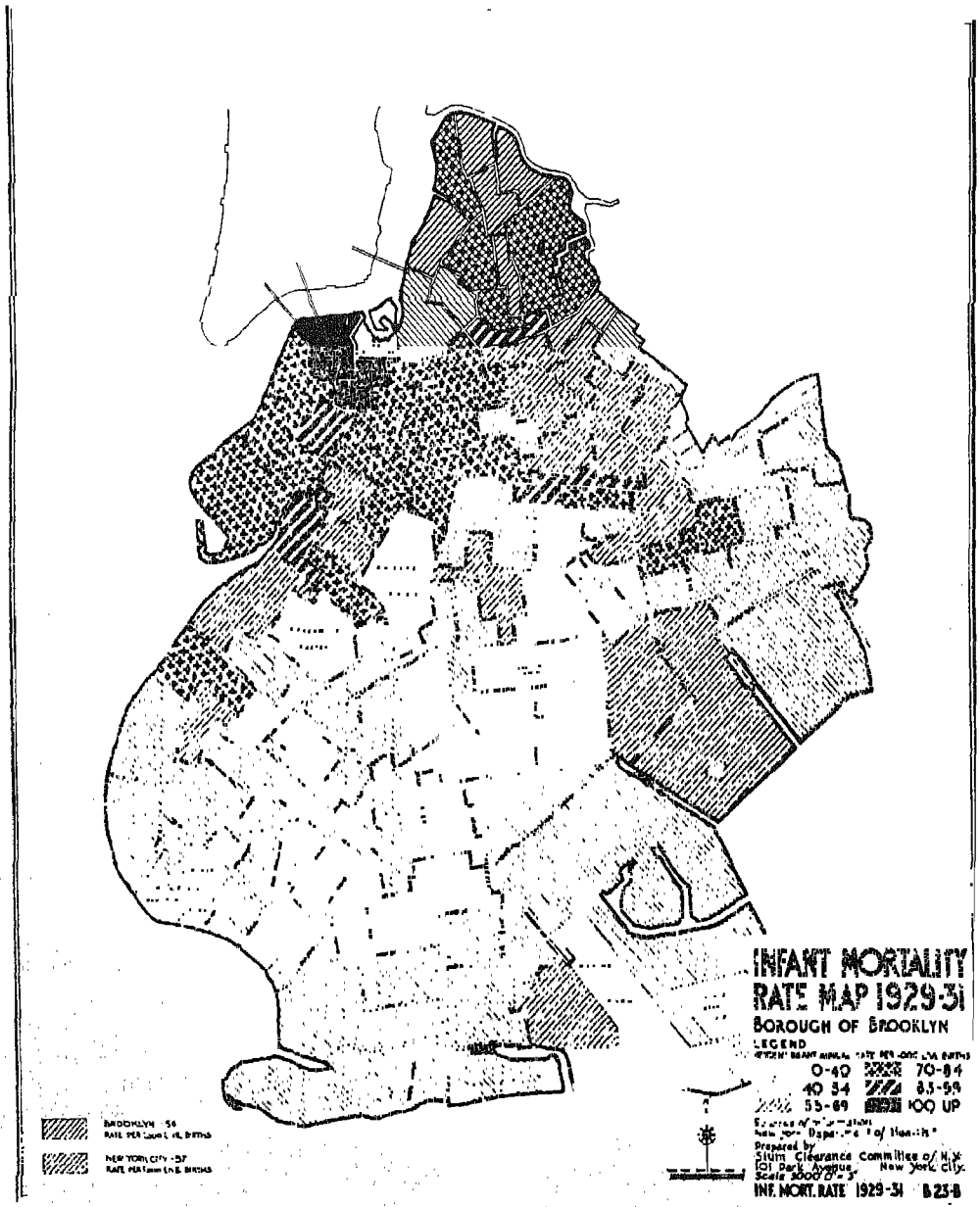

INFANT MORTALITY
RATE MAP 1929-31
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
LEGEND
0-40
40-54
55-69
70-84
85-99
100 UP
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
Scale 3000 0" 3"
INF. MORT. RATE 1929-31 B 23-8

FIG. 7(

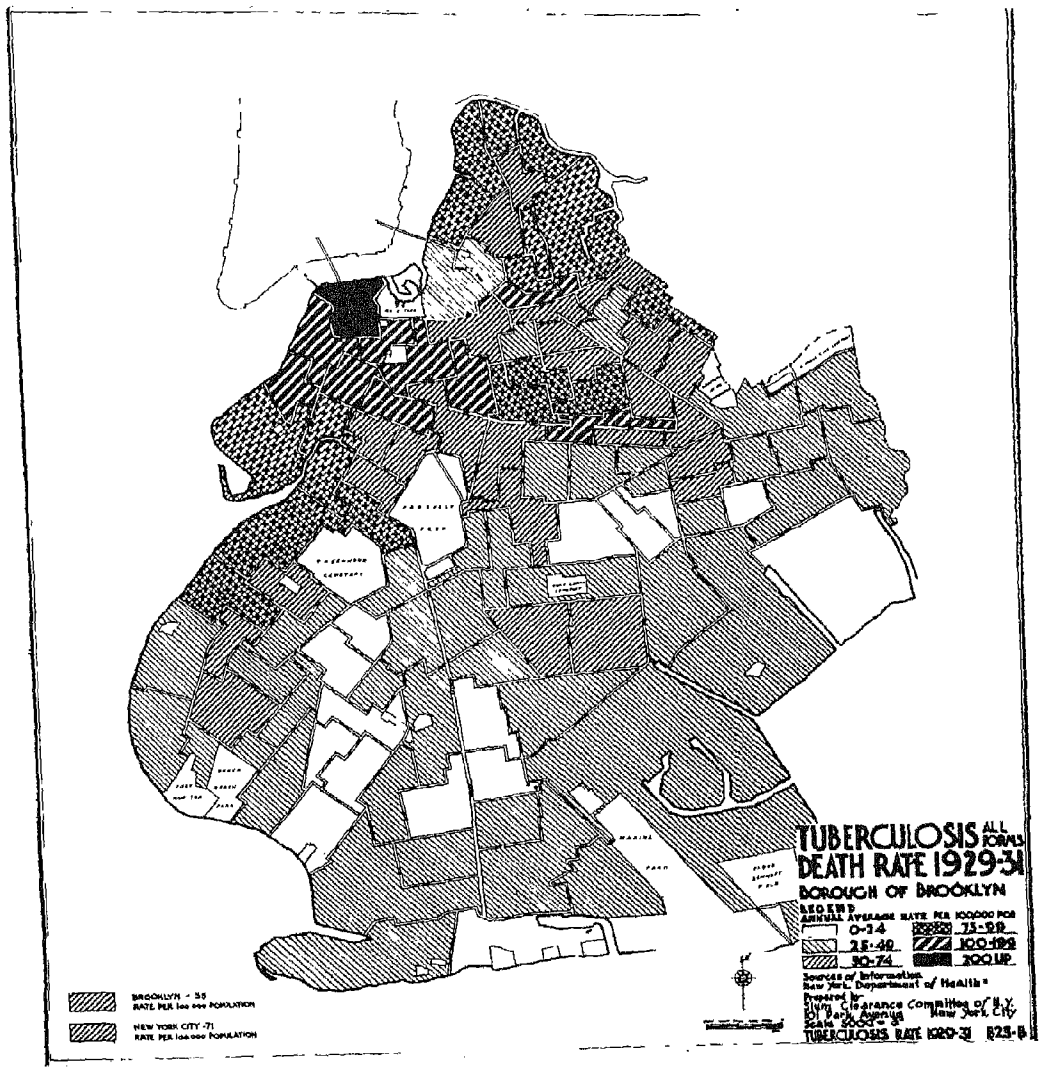
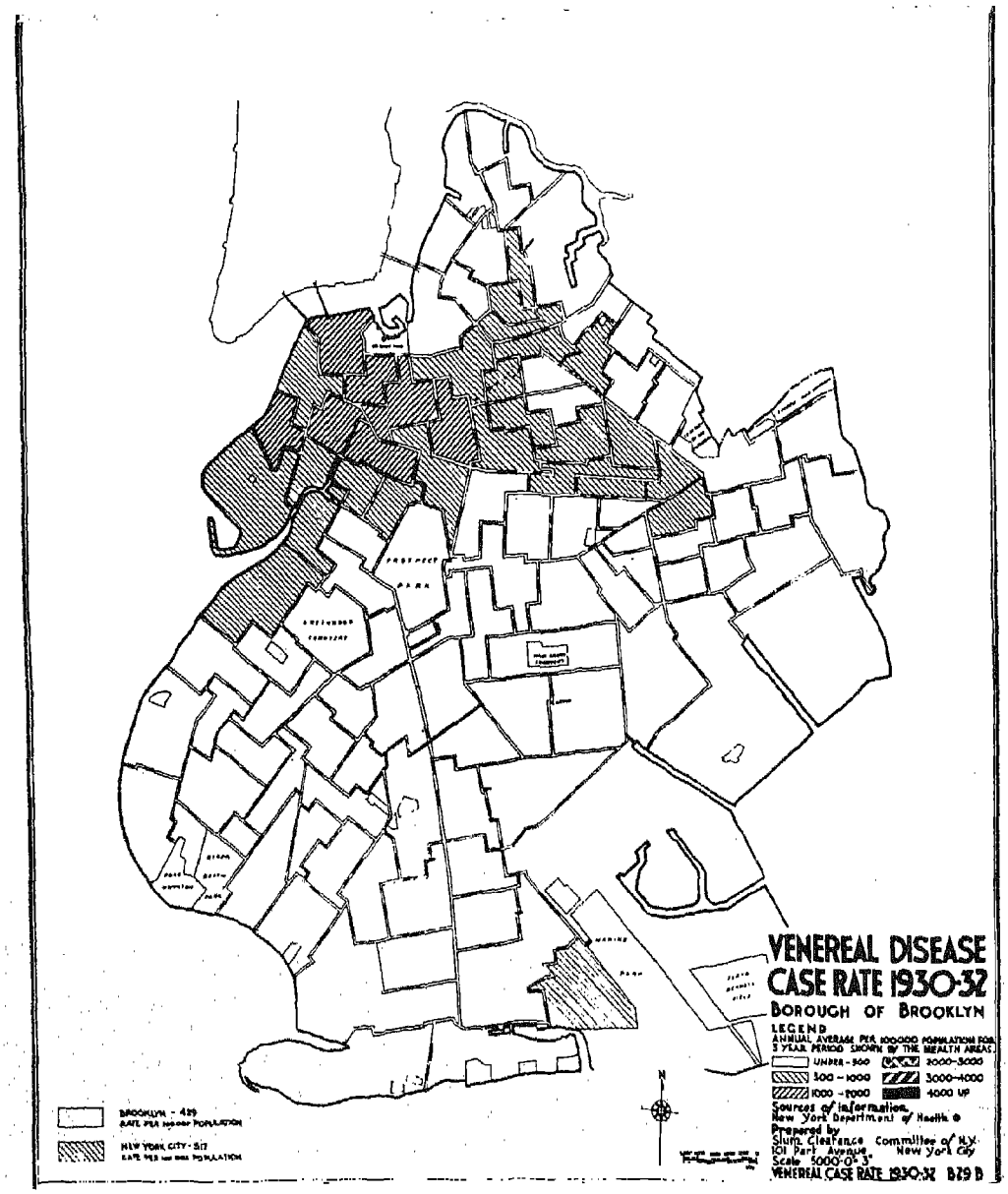

TUBERCULOSIS ALL FORMS
DEATH RATE 1929-31
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
ACCORD
ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE PER 100,000 POP
0-24
25-49
50-74
75-99
100-199
200 UP
Sources of Information
New York Department of Health
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
Scale
TUBERCULOSIS RATE 1929-31
BROOKLYN - 55
RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION
NEW YORK CITY -71
RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION

FIG. 77


VENEREAL DISEASE
CASE RATE 1930-32
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
LEGEND
ANNUAL AVERAGE PER 100000 POPULATION FOR 3 YEAR PERIOD SHOWN BY THE HEALTH AREAS
UNDER - 500
500 - 1000
1000 - 2000
2000-3000
3000-4000
4000 UP
Sources of information
New York Department of Health
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
Scale 5000'-0" 1"
VENEREAL CASE RATE 1930-32 B29 B
BROOKLYN - 439
NEW YORK CITY - 517
N

There are other conditions that require watching if a too hasty interpretation is not to be placed on the figures. Certain districts are the abodes of seafaring men and persons of other occupations particularly susceptible to tuberculosis and pneumonia. Others contain missions and cheap lodging houses to which elderly men with constitutions weakened by misfortune naturally gravitate. To jump to the conclusion that such areas show a black record because of bad housing is to employ a naive approach.

Nevertheless, the Committee on Neighborhood Health Development, which knows local conditions intimately and compiles its statistics with great thoroughness, should receive close attention when it says:

> In general, the more favorable conditions exist in sections of the city which are newly built up; in each of the boroughs, tuberculosis and infant mortality are particularly high in the older areas — in the so-called slum sections where bad housing with its implications of inadequacies of initiative, economic efficiency and stability of character creates the inevitable vicious circle. The findings of this study are evidence once more of the menace to public health of outworn dwellings in the older sections of the city, which should, if for no other reason than for protection of life, be replaced by new housing as a first order of business for the health and welfare of the City. This connection of disease with poor housing as was brought out startlingly in Part I, is shown conclusively in this section of the report also. As time goes on and the character of neighborhoods change, every possible effort should be made to forestall the further development of such conditions. It is generally agreed that prevention is easier than cure and that the money value created by the reduction of suffering and the prolonging of life is many times the cost. It is important, therefore, not to relax efforts in those sections which still have relatively low rates and whose health advantages should be protected and conserved.[1]

No better summaries of health conditions can be found than in these reports on infant mortality and tuberculosis.[2] While they cover but two causes of death they are representative of the care with which facts have been ascertained and recorded.

INFANT MORTALITY, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

1. Annually more than 28,000 Manhattan mothers are confined; in 1931, 2,670 babies were born in the Kips Bay-Lenox Hill District, and 5,173 in East Harlem.
2. During the three-year period 1929–1931, the East Harlem Health Center District had the highest birth rate in Manhattan, namely 24 per 1,000 population, and Riverside had the lowest birth rate, namely 11.
3. In 1929, during their first year of life, 2,288 Manhattan infants died; in 1930, 2,086, and in 1931, 1,808.

1. Department of Health, City of New York, and Committee on Neighborhood Health Development, *Infant Mortality — Tuberculosis*, Pt. II, p. 8.
2. *Ibid.*, Pts. I and II.

4. The infant mortality rate during the three years, 1929–1931, averaged 72 per 1,000 births for the Borough. However, in the Central Harlem Health Center District the rate was 97 as against 55 in Washington Heights.
5. There was marked variation in infant mortality rates within health center districts. For example in the Kips Bay–Lenox Hill district, Health Area 36 had an infant mortality rate of 37 as against 104 in Health Area 50. Similarly, in the Washington Heights District, Health Area three had a rate of 28 per 1,000 births as against a rate of 79 in Health Area 7.
6. Although Negroes constitute 12 percent of the population of the Borough, 16 percent of the births and 23 percent of the infant deaths were among Negroes. The white infant mortality rate was 67 per 1,000 births; the colored rate was 98.
7. *Thirty-four health areas had a rate above the Borough average.* Ten of these were in the Lower West Side District, eight in Central Harlem, and six in the Kips Bay–Lenox Hill District.
8. Three health areas had an infant mortality rate below 40 per 1,000 births. Health Area 34 in the Riverside District had a rate of 39; Area 36 in the Kips Bay–Lenox Hill, a rate of 37; and Area 3 in Washington Heights, a rate of 28.
9. *One hundred and thirty-seven babies' lives would have been saved annually* if no area had had a death rate for preventable diseases above the average for the borough.

TUBERCULOSIS, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

1. More than 5,000 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are reported annually in the Borough of Manhattan.
2. During the three-year period, 1929–1931, an average of 286 cases per 100,000 population were reported annually. In Central Harlem 478 new cases per 100,000 were reported yearly; in Kips Bay-Lenox Hill, 192.
3. In sixteen health areas the pulmonary tuberculosis new case rate was more than 400. Eight of these areas were in Central Harlem, and five on the Lower East Side. The highest rate, 823 per 100,000 population, was in Area 77 in the Lower West Side District.
4. Thirteen health areas in Manhattan had a new case rate below the City average of 171. Five of these were in the Washington Heights District. The lowest rate, 98 per 100,000 population, was in Health Area 31 in the Riverside District.
5. In 1929 tuberculosis caused 2,277 deaths in the Borough; in 1930, 2,267 deaths, and in 1931, 2,236.
6. The death rate averaged 122 per 100,000 population during the three years, 1929–1930 and 1931 for the Borough as a whole. The Central Harlem Health Center District had the highest rate, namely, 245; Riverside and Washington Heights each had a rate of 70, the lowest for the Borough.
7. In twenty health areas more than 150 people out of every 100,000 died annually from tuberculosis. Eight of these areas were in Central Harlem; five were on the Lower West side. Area 77 on the Lower West Side had a tuberculosis death rate of 345; Area 13 in Central Harlem had a rate of 311.

8. Most, but not all of the areas with high tuberculosis death rates, had a large colored population with extremely high tuberculosis rates.
9. Sixteen health areas had tuberculosis death rates below the City average of 73. Seven of these were in Washington Heights and five in Riverside.

INFANT MORTALITY, BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

1. More than 47,000 babies are born to residents of Brooklyn annually. In 1931, Flatbush was the health center district with the largest number of births, namely 6,208 and Red Hook–Gowanus was the district having the smallest number, namely, 3,281.
2. During the three-year period, 1929–1931, there were no very marked differences between the birth rates of the various health center districts in Brooklyn. Red Hook–Gowanus and Williamsburg–Greenpoint each had a birth rate of 20 per 1,000 population; Sunset Park, Fort Greene, Lower Flatbush and Bay Ridge each had a rate of 19; and Bushwick, Brownsville, Flatbush and Bedford, a rate of 18.
3. In 1929, 2,720 Brooklyn babies died before their first birthday, in 1930, 2,716 babies died and in 1931, 2,501.
4. During the three-year period, 1929–1931, 56 babies died out of every thousand born. The infant mortality rates for the different health center districts varied from 79 per 1,000 births in Fort Greene and 76 in Red Hook-Gowanus to 41 in Flatbush.
5. There was marked variation in infant mortality rates within health center districts. For example, in the Bedford District, Health Area 50 had an infant mortality rate of 30 as against 78 in Health Area 36. Similarly, in the Sunset Park District, Health Area 68 had a rate of 35 per 1,000 births as against a rate of 72 in Health Area 65.
6. Negroes form less than three percent of the population of Brooklyn. Four percent of the births were among Negroes and seven percent of the infant deaths during the the three-year period, 1929–1931. The Negro infant mortality rate was 103 per 1,000 births as compared with a white rate of 54.
7. *Forty-eight of the Brooklyn health areas had an infant mortality rate higher than the borough average.* Nine of these were in the Fort Greene District, nine in Williamsburg–Greenpoint, and eight in the Red Hook–Gowanus section. The highest rate, 122 per 1,000 births, was in the Fort Greene District.
8. Twelve Brooklyn health areas had an infant mortality rate below 40. Area 84 in the Bay Ridge District had a rate of 29.
9. *Two hundred and twelve more Brooklyn babies would have lived annually* if no area had had a rate above the Borough average for preventable causes such as respiratory and other infectious diseases, diarrhoeal, and other gastro-intestinal disturbances.

TUBERCULOSIS, BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

1. Over 3,000 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are reported annually in the Borough of Brooklyn.
2. The pulmonary tuberculosis new case registration rate averaged 136 per 100,000 population for the Borough during the three years 1929, 1930 and 1931. Of the health center districts Red Hook-Gowanus had the highest rate, namely 239. The lowest rate, 95 per 100,000, was in Lower Flatbush.

3. In eleven health areas more than 200 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis per 100,000 population were reported annually. Area 10 in the Fort Greene District led with a rate of 509. Six of the eleven high areas were in Red Hook-Gowanus; four were in Fort Greene, and one in Sunset Park.
4. In twenty-eight health areas, the new case registration rate was below 100. Seven were in Flatbush, and six in Lower Flatbush.
5. Tuberculosis caused 1,473 deaths in Brooklyn in 1929; 1,415 deaths in 1930, and 1,328 deaths in 1931.
6. Tuberculosis deaths averaged 55 per 100,000 population in Brooklyn during the three-year period, 1929–1931.
7. The tuberculosis death rate for the individual health center districts varied from 104 in the Red Hook-Gowanus District to 30 in Lower Flatbush. Four of the ten health center districts in Brooklyn had tuberculosis death rates below 40. Three had rates above 90.
8. Twenty-six Brooklyn health areas had tuberculosis mortality rates of 75 per 100,000 population or more. Of these, 7 were in the Red Hook–Gowanus District and 7 in Williamsburg-Greenpoint. The highest death rate, 246 per 100,000 population, was in health area 10 in the Fort Greene District.
9. In 22 health areas the tuberculosis death rate was below 30. Five were in Flatbush, and 5 in Lower Flatbush. The lowest rate, 15 per 100,000, was in Health Area 58.20 in the Brownsville District. Areas 83 in the Bay Ridge District, 85.10 in Lower Flatbush, and 58.10 in Brownsville each had a rate of 16.

INFANT MORTALITY, BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

1. More than 22,000 babies were born to residents of the Bronx annually during the three-year period, 1929–1931 — a rate of 17 births per 1,000 population.
2. The number of births was largest in the western and southern parts of the borough where in each of three health center districts — Mott Haven, Morrisania and Tremont — well over 4,000 occurred each year. Residents of Morrisania alone gave birth to 4,657 babies annually; in contrast, residents of the Pelham Bay District, the [illegible] section of the the Bronx at present, gave birth to only 1,852. The [illegible] for Pelham Bay was 18 per 1,000 population as against 19 for Mott Haven and 16 for Morrisania and Tremont.
3. Of the 22,000 infants born each year in the borough, 1,027 died before their first birthday, or 47 of every 1,000. Although by boroughs, this was the lowest infant mortality rate in the City, some parts of the Bronx, particularly the older section in the south, obviously need more intensive infant welfare work.
4. Considering health center districts, the largest number of infant deaths annually, namely [illegible] the highest infant mortality rate, 57 per 1,000 live births, occurred in the [illegible] District, the section south of 161 Street; babies of the Williamsbridge-Westchester District, on the other hand, died at the rate of 42 per 1,000 births.
5. The variation in the infant mortality rate of individual health areas was even more marked than that of health center districts, ranging from 33 per 1,000 births in three health areas — Health Areas 5, 30 and 43 — to 80 in Health Area 46.

6. Twenty-one of the health areas had infant mortality rates above the borough average of 47; more than a third of these were in the Mott Haven Health Center District.
7. Two-thirds of the 1,027 infant deaths in the Bronx were due to congenital malformations, premature birth and birth injuries; the rest were due, for the most part to respiratory and digestive causes or infectious diseases. The mortality rate for the first group of causes of death was 28 per 1,000 births and for the second, 19.
8. A possible saving of 60 infant lives annually would result if deaths from the respiratory-digestive group of causes of infant mortality in the individual health areas were reduced to the present borough rate; more than half of this saving could be made in the Mott Haven Health Center District.

TUBERCULOSIS, BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

1. Number of new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis registered:
   (*a*) Approximately 1,700 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were reported annually in the Bronx during the three-year period, 1929–1931 — a total for the three years of more than 5,000 new cases.
   (*b*) These new pulmonary cases tended to be concentrated in the southern and central part of the borough, particularly along the Third Avenue Elevated Line. The Morrisania Health Center District reported the largest number of cases, nearly 420 each year; the Mott Haven District was a close second, reporting an annual average of 370 new cases. Pelham Bay, on the other hand, a district with a relatively small population, reported only 140 cases.
   (*c*) In 13 of the 47 health areas into which the borough is subdivided 40 or more new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were reported each year. Five of these areas — 40, 41, 44, 46 and 47 — were in the Mott Haven Health Center District south of 161st Street and west of Prospect Avenue, and five — Health Areas 21, 26, 27, 29 and 35 — were in Morrisania, the district adjoining Mott Haven on the north.
2. Pulmonary Tuberculosis Registration Rate:
   (*a*) For the borough as a whole, new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were registered at the rate of 135 per 100,000 population annually during the three-year period, 1929–1931.
   (*b*) Mott Haven, with an average of 160 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis annually for each 100,000 population, had the highest rate of any of the Bronx health center districts; Morrisania was second with a rate of 144.
   (*c*) In ten of the health areas the annual average rate for pulmonary cases reported exceeded 175 per 100,000 population. (The city rate for pulmonary cases was 173.) Four of the health areas — 40, 41, 44 and 46 — were in the Mott Haven District where the rates ranged from 177 in Health Area 40 and 41 to 232 in Health Area 46.
3. Number of Deaths from Tuberculosis:
   (*a*) There were 666 deaths annually of residents of the Bronx during the three-year period, 1929–1931, due to tuberculosis — a total of nearly 2,000 lives were lost in these three years.

(*b*) Tuberculosis deaths as well as cases were most numerous in the Mott Haven and Morrisania Health Center Districts, the first with 162 and the second 140 residents dying annually.

(*c*) In eight of the health areas there were more than 15 deaths from tuberculosis annually, the number of deaths rising as high as 35 in Health Area 16 of the Morrisania Health Center District.

4. Tuberculosis Mortality Rate:

(*a*) The annual average tuberculosis mortality rate for the entire Borough of the Bronx was 55 per 100,000 population in 1929, 53 in 1930 and 48 in 1931 or 53 during the three-year period.

(*b*) By health center districts, Mott Haven had the highest tuberculosis death rate, namely 70 per 100,000 population; Tremont, on the other hand, had the lowest rate — 43.

(*c*) Eleven health areas had a tuberculosis mortality rate of 75 or more per 100,000 population; nearly half of these were in the Mott Haven District where the rate for one of the health areas — 46, in the southern part — reached the peak of 144 deaths per 100,000 population.

INFANT MORTALITY, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

1. In Queens, nearly 18,000 babies were born annually during the three-year period, 1929–1931 — a birth rate of 16.6 per 1,000 residents.
2. An average of 866 of the 18,000 babies born each year died when less than one year of age, or at the rate of 48 per 1,000 live births. Nearly four per cent of the deaths under one year were among Negroes, although colored births formed only two per cent of total births.
3. Considering health center districts, the highest infant mortality occurred in Astoria-Long Island City, the oldest section in the Borough, where an average of 218 babies died each year — at the rate of 52 per 1,000 births; Jamaica East was second with a rate of 50. In the latter district five per cent of the births and 10 per cent of the infant deaths were among Negroes.
4. Maspeth Health Center District, which also covers Forest Hills and Kew Gardens, had the lowest infant mortality rate, namely 43 per 1,000 births, though Health Area 17, a low lying section, had a rate of 67.
5. In fourteen of the health areas the infant mortality rate was above the borough average of 48 per 1,000 births. The highest, 69 per 1,000 births, was in Health Area 34 in the Jamaica East District between Merrick and Sutphin Boulevards south of Atlantic Avenue. Four of the high rate areas — 1, 4, 5, and 7 — (practically the entire section from the River to Hazen Street north of Northern Boulevard) were in the Astoria-Long Island City District.
6. Nearly 60 per cent of the 866 infant deaths annually were due to congenital malformations, premature birth and birth injuries; the rest were due, for the most part, to respiratory and digestive causes or infectious diseases. The mortality rate for the the first group was 28 per 1,000 births and for the second, 20.

7. During three years alone 141 infant lives might have been saved if mortality from the respiratory-digestive group of causes in the individual health areas had been kept to the level of the borough average.

TUBERCULOSIS, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

1. Number of New Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis registered:
   (*a*) In Queens, with a population of 1,079,129, an average of nearly 1,200 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were reported annually during the three years 1929–1931.
   (*b*) The Astoria-Long Island City Health Center District reported the largest number of new pulmonary cases — 233 or nearly 20 per cent of the cases in the borough; the smallest number — 132 — was reported from the Flushing District.
   (*c*) The number of cases in the individual health areas into which the health center districts are further subdivided ranged from four to 58 annually. In the Astoria-Long Island City District, Areas 1.10 and 7 each reported 58 as compared with four cases from Area 8 in the same district but south of the Long Island Railroad between 30th and 43rd Streets. In the Corona Health Center District 58 cases were reported from Area 15, the section south of the Long Island Railroad between Junction Boulevard and the Flushing River, and only four from Health Area 0.20 in the northwestern part of the district.
2. Pulmonary Tuberculosis Registration Rate:
   (*a*) The registration of new pulmonary cases in the Borough as a whole was at the rate of 110 per 100,000 population — the lowest of any of the boroughs. The rate for the City as a whole was 173.
   (*b*) By health center districts the tuberculosis case rate ranged from 96 per 100,000 in Jamaica West to 131 in Corona.
   (*c*) In individual health areas new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were registered at rates varying from 24 per 100,000 population as in Health Area 5 (the section of the Astoria-Long Island City District between 38th and 49th Streets and Astoria and Northern Boulevards) to 334 in Health Area 15 (the section of the Corona Health Center District bounded by Flushing Bay and River, the Long Island Railroad, Junction and Northern Boulevards). In 10 health areas the registration of new cases was in excess of 175 per 100,000 population. Three were in the Astoria-Long Island City District taking in the section west of Hazen Street north of Astoria Boulevard and west of 30th Street as far south as Broadway.
3. Number of Deaths from Tuberculosis:
   (*a*) More than 500 Queens residents died from tuberculosis each year during the three years, 1929–1931. The largest number of deaths was in the Astoria-Long Island City District where there were 115 annually; Jamaica West, where 109 residents died from tuberculosis, was a close second.
   (*b*) Consideration of the health area subdivisions showed seven where 17 or more deaths from tuberculosis occurred annually; three of these were in the Astoria-

Long Island City Health Center District where in Health Area 9 deaths rose to 34 annually.

4. Tuberculosis Mortality Rate:
   (*a*) The annual average tuberculosis mortality rate for the entire Borough of Queens was 47 annually, the lowest of all of the boroughs. The rate for the Greater City was 71.
   (*b*) For the health center districts within the Borough the tuberculosis death rate ranged from 43 in Maspeth to 55 in Astoria-Long Island City.
   (*c*) Nine health areas showed a tuberculosis mortality rate in excess of 60 per 100,000 population. The highest rate, 86 per 100,000 population was in health area 12 in the Flushing District; three of the high rate areas, 1.10, 1.20 and 9 were in the Astoria-Long Island City Health Center District.

INFANT MORTALITY, BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

1. On Staten Island an average of 2,734 babies were born annually during the three-year period, 1929-1931 — 2,134 in the St. George Division and 600 in the Tottenville Division.
2. Of the 2,734 babies born, an average of 155 died each year, 121 in the St. George Division and 34 in the Tottenville Division. But although the number of births and infant deaths in St. George far outnumbered those in Tottenville the rate of mortality was practically the same in each, namely 57 per 1,000 births.
3. In the health area subdivisions infant mortality rates ranged from 34 per 1,000 births in Health Area 6 to 67 per 1,000 in Health Area 3. Both of these health areas are in the St. George Division.
4. Half of the health areas on Staten Island had infant mortality rates above the borough average and all but one of these were in the St. George Division.

TUBERCULOSIS, BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

1. Number of New Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis Registered:
   (*a*) Slightly more than 200 new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were reported annually among the residents of Staten Island during the three-year period, 1929-1931.
   (*b*) Cases of pulmonary tuberculosis tended to be concentrated in the northern part of the borough — 70 per cent were registered in the St. George Division.
   (*c*) The health area with the largest registration was number 5 with an average of 45 new pulmonary cases annually.
2. Pulmonary Tuberculosis Registration Rate:
   (*a*) The borough registration rate for pulmonary tuberculosis cases was 129 per 100,000 population, next to the lowest of the five boroughs in the City.
   (*b*) The St. George Division had a registration rate of 119 new pulmonary cases per 100,000 population — this was 30 points higher than the rate for the Tottenville Division.
   (*c*) Of the individual health areas, number 5, which is north of Clove Road between Victory Boulevard and Vanderbilt Avenue, had the highest pulmonary case

registration rate -- 306 per 100,000 population, while Health Area 7, adjoining it on the south east, had a rate of 58.

3. Number of Deaths from Tuberculosis:
   (*a*) The number of deaths from tuberculosis on Staten Island averaged 90 for the three-year period 1929–1931.
   (*b*) As might be expected, the number of tuberculosis deaths was greatest in the northern part of the St. George Division where the largest number of cases were reported.
   (*c*) In Health Area 4 of the St. George Division, where the population numbered 23,817, 17 residents died annually from tuberculosis while in Health Area 9 of the Tottenville Division, where the population was nearly as large, 21,784, there were only half as many deaths.
4. Tuberculosis Mortality Rates:
   (*a*) The tuberculosis death rate for the Borough of Richmond for the three-year period 1929–1931 was 57 per 100,000 population — only Manhattan was higher.
   (*b*) The Saint George Division had a tuberculosis mortality rate of 63 per 100,000 population for the three-year period, 1929-1931 - - twenty-one points higher than the rate for the Tottenville Division where the rate was 42 and six points above the Borough rate.
   (*c*) Health Area 6 with one of the lowest rates for pulmonary cases in the Borough had the highest tuberculosis mortality rate, namely, 88 for the three-year period.

While many of the communicable diseases have been driven into a few last strongholds and are nearly obliterated, venereal disease is still present at rates which make some other disease rates appear insignificant.[1]

Analysis of the foregoing data reveals the highest crude death rate for Manhattan, and rates that are relatively low in the Bronx and Queens; but the rate in the most rural of all boroughs, Richmond, is higher than that of any other borough, save Manhattan, and Brooklyn ranks third. The highest rates thus fall in the most congested and the least congested boroughs of the city. Crude death rates hence fail to reveal anything specific with regard to the relation between housing and density. One would suspect, however, a possibility that Richmond's high rate is due to more primitive sanitation, or to factors relating to population composition; and that Manhattan's rate is associated either with composition or density of population, or more specifically with the many-storied structures in which people live. Nothing, however, is proved for our purpose by the crude death rates.

The tuberculosis death rate is seen, in Figure 74a, to be highest in that part of Manhattan which is known as Central Harlem. The Lower West Side has the

1. Figures 73c and 77 show the distribution in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

next highest rate, and following it come East Harlem, and the Lower East Side. The only comparable district outside of Manhattan is the Red Hook-Gowanus district of Brooklyn. A common characteristic of the areas specified is that they are regions of old-law housing, of poor population, with a considerable sprinkling, even outside of the Central Harlem district, of Negroes and Porto Ricans, among whom the tuberculosis death rate is exceedingly high.

About two years ago we called attention to the very high tuberculosis death rates among the Porto Rican population in this city. Whereas this death rate was less than 70 per 100,000 in the city as a whole, among the Porto Rican group it was 461 per 100,000. According to the census of 1930 the total number of persons resident in New York and born in Porto Rico was very nearly 45,000, of which 35,000 were white and 10,000 colored. While the entire group constitutes only 0.6 per cent of the city's population, its concentration in two definite areas in the city results in definite health problems for these areas.

In Manhattan the Porto Ricans are found chiefly in the district which adjoins the northern portion of Central Park, the southern boundary being on the east side about 93rd Street, and the northern boundary about 130th Street. In Brooklyn the Porto Ricans are most numerous along the waterfront from the Navy Yard south to Gowanus Canal and extending inland to about Third Avenue. It is significant that the districts mentioned have not only the highest tuberculosis death rates, but also the highest infant mortality rates.[1]

Figure 74b shows the same districts leading in infant mortality with a very slight change in their relative order, and with an addition of two new Brooklyn districts, Williamsburg-Greenpoint and Fort Greene, and also the two districts of Richmond (Staten Island).

The venereal disease case rate in Figure 74c follows the same general distribution, with Central Harlem again displaying appalling leadership, and the Lower West Side, East Harlem, and the Lower East Side next in order of frequency. The Red Hook and Fort Greene districts again take ascendency in Brooklyn. The high incidence of these diseases among the Negro population once more largely explains the distribution. Poverty, ignorance, and neglect are distinct factors. The structure of the house has little or nothing to do with the incidence of this disease, though one should mention that the common toilet in tenements, and common toilets, baths, wash-basins, and perhaps towels, in lodging houses, are possible means of transmitting the infection.[2]

The major attempt to relate crude mortality rates to housing was made in a useful compilation by Dr. John F. J. Sykes, published in London in 1901. Through a lengthy series of charts borrowed from the researches of many nations, he showed the highest mortality rates in cities or districts with the highest density of persons to a square mile;[3] and highest zymotic, tubercular, and respiratory dis-

1. Department of Health, City of New York, *Quarterly Bulletin*, II, No. 4, 1914, p. 79.

2. See p. 394.

3. John F. J. Sykes, *Public Health and Housing*, pp. 11, 13.

ease death rates in London areas of highest density.[1] He also found, for eight principal towns of Scotland, that the death rate varied with the percentage of population living in dwellings of one room, which inevitably meant crowded conditions of living, but is quite as likely to mean poverty, ignorance, and malnutrition.[2] He displayed also, for Scottish cities, highest death rates from the zymotic, lung, and nervous diseases in dwellings of one or two rooms, as distinguished from those of three or more rooms.[3] A comparison of six cities showed highest mortality rates in those which had the highest percentage of overcrowding of rooms; and infant and child mortality were shown also to vary with the degree of overcrowding of rooms.[4]

More recent data, assembled for the United States Public Health Service by Rollo H. Britten,[5] are submitted below:

Sickness and Mortality in Slum Areas

The existence of excessive sickness and mortality rates in the recognized slum or overcrowded districts of large cities is an accepted fact. Evidence to this effect has been accumulating for many years, both in this country and abroad. The sharpest relation is shown for infant mortality, pulmonary tuberculosis, and perhaps pneumonia; but in certain areas many other diseases play their part, including typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, rickets, hookworm disease, etc. A few recent examples may be cited.

On the basis of 23,000 records of births in 8 cities, the United States Children's Bureau [6] found that "the infant death rate in families which lived in homes with 2 or more persons per room was 2½ times that in families which lived in homes with less than 1 person per room. The variations in mortality from gastric and intestinal and from respiratory diseases were especially marked."

In Detroit, mortality rates (1927) were determined for different geographical zones in which the average number of persons per room was available from a special census.[7] The results are summarized in the following table for three groups of such zones:

Average number of persons per room	Infant deaths per 1,000 births	Death rates per 100,000 population			Deaths from all causes (per 1,000)
		Tuberculosis	Pneumonia	Diphtheria	
0.9 or more	86	132	113	22	10.9
0.8	69	79	87	17	9.5
0.7 or less	62	52	77	18	9.5

Green [8] classified census tracts in Cleveland on the basis of the equivalent monthly rental, which, like persons per room, will serve as a rough index of areas which come within our con-

1. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 30. For later data, see *Housing and the Public Health*, by John Robertson, M.D., published in 1919 in English Public Health Series, especially pp. 14 and 15.
5. "The Relation Between Housing and Health," *Public Health Reports*, vol. 49, no. 44, November 2, 1934.
6. Robert Morse Woodbury, *Causal Factors in Infant Mortality. A Statistical Study Based on Investigations in Eight Cities.* U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 142, p. 7.
7. *City Health.* Report of Detroit Health Department for July–August, 1929.
8. Howard Whipple Green, *Population Characteristics, by Census Tracts, Cleveland, Ohio, 1930.* The Plain Dealer Publishing Co., 1931.

ception of slums. After adjusting the 1930 death rate for age and sex, he found that it varied "from 15 per 1,000 population in the lowest of the 12 areas to 7.2 per 1,000 population in the highest economic area." The lowest economic area in this comparison covered average rental, or equivalent, of less than $20 per month; the highest $75 or more. Most of the excess mortality was found in areas with an average rental of less than $40 per month. The death rate from tuberculosis (ages 25–44) varied from 215 per 100,000 population in the lowest of these areas to 34 in the highest. The infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births) was 110 in the area with an average rental of less than $15 and decreased to 26 in the areas with an average rental of $100 or more.[1] If the deaths in the first month of life are excluded — these exhibited no great relation to economic status — an even more striking correspondence is shown, the respective rates being 65 and 10 (*b*).

(*b*) The rapid decrease, even for relatively low rentals, is seen in the following table:

INFANT MORTALITY (1928) EXCLUDING FIRST MONTH
(per 1,000 births)

Equivalent monthly rental (average)	
Under $15	65
$15 to $20	43
20 to 25	45
25 to 30	31
30 to 35	36
35 to 40	18
40 to 45	17

A large number of complicating factors enter into the interpretation of these figures. The Cleveland study referred to indicated an association between the average equivalent rental in given census tracts and a large number of factors, many of which enter into the determination of the sickness or death rates. Among these factors are density of population, race, tenement flats, proportion renting dwellings, age distribution, marital condition, unemployment, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency, birth rate. The populations are unlike also in many other particulars. Accordingly, although a social fact of great importance, general statistics are ambiguous from the point of view of expressing the effect of slum areas or of bad housing *per se*.

PROOF THAT SOME OF EXCESS IS DUE TO SUBSTANDARD HOUSING

Certain European data are more to the point, because they offer a comparison of the mortality in slum areas with that in municipal houses constructed for the same type of population. The following recent comparison is available for Liverpool (average 1923–29).[2]

	Population	Deaths from all causes per 1,000 population	Deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis per 100,000	Infant mortality per 1,000 births
Entire city	872,802	13.9	123	98
Corporation tenements	14,572	18.2	164	131
A slum area (*c*)	3,436	28.4	299	171

1. Howard Whipple Green, *Infant Mortality and Economic Status. Cleveland's Five-City Area.* Cleveland Health Council, 1932.

2. A. A. Mussen, *Report on the Health of the City of Liverpool During the Year 1930*, p. 254.

(*c*) The slum area ("Gerard Street") is one for which a clearance order was issued July 3, 1932, i. e., it is one of the areas which England hopes to eliminate under its broad program for slum clearance. The corporation tenements are municipal rehousing projects in the old city area, many of long standing, with rentals (from 2*s* 6½*d* to 12*s* per week) which are comparable with those in the slum area.

The mortality rates in the slum district are evidently greatly in excess of those in the municipal houses, although the latter are definitely higher than for the city generally. These figures take on an additional significance when it is realized that the "houses in this area (slum district) are systematically visited by the sanitary staff, and where nuisances have been found to exist, the usual notices have been served upon the owners. The streets and passageways are systematically cleansed, sewers and private drains regularly flushed, and in addition baths and washhouses, infant-welfare centers and clinics have also been provided in close proximity to the area." In other words, methods falling short of demolition have failed to prevent the continuance of high death rates.

For Liverpool there is also available an example of the effect of rehousing on the same sites.[1] In this case the same type of population is under consideration, since, with few exceptions, the only tenants accepted for the new houses were persons who had been previously living on the same sites (*d*).

(*d*) The rates for the insanitary housing group cover an average of 3 years prior to demolition; those for the new dwellings, an average of 3 years after reconstruction (1916–18). Rates for the whole city are given for the latter years.

	Deaths from all causes per 1,000 population	Deaths from phthisis per 1,000 population	Infant mortality per 1,000 births
Before reconstruction	37.0	4.0	259
After reconstruction	26.6	1.9	162
Entire city	18.0	1.7	119

The comparison is somewhat weakened by the facts that it does not relate to present slum conditions and two successive periods are compared; nevertheless, the definite improvement is unmistakable (*e*).

(*e*) Mention should be made of two studies which yield a different result. The population of an "unhealthy area" in Stockton-on-Tees was moved to a self-contained municipal housing estate in 1927. Mortality and morbidity rates during the 5 succeeding years were higher than those before removal. McGonigle attributes this to the fact that the rents were higher in the new area and, therefore, less money was available for food.[2] A study of housing conditions and respiratory disease morbidity in a poor-class quarter and in a rehousing area in Glasgow gave no consistent results, the somewhat higher rates in the latter being explainable on the grounds that there was as much crowding in sleeping quarters in the new area as in the old.[3] Until a comprehensive analysis is made of the

1. E W. Hope, *Report on the Health of the City of Liverpool During the Year 1918*, p. 117.
2. Quoted in "Letter from Great Britain." *American Journal of Public Health*, July 1933, XXXIII, no. 7, p. 725.
3. C. M. Smith, *Housing Conditions and Respiratory Disease. Morbidity in a Poor-Class Quarter and in a Rehousing Area in Glasgow*. Medical Research Council Special Report Series No. 192. London. His Majesty's Stationery Office. 1934.

effect of the widespread municipal rehousing projects carried on in Europe since the war, no very definite conclusions are possible as to the immediate effect on health of transferring populations bodily to new surroundings. There is no doubt that the problem is complicated by economic considerations; the poorer groups of the population cannot increase markedly the proportion of their income going into rentals without a serious sacrifice in some other direction, and that may mean a sacrifice in health as well. Thus low rentals become one of the public-health aspects of rehousing projects.

Mortality rates are not in themselves a sufficient index of the harmful influence of bad housing. Most diseases are unrelated to housing, and even among those in which a relation is demonstrable, other conditions, such as malnutrition — which is commonly an effect of poverty, or ignorance, or both — inevitably play a larger rôle. It is probably safe to say that a well nourished person, who has enough of appropriate outdoor exercise and enough of sleep, can survive the spending of eight or ten hours of his day under average slum conditions without showing much, if any, ill effect therefrom.

In other words, the studies made in this chapter have suggested the presence of a problem but do not indicate that problem's exact nature. In order to find out if the types of housing which are customarily termed "bad" are to be correlated in any way with disease, it is necessary to examine the literature of each of the many recordable diseases to discover what rôle, if any, may be played by housing. This is attempted in the next chapter.



CHAPTER XV

HOUSING AND HEALTH

One frequently comes across the statement that slums and bad housing are the "major cause of disease, vice, and crime." Analysis of this statement will show it to be incorrect. It is possible, however, to show the relations of specific factors in housing to specific diseases.

Exaggerated statements often do harm to reform efforts because they can be disproved. Public programmes for housing are primarily to be justified under the police powers of the state and in terms of the effect of existing conditions of housing upon health, safety, morality, and the general welfare. In so far as we can isolate the factors in housing which produce or contribute to ill health, we can strengthen the case for the improvement of housing before our courts.

If one should take a list of all known diseases and study the causative factors as outlined by contemporary pathologists, one would find housing seldom mentioned. We do know, however, that man's health and happiness are influenced by his environment. In the cultivation of plants we recognize that even the most carefully selected seed will not develop into a vigorous plant unless there are right conditions of moisture, temperature, soil, fertilization, and cultivation. One may develop a more vigorous plant from poor seed which has the advantages of proper environing factors than one would get from good seed planted in the wrong soil or climate, or with insufficient or excessive moisture. The same is more or less true of human beings in their relations with environment. Good stock may be destroyed by inappropriate conditions of living, while poor stock may flourish in a favorable milieu.

We can generalize by saying that in our northern climates in the winter season shelter is necessary and that it should provide adequate protection from the elements, which means exclusion of wind and storms and reasonable control of humidity and temperature. It should be of construction so sound that it will not fall down and crush its occupants. There should be appropriate sanitation — adequate removal of filth and waste. There should be as much of sunshine and fresh air as the organism requires for wholesome development, and protection

from multitudinous injurious factors, whether defective flues, defective wiring, or pathogenic bacteria.[1]

Man, unlike the plant, is, however, peculiarly able to adjust himself to his environment and adjust his environment to himself. Man's passive adaptation is accompanied by mental adjustments which, if he is enough of a philosopher or if he has good psychic controls, make it possible for him to accept the inevitable or put up with difficult conditions temporarily upon the assumption that they can ultimately be overcome. His active adaptation leads him to improve upon his natural environment, excluding rigors of a cold winter by putting in heating devices, surmounting the darkness through artificial lighting equipment, and so on through a long list.

Men vary in their ability both to adjust to nature and to "improve upon" her. Backward races make relatively few improvements and exemplify the struggle for life in its crude form. Among slum dwellers in our cities, some overcome outrageous fortune through hard work, pertinacity, and spiritual control. Many gifted men have been born in slums and have lived their early lives in the characteristic unwholesome physical environment which the slum involves. Others succumb to the struggle with the adverse conditions which the slum entails. Social workers of the past generation used to designate as the "slum disease" an apathy which seems to be engendered by conditions of slum living. In other individuals a chronic resentment or grudge against society was attributed to what, on the surface at least, were similar conditions — thus different adjustments have been made as a result of the interaction between given individual constitutions and depressing environmental influences.

Analysis of the effect of the slum environment upon the health of human beings should involve consideration, for slum areas and other residential districts of the city, of (1) relative mortality rates; (2) infant mortality; (3) etiological factors of specific diseases classified in the following categories: (*a*) traumatic, (*b*) chemical toxic, (*c*) parasitic, (*d*) bacterial, (*e*) nervous; and (4) the relation of housing to resistance to disease.

Relative Mortality Rates. Mortality rates have been discussed in the previous chapter. They tend to be higher in the city's slums than in other areas. Even after correction has been made for age and sex distribution, and hospital deaths within the slum area have been allocated to the preceding residence, slum death rates still continue relatively high. Where they are not the very highest this is apparently due to occupational factors, race composition, or the extra care which is taken by health departments and social service agencies to prevent spread of

1. See Chapter XXXIII on Housing Standards.

contagion in crowded areas — through education in the principles and practice of hygiene, through public recreation, and through free medical clinics. There are more social service agencies in the slum districts of the city than in other districts, and their facilities are increasingly utilized by the local populace.

The ever-changing racial character of slum districts should have much to do with their relative morbidity. Because of the high tuberculosis rates of Negroes and Porto Ricans,[1] and the relatively low tuberculosis rate among Jews,[2] the rate for any district may be increased by invasion of the former and decreased by predominance of the latter.

. . . on careful analysis it was discovered that the wards which enjoy the lowest mortality of the other wards in New York are most densely populated spots in the city, overcrowded with tenements, each of which affords a dwelling place for between 200 and 400 human beings.

The wards showing the lowest mortality in Greater New York are those that are inhabited by the Russian Jews. The wards showing the highest death rates are inhabited chiefly by Italians, Irish, Bohemians, etc., and none or only few Jews. . . .

In fact, when we observe the comparative death rates of the seventh, tenth, eleventh and thirteenth wards, which are chiefly inhabited by Jews,[3] we find that during 1899 the death rate per 1,000 population was: In the seventh ward, 18.16; in the tenth, 14.23; in the eleventh, 16.78; and in the thirteenth, 14.52; for New York City the death rate was, in the same year, 18.53 per 1,000. It will be observed that the seventh ward had the highest death rate of the Jewish districts, 18.16, nearly approaching that of the city. But considering that in this ward the non-Jewish, particularly the Irish population, makes up at least 35 per cent. of the total, we must conclude that the mortality of the Jews in this district is also lower than the average of the city.

When we recall that the death rate in New York City was in 1880, 26.40 per 1,000 population, and that ever since it has been, with slight fluctuations, steadily declining, we may find that, possibly, there may be some correspondence between this reduction of mortality in the city and the steady influx of Jewish immigrants. While the activity of the Board of Health towards the lowering of the death rates of the city is evident, still the thousands of Jews with their low mortality may also have contributed somewhat to this effect. . . .

The most important disease to which the Jews show a relative immunity is tuberculosis, or, as it is commonly known, consumption. The author of this article has shown this to be a fact among the immigrant Jewish population in New York City in his paper on the "Relative Infrequency of Tuberculosis Among Jews," in *American Medicine*, (Nov. 2d, 1901,) to which the reader is referred for details. One fact we desire to emphasize here, namely that consumption is very much on the increase among our population on the East Side, particularly among the poorer classes of the Jews living in New York City. Dr. Lee K. Frankel, Manager of the United Hebrew Charities, has shown that, while in 1895 the ratio of consumptive applicants for relief

1. See Chapters XII and XXXVI.
2. See Maurice Fishberg, *Pulmonary Tuberculosis*; also the study by Bolduan and Weiner on the causes of death among Jews and non-Jews, *New England Journal of Medicine*, February 23, 1933; also *Jewish Communal Survey* published by the New York Bureau of Jewish Social Research.
3. "It is estimated that over 75 per cent. of the population in these wards are Jews — the tenth and the thirteenth almost exclusively, the eleventh at least 80 per cent., and the seventh 65 per cent."

was 2 per cent., in 1899 it reached 3 per cent; *i. e.*, that is, an increase of 50 per cent. in 4 years, which is appalling. . . .

The causes of this relative immunity of the Jews are to be sought in their past history, their religious customs and habits of life; to their devotion as husbands, as wives, as parents and as children. . . . The Jews, not being addicted to alcoholism, are consequently less frequently affected by these diseases. . . . The Jewish children show a lower mortality, because their parents bestow on them a vitality untainted by alcoholism and syphilis, and they can therefore more easily resist the effects of contagious diseases. Jewish parents are also more devoted to their children than other nations; their anxiety in case of slight illness is greater than that of poor people of other races, and they seek medical assistance far more frequently. . . .

. . . The Jew is prohibited from consuming meat coming from diseased cattle, particularly such which have suffered from diseases of the lungs and pleura. We know that a great proportion of the tuberculosis has its origin in the consumption of meat coming from tubercular cattle. . . .

To the cleanliness of the Jewish home from the moral and sanitary standpoint we must ascribe most of the health, longevity and immunities of the Jews. When the Jew assimilates with his non-Jewish neighbors, adopting their modes of life and habits, he gradually loses his immunity and his longevity, and in time does not differ as to health and sanitation, from the people amongst whom he happens to live.[1]

The same distinction between these races is to be found in the distribution of venereal diseases.

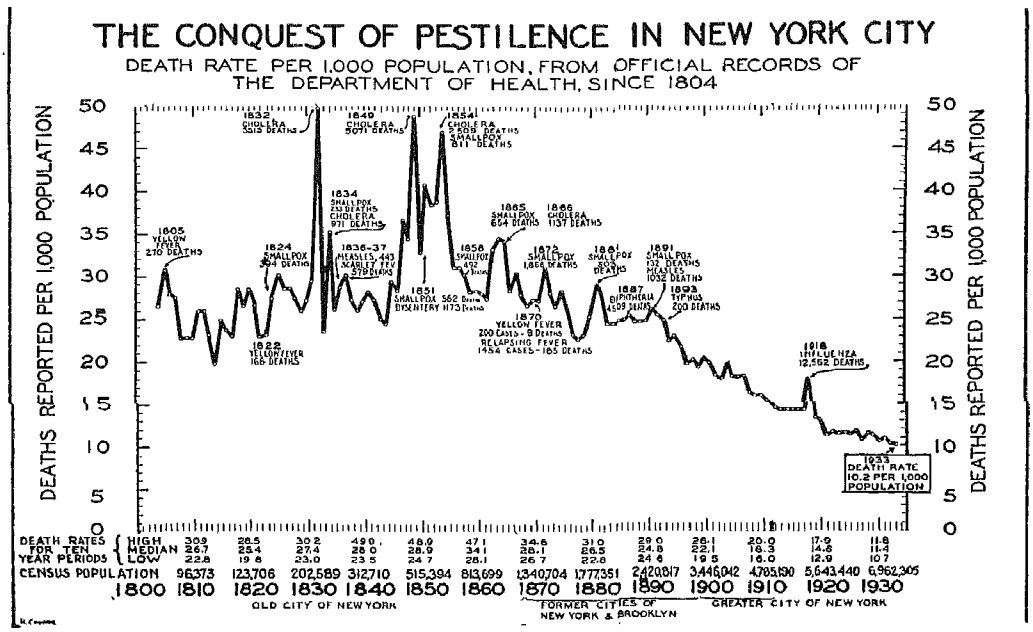
Of the venereal diseases, the Jews appear to suffer less frequently than other races from syphilis. Many writers in Russia have recorded statistics to that effect. We do not have exact statistics about the prevalence of syphilis and gonorrhea among the Jews in New York, but the testimony of physicians practicing among them goes to show that while among the Jews syphilis is often met with, it is not so frequently encountered as among non-Jews. Gonorrhea seems at present to be very much on the increase among the Jews in the East Side in New York, which again shows the effects of their sojourn in our metropolis.[2]

Pestilence, which played a large rôle in general morbidity in the early history of the city, has been brought well under control in the past two generations. Figure 78a, though a curve of general mortality, indicates by its peaks epidemics of yellow fever, cholera, smallpox, dysentery, diphtheria, typhus, and influenza. Many of these have been shown to have relation to conditions of housing or general urban sanitation. Cholera particularly was a disease of primitive sanitation, overcome chiefly by sanitary engineering. Smallpox has been eliminated by means of vaccination, and diphtheria reduced to relatively low rates by immunization. Typhus, like cholera and possibly dysentery, is in a sense a housing disease in so far as its germ inhabits the louse, to which the rat is host.[3]

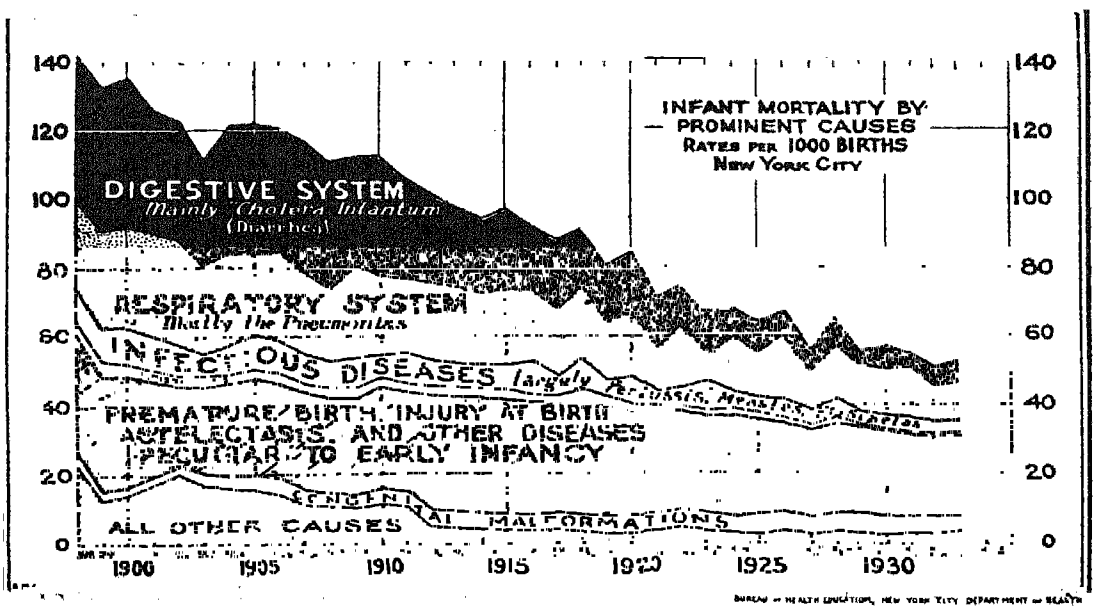
1. Maurice Fishberg, "Health and Sanitation of the Immigrant Jewish Population of New York," *The Menorah*, August-September, 1901, pp. 19–22, 29–31.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29. See also Chapter XIV, p. 370.

3. Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History, Being a Biography of Typhus Fever.*


THE CONQUEST OF PESTILENCE IN NEW YORK CITY
DEATH RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION, FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SINCE 1804
DEATHS REPORTED PER 1,000 POPULATION
1805 YELLOW FEVER 270 DEATHS
1822 YELLOW FEVER 168 DEATHS
1824 SMALLPOX 394 DEATHS
1832 CHOLERA 3515 DEATHS
1834 SMALLPOX CHOLERA 971 DEATHS
1836-37 MEASLES, 443 SCARLET FEVER 2798 DEATHS
1849 CHOLERA 5071 DEATHS
1851 SMALLPOX 562 DEATHS DYSENTERY 1173 DEATHS
1854 CHOLERA 5675 DEATHS SMALLPOX 811 DEATHS
1856 SMALLPOX 492 DEATHS
1865 SMALLPOX 654 DEATHS
1866 CHOLERA 1137 DEATHS
1870 YELLOW FEVER 200 CASES - 8 DEATHS RELAPSING FEVER 1454 CASES - 185 DEATHS
1872 SMALLPOX 1866 DEATHS
1881 SMALLPOX 2063 DEATHS
1887 DIPHTHERIA 4509 DEATHS
1891 SMALLPOX 132 DEATHS MEASLES 1032 DEATHS
1893 TYPHUS 200 DEATHS
1918 INFLUENZA 12,562 DEATHS
1933 DEATH RATE 10.2 PER 1,000 POPULATION
DEATH RATES FOR TEN YEAR PERIODS
HIGH 30.3 28.5 30.2 49.0 48.9 47.1 34.6 31.0 29.0 26.1 20.0 17.9 11.8
MEDIAN 26.7 25.4 27.4 28.0 28.9 34.1 28.1 26.5 24.8 22.1 18.3 14.6 11.4
LOW 22.8 19.8 23.0 23.5 24.7 28.1 26.7 22.8 24.6 19.5 16.0 12.9 10.7
CENSUS POPULATION 96,373 123,706 202,589 312,710 515,394 813,699 1,340,704 1,777,351 2,420,817 3,446,042 4,766,190 5,643,440 6,962,305
1800 1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930
OLD CITY OF NEW YORK
FORMER CITIES OF NEW YORK & BROOKLYN
GREATER CITY OF NEW YORK

a


INFANT MORTALITY BY PROMINENT CAUSES
RATES PER 1000 BIRTHS
NEW YORK CITY
DIGESTIVE SYSTEM
Mainly Cholera Infantum
(Diarrhea)
RESPIRATORY SYSTEM
Mainly the Pneumonias
INFECTIOUS DISEASES largely Pertussis, Measles, Scarlatina
PREMATURE BIRTH, INJURY AT BIRTH ATELECTASIS, AND OTHER DISEASES PECULIAR TO EARLY INFANCY
CONGENITAL MALFORMATIONS
ALL OTHER CAUSES
1900 1905 1910 1915 1920 1925 1930

b

The flattening out of the epidemic curve has left, to produce our general mortality, a group of diseases many of which fail to reveal any correlation with housing. The most profitable course, therefore, is to isolate those diseases — whether or not they cause death — which can be related, in some instances at least, to one or more factors in the housing of our people.

Infant Mortality. Since infant mortality has been related to housing in many studies, it should be treated here. It may well be noted that the birth rate per thousand has declined from 26.95 in 1910 to 14.09 in 1933. The marriage rate has shown ups and downs, but stood, in 1933, at 8.18 per thousand. The stillbirth rate has declined since 1900, but in 1933 was 51.7 (ratio of stillbirths to 1,000 live births), which is higher than that for any year since 1910, when it stood at 52.3. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 births has declined from 98.40 in 1913 (the first year in which the births were properly estimated) to 53.22 in 1933.[1]

In the meantime the age distribution of the population has changed, for in 1900, 30.7 per cent were under fifteen years of age, but by 1930 only 24.4 per cent. As families become smaller, individual children may receive more personal attention from parents. Social resources for the prevention of infant mortality have increased greatly in quantity and quality. The percentage of parents who have had the advantage of American public school training in the principles of hygiene has greatly increased, and medical science has gained mastery over many preventable diseases, the causes of which were unknown earlier in this century.

Figure 78b reveals that between 1898 and 1933 there was a marked reduction in infant mortality from diseases of the digestive system; a less conspicuous reduction in those of the respiratory system; a striking decrease in deaths from infectious diseases; and relatively little progress in those cases of infant death associated with the birth process, such as premature birth, injury at birth, and congenital malformations.[2] Among these cases of infant disease only the first three groups could be associated with conditions of housing, except, perhaps, for rare injuries to the mother through tenement-house accidents.[3]

The presumption is that this reduction in infant mortality has been accomplished by factors other than improved housing. "Cholera infantum," or summer diarrhoea, now produces less than 10 per cent of the number of deaths that it caused a generation ago. Reduction has been achieved more by the education of parents and the pasteurization of milk than by any factor in housing or municipal sanitation. Conceivably the reduction in respiratory and infectious diseases is,

1. Summary of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, City of New York.

2. The most authoritative analysis of deaths in childbirth is *Maternal Mortality in New York City. A study of all puerperal deaths, 1930–1932.* By the New York Academy of Medicine Committee on Public Health Relations. Ransom S. Hooker, M.D., F.A.C.S., Director of the Study. New York and London, 1933.

3. See pp. 386–387.

in part, attributable to reduction of overcrowding and more hygienic modes of living. Factors of home-life rather than housing, combined with improved health education and facilities, have, however, produced most of this decline. There is strong presumption that the high infant mortality rates that were correlated with overcrowding by authors quoted in the preceding chapters [1] were caused, not by the overcrowding, but by the poverty which made overcrowding necessary.

Etiological Factors of Specific Diseases. Housing plays an inconspicuous part in the production of most diseases. It may, however, have an important bearing either upon the acquisition of certain diseases or upon recovery from them. One cannot profitably correlate housing and disease, but rather specific factors in housing with related types of disease. The diseases may, for convenience, be classified as traumatic, chemical toxic, parasitic, bacterial, or nervous. Each of these in the following pages will be related to the part of the house or the activity within the home which may, in individual cases, have some demonstrable effect upon the origin or progress of the disease in question. The bearing of the residence upon resistance to, and recovery from, disease will be treated separately.

Traumatism, or Housing and Safety. This category includes injuries and lesions. There are many instances and types of injuries to occupants associated with poor construction or construction ill-adapted to the needs and capacities of occupants. Most obvious is unstable construction, for the house may be so imperfectly built that parts of it fall down and crush or maim the occupants. This difficulty was appreciated early, and the first housing legislation of which we have record, the Code of Hammurabi at about 2000 B.C., provided for the punishment of the builder.[2] The necessity of better protection against insecure construction was early recognized in New York City. Colonial and nineteenth-century history shows many calamities in this city from poor construction. In general, the "jerry-built" houses of today (so named for a notorious builder of shoddy houses in Liverpool) are rendered reasonably sound by law so far as collapse is concerned, though remaining unsound as investments. Loss of life and serious maiming, however, occur from time to time as a result of falling ceilings or cornices; fire-escapes insecurely attached; unstable railings of piazzas and stairways; broken treads on stairways; obstacles in dark hallways, on dark stairs, and on fire-escapes; low window-sills; broken elevators; rotten boarding; and winding staircases without platforms and with treads too narrow at one side.

Another group of injuries is associated with imperfect installation or improper use of electric wiring and outlets.[3] Minor injuries, such as cuts, from protruding

1. See pp 173 and 174.
2. See Chapter II, p 17.
3. United States Bureau of Standards, *Safety for the Household*, and President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 54-85, 201-222.

FIG. 79



a. Use and abuse of fire escapes adjoining elevated railroad in old-law tenements, *c.* 1900.





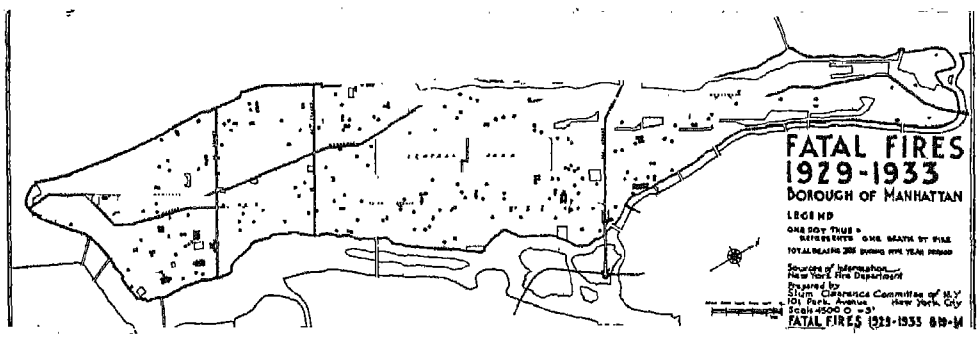
b and c. Sinks in public hall of old-law tenements, showing extreme conditions, *c.* 1900.

nails or broken window-panes, and burns or shocks from heating or lighting fixtures, are common.

Tenement-house fires are a cause of many deaths, accidents, injuries, and frights. Few persons are burned to death in such fires; more are killed by suffocation than by burning. Many, in their panic, strain themselves by carrying loads that are too heavy, or incur injury by jumping from windows or balconies instead of waiting for rescue. The typical exterior fire-escape permitted by law in New York City cannot be used with safety by elderly people, cripples, and young children, or by persons who suffer from dizziness when high above the ground. No device for escape in case of fire is adequate for such persons except the type known as a fire tower.[1]

Official statistics record the deaths from tenement-house fires of New York City. Figure 80 is misleading without explanation, since many of the deaths are

FIG. 80



not the result of large fires from which the tenants could not escape, but are caused by smoking in bed — a condition which obviously is not related to housing as the term is ordinarily construed. It is striking, however, that the points of concentration are in the regions of old-law housing — especially in the Lower East Side, Harlem, and East Harlem.

There have been relatively few deaths caused by fire in new-law tenements constructed under the law of 1901. In many years there have been no deaths traceable to fires in buildings constructed with the degree of fireproofing required by that law. Most disastrous fires still occur in buildings erected prior to that date or in those which, because they are not technically tenement houses, do not fall under the supervision of the Tenement House Commissioner.

1. See *Report of the Tenement House Committee*, 1894, pp. 220–239, and DeForest and Veiller, I, 275–289.

FIRES IN CLASS A MULTIPLE DWELLINGS[1]
1932

	Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond	New York City
Old-law tenements	2,266	163	855	20	7	3,311
New-law tenements	1,002	1,096	1,634	170	2	3,904
Heretofore conv. dwlgs.	49	5	39	21	2	116
Apartment hotels	16	..	..	..	..	16
Total	3,333	1,264	2,528	211	11	7,347

FATAL FIRES IN CLASS A MULTIPLE DWELLINGS
Deaths from all causes

	Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond	New York City
Old-law tenements	38	6	2	0	0	46
New-law tenements	12	2	0	0	0	14
Heretofore conv. dwlgs.	1	1	0	4	0	6
Total	51	9	2	4	0	66

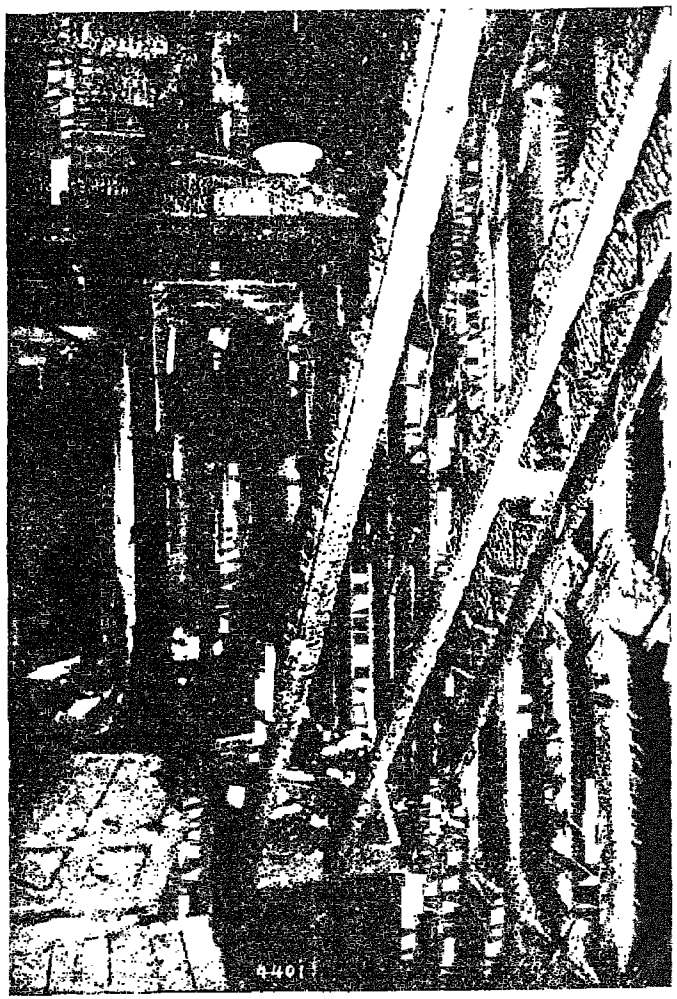
DEATHS DUE TO CONFLAGRATION OF BUILDING

	Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Richmond	New York City
Old-law tenement	27	6	0	0	0	33
New-law tenements	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heretofore conv. dwlgs.	1	0	0	2	0	3
Total	28	6	0	2	0	36

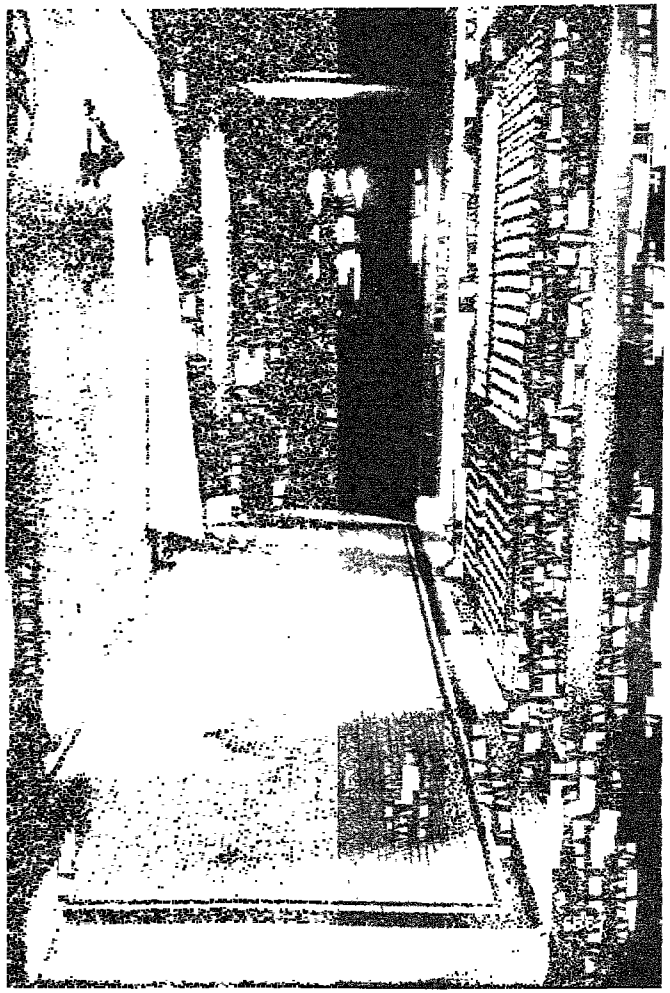
It is clear that, in the absence of complete fireproofing in a building three stories or more in height, the first floor should be completely cut off from the cellar by slow-burning construction materials so that the 20 per cent or more of tenement-house fires which originate in the cellar [2] may be confined to their point of origin. It is equally clear that stair halls and all shafts, whether for elevators, dumb waiters, light and air, or other purposes, should be of fireproof construction, and that all major partitions should be filled with fire-resistive material to prevent each such vertical outlet from becoming a flue for the fire. Experience shows that in the absence of such provision, a fire beginning in the cellar is likely to make its next appearance on the top story, mushrooming out first there and then on the story below. There is no security against loss of life from fires or conflagrations until all buildings are of fire-resistive construction throughout. The loss of life is, however, being cut down progressively by restrictive legislation, which increasingly requires fire-resistive construction at the danger points. Important work is also being done by organizations of fire underwriters in pursuing incendiaries who

1. *Thirteenth Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York. Report for the Year 1932.* Table XXXII.

2. DeForest and Veiller, I, 267.



a How fire destroys wooden stairs and non-fireproof halls in old-law tenements erected before the law of 1901.



b How fireproof halls in new-law tenements, erected under the law of 1901, withstand fire

FIG 81

set fires in their shops, in tenement houses, or in the closets of their apartments, in order to collect insurance.

POINT OF ORIGIN OF DWELLING FIRES, NEW YORK CITY, 1929[1]

Point of origin	Dwellings	Boarding and lodging houses	Apartments and tenements	Total	Percentage of total
Areaways, porches, roofs, etc.	297	24	487	808	7.0
Airshafts	14	5	85	104	0.9
Attics	57	0	2	59	0.5
Awnings	114	7	637	758	6.6
Bathrooms and toilets	42	18	109	169	1.5
Bedrooms	323	176	879	1,378	11.9
Boiler and furnace rooms	108	14	255	377	3.3
Cellars	574	28	812	1,414	12.3
Chimney fires	91	13	167	271	2.4
Closets	120	21	184	325	2.8
Defective flues	188	16	179	383	3.3
Dining rooms	135	4	166	305	2.6
Dumbwaiter and elevator shafts	6	2	433	441	3.8
Hallways and corridors	73	19	285	377	3.3
Kitchens	563	22	1,271	1,856	16.1
Parlors	195	18	527	740	6.4
Partitions, under floors, etc.	52	14	95	161	1.4
Storerooms	30	2	67	99	0.9
Stoves	381	25	816	1,222	10.6
Vacant floors and apartments	51	1	218	270	2.3
Miscellaneous	5	2	3	10	0.1
Total	3,419	431	7,677	11,527	100.0

Other injuries of quite a different nature fall in the traumatic group. Progressive eye-strain from reading or pursuing household trades or housework in quarters that are too dark may be classified as an injury. The lower floors of practically all tenement houses have inadequate natural lighting, at least for rooms on interior courts, and also for rooms facing the street or yard if surrounded by high buildings. Tenants often add to the darkness by use of window-shades and curtains, for they inevitably face the necessity of sacrificing either privacy or light, each of which is properly deemed essential. Progressive eye-strain may occur also from improper artificial lighting fixtures, which may give light either too brilliant or too dim. But this is a matter more related to the education of the tenant than to housing as such. Improper location of fixtures, which is definitely related to house construction, does, however, conduce to such eye-strain.

Stair-climbing in four-, five-, and six-story walk-up tenements is sometimes apparently responsible for injuries to pregnant women. Some case records ascribe

1. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 212, citing data supplied by the National Fire Protection Association.

miscarriages to this condition. If the pregnant woman does not climb the stairs she may be a virtual prisoner in her rooms in the walk-up apartment for several weeks or months prior to confinement, and thus exposed much more than are the other members of her family to the many other deleterious influences of the tenement house. Stair-climbing may be both a possible source of cardiac difficulties and a contributing factor in cardiac cases of other origin.[1]

Chemical Toxic Diseases. There are probably very few diseases in this category that may properly be ascribed to conditions of housing. Carbon monoxide poisoning from defective flues would, however, belong here, though the defect in the flue may be either a fault of construction or a fault in maintenance. Such poisonings are usually due to improper stoking of heating apparatus and management of drafts, rather than to construction.

Defective fixtures and piping for gas appliances and gas lighting probably account for some illness from this source, though the majority of instances of gas poisoning are traceable presumably to ignorant or careless use.

The old theory that sewer gas from broken house mains and soil pipes, and imperfectly trapped fixtures, contains disease germs has been outgrown. Nevertheless, house inspectors in northern cities can record instances where frozen and broken pipes and the back-flow of contents into fixtures have caused conditions of prolonged nausea to occupants.

The notion that arsenic in green paint or wallpaper can, by its emanations, poison the occupants of rooms has long since been discarded. Yet infants and young children have been known to pick off shreds of wallpaper to chew; so there may be some danger of poisoning, because of misuse by the ignorant or immature, from the chemicals used in house decoration. The few deaths ascribable to the chemical-toxic diseases are to be avoided chiefly by education in household management rather than by improvements upon contemporary methods of construction.

The general use of lye, potash, lime, ammonia, naphtha, gasoline, and wood alcohol in households is correlated with fires, explosions, and loss of eyesight through spattered alkalis.[2] This suggests the importance of protected substitutes

1. Some English studies correlate cardiac difficulties of a rheumatic nature with stair-climbing. An examination of the records of cardiac cases for New York City reveals that they do not indicate the residence at which the difficulty was acquired, so this correlation cannot be examined, and possibly verified, for New York City. A fresh investigation would involve a considerable financial outlay, but is recommended as a valuable type of research. For bibliographical background on rheumatic fever and its possible relation to housing, consult Homer F. Swift, "Rheumatic Fever," Nelson Loose Leaf Medicine; G. Andrieu, *Le Rhumatisme articulaire aigu maladie contagieuse*; A. F. Coburn, *The Factor of Infection in the Rheumatic State*; J. A. Glover, "Incidence of Rheumatic Diseases," *Lancet* I, 499, 607, 733; A. Newsholme, "The Milroy Lectures on the Natural History and Affinities of Rheumatic Fever," *Lancet*, I, 589, 657; J. R. Paul, "Age Susceptibility to Familial Infection in Rheumatic Fever," *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, X, 53; J. R. Paul and R. Salinger, "The Spread of Rheumatic Fever through Families," *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, X. 33.

2. See Harry Best, *The Blind.*

for cleansing purposes, since we must assume frequent carelessness, and delays in education, in their use. These are, however, problems of the home rather than of the house.

Parasitic Diseases. The few parasitic diseases which are associated with the house remain well under control so far as our northern cities are concerned. The most general of these, hookworm disease, is characteristic of southern climates, and it is dependent upon primitive sanitation, or none at all, for the deposit of the eggs, and upon bare feet for reaching its new victim — obviously not a problem of New York City. Other intestinal parasites, such as the tapeworm, for example, have been transmitted to city folk primarily by food, rather than by conditions of housing.

The microscopic parasite conveying malaria is carried by the *anopheles* mosquito to its new victim. In New York City there was much difficulty with this disease in the past. It has been well under control in the last two decades. Stagnant water in dumps, swamps, catch-basins, and even the tin cans that clutter vacant lots may be breeding places for the mosquito carriers. Draining of such water, or coating it with kerosene, and filling in low lands where there is standing water help in reducing the danger from this pest. The protection of the tenant involves the screening of windows in mosquito-infested areas and the removal of standing water in and about the house. The latter is a question of management rather than of housing proper.

Yellow fever was the source of many epidemics in New York City in its early history. Borne by a species of mosquito known as the *Aëdes Aegypti*, it was responsible for epidemics in each of the first three centuries, and the danger from it was not eliminated until after the remarkable work done by William C. Gorgas in Havana, Panama, and the Canal Zone.

It is not clear how much disease is caused by household insects and vermin. Scientists have isolated a particular rat flea as the carrier of the bacterium transmitting bubonic plague (the Black Death of earlier European history) and another rat parasite as the carrier of endemic typhus, and they point to the dangers from rats that immigrate in the vessels from foreign ports. The Lower East Side is infested with rats. The house sewer is one of their major modes of entering houses, though broken foundations, open doors, or doors and windows that are not tight provide other means of entry. Whether or not there is danger of carrying bubonic plague acquired in other ports, the rat may be physically dangerous to infants and a source of annoyance and sleeplessness to persons of all ages. Its gnawings may lead to structural disrepair and possible fire danger. Both rats and mice may deposit in food supplies excrement which may contain germs or poisons from the

filth upon which they feed. This suggests the importance of universal rat-proofing of dwellings and more effective measures for the elimination of the rat.

More general fireproofing, advocated elsewhere in this volume,[1] will contribute also to making buildings relatively vermin-proof; but special attention needs to be paid to the installation of vertical and horizontal pipes and to adequate caulking around the floor holes to prevent the entrance of vermin and their passage from one floor to another.[2]

Dr. Lord's experiments, many years ago, showed that the excrement from flies that had been fed on tubercular sputum contained virulent bacteria that had not been destroyed by passing through the insect body. Conceivably all of the household insects are a source of bacterial danger in this way, as well as from such filth as they may carry from unclean places to the kitchen, pantry, or bedroom. Further steps toward rendering residences insect-proof are thus indicated as desirable.

Of the body parasites, that which transmits endemic typhus is apparently now well under control, though it was responsible for considerable illness and mortality in New York's earlier history.

Although ringworms (a vegetable parasite), impetigo, and pediculosis are primarily contact diseases, they can probably be transmitted by means of household objects other than the hair-brush, bed linen, chairs, and sofas. They are, in varying degrees, essentially slum diseases.

Unquestionably the common toilet facilities shared by two or more families in the typical old-law tenements are responsible for the transmission of parasites.

A scourge of the lodging house and of many tenements is the bedbug, which infests not only beds but upholstered furniture, insecure wall paper, mouldings, baseboards, and dust-filled cracks in flooring. The use of painted walls, instead of wallpaper, and the covering of poorly laid floors with paint and well laid linoleum may reduce this and other insects pests without increasing construction costs.

Bacterial Diseases. The microscopic plant organisms known as bacteria are the agents of transmission of most of our contagious and infectious diseases. They may be grouped conveniently for our purpose under three major headings: diseases of the respiratory tract, the intestinal group, and the venereal group.

The other categories are apparently unimportant in relation to housing, except in so far as good housing increases resistance to invading organisms. There may be some exceptions as, for example, diseases of the eye, e. g. conjunctivitis and trachoma, and of the skin, transmitted by roller-towels in lodging houses.

1. See Chapters XXXI and XXXIII.
2. Many publications on this subject are available from the United States Public Health Service and the Health Department of the City of New York.

In general, the germs of the respiratory group must presumably be taken into the system in considerable quantity in order to overcome the body's defensive mechanisms and produce disease. This may preclude the possibility of transmitting the diseases of this group through polluted air. To some extent, however, the vitiation of air with dust and fumes, so characteristic of tenement sections, may cause irritations or miscroscopic abrasions which facilitate the ingress of the invading organisms. It is characteristic of our slum population that they have only one heated room, and in the six or eight months of the year when heat is necessary for health or comfort windows are kept tightly sealed, and the whole family, perhaps with lodgers or visitors, is congregated in a compact space. The possibilities of droplet infection from coughing, sneezing, expectoration, and even animated conversation are sufficient to justify the belief that various diseases the germs of which lodge in the throat or nose may be transmitted without direct physical contact. It is even likely that the kitchen table and furniture, as well as the hand-rail of dark tenement stairs, may be sufficiently sprayed with germs from infected persons to cause infection in the new victim, who carries his unwashed hand from such table or hand-rail to his face, or to any abrasion (even microscopic) on his hands or face. The diseases in question, for which the kitchen and the common stair-hall may serve as a clearing house, include many of the characteristic children's illnesses, as well as many varieties of common cold, grippe, or influenza, and conceivably bronchitis, bronchial pneumonia, and tuberculosis. These are properly designated as housing diseases in so far as their extent can be reduced by housing measures — such as providing more heated rooms, or eliminating room overcrowding, or substituting open stairs for dark interior stairs, as has been done in the Riverside, Vanderbilt, and John Jay Dwellings.[1]

The relation of housing to tuberculosis is still a matter of dispute. Earlier writers freely assumed a correlation. Over 100 local studies are available, largely conducted in Germany, France, and England, and in this country, which show higher tuberculosis rates in back-to-back tenements, one-room flats, overcrowded quarters, basement dwellings, lower stories, tenements with windowless rooms, and regions of high density of population.[2]

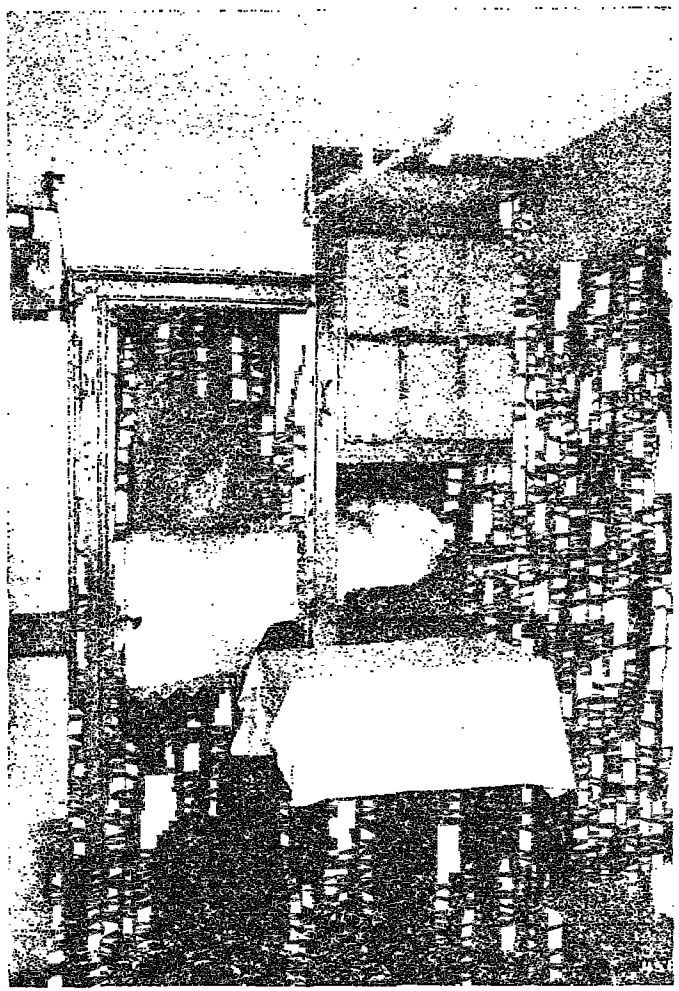
In spite of the above findings, the von Behring school of Austria determined that the house played little, if any, rôle in the transmission of tuberculosis and that infection was generally acquired in childhood, remained latent during early adolescent years, and, in case of improper living, might result in the disease in the

1. See Figures 49, 150, 158a and 122.

2. James Ford, "Bibliography of Tuberculosis in its Relation to House Infection and Housing Betterment," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. VI, no. 12; and Sarah T. Morse, "Housing as related to Tuberculosis — 1915 to 1928" *Journal of the Outdoor Life*, April and May 1929. Both are annotated bibliographies.



a. Flashlight view of an interior bedroom. No window or transom, 1900.



b. Interior bedroom showing transom required by law of 1901.

FIG. 82

late adolescent period or early adult life. Karl Pearson [1] and his associates in the biometric laboratory of London similarly discovered that two or more cases of tuberculosis were not found in the same family with any greater frequency than two or more cases of cancer or of mental disease, and by this independent approach tentatively concluded that tuberculosis was not a housing disease. On the other hand, the late Dr. Theobald Smith, who probably contributed more than any other individual during the past generation to our knowledge of disease transmission, has, in several papers, outlined at length his reasons for holding the latency theory untenable.

Since the matter is still under dispute, it might be best here to make a fresh approach to the subject on the grounds of probability. Pulmonary tuberculosis, we know, is still widely prevalent, though greatly reduced in relative incidence by the educational work of anti-tuberculosis associations, state and local boards of health, hospitals, dispensaries, and practicing physicians. We may exclude other forms of the disease. In New York City about one person in every seventeen dies of this disease. The rate is higher in regions where health services are less good. It is possible also, even in New York City, that some deaths from this disease are not so recorded, owing to wrong diagnosis or intentional deception, since many persons do not like to have it known that there has been tuberculosis in the family.

Pulmonary tuberculosis is transmitted by a microscopic bacillus deposited in quantities, perhaps millions per day, in the sputum of approximately a third of all active patients. The exposure to these germs is so prevalent that certain scientists have concluded, through applying the von Pirquet test to thousands of school children, that most city children have taken the organism into their systems during childhood. These bacteria may enter the new victim through skin abrasions, or may be ingested with food, or may conceivably enter directly into the respiratory tract, in spite of the protective action of the mucous surfaces.

Tubercle bacilli have exceptional viability outside of the human body. Virulence can apparently be maintained in a dark, moist place for several months outside of the body of the host. Some experiments show a viability of a year or more. Of interest to housing specialists, however, are the experiments of the Boston Board of Health, which suspended cultures from the sputum of tubercular patients in typical, dark, vacant tenements of the city and ingested the sputum in guinea-pigs at the end of each month. Tuberculosis was produced in guinea-pigs from sputum of the tenement-house environment for the first six months of their experiment. Apparently, therefore, the typical sunless tenement is a medium in which tuberculosis bacilli can retain their viability for a considerable period.

1. *Tuberculosis, Heredity and Environment*, London, 1912. Also *Eugenics and Public Health*, London, 1912.

There have been many recorded instances, both urban and rural, of "lung" houses in which family after family has become a victim of this disease.

"The Lung Block" has well earned its name. It is bounded by the streets Cherry, Catherine, Hamilton, Market. . . .

There is one [tenement] called "The Ink Pot." It has front and rear tenements five floors high, with a foul narrow court between. Here live one hundred and forty people. Twenty-three are babies. Here I found one man sick with the Plague in the front house, two more in the rear — and one of these had a young wife and four children. Here the Plague lives in darkness and filth — filth in halls, over walls and floors, in sinks and closets. Here in nine years alone twenty-six cases have been reported. How many besides these were kept secret? . . .

Rooms here have held death ready and waiting for years. Up on the third floor, looking down into the court, is a room with two little closets behind it. In one of these a blind Scotchman slept and took the Plague in '94. His wife and his fifteen-year-old son both drank, and the home grew squalid as the tenement itself. He died in the hospital. Only a few months later the Plague fastened again. Slowly his little daughter grew used to the fever, the coughing, the long, sleepless nights. . . . At last she, too, died. The mother and son then moved away. But in this room the germs lived on. . . . they can live two years in darkness. . . . Then one year later, in October, a Jew rented this same room. He was taken and died in the summer. The room was rented again in the autumn by a German and his wife. She had the Plague already, and died. Then an Irish family came in. The father was a hard, steady worker, and loved his children. . . . But six months later he took the Plague. He died in 1901. This is only the record of one room in seven years. . . .

Infection comes not only from the room, but as well from halls and stairways. An old Italian, a hopeless victim, sits out on the steps in front, all day long in the sun while the children play around him, and all through the evening with men and women beside him. His cough never stops. The halls behind and above are grimy, offensive, hung heavy with cobwebs, and these cobwebs are always black. The stairways in the rear house are low and narrow, uneven, and thick with dust piled up in every nook and corner. This dust is virulent with disease. Through the years a score of consumptives have lived here, groping their way each night up the stairways, stopping on the landings to catch their breath and cough, and so spread the infection. But for light trickling through grimy panels in doors, these halls are forever dark. It is in halls like these that the germs can live two years or longer.[1]

In view of the many studies of the relation of housing and tuberculosis above cited, it seems reasonable to assume the possibility of housing infection by a process somewhat as follows: (1) spraying of walls, floors, and other surfaces, and also of house dust with the droplets from coughing, spitting, and sneezing of the first infected resident; (2) quarters left either not clean or imperfectly disinfected after the removal of the first patient's family (floors are seldom reached by chemical disinfection but can be effectively cleansed with soap, water, and a scrubbing brush); (3) infestation of the new occupants of the tenement by the bacilli over

1. Ernest Poole, *The Plague in its Stronghold. Tuberculosis in the New York Tenement*, pp. 6, 11–13.

months of residence through (*a*) abrasions, or possibly (*b*) through food soiled with infected dust, or even (*c*) inhalation. Inhalation of infectious doses seems least probable because moving, dust-borne germs would probably dessicate rapidly, causing loss of virulence on the part of the bacteria.

In considering the problem of tuberculosis in its relation to housing, it is necessary to bear in mind that the comparative poverty [1] of the slum dweller may mean imperfect nutrition, that the noise of tenement districts may mean imperfect sleep, that the sunlessness of lower floors of tenement houses may mean reduced resistance. Even though subsequent studies may definitely prove that the house is not a means of transmission of tubercle bacilli, there will still remain the possibility that there is relation between housing and pulmonary tuberculosis because of reduced resistance caused by inadequate sleep and lack of sunshine and clean air.

Experiments in the field of venereal diseases demonstrate viability of the germs of syphilis and gonorrhea for several hours outside of the human body, in environments that are dark and damp.[2] The common toilet, shared by two or more families in the old-law tenement house, is usually such an environment. There is possibility of innocent infection with these diseases through abrasions of the skin, even though the latter are of microscopic size. Dr. Antonio Stella, in his study of these diseases among the Italians, calls attention also to innocent infection from the use of the same bed by successive occupants.[3] In the days of high immigration there were many instances in which the same bed was used in rotation throughout the twenty-four hours, in three shifts — a condition which is relatively rare today. The common roller-towel, which is still found in improperly supervised lodging houses, is another possible agency of innocent transmission of these diseases.

Of the intestinal diseases, typhoid fever had considerable urban incidence in the period of primitive sanitation, primarily because of the infection of water supply in wells, through the soil, from the neighboring privy.[4] Now that there are ample public supplies of protected water and universal sewerage systems for all but the outskirts of our large and important cities, typhoid has become relatively rare, and is usually milk-borne or transmitted by salads and other uncooked vegetables, or by typhoid carriers. A spot map of typhoid fever made in Newark, New Jersey, more than twenty years ago showed a ring of spots on the outer rim

1. Edgar Sydenstricker, *Health and Environment*; E. C. B. Barnett, *The Standards of Living as a Factor in the Decline of Tuberculosis*, Transactions, National Tuberculosis Association, 1919.
2. Edward B. Vedder, *Syphilis and Public Health*, Philadelphia, 1918, pp. 111–123.
3. "The effects of urban congestion on Italian women and children," *Medical Record*, May 2, 1908.
4. Many publications on typhoid are available from the United States Public Health Service.

of the city and only a few random cases in the congested quarters.[1] The cases are so few in New York City that it has not been thought necessary to prepare such a spot map. Early history shows not only typhoid but also cholera.[2] The elimination of these diseases has been accomplished through the remarkable progress made in recent decades in providing appropriate sanitation throughout the city.

Quite possibly the spread of intestinal complaints of infants may be facilitated by the house fly — though this peril is certainly overstressed in campaign literature. If so, adequate screening of residences is indicated as desirable, for this reason as well as to prevent the spread of malaria cited above. Elimination of the filth in which flies breed is also important.

Nervous Diseases. Mention has been made above of fright occasioned by tenement-house fires. Case histories reveal nervous disorders and even mental upset precipitated in susceptible individuals from sudden fires of this sort. Similarly, the drunken brawls of slum dwellings or neighborhoods may cause lasting nervous impairment for predisposed individuals. The latter is primarily a condition of the slum, but housing is involved, since density can be controlled and privacy and sound-proofing provided as a part of housing policy. Such illnesses can be reduced in slum neighborhoods through the comprehensive type of programme contemplated in slum rebuilding.

Nervous impairment is a possibility also from eye-strain occasioned by dark halls and rooms. But most important as a cause of harm to the nervous system is the incessant noise and confusion of the city. There is apparently no escape, at present, for hundreds of thousands of New York slum dwellers, and for some who live in more favored quarters of the city, from the noise of passing elevated trains, the horns of motor vehicles, street cries and street music, screaming babies and playing children, angry voices, radios, victrolas, practising upon musical instruments, parties in neighboring tenements, and the return of late revelers. Some persons apparently become insensitive to these noises when habituated to them. Other more susceptible individuals apparently never become acclimated. Sleep for them is reduced and made inadequate. Sleeplessness may not only reduce resistance to contagious disease, but may also be a factor in producing disorder of the mind or nervous system. The slum affords no escape from unendurable cacophonies. Privacy, which is the basis of mental, moral, and spiritual development, is impossible.

It is difficult to isolate the effects, nervous and mental, of crowded living upon the individual. To some, crowding is perhaps relatively harmless, and for others, a source of danger. Probably hundreds of thousands of boys and girls in this

1. James Ford, *Housing Report to the City Plan Commission of Newark, New Jersey*, 1913. 2. See Chapters III and IV.

city have to grow up under conditions in which no provision can be made for what are ordinarily called the decencies of life. Both sexes and all ages may have to share the same sleeping room and even the same bed. Modesty, as that term is ordinarily construed, is an impossibility for many. All the natural functions of life are witnessed in the daily environment. Birth, disease, copulation, and death may all have to take place in the presence of the whole family, in the restricted space that is designated as home. It is difficult for persons who have grown up in more favored environments to discover how far and in what way such experiences are unwholesome. Whether the absence of privacy leads, on a large scale, to perversions and immoralities, or whether it is a protection from them, is not a matter of documented experience and, in general, is not ascertainable. To some extent the effects of such modes of living are revealed through case histories. But these are written down, unfortunately, by persons who grew up under environments so different that they may not properly evaluate the statements made to them, and may misinterpret them.

There is a strong presumption that on grounds of sex protection greater provision for privacy is desirable. Even in many tenements of the better class the toilet cannot be reached from some of the bedrooms without passing through the living room. Space arrangements within tenements should provide privacy for sleeping. This would mean enough bedroom space so that not more than two persons, and preferably one, would have to sleep in any bedroom, and no one should be forced to sleep regularly in living rooms or kitchens, for in either of the two latter rooms the individual cannot with decency retire until after all other members of the household have done so, and must get up as soon as the rest of the household begins to stir. It is unquestionable also that the type of privacy which would make possible home study, and the development of personal capacities in solitude, would have value.

Relation of Housing to Resistance to Disease. Good housing is most effective in the prevention of disease, in all probability not so much because it provides means of reducing contagion or destroying germs as because of the part which it may play in the building up of resistance. Human beings vary quite considerably in their relative constitutional immunity to specific diseases, but a given individual's susceptibility to many diseases, as for example tuberculosis, may be considerably affected by his mode of living. Resistance may be reduced by overwork, undernourishment, abuse of alcohol or certain other poisons, and apparently also by inadequate or inappropriate exercise. It may be increased by living in fresh air. It is probable also that sunshine plays a quite important part in increasing human resistance. The quality of the blood and the number of phagocytes, or white

blood corpuscles, which are among the most important of the body's defensive agents against invading disease organisms, may be increased rapidly by exposure of the body to sunshine. In so far as improved housing tends therefore to increase the amount of fresh air and of sunshine in the homes of all classes, it presumably tends to increase resistance to disease. This, if true, offers the most cogent argument of all for the maintenance of strict standards through housing legislation.

It should be understood that housing conditions are never the sole cause of disease. There may be a constitutional predisposition, hereditary or acquired. In the case of infectious diseases, the germ must be present and ingested in infective quantities. Each illness is a resultant of the interplay of many factors operating within the individual and within his physical and social environment. Medical specialists disagree as to the mode of infection or acquirement of many diseases. Nevertheless, the burden of proof lies with the person who criticizes the general view of the pathologists and quarrels with the experience of health departments and investigators. Bad housing conditions of various sorts are factors in the reduction of health and in the spread of a variety of diseases. Improvement of housing conditions will serve to reduce the volume of preventable diseases and accidents and may help to render the lives of persons of small income not only tolerable but efficient and joyous.

CHAPTER XVI

SLUMS AND CRIME DISTRIBUTION

THE idea that crime and delinquency are somehow associated with slum conditions is one widely held, although the precise relationship is admittedly difficult to demonstrate. In 1928, the Sub-Commission on Causes was moved to state in its report to the Crime Commission of the State of New York that "Bad housing undoubtedly has a distinct bearing on juvenile delinquency rates." [1] Whatever the precise effect of housing in combination with other factors, it is of interest to see how closely areas of bad housing and crime coincide. A method of study that suggests itself is locating the addresses of offenders and the places where the crimes have been committed. This method was employed by the Committee on Crime and Delinquency, which reported conditions to the New York City Housing Authority. In a noteworthy volume, published in 1934, the following questions are asked and answered: [2]

> Where did the most delinquents live?
> Where were the most offenses committed?
> What and how numerous were the offenses?
> What kind were the offenders?
> What dispositions were made of the offenders?

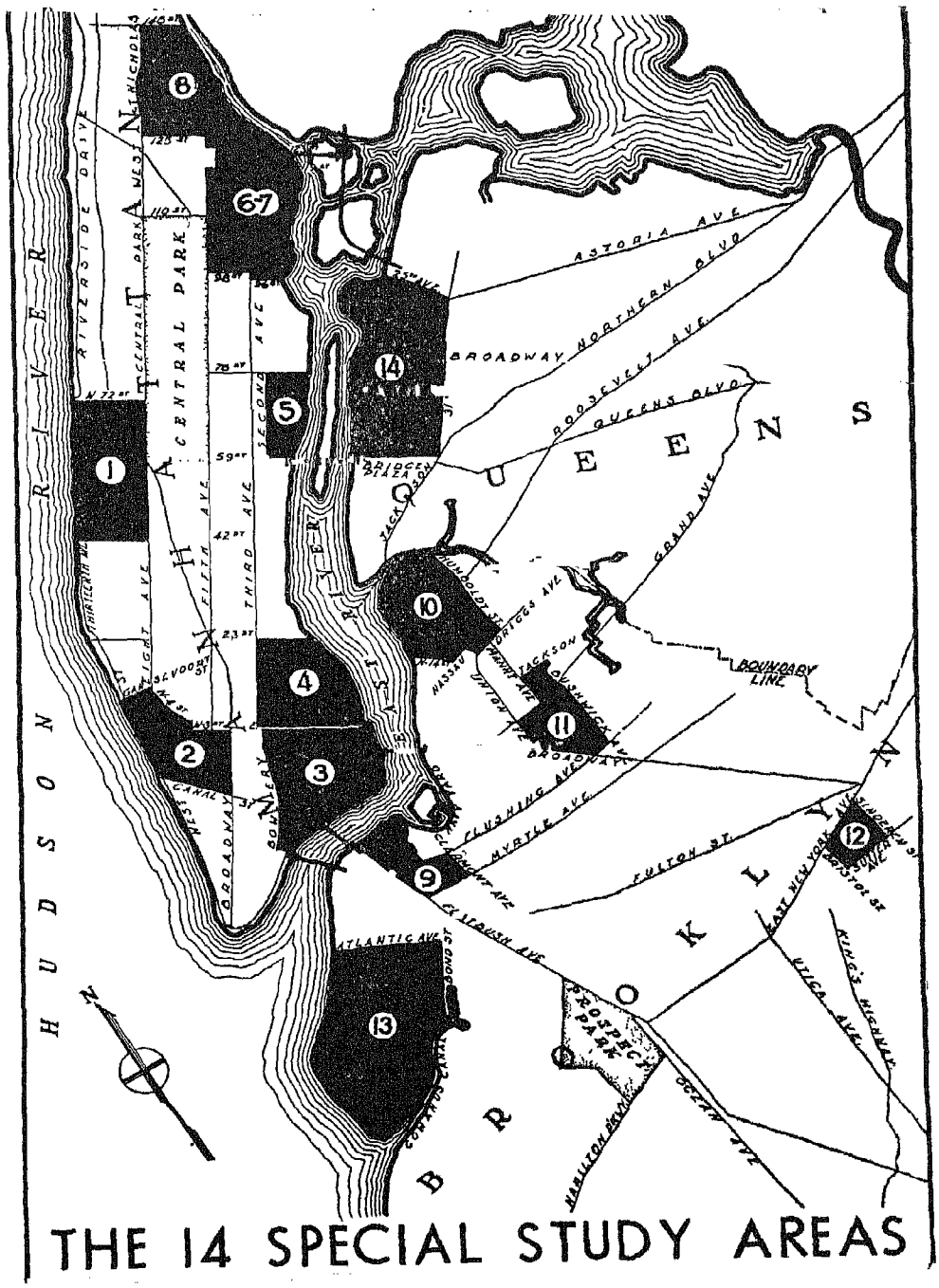
The period selected was the year 1930 because of its relation to the United States Census information, and the boroughs studied were Manhattan and Brooklyn, with special reference to thirteen areas selected by the Slum Clearance Committee as bearing strong slum characteristics. Figure 83 shows these areas and one not covered in this summary. In a series of operations, starting with police blotter records in the various precincts and carrying through to the prison sentences or other disposition, the Committee has produced a picture of conditions such as was previously unavailable.

Table A shows, with one exception subsequently added, the boundaries of the "slum" areas selected for study. The remaining one was located north of the Queensboro Bridge on the Queens side, as will be seen by reference to the map.

1. "A Study of Environmental Factors in Juvenile Delinquency in a District of Manhattan Borough, New York City," *Report of the Crime Commission*, State of New York, 1928, p. 384.

2. Irving W. Halpern, John N. Stanislaus, and Bernard Botein, *The Slum and Crime*.

FIG. 83



Map showing the fourteen slum and rehousing areas studied by the Slum Clearance Committee, 1933–1934. Reproduced from *Maps and Charts Prepared by the Slum Clearance Committee, 1933–1934.* See also Frontispiece, Vol I.

TABLE A

Location of Substandard Areas[1]

Area No.	Area Boundaries	Total pop. of each area	No. of sq. blks.
1	West 74th St. to West 42nd St. — Central Park West and Eighth Ave. to Hudson River	104,525	124
2	West 14th St. and West 11th St. to Canal St. — Waverly Pl. and Broadway to Hudson River	52,301	161
3	East 3rd to E. 5th St. to New Chambers St. — East River to Bowery	163,441	241
4	East 24th St. to East 3rd St. — East River to Third Ave.	122,737	124
5	East 79th St. to East 59th St. — East River to Third Ave.	65,587	69
6	East 126th St. and E. 119th St. to East 98th St. — East River to Fifth Ave.	189,667	190
7	East 119th St. to Harlem River — First Ave. to East River	7,881	11
8	West 150th St. to West 126th St. — Harlem River to Eighth Ave.	117,121	106
8A	West 126th St. to West 110th St. — Fifth Ave. to Eighth Ave.	71,350	53
	Total Manhattan Slum Areas	894,610	1,079
9	East River to Johnson St. and Myrtle Ave. — Adelphi St. to Bridge St. and Adams St.	23,109	86
10	Newtown Creek to Driggs Ave. and North 14th St. — Humboldt St. to East River	44,274	146
11	Richardson and Ten Eyck St. to Broadway and Flushing Ave. — Bushwick Ave. to Union and Manhattan Aves.	42,517	98
12	East New York Ave. to Sutter Ave. — Van Sinderen Ave. to Hopkinson Ave.	17,330	44
13	Hamilton Ave., Coles St., Court St. and Bush St. — to New York Bay	20,564	120
	Total Brooklyn Slum Areas	147,794	494
	Total Slum Areas	1,042,404	1,573

Table B shows the nature of the offense, the record of each area with respect to each offense, and the record of the "non-slum" territory in each borough outside of the chosen thirteen areas. As the selection of the "slum" areas was arbitrary, comparisons between them and "non-slum" areas cannot be accepted without qualification. The validity of some of the conclusions is conditioned by this division into "good" and "bad" areas, and the authors of the report, who did not select the areas, are quick to point this out. In view of the scientific spirit shown throughout in their report, however, the general conclusions presented, such as the following, are deserving of thoughtful attention.

1. The severity of crime and juvenile delinquency is greater in Manhattan than Brooklyn.

2. The most offender concentrations occur in Manhattan. They coincide with population congestion, vary in degree of severity, and are mainly in Harlem and the lower East Side. Although largely within, they are not confined exclusively to substandard areas.

3. The slum areas collectively have higher offender ratios to population and to the square block than the non-slum sections of Manhattan. The incidence rates of juvenile delinquency

1. *Ibid.*, Table 2.

TABLE B

Distribution of Arrests — 1930 [1]

By Residence of Offender and Offense

Offense	Manhattan Areas											Brooklyn Areas							Non-Res. Man. Bkn.	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8A	Slum total	Non-slum	9	10	11	12	13	Slum total	Non-slum		
I *Offenses against the person*																				
Abortion	3	1	1	3	1	6	..	1	..	16	28	..	1	..	..	..	1	24	9	78
Assault, felony	81	34	161	95	21	150	3	256	75	876	590	43	24	21	17	22	127	924	228	2,745
Attempted assault, felony	1	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	11	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	2	23
Assault, misdemeanor	96	23	128	116	23	99	2	86	100	673	596	16	39	44	28	12	139	1,970	420	3,798
Homicide	20	6	46	15	16	46	..	46	14	209	186	7	6	10	6	4	33	434	172	1,034
Kidnapping	2	..	1	3	1	1	..	1	..	9	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	13	33
Minor: endangering Health of	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	3
Total	203	64	341	232	62	302	5	390	189	1,788	1,415	66	70	75	51	38	300	3,367	844	7,714
II *Offenses against chastity*																				
Abduction	..	1	6	1	..	1	..	1	..	10	29	1	..	2	..	1	4	24	12	79
Degeneracy	6	1	6	1	1	5	..	2	..	22	15	..	1	..	..	..	1	8	13	59
Indecent exposure	7	8	8	10	5	10	..	5	3	56	146	3	6	8	4	1	22	232	52	508
Disorderly house	1	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	2	6	25	3	.	1	1	..	5	14	4	54
Incest	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	1	..	1	9	1	15
Minor: impairing morals of	12	1	5	5	6	8	..	5	2	44	39	6	..	3	..	1	10	88	16	197
Obscene prints	1	5	6	5	..	2	..	2	1	22	21	1	..	6	..	..	7	38	12	100
Prostitution	312	36	189	141	17	160	1	581	168	1,605	1,008	120	12	33	20	13	198	918	342	4,071
Rape	14	8	42	30	10	62	2	68	31	267	196	10	16	14	2	4	46	398	54	961
Attempted rape	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16	8	27
Seduction	2	..	..	4	..	7	..	..	2	15	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	22	5	51
Sodomy	2	1	4	..	1	10	..	5	1	24	22	3	1	..	..	..	4	39	7	96
Total	357	62	268	198	40	267	3	671	210	2,076	1,512	147	36	67	28	20	298	1,806	526	6,218
III *Offenses against the family*																				
Abandonment	5	2	8	4	3	3	..	4	4	33	40	..	1	2	..	3	6	66	41	186
Bigamy	2	..	2	3	1	4	..	..	4	16	21	1	..	..	..	..	1	25	18	81
Improper guardianship	5	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	8	28
Minor: failing to provide for	3	..	4	3	..	..	..	4	..	14	5	1	..	..	1	..	2	9	..	30
Paternity proceedings	4	1	4	2	2	14	..	31	8	66	42	..	5	1	1	4	11	188	35	342
Total	19	3	20	12	6	21	..	39	16	136	110	2	6	3	2	7	20	299	102	667

IV *Offenses against property*																				
Arson	3	..	2	1	1	..	..	5	3	15	13	1	..	..	1	1	3	25	5	61
Burglary	71	32	112	66	33	132	..	180	52	678	406	..	15	17	20	10	62	614	232	1,992
Attempted burglary	3	..	4	7	1	3	..	..	2	20	12	7	..	4	2	..	13	28	16	89
Forgery	11	4	16	9	3	11	..	11	5	70	86	4	1	5	..	..	10	126	85	377
Grand larceny	146	70	156	91	55	161	4	229	60	972	971	24	16	27	17	15	99	1,392	706	4,140
Attempted grand larceny	5	..	13	5	..	..	..	7	..	30	34	2	..	..	..	..	2	15	20	101
Fraud	13	4	14	7	2	1	..	6	4	51	95	3	1	1	9	..	14	78	57	295
Petit larceny	103	44	252	117	41	109	6	267	63	1,002	935	17	20	23	12	6	78	1,162	900	4,077
Attempted petit larceny	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	7	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	12
Receiving stolen goods	4	3	15	13	2	6	..	6	2	51	47	1	..	5	2	1	9	89	35	231
Robbery	50	31	86	34	13	107	4	126	45	496	305	12	11	15	2	3	43	475	162	1,481
Attempted robbery	1	..	5	..	1	4	..	..	..	11	13	2	..	3	..	..	5	17	10	56
Unlawful entry	8	13	19	6	4	5	..	2	11	68	55	5	3	1	..	..	9	51	23	206
Total	421	201	694	356	156	539	14	843	247	3,471	2,973	78	67	101	65	36	347	4,075	2,252	13,118
V *Offenses against public peace and order*																				
Bribery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	23	17	41
Conspiracy	1	..	..	2	..	2	..	1	..	6	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	21	19	62
Contempt of court	1	1	5	7	1	..	..	..	1	16	16	..	..	6	..	..	6	152	5	195
Disorderly conduct	1,659	1,070	4,265	2,071	603	3,135	46	4,015	1,429	18,293	13,187	226	331	542	412	219	1,703	16,561	5,642	55,413
Extortion	5	3	5	5	1	3	..	6	2	30	33	..	..	1	..	..	1	34	24	122
Fortune telling	3	1	2	..	1	6	..	1	2	16	25	3	..	4	..	..	7	21	..	69
Fugitive from justice	46	5	9	11	..	14	..	25	6	116	152	1	1	..	1	1	4	89	115	476
Gambling	391	209	962	266	238	566	17	863	385	3,897	2,375	74	72	155	80	42	423	3,114	549	10,358
Intoxication	197	50	197	132	96	327	5	197	89	1,290	1,358	54	56	44	7	55	216	2,043	1,143	6,050
Jostling	1	..	..	2	..	1	..	2	3	9	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	15
Malicious mischief	19	10	28	24	6	16	..	19	13	135	140	4	10	7	5	2	28	168	72	343
Narcotics	77	14	139	37	7	36	..	55	54	419	293	19	3	5	..	5	32	181	107	1,032
Perjury	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	6	..	1	..	..	..	1	22	5	37
Possession of burglar's tools	3	1	9	1	2	1	..	..	..	17	11	..	1	..	1	..	2	22	6	58
Possession of weapons	53	8	77	47	9	108	1	99	37	439	278	10	2	19	6	5	42	421	143	1,323
Vagrancy	55	14	108	72	12	81	1	116	59	518	531	12	2	6	..	6	26	396	1,142	2,613
Violation of parole	3	1	12	9	4	12	..	13	2	56	49	..	3	1	5	2	11	84	27	227
Violation of probation	..	3	3	4	1	..	..	5	1	17	29	..	6	1	..	..	7	133	19	205
Wayward minor	15	6	51	23	9	45	2	20	11	182	159	4	3	4	2	3	16	277	144	778
Total	2,529	1,396	5,875	2,713	990	4,353	72	5,437	2,094	25,459	18,660	407	491	795	519	340	2,552	23,765	9,181	79,617
Felonies — unclassified	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	10	27
Misdemeanors — unclassified	10	12	12	7	6	5	..	14	2	68	96	4	1	1	5	..	11	116	12	303
Juvenile delinquents	120	53	151	147	32	348	11	401	112	1,375	591	16	50	57	40	14	177	2,004	352	4,499
Grand total	3,660	1,791	7,361	3,665	1,292	5,835	105	7,796	2,870	34,375	25,357	720	721	1,099	710	455	3,705	35,447	13,279	112,163

1. *The Slum and Crime*, opp. p. 60.

FIG. 84

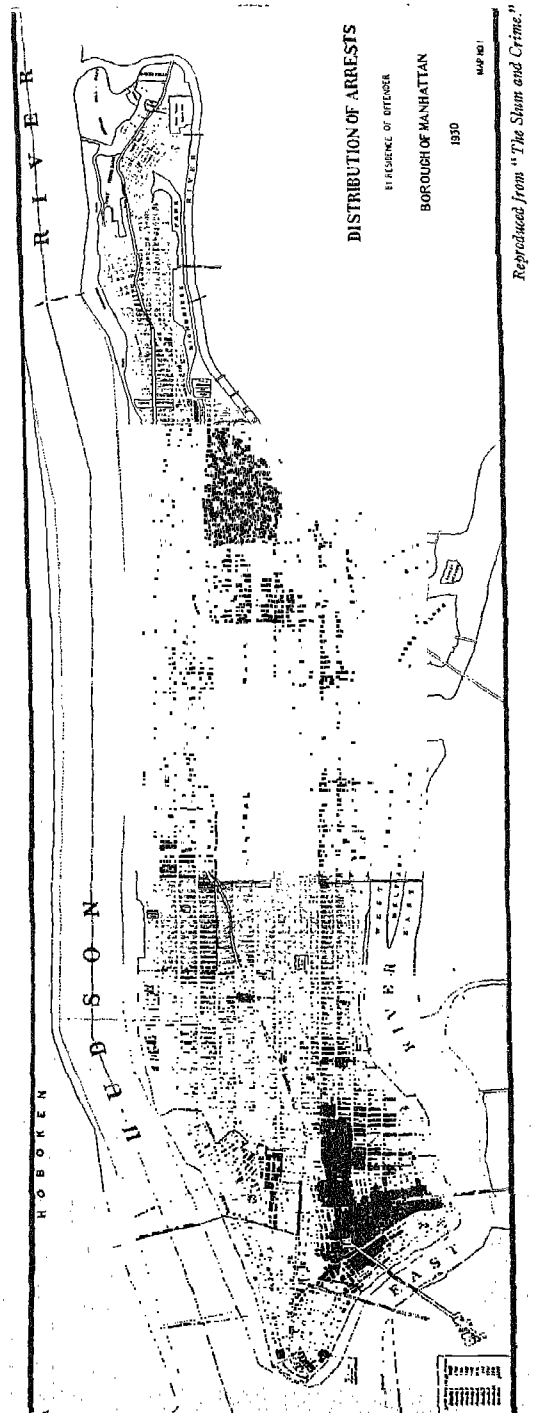

DISTRIBUTION OF ARRESTS
BY RESIDENCE OF OFFENDER
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
1930
MAP NO. 1
HUDSON RIVER
HOBOKEN
EAST RIVER
Reproduced from "The Slum and Crime."

FIG. 85

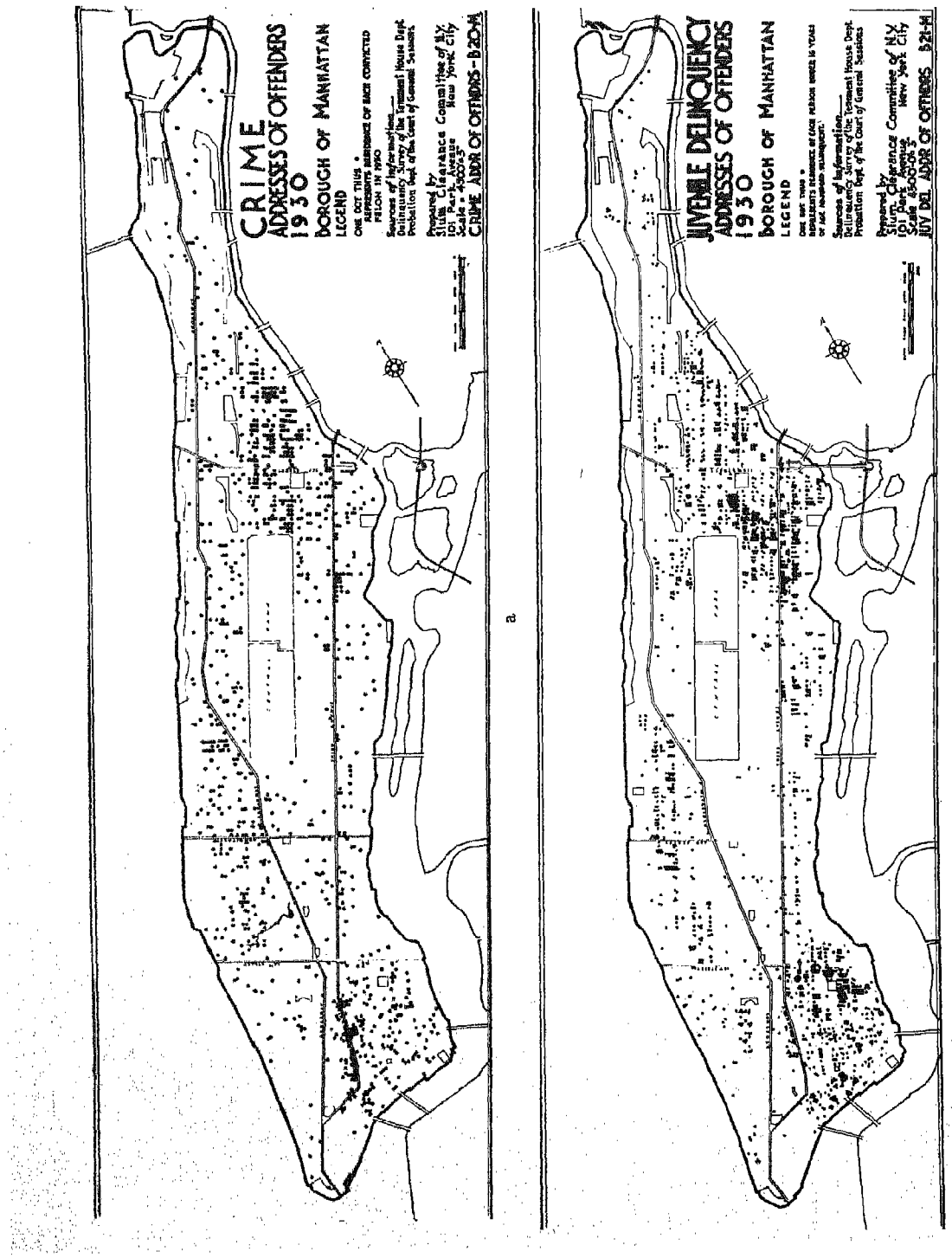
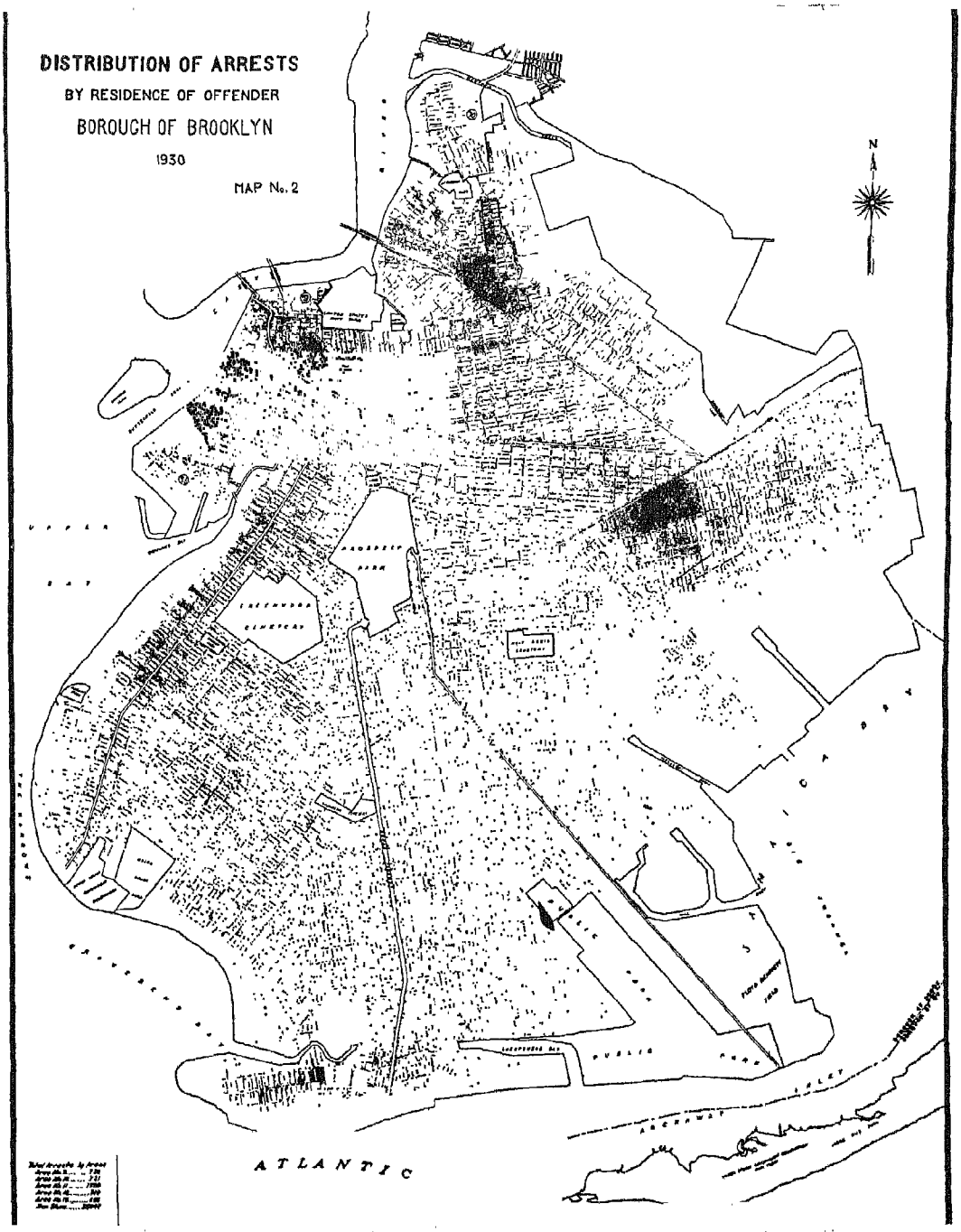

CRIME
ADDRESSES OF OFFENDERS
1930
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
LEGEND
ONE DOT THUS •
REPRESENTS RESIDENCE OF MAN CONVICTED
FELON IN 1930
Sources of Information—
Delinquency Survey of the Tenement House Dept.
Probation Dept. of the Court of General Sessions
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
Scale 4500ft.
CRIME ADDR OF OFFNDRS—B 20-M
a
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
ADDRESSES OF OFFENDERS
1930
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
LEGEND
Sources of Information—
Delinquency Survey of the Tenement House Dept.
Probation Dept. of the Court of General Sessions
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
Scale 4500ft.
JUV DEL ADDR OF OFFNDRS B21-H

FIG. 86



Reproduced from "The Slum and Crime."

FIG. 87

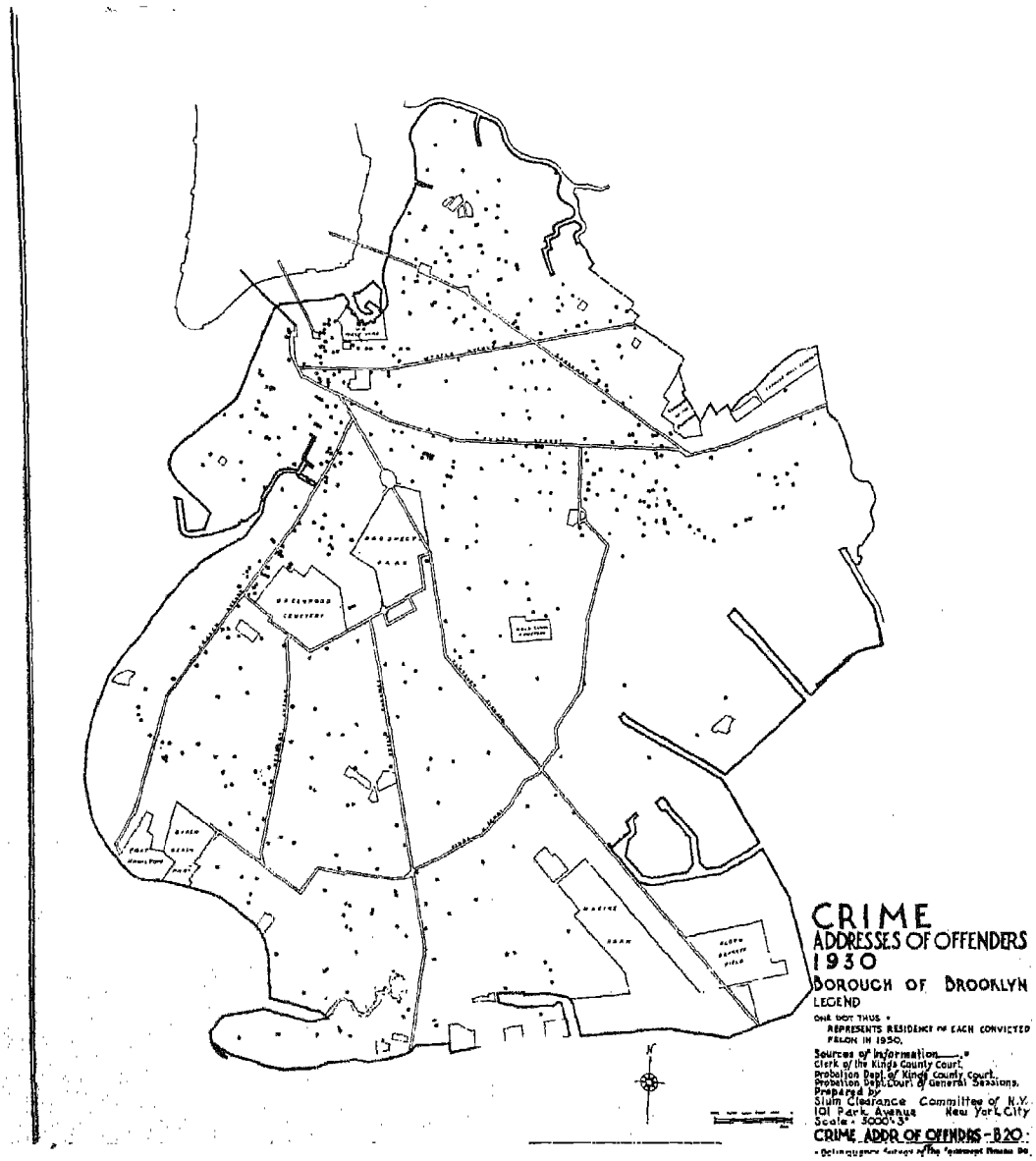
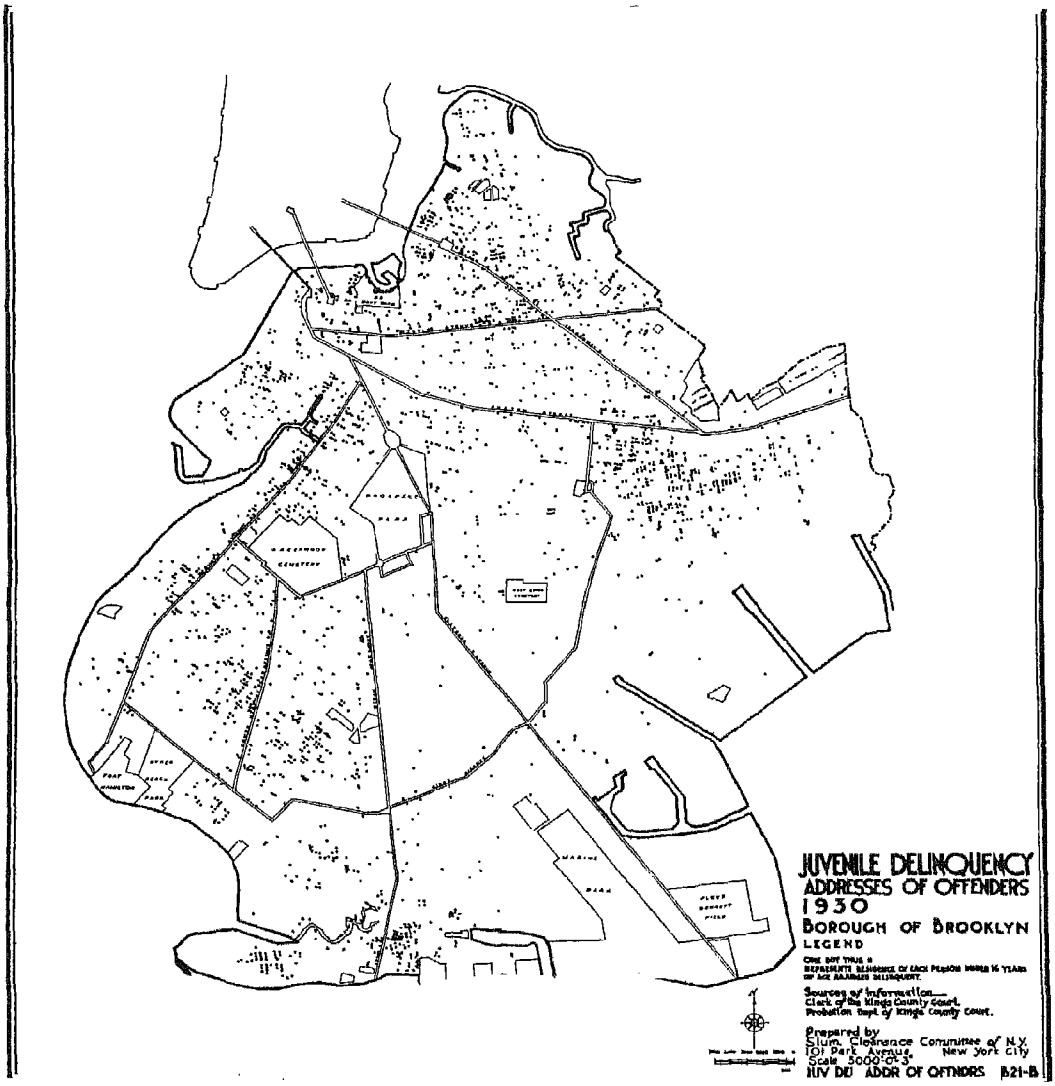

CRIME
ADDRESSES OF OFFENDERS
1930
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
LEGEND
ONE DOT THUS •
REPRESENTS RESIDENCE OF EACH CONVICTED
FELON IN 1930.
Sources of Information
Clerk of the Kings County Court.
Probation Dept of Kings county Court.
Probation Dept. Court of General Sessions.
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue New York City
Scale - 5000'=1"
CRIME ADDR OF OFFENDERS - B20.

FIG. 88


JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
ADDRESSES OF OFFENDERS
1930
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
LEGEND
Sources of Information—
Clerk of the Kings County Court.
Probation Dept of Kings County Court.
Prepared by
Slum Clearance Committee of N.Y.
101 Park Avenue, New York City
Scale 5000'=1"
JUV DEL ADDR OF OFFNDRS B21-B

in the slum are high and suggest the possibility that adult patterns of misconduct are emulated freely.

4. One third the total number of felons convicted in Manhattan and Brooklyn during 1930 resided in the substandard areas of the first named borough. While the larger proportion committed crimes within their own neighborhood, more felons went out of these areas than entered them for the commission of offenses.

5. Offender mobility is away from the substandard areas in Manhattan; towards them in Brooklyn. More Brooklyn delinquents went to Manhattan than vice versa. Offender mobility between the slum areas is greatest where they are adjacent.

6. The higher incidence rates of crime and juvenile delinquency indicate that the substandard are major delinquency areas. Conclusions about the causes of this situation cannot be arrived at scientifically unless the case method is the approach used.[1]

Although location spot maps such as are shown in Figures 84, 85, 86, 87, and 88 present an interesting picture and serve to locate the points of concentration of arrests, crime, and juvenile delinquency, they do not relate the number of arrests to the population in the neighborhood. Such an effect is brought about in Tables C, D, E, and F,[2] which give, among other things, the rate per 1,000 population for "slum" and "non-slum" areas. The rate of arrests is considerably greater in "slum" than in "non-slum" areas.

After calling attention to the inadequate playground facilities and other neighborhood deficiencies that go hand in hand with delinquency, the Committee presents a table which deserves further study in correlation with health rates in health areas throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn. This table (G), which needs to be reduced to a per capita basis for greatest effectiveness, is on pages 410–412.

TABLE C

OFFENDER FREQUENCY IN MANHATTAN SLUM AREA

Offenders	Actual number studied	Per cent of total[3]	Per 1,000 population	Per square block
Arrests	34,375	31	42.96	31.86
Convictions				
Juvenile delinquents	1,107	30	8.04	1.02
Female offenders	1,177	38	3.68	1.09
Petty offenders	10,770	27	16.25	10.00
Misdemeanants	3,460	30	5.02	3.20
Felons	596	33	.90	.55
Total	17,110			
Median rate		28.5	21.38	15.86

1. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
2. *Ibid.*, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8, pp. 50–55.
3. "All offenses implying delinquency were transcribed. Eliminations, however, were necessary both before and after the transcription. Traffic, violations of Corporate Ordinances and offenses against Federal statutes, notably the defunct Volstead Act, were ruled out at the start of the survey. Others like violations of the Workmen's Compensation Act, violations of the Sanitary Code, the Education Law or Peddling equally were disregarded." *Ibid.*, p. 36.

TABLE D

Offender Frequency in Manhattan Non-Slum Section

Offenders	Actual number studied	Per cent of total	Per 1,000 population	Per square block
Arrests	25,357	22	28.12	15.79
Convictions				
Juvenile delinquents	470	13	4.59	.29
Female offenders	914	20	2.25	.57
Petty offenders	9,618	24	12.03	5.99
Misdemeanants	2,593	23	3.24	1.62
Felons	452	25	.57	.28
Total	14,047			
Median rate		23.4	15.58	8.75

TABLE E

Offender Frequency in Brooklyn Slum Area

Offenders	Actual number studied	Per cent of total	Per 1,000 population	Per square block
Arrests	3,705	3	28.95	7.50
Convictions				
Juvenile delinquents	226	6	7.62	.46
Female offenders	95	3	2.05	.19
Petty offenders	1,286	3	13.08	2.60
Misdemeanants	378	3	3.85	.76
Felons	57	3	.58	.12
Total	2,042			
Median rate		3.4	15.96	3.59

TABLE F

Offender Frequency in Brooklyn Non-Slum Section

Offenders	Actual number studied	Per cent of total	Per 1,000 population	Per square block
Arrests	35,447	31.5	16.67	4.66
Convictions				
Juvenile delinquents	1,857	49.5	4.75	.24
Female offenders	553	18	.64	.07
Petty offenders	12,224	30.5	7.05	1.61
Misdemeanants	3,328	29	1.92	.44
Felons	489	26.5	.28	.06
Total	18,451			
Median rate		30.8	8.68	2.42

TABLE G

Distribution of Offender Group by Health Areas[1]

Manhattan and Brooklyn — 1930

Manhattan Health Areas

	1	2.1	2.2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Juvenile	6	13	6	..	9	6	12	45	61	17	42	22	33	48	11	25	22	42	23	29	50	35	34	14	11	52	29	31	12
Female	4	3	7	7	17	13	18	35	70	30	62	28	117	160	28	51	59	11	28	48	45	6	11	48	24	31	5	58	5
Petty offenders	71	85	52	85	132	99	182	286	349	161	353	171	413	326	97	368	538	216	198	233	319	95	118	217	248	389	123	278	215
Misdemeanants	41	27	24	24	51	37	78	153	275	79	196	96	191	189	35	187	309	90	57	104	56	43	84	77	71	74	73	95	44
Felons	5	7	1	2	6	3	5	19	44	7	32	8	33	40	11	45	22	8	13	18	13	8	9	13	21	11	9	11	4
Total	127	135	90	118	215	158	295	538	799	294	685	325	787	763	182	676	950	367	319	432	483	187	256	369	375	557	239	473	280

	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57
Juvenile	21	28	8	12	31	2	8	2	13	17	19	9	2	12	19	9	10	19	18	7	9	14	27	17	6	8	20	20	14
Female	12	20	41	36	17	29	32	9	9	9	54	47	10	3	7	2	5	42	101	29	11	8	59	59	25	17	40	37	19
Petty offenders	209	75	160	211	126	109	219	162	201	116	119	310	90	97	74	80	119	261	440	228	163	264	438	1,236	320	248	648	513	660
Misdemeanants	40	50	43	56	64	33	47	19	45	28	67	85	5	55	34	17	51	98	164	52	22	33	90	300	44	35	149	129	56
Felons	6	8	6	19	12	3	13	4	15	5	13	21	1	1	3	4	6	9	22	15	10	6	33	45	10	11	29	24	14
Total	288	181	258	334	250	176	319	196	283	175	272	472	108	168	137	112	191	429	745	331	215	325	647	1,657	405	319	886	723	763

	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	Manhattan Total
Juvenile	17	19	49	8	27	34	12	15	19	26	17	19	13	12	17	11	7	20	22	16	20	15	21	1,577
Female	26	17	11	10	26	8	15	19	9	10	6	10	7	9	13	7	14	10	8	13	10	4	11	2,091
Petty offenders	238	159	172	226	315	101	237	239	122	122	214	225	393	331	183	75	349	365	155	1,237	325	170	122	20,388
Misdemeanants	53	47	42	29	86	24	54	38	19	26	43	83	58	37	28	12	66	117	28	254	80	21	37	6,053
Felons	13	7	6	5	11	6	7	5	9	8	6	23	12	9	9	3	8	24	12	34	18	6	11	1,048
Total	347	249	280	278	465	173	325	316	178	192	286	360	483	398	250	108	444	536	225	1,554	453	216	202	31,157

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Juvenile	19	15	18	73	26	32	24	16	12	47	11	6	10	45	37	29	31	39	9	14	13	9	15	20	15	16	19	16	28
Female	4	6	6	8	9	15	8	7	4	61	58	31	11	8	8	18	8	17	10	6	7	0	27	21	3	9	22	6	3
Petty offenders	75	162	121	178	123	127	102	121	105	421	281	299	126	244	139	192	76	105	117	200	105	63	464	359	127	257	224	175	103
Misdemeanants	25	25	31	57	53	43	73	42	43	134	125	71	81	94	48	57	52	40	38	50	31	27	82	85	31	80	37	88	35
Felons	2	5	2	5	7	7	12	8	7	15	18	6	5	3	8	9	7	2	4	5	4	2	15	9	2	8	16	6	6
Total	125	213	178	321	218	224	219	194	171	678	493	413	233	394	240	305	174	203	178	275	160	101	603	494	178	370	318	291	175

	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53.1	53.2	54	55.1	55.2
Juvenile	13	28	17	13	20	8	24	20	14	5	37	20	23	32	28	9	15	22	12	4	8	26	25	6	4	10	9	11
Female	6	7	4	3	6	4	11	3	1	0	22	10	1	6	5	1	5	3	4	5	4	1	4	1	1	3	2	4
Petty offenders	112	109	82	47	87	39	183	126	77	47	330	232	312	206	307	82	120	113	109	71	86	125	138	72	47	92	58	90
Misdemeanants	55	43	37	35	29	20	52	49	22	17	141	57	43	37	57	14	31	26	29	30	23	26	33	15	14	33	23	17
Felons	4	11	6	3	5	1	7	5	3	2	9	4	12	9	17	1	6	8	7	1	7	4	5	3	1	3	5	1
Total	190	198	146	101	147	72	277	203	117	71	539	323	391	290	414	107	177	172	161	111	128	182	205	97	67	141	97	123

	56	57	58.1	58.2	59	60	61	62	63	64.1	64.2	64.3	65	66	67	68	69	70	71.1	71.2	72.1	72.2	73.1	73.2	74.1	74.2	75.1
Juvenile	12	63	8	15	59	18	42	28	10	5	15	1	30	20	20	15	15	9	6	16	2	3	3	3	2	2	11
Female	6	9	0	2	8	3	4	3	0	3	1	0	7	4	0	1	4	4	2	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
Petty offenders	245	442	49	125	448	282	188	99	145	53	48	2	281	174	140	65	60	84	28	43	54	33	35	37	47	28	45
Misdemeanants	31	64	11	15	56	36	35	37	25	13	25	2	48	34	16	15	14	13	4	8	21	7	19	8	16	9	8
Felons	3	11	2	3	14	0	0	3	4	3	7	0	1	8	2	4	1	3	1	4	4	1	4	1	4	6	1
Total	297	589	70	160	585	339	269	170	184	77	96	5	367	240	178	100	94	113	41	72	81	46	62	50	69	45	65

Brooklyn Health Areas (Continued)

	75.2	76	77	78.1	78.2	79	80.1	80.2	81.1	81.2	82	83	84	85.1	85.2	86.1	86.2	87.1	87.2	88.1	88.2	89	90	91	Bkn. total
Juvenile	10	8	16	7	5	20	39	16	26	25	33	50	15	10	8	23	30	4	20	8	8	2	69	71	2,083
Female	0	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	3	6	2	2	0	5	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	13	0	648
Petty offenders	53	78	87	53	25	70	62	51	34	55	58	61	60	45	65	55	64	37	72	50	74	10	281	40	13,510
Misdemeanants	7	15	24	9	9	27	15	21	25	10	27	8	16	14	9	29	17	22	18	28	13	3	52	12	3,706
Felons	2	7	2	0	0	8	3	1	4	3	8	4	3	4	6	9	6	2	3	4	3	3	10	1	546
Total	72	110	131	71	40	126	122	91	91	96	132	125	96	73	93	117	118	66	113	91	101	19	425	124	20,493

	Manhattan total	Brooklyn Total	Non Residents	Grand total
Juvenile	1,577	2,083	83	3,743
Female	2,091	648	367	3,106
Petty offenders	20,388	13,510	6,128	40,026
Misdemeanants	6,053	3,706	1,620	11,379
Felons	1,048	546	240	1,834
Total	31,157	20,493	8,438	60,088

1. *The Slum and Crime*, opp. p. 164.

The study, *The Slum and Crime*, has so effectively taken into consideration the findings of its predecessors that extensive mention of them is not necessary. Nevertheless, many previous studies have been made, including those of the Tenement House Committee of 1894 and the Tenement House Commission of 1900, and more recently those of the New York State Crime Commission beginning with the year 1927. On the specific group of crimes related to the social evil there are also the Report of the Committee of Fifteen, formed in 1900, and of its successor, the Committee of Fourteen, whose major analytical report was published in 1910.[1]

With diverse approaches and varying degrees of precision in thinking, these committees have each demonstrated, within the restricted fields of their researches, some relation between slum conditions and the volume of crime. Those studies which have appeared within the last fifteen years have sufficient bearing upon the contemporary situation to warrant brief examination.

The studies for the Crime Commission of New York State were undertaken by a Sub-Commission on Causes, which employed Harry M. Shulman as Research Worker, and Professor Raymond Moley of Columbia University as Research Advisor. An early report dealt with the section of Brooklyn which proved most productive of juvenile delinquency, an area having a ratio of 4.29 delinquency arrests per 1,000 population, which was five times the ratio for Brooklyn as a whole.[2] This district was surrounded on three sides by the waterfront and on the fourth by a growing commercial district. Its population was approximately 113,000, of whom over 41,000 were foreign born. It was an area of wretched housing in which only three houses had been built since 1901, and even these lacked baths and central heating systems. Most heads of the families were longshoremen, which means casual labor. Two hundred and nineteen cases of juvenile delinquency were closely analyzed. The influence of the street, of gang life, of commercial recreation, spare-time pursuits, street trades, and a variety of other factors were studied. The Committee, though chiefly stressing improvement of community recreation, made recommendations for improved sanitation and housing within the district. Although the district was definitely a slum, it is clear that housing did not rate in the study as a major factor in the production of delinquency.

In their report for 1929 the Crime Commission stated, with regard to another study:

> In four small blocks of wretched housing, under an elevated structure, fifty-eight boys and girls, or nearly four times the average for the area, were reported as conduct problems during 1926.

1. See Chapter XVII.
2. "A Study of Delinquency in a District of Kings County by the Sub-Commission on Causes and Effects of Crime," *Report of the Crime Commission*, State of New York, February 28, 1927, p. 332.

The five blocks productive of the greatest amount of juvenile delinquency in 1926 were blocks either of bad housing construction, or bad sanitation, or both, according to the report of tenement house department to the subcommission on causes. In these five blocks, one hundred and sixty-one out of the one hundred and seventy-five tenement buildings were old-law structures, constructed prior to 1901, of the type unqualifiedly condemned as unfit for human habitation. At that time private demolition was going on at a rate that would require two hundred years for the replacement of these houses by modern structures.

Juvenile delinquency among boys was greatest in the portions of the area most devoted to commercial activities.

No direct relationship between congestion of population and degree of delinquency could be found.[1]

The special report of the Sub-Commission on Causes for 1929 dealt with problem boys and their brothers. As the delinquents and their normal brothers were subjected, in general, to the same housing environment, the comparison is of importance. It was found that the problem boys had lower intelligence quotients — seventy-five, as compared with eighty-six for the normal brothers, were inferior in their grasp of school subjects, displayed more frequent school retardation, but were superior to their normal brothers in mechanical ability.[2]

For purposes of convenience, cases were selected from two areas in New York county where juvenile delinquency was known to be a serious problem. . . . These areas were the Lower East Side, from Houston Street to Grand Street, and the Bowery to the East River; East Harlem, from 99th Street to 125th Street and from Madison Avenue to the East River. Within these areas all cases coming to the children's court of New York county during 1927 were chosen as an unselected sampling from which the final group of cases were to be chosen. From this group were eliminated all cases that did not fill these required specifications: Total age range — age 10 to 17; age difference between brothers 4 years or less. Type of offense — theft, burglary or serious misconduct not involving property. Length of family residence in area — 5 years or more. Out of several hundred cases originally chosen, eighty-seven cases filled the requirements of having two brothers within the proper age limits and near enough in age, one known to the court and the other not, as well as the other qualifications. These eighty-seven simmered down, by degrees to forty pairs where the differences in behavior were clear-cut, as described by parents, teachers, case investigators and recreation leaders. Throughout this whole process of selection, no criterion other than those originally chosen was followed save the question: Is the second brother truly non-delinquent.[3]

That the slum is usually the home of the urban delinquent child is acknowledged by all investigators who have conducted broad scale inquiries covering urban communities in their entirety. The areas of isolation, of deteriorating housing, of immigrant population, stand out on delinquency spot maps as sore spots.

The boys studied in this report come from two such areas, one situated in a downtown neighborhood whose delinquency rate for children was 4 per cent and for boys 16–18 a similar

1. *Report of the Crime Commission*, State of New York, 1929, p. 46.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

amount; the other, an uptown Manhattan area where the delinquency rate was slightly less. These two areas, each not more than half a mile square, were selected for this study as being among the highest in juvenile delinquency in the entire city. . . .

In the group of cases studied in this report, the findings that the delinquent boys have been both less intelligent and more unstable than their non-delinquent brothers, gives credence to the view that they were abnormal individuals influenced by abnormal environments, both within their homes and in their own children's world. There is evidence that the environment in which they were reared was abnormal, not alone in its material drabness and harshness, but in the mental quality of their associates and families. There is evidence that while the delinquents themselves were retarded and even feeble in intellect, their non-delinquent brothers and other members of their families were, for the most part, not much higher in intelligence and represented an inferior stratum of mentality. Still further evidence indicates that the ethical standards of many of the families and associates of the delinquents was low and that loose behavior, particularly with regard to theft and other misappropriations of property, was either condoned or at least not vigorously condemned. The inference from these findings is that the delinquents in this group at least were boys who by virtue of their lessened ability to think clearly, to define the social code of right and wrong in terms of their own impulses, to resist sinister suggestions — in a word, by virtue of their mental inferiority to those about them, were prey to the worst influences in their environment.

The group of cases here presented are far too small a number from which to draw conclusions regarding slums in general. They do suggest, however, that our segregated areas of poor housing are areas in which the general intelligence level is below average. If this be true it would profoundly affect our views on the problem of eradicating the slums. A conception of the slum as a simple living area brings many new questions to the foreground. The old concept that the "melting pot" functions through mingling of races would have to be set aside in favor of an approach that recognized the problem of eradicating slums; not primarily as one in sociology, but of one in education. As we have stated elsewhere, the sociological problem of family life in the slum seems to settle itself — the families of better capacities move out. Thus, in New York city, in the ten years following the national policy of immigration restriction, we have seen vast losses in slum population. But the educational problem of dealing with those who remain would thus be intensified.[1]

Other studies by the Sub-Commission on Causes were, more briefly, as follows. In 1926, 145 male offenders thirty years of age and under had been studied by Frederick A. Moran, and "Among the outstanding findings of this study were that these offenders began as school truants and came from slum areas."[2] Then followed a study of 201 truants in New York City schools. The third study was of 251 adolescents all of whom were truants. A high percentage of these boys were found to come from families in which one or more members had police records, but who also lived under conditions of housing congestion.

. . . the survey showed that almost the entire group of cases lived under conditions of extreme poverty and unusually congested housing, in homes that were broken by death or

1. *Ibid*, pp. 210–212.

2. *Report of Crime Commission*, State of New York, 1930, p. 182.

desertion of one or both parents in over one-half of the cases, and in which parental care was rendered ineffective in a large percentage of the cases by the employment of mothers at jobs in addition to household tasks.[1]

With regard to housing congestion they concluded:

There is no significant relation between the number of persons per room and severity of offenses. But in general, the group of 251 cases lived under conditions of housing congestion twice as great as the average poor in congested areas. Unspeakable congestion therefore must have had some relation to the truancy of this group, if not to severer offenses.[2]

Another study was made by the Commission of the residences of the juvenile delinquents in Manhattan in an area south of Third Street and east of the Bowery and Catherine Street, an area of 220,000 population in 1925, of whom somewhat over 157,000 were foreign born.

The Commission's general conclusion, as of 1930, is probably well expressed in the summary of its Brooklyn study published that year.

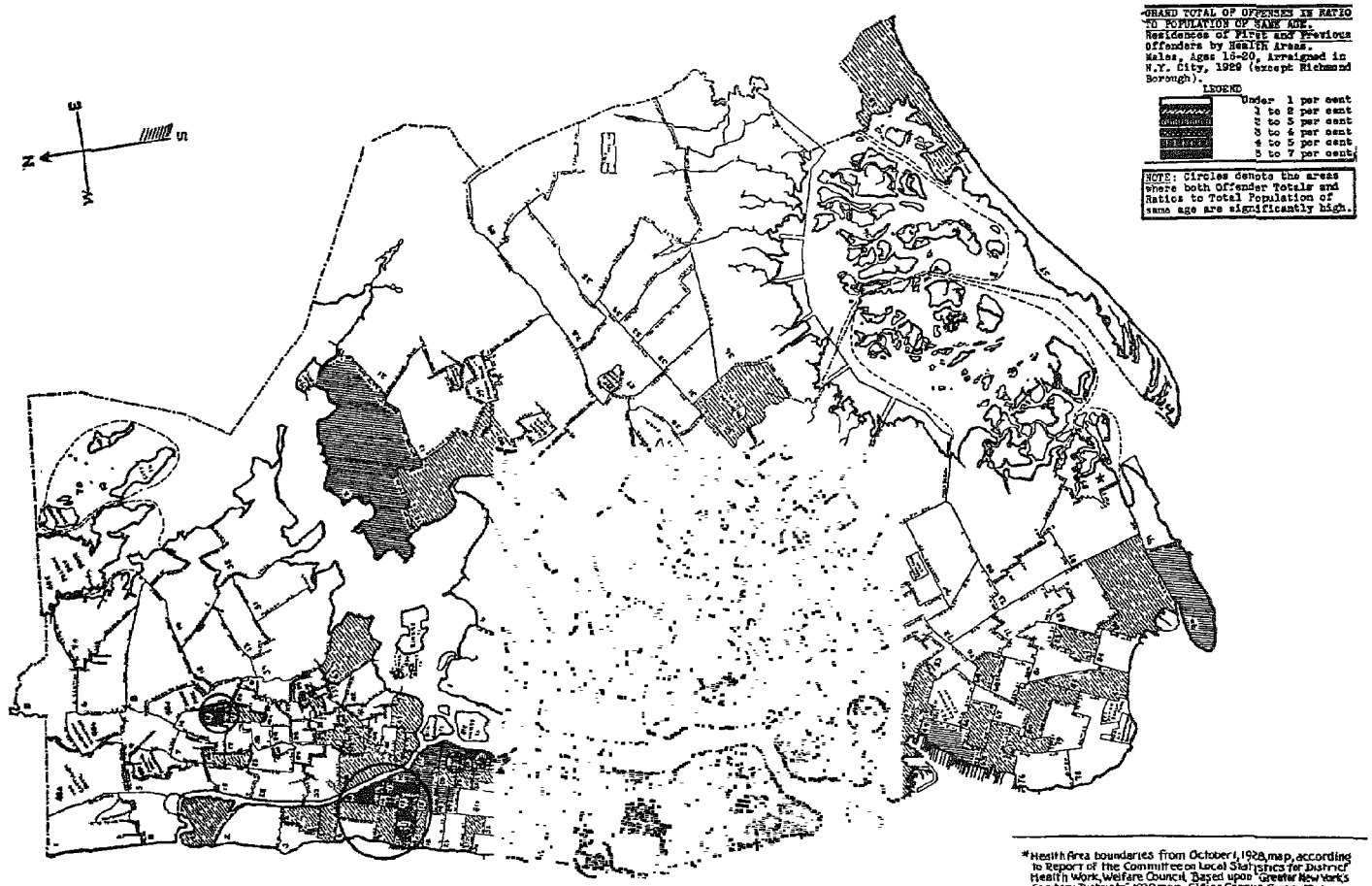
. . . Although the average delinquency ratio was one in twenty, the range varied from zero to one in seven. The ratios are from two to three times the average as we approach the commercial section. In the sanitary district immediately adjacent to the commercial district, one of every seven boys is complained against. . . .

. . . There is no marked relationship between delinquency and congestion. All the sanitary districts near the commercial district are congested, but in the seven sanitary districts remote from it three non-congested and four congested areas had ratios for delinquency below the average.[3]

In 1931, the Sub-Commission on Causes submitted a study entitled "The Youthful Offender," a statistical study of crime among the sixteen-to-twenty-year-old group in New York City. This was also compiled by Harry M. Shulman and is much more elaborate than the preceding studies. The examination covered over 3,000 cases. The areas of both highest frequency and ratio for major arrests among the groups from sixteen to twenty years of age were discovered to be as indicated in the table on page 418.

The factors productive of crime are so multitudinous that housing receives slight attention in the 1931 report. But among 110 families closely analyzed, the concentration of rentals was within the range from $4 to $10 per room per month. The degree of dwelling congestion ranged from less than 1 person per room to 3 per room, the median being 1.47.[4]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 207, 208.



*Health Area boundaries from October 1, 1928, map, according to Report of the Committee on Local Statistics for District Health Work, Welfare Council. Based upon "Greater New York's Sanitary Districts" 1920 map, Cities Census Committee. Prepared by Research Service, New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, in cooperation with the Bureau of Records, New York City Department of Health, for the Welfare Council of New York City.

"*Report of Crime Commission*," 1931.

Fig. 89

THE AREAS OF BOTH HIGHEST FREQUENCY AND RATIO FOR MAJOR ARRESTS AMONG 16–20 GROUP [1]

Health Area number	Borough	Boundaries	Criminality frequency	Percentage
13	Manhattan	Fifth Ave., West 126th St., Lenox Ave., West 140th St.	47	6.43
10	Manhattan	Lexington, West 142d St., Eighth Ave., West 134th St. .	36	4.01
42	Brooklyn	Butler St., Sixth Ave., 5th St., Fourth Ave., 1st St., Nevins St., Douglas St., Fourth Ave.	36	3.81
8	Manhattan	Harlem River, West 140th St., Lenox Ave., West 142d St., Eighth Ave.	34	3.69
45	Manhattan	Hudson River, West 58th St., Tenth Ave., West 46th St.	32	6.85
52*	Manhattan	West 46th St., Sixth Ave., East 42d St., Fourth Ave., East 28th St., Sixth Ave., West 22d St., Tenth Ave., West 26th St., Eighth Ave.	31	5.58
12	Manhattan	Lenox Ave., West 134th St., Eighth Ave., West 126th St.	31	3.63
11	Bronx	Hoffman Ave., Fordham Rd., Southern Boulevard, East 182d St.	30	3.41
21	Manhattan	East 114th St., First Ave., East 109th St., Third Ave. . .	28	4.78
11	Manhattan	Hudson River, West 134th St., Eighth Ave., West 126th St., West 127th St.	27	3.48

* These areas have been circled in the accompanying map Figure 43 [Figure 89], save for Health Area 52, in Manhattan, a mid-town area which undoubtedly represents transient hotel and rooming-house accommodations rather than permanent neighborhood domiciles.

Eight of these ten areas are seen to be in Manhattan, one in Brooklyn, and one in the Bronx.

The conclusion to be drawn tentatively from all of the many studies covered in this chapter is clearly that highest crime ratios are usually to be found in slum areas. Arrests and convictions do not necessarily vary with the density of the population, as is evidenced by the crime areas of the Bronx and Brooklyn and the declining densities in the Lower East Side. M. C. Elmer found in Minneapolis and St. Paul that juvenile delinquency was less correlated with density than with the conditions of "transitional zones." [2] C. R. Shaw, on the other hand, found in Chicago that in general the areas with the highest rates of delinquents fall within those sections of the city having the greatest density of population, excepting, however, the high-class apartment districts.[3] This statement would need considerable qualification if applied to New York, where density does not appear to be a factor of primary significance.

In general, juvenile delinquency rates appear to have some relation to room-overcrowding, which confirms the findings of Burt, in England, and of Gillin.[4]

1. *Report of Crime Commission*, State of New York, 1931, p. 139.
2. M. C. Elmer, *Maladjustment of Youth in Relation to Density of Population*, Proceedings of the American Sociological Society, 1927.
3. C. R. Shaw and H. D. McKay, "Social Factors in Juvenile Delinquency," *Report on the Causes of Crime*, National Commission on Law [illegible], D. C., 1931), II,
4. [illegible]

Room-overcrowding, however, is a consequence of poverty; and poverty in turn may be a consequence of low mentality, mental disorder, imperfect social assimilation of immigrants, or a variety of other factors each of which might be more directly responsible for the criminality than is room-overcrowding.

Throughout these local studies it has proved impossible to isolate any one factor as productive of criminality. A vast array of factors has been considered by the Commission but is not summarized here. If we accept slums as the major geographical source of crime — as we are justified in doing — it is still probable that other factors of the slum environment play a larger rôle than housing. Inadequate supervision of child activities — whether due to broken homes, wage-earning by both parents, or the necessity of having child-play activities proceed in the unfavorable environment of the city streets — is of much greater significance than housing. Such slum conditions, however, might be eliminated by well conceived slum-rebuilding projects which would provide playgrounds in the center of the block, play supervision, nurseries for young children, and a variety of other features. Slum rebuilding would, therefore, mean reduction of crime.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EFFECTS OF BAD HOUSING IN TERMS OF CRIME AND OTHER ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

No adequate statistical studies of the causes of crime which properly isolate housing factors are available.[1] Nor does it seem probable that housing factors can be sufficiently isolated from other environmental factors, or from conditions of family life, moral training, and the mental and emotional make-up of the individual, to make such a study convincing. Bad housing conditions are generally accompanied by conditions of poverty, ignorance, malnutrition, or evil associations. Attempts to demonstrate statistically the influence of the dwelling upon morality, like that of Dr. E. Laspeyres in his *Der Einfluss der Wohnung auf die Sittlichkeit*, are wholly unconvincing. We may, however, agree with William Adrian Bonger [2] that, in spite of the difficulty of distinguishing good conduct from bad, and of separating the effect of bad housing from other influences operative at the same time, "*there is a relationship between housing and conduct.*"

Bad housing in itself does not produce criminality, immorality, intemperance, or other vices. All behavior, good or bad, is a resultant of the interaction of personality, which is intricate and complex, with environment, which is equally complex. Most of the factors in personality and environment are unknown and, certainly for the present, unknowable. Heredity, training, and experience determine susceptibility to environmental influences. A home of slum environment which apparently produces criminality in one individual may leave his brothers and sisters unscathed.[3] It is because of differences in individual make-up that one man's food is another man's poison. It is, however, an accepted social responsibility to protect individuals from conditions which to them would be deleterious even if not harmful to all others. This justifies the attempt to ascertain relations of housing and slum-living on the one hand, and of criminality and other social behavior on the other.

The influence of home conditions, as distinguished from housing factors, is easily demonstrated from case histories, and ably elaborated in the book by

1. Several paragraphs of this chapter are borrowed from the author's "Improved Housing as a Means of Crime Prevention," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Philadelphia, May 1926.

2. [illegible]

3. [illegible]

Breckinridge and Abbott on *The Delinquent Child and the Home.* But as might be expected, in all the many cases described in which undesirable housing conditions were found, such as overcrowding, the lodger problem, defective sanitation, and poor standards of maintenance, there are other factors of home life which might be sufficient in themselves to account for the delinquency. We are also not sure in any given case whether bad housing conditions caused or resulted from these other factors.

It may, however, still be reasonably argued (1) that bad housing conditions may reduce the physical health of members of the household and thus reduce resistance to temptation, and (2) that housing conditions may be directly conducive to contamination of the moral life — overcrowding, discomfort, lack of privacy, and improper facilities for home life may drive the members of the family to spend their leisure away from the home, which for many inevitably means subjection to another group of unwholesome influences.

The moral life of the individual is unquestionably affected by his physical health. As Professor MacCunn has shown in his *Making of Character*, good health is a prime condition of "practical energy." "A weak or sickly body is a grievous moral disability, in so far as by narrowing the range of contact with life it stunts the character." Such lack of energy and weakness of body, which may be caused by housing conditions, may be the basis of that physical inferiority in certain persons among our criminal population which Charles Goring emphasizes in his statistical study entitled *The English Convict.* It should be remembered, however, that the latter study deals with a specialized group of the criminal population. Though it is difficult to demonstrate this point, it seems more probable that housing conditions, by reducing physical energy, may reduce, at the same time, the moral energy of individuals to resist the opportunities for evil which slum conditions so generally offer. Doubtless it is usually the marginal individual, whose moral training has not been good and whose moral standards are therefore not high, who thus becomes involved in anti-social behavior.

MacCunn submits further that good health is the basis of moral endurance:

> The weaker the body is the more it commands. It commands in the hour when we cannot face our willing work, or when we wince like cowards under demands that shake the unstrung nerves, or when it makes us, in spite of resolutions, morbid, irritable, wrong-headed in our estimates of men and things.

To this, he adds that

> bodily health is also a condition of all soundness of practical judgment. For though health and cheerfulness may not bring wisdom, they afford securities against unwisdom in some of its most familiar forms. Even the salt of the earth may thus on occasion be betrayed, by nothing more

dignified than physical exhaustion or irritability, into judgments peevish, uncharitable, precipitate.

There are, however, other ways in which conditions of health affect behavior. Thus if venereal disease is acquired innocently from the common toilet, bed linen, or towels,[1] such disease, through incessant irritation and the focussing of attention upon sex, may lead its victim into a type of criminal behavior to which he would not otherwise be responsive. Insomnia, from the incessant noises and invasions of privacy of the tenement-house district, may be a means of developing a morbid irritability that would lead, in certain social situations, to assault and battery or other forms of criminality. Thus certain factors in bad housing increase susceptibility of certain, but not all, individuals to specific types of misbehavior. It is needless here to multiply instances of this sort of thing; case records of delinquents will supply abundant evidence.

Dark hallways of tenements provide opportunity for sexual misbehavior, and many young girls have reported to probation officers that assault in such hallways occasioned their first delinquency. The use of vacant buildings in slum districts, and sometimes also cellars and sheds, as meeting places for sexual degenerates, and for juvenile gamblers, has also been reported. Here again the housing conditions of the slum contribute to criminality by provision of an opportunity for unsupervised activity. Dark hallways, vacant buildings, and sheds can be eliminated in any slum-rebuilding project.

The crowding of ignorant and badly trained persons in our tenements may result in frequent cases of grudges and quarrels, which sometimes end in a call for the police and the beginning of a record in the criminal court.

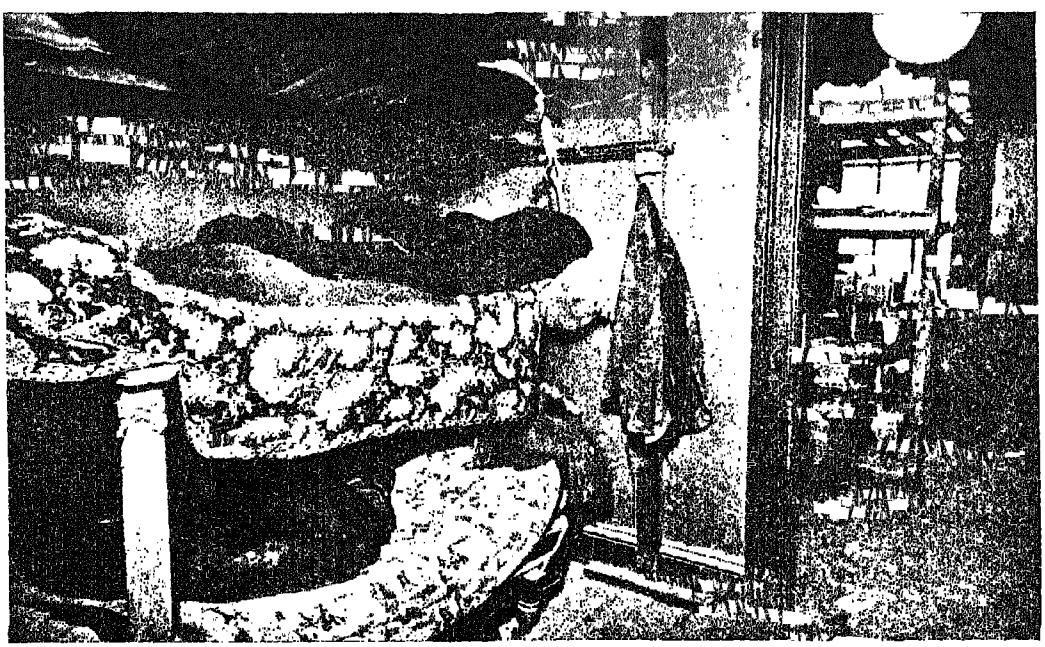
Overcrowding is an outstanding condition in the tenement life of our industrial population. Surveys of housing conditions made in more than seventy American cities have shown it to be a factor present in each. It takes two main forms: either the crowding of large families into a tenement of two or three rooms, or sometimes into a single furnished room; or else the taking of lodgers to live with the family in quarters too small to make privacy possible. Frequently, this means that children of both sexes have to sleep several to a bed, or in the same room or bed with their parents, or in the same room with lodgers. This almost inevitably means that there can be no provision for privacy or decency, and results in sexual precocity and in many cases promiscuity, which may, of course, in time lead to a criminal record.

There is probably no one correlation between housing conditions and the

1. See p. 394.



a Overcrowding — bedroom in Bronx tenement showing six beds, 1900.



b. Bedroom in rear of shop, 1900.

violation of our criminal statutes as important or as serious in its social consequences as this. Cyril Burt expresses this cogently in his book, *The Young Delinquent*:

> To view the home in isolation from the individual, to deal with environment as a thing apart, to picture its bad effects as an external deposit which may stick for a while, but can be easily wiped away from the surface, becomes utterly fallacious. Some natures remain unsoiled though sunk for years in mud: others are porous and penetrable; and the grime works into the grain. It is the personal reaction to a given situation that makes a man a criminal, not the situation itself. It is not bad surroundings alone that create delinquency, but the workings of these bad surroundings on the thoughts and feelings of a susceptible mind.

Somewhat less tangible but of unquestioned significance is the effect of home discomforts upon the conduct of the individual. To return from school or from the day's work to a dwelling of three or four dark, malodorous, and crowded rooms, invaded by the noises of brawling neighbors, crying children, and the rumbling of passing traffic, and then to find nothing of beauty or cheer, no convenient place to read or play or entertain one's friends, is likely to lead either to sullen indolence or to profound discontent. Escape is possible, however, for those whose spirit is not yet broken. It is the usual recourse of the adolescent boy or girl, if not of the parents. So from the physical and mental suffocation of the tenement they thrust themselves upon the streets and into the excitements which the night life of the city may offer to persons of their interests and backgrounds. This "expulsive factor" of bad housing drives the individual to the streets, where he may be confronted by evil influences. Reduced as he is in physical and moral resistance by the condition of the dwelling which he calls "home," and obsessed with a justifiable desire for gaiety and adventure and release from the thralldom of intolerable circumstance, it is scarcely strange if he succumbs to moral hazards and becomes involved in socially undesirable or anti-social activity.

If settlement houses, public libraries, night schools, or other constructive agencies have succeeded in reaching and interesting the child or adult, more may be gained than lost by withdrawal from the home circle. If not, the commercialized recreations, such as dance halls, movies, pool-rooms, and saloons, may exercise an unwholesome influence. As these facilities are not free, the habit develops in many of the young girls of the district, in the absence of a "boy friend" who has a job, of "picking up" some promising stranger and letting him take what liberties he wants in payment for an evening's entertainment. Many case histories of girl delinquents show that an innocent and natural desire for fun may be responsible in such circumstances for the first delinquencies. One notes in these cases the "expulsive factor" of the home, as well as social neglect — the absence

of adequate and universal provision for interesting, entertaining, and at the same time constructive outlets for natural interests.

Among adolescents there is very little visiting in each other's homes and little opportunity for home games or entertainment in the crowded, uninviting tenement quarters. While the daughters of a household, individually or in groups of two or three, may saunter along the tenement streets, or those of the nearest areas of commercialized recreations, in search of adventure, their brothers tend to meet at some established street-corner, pool-room, shed, or cellar, in groups of from ten to twenty known as "gangs." The gang in its initial stage is a natural drifting together of boys of approximately the same age, interest, and district. It is a like-minded social group formed in response to a fundamental impulse, usually informal, and lasting often from puberty to adult life, with very little change of personnel throughout the period.[1]

In spite of the popular connotation of the term "gang," most gangs are probably relatively harmless in that their activities are neither better nor worse than the individual activities of the boys who make up the membership. Some gangs are little more than informal athletic groups. However, they are all more or less characterized by low conversation and by the practice of annoying passersby or unfriendly shopkeepers of the vicinity. Some gangs, in search of adventure, travel a bit through the outskirts of the city, and engage in fights with other gangs or organized depredations upon property. Petty pilfering, usually from neighboring pushcarts or shops, is a common activity but is not necessarily confined to the immediate vicinity, especially as the gang members grow older. Some engage in sexual indulgence, either with their group of girls or through perversions.

Settlement houses are alert to reach the gangs of their vicinity in their early stages and deflect them from imitation of the notorious bad gangs of the district to wholesome activities in athletics, debating clubs, and so on. The major method is to reach the gang leader and make him an ally of the settlement house, and develop, through him, a higher loyalty to the settlement house and neighborhood interests. Effective work of this sort is done in many tenement districts, but some gangs escape its benefits.

Thus the "expulsive factor" of the home, combined with the natural impulse to gang formation, combined in turn with the destructive influences of the tenement district and inadequate social supervision or neglect, provides a medium in which criminality may develop. Some of the gangs of young boys, seeking to fulfill legitimate, fun-loving interests, become in time criminal gangs with their

1. Gangs have been widely studied See especially Hall, *Adolescence*; Puffer, *Boys' Gangs*; Forbush, *The Boy Problem*; Thrasher, *The Gang*; and President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 177–179.

entire professional activity devoted to money-making forms of anti-social behavior, even on occasion facilitated by the use of firearms. The bootlegger, gunman, and racketeer are thus in a sense an outgrowth of the "expulsive factor" of the slum home.

It should not be understood from the foregoing statements that crime originates exclusively under bad housing conditions. Gangs may be formed by boys of any economic group. Home life may be uninviting to boys and girls of any cultural background if personalities of the household are not well adjusted to one another or are unfavorable to the reception of the child's friends in the home. Children may be unimpressed by the authority of parents or others and by the moral standards which are incorporated in law. Many a cultured and well-to-do family, a few years ago, similarly resisted prohibition legislation.

There have been cases in which spot maps of delinquency areas have shown a higher concentration of crimes in the vicinity of playgrounds than in slum districts in which playgrounds were not provided, and a higher concentration in well-to-do sections than in poorer sections.[1] Such erratic incidence in crime rates is presumably traceable to the potency of leadership on the part of some bad boy in the good community, rather than to the factors of physical environment. In general, it may be said that the personal and social environment is always more cogent in its influence upon behavior than the physical surroundings.

High adult crime rates in more favored communities may grow out of the practice of some professional thieves of hiring out as servants in the homes of the well-to-do.[2] Successful professional criminals, whose incomes are large, sometimes take up residence in more favored districts, and thereafter their criminality is ascribed to such districts even though they may have committed their first crimes while residing in the slums of the city. For the spot maps of crime distribution reveal only the address of the criminal at the time of the act, and not the address at which he first acquired the habit of law-breaking.

Most persons in our prisons are recidivists.[3] Many of them have committed several crimes before their first sentence, and have also been in prison a number of times. It is difficult to determine under what conditions of housing their "careers" began. The spot map of New York City thus shows a high concentration of adult criminals in the Bowery district. This is a region of cheap lodging houses, the tenants of which may have come from rural districts, from other cities, or from the slums of Manhattan. The conditions of living in most of the lodging houses of the Bowery are conducive to anti-social behavior in persons of average

1. The author found this to be true in Somerville, Massachusetts, when he made a survey for the Technical Advisory Corporation, to be included in their recommendations for the city plan.

2. Aschaffenburg, *Crime and Its Repression*.

3. Glueck and Glueck, *500 Criminal Careers*.

or less than average morality, unless they have been so crushed by adverse circumstances of living as to become apathetic. Even then they may break laws governing vagrancy, street-begging, or public drunkenness. The social conditions of the lodging house involve intermingling of lower-grade professional criminals and degenerates with men who "have seen better days." To some extent, doubtless, those in the latter group become responsive to suggestions from the former and become involved in active criminality.

It is probable that the original places of residence and environing conditions of childhood have played some part in the production of anti-social tendencies of the professional criminals in this and other districts. The history of New York slums shows conditions of social neglect to have been much greater in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth.[1] Many of the odds and ends of humanity in the Bowery lodging houses learned their first lessons in criminality in housing much more crowded, insanitary, and uncontrolled than that with which we are now familiar. Privacy was then impossible for any of the domestic functions. Drunkenness and depravity were witnessed daily by growing children. Those brought up under such influences are now adults. Contemporary adult crime rates must, in some degree, reflect conditions of this sort, which we have now partly outgrown.

The spot maps (Figures 84 and 85a) of adult arrests and of addresses of adult offenders show concentration in the Bowery and Times Square districts and in Harlem. The juvenile delinquency incidence (Figure 85b) is on residential, or east-west streets, and is most concentrated in East Harlem and the Lower East Side. This reflects not only juvenile gang formation and lack of parental control, already discussed, but also the failure of public authorities to provide adequate play space as an outlet for youthful energies.[2] The slum child has to play in the streets, or in the yards and cellars, and on the roofs of tenements. Trouble is inevitable. Almost every boy, for example, experiments with the building of fires, but in the city such fires, built in the streets or yards, may lead to police intervention, warning, and possible arrest. Boys need to play ball, but on the city streets that may mean broken windows, injuries to passersby, and arrest. Thus many criminal careers begin as a result of natural boyish activities of a wholesome sort which should be encouraged under right conditions. Slum-rebuilding can be so planned that adequate play space will be available for boys and girls of each age, thus reducing the volume of delinquency from this source. Delinquency from juvenile gang activities may likewise be reduced through adequate

1. See Chapters V and VI.

2. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Housing and the Community*, VIII, 179–185.

play direction and supervision in such housing projects, and the substitution of wholesome activities for those that are unwholesome.

Many forms of sexual vice and crime occur in tenement houses. English slum studies make frequent reference to incest as a product of overcrowded conditions of living and sleeping, frequently associated also with drunkenness. As has been stated, the dark hallways and cellars may facilitate assault or rape by boys or degenerates. Sexual curiosity aroused by lack of privacy may stimulate solitary vice in the susceptible. Prostitution is an evil so general that it has required special legislation to keep it out of tenement-house districts, and a special section was written in the Tenement House Act of 1901 for the purpose.[1] Prostitution and extra-marital sexual relationships are a continuous problem in rooming houses and hotels.

The special legislation with regard to prostitution in tenement houses was an outgrowth of studies made by the Tenement House Commission of 1900 and by the Committee of Fifteen.[2]

When commercialized vice moves into a tenement house, the children of that dwelling and vicinity rapidly become familiar with it. Young boys of the tenement may be employed to distribute cards or run errands. Older boys may be employed to warn of the approach of the police or to serve as "cadets" or procurers. Daughters of the residents of such tenement houses may be influenced by the apparent prosperity or specious gaiety of the professional prostitutes — in contrast with their own poverty or unhappiness — to lead the same type of life. Specific instances are quoted in many reports.

The elimination of such conditions in tenement houses has never been complete, and the process of law enforcement has continuously been one of exceptional difficulty. In 1905, the Committee of Fourteen succeeded the Committee of Fifteen and conducted a number of studies. Their report, published in 1910,[3] made the following statement:

> Tenement House Law. — 1,355 complaints for prostitution have been filed with the Department since it was created; not one owner or agent has had a court proceeding brought against him, and no publicity has attached to his ownership. The Department has knowledge of but one-third of the existing cases, the Police report but 25 per cent. of the arrests in tenements to the Department, the Department has been successful in but 44 per cent. of the houses it has "cleaned up." The ratio of convictions is small to the arrests, and but 28 per cent. of the women serve their full sentences. The average time taken to "clean up" a place is eleven days. The population affected by disorderly conditions in 129 tenements numbered 1,521 families.

1. See Chapter VI.
2. See their Reports, and also E. R. A. Seligman, *The Social Evil*; DeForest and Veiller, vol. II, chapter by James B. Reynolds entitled "Prostitution, as a Tenement House Evil," pp. 15–23.
3. *The Social Evil in New York City; a study of law enforcement by the Research Committee of the Committee of Fourteen.*

In 65.9 per cent. of the cases of women arrested for immorality, they were so disposed of that they were in a position to immediately return to the street.

Remedies. — That there be created a special inspectorship or division in the Tenement House Department which shall have charge of violations of these sections, shall facilitate co-operation with the police and obtain court records, follow up supposedly "cleaned up" places, and proceed against owners and agents as the law provides. Nothing short of determined and intelligent effort, specifically directed to this evil, will better conditions. Public opinion should make its influence felt upon the magistrates who interpret the rule of evidence so at variance with the specific wording of the law, or the law should be amended in this respect.[1]

The Committee of Fourteen conducted a special study of 133 tenements in three different sections of the city against which complaints had been filed in the Tenement House Department. They found that prostitution still continued in sixty-one instances, or 45.9 per cent, but that in thirty-eight instances, or 28.6 per cent, legal evidence could not be obtained. In the course of their visits they discovered disorderly conditions in sixty-three other tenements which did not appear in any other record as having been complained against. This made a total of 124 tenements in which disorderly conditions were found while investigating 133 cases.[2]

This investigation was not made in districts where prostitution in tenements was believed to be greatest. The Committee also found disorderly conditions in tenement houses in the Bronx and in Brooklyn. They concluded that there was inadequate cooperation between the Tenement House and Police Departments and that the former lacked initiative in enforcing this section of its law. The burden of punishment was found to fall entirely upon the women, and not upon the men who facilitated prostitution nor upon the owners of the tenement houses. Protection was purchased by the exploiters of vice from janitors and from the police. High rentals were paid to owners. A major difficulty with enforcement was the ridicule to which the Department's agents were subjected when giving the specific testimony required by the law.

In 1913 the provisions of the Tenement House Law relating to prostitution were amended.

Prior to the year 1913, it was recognized that the provisions of the Tenement House Law relating to prostitution in tenement houses were inadequate to accomplish the objects for which they were enacted, because of the fact that it was found to be difficult to obtain sufficient evidence to prove the existence of a use for such unlawful purpose within the contemplation of the Statute and that such use existed with the permission of the owner or his agent. Therefore, in the year 1913, with the view of eliminating such obstacles to the enforcement of the law, Sections 153 and 154 of the Tenement House Law were amended to provide that, where two or more convictions are secured within a period of six months relating to the same tenement

1. *Ibid.*, pp. xxv–xxvi.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

house, either under Section 150 of the Tenement House Law or Section 1,146 of the Penal Law, the said tenement house shall be deemed to have been used for such unlawful purpose with the permission of the owner, agent and lessee thereof; and, furthermore, that proof of the ill-repute or common fame of the premises, of the inmates thereof, or of those resorting thereto shall constitute presumptive evidence of such unlawful use and of the fact that such use existed with the permission of the owner, agent and lessee.

The first case instituted and brought to trial under the Statute as thus amended was begun against certain premises located in the Borough of Manhattan.

This action was tried before Mr. Justice Daniel F. Cohalan and a jury at Trial Term, Part 16, of the Supreme Court, First Department, the said trial consuming about four days and the jury being unable to agree upon a verdict.

A vast amount of time and consideration were devoted to the preparation of this case and an appreciable sum of money expended thereon, 24 witnesses having been called in behalf of the plaintiff and 14 for the defendant, and the stenographer's minutes containing 527 pages of testimony.

While in this case the number of convictions for vag[r]ancy were few, there was a great deal of testimony presented relative to the alleged ill-repute and common fame of the premises in question, and some of the witnesses had been formerly employed in the said building.

In rebuttal, testimony was presented relative to the care exercised in the renting of the apartments and the lack of knowledge on the part of defendant of the alleged unlawful use.

The case was not re-tried for the reason that the inability to secure some of the important witnesses precluded the possibility of a successful prosecution.

It is obvious that formidable obstacles to a successful issue present themselves in a case based entirely upon the presumptions created by the Statute.[1]

Willoughby Cyrus Waterman, in *Prostitution and Its Repression in New York City, 1900–1931*, states [2]

The present highly chaotic condition of the laws aimed at prostitution and enforceable in New York City is clearly indicative of the uncertainty of public policy in relation to this type of behavior. As Spingarn points out, "A prostitute may now be convicted and committed under a bewildering number of statutes, among others, the New York Consolidation Act, Code of Criminal Procedure, The Inferior Criminal Courts Acts, State Charities Law, Tenement House Law, Penal Law, Chapter 439 of the Law of 1892, and Chapter 353 of the Laws of 1886. Likewise the keeper of a bawdy house makes herself liable to punishment under the Penal Law, Code of Criminal Procedure, Liquor Tax Law, Tenement House Law, Public Health Law, White Slave Traffic Act and the Immigration Laws." [3]

While Spingarn's criticism of the statutes covering morals legislation was written in 1915, it accurately describes the confusion existing in earlier laws. The same condition still persists.[4] . . .

. . . very few owners of tenements or other dwellings are convicted under the penal law. The civil penalties seem equally difficult to use. The result is, that while the unfor-

1. *Eighth Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York, 1915–1916*, pp. 80–81.
2. *Prostitution and Its Repression in New York City, 1900–1931*, New York, 1932.
3. Arthur B. Spingarn, *Laws Relating to [illegible] New York City* (Revised edition, New Y
4. *Prostitution and Its Repression in New York City, 1900–1931*, New York, 1932, p. 11.

tunate prostitutes continue to be convicted in increasing numbers, the property owners who furnish them facilities for their occupation, and the male customers for the most part, go scot-free. . . .[1]

. . . During 1929 arrests were made in 99 hotels, 1386 tenement houses, and 321 furnished-room places [according to the Committee of Fourteen, *Annual Report for 1929*]. . . .[2]

. . . Because their primary task is to discover structural and operating violations in tenements, rarely, if ever, do employees of the Tenement House Department themselves discover violations. Moreover, delay results from the present procedure which could be obviated by the notices of conviction going directly from the police to the property owners and to the Corporation Counsel. As the Tenement House Department makes no investigation on its own account of convictions for vagrancy but depends entirely upon the police reports, it would seem as if procedure would be improved by having the Police Department directly institute proceedings for the recovery of monetary penalty instead of the indirect method now followed. . . .[3]

. . . The problem of tenement-house prostitution, far from being solved, yearly becomes more widespread. This is probably inevitable, due to the fact that the population of Manhattan has largely become a population of apartment dwellers, a result of social and economic changes. Of course, the striking increase during the past few years in the number of tenements from which arrests have been made does not necessarily indicate any increase in the total amount of prostitution. It may mean, and probably does mean, that those engaged in prostitution have in increasing numbers been attempting to find shelter in tenements, trusting in the anonymity usually enshrouding apartment dwellers to protect them from detection by the authorities.[4]

Drunkenness is not primarily a condition in which the house, as such, plays a large rôle. In so far as housing conditions reduce health or moral stamina, they may contribute to the volume of drunkenness. Some men drink not only to drown their sorrows but also to forget physical discomfort. With others, drunkenness may be merely a matter of social celebration, and with still a third group it is traceable primarily to some constitutional weakness, neurosis, or psychosis upon which the habit of inebriety has become ingrafted. Bad housing is not one of the more important causes of extensive drunkenness, although insanitary, crowded, or cheerless conditions may be contributory factors in a fair percentage of cases.[5]

1. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–79.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
5. The cheap retail liquor establishments of the slums, however, are so numerous that they are constrained to push sales as far as they can in order to make an adequate income. Men and women are induced to purchase and consume more liquor than they should drink. Carroll D. Wright, as Commissioner of Labor, submitted to President Grover Cleveland in 1894 a special report relating to the slums of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago, in which he stated: "In the city of New York there was, at the time of the investigation, 1 liquor saloon to every 200 persons, but in the slum district canvassed there was 1 saloon to every 129 persons." There is no solution for this problem save the removal of all incentive to profit-making from both manufacturers and distributors of liquor. This means an ultimate policy of governmental monopoly in both production and distribution, combined with rigorous enforcement of laws prohibiting private traffic. See Reports of National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, also Reports of two Massachusetts Commissions on Drunkenness (*ca*) 1909 and 1910.

Large-scale slum-rehabilitation projects can reduce the volume of drunkenness in their districts, and thus of the suggestion to drink, either by exclusion of the traffic or by provision for supervised and controlled selling of alcohol within their premises. Also, by providing wholesome recreations, interior parks, and roof-gardens in slum-rehabilitation projects, counter-suggestions are readily developed. The experience of the Liverpool Municipal Corporation definitely reveals an amazing reduction in the volume of drunkenness by transferring the inhabitants of demolished slums to decent housing in well planned communities. There is no reason to believe that the same effect would not be secured, to a considerable degree at least, in New York City.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOCIAL COST OF SLUMS AND INFERIOR HOUSING

To MAKE their case convincing to the taxpayer and the municipal authorities, many proponents of housing reform measures have attempted to demonstrate the financial loss that accrues to the community as a result of inferior housing. Such computations have been made in the past in this city, and more recently have been published by agencies interested in slum elimination in Indianapolis and Cleveland.

Ten per cent of the city's population causes the greatest economic drain on Indianapolis taxpayers. . . .

This economic drain amounts to $27.29 paid each year for every man, woman and child making up only 10 per cent of the population of Indianapolis. Other districts have a cost of only $4.

An amount equal to 20 cents of the tax rate on all of the real estate and personal property in Indianapolis is drained from the community in providing these public services for this tenth of the citizens.

In dollars, the total of this economic drain due to the expenditure of tax money and charitable contributions on this 10 per cent of the citizens is $1,035,729.

Twenty-six per cent of all of the money spent in Indianapolis for this character of public services goes for the benefit of this 10 per cent of the city's population.

The seriousness of this financial burden upon the city as a whole may be seen if every citizen within our city cost $27.29 annually for these services. With a population of 364,161 in Indianapolis it would mean that the cost would amount to $9,937,963. The total cost for civil government now is approximately only $7,000,000 annually, including all services. It can readily be seen that if close to $10,000,000 were the additional charge for social services the entire city would be bankrupt in the course of a few months. Such a cost would add $1.92 to the present rate of $2.82 per hundred dollars.

This disproportionate spending of money on such a small percentage of the population represents an economic drain upon all the people of the city of Indianapolis as revealed by the fact-finding survey of the community plan committee, appointed three months ago as a special committee of the Chamber of Commerce by Louis J. Borinstein, chamber president. The purpose of this committee as outlined in its program of work was first, to study economic, social and living conditions in Indianapolis; second, to see what has been done in other cities to improve conditions, and third, to make recommendations of what might be done to improve conditions in Indianapolis.

The fact-finding survey was laid out by Mr. Beckett, Dr. R. Clyde White, director of the Indiana University bureau of social research, and Harmon E. Snoke, director of public relations

of the Chamber of Commerce, who is serving as secretary of the committee. Under their direction, studies have not only been made of the cost of these social services throughout Indianapolis to determine what areas are the most costly to the city as a whole, but information has been tabulated on death rates, location of residences of males coming into Criminal court, average house rents, percentage of land used for business, location of residence of misdemeanants, dwelling vacancies and number of residents an acre of residential area.

Findings as shown by this census tract map were prepared by the community plan committee and are made public.[1]

Slums — A City's Most Expensive Luxury

One small section of slum area in Cleveland in which the community invested over $5,000,000 in public and semi-public buildings produces a tax-rate income of $225,000. It costs the city, county, and Board of Education $1,357,000 to render such direct services as good municipal housekeeping and education require. Thus, this area shows a net cost to the taxpayer of $1,132,000 annually — a loss of well over a million dollars a year. Private funds increase this cost to $1,747,000 a year — a total approaching two million dollars a year.

When fire protection in a residential suburb costs $.63 per 1,000 dollars of appraised value of land and buildings, $50 seems too large for a section of slum area. When police protection costs $4 per family in a suburban city, $58 seems high.

Since only 5,244 families live in the area, each family is being subsidized to the extent of over $333 per year by tax funds and private funds. And yet these families have no right to be content. They should demand more — a decent environment in which to live. They live in "cast-me-down" dwellings which in the heyday of high rents cost them over $25 per family per month.

They suffer from crime — over 21 per cent of Greater Cleveland's murders during the past 12 years were committed in this tiny section with an area of only 0.55 per cent of the area of Greater Cleveland and a population of but 2.1 per cent of the population of Cleveland, Lakewood, Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland and Shaker Heights. Among them were not necessarily the murderers. The murderers may have lived in the fine residential suburbs, but the murders were committed in the section. It provided an ideal place to commit a murder, with its dark alleys, tumbled-down buildings, junk yards, and other obstacles to peace and order.

They suffer from vice — over 26 per cent of the houses of prostitution located in eight under-cover surveys made in this community during the past few years flourished in this area. Doubtless, the residents do not patronize the prostitutes — they lack the funds. . . .

They suffer from delinquency — more than 6 per cent of the boys brought into Juvenile Court lived in this area, a rate three times the average for the entire community. Only 89 boys appear in Juvenile Court per 1,000 boys 10–17 years of age in the community, 307 in this area.

They have illegitimate births — 10 per cent of the mothers giving birth to an illegitimate child lived in the area.

They have large numbers of deaths from tuberculosis — nearly 12 per cent of all during a four-year period.

1. The Indianapolis Community Plan Committee of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. Series of articles in the *Indianapolis Star*, July 24, 1933 to August 17, 1933.

They suffer most from unemployment — 5.5 per cent of the jobless lived in the area in April, 1930, as compared with 2.2 per cent of the gainful workers. They had many jobless in January, 1931, 120 per 100 families.

These people need relief — food, clothing, and shelter. As many as 8.0 per cent of all relief families in 1932 were in this section where 1.9 per cent of all families live. Over half of the 5,244 families were on relief in 1932.

They need help — a decent place to live, in a decent environment, with decent opportunities for all.[1]

A common feature of the Cleveland and Indianapolis studies is the attempt to ascertain relative rates for crime, juvenile delinquency, preventable disease, and mortality, to which may be added data on such special features as vice rates, illegitimacy, dependency, and tax arrears. The per capita or per acre cost of these is computed, and the slum districts' share of the total community cost may be contrasted with its contribution to the public treasury in the form of taxes. By this method the slum is shown to receive more in services than it pays for in taxes, or to cost the community more than other districts through hospitalization, police, courts, prisons, relief, and other services, such as schools. The slum is thus stated to be an economic liability, and it is argued that through improved housing the district might be rendered an asset. The above abstracts for these two cities provide only a brief summary of the material gathered and published, but serve to indicate a portion at least of their conclusions.

A merit of such studies is that they focus attention upon sore spots of the city. It is important to know the districts in which rates for tuberculosis, venereal disease, and infant mortality are high; where arrests are most abundant, murders most frequent, or juvenile delinquency most prevalent. The spot maps and tables which they offer unquestionably indicate the need of close analysis of causative factors.

It is difficult, however, to discover a fair basis upon which to ascribe costs. A city would find it necessary to maintain police services, hospitals, health departments, and schools even if there were no slums. It is also difficult to ascertain precisely what costs are added by the presence of slums, or fairly to determine whether or not the disease and crime occurring in the slum area or among persons who reside there are produced by conditions in the slum itself or by conditions or associations outside of that area, whether in the workshop, the theater district, or elsewhere. Moreover, the slum population is poor. Many of them work at unhealthy occupations and for long hours. Many suffer malnutrition as a result

1, *A Sheet-a-Week prepared by Howard Whipple Green*, vol. 1, no. 52, September 22, 1934. For further details, see *An Analysis of a Slum Area in Cleveland*, prepared for Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority under the direction of Howard Whipple Green, March 27, 1934.

either of their small incomes or their relative ignorance. Little allowance has been made for such factors.

On the other hand, the calculation of the slum's contribution to the city in the form of municipal taxes is misleading when contrasted with the cost, because cost of municipal government is met, not exclusively by residential districts, but also by commercial and industrial districts.

The City Planning Board and the Advisory Committee on Housing in Boston, approaching this problem, not to make a case against the slum but rather to ascertain the truth, covered four residential districts of diverse types and discovered a small "deficit" in a suburban district (West Roxbury); a larger "deficit" in a low-rental district in South Boston; slight "profits" from an industrial district, and from a mixed residential district of medium rentals (between the Fens and Massachusetts Avenue); a somewhat larger "profit" for the Back Bay district, which is largely but not exclusively an area of high rentals; and a "profit" many times as large from the business district.[1]

Although further studies of this type are needed before final judgment can be rendered, it seems reasonable to assume that there are many residential areas that are not slums which would be found to be "economic liabilities" by this method of calculation. For that reason no attempt has been made in this study to ascertain the money cost of slums.

In terms of social cost, however, the slum is definitely a liability, and bad housing plays a considerable, but not a major, part in the social deficit of the slums. This was made particularly apparent in the study of housing and crime.[2]

The high per capita incidence of arrests and convictions among both adult and juvenile law-breakers in slum areas is ascribable only in part to the conditions of housing and much more largely to ignorance, poverty, relatively low intelligence, inadequately directed leisure-time activities, and the imperfectly supervised and controlled saloons, dance halls, pool-rooms, and other commercial recreations of the district. Since many of these conditions, but not all, could be wiped out by comprehensive slum-clearance projects, the remedy lies in the field of housing policy, even though such housing policy goes beyond its narrow field to provide more adequately for neighborhood recreation, adult education, and organization.

Even if there were a net gain to the city through the taxes levied on slum districts, and thus no economic liability, in the sense in which this term has been used in Cleveland and Indianapolis, the slum might still be a social liability. This might be registered in terms of low moral standards, if not in crime costs; in low

1. *Report of the Income and Cost of Six Districts in the City of Boston*, December 1934.

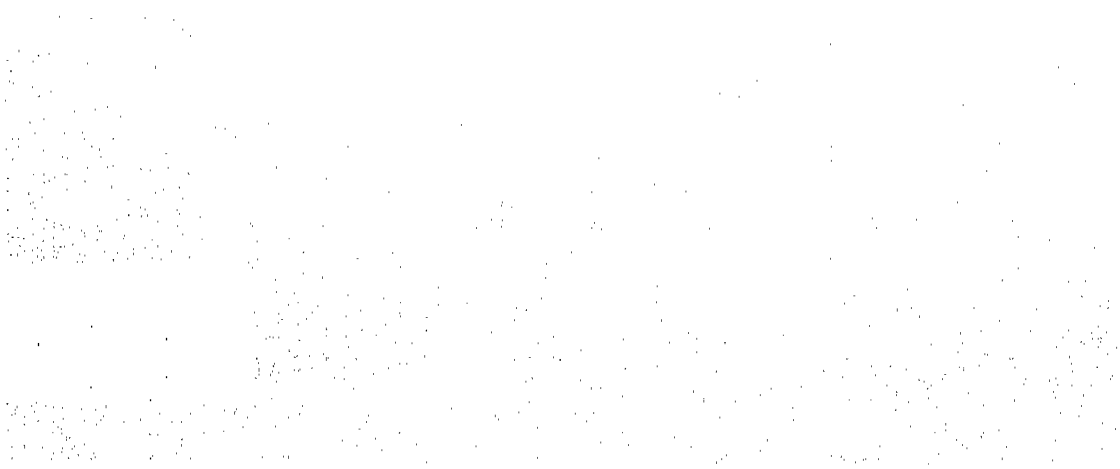
2. See Chapter XVII.

vitality, if not in hospital costs; in ignorance or low educational standards, if not in school costs; in ignorant citizenship, if not in terms of municipal corruption.

But in essence, the social liability should be measured in terms of the restricted opportunities for development of individual capacities which slum living now entails. At every point the children of the slum are handicapped. Their homes are dark, miserable, crowded, and lacking in privacy, even when the housekeeping standards of the parents are as high as the income will permit. The buildings are dark, ugly, and malodorous. The yards and roofs are unkempt, the streets crowded and dangerous. The neighboring shops, movies, pool-rooms, and dance halls share the same low standards and may be crowded, dismal, uninviting. Much of the conversation overheard is low. Degrading sights are often witnessed. Access to nature, to beauty, to inspiration, is infrequent. Demonstrations of evil are everywhere at hand. Incitements to good are rare.

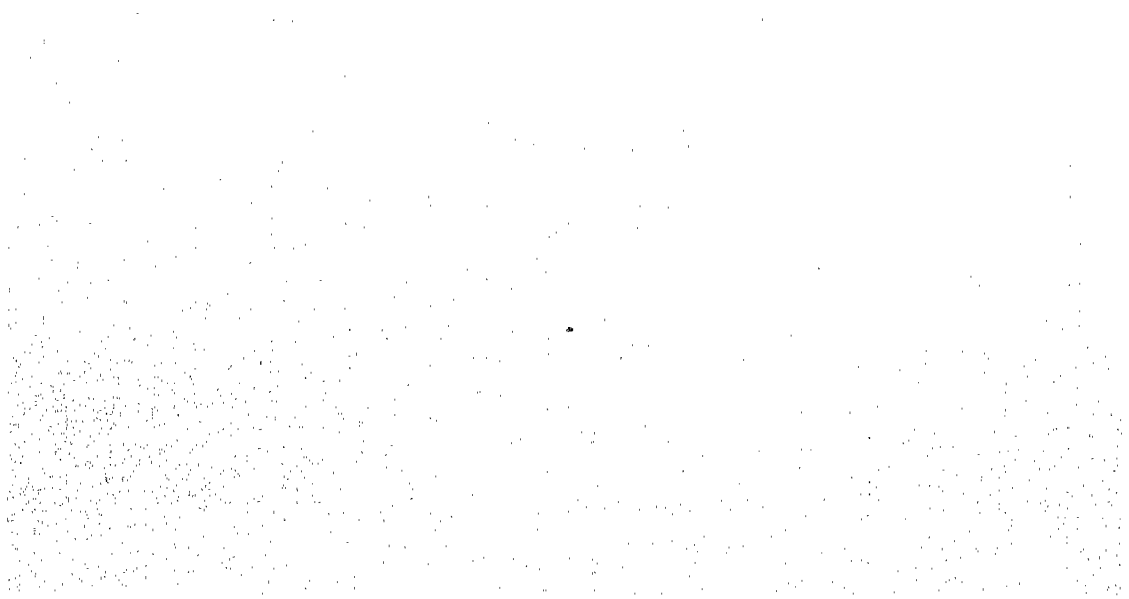
Were it not for the presence of settlements, health centers, and other social service agencies, and for the personal service rendered by social workers, ministers, priests and rabbis, teachers, play directors, physicians and nurses, and others who have understanding of their fellowmen and vision of their potentialities, the slum would be a vastly greater social liability than it now is, and might even reproduce the degraded conditions of the 1840's and 1850's. The personal influence of such community leaders, however, needs supplementation. They frequently have to witness the waste of their own efforts when their clients, constrained by the conditions of their environment, revert from the new standards, so laboriously taught, to those that prevail in the neighborhood.

Although intellectual and moral growth must be accomplished chiefly by the case method, under the direction of leaders who possess insight, slum clearance and improved housing are universally recognized among such leaders to be necessary. For they will provide a medium helpful if not actually essential to effective intellectual and moral cultivation.



PART III

SLUM PREVENTION



CHAPTER XIX

CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF SLUMS AND BLIGHTED AREAS

IT IS difficult to isolate the causes of social phenomena. A slum is a complex phenomenon made up of an unknown number of elements. It is a product of antecedent factors. It is continuously changing as a result of new factors operating upon it. Relatively few of the elements can be isolated, and one is likely to do violence to truth in attempting to do so.

The slum, in the terminology of the Gestalt-Psychologie, is a "total situation" which should be viewed as a whole — as a unit. It has grown out of previous total situations. But even a total situation, like a cause, is an unwarranted abstraction if viewed as static. Life is an "ever-flowing becoming" in which tendencies, trends, and potentials are as much "facts" as the bricks and timber of which houses are built.

When, in this chapter, causative factors are mentioned, it is realized that they are not operating in a vacuum but in an intricately complex physical and social milieu. Each such factor is not static but dynamic, and each is intricately involved with an infinite number of other factors and the common or general physical and social milieu.

Each causative factor named is also not a unit but a complex in which traditions, stereotypes, attitudes, human relations have played, continue to play, and are presumably destined to play large rôles, most of which are not measurable and possibly not decipherable by scientists.

Not the least important, and possibly the most important, of the causes of the slum are the individuals who make it. Each such individual, like the environment in which he finds himself, is infinitely complex, and resembles no other one except in a most superficial sense. The interrelations of individuals are even more complex, and are likewise continually changing. Each individual has a unique constitution upon which environmental factors, which include personal relations, have been playing up to the moment when he becomes a subject for our study. Personality is the resultant of the interplay of environment and experience upon native individuality. Both the individuality and the personality are so intricate that no person can explain himself, nor be aware of more than an insignificant fraction of the influences that made him what he is.

The personalities involved in the production of slums include in one way or

another every person in our present and past society. Among these the slum dweller, with low standards of maintenance or with an income too small to pay rent for decent quarters, is conspicuous. So also is the landlord who has let his property deteriorate because of preoccupations, apathy, inability to finance improvements, or any other reason. Equally involved is the architect who has designed a building unsuited to family use, the contractor whose low standards of construction are incorporated in the building, the city engineer or real estate developer to whom are directly attributable the unfortunate dimensions of the lots and blocks, and the assessor whose appraisals are too high. But back of all this lies a social system which is responsible through poorly thought out educational systems for the ignorance of the slum-dweller, landlord, realtor, contractor, architect, and others, and for the high price which material wealth — with its encouragement of the aquisitive impulses and exploitation of man by man — plays in the hierarchy of values of most American citizens. Fundamental among the causes undoubtedly is the misplacement of values which puts the acquisition of wealth ahead of the subtler and more enduring aspects of individual and social welfare.

Man almost universally takes what is for granted. He has witnessed poverty from childhood, and with little or no thought assumes that it is implicit and inevitable in the social order. He has grown up in the midst of ugly architecture and of dirty city streets, and it has never occurred to him that such things need not be. His personal life has been lived planlessly; he drifts along through his daily routine, following the habits of his economic and social group, and seldom if ever subjecting his daily life or the standards of the group to analysis and challenge. It has probably never occurred to a large majority of our citizens that in a nation with such an abundance of land, decent and attractive housing might have been brought — and may even still be brought — within the reach of every one. Ignorance of values is perhaps even more serious than ignorance of ways and means. It is an inevitable outgrowth of the lack of organization and sense of direction in personal lives as well as of the lack of social objectives and social planning. It is a product of drifting.

Viewed historically, the slums of Manhattan originated usually in unfavored quarters. The well-to-do seized the more favored locations. Servants, slaves, and unskilled laborers, or in other words the poorer classes, took what was left. Unless accommodated in the homes of the rich, they built their homes, in earliest Manhattan history, on the edges of marshes and dumps. The first slums were holes in the ground roofed over, or shanties near the Fresh Water.[1] As the city

1. See especially Chapter II, pp. 20 and 24, and Chapter III, pp. 46 and 60–65.

grew, the poor dwelt usually on the least desirable land. They ordinarily grouped their homes in districts of their own, adjacent to the centers of commerce and industry, and seldom among the residences of the more prosperous. The major exception consists in those cases where the prosperous have moved northward and the poor have begun to move in before all of the earlier group have departed. Almost invariably where there are obnoxious industries the only residences in their vicinity are those of the poor. New houses other than shacks have seldom in New York history been built for the use of the wage-earning group, although there have been a few attempts at model tenements for them. Occasionally speculative enterprise has built residences for those of lowest income, especially during the middle years of the nineteenth century. In the main, the poor have dwelt in the cast-off houses of the more prosperous when the latter have moved uptown, and in such circumstances the dwellings have usually been converted crudely for the new use to which, in their original design, they were ill adapted.

The slums are not necessarily blighted areas. The term "blight" as ordinarily used connotes a reduction of land values. Yet in many of the slums of New York there have been periods of increase in value, due either to increasing earning capacity of the land, which in turn was due usually to rapid immigration, shortage of available accommodations, and crowding of two or more families to an apartment; or to the invasion of commerce and industry in a region previously occupied by residential buildings.

The slum is also not necessarily an area in transition. There are streets in the Lower East Side which have been slums for generations and still give no evidence of transition. The slum, moreover, is not always an interstitial area, for slums are found in the region first inhabited in Lower Manhattan, on the edges of each of the regions successively developed in the growth of the city, and apparently at all stages of the city's growth on the outskirts as well. When New York City had grown northward to the vicinity of Fifty-seventh Street, shanty towns of the poorest Irish and German immigrants were scattered through the area that is now Central Park and the region to the west of it. In Queens and on Staten Island, as well as in Brooklyn and the Bronx, one can still detect outskirt housing of a primitive, inferior, neglected, and relatively insanitary type, which is the modern equivalent of the shanty towns of the fifties.

Although no single cause of slums can be specified, and no group of clear-cut causes of measurable influence and intensity, there is value in outlining the imponderable, precipitating, and causative factors, since they unquestionably suggest possible points of attack upon the contemporary problem and devices for prevention. For convenience these may be listed under the following headings:

physical factors, population factors, economic factors, architectural and engineering factors, political factors, and social factors. Inevitably and invariably they interpenetrate and operate together and, as previously specified, the slum becomes an outgrowth of the development of a dynamic total situation in which relations of elements are as important as the elements themselves, rather than the resultant of a single cause or group of causes. The list that follows is one merely of conspicuous factors in a complex social organization in which most variables are unknown but active.

The physical factors comprise topography, land configuration, climate, and natural resources, no one of which in itself is a cause of slums. If, however, man makes unwise use of physical features, slums may originate. If, in his so-called improvements, he makes scars upon the face of nature by cutting highways straight up steep inclines or through sandhills or rock or otherwise fails to adapt his uses to the features provided by nature, the region may become undesirable for living, and utilized only by persons of low standards; thus a slum may develop. Many cities show slums on the edges of swamps, in hollows, adjacent to railroad tracks, or, as in Pittsburgh, on hillsides where street systems and housing were not conformed to topography. Similarly, slums may grow up on the borders of rivers and harbors, if man pollutes them by dumping his refuse or emptying his sewers there. Such regions may become slums because persons of standards refuse to live there. They are adopted as sites for residences only by persons who, because of their poverty, can make no other choice, or who, because of their ignorance, do not deplore the injury done to their site.

The configuration and topography of the island of Manhattan, which have already been described,[1] have made growth possible only in one direction. Inadequate provision for north-south avenues, which grew out of failure to anticipate the volume and direction of the city's growth, led to a type of street planning, earlier described, which forced the concentration of population and the block-and-lot system which deprived occupants of adequate light for their residences.

Man's active adaptation of configuration and topography to fit his needs has resulted in the construction of elevated railroads which, because of the shadows that they cast and the noise and vibrations from moving trains, have blighted all property in their immediate vicinity and have injured the health of occupants. From nature's resources he has also built factories which crowd the neighboring residences, and injure them by their noise, smoke, gases, or stench; and office buildings with towers that may cast a shadow over many acres of residences and do injury to the occupants.

1. See Chapter VIII.

The population factors comprise the movement and pressure of population, immigration, and rapidity of growth. These of themselves do not produce slums. There is no inherent reason, other than man's native stupidity, why a population as large as that of New York should not be decently and comfortably housed within the city's area. But, as has already been seen, population at times grew very rapidly; the leading citizens and law-makers were preoccupied with other problems; and the new population was left to shift for itself. Speculators, seeing a chance for profit, built types of houses which they thought would bring them the most rapid return on their invested capital. The houses were ignorantly planned, poorly built, and crowded with tenants, many of whom were untrained for urban living. This was particularly true in the latter half of the nineteenth century; and although housing legislation of the present century forced high standards for new construction, the European immigrants, who arrived in their greatest numbers in the first decades, did not dwell in the new buildings, but congested those built under earlier and less adequate laws. Thus, foreign immigration was, in a sense, a major cause of many of the slums of Manhattan and Brooklyn, even though adequate pre-planning could have housed all immigrants satisfactorily.

Many of the slums in the early history of the city were those on the edges of foul swamps and by the wharves where the poorer population lived. They are paralleled in every American city today. Another source of slums, ascribable in part to population movements, also existed early in New York's history. For, as business developed and encroached upon residences, the more cultured and well-to-do families moved north to less crowded regions. The houses which they abandoned could not be rented to persons of means and background similar to their own, and there was as yet no incentive to destroy them. So the houses were partitioned for the use of two or more families. Since the houses had not been built for such use, and were often crudely converted, they sooner or later attracted families whose standards were low, though usually there was an intermediate down-grade stage before the areas of converted houses became true slums. This has been a continuous process in New York's history. Areas of high-class dwellings are abandoned by a process in which fashion plays a rôle, and are converted into rooming houses or multiple dwellings for families in less fortunate circumstances. These in turn move out, to be replaced by groups still lower in the economic scale. This type of slum is likewise found in all American cities, and is developing today in outlying suburbs.

So to population growth may be ascribed three major categories of slums. First, there are the shanty towns and squatter colonies on the periphery at each stage of growth, and usually, though not invariably, in unfavorable locations near

swamps, dumps, railroads, or other regions of ugliness and neglect, noticeable today in Queens, Richmond, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Next there are the abandoned dwellings of the well-to-do, suffering from impromptu conversion and use by persons of lower standards, to be found both in Manhattan and the suburban boroughs. Third, there is the type more generally visualized as typical of New York, though to be found also in Boston and in portions of several other cities, in which many-storied dwellings of high land coverage were erected under earlier and inferior legislation, for rental chiefly to European immigrants.

The economic factors are represented in the change of location of commercial and industrial establishments and the pressure of new shops and factories upon neighboring residential areas, as well as the rise in land values consequent upon population growth and commercial or industrial pressure.

First should be noted the causes of blight, commonly but not invariably the first stage of slum development, which were admirably outlined by John Ihlder, Bleecker Marquette, and Charlotte Rumbold, for the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.

The causes of blight in residential areas fall under three classifications:

1. Primary: Those so important in their effect that the presence of one of them is enough to cause blight.

2. Secondary: Those that themselves can be fairly readily removed or remedied, but that in conjunction with a primary cause hasten or increase blight.

3. Sequels: Conditions that accompany blight, that intensify it, but that, except as they intensify, are not in fact causes.

1. **Primary Causes.** (*a*) *Uneconomic use of land.* "Blight" having economic connotations, any use of land that does not produce an economic return, that results in financial distress, is a cause of blight. This is true in rural areas when attempt is made to cultivate soil that will not grow crops sufficient to pay for labor and capital. It is true in urban districts when the wrong type of development is attempted, as too large an area zoned for business or for apartment houses, an oversupply of building lots put on the market.

In urban districts a common form of uneconomic use is land overcrowding. This may yield large returns for a short period followed by increasing losses unless and until the loss is finally written off by demolition and reconstruction on a sounder basis.

In rural districts the analogy is growing the same crop year after year without fertilizing. The exhausted tobacco lands of some states, once highly profitable to their owners, present essentially the same problem of rehabilitation as do the crowded slum areas of our older cities.

In addition there are uses, neither urban nor rural, like coal mining, "sick industries," that cause blighted areas because they do not produce an economic return.

(*b*) *Obsolete buildings that can not be modernized.* This is essentially an urban cause of blight, as the usual reasons that buildings cannot be modernized are:

1. They fill the lot, so there is no space for alterations;

2. Their size and plan make them unadaptable to modern requirements.

(*c*) *Invasion of incompatible uses.* This also is essentially an urban cause of blight, though occasionally conditions such as those produced by the copper smelters in Montana will blight a farming area. This may be by:

1. Social or racial groups antipathetic to earlier inhabitants;
2. Degenerate uses of dwellings, as boarding houses; or several families using accommodations designed for one family;
3. Deterioration of border lands producing bad conditions that progressively work inward;
4. Sporadic business or industry;
5. Development of heavy traffic;
6. Development of conditions outside the district that adversely affect it, as production of smoke or smell in the direction of prevailing winds.

(*d*) *Competition by other districts.* Other districts may offer facilities more accessible, more economical, more modern, and so cause desertion of an old district.

2. **Secondary Causes.** (*e*) *Obsolete buildings.* Their design or equipment is out of date. Where a primary cause does not prevent, these can be and often are "modernized."

(*f*) *Natural handicaps.* These may be swampy soil (rural, non-arable; urban, poor building sites,) steep hillsides (rural, soil washing; urban, expensive grading, etc.). Where better regions become accessible these are condemned to deterioration. But modern methods and equipment may make them fully productive. (Rural, irrigation, swamp drainage, etc.; urban, city planning, zoning, engineering ability, etc.)

(*g*) *High costs.* These will be expressed in terms of

1. Taxes (assessments),
2. Mortgages,
3. Asking prices,
4. Wages,

that are incompatible with the earning ability of the area and consequently cause it to be deserted.

(*h*) *Rising standard of living.* This will be expressed in terms of

1. Greater spaciousness,
2. More light and air and sun, due to spaciousness,
3. "Modern" buildings, as regards arrangement and equipment as well as architectural design.

This rising standard has been more readily secured in new developments. The increasing amount of "reconditioning" may change this.

(*i*) *Fashion, advertising, a deliberately created attitude of mind.* The effects of this have been evident in the "suburban trend," in the buying of abandoned farms, more recently in the reviving of old urban districts such as Georgetown in the District of Columbia and Beacon Hill in Boston.

3. **Sequels.** These are things that accompany blight, rather than cause it, but that accentuate it, as absentee landlordism, neglect of properties, dilapidation.[1]

1. President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Slums, Large-Scale Housing and Decentralization*, III, 42–44.

The contour of Manhattan Island has made growth possible in only one direction. This, combined with the opportunities for rapid growth and the slow development of transit, forced crowding of persons in many-storied buildings. This in turn caused high land values. The speculative impulse was encouraged, and caused land to be sold for potential values. Persons holding the land charged high rates to get a return on the fictitious value already given it. This forced tenants to take lodgers or to crowd two families in an apartment to meet the rent, which caused excessive wear and tear and thus poor maintenance, and discouraged high standards of upkeep on the part of both landlord and tenant, resulting in run-down conditions.

Low wages to the industrial population — caused by unfamiliarity with American language and customs, or by incompetence, hereditary or acquired, or by the tradition of low wages, the selfishness of employers, the competition of employees for jobs, the ignorance of the wage-earner of what his share should be, the lack of effective organization on the part of wage-earners to demand what their labor was worth or the resistance of employers even when through organization the proper wage and working conditions were demanded — meant low rent-paying capacity which made it necessary for workers to hire miserable quarters or take in lodgers, and for owners to pack as many families as possible onto the land.

The expansion of trade and industry in regions originally residential was another cause of blight. The shops and factories overshadowed the houses, cluttered the streets with trucks, crowded the street with purchasers, and increased the volume of soot, fumes, and dust in the air, thus making the district more unhealthy and giving it an unkempt appearance. Owners of residential property on streets invaded by trade and industry held their property with a view to selling at the higher prices which shops and industrial concerns might yield. Judging that the district would not continue to be residential, they were inclined to make no repairs on existing residences and certainly no improvements not actually required by law and enforced by the department charged with its administration. Poor upkeep, in turn, meant poor maintenance by tenants, and a vicious circle was established, accentuating each of these conditions.

Meanwhile the growth of population and the movement of the well-to-do families uptown required provisions for north-and-south transit, which became so heavy as to force, first the construction of street-car lines, then elevated railways, and subsequently subways. Residences on the streets where there were surface or elevated lines suffered increased noise, dust, confusion, and accident risks, and became relatively undesirable. They were therefore vacated by those who could afford to remove to quieter locations, usually farther uptown. The elevated rail-

way usually also decreased the natural lighting of lower stories, reduced privacy, and because of its noise interfered with sleep and thus injured health, which in turn meant reduced income-earning capacity. For these many reasons blight was particularly serious on streets on which there were elevated railroads. It meant declining rent-paying capacity on the part of tenants. Thus such sections catered, as the years went by, to groups lower and lower in the economic scale, since no others were willing to live there. Repairs were discouraged by such a process. Land values were also reduced unless profitable uses, other than residential, proved possible.

Foreign immigration has played a large rôle in the production of American slums. Even the earliest settlements had areas of neglected and undesirable housing for their lowest paid servants and employees. The immigration rate was so heavy in the nineteenth century that accommodations were available only through the crowding of many individuals into a room, and of many families or of a family with many lodgers into each apartment. Building could not keep pace with the demand, and new construction for recently arriving immigrants was not deemed to be economic. Instead the new construction was limited to natives or to immigrants well assimilated.

Moreover, a considerable fraction of the immigrants were from the lowest classes of European cities, among whom living standards had not been high. In the latter half of the last century large numbers of persons with a history of depravity were among the immigrants received. Selection of immigrants did not become reasonably careful until quite late in the history of our immigration policy — the twentieth century.

Large numbers of the immigrants came from rural districts and were accustomed to conditions of living which were exceedingly primitive so far as sanitation was concerned. Such modes of living, though relatively safe in rural districts, were dangerous in cities. It may be innocuous to throw garbage to the chickens from one's kitchen steps in Silesia or Poland, but the American version of this habit was to throw the garbage out of the window into the street, yard, or court. Such habits on the part of the recent immigrants, innocent enough in their origin, naturally drove self-respecting citizens of native birth out of districts in which immigrants settled. This removed the only group able to lift standards. The immigrants were left to themselves and standards remained low.

Meanwhile, some immigrants made fortunes by the value of their services, or by living thriftily, and by exploiting members of their own or other races. Many of these acquired slum property before their own standards of living and of housing had been raised to what would be considered American levels. They, there-

fore, tended to give their tenants conditions and facilities no better than they themselves had enjoyed upon their arrival in this country. Some of them purchased property with a minimum equity, which represented their entire savings, and were thus literally unable to finance repairs and improvements even if they desired to do so. Standards of upkeep, maintenance, and sanitation thus tended to decline under their ownership.

Absentee landlordism contributed largely to the development and perpetuation of slum conditions. Well-to-do families when moving uptown often continued to hold their downtown property. Many did not subsequently visit the property themselves but put it in the hands of agents. The agents assumed that the owner's interest was solely in continuity or increase of income and that their function was to keep the income unimpaired, and to make their own necessary profit besides. Hence they also tended to make no repairs unless such were required by well enforced laws. More recently, banks and other financial institutions have served as intermediary between owner and tenant, and have applied the same principles in their management of properties.

High land values, as previously explained, likewise induced excessive coverage of land with buildings so as to yield a maximum return on the capital invested in the land. In the middle of the last century this meant front and rear buildings on the same lot, and new buildings erected covering 90 per cent of the lot prior to effective restrictive legislation. This in turn meant darkened lower stories, windowless interior rooms, poor block ventilation, utterly inadequate room ventilation, and dirt which inevitably accumulated in dark places where it could not be seen.

Recent economic factors which, in one way or another, discourage improvement of areas already blighted or which complicate the problem consist in the current economic depression, the comparatively high wages paid to local labor in the construction industry, the increased horizontal mobility of population, the conservative policies of banks in the foreclosure of mortgages and sale of properties, the practice of continuing mortgages without amortization, the holding of land for speculation rather than investment in the hope that future increases in values will compensate for present losses or low interest, the new tendency of industry to expand vertically rather than horizontally thus causing "technological unemployment of land," [1] the failure to base the capital value of land upon its annual rental value, and the "capitalization of expectations" in our mortgage and bond structure, which saddles the future with the burdens of the present.[2] To the investor the uncertainties of the current economic situation — shifting money

1. Henry Wright, *Rehousing Urban America*, p. 4.
2. Charles Harris Whitaker, *Ramsey to Rockefeller*, especially pp. 278–279; and Frederick L. Ackerman, "Controlling Factors in Slum Clearance and Housing," *Architectural Forum*, February 1934.

values, colossal Federal expenditures, fear of war in Europe, prodigious bills for relief and the prospect of permanent public parasites or of disturbance as the probable alternative, certainty of higher taxes, fear of political unwisdom and ruinous legislation, all make for inaction. Thus the repair or improvement of slum housing is discouraged and other areas lapse into blight through the investor's timidity.

The engineering and architectural factors in slum causation cover all errors in the planning and designing of cities, of their street systems and public utilities, of residences and their internal equipment, of transit and transportation facilities, and of municipal sanitation. If all dwellings from the beginning had been designed as free-standing units, adequate light and air would be possible for each room within the city, and necessary sanitary facilities could be provided today through home modernization movements of the current type. Age alone does not make a slum. Most of the survivals of colonial houses in the eastern states can be made wholesome residences by skillful modernization, even after two centuries. The earlier engineers, especially those of 1811, in their street, block, and lot planning devised residential land units of a type which hastens obsolescence. Dark, deep dwellings on narrow lots were recognized as unhygienic, abandoned as soon as possible by persons who had had the advantage of American public-school education, and left to those who could afford no better housing. Population factors, previously mentioned, resulted in buildings too high for their streets; office and tower buildings cast long shadows which kept large areas in darkness. Each of the technological improvements in transit, whether the noisy, overshadowing elevated, or street-cars and motor buses with their continuous strident noise, or underground railroads with their vibrations, in one way or another reduced the amenities of urban living and in some regions, especially those fronting on the elevated railroads, created slums by their invasion.

Poor architectural planning is everywhere apparent, whether through slavish use of the 25 foot city lot (in place of multiple units), which means dark kitchens, bathrooms, and hallways, even for the well-to-do, or in the unimaginative design of suburban dwellings. Most residential buildings, whether in Manhattan or the outlying boroughs, are mistaken investments when long-term use is under consideration, as they are designed in conformity not only to the narrow lot but to the crude building regulations enforced by tenement-house and building departments, and the investor's ignorance of his potential tenants' true needs. As understanding becomes more general, most of the present residential buildings of both city and suburbs will find fewer and fewer buyers or renters. Rapid obsolescence is implicit in their design and plan.

This would be true even if the equipment were not taken into consideration. But rapid invention in the fundamental equipment of buildings, whether for heating, lighting, air-conditioning, elevator service, plumbing and sanitation, or refuse removal, combined with a prodigious investment in competitive sales promotion by producers and distributors of such equipment, results in an artificially stimulated public demand for newer types which makes many types obsolescent long before they need to be eliminated on grounds of depreciation. Even the dwellers in slums are affected in due course by this upward pressure for equipment. An uneasy demand for such facilities is stimulated by the advertising they read in their daily papers, and modernization by investors in hope of higher profits reduces the area in which the man of low income may dwell within his rent-paying capacity. These devices, in so far as they are installed in slum areas without fundamental changes in the building plan, may reduce some of the curse of slum housing — at the expense of higher rentals — but make fundamental reconstruction more difficult.

Poor design is traceable, also, to many forms of ignorance — ignorance of human needs of fresh air, adequate ventilation, privacy, and space — and failure to recognize the needs, modes of living, and aspirations of industrial workers.

Poor construction is traceable to ignorance of construction methods, lack of adequate building legislation, selfishness, and competition of builders (which means skimping of materials), as well as to the disappearance of building craftsmen under the "lump-sum" competitive contract.

The causes of slums that are inherent in our political structure and administration have already largely been suggested. Survivals of old principles of land ownership and control are at the bottom of our difficulties. Land owned in fee simple is exploited for the owner's, rather than the public's, benefit. The owner's use of his land is limited only by such legislation as may exist upon the statute books in enforceable form. The courts safeguard private rights in property ownership and limit only those forms of "improvement" which are demonstrably dangerous to health, safety, morality, or the general welfare as construed under the police powers. Presumably intangible dangers exceed tangible harm in volume, but because of their intangibility the owner is not restrained by the courts. Thus, land exploiters are able to shut out their neighbors' sunshine, make light rooms gloomy, fill the air with dust and soot, and crowd the streets with noisy trucks; and the slum-dweller has no recourse in law. The liberties accruing to ownership are among those which, on occasion, are little restricted by law. Profit-taking appears to have acquired a priority over the amenities of life. Vested interests, even in slum housing, are at many points inviolable.

Legislative controls through statute law are at every point far short of perfection. At best, building, housing, and zoning legislation provide only minimum standards, and fail to incorporate well conceived norms for human welfare. Constructive legislation in the field of city planning, including provision for street layout, parks and playgrounds, transit and transportation, and municipal sanitation, fall equally short of the ideal. The cultural lag is indicated in the generation or more that elapses between the envisioning of a desirable system and the provision for it. Moreover, enforcement falls far behind the intent of most laws. Not only do slums thus continue to exist, but their areas expand and new slums are created. The public becomes aroused only when the conditions grow so evil that their damaging effects become conspicuous.

The tax system is at fault and contributes to the production of slums by maintaining prevailing assessment values that are fictitious. The owner encourages this practice, for after population has declined and the building has become obsolete he often prefers to pay taxes on a high assessment in the hope that thereby he may realize a larger return when he sells his property.

Mistaken legislation may play some part in the production of slums. For example, the practice in zoning legislation of allotting areas for commerce that are needlessly large keeps the land from becoming available for other uses. Even after the population has ceased to grow, buildings in such over-zoned areas cannot as a rule be modernized profitably and a blighted area is thus created. Lack of adequate planning in the requirements for new districts may result in the creation within them of many problems from which the older districts, at high public cost, have escaped. Thus, amateur and premature land subdivision, an over-rigid street plan, and inadequate legislation governing the construction and equipment of dwellings designed for one or two families have made a great part of the boroughs of Queens and Richmond ragged and depressing, uninviting for investment, and unwholesome for living.

The history of our Federal immigration policy shows many of the factors equally at work in that field. Much harm had been done by immigration before it suffered any restrictions. Then the regulation was so inadequate that this and other cities were flooded with more immigrants than they could accommodate wholesomely. Lags and inadequacies in legislation were observable well into this century. At times there was ignorant, timid, or corrupt enforcement.[1]

A separate category for discussion of the social factors that produce slums seems hardly necessary in view of the fact that in one sense or another all of the factors so far considered have grown out of our social structure and organization,

1. See especially Report of the United States Commission of Immigration.

or the social process. The ignorance of landlord, tenant, or public official; the lack of perspective in each; speculation, greed, corruption, apathy, fashion, and imitation; the rise of standards which create obsolescence — all originate in our social system. A characteristic of some urban promoters, especially in chambers of commerce, is an interest in urban size as distinguished from quality. Where such attitudes prevail municipal neglect may provide a medium in which slums and blighted areas develop needlessly.

Other attitudes play a rôle in the creation of slums. The reputation of a district, if bad, may keep self-respecting citizens out, even though that reputation is undeserved. A change in reputation may be a means to recovery. Thus, Greenwich Village gained in some ways by its recent reputation for Bohemianism, and Sutton Place has recovered values by acquiring distinction as a place of fashionable residence.

Another such attitude is the general assumption on the part of many of the well-to-do that the poor are inured to poverty and hardship and are incapable of making proper use of better housing. There are persons who believe that slum conditions are all that the poor deserve. The "coal-in-the-bathtub" myth has wide currency. Such minds even confuse poverty with criminality and assume that the poor are depraved. Although this attitude is less general than formerly, it is still a factor in producing public inaction and thus in continuing the slum areas.

All of the above causes, whether listed as originating in physical conditions, population growth, economics, engineering, architecture, or social organization and human attitudes, continue to operate either because of ignorance on the part of some individual or group, or because of private or public neglect. It is to these that slums must be chiefly ascribed.

CHAPTER XX

SLUM PREVENTION THROUGH SOCIAL CONTROL OF CAUSATIVE FACTORS

To PREVENT any evil the causes must be ascertained and brought under control. Unless they are reached at the source their development is likely to be so rapid that only palliative or remedial measures are possible. Unwholesome housing conditions are no exception to this rule. The relative ineffectualness of the housing programmes of today is due primarily to the fact that they are fundamentally remedial rather than preventive in character.

Causes may be dealt with either directly or by circumvention. Thus, if land speculation is considered a cause of bad housing, it may be prevented either by removing all the incentive to profit-making involved in private ownership of land by the substitution of public ownership, or else the longer and more difficult programme of control through education may be undertaken — crowding out the interest in speculative material gains by the substitution of more altruistic incentives. In contrast with these two fundamental approaches to social control of land speculation, we observe the meager results of contemporary remedial legislation, which attempts to mitigate the social consequences of land speculation by means of rent-profiteering laws, land-appraisal and condemnation practices, the use of eminent domain,[1] and taxation of income or property. No one of the latter devices is fundamental. Each assumes the perpetuation of the evil and merely curbs its operation.

Instrumentalities of social control, on the other hand, include personal leadership as well as organizations and institutions. Control may be exercised through statute law, rigidly enforced, though some policies might prove so radically different from traditional practice as to require a change in the state constitution as well. Some factors can be reached under existing legislation through the city plan and its rigid enforcement; others can be reached only by the education of a new generation of voters. Change of attitude can be assiduously taught and cultivated within the public-school system, but may also involve the slow process of adult education, with utilization of the press, the radio, the motion picture, the lecture platform, and other characteristic devices for reaching the populace.

1. See Chapters XXV and XXVI.

Taking first the physical factors, one might despair of changing the configuration of the land, which we have seen resulted in the high land values and high buildings so typical of Manhattan. Yet the effects of this factor are already being brought under social control by the construction of bridges, tunnels, and subways which have connected Manhattan with New Jersey on the west and Brooklyn and Queens on the east, increasing many fold the land immediately available for urban expansion. To some extent also this factor has been mitigated by the making of new land through cuts and fills. Developments in transit and transportation, whether through street-car, railroad, elevated railroad, subway, bus or airplane, have made it no longer necessary to live in Manhattan if one is to conduct one's business there, and have already begun to result in a decline in the population of that borough.

Much of what has been accomplished so far is not consciously directed control of the problem, but rather a reaction to a situation in which the profit-making motive has played the dominant rôle. But such devices, born of competition, are now amenable to social direction and control through a scientifically conceived city plan carried out under far-seeing leadership, rendered sound by adequate legislation. Neither New York nor any other city need be the victim of circumstances, and if it wills to do so it may become their master.

Under an adequate city plan most of the other factors classified under the headings of population, economic, engineering, or political factors could be brought under an increasing degree of control. Assuming that the Federal immigration policy continues to keep foreign immigration down to reasonable proportions, provision can readily be made for residential groupings of all types in accessible locations for all population increases either through births or through migration. This is chiefly a matter of industrial and residential decentralization,[1] of adequate highways and tunnels, and of a coordinated, rationalized system of transit and transportation, accompanied by use zoning in a form that will properly interrelate the functional areas — residential, commercial, industrial, financial, civic, educational, and recreational. A thoughtful and well considered exposition of the possibilities for New York City is fortunately already available.[2] With these as a starting point and with adequate organization and resources for execution, a social policy for New York City is conceivable that would prevent future slums and eliminate the present slums within two generations without too radical upsets in fundamental economic values or too drastic changes in economic or political institutions.

1. Outlined in Chapters XXI and XXII.

2. Through the eight volumes of the *Regional Survey of New York and its Environs* and the two volumes of the *Regional Plan* recently issued by the Russell Sage Foundation and promoted through the community educational facilities of the Regional Plan Association of New York. See Chapter VI.

The only deeply rooted change that is needed to accomplish this result is one in the field of human attitudes. Contemporary conditions reveal two characteristic American traits: first, an unreflective materialism and, second, an equally unreflective individualism. Each has origins deep in history. Each has developed its own traditions and incorporated them in legislation — particularly the legislation relating to the ownership of property and the exploitation of business and industry. America was founded, and throughout her history largely dominated, by men who migrated from other countries to seek their fortunes. It was a personal fortune that they sought — exemplifying both materialism and individualism. Many others of our settlers and immigrants sought in America personal liberty and freedom from religious or political oppression, confirming the individualistic trend. Aside from the leaders in these two groups, the remainder, who actually constituted the vast majority of our immigrants of the first three centuries, were largely the victims of circumstances, whether induced to come by relatives or the scouts for steamship companies, or as indentured servants, colonized convicts, or Negro slaves. The latter, in proportion to their capacity, adopt the mental stereotypes of the fortune seekers and the seekers of liberty. Under the pressure of the developing American tradition, the Jews in varying degrees exchanged rabbinical culture for hard and aggressive profiteering; the Irish, the deferential courtesy of their native land for hard and aggressive political manipulations; the Germans, their *Gemüthlichkeit* for the long hours and hard practices of American commerce; the Italians, Greeks, Russians, and Poles, the charm and *savoir vivre* of their native lands for the bitter exploitations of American industry. Though there have been some slight infiltrations of their native cultures in our American system of thought, one is impressed with the ascendency of American materialism and individualism in their contemporary attitudes and behavior.

In essence American materialism is preoccupation with money-making. For the leaders, money-making is a means to investment and to power, and for many the latter becomes a dominating motive. For the great mass of followers, the end-product of money-making is the amassing of consumers' goods — competitive display — or the spending of the day's wage or salary among the excitements of commercialized recreations.

One notes the characteristic tendency to name as the leading citizen of any community the person of greatest wealth, rather than the person of highest culture or superior character. In prosperous periods "keeping up with the Joneses" is a dominating motive for spenders in every economic class.

In essence the fundamental difficulty with our social and economic system, of which slums are an inevitable by-product, lies in this misplacement of values —

the placing of material gain at the top of the hierarchy of values by the persons who dominate not only our business but also our political institutions. Escape from this predicament can be accomplished only by an assiduous, well-reasoned, educational policy conducted through all the media of instruction, not merely the schools, to make all material possessions universally recognized as instrumental, rather than as ultimate, values. It makes little difference whether for materialism we substitute truth, beauty, goodness, liberty, justice, love, or service as the ultimate end, provided that money-making is made instrumental to one of these ends rather than itself the aim of conduct.

Once the need of such change is recognized and incorporated in our public schools the unfortunate present stress upon personal ambition can be displaced by progressive experimental verification of the joys of discovery, morality, or service. But to be effective such change in educational emphasis must be carried over also in an interesting and entertaining, but convincing, manner into the fields of radio, motion picture, and press. Even the church has offended through excessive concern with sectarian controversies, through sermons reflecting the predominant materialistic attitudes and prejudices of the period, or through domination by wealthy personalities who have not outgrown the materialistic stereotypes. Progressively changing attitudes toward higher values would be reflected in the relative ease with which public ownership or control of land would be incorporated in statute law. It would be reflected also in reduced opposition to constructive measures for the social welfare. For it is the bogey of private ownership that prevents the taking of land at reasonable cost for such welfare programmes as slum clearance and rebuilding. Today when the Government is in the market for land the price is *ipso facto* raised because of the potential purchase and the general conviction that the Government is wealthy. The displacement of materialism with a rational view of the public welfare could be made in the long run to induce owners to sell their property voluntarily to the Government, instead of holding out as they now do, and gladly to turn over land at the minimum price at which they could afford to sell.

Such fundamental changes in attitude can be made through our comprehensive educational system within a generation, but only through the enlistment of leading minds convinced of the importance of such a programme, in the outlining of syllabi of instruction for each of the school grades, and in the programme of adult education which is its essential supplement. Herbert Hoover, during his service as Secretary of Commerce, in scores of conferences of business men, brought about a shift from selfish competition to rationalized cooperation in which practical altruism and high professional codes of ethics played a leading rôle. He proved

that service to the consumer is wise business policy, even when brought about at the sacrifice of immediate profits. Beyond this it is possible to demonstrate the joys of sacrifice of narrow individual interest to the common good while incidentally proving, for those who require it, that the greatest long-run good to them as individuals grows out of activities that facilitate the common good.[1]

Individualism is an evil only when it is ignorant. The evils that we ascribe to it grow out of narrowness of the conception of the individual. Because they have not been taught to reflect upon this matter, most persons implicitly assume that one man's gain is another man's loss. Actually this need not be the case, since we gain most by the fulfillment of those interests that are shared. The gain of each person who shares his interests is not limited to his immediate individual return but is enhanced by the increased welfare of his fellows and his reciprocal relations with them.

For the individual does not live in a vacuum but in relation to his fellow-men. His interests are best fulfilled when his relations with them are perfected. Their gain in development, happiness, or welfare increases his development, happiness, or welfare. Once this fact is recognized the individual will so order his life that he will concentrate upon the fulfillment of those interests of the self which are congruous with the interests of others, whether he makes wealth, culture, or character his goal. He will no longer stand out for personal gain at the expense of others, but will cooperate with them for the common end.

Unfortunately our educational system has not worked this concept into the consciousness of the growing child. Nevertheless, it could be incorporated in the thought process of every citizen. If this were done, the perfection of our social and industrial order could progressively be accomplished, instead, as at present, of having the system threatened by a growing minority of embittered victims of exploitation who are usually as selfish in their attitude as the magnates whom they criticize.

Thus the deeper lying cause of slums — the narrow selfishness of property

1. An experienced educator, Dr. John M. Gries, explained his method to me as follows: "The general impression of success given to students in some of our special schools is that of making money, becoming rich, acquiring power, and then living luxuriously. The goal is almost wholly selfish. Without disturbing their desire to do something, I have presented another picture to some students and to my surprise at times the ideas have had an effect. In trying to give them the goal of contributing something of value to those now living, and leaving something worthwhile to posterity, and not to take more out of this world than they put into it, I proceed roughly as follows: 'When we were born, somebody who preceded us built the house into which we were born. They built schools and churches, also hospitals. They cleared the fields and built roads. Cities were built, streets and sidewalks were laid out. Teachers and preachers had been trained. We were born into a civilized community with governments established, and courts of justice. We enjoy fire and police protection, parks and playgrounds. All of this and more too was our inheritance for which we did nothing. Our ancestors collectively put more into this world than they took out, and we are the beneficiaries. Had they adopted the principle that the world owed them a living, we should be living in a very primitive civilization today. In view of our inheritance, it seems that we owe it to ourselves to help others and to leave something worthwhile to those who come after.'"

owners, landlords, builders, and financial interests — can be removed only by a consistent, nation-wide educational programme to displace the attitudes of materialism and narrow individualism with new concepts of values and of the self. It may seem that one is going far from the field of housing in the recommendation of such a solution. But without it prevention of slums is impossible and all solutions become makeshift and piecemeal devices for the progressive curbing, through restrictive legislation and court decisions, of the effects of prevalent selfish attitudes. The educational programme suggested is not impossible but is wholly dependent upon correct leadership, adequate appreciation of the social objectives in question, intensive study of ways and means, and careful organization for its execution.

Side by side with it should go broad training for city planning, architecture, and engineering, which would cover the social and aesthetic as well as the technical factors in these fields. Too generally professional education has been strictly on techniques, with an inadequate background in the fields of sociology, government, economics, and ethics. But background is essential to leaders if they are to lead in the direction of wholesome social objectives, and would be exceedingly useful among subordinates as well. Perspective is essential in policy-framing, as it helps to give priority to that which is fundamental. The development of perspective should, therefore, be implicit in the instruction of specialists for each of these fields, as well as for the more general fields of business and politics.

The diffusion of civic education among the general populace is equally important in a democracy. In our grade schools, as well as colleges, there should be consideration of housing standards in their many details, and also of the process of city building and the importance of the city plan. Influences which now obstruct slum clearance and the improvement of housing would gradually dissipate as improved housing standards became increasingly incorporated in the funded thought of our population. Low standards of tenants would be less and less a factor in the production of slums, and as voters, the students with adequate civic training would increasingly facilitate the promotion of appropriate city planning.

Implicit in such training, however, should be careful instruction in public finance for city, state, and Federal governments, in order to overcome the present tendency of the propertyless voter to assume that the public treasury is inexhaustible and that he is justified in accepting gratuities or services which he could do without. At present the ability to appreciate relative values in public expenditures is much too rare, and the propertyless public is prone cynically to assume that it is natural to feed from the public crib. Herein lies a serious danger to our democracy, which means that specific education in public finance should be

added to the civic education and the training in values previously suggested. In the long run, we can have something which approximates the kind of government and society that we want, but if we continue to do nothing about it both our government and our social and industrial order will be so poisoned by their own growth products that the system will die and be displaced by new, crude, proletarian devices. The solution of the slum problem from the point of view of prevention is thus an integral part of the solution of each of our other major social problems — in the fields of labor, health, politics, and national planning. There is no solution other than education in reasoning capacity, judgment, moral values, and character, with due recognition of the social context and social-moral objectives.

CHAPTER XXI

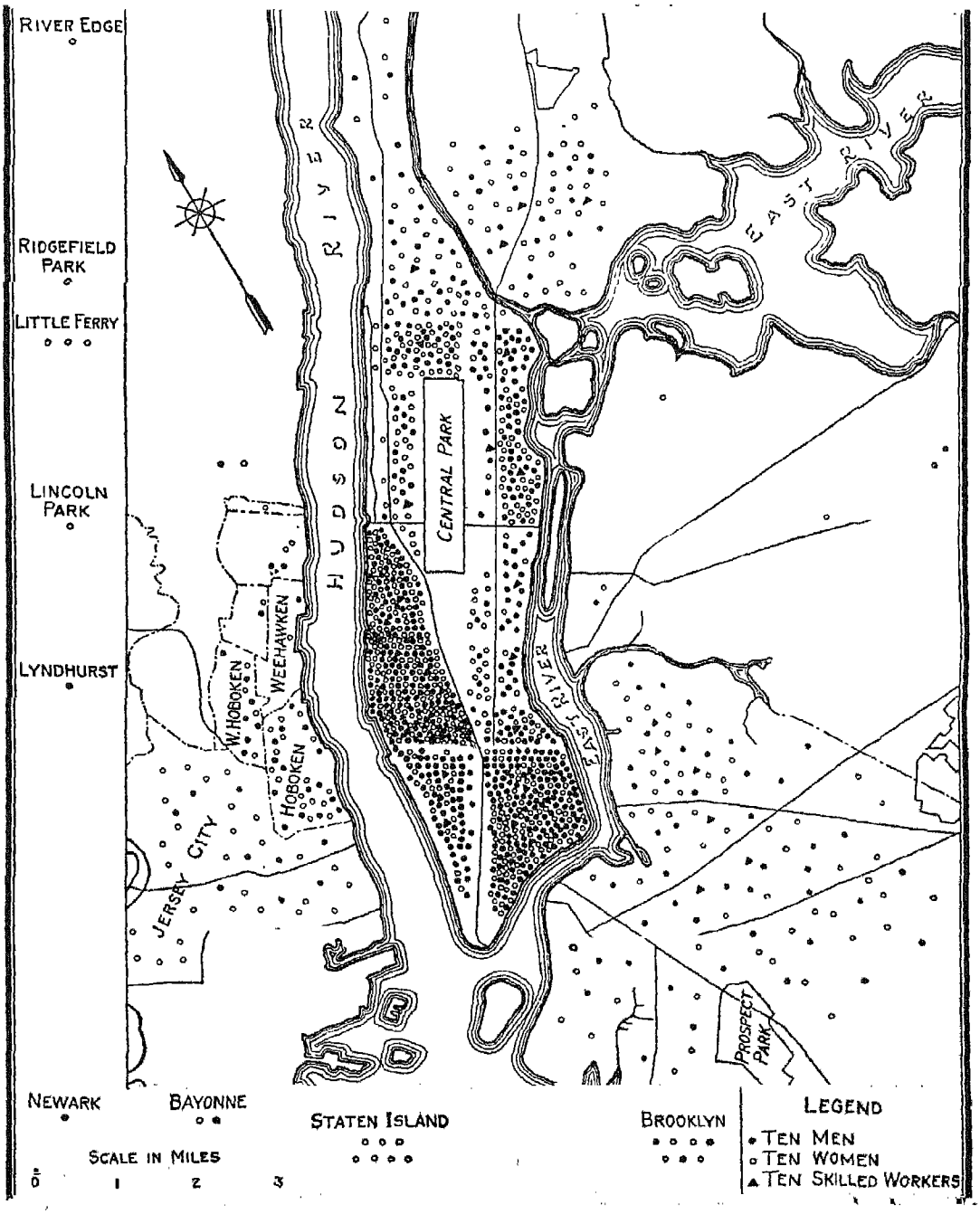
INDUSTRIAL DECENTRALIZATION

CONSIDERED as a device for the prevention of slums, the decentralization of industry has merit only in those cases in which it follows a scientific city and regional plan. Otherwise, new slums may be created in the areas to which the industries move, and the areas from which they move may continue to be blighted.

The problem of guided industrial relocation within the city of New York or the metropolitan region is pertinent to a study of housing policy because 32 per cent of the gainful workers of the city were found by the census of 1930 to be employed in manufacturing and mechanical industries. A considerable portion of the city's population thus has its place of residence determined in large part by the location of the city's industries. A glance at Figure 91 will show, for example, the high degree of concentration in the Lower East Side and middle West Side of the residences of employees in a manufacturing plant that was located (as of August 1923) on the West Side of the city, between 14th and 23rd Streets.

The urban location of a plant means tenement housing for the vast majority of its employees; for the industrial worker has to take into consideration the accessibility of his place of work when he chooses his place of residence. Much time is consumed in transit by the wage-earner, even if he lives in the borough in which he works. The Real Property Inventory, made in 1934, showed for Manhattan residents that 31 per cent required nineteen minutes or less to get from home to shop; 49 per cent required twenty to thirty-nine minutes; 15 per cent, forty to fifty-nine minutes; and 5 per cent, an hour or more. Obviously, if a fair percentage of the New York industries could profitably be moved to areas in outlying boroughs and their workers could simultaneously be moved to well planned residential communities near the factories, much of the congestion of population and traffic within the city could be eliminated, and decent housing might be made accessible to the workers, without loss of time in getting from the home to the job.

The argument for decentralization should, however, not be limited to present industry, since new manufacturing plants continue to be established in New York City. Under a well directed social policy many of these could be induced, to their own advantage, to obtain sites in outlying boroughs or elsewhere in the New York region rather than in Manhattan.



Spot map, showing the residence of employees of a large food manufacturing plant on the West Side, between 14th and 23d Streets, August, 1923. Reproduced from *Regional Survey*, Vol. I, p. 69.

FIG. 92



a. Clothes-making in old-law tenements, *c.* 1908. A whole family "finishing pants" at ten cents a dozen.



b. Cigarette-making in old-law tenements, *c.* 1910. A tuberculosis suspect rolling cigarette wrappers by licking the edges of the papers to moisten the paste.

In our American urban economy, industries of all sorts have traditionally located wherever they pleased. Owners of factories and workshops have purchased land and constructed buildings in any quarter of any city, or have made over buildings designed for other uses to fit their specific needs. Prior to the period of restrictive health and zoning legislation, a workshop might be established in any home or on any lot.

Early in New York history it was recognized that certain types of industry were dangerous to neighboring properties, whether residential or commercial, because of risks of fire or explosion, or because of menace to health or comfort.[1] These were the first to suffer regulation.

The industries excluded from downtown areas sought locations in the unbuilt areas farther north. As residential quarters in their northward movement overtook them, they were forced once more to move. Thus the so-called "nuisance industries" have continually been pushed toward the periphery of the city, first northward in Manhattan and subsequently to outlying boroughs. There is, however, continuous change in the location of all industries as well as in the size of plants. The excellent studies of Robert Murray Haig and Roswell C. McCrea for the Regional Survey show increases in the number of employees in Manhattan south of 59th Street between the years 1900 and 1922 for seven of the nine industries which they examined. These increases ranged from 8.2 per cent for the food industries to 92.7 per cent for women's clothing. There were declines in the number of employees in the wood and tobacco industries.[2]

Taken industry by industry, it was noted that tobacco products were increasing for the whole New York region at a rate substantially lower than the rate of population increase and were rapidly declining in Manhattan. Maps issued by the Committee on Regional Plan show decreases of wood plants in Manhattan and increases in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. The same can be said of textile and food plants, while printing plants have increased in Manhattan as well as elsewhere in the area. Metal plants, on the other hand, have increased north of 59th Street in Manhattan, have become more dispersed in Brooklyn, and have become much more concentrated in Queens. The women's clothing industry has moved north in Manhattan and has spread over into Brooklyn to some extent. Much the same tendency is shown in the men's clothing industry; while chemical plants, though increasing in southern Manhattan, also show increases in other boroughs.[3]

Restrictive measures with reference to the location of industry appeared in

1. See Chapters II and III.

2. *Major Economic Factors in Metropolitan Growth and Arrangement, Regional Survey*, I, 34. 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

New York's zoning legislation of 1916. The zoning resolution,[1] in addition to its provisions for the control of the height of each building and the area of the lot which it might cover, contained a section on use zoning. Figure 93 shows the present areas of industrial concentration. Heavy industries may be established only in the unrestricted zones, which, for Manhattan, follow quite closely the borders of the rivers. Light industries are permitted in commercial zones, and each tends to group in one or more districts of its own, a fact particularly noticeable in the men's clothing industry and the women's garment industry. This is one of the unfortunate weaknesses of the zoning plan, for though additional restrictions on light industries in the mid-Manhattan region were established on April 19, 1929, neither commercial nor residential districts are yet wholly free from unwanted invasion.[2]

It should be apparent from the foregoing statements that considerable social control has already been exercised over the location of industries. Proposals for comprehensive plans for industrial relocation would, therefore, not be new in kind but new only in degree. On the other hand, public policy, though it has involved extensive legislation and control, is still far from adequate in its protection of residential districts from the harm that may be done by a wide variety of factories or workshops. A city which tolerates the slaughterhouses and meat-packing and dressing establishments of First Avenue in the vicinity of 42nd Street cannot be said to have yet put social interests ahead of those of private property.

Arguments for Expulsion of Industry from Residential Areas

Industries and workshops vary greatly in their menace to neighboring properties and residences. Some are nuisances of an extreme type; others may be in many senses a community asset. Most industrial establishments fall somewhere between these two extremes. Some industries offend in only one or two particulars, while others offend in many. Moreover, the nuisance factor may vary with the size of the establishment, with the nature of the product, with the type of building in which the work is conducted, with the type of person employed, and with the peculiarities of the district. The term nuisance expresses a relation between factory conditions on the one hand and human needs on the other. Conceivably an industry which is a nuisance in one location might be an asset in another.

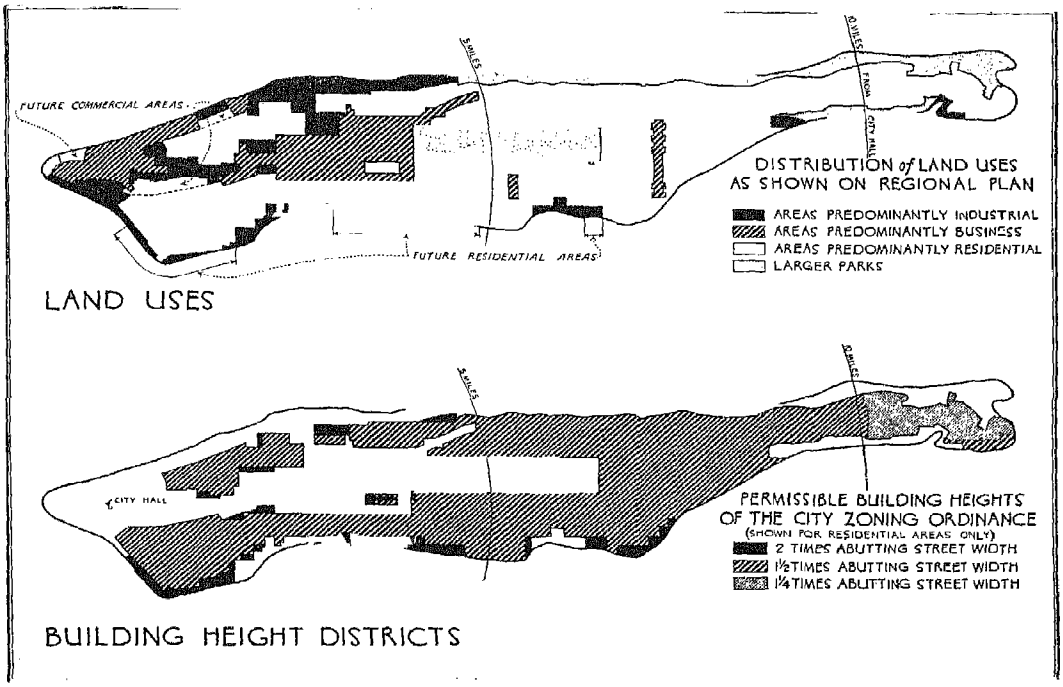
The possible nuisance factors comprise the following:

1. Explosion risks, e. g. celluloid factory.
2. Fire or conflagration risk, e. g. box factory.

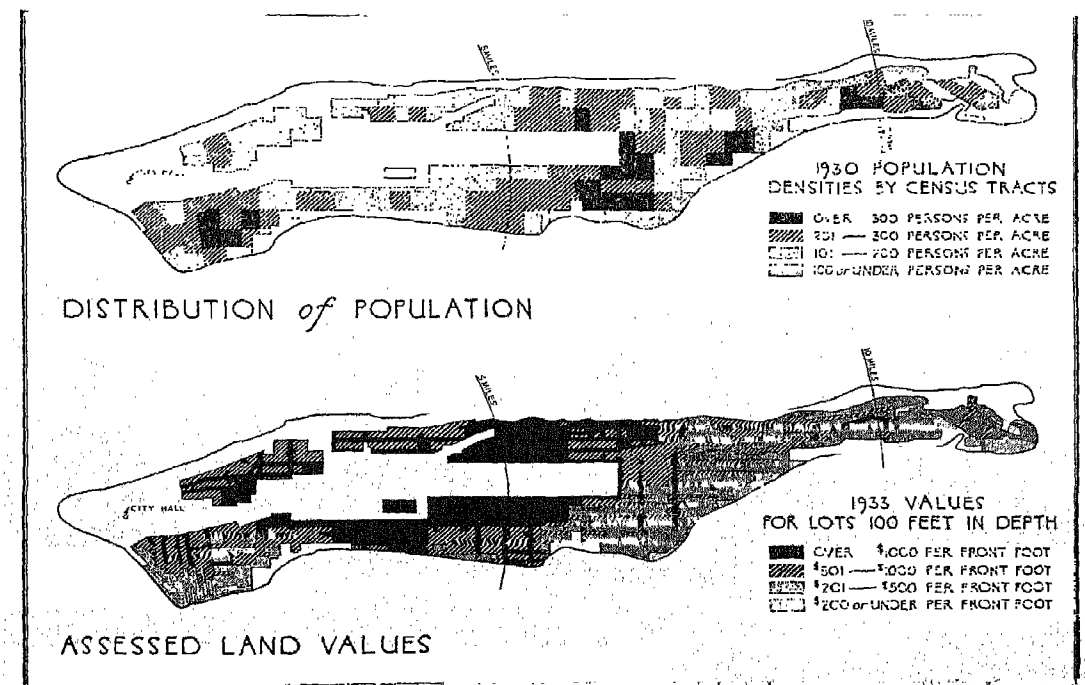
1. See p. 431.

2. For discussion, see *Regional Survey*, VI, particularly pp. 375–377.

FIG. 93



ISLAND OF MANHATTAN, SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF LAND USES AND PERMISSIBLE BUILDING HEIGHTS WITHIN THOSE AREAS EXPECTED TO REMAIN PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL (INCLUDING BUSINESS AREAS OUTSIDE OF SOUTHERN MANHATTAN)



ISLAND OF MANHATTAN, SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION (ABOVE) AND ASSESSED LAND VALUES (BELOW) WITHIN THOSE AREAS EXPECTED TO REMAIN PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL (INCLUDING BUSINESS AREAS OUTSIDE OF SOUTHERN MANHATTAN)

Reproduced from Regional Plan Association, "Information Bulletin," No. 21.

3. Health risk from
   (*a*) Gases and fumes.
   (*b*) Smoke.
   (*c*) Decaying organic matter.
   (*d*) Obnoxious odors, e. g. of slaughter houses, which may reduce appetites or even produce nausea.
   (*e*) Mineral or metallic dusts.
   (*f*) Imperfectly controlled acids or alkalies.

4. Accident risks from heavy trucks and drays, railroad sidings, or loading and unloading of raw materials or products.

5. Noise of the factory itself or the heavy street traffic which its operations involve.

6. Street dusts raised by such traffic.

7. Moral risks possibly entailed by association of the boys and girls of the neighborhood with employees or others at noon hours or at other times — for parental control over children's associates is reduced by the presence of a factory on a residential street.

8. Reduction of the potential beauty of the residential street by the inconsistent architecture and bulk of the factory. Beauty in residential areas is a value. It is most difficult to conserve it where factories are located next door. Factories close to several of the model tenements in New York City definitely rob them of such distinctiveness as they may have in architecture and reduce their value as community assets.

9. Confusion and unrest, which militate against the peace, wholesomeness, dignity, privacy, and other values which one associates with home.

10. Creation of a condition of blight, discouraging all improvements on the residential property because of anticipated resale for industrial purposes. In a better-class residential area, land values would usually be reduced by the intrusion of a factory or workshop because the land would no longer be available to sell to the original class of occupant for residential purposes or because additional factories in that specific area might not be profitable. The effect upon land values of factories and workshops distributed through residential areas would, however, be advantageous or disadvantageous according to circumstances. The construction of a new factory in an old residential area may raise local land values in the hope that the residences may ultimately be displaced by additional factories. Thus land values may go up on residential land even though residences may suffer from the presence of the factory for some or all of the reasons mentioned above.

11. Increase of municipal costs in residential areas for street surfacing, sewers, utilities, and policing. Concentration of industrial areas would help to protect the municipal treasury against excessive costs for such services.

Since industries are clearly undesirable in residential areas, the next problem is to determine where a wise social policy would best provide for them. To face this problem in a practical manner one must recognize that a policy which would reduce the assets, the earning power, or the productive power of industry would be undesirable. In other words, industry, if induced to relocate, should be able, in the long run, to recover its investment in the site which, in the public interest, it abandoned, unless loss can be compensated by larger gains in the new site. In

its new location it should have ready access to raw material, labor supply, public utilities, services, and facilities for distribution of goods, and in one or more of these should be better off than it was before removal.

To meet these needs on the part of industry and to protect public interests, it is desirable to provide a large number of industrial sites in the city and its many suburbs. Certain types of industry should not be forced to move and can properly be accommodated in areas primarily commercial. These include the shops that deal directly with the consumer, such as tailoring and millinery establishments, dry-cleaning shops, and many types of handicraft, from the making of jewelry to the production of custom-made furniture. Laundries and bakeries, which also deal directly with the consumer, might likewise be located in districts primarily commercial, though the larger establishments of these types have often found it feasible to have a suburban location with extensive delivery service. Similarly, milk-distributing establishments and warehouses for the distribution of perishable foods of other sorts must be located close to the heart of the city and many of them close to the wharves as well. Such industries, therefore, like financial institutions, may be accommodated within commercial areas.

Thus (1) industries of the nuisance type should be segregated in outlying parts of the city. (2) Primary industries and factories which sell exclusively to other factories, or to wholesalers or retailers, should not be placed either in the residential district or in the commercial district, since they confuse traffic, menace the visiting buyer, and reduce district amenities. Instead they would best be located in specially restricted areas where they will at once be close to an adequate labor supply and to transportation and financial facilities. Such industrial zones might be in either the city or the suburbs for those industries that are not of the nuisance type. (3) Non-nuisance industries that are small, or that have need of being accessible to out-of-town buyers or sellers or close to in-town related industries, wholesalers, or retailers, might reasonably be located in certain of the commercial areas or in special areas of their own close to commercial areas.[1]

1. Haig and McCrea, in vol. 1 of the *Regional Survey*, divide industries into several categories and indicate the tendencies of each (pp. 104–106). Those that will tend to cling to the center of the city in the absence of legal prohibition have the following characteristics. They require no specialized building; the time or service factor is an important element; work is highly skilled, specialized, unstandardized; a low ground area per worker is required; they operate on a comparatively small scale; obsolete buildings are suitable; close contact with the market is required; they are highly seasonal with fluctuating labor force; and the style factor is important. The clothing and garment trades have all of the above characteristics and many of them are found in high-grade jewelry, small job printing, special furniture and cabinet work, metal assembling and service plants, technical instruments, cigar manufacture, and photo-engraving. Those that readily move from central sites are of large size with large ground area required per person. The time or service factor is unimportant; specialized buildings may be required; there may be nuisance features, a serious problem of waste disposal, and need of large quantities of fuel or water. Heavy chemicals and copper-smelting and refining possess all of these features. Sugar-refining, iron foundries, explosives, paint, soap, fertilizer, slaughtering, textile finishing, and petroleum refining have many of these characteristics.

Sources of raw material and proximity of markets would lead certain industries, such as slaughtering, lumber, textile-finishing plants, heavy and bulky metal plants, sugar and oil refining, foundries, to move west of the Hudson River. Those that would move east, if forced to do so, would include

Thus some of the industries which a wise social policy would remove from residential areas would relocate in the commercial areas within the city and others perhaps close to the shipping areas. The policy of limiting heavy industries largely to the waterfront in the use zoning provisions of New York City is most unfortunate in that it deprives the city population of access to the river-banks for recreational purposes. It has been clearly shown by the Committee on Regional Plan and by the present Regional Plan Association that extension of waterfront highways and more park areas are needed.[1]

The advantages to industry of relocation in suburbs would include the following:

1. Lower land costs. Satisfactory suburban land is available at prices which are only a small fraction of urban land prices, even after being fully equipped with utilities. This would make possible

2. Much more ample space upon which to conduct their operations;

3. Tracks and sidings in selected suburban locations for those industries which need to ship by railroad, as well as belt lines connecting two or more railroad systems.

This means (4) avoidance of the losses characteristic of urban locations entailed by breakage and leakage, as well as the waste of expense and energy through transporting products from the factory by truck or dray, which, after time-consuming trips through traffic jams, unloads upon freight cars at a distant siding. The suburban location makes possible direct loading from factory to freight car, saving the high expense of the intermediary service.

5. An abundant labor supply which can be made available, provided that industrial decentralization is supplemented with carefully planned residential decentralization.

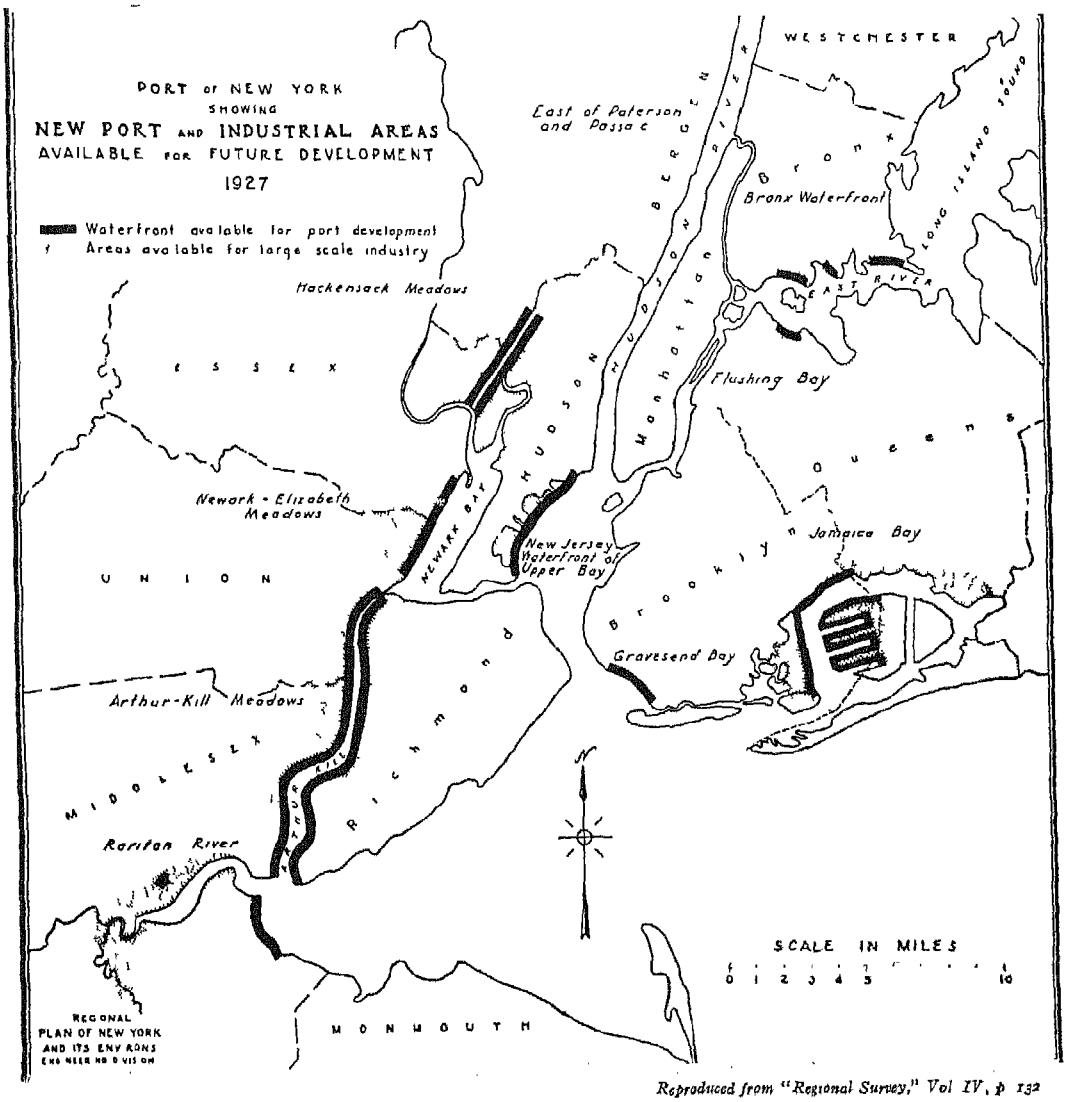
6. Residential decentralization, which, if skilfully devised, should provide for better health on the part of labor than it could possibly enjoy in a slum location. Better health under proper personnel administration should mean greater contentment and larger output.

The problem of where industries should locate within the New York region must be met by carefully considering the needs of the industries themselves as well as the needs of the public. There is nothing to be gained from forcing any industry into an uneconomic location. On the other hand, if the public interest demands the withdrawal of an industry, its new location should be determined with reference to the city and regional plan, which, in turn, should provide adequately for the industry's specific requirements as to space and accessibility to raw materials, power, markets, related industries, and labor supply. Some industries will require loft buildings in Manhattan, expanding vertically rather than later-

the clothing, garment, and food industries. Cigar and silk industries, and some others listed, are likely to leave the New York area. Waterfront locations are desirable for sugar, coffee, oil, lumber, and power houses. Plants whose products are perishable will locate primarily with reference to local distribution, e. g. bakeries, ice cream factories, kosher slaughterhouses, milk-producing, and certain types of assembly plants.

1. *Regional Plan*, II, 351.

FIG. 94



Reproduced from "Regional Survey," Vol IV, p 132

ally. Others require structures of the Bush Terminal type, congregating with related industries, and accessible to railroad sidings and wharves. For others, space needs are a primary consideration and waterfront locations unnecessary.

Figure 94 shows several new port and industrial areas determined, after intensive study, by the Regional Plan of New York, to be available for future development. Those of the Bronx waterfront, Flushing Bay, Jamaica Bay, and Richmond are within New York City. The remainder are in the New York region but are located in New Jersey. The proposed industrial districts of Brooklyn and Queens comprise over 22,000 acres, which may be contrasted with the 4,100 acres of land now provided by the New York Zoning Ordinance for industrial use in Manhattan. The Richmond area comprises 4,600 acres. These alone provide sufficient industrial land to take care of needs for many decades to come.[1]

The Bronx East River waterfront has two main-line railroads, is comparatively level with a small portion of marsh land, is mostly undeveloped, is accessible to the more densely populated sections of the Bronx, comprises 7,500 acres, and is 11 miles from New York City Hall.

The Jamaica Bay district is served by one main-line railroad, is now marsh land, is accessible to populated areas of Brooklyn and Queens, comprises 11,600 acres, and is 10 miles from New York City Hall. It lacks railroad freight connections to the west.

The Flushing Bay area is served by one main-line railroad, is partly marshy and partly filled in, is accessible to the population of Corona, Flushing, and College Point, comprises 3,600 acres, and is 9 miles from New York City Hall. Like Jamaica Bay, it lacks adequate freight railroad connections.

In contrast with these are the Arthur Kill Meadows in Richmond and New Jersey with easy connections to four main railroads in New Jersey, level topography but much marsh land, comprising 4,600 acres on Staten Island and 12,500 acres in New Jersey. This area is 13½ miles from New York City Hall.

The Regional Survey lists also the Raritan River area of 4,000 acres, 18 miles from City Hall; the New Jersey Upper Bay waterfront of 1,000 acres, 4 miles from City Hall; the Newark-Elizabeth Meadows of 14,000 acres, 8 miles from City Hall; the Paterson-Passaic area of 5,500 acres, 14 miles from City Hall; and the Hackensack Meadows of 26,200 acres, 7 miles from City Hall.[2]

A special study was made of the last-named area, which affords connections to six railroads, and it was concluded that, if developed for industry, it would provide occupation for 720,000 workers supporting a population of over 5,000,000. A plan was drawn distributing 30,650 acres of the Hackensack Meadows to provide 3,990

1. *Regional Survey*, IV, 134. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 144–146.

acres for new industrial areas and streets, and the remainder for residences, business, and parks. A Meadows Reclamation Commission was appointed by the New Jersey State Legislature and reported to it in November 1930. It has since been consolidated in the Regional Planning Commission of the State of New Jersey, and is continuing its studies of this project.[1]

With so much land available for industrial uses it is wholly possible, after further intensive studies, to build pre-planned industrial cities on one or more of these tracts. The studies to be made cover not only the costs of reclamation and street and site planning for the types of industry that would be attracted to each location, but also the planning of appropriate residential communities for wage-earners, unskilled or skilled, for clerical workers and executives, and for parks, recreational and civic centers, retail commercial districts to serve this populace, and of housing for the workers in these tributary occupations. The engineering problems of reclamation, railroad service, docks, and transit facilities to Manhattan are paralleled in their comprehensiveness and seriousness by the problems of public and private finance entailed. For the costs ought to be distributed equitably among those who should justly bear them.

To carry out such a programme, careful study should be made of the garden-city movement in England, and of similar ventures on the Continent. The social philosophy outlined in A. R. Sennett's two-volume work on *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice*,[2] and particularly in Sir Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow*,[3] led, over thirty years ago, to definite attempts to establish new industrial communities surrounded by agricultural belts in which urban workers would have the advantages of rural living, and rural workers the advantages of urban living. Each garden city is pre-planned to provide convenient industrial locations on railroad sidings in valleys. The direction of the prevailing winds is considered in determining industrial sites so that the residential areas will be kept free from gases, odors, and smoke. Factories are separated from residences by parked strips and are not visible, though accessible. Housing for all workers is provided in single-family dwellings, detached or in groups. Increments to land values accrue to the community itself, rather than to individual property owners.

The movement to establish garden cities in our country, initiated by the late Sir Ebenezer Howard, has succeeded in bringing into being the two new towns of Letchworth and Welwyn in Hertfordshire, and now has the support of all political parties. . . .

Definition of the Garden City. The definition of the term "garden city" which has

1. *Regional Plan*, II, 540–547; *Regional Survey*, IV, 150–157.
2. London, 1905.
3. London 1902. The first edition in 1898 was entitled *To-morrow*.

been adopted by the Association is: "A Garden City is a Town designed for healthy living and industry; of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life, but not larger; surrounded by a rural belt; the whole of the land being in public ownership, or held in trust for the community."

A garden city, therefore, is a self-contained town which has a town centre, an industrial area, residential areas, a limited size, and a permanent belt of agricultural land, and at once distinguished from ordinary suburban development. It is an effort on a great scale to depopulate London, not by restrictive legislation, but by offering its inhabitants better, more wholesome, and hopeful places in which to live and work.

Three Alternatives. There are three ways of continuing the growth of London and all big cities: (1) by building on the circumference; (2) by building in a vertical direction; or (3) by building new daughter-towns in the country. The first method results in the continuance and even intensification of the problems of transport, haphazard growth, ribbon development and spoliation of amenities in the outlying areas. The strain placed upon workers travelling to and from the centre is reaching breaking point, while the excessive concentration of industry and commerce in the centre is placing a burden upon production with far-reaching results.

The second method, that of high buildings or skyscrapers, if built in congested areas, blots out sunlight and fresh air, and by increasing the density per acre in such areas, becomes a breeding-ground for infectious disease. The third alternative is to decentralise industry and population into Garden Cities or Satellite Towns. The essential basis of the Garden City idea is the removal of industry from the overcrowded cities into self-contained towns. Certain industries can be so moved because they do not depend upon their present location for any service which could not be supplied in a Garden City.

The Example of Letchworth. At Letchworth, the pre-war Garden City, there is to be seen a busy manufacturing town, with about a hundred factories and workshops, embracing such trades as printing and publishing, corset making, motor-car manufacturing, engineering, scientific instrument making, weaving and pure food production. The town is built upon an area of 4,483 acres, of which nearly 3,000 is reserved as an agricultural belt. Its population is 15,000 and according to the 1921 Census only 556 persons work outside the town. The industrial area is confined to the north-east portion of the town, and being adjacent to the main London-Cambridge line, factories have direct access by sidings from the factory door to the railway. The shopping centre, with over 150 shops, forms the central area, in which is also to be found the public buildings numbering over forty. The educational needs of the population are met by the thirteen schools of the elementary, church, secondary, and private type. . . .

Welwyn Garden City is based on a Town Plan of similar structure. The centre of the town has been reserved for the shopping area, and on the north-east side of the railway is the industrial area, in which no houses may be erected and out of which no factories may be established. Surrounding the city is the agricultural belt, including the golf links. Although only commenced in 1920, Welwyn has a population of over 5,000, and the factory area includes about twenty different industries, such as engineering, sand, gravel and brick works, pure food production, iron foundry for light castings. The town is built on an estate of 2,300 acres, of which a little more than a third will be allocated to parks, open spaces and the agricultural belt.[1]

1. Garden City and Town Planning Association Leaflets, No. 8, *Garden Cities: An All-Party Programme.*

Such ventures if undertaken in America should not be handled on a philanthropic or cooperative basis because of the limited amount of capital available from such private sources and our comparative inexperience with cooperative organization. To undertake slum prevention on the gigantic scale proposed, it would be necessary to operate through state authorities by means of specially constituted expert commissions, amply empowered. In case developments were contemplated on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, interstate commissions would be essential. Nevertheless, some private organization of housing and city-planning specialists would be needed, to gather pertinent data from European experience and keep it before the public by means of the press, radio, and news-reel, and particularly to appear at hearings in order to represent enlightened public interest. In these days of colossal expenditures upon public works, carefully considered and scientifically based projects for planned industrial decentralization have outstanding merit. For the repayment of the capital investment is a virtual certainty if the projects are wisely executed.

The other angle of this problem of industrial decentralization is to determine what can be done with the areas from which industry is thus removed. Presumably certain business undertakings, such as banking, brokerage, warehousing, shipping, and wholesaling, cannot profitably be decentralized. The same would be true of civic centers for municipal or public activities and many kinds of recreational facilities. Trade, civic, cultural, social, and educational organizations will also need centers, as well as all organizations working on a national basis and having visitors from out of town, which means also that hotels, restaurants, and similar institutions of personal service must largely remain in the city proper.

There may not be enough establishments of the above type to warrant using all of the present slum areas which might be abandoned by industry. To a considerable extent, such areas could be used for residence, if properly planned with sufficient open space and with high standards, for those groups of the population that need city apartments. Whether they would absorb as large a population as now resides there is an open question. It is probable, in view of the proposed decentralization of factory workers, that they would not. It is possible that a wholly different group of the population should be catered to. There may be many well-to-do persons who would prefer to have their city residences close to their work and many unattached persons for whom housing should be provided in such areas. These may be convenient locations also for persons engaged in personal and domestic service, both white and colored. The proper distribution of the vacated space among these potential users would take considerable study. A fundamental question of municipal economics is raised because the city cannot afford contrac-

tion in its total taxable assets. Presumably it could stand a contraction in one area, however, if it was compensated for by enhanced values in other areas.

Present prices for slum lands are prohibitive for park use on a large scale. It is questionable whether the city could at present afford to purchase and develop for such use even as much as 10 per cent of present slum areas if it had to pay for more than the cost of the land. No compensation whatsoever should be made for the so-called "improvements" upon such land, if they consist of unimproved old-law tenements. The problem of appraisal and of compensation, as well as those of justice and of ultimate public welfare in connection with both of these, becomes fundamental to this study. The solution should be found before the industries are removed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SUBURBAN MOVEMENT AND RESIDENTIAL DECENTRALIZATION

THE suburban movement as a device for slum prevention requires analysis on the basis of existing conditions and trends, as well as on the basis of possible future social direction. History reveals in Manhattan a continuous northward movement, and a slight lateral movement across the rivers by ferry prior to the building of the bridges across the East River and the extension of subway and elevated lines to outlying boroughs. This was a natural undirected movement occasioned chiefly by population pressure, much affected by fashion and imitation, and constrained, so far as the direction of the movement was concerned, by physiographic factors. When transit facilities were made available from Manhattan across the East River to Brooklyn and Queens they were in each case laid out through districts already populous. Population thus preceded, as well as followed, their installation. They tended to create new areas of minor concentration and to connect urban sub-centers with residential strips. If the transit facilities had been run through areas not yet built up, the map of population distribution would show a very different pattern, since population and residential construction have always followed the transit facilities.

Where suburban growth is not guided it takes unpleasant forms. This is true of all American cities. Under our system of economic organization the profit motive is stimulated. In suburban development the operation of this motive takes the form of speculation in land in the hope of a rapid rise in values, and speculation in house-building in the hope of a rapid turnover of profits through quick sales. There is no interest in soundness of construction, where the original investor, the builder, or the real-estate exploiter will not carry the house long enough to have it depreciate on his hands. The buyer of the speculatively built house finds to his dismay that repairs and replacements are frequent and costly and that the property purchased is more a liability than an asset, unless continuing enhancement of land values compensates for the maintenance cost and the attendant discomforts.

Most of the housing in the outlying boroughs has been of the speculative type. Rapid depreciation apparently has been least felt in the buildings erected since

1901 under the Tenement House Act, or its successor, the Multiple Dwelling Law. It is because public regulation and supervision have been less strict for one- and two-family units that the condition of houses of these types is comparatively inferior. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule in what are termed high-class developments, but these constitute only a small fraction of the housing in the neighboring boroughs. There are exceptions also in some of the houses built by investors for their own occupancy. Yet the majority of owned homes have been purchased from speculators and, of the remainder, the presumptive majority have been designed by a builder rather than an architect, usually from stock plans of inferior quality, or by the owner himself, who usually lacks training in the principles of design and planning and in the methods and materials of construction.

Moreover, no device has adequately protected the home buyer or home builder and his investment from undesirable neighbors, and from houses of inferior design or of bulk, style, or cost inappropriate to his neighborhood. Except for the subdivisions which have been planned and built under competent architectural supervision, and which have been protected by restrictions, the suburban boroughs outside of the areas of multi-family dwellings usually present a ragged appearance, and often present in the same block a jumble of inconsistent architectural types, ranging from substantial houses erected in the last century or even earlier, through single-family dwellings — one-, two- or three-story box-like structures — to row-housing and tenements or apartments.

In addition to the above, suburban development for New York, as in many other cities, has the further disadvantage of unduly separating the social classes. There are some suburban communities inhabited almost exclusively by families of large income, and others with no well-to-do families. In the latter type of community, if established outside of the city limits, the tax burden will be particularly heavy upon families of modest income, or else the municipal services will be poor.

Of the New York City boroughs, Queens and Richmond offer the largest amount of land available for real-estate subdivisions and planned communities. In Queens the Federal census recorded over 125,000 owned homes and over 150,000 rented homes in 1930. The following table[1] shows distribution of the owned homes by value and the rented homes by monthly rental. Although over 50,000 of the owned homes were valued at $10,000 or more, there were over 8,000 houses in Queens valued at less than $5,000; 34,000 at from $5,000 to $7,499; and 31,000 at from $7,500 to $9,999. The large majority of owned homes probably cost under $10,000, and it is a fairly safe presumption that the incomes of the ma-

1. See also Figures 58 and 59.

Health Center Districts, New York City

HOMES BY TENURE AND VALUE OR MONTHLY RENTAL, 1930 FEDERAL CENSUS

HEALTH CENTER DISTRICT	OWNED HOMES BY VALUE											RENTED HOMES BY MONTHLY RENTAL												
	Under $1000	$1000-$1499	$1500-$1999	$2000-$2999	$3000-$4999	$5000-$7499	$7500-$9999	$10,000-$14,999	$15,000-$19,999	$20,000 and over	Unknown	TOTAL OWNED HOMES	Under $10	$10-$14.99	$15-$19.99	$20-$29.99	$30-$49.99	$50-$74.99	$75-$99.99	$100-$149.99	$150-$199.99	$200 and over	Unknown	TOTAL RENTED HOMES	MEDIAN MONTHLY RENT	HOMES WITH TENURE UNKNOWN	TOTAL HOMES
MANHATTAN																								
Lower East Side	2	1	3	3	7	13	23	110	164	720	51	1,102	1,640	10,293	17,499	25,838	15,611	4,651	1,287	1,370	531	461	2,270	81,451	$24	439	82,992
Kips Bay-Lenox Hill	3	0	4	8	26	40	143	131	148	2,396	280	3,178	164	1,363	4,525	14,774	17,404	5,266	3,221	4,149	2,376	7,984	3,384	64,610	41	632	68,420
East Harlem	2	1	3	4	18	32	100	264	313	704	32	1,474	140	1,647	5,857	18,216	18,523	2,861	564	805	527	1,244	1,385	51,579	30	310	53,363
Central Harlem	1	2	2	4	45	228	62	320	432	408	21	1,522	29	106	434	3,050	15,482	15,831	3,595	1,203	501	120	1,636	41,987	52	191	43,700
Lower West Side	0	6	5	10	18	17	37	78	87	801	54	1,153	388	2,734	7,660	19,911	16,781	8,161	4,343	4,294	2,457	2,520	3,642	72,891	35	992	75,036
Riverside	1	2	4	22	67	33	12	61	108	1,306	85	1,701	21	191	571	3,392	12,537	12,122	5,932	10,857	7,570	9,675	6,218	70,107	96	601	72,409
Washington Heights	8	22	21	16	30	93	170	284	371	515	29	1,559	9	67	119	952	14,271	32,670	12,872	7,359	1,123	198	1,433	71,062	65	189	72,830
Miscellaneous*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	196	202	0	4	206
Borough of Manhattan	17	35	42	67	211	461	547	1,348	1,623	6,845	593	11,589	2,391	16,403	36,474	86,133	110,633	81,562	32,814	30,047	15,085	22,203	20,164	453,909	$44	3,358	468,956
BRONX																								
Mott Haven	2	8	10	11	73	425	633	846	473	532	107	3,120	70	371	822	5,340	29,526	12,122	1,463	590	79	23	1,279	52,765	$42	1,008	55,913
Morrisania	2	10	6	6	32	398	622	1,099	571	713	66	3,525	52	126	316	2,635	31,809	27,283	3,884	1,254	233	78	2,196	69,835	49	290	73,650
Tremont	3	3	6	3	35	274	411	1,007	688	1,243	97	3,770	58	51	103	1,725	22,660	33,953	7,947	3,005	284	54	1,772	71,612	58	281	75,663
Fordham-Riverdale	5	2	4	36	61	238	374	1,247	815	1,482	99	4,361	18	44	145	1,155	13,553	22,150	5,388	1,889	248	80	843	45,513	58	281	50,155
Pelham Bay	10	19	22	72	261	1,228	1,877	2,450	1,171	659	205	7,974	9	40	61	565	5,815	7,717	1,265	289	21	8	633	16,423	55	351	24,748
Wimsbridge-Westchester	143	80	64	168	497	1,574	2,227	3,601	1,961	672	198	11,185	9	29	68	943	10,296	13,743	2,474	361	26	12	497	28,458	55	412	40,055
Miscellaneous*	0	0	0	1	8	8	4	4	5	8	2	40	1	0	0	2	8	7	1	5	1	2	14	41	-	5	86
Borough of The Bronx	163	122	112	297	967	4,145	6,148	10,254	5,684	5,309	774	33,975	217	661	1,515	13,365	113,767	116,945	22,422	7,393	892	257	7,233	284,567	$32	2,628	321,270
RICHMOND (Staten Island)																								
St. George Division	5	25	35	205	1,400	4,204	3,172	2,480	715	582	503	13,426	28	192	569	2,583	5,455	2,738	487	235	35	21	348	12,789	$40	695	26,910
Tottenville Division	21	51	57	199	931	1,931	1,107	817	219	166	187	5,686	80	102	151	573	1,309	682	72	27	3	2	112	2,963	39	230	8,879
Borough of Richmond	26	76	92	404	2,331	6,135	4,279	3,297	934	748	690	19,112	58	294	720	3,256	6,764	3,420	559	262	38	23	460	15,752	$40	925	35,789
BROOKLYN																								
Wmsburg-Greenpoint	4	23	8	45	439	1,746	1,725	2,593	1,059	483	212	8,337	551	2,290	5,774	18,208	15,443	3,786	416	150	33	25	2,362	49,020	$28	922	58,279
Fort Greene	7	26	10	42	379	1,351	1,781	2,930	1,514	1,281	241	10,062	225	856	2,179	9,408	12,638	8,321	2,442	1,696	576	540	961	39,872	41	1,152	51,088
Red Hook-Gowanus	7	26	23	87	483	1,472	1,408	1,947	841	763	224	7,281	199	1,007	2,953	9,842	11,280	3,611	1,063	893	381	192	1,349	32,780	33	953	41,004
Sunset Park	4	28	28	78	573	1,748	2,581	4,587	2,159	905	283	13,071	27	217	621	4,669	17,667	12,025	1,874	525	75	52	716	38,478	45	807	52,356
Bay Ridge	1	23	20	23	209	1,677	3,890	9,294	4,800	1,978	507	22,472	39	31	122	1,495	15,286	22,351	4,358	908	135	63	795	45,585	56	1,079	69,136
Bushwick	5	30	6	49	543	2,850	3,792	4,736	1,509	696	183	14,408	133	903	2,158	17,457	21,189	5,339	512	204	32	24	392	48,343	33	576	63,327
Bedford	16	27	22	47	513	2,349	3,374	4,759	2,260	2,091	314	15,771	21	188	591	5,343	20,722	19,923	4,404	2,081	280	120	1,280	54,953	50	1,143	71,866
Flatbush	35	58	17	69	594	4,621	8,182	10,071	5,355	4,199	576	33,887	57	57	55	859	13,477	28,305	9,048	3,849	631	176	1,585	58,110	62	933	92,930
Lower Flatbush	58	59	35	104	792	2,561	3,433	5,670	2,667	1,426	481	17,285	36	75	141	1,243	9,957	13,776	2,599	838	94	37	2,239	31,035	55	973	49,293
Brownsville	16	45	35	152	1,255	4,128	2,773	3,471	2,328	949	320	15,481	46	451	1,935	9,144	26,357	11,818	779	203	34	16	487	51,171	41	816	57,468
Miscellaneous*	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	1	0	0	15	0	0	0	3	0	4	2	14	0	0	87	110	0	5	130
Borough of Brooklyn	152	402	204	696	5,790	25,013	32,944	50,165	24,492	14,771	3,441	158,070	1,334	6,075	16,451	77,671	163,998	129,259	27,499	11,361	2,271	1,845	12,272	449,437	$44	9,368	616,875
QUEENS																								
Astoria-Long Island City	5	33	14	59	458	1,365	1,972	4,078	1,540	1,095	178	10,797	53	129	549	3,411	19,880	18,473	1,719	250	58	27	698	45,247	$48	476	56,520
Corona	4	20	20	69	489	2,072	2,633	4,849	2,317	1,172	200	13,836	20	68	100	865	7,092	11,303	2,737	1,101	194	83	181	23,734	58	484	38,053
Maspeth-Forest Hills	8	48	26	70	760	3,614	5,336	5,059	1,626	1,551	285	19,432	33	150	450	3,762	17,378	5,432	906	893	307	111	420	29,842	42	569	49,843
Flushing	11	24	37	118	698	4,525	3,230	3,962	2,006	2,208	266	17,084	16	77	179	1,107	4,551	4,171	1,573	923	196	58	280	13,131	53	414	30,629
Jamaica West	77	134	105	280	1,945	10,125	8,431	6,725	2,416	1,810	565	32,594	33	88	266	1,854	10,288	10,002	1,708	1,036	223	101	852	26,451	51	981	60,026
Jamaica East	16	46	57	203	2,327	12,309	8,962	5,162	1,568	1,104	295	32,039	19	58	138	989	5,617	3,952	731	339	89	38	126	12,096	47	486	44,621
Miscellaneous*	1	0	0	1	4	38	53	44	7	3	0	151	0	0	6	15	78	54	13	11	5	5	17	204	0	17	372
Borough of Queens	122	305	259	780	6,682	34,048	31,657	29,879	11,468	8,943	1,789	125,932	174	560	1,689	12,003	64,884	53,287	9,387	4,553	1,072	423	2,574	150,705	$48	3,427	280,064
CITY OF NEW YORK	480	940	709	2,244	15,981	69,802	75,575	94,643	44,201	36,716	7,287	348,778	4,174	23,993	56,848	192,428	460,046	384,473	92,681	53,614	19,358	24,151	42,704	1,354,470	$46	19,706	1,722,954

*Miscellaneous includes parks, islands and cemeteries.

Note: For more detailed current information consult Real Property Inventory of Municipal Housing Authority.

Compiled by Committee on Neighborhood Health Development from "Homes by Tenure and Value or Monthly Rental, by Health Areas, New York City, 1930" Welfare Council of New York City, 1935.

jority of owners were well under $5,000 and quite probably under $4,000. The large number of rentals at from $30 to $49 per month suggests annual incomes ranging from $1,500 to $2,400.

Several areas in Queens have been studied. Perry [1] made a close investigation of a tract located in Winfield, where the main line of the Long Island Railroad crosses Queens Boulevard, three miles from Manhattan. He noted that the factors most affecting the residential quality of this section were railways and burial grounds. A dominating element in the real-estate situation of northwestern Queens is a "dismal network of tracks" of the Long Island Railroad and subsidiary yards over two miles in length and in places a quarter of a mile wide, surrounded by a factory belt. The landscape over many miles is encumbered by tracks and embankments, signal towers, bridges, and telegraph lines.

One family buildings, of various heights, in various states of repair, with a medley of additions and separate garage structures, are indiscriminately mixed with multi-family dwellings of many types and descriptions. Retail stores, filling stations, and small industrial plants are sprinkled about without apparent regard for business advantage or residential harm. Unimproved areas, sometimes strewn with litter, and here and there a shanty, help to complete the appearance of miscellaneousness which is the chief characteristic of the section.[2]

Forty-one acres selected for special study are bordered by an industrial district containing a coal-pocket, a power-house (just across the tracks), and the plants of several light industries on the east. On the south is a residential district with a cemetery visible beyond. To the north is the stark Queens Boulevard, 200 feet in width, hideous, strident, and unadorned, and the main branch of the Long Island Railroad.

The internal aspect of the tract is not much more cheerful. Only two of the bounding streets are improved, while all the internal roadways are soft [3] except a short stretch of the highway leading to the cemetery.

About one half of the lots have no buildings and many of these are unsightly with litter and rubbish. The existing structures are scattered unevenly throughout the tract, no single block being wholly built up or wholly vacant. No park, or other open space, relieves the drabness of the scene.

Three fourths of the buildings (all are dwellings except one small industrial shop) are of wooden construction; the newer, multi-family structures are of brick and some of the older one family buildings are of stucco.

Nearly two thirds of the houses are two stories high, while a seventh of them are one story, the remainder being distributed among the heights of two and a half stories, one and a half stories and three stories. In many cases, a one story addition has been joined to a higher building. As to position of structure with reference to lot lines, no observable rule has been followed.

1. Clarence A. Perry, *The Rebuilding of Blighted Areas*, pp. 12-18.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
3. Some paving has since been done.

The preferred location seems to be close to the sidewalk but there are many exceptions. As to repair, all the various states are represented, from recent newness to the last stage of the ramshackle.

Some notion of the economic level of the settlement can be obtained from the following figures. Computing from values of improved lots only, the average house and lot — if such an abstraction may be permitted — had an assessed valuation in 1930 of about $5,000, one third of which was apportioned to the land, and the taxes on that property amounted to $134 (the 1930 Queens rate being .0268). Equalization at 85 per cent, the official ratio for that year, set the market value of this property at approximately $5,900.

For the 170 houses on the tract the Census of 1930 showed a population of 980 persons, or 5.76 persons per dwelling. Since only 39 per cent of the houses have garages, it is evident that the average family does not quite possess an automobile.[1]

By way of contrast another district in western Queens, examined by Perry, is described as follows:

An inspection was made of western Queens to see whether there was any older district, subject to the same deteriorative influences, that would afford an indication of the character which the future might bring to our tract. A completely built-up area of about the same size was found in Astoria. This old settlement is two miles nearer Manhattan and has the advantage of being only a quarter of a mile from the Interborough elevated and subway line. No railroad is actually visible to its residents but the extensive railroad yards at Long Island City are only a half mile away.

From the coverages and heights of buildings . . . it is easy to discern the main characteristics of this Astoria tract. An excessive business frontage, exerting its baleful influence upon residential quality along three sides of the district, attracts immediate attention. The severity of this effect is heightened by a scrutiny of the stores themselves. From the coverages and lack of setbacks, it is plain to see that they consist mainly of two and three story buildings with stores on the ground floor and family apartments above. Mingled with them are one story "taxpayers" and discarded dwellings with improvised store fronts. To the residences backing up against the business zone, the rears of the stores present a motley aspect. Blank walls crowding the back line, shallow yards serving no useful purpose, deeper yards filled with litter, and yards entirely covered with one story additions — all contribute to an atmosphere of makeshift and miscellaneousness.

The residences are divided into four types of structure, detached, semi-detached, row-house and multi-family, but in the distribution of these types the accident of large parcel ownership, rather than any consideration of light, open space, or amenity, has been the determining factor. Except for the scanty yard about the single elementary school, there is no public playground in the district and no park of any kind.[2]

A more remote district in Queens was studied by the New York State Board of Housing. It was an area of two-story wooden row-houses with shingle roofs, on lots 20 feet in width, flanking streets largely unpaved, with inadequate water

1. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

supply and cesspool drainage. The Board wrote: "Because of the character of this development, New York is daily faced with the prospect of the greatest conflagration in history." [1] The *Regional Survey* of New York [2] states that developments of this type "form potential slum areas in what should have been one of the best developed areas for small houses in the city."

Brooklyn and the Bronx have areas of housing more similar to Manhattan, though reproducing the problems of Queens in their less densely built districts. Richmond, on the other hand, is so sparsely built as still to make possible complete replanning without involving excessive costs for demolitions.

Aside from characteristic modes of regulation, the problem of guided development for these outlying boroughs resolves itself into three major divisions: first, the determination of the style of house required and the facilitation of single-family housing and home ownership with reference to demand, whether actual or stimulated; second, subdivision control; and third, the problem of the planned community, to take the form either of (*a*) the garden suburb or self-contained residential community, or (*b*) the garden city, which combines residential with industrial decentralization and provides for employment as well as for residence and appurtenant services.

To determine the types of houses required in suburbs near or remote it is necessary first to consider their relative merits in terms of family use.

Whenever an American family is faced with the need of acquiring a new home the question inevitably arises as to whether that home should be in an apartment house, with its advantages of central location, central heating, and janitor service, or in a private dwelling. The question is usually solved by a consideration of relatively few of the many factors involved, and largely by the arguments of realtors and renting agents whom the family consults. The choice to be made, however, must today be determined with reference to the available facilities. Our future social policy should be so framed that it will create a demand for the most desirable types of housing, irrespective of whether that means that the percentage of apartments or the percentage of single-family houses should be increased.

In order to determine the relative merits of dwellings of these two major types, it is necessary to make a fair comparison between them. This is not easy, for the problem varies widely from community to community. In our larger cities, however, the choice for the well-to-do lies between the luxurious apartment house or apartment hotel and the suburban mansion. For the poor, it is a choice between the typical tenement house, which ordinarily has only one heated room (the kitchen), and no elevators or janitor service, and the dreary, unpainted, run-

1. *Report of the State Board of Housing*, 1930, p. 65. 2. VI, 263.

down single-family house found in the blighted districts near suburban industries — with the suburban jerry-built homes deserted by their original owners as a possible alternative.

For the great middle class, with incomes ranging from $2,500 to $10,000, the choice generally lies between a fairly modern apartment of from three to eight rooms in a neat and fairly well equipped city apartment house and either an old fashioned home in the city or a modern, better equipped, but less well built, home in some real-estate subdivision on the outskirts. New York City is the only exception to this rule; for there, comfortable sunny and ample quarters in either apartment houses or single-family homes are not ordinarily accessible to families with incomes of much less than $3,000 per year. In the South, however, comfortable and attractive single-family housing can ordinarily be made available for families with incomes as low as $1,500 or even less.

The chief reasons for the preference for apartment houses over single houses, from the point of view of the householder, are central location, escape from ties of ownership, the avoidance of business burdens involved in home ownership, and freedom from the bother of tending furnaces, mowing lawns, shoveling snow, and making continuous petty repairs upon the house and household equipment, which the rapid depreciation of the owned dwelling inevitably involves. For homemakers and servants, additional advantages include the reduction of household tasks made possible by compact quarters located all on one floor, and the many conveniences involved in janitorial services. Usually the apartment dwellers, if they have shown wisdom in the selection of their apartments, have more leisure, which if wisely used may be of advantage to them and to the communities in which they dwell.

With wise planning, however, every one of the advantages of the multiple dwelling, with the possible exception of accessibility to place of work, may be provided in the single-family house, though with somewhat more difficulty and, in some instances, with an increase in the rent or sales price. There is no reason why single-family houses should not be built in units of three, four, or five rooms of dimensions identical with those of apartment dwellings, if such dimensions are socially desirable and conducive to the health, convenience, comfort, and welfare of the family. If it is best that the rooms of the house should be on one floor, the single-family house may be built as a bungalow. Central heating for single-family houses has been demonstrated to be possible on the Girard Estate in Philadelphia and in a number of other instances. Where it is not feasible, however, the cooperative employment of janitorial services for tending furnaces, removing ashes, mowing lawns, and shoveling snow is entirely possible in suburban areas for those who

desire it. It is probably good for most men, however, to engage in these tasks themselves.

Even if the apartment is to be favored on the grounds of accessibility, a well conceived and well managed programme for the decentralization of industry would remove this relative advantage, since residences can be made to follow decentralized industry into the suburbs or the open country. Retail shops and various other community facilities would also inevitably follow, so that our overgrown cities need no longer grow at their center.

A fair consideration of this subject should involve recognition of the fact that for many families the apartment dwelling will continue to have relative advantages — the chief of which is its provision for freedom of movement. In a population as restless as ours, many men, both among the industrial workers and among the captains of industry and commerce, must be free to change their jobs and their location at any moment. For this group particularly the rented home, which ordinarily means an apartment in the case of city families, is the only possibility, or the only judicious choice. The apartment dwelling also has recognized advantages for bachelor quarters, for the childless family, and for the family in which both the husband and wife are wage-earners. In households with young children, however, the relative merits of the private dwelling are demonstrable even though it is possible through specially designed model apartments to provide some of the advantages of the single-family home through nursery schools and supervised play space.

The advantages of the single-family house for the family with children may be considered under the headings: health, safety, convenience and comfort, privacy, education, play, and family life. In each instance these advantages should be contrasted with those which the same annual investment in rent would secure in an apartment dwelling. It is obviously unfair to contrast the modest home with the expensive apartment, or the expensive private home with the city tenement. According to estimates by the Building and Housing Division of the United States Department of Commerce,[1] the family which earns $2,000 a year can afford to purchase, as a rule, a house costing from $4,000 to $4,500. The same family could live in the city in a house or apartment renting at from $200, in Southern cities, where rents are figured usually at only 10 per cent of income, to $500 in New York City, where rents often take 25 per cent or more of the annual earnings. The average for the entire country would probably be nearer 15 per cent, or $300. In the case of the purchase of a $4,000 house by a family with an annual income of $2,000, there might be a 20 per cent down payment of $800; the interest

1. John M. Gries and James S. Taylor, *How to Own Your Home*, Washington, D. C., 1925.

and amortization would amount to $400 per year at first on a $3,200 loan, while taxes, insurance, and upkeep would cost approximately $160, making a total annual expense of $560. Of this total, however, $200 would be savings, leaving, during the first year, $360 as the cost equivalent to rent.

Obviously such an investment requires initial thrift for the down payment and continued thrift for the payments which follow. It might be out of the question for a family of five persons in which there is only one wage-earner, though wholly feasible for a family of three persons or one in which there is developing earning capacity. It is unwise for a family to undertake an investment in a home which it is not likely to be able to pay for; on the other hand, the families who are capable of such thrift and common enterprise make the backbone of our citizenry and pass on the sturdy virtues of our forefathers to the coming generations. The single-family house is not necessarily an owned home, but home ownership, by its encouragement of common family ideals and cooperation, by its development of family pride and self-respect and of community responsibility and active interest in neighborhood and community problems, provides perhaps the chief training-ground for family and civic qualities which are the source and conservators of our republican institutions and our national progress.

To return to the detailed comparison between the single-family house and the apartment, it should be noted that under the current conditions of planning and construction the single-family house is more desirable from the point of view of child health, because it provides better light and ventilation, better opportunities for play and nature contacts, and greater freedom from the dust, noise, smoke, traffic dangers, and confusion which characterize the streets where apartment dwellings, for economic reasons, are almost inevitably situated. Very few apartment houses are designed to provide cross-ventilation and sunshine in every room, yet these are necessary to develop vigor and health in children, and can be provided with ease in the planning of a detached suburban dwelling. The play advantages are particularly important because opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation under conditions which protect from traffic are so much more accessible for the single-family dwelling. The younger children can play in a protected back yard under the supervision of their mother while she is engaged at her household tasks. The selection and supervision of play opportunities and playmates are almost always possible for the suburban family, but next to impossible under existing conditions for the city family unless they can afford to place their children in a school which arranges for supervised play throughout the week.

The private dwelling also makes possible reduced exposure to contagious dis-

ease and relative freedom from the continuous noise and vibration which affect the health of city dwellers deleteriously. The fire risk is less in the suburban dwelling because the latter is thus endangered only by the carelessness of its own occupants, whereas in multiple dwellings each family is endangered by the carelessness of all other families under the same roof.

There is no reason why the conveniences of the suburban house should be less than those of the city dwelling. The same equipment can be provided and at a cost not appreciably higher, if the single-family houses are built in quantity thereby securing the economic advantages of large-scale construction.

From the point of view of the moral welfare of the coming generation, the suburban dwelling, under ordinary conditions, is superior, for it can provide for privacy, which is an indispensable factor in moral and spiritual development. In addition to this, it offers many more opportunities for cooperative activities of parents and children — contacts which are indispensable for guidance of moral growth and which train for future citizenship. The artificiality of apartment-house life and youthful familiarity with the more sordid aspects of our civilization are, as a rule, easily avoided. The expression of individuality through the owned home and the training and sharing of a developing love of beauty through landscaping and home gardens are more easily cultivated in the suburban dwelling.

The former president of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot, once remarked that apartment-house dwellers are nomads and that no nomadic race has ever developed a high civilization. The statement may not be entirely fair; yet it is easier to develop an interest in civic affairs when the family owns its home and has a stake in the community. A sense of responsibility develops for the protection and improvement of the streets, neighborhood schools, parks, and playgrounds, and this means an active and responsible participation in civic affairs. Such a civic interest is essential to the orderly development of public institutions in a democracy.

A wise community policy, therefore, involves provision, through such devices as city planning and zoning, for the development of residential districts in which single-family housing will be possible for families at [illegible]. Each family should be free to make its own choice between the single-family house and the apartment with reference to its own specific needs and ideals. For those families which wish to acquire homes of their own, judicious advice should be accessible, through local home builders' clinics or home information centers operated with the disinterested cooperation of chambers of commerce and real-estate exchanges to see that opportunities for the building of well-designed homes are available in so far as possible for all families irrespective of income.

Between the single-family detached house and the apartment or multi-family house fall the semi-detached, group, and row types of single-family houses and of two-flat houses. Their relative merits have been carefully outlined in the Report of the Types of Dwellings Committee of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.[1] In ordinary circumstances the availability of light, cross-ventilation, sunshine, privacy, and facilities for the proper rearing of children vary with the degree of independence of the units. They tend to be at their highest in the free-standing single-family house. Light, air, and privacy are sacrificed on one side of the dwelling in semi-detached units and on two sides for interior houses in group or row units. They are sacrificed also in two-flat houses, whether detached, semi-detached, or in rows. Yet, primarily because of the economies which houses of these types involve in the use of land, building material for party walls, or floor space (for a family will unhesitatingly live in a two-room flat when they would feel themselves open to ridicule if they built and dwelt in a two-room house), houses of these types will be in demand until prefabrication brings detached housing within the reach of the wage-earning population. Under competent design and efficient planning, any one of these may be rendered a wholesome place for family life and the rearing of children, but may fail of these ends in the absence of skilful planning and a reasonable degree of social control.

Perhaps the most serious social consequence of unguided development is the permanent incorporation in the city's pattern of the crude and unimaginative subdivision plans filed by each of the real-estate promoters for his tract. Most subdivision plans are unintelligent and wasteful of the public funds which must be invested in streets, sanitation, and utilities. They fall far short of production of the amenities of life which skilful planning would have produced. Once it has been accepted and recorded, the street, block, and lot plan is likely to remain unchanged for generations. Thus amateur and ignorant planning creates conditions that are perpetuated many decades after its inadequacies are recognized and deplored. Premature planning may similarly tie up thousands of acres of a city's suburban land, and if, as is the American practice, streets, curbs, sidewalks, and sewerage facilities are installed in advance of construction — which may be deferred for decades owing to the failure of the promoters or for other reasons, such as lack of demand — replotting of the land becomes a virtual impossibility because of the doggedness of officialdom, and the unreasonable costs involved in tearing up and re-laying streets, sewers and water mains, new and unused.[2]

1. Vol. IV, *Home Ownership, Income and Types of Dwellings.*

2. Many additional problems of subdivision layout are skilfully covered in vol. I of the publications of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership; in Harland Bartholomew, *Land Uses*; Whitten and Adams, *Neighborhoods of Small Homes*; Thomas Adams, *Design of Residential Areas*; Morris Knowles, *Industrial Housing*; and in various of the publications of the National Association of Real Estate Boards.

Since amateur subdivision means potential blighted areas and even future slums, it is essential that social controls be so organized as to provide for the acceptance of expert plans only. Even these would not serve their long-run purpose well unless they were in turn an integral and functional part of a well conceived master plan for the city and its region. A local city planning authority is thus involved. Skilled technicians and advisors are necessary to prepare principles and standards for subdivision layout, to analyze all plans submitted, and to approve only those that are competent in design and detail and consistent with the master plan.

Adams, in his *Residential Areas*, offers as primary considerations in the design of neighborhood patterns (1) the approaches and boundaries; (2) the arrangement of local streets, squares, and public utilities; (3) the distribution of residential areas for different types of dwellings, and the location of business districts; (4) the appropriate place for centering community life and locating public and semi-public buildings; and (5) the sizes and shapes of blocks and lots, and the arrangement of neighborhood parks and playgrounds.[1]

But one may go farther, and recommend that new subdivisions be not accepted until the need for them has been demonstrated. They should ordinarily be contiguous to existing built-up areas to prevent needless municipal expenditures for the extension of streets and utilities, and should be appropriate both to their community and to their immediate neighborhood. Furthermore, they should not be developed for occupancy until necessary streets, sanitation, and other utilities have been voted, and should invariably comprise adequate space dedicated to parks, playgrounds, and other recreations and to schools or other public uses. The latter are obviously problems that are part of the general community organization and pattern and not limited in their bearing to the subdivision itself.

Among the less obvious principles to be borne in mind is, first, the importance of conforming the street, block, and lot layout to the natural topography instead of ignorantly following the customary gridiron pattern. Brooks, ponds, rivers, ledges, and outcroppings of rock are natural resources to be considered for incorporation in parked areas — a process facilitated by the fact that such features are costly to "improve" by filling, draining, or dynamiting to render the land available for house lots. Yet with incredible stupidity subdividers continue to level their hills and fill their low lands in order that they may erect unbroken and monotonous rows of houses of uninspired design.

Due consideration should be given also to the arrangement of the street sys-

1. Thomas Adams, *Design of Residential Areas*, p. 102.

tem in such a manner that through highways will either be outside the subdivision — though reasonably accessible — or else be so handled within the subdivision as to preclude danger of accidents. Residential blocks for single-family houses should not be situated on such highways, and may be so designed upon the cul-de-sac system (exemplified at Radburn, New Jersey, Figure 126) as to provide the maximum number of accessible, protected, and private residential units, per unit of street and utility costs.[1] Also, the streets should be so aligned as to provide suitable orientation for residential buildings. Functional ease should govern the relations between residential, commercial, recreational, and civic units.

Whitten and Adams, in their volume entitled *Neighborhoods of Small Homes*,[2] have defended many of the above principles, submitting much useful evidence and illustrative material. Their recommendations which follow are based upon close study of subdivision planning conducted in many American and European cities and suburbs.

Zoning and platting and street-construction control should be one and indivisible. It is fundamental that at the time the raw land is cut up into streets and building lots, the completed community or neighborhood unit should be visualized with all its characteristics and requirements. It is almost as essential that there should be neighborhood parks as that there should be local streets. Substantial savings in street improvement and permanent maintenance costs can be effected by scientific block and neighborhood planning.

The present ordinary street and block pattern for residential neighborhoods is wasteful in its street and utility construction requirements, and lacking in provision for neighborhood requirements. From 15 to 40 per cent of the money expended for street improvements can be saved by careful planning. From 15 to 30 per cent of the gross land area now inefficiently used or wasted can be devoted to interior-block and neighborhood parks without any additional cost for land. The saving that can be effected in street and lot-improvement costs is more than adequate to pay the cost of park development and other community betterments.

By using longer and wider blocks, street and improvement lengths can be reduced and large interior-block areas created. By using culs-de-sac or closed-end lanes, a portion of this interior area can be used for house lots with great economy in the use of land for streets and in street improvement costs. The area saved from the streets and from the unnecessarily deep rear yards can be combined in attractive play-parks.

The saving in street length effected by careful planning will mean a considerable saving to the city for water mains and other improvements paid for directly in whole or in part from general funds, and will effect a very much greater annual saving in expenditures for the maintenance of streets and utilities. The cleaning, repairing, and reconstructing of 25 to 50 per cent more paved street surface than is necessary with good planning, is a very important item in municipal finance. It will be much wiser to spend an equal amount in the development and maintenance of the interior-block play-parks that should be a normal feature of community life.

1. For elaboration, see vol. 1 of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Planning for Residential Areas*; Harland Bartholomew, *Land Uses*; and Thomas Adams, *Design of Residential Areas*. 2 P. 80.

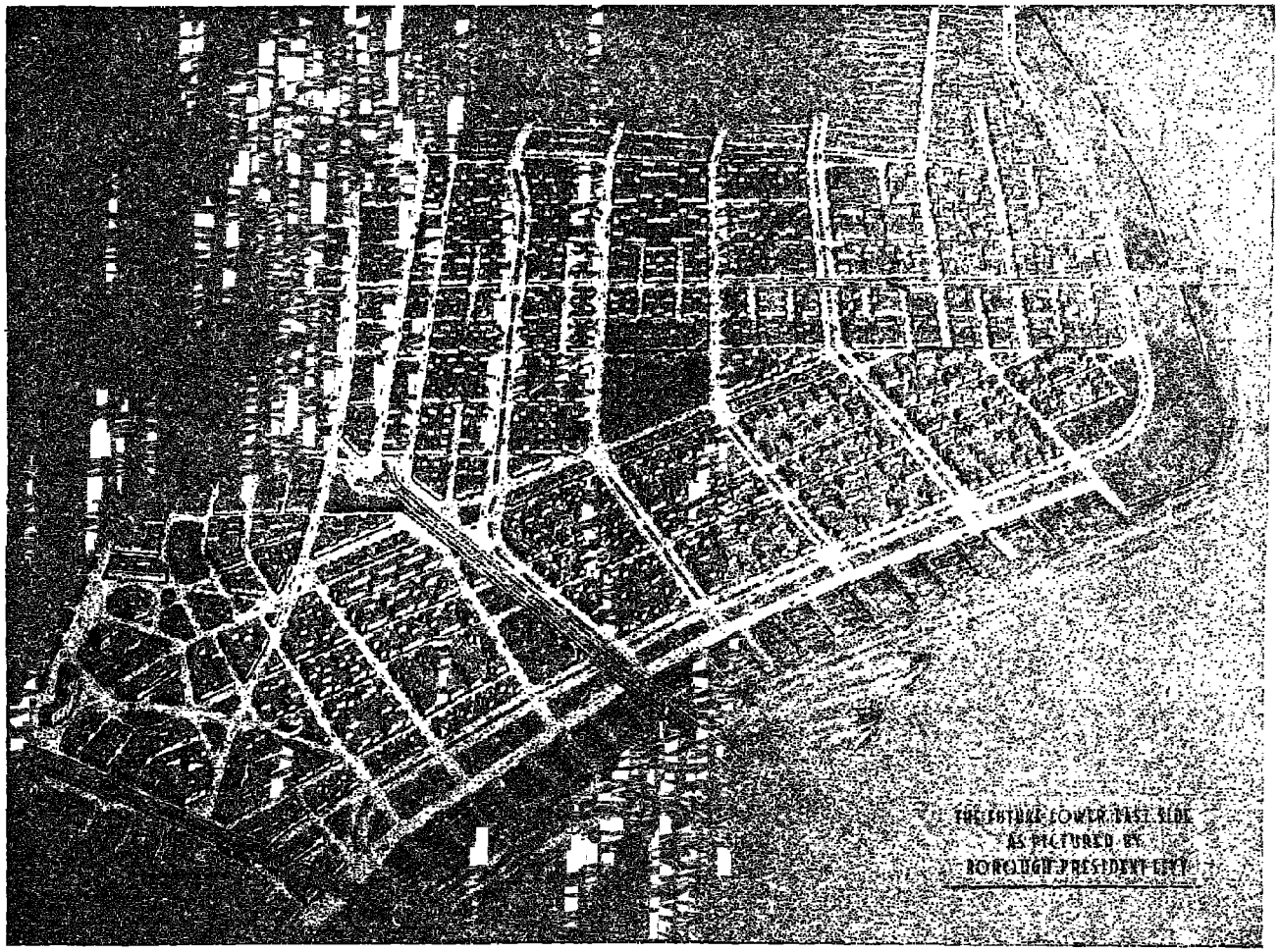
CHAPTER XXIII

CITY PLANNING IN RELATION TO SLUM PREVENTION

CITY PLANNING is a science and an art concerned primarily with the city's ever-changing pattern. As a pure science it examines causes (history, etiology) and reciprocal influences of man and environment (urban geography and ecology). As applied science it synthesizes these findings with those of the economic, sociological, and political sciences, as well as the technological branches of statistics, civil and sanitary engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, and all other pertinent branches of human knowledge, in an attempt thoroughly to understand conditions and their contexts and trends. As an art it utilizes these materials, instructs or organizes citizens, molds events, and thwarts or guides trends to bring about the changes in city design which it contemplates. Such changes may be merely skeletal, involving layout or relocation, and official mapping of streets, blocks, lots, transit, ports, parkways, civic centers and sub-centers; or may better be functional as well, involving controlled redirection of the distribution of population and of services — commercial, industrial, residential, recreational, and civic. Science, technique, and art thus blend in a pursuit which, because of its far-reaching judgments and effects, must, for safety, cooperate with agencies public and private, civic, social, educational, commercial, and financial, to represent all interests, and gain all necessary backing for an accepted official series of maps which, together with empowering legislation and provisions for administration and enforcement, make up the master plan for the city or its region.

Wise planning involves employment of experts. They study all factors bearing upon the city's pattern, growth, functions and needs. Maps and charts detail every significant condition of urban life by blocks and districts for the city and its outlying region. Study of such maps, past and present, and of available literature and statistics, leads to an understanding of conditions and their interrelations. The essentials to skilful planning are extensive and penetrating research, close analysis and comparison of findings, and the exercise of judgment in each detail of the recommendations officially made and in the ultimate plans.

In America a large percentage of the city plans have been prepared for chambers of commerce or other civic bodies, in the hope that public commissions or boards would be established to adopt or modify and extend such studies in an



Section of master plan prepared in office of Borough President Levy for Mayor's Committee on City Planning. Proposed East River Drive and Parkway from Brooklyn Bridge to 14th Street, showing suggested replanning of Lower East Side slum area, 1935

Fig. 95

official capacity. In many cities official planning powers are still distributed among several imperfectly coordinated departments or commissions — the city engineer and boards or commissions for zoning, transit, highways, and many others — and a city planning board, if such exists, has few powers except to study, advise, and recommend. This is virtually the situation in New York today.

A striking feature of New York's current situation is its lack of an official city planning commission. Through the munificence of the Russell Sage Foundation the characteristics and needs of the region extending for miles beyond the city borders have been carefully appraised, and much that is constructive has already been accomplished. At present there exists a Mayor's Committee on City Planning which is doing important work in coordinating basic studies and in determining a satisfactory legal basis for official action.[1] But such endeavor lacks the driving force of an official body having authority to direct future improvements into the right channels.

Planning does go on, of course, in the offices of the presidents of the various boroughs and in that of the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Much of it is of a high order and deserving of more credit than is generally accorded it. The present need, however, is for increased scope, and coordination with respect to the interest of the city as a whole.

A city planning commission would interest itself in many other matters than housing, but would recognize that the places where people live have a vital relationship to an integrated city plan. It might be expected to guard against ill-advised housing projects placed athwart probable lines of commercial advance or fixing workers in localities from which industry might drift rapidly away. If the Mayor and Comptroller could have the benefit of advice from such a body when *performing their legal duty* of passing upon housing proposals of the local Authority, they would be in a much better position to determine whether the proposals fit in with a broad plan of city improvement.

Such a process involves no criticism of the Authority itself, which is necessarily overburdened within its own sphere, and cannot be expected to be omniscient in all matters concerning the city. There are currents and cross-currents of business, for instance, that should be watched vigilantly by those skilled in the interpretation of commercial trends. The movement of such large concerns as the General Electric Company, for example, from a downtown to an uptown location may or may not have a bearing on the future working place of clerical employees similar to that of the shift of the garment trade to the Upper West Side. Recent

1. This committee, appointed on April 12, 1934, by Mayor La Guardia, has eighteen members, with Bernard S. Deutsch as Chairman, and Lawrence M. Orton as Secretary.

removals from long-established locations to midtown skyscrapers may or may not be indicative of far-reaching change. All such questions require intensive study and breadth of information.

Even though New York is hampered by an archaic system of handling city planning, changes in the city are taking place. The East Side Drive (see Figure 95), to skirt the East River for nearly the entire length of Manhattan, is verging on reality through the aid of funds furnished by the Federal Public Works Administration. Other developments having a significant influence on future plans for housing are under consideration. The need for an official city planning commission to coordinate activities is clear.

A philanthropic foundation is responsible for the most comprehensive, scientific study that has yet been made of the factual material upon which a city and regional plan for New York should be based, and for the best known and best defended master plan for the city and region. To attempt here to cover this subject would be supererogatory, for the data and the evidence upon which they are based, together with hundreds of illuminating maps, charts, and drawings, are available in the eight volumes of the *Regional Survey of New York and its Environs*, and the two volumes of the *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs*, published by the sponsor, the Russell Sage Foundation, between the years 1927 and 1931. These are supplemented by two volumes [1] and the periodic information bulletins issued by the Regional Plan Association, which is residual legatee of the Committee on the Regional Plan. Supplementing these for recent years are the figures of the Census of 1930; the reports made under the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, the Board of Transportation, the Port of New York Authority, the Real Property Inventory, the Housing Authority, and the various departments of city, state, or Federal government dealing with commerce, highways, transit, sanitary engineering, park and playground services, schools, and many other related branches; the special studies by private organizations, such as the Citizens' Budget Commission, the Chambers of Commerce of the East Side, the West Side, and the various boroughs, and the Land Utilization Committee of the New York Building Congress; the files of the *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*; [2] and various architectural and municipal magazines, and publications of organizations or individuals specializing in taxation, finance, investment, real estate, and all other related fields — an array of material vast in its proportions but uncoordinated, data essential to a master plan but in its present form falling far short of unity.

To the city planner, housing is a detail, important but not preeminent, in the

1. *From Plan to Reality*, 1933, and *The Rebuilding of Blighted Areas*, 1933.

2. The name of this magazine has been shortened to *Real Estate Record*, effective January 5, 1935.

general urban pattern. His attitude on this matter is correct since the home is but one of man's interests, paralleled by interests in work, or making a living; in play and culture, service and citizenship, or the making of a life. Each of these interests is vital and essential. Adjustments should be made in the master plan to facilitate the fulfillment of all such interests in congruity and harmony with each other. From the point of view of public welfare and the city plan, this means allotment of ample and appropriate space for the satisfaction of these interests under conditions that provide for smooth interplay, accessibility and ease in intercommunication, and scope for normal and wholesome development of each function. This must be accomplished in the midst of uncertainties as to the rate of population growth and the increase or decrease in each of the elements of population, the frequency and duration of future periods of economic depression or prosperity, the possibility of changes in human interests, attitudes, and fashions. There is also a probability of inventions that will make profound changes in habits of working and living. Unknown elements comprised under the heading of disaster, whether conflagration, earthquake, war, or plague, are not inconceivable. Allowance should be made for many imponderables, such as changes in national and international relationships, in the relations of social classes, in fundamental social institutions, and in the personalities, interests, methods, and emphasis of leaders.

In suggesting city planning as a device for slum prevention, therefore, one should recognize the importance of conceiving of the master plan as a functional whole within which any provision for housing must be dependent and related to all other factors. One should further leave enough elasticity in the planning to take care of those factors, now unknown, which may affect modes of living and earning in the future. It is thus necessary to plan for the present on the basis of present knowledge and at the same time to study all current trends.

Unplanned urban growth results in blighted areas, slums, and both economic and social loss. Yet a plan that is too exacting and too slavishly followed may do as much economic and social injury as would be done by unguided development. The Commission of 1811 [1] planned wisely for east-west traffic of its day, but was unable to visualize the changes in methods of transit that were to be devised in the following century. The perpetuation of its type of street and block planning in the boroughs outside of Manhattan seems inexcusable now that we are aware of both the transit solutions and the improved types of subdivision layout made possible in the past generation. Narrow, rectangular lots are still being covered with new-law tenements and apartments in a period when the legal inner and outer courts are considered by housing authorities and many enlightened tenants

1. See pp. 83–84, and Figure 9b.

to be obsolescent or obsolete.[1] Open construction of U-shaped apartments by Andrew J. Thomas in Queens [2] and elsewhere, and other open types of apartment building, with parked interiors for blocks, have displaced standard new-law types in many outlying developments and have become the rule in the architectural plans for slum rebuilding submitted in recent New York competitions.[3]

When one considers city planning as a device for slum prevention, one notes that in writings on housing little specific attention has so far been paid to the problem. City planners have dealt with the rehabilitation of blighted districts or of slums, but in so doing have been dealing with curative rather than preventive aspects of the problem. They deal continuously with the devices through which slum prevention may be brought about, but as a part of a general plan and with few, if any, references to the problem with which this chapter is concerned. The concentration of attention upon the prevention of future slums and the prevention of the enlargement of present slum areas might lead to considerable saving in future public expenditures as well as in private investments.

The customary approach to the problem by city planners is, naturally enough, the city or region considered as a unit. There may be merit in approaching the problem from its opposite angle, the individual and the family. The family seeking a residence, if its imagination has not been stunted by too long a period of "putting up with the inevitable," usually has a fairly definite picture of the type of residence in which it would wish to live, the number of rooms, type of equipment, arrangement of rooms, and the type of neighborhood that it would prefer. The ability of home seekers to get what they want is limited, first, by their income; second, by the lack of a centralized home registration service listing all available quarters within the city area; and, third, by the failure of city planning authorities to ascertain the needs and interests of each family, to compute the relative effective demand for each type of house with reference to appropriate location, and to provide, in advance, residential areas ample to meet such demand for the present and proximate future. This would be a colossal task for a city of the size of New York, and it is one that has scarcely been performed anywhere in the world outside of garden cities and industrial villages.[4]

It is, however, not an impossible task, first, because there is more than enough land in the New York Region to house all of its inhabitants for the rest of this century in single-family, detached houses.[5] Second, the home registration func-

1. For a somewhat different point of view, see Appendix.
2. See Appendix and Plates 16B and 16B[1].
3. See Appendix.
4. See pp. 473-474.
5. The estimate of the *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* is as follows: " . . . if the unbuilt area within the city were developed at the low density of 10 houses to the acre it could accommodate another 3,000,000 people, and there is enough space within a 25 mile commuting radius to provide for the prospective population of the region for a hundred years to come at the same density." Vol. II, p. 142.

tion may be handled on a borough basis with interchange between boroughs of their monthly summaries of accommodation and demand. It may be lodged either as a municipal service in the borough hall, or as a private service maintained by the borough chamber of commerce or real-estate exchange. Third, with consumer demand registered in this manner, the city planner would have current access to invaluable statistical summaries heretofore unavailable, which would make possible advance planning of the types of neighborhood for which existing accommodations were unavailable. For, in spite of the fact that vacancy surveys may show from 10 to 20 per cent of vacancies in a given borough,[1] a fair fraction of such vacancies cover accommodations for which there is or should be little or no demand — buildings in disrepair, outmoded, or in undesirable neighborhoods. A city might show 20 per cent vacancies and still be unable, through existing accommodations, to house a majority of the families in the types of dwellings which they seek and for which they can pay.[2]

Having ascertained consumer demand, the next logical step for the city planner is to canvass all possible methods for meeting it. These are comprised under the headings of (1) highway and street systems; (2) use zoning; (3) industrial decentralization and recentralization; and (4) residential decentralization and recentralization, as major categories. All the remaining subdivisions of city planning, whether concerned with port, harbor, railroad and transportation developments, park and recreational services, civic centers, municipal sanitation, finance, or law, should also be considered in their bearing upon the problem of housing so that the solution of that problem may be facilitated and houses designed and placed with reference to neighborhood, community, borough, city, and region, as well as with reference to work, play, and opportunities for civic and cultural development. Moreover, throughout the entire process there should be due consideration of the assets and liabilities, present and potential, of law and governmental administration, and of public finance and taxation.

In this conglomeration of problems every city planning authority must have access to adequate and competent services of statisticians, economists, sociologists, engineers, architects, in addition to prompt and perceptive legal services; it must not be too bound by precedent, and must be capable of anticipating the changes that are needed in statute law. The task is so difficult and so gigantic that the cooperation of a wide variety of technical specialists under the direction of a city planner, trained for such synthesis, is imperative.

City planning should ultimately be gauged with reference to its bearing upon human welfare. Although this term is freely used, it is seldom defined. It is often

1. See p. 289.

2. The organization of home registration services is outlined in Chapter XXIX.

construed in terms of health, convenience, racial development, or social adaptation. But in the minds of most persons its central factor is happiness, a human end which is likely to be missed if directly sought, but which is a by-product of the right mode of living. The essence of right living is creativeness; and thus the aim of all social policy, including city planning, should be to give every individual member of society an opportunity to make the most of himself — that is, to live creatively or to make use of his native abilities in the service of his fellow-men.

The first essential for creative living is health, which is the basis of self-confidence, facilitates good judgment, and is an indispensable means to courageous and enduring effort and growth. Other essentials are reasonable safety, freedom from needless strain, privacy, which is a chief medium of mental and moral recuperation for the planning of life's activities, enough of comfort, convenience, and economy to rid life of needless annoyances and obstructions, and lastly, beauty, to provide the inspiration for effective service. A city planning policy on its negative side, then, consists in ridding life of petty annoyances, obstructions, and all elements which thwart productiveness and happiness. On its positive side it is concerned with the development of a milieu which will encourage man to put forth his best energies, increase his joy in living, and induce his creative participation in life's highest values. This field of effort is not, of course, limited to specialists in city planning, as it is chiefly dependent upon public education, vocational analysis and training, and a wide range of devices for the inculcation of ideals and the building of character. Nevertheless, the latter process cannot go far unless the environing conditions are right. The chief task, therefore, of the city planner is, on the one hand, the removal of those elements in the physical environment which thwart growth and moral productiveness, and, on the other hand, the building of a physical environment which will facilitate and encourage the development of man's highest powers and their use in the service of mankind.

The ultimate aim of housing policy would be to provide for every family, irrespective of occupation or income, a type of home which would be healthful, safe, comfortable, private; and which, above all, would make it possible for the family residing in it to enjoy the self-respect and pride that are the product of a life in which beauty is a continuous and developing factor. Many of the deeper and more enduring elements of effective living are still relatively inaccessible to fully half of the population of America, because under present conditions these people are forced to dwell in the midst of the ugliness of city tenements, monotonous suburbs, dreary towns, or the uninspired and bleak farm homes designed prior to the era of architectural consciousness. A considerable portion of the construction now in process is equally barren of comfort and beauty.

Building laws and housing laws cannot do more than establish minimum standards of structural safety, sanitation, fire protection, maintenance, and privacy. Though such legislation is necessary, and though the standards can be progressively raised in any given locality, they cannot of themselves provide the amenities of life; they can provide merely for protection from obvious dangers. A considerable portion of the urban population is not effectively reached, because building and housing laws are poorly drafted, meager, mistaken in their provisions, or poorly enforced.

There are many points at which city and regional planning can supplement existing programmes for improved housing, and perform a service which no other agency would be in a position to render. These contributions are in the fields of zoning, street layout, transit, lot-and-block subdivisions, residential and industrial decentralization, and particularly the fostering of self-contained industrial communities and of suburban developments, based upon an understanding of human needs and aspirations.

Zoning, when properly devised, contributes greatly to human welfare, both because it prevents residential conditions from becoming worse in the central portions of our cities, and because it prevents the inception of many unwholesome conditions in newer residential areas. Height and area limitations, intelligently drawn and courageously enforced, can, if supplemented by wise building restrictions and city planning, guarantee sunshine and fresh air and reasonable privacy to all new dwellings of both urban and suburban types. The establishment of residential areas may be made to protect homes, new and old, from the invasion of undesirable industrial and commercial neighbors, and thus also from the smoke, fumes, and fire risk which their presence would entail, and from the increased traffic, dust, noise, and accident dangers which would be occasioned by their inevitable drayage of raw materials and finished goods. Neighborhood life and neighborhood beauty and pride become a possibility wherever new residential districts are established, though, of course, these values by no means become a certainty unless special arrangements are made for their development through neighborhood improvement associations or other civic educational devices.

City planning, through its street layout, can accomplish many things. It can make all outlying suburbs accessible, and it can keep through traffic, with its attendant noise, dust, confusion, and danger of accidents, off residential streets. In strictly residential areas it is possible also to provide picturesque, winding streets, trees, grass borders, and vistas which give charm to the neighborhood and encourage high standards in home architecture and upkeep.

An important function of the street layout is the facilitation of rapid transit to outlying areas, and intercommunication between such areas. Unless suburban residential areas are made readily accessible, families working in the industrial or business centers of the city will find it difficult to live in private residences of their own, and will live in apartment houses or tenement houses in central districts. Although multiple dwellings are proper places of residence for childless families, unmarried persons, and transients, they are distinctly less desirable for families with children of school age or younger. For at their best they provide a mode of living which is relatively unhealthful and unwholesome for the growing child, increasing the exposure to disease and accident, reducing privacy, making parental supervision of the child's outdoor play and the selection of his play associates almost impossible, and depriving the child of the advantages of sunshine, fresh air, contact with nature, and privacy, which the suburban home provides. To live in a suburban home it is necessary that the working members of the family be able to reach residential suburbs quickly from their place of work and at a reasonable fare. Otherwise, they will be unable to afford the expenditure of time and money involved in suburban living during this child-rearing period of family life. The total cost of suburban living, including the carfare of working members, should not exceed the total cost of the equivalent accommodations in the apartment houses or tenements of the city. With wise planning of streets, transit facilities, block-and-lot subdivisions, and large-scale construction of suburban communities, and only with such wise planning, it is possible in large American cities for most families with children to enjoy the advantages of suburban life.

One of the chief opportunities for the city planner to promote the best types of housing lies in suburban areas. Contour lines, and the natural resources of the district, as well as the relation of the district to the city proper and its sub-centers, must be carefully considered in the arrangement of streets, blocks, and lots. Great wisdom and care should be exercised in determining which group of the population shall be housed in any given area, and the land should be subdivided with the needs of that population well understood and considered. Different income groups have different needs. The size and shape of the lot must be determined with reference to the type or types of housing available for such income groups in that city. The housing traditions in the vicinity must be taken into consideration, as well as the expectations and needs of the group of families catered to. Diverse industrial, economic, racial, and cultural groups have their special interests and needs, which can be ascertained only by preliminary surveys. Different cities have different standards in architectural construction and building materials; in some cities row housing or group housing may prove desirable, while in

others semi-detached housing and single-family dwellings will fortunately be the only types wanted.

In the past, subdivisions have been designed much too generally to cater exclusively to families with incomes of three or four thousand dollars or more per annum. Only a small amount of pioneering work has been done for families with small incomes, who constitute the majority of our population, and it is in the housing of this group that the city planner will make his most significant contribution to future national progress. Since square houses are, under most circumstances, the most economical to build, this fact should be taken into consideration in suburban planning for wage-earners. This means a house lot wider than that usually provided, but the extra cost of the width may be secured at sacrifice of depth. A lot 35 or 40 feet in width and 60 feet in depth will use less land than the standard lot, 25 by 100 feet, and will facilitate economical construction, adequate sunshine in side windows, and variety in architecture which the standard lot does not make possible. Community playgrounds in the center of blocks or at strategic locations throughout the district will be possible with wise planning, and the layout should conserve existing trees, bushes, and other natural resources which will contribute to neighborhood beauty. Wherever houses are to be built in quantity by limited-dividend companies, cooperative groups, or operative builders, the grouping of houses so as to avoid architectural monotony and increase architectural interest can be taken into consideration, and should involve no increase in the cost of utilities if properly planned for in advance through the block-and-lot subdivision and street layout.

Residential decentralization has already been discussed as a suburban problem. It can, however, be promoted on a much larger scale if comprehensive plans are developed for the decentralization of those industries for which an urban location is not essential. In an era of electric power most industries can be put in this latter class. If power can be made as cheap in a rural or suburban location, that fact, combined with the vastly lower land costs and lower taxes, will provide the first incentives for moving factories out from their present city locations. The next essential is the provision of transportation facilities for grouped industries, and is a problem of regional, if not national, planning. In many rural and suburban districts, however, such transportation is already at hand, and factory sites can be provided on railroad sidings, thus eliminating drayage costs, traffic delays, and losses from extra handling involved when factories are located in cities at a distance from the railroad facilities. The remaining difficulty in industrial decentralization is that of securing an adequate labor supply. There are two essential factors in the solution of this problem — first, the provision of an adequate

network of labor exchanges in urban centers, and second, the provision for housing of labor in residential areas surrounding the newly created industrial districts. The problems involved, though serious, are not insuperable.

City and regional planners, in cooperation with public departments, chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations, and sociologists, can unquestionably contribute greatly to the solution of this problem within the next two generations. Through their joint efforts they can, by means of careful planning, make a true garden city out of each new industrial community with adequate provision for efficiency in industry, for wholesomeness in home life, for civic beauty, and for constructive recreational and civic activity.

Thus, city planning can prevent slums in the following ways:

(1) By so distributing population as to prevent undue densities and congestion.

(2) By pre-planning of subdivisions to prevent excessive land coverage.

(3) By dedication of frequent land tracts for civic or recreational purposes.

(4) By wide streets and street planting, which guarantee the perpetuation of beauty.

(5) By prohibiting through traffic in residential districts.

(6) By height, bulk, area, and use zoning to prevent intrusion of buildings that would depreciate values.

(7) By segregation of service areas of residential communities in such a manner as to make retail shops and other services accessible, but non-invasive, and consistent with the residential area in bulk, placement, planting, and architectural design.

(8) By application of the neighborhood-unit principle.

(9) By so coordinating and interrelating use areas (residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, civic, and cultural) that there will be ease of access from one to another without depression of values in one by the other.

In essence, city planning can prevent slums by insulation of residential areas and pre-planning for functional convenience and for preservation of beauty and the amenities of life. Even age and obsolescence need not depress either economic values or living standards if the above principles are consistently followed.

CHAPTER XXIV

A SOCIAL POLICY FOR SLUM PREVENTION

Too little is known of the causes of slums to warrant more than a purely tentative social policy for slum prevention. One is impressed with the fact that the data at present available on this subject are by-products of studies undertaken with purposes other than the ascertainment of the causes of slums and blighted areas and the means of bringing such causes under social control. Even the best available material is incidental to studies in some specific field, such as land values, taxation,[1] city planning,[2] or other restricted branches of the broad problem with which we are concerned.

The first essential need is, therefore, for a closer study of the causes of slums and blighted areas through specific research, amply endowed, conducted according to the best of scientific method, under expert direction, and comprehensive in that it is designed to cover all of the causative factors and their relative weight and interrelations. Such a study would require several years and would involve employment of men with a wide variety of scientific backgrounds, and representing all of the necessary techniques of research. The findings from such a study might lead to a considerable shift in emphasis in the social policy tentatively outlined in this chapter.

Pending such researches and proceeding, as we must, upon the basis of data at hand, slum prevention requires the types of analysis, organization and action outlined in the following paragraphs.

(1) Elimination of blight wherever found, because it tends to spread and create slums. This involves specific attention both to the edges of the blighted area, to prevent its spread to adjoining houses and blocks, and an attempt to discover the core and roots of this malignant growth, with a view to excision or eradication. This latter process, under the title of slum elimination, is discussed at length in later chapters.[3]

(2) The agencies now available to prepare measures for specific local slum or blighted areas comprise the settlement houses within such areas, the local chambers of commerce for the districts within which the areas fall, and civic improvement organizations already established. In addition to these, banks and other

1. Richard M. Hurd and Robert M. Haig. (See Bibliography.)
2. *Regional Survey.*
3. See especially Part IV, Chapters XXVII and XXX.

investment organizations owning property within such districts, and city-wide organizations representing real estate, mortgagors, investment, management, taxpayers, and relief or social service interests should be able to contribute much by way of study, publicity, and advice. There is still no perfect example of adequate cooperative organization of the local-interest groups, the special-interest groups, the Regional Plan Association, and public officials, for either the elimination or prevention of any specific slum, though good beginnings have been made at this process by the East Side Chamber of Commerce, which faces a problem of literally appalling dimensions, the West Side Chamber of Commerce, and various organizations in the mid-Manhattan area.

(3) Another approach is the improvement of tenement-house, building, health, and safety legislation in such a manner as to raise the general level of standards of housing throughout the city. Since the buildings in the areas under consideration are old, the improvements in the statute law here suggested cover the provisions with regard to the conversions, repairs, enlargements, or rearrangements in old dwellings that are undertaken voluntarily by the owner, the maintenance provisions of the Multiple Dwelling Law and health or safety laws, and the retroactive "improvements" provisions which force changes in the structure or fundamental equipment of existing buildings. Owing to the relative poverty of a large percentage of tenement-house owners, some of whom have invested their entire available capital in the equity, and to the fetish of private property rights which actuates so generally the judgments of our courts, the improvements sections of our tenement-house legislation are thin and flabby. Little has been accomplished through them to date except in their requirements for water supply and water-closets, new fire-escapes, and the cutting of windows in windowless rooms. It would be impossible to accomplish more under contemporary conditions of ownership and existing precedents in court decisions, unless funds were made universally available at low interest and with a lengthy period of amortization from public sources, and in a volume adequate to take care of all new retroactive provisions which the law might incorporate. At present the financial resources made available through the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, and still more recently through the National Housing Act and the Federal Housing Administration,[1] are too limited in their volume and in the specific uses to which they may be applied to make extension of these retroactive provisions an economic possibility, except at the sacrifice of a considerable fraction of present tenement owners who would be unable to finance the contemplated requirements.

(4) Both slum and non-slum areas could have their minimum standards raised

1 See Chapters XXXI, XXXII and XXXV.

materially if the agencies of enforcement of tenement, building, health, and safety legislation were equipped with more ample powers, increased appropriations, and larger, more competent forces for inspection, for the keeping of ample, accurate office records, and for the prosecution of violations. The force of inspectors of the Tenement House Department might wisely be trebled, but if this were done the records and legal branches of that Department would have to be correspondingly increased.

(5) The public departments concerned with the enforcement of laws relating to any branch of housing or city planning accomplish little, however, unless backed by active and enlightened public opinion. In a city as large as New York, public opinion cannot be adequately developed or made vocal except through well endowed organizations established for the purpose. Remarkable work has been done with painfully meager resources by the Tenement House Committee of the Charity Organization Society of New York City and the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities. But New York City needs an organization which shall be in every way equivalent to the Philadelphia Housing Association, the Pittsburgh Housing Association, and the Better Housing League of Cincinnati, which, in proportion to the populations of these cities, are more adequately financed and staffed than the corresponding organizations above mentioned for New York City. By means of their privately supported inspection staffs, the associations in these three cities have been able to supplement the municipal authorities through their continuous inspections of areas of bad housing, and report daily to the appropriate authority large numbers of violations of law. They follow up these reports to make sure that the violations are properly prosecuted, backing the public departments in question in the courts with their evidence and moral support, and, if necessary, with pressure from the civic and social service organizations throughout the city.

(6) A movement concentrating attention specifically upon the elimination of old-law housing, but in cooperation with the other projects already mentioned, would have value. First, emphasis might properly be placed upon measures for getting rid immediately of rear dwellings of unwholesome types, and of surviving examples of "railroad" tenements, as well as of other tenements or crudely converted private dwellings that incorporate windowless rooms or fail to provide running water in each apartment or toilets on each floor. After this has been accomplished, such a movement might properly turn its attention to the elimination of "dumb-bell" tenements. Simultaneously the discovery and elimination of obsolete structures, or others detrimental to their neighbors because they are a source of danger either to health, safety, or property values, would have merit. This might be a separate movement, or one combined with some of the other ac-

tivities already mentioned. In either case, studies and recommendations by private organizations should precede, or be conducted simultaneously with, the work of the public departments, under which local action for elimination of specific buildings must fall under the present law. It is probable that many such buildings could be eliminated by persuasion, without recourse to law, for they are owned by churches, well-to-do families and estates, and doubtless some by families or organizations renowned for their philanthropies. Statements courageously prepared, informing such owners in specific, accurate, and unexaggerated terms of the social consequences of their holdings, might lead many to demolish the properties at their own expense. It is not necessary to shame them into such activity but merely to inform them. The conspicuous and well directed efforts of Langdon Post, as Tenement House Commissioner and Chairman of the New York Housing Authority, would be materially helped by judicious cooperation of this type.

(7) It is desirable, however, to recognize the importance, in at least some instances, of taking a whole block or group of blocks rather than the building as the unit for elimination. This might involve the razing of some blocks which contain a sprinkling of new-law tenements or even an older model tenement or two, in the midst of the less desirable types of old-law tenements.

(8) Slum-district analysis and improvement involve also the removal of undesirable industries from areas which should continue to be residential. The attack would naturally first be directed at the establishments that are most undesirable, but might conceivably be comprehensive and include them all at the outset. The method involves stricter zoning or the change of the district from an unrestricted to a residential area.[1] It includes also the type of activity involved in the "Save New York" movement, the Fifth Avenue Association, and mid-Manhattan groups to keep industries out of the Fifth Avenue and mid-Manhattan areas and protect such areas from excessive day-time populations, congestion of streets, inappropriate architectural types of buildings, and related evils. In addition, it involves cooperation with authorities charged with the execution of any aspect of the city plan for properly directed industrial decentralization.

(9) Removal of blight further comprises popular cooperation and backing for efforts, city or region wide, to substitute subways for elevated railways, and buses for street cars, and to eliminate from certain streets, or to conceal by means of tunnels or otherwise, railroad freight services in cases in which they penetrate or adjoin areas ascertained to be desirable for continued residential uses.

(10) The spread of blight in certain directions can on occasion be prevented,

1. For example, see the article on proposed West Side zoning published in the *New York Times* of Sunday, April 30, 1933, by the West Side Chamber of Commerce, suggesting revision of zoning regulations for the area between 14th and 30th Streets, and from Seventh to Tenth Avenues.

and within slums blight can be reduced and amenities increased, by interspersing parks or playgrounds, new schools or other new civic buildings, where definitely needed, to replace the worst of old-law housing and to start the district on the upgrade. These will not help the situation, however, unless carefully designed and equipped, with due consideration for the application of the principles of landscape architecture to each such venture, and provided with staffs for maintenance of a high quality. Many of the cinder-strewn playgrounds of the city, devoid of planting, contribute nothing to the removal of blight.

(11) Better social control of land is indicated as essential, and must be accomplished through a unified, coordinated, courageous policy, specifically adopted to keep public interests paramount. This programme should be approached in the fields of assessment, taxation, eminent domain, condemnation, the police powers, and court procedure, and may conceivably lead to an extension of public ownership, and ultimately to changes in the city charter, and the state or even the Federal constitution. There can be no solution of the slum problem until the primacy of public interests over private interests in property is recognized and incorporated in the thought-habits of our people and in fundamental law.

(12) Future progress is dependent upon continuous education of high quality for all groups concerned. This includes the entire populace, either as pupils in public and private schools, or as slum dwellers, property owners, taxpayers, builders, architects, financial specialists, realtors, or voters. Since the effect of housing upon well-being has been demonstrated to be important, all school children and all citizens should have access to competent training in housing, health, city planning, and civics. For without such training they cannot adequately recognize and defend their interests. Beyond this, however, there is needed specific training for the orientation of attitudes and values[1] which will substitute for narrow, self-seeking, competitive exploitation the habit of recognizing and furthering, on a cooperative basis, those interests which are common to the group. This also is fundamental to the solution of the slum problem.

(13) An official master plan for New York City and its region is essential as a basis for intelligent, unified effort. It should grow out of adequate comparative study. Though official, its efficacy is dependent upon avoidance of the prevalent curses of bureaucracy — inelasticity, cocksureness, and finality. The master plan should be open to change as new data come to hand. It should be amply empowered and endowed to meet our problem or any of the others with which it is concerned. It should involve integral, coordinated planning for highways, transit, transportation, street and subdivision control, use zoning, and rational

1. Described in Chapter XX.

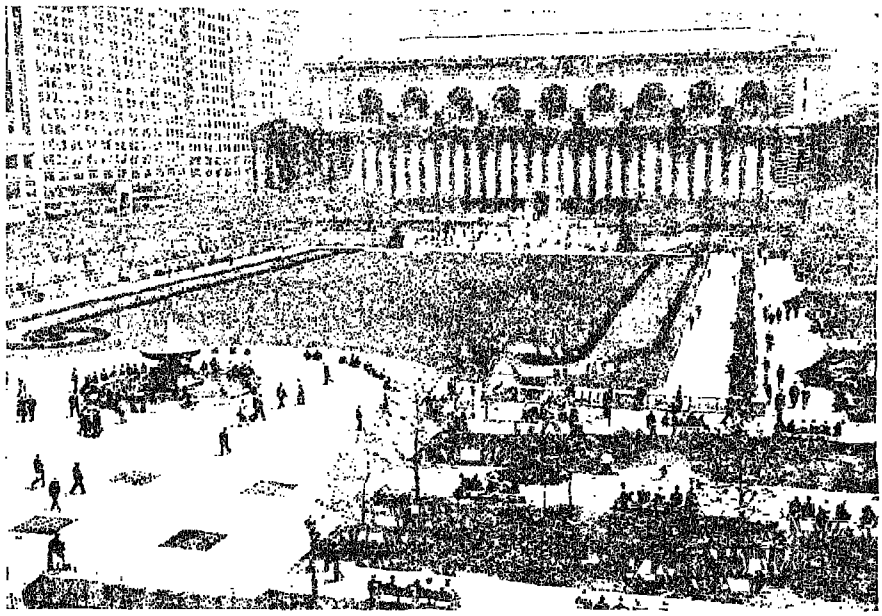
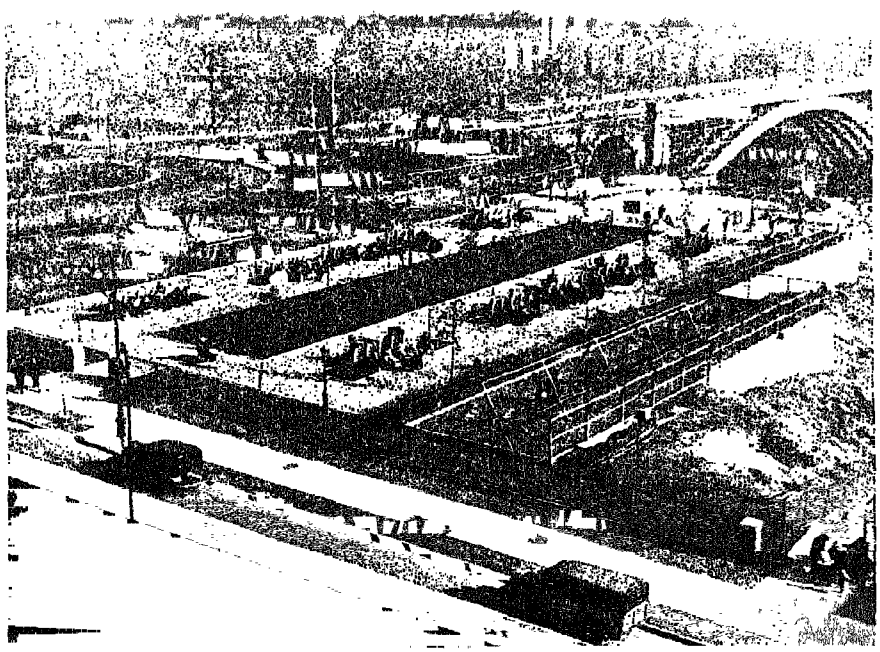


Photo from Brown Brothers

a Bryant Park, Sixth Avenue, 40th to 42d Street, showing Public Library Most elaborate and attractive of the parks redesigned under Commissioner Moses An outstanding example of what could and should be done throughout the residential sections of the city



Alajos Schuszler Photo, Courtesy Park Department

b. Playground at 181st Street and Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan. One of the ninety-eight playgrounds (thirty-five in Manhattan) laid out under Mr. Moses's administration.

decentralization and recentralization of all uses — industrial, residential, recreational, civic, or cultural.

(14) Each of the above is dependent upon leadership in both public and private agencies. Leadership requires knowledge, thorough training, judgment, insight, vision, centrality of interests. In key positions it demands also a type of personality that is convincing in its emphasis whether in interviews, public speaking, writing, or the other devices of publicity. Effective leadership in the service of a community should command the type of wisdom which grows out of fair consideration of alternatives. There is needed a profound sense of values, self-organization to precede community organization, and self-mastery as a basis for the development of a mastery of public problems. Effective social policy is a product of character.

Prevention is more rational than cure, and better conserves economic resources and human values. Since slums now exist, curative measures are necessary. But, as has been shown above, the remedial measure may largely be incorporated in a preventive policy. New York City today lacks organization for comprehensive preventive effort in the field of housing. Larger and more lasting returns will accrue per unit of effort expended if cure is made incidental to prevention.