An ecological study of Ashland park community

Angeline Rose Tauchen

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/536
AN ECOLOGICAL STUDY

OF

ASHLAND PARK COMMUNITY

A Thesis Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

Department of Sociology of the

Municipal University of Omaha

Angeline Rose Tauchen

1938
FOREWORD

Without the cooperation of former and present residents of Ashland Park Community this study would not have been possible. During the four years that the writer taught school in District No. 4 many friendships were formed which later proved of inestimable value when suggestions and constructive criticism were needed. A debt of gratitude is due Miss Bird Claybaugh, principal of Ashland Park school, who gave unsparingly of her time and effort in contributing little known but valuable facts and statistics. The help received from the Reverends Cajetan Zaranton, A. R., of the Holy Ghost Catholic church and Edward Holub of the Mosher Memorial Presbyterian church, the board of trustees and teachers of the school, and business leaders in the community, have aided in making possible the comprehensive survey necessary to an investigation of this kind.

May 27, 1958

Angeline Rose Tauchen
INTRODUCTION

Why Interested

This study grew out of an interest in the problems of, and a deep regard for, the people of District No. 4 with whom the writer came in close contact during her teaching experience in the district, (1925-1929). In the capacity of physical training instructor and 4-H club leader she was frequently called upon to participate in programs and recreational affairs and other extra-curricular activities, many of which took place in the evenings. From these experiences, plus the knowledge derived from school and home contacts, she was able to appreciate the relationships and meanings of events as they occurred in the community. During that time the problems of the community became her problems. Finally she came to the realization that there was a field for social research in the various phases of community life and in 1935 investigation was seriously begun. The results are herewith presented.

Today the writer feels sufficiently detached from the district and its life to view it objectively. The present study attempts to explain and analyze the network of a complex social life in an unorganized community with the ecological concept in mind. Incidentally, social change, together with persistence or disappearance of social phenomena, is emphasized. Trends have been especially observed.

Purposes of Study

The purpose of an ecological study of a community is to bring out

\[1\]

Park and Burgess, The City, p. 61-62. "Human ecology is the study of the spatial and temporal relations of human beings as affected by the selective, distributive, and accommodative forces of the environment. It is interested in position, in both time and space upon human institutions and human behavior."
various phases of social life as they really exist, with reference to their interdependence upon environmental forces. Few comprehensive studies of the human community from the ecological viewpoint have been made; the field is practically unexplored. Human ecology shows a striking similarity to plant ecology in the effect of definite external processes upon life. Because of the bearing of many ecological factors upon the social life of Ashland Park Community, the district offers innumerable opportunities for research in this phase of sociology.

Further incentives for the study of Ashland Park Community are two:

1. The investigator is personally interested in the community and is acquainted with many of the facts of its social life. Practically no research has been made on this type of community, neither strictly rural nor truly urban. In the absence of an organized social life and an almost total lack of available printed material, the writer believes that only one with a personal interest in the community would have been impelled to probe into its sociological factors.

2. The ecological processes of competition, invasion, succession and segregation are discernible in the community, thus providing a fertile field for the study of social change.

Part I presents an over-view of general community life from its beginnings, while a specific ecological factor is taken up in each part thereafter. An attempt is made to reveal how these various constituents in their intermingling affect the daily lives and hopes of inhabitants of the community. The average citizen in the district will be able to
see himself in his environment as he really is while leaders will be able to view all phases of community life from a sociological standpoint. It is hoped that a permanent record of a social situation will be of value to those interested in the community.

**Technique Employed**

In addition to participation in the affairs of the community, the writer has recently taken advantage of every occasion which afforded further observation of social phenomena pertinent to the study at hand.

The bulk of information was secured through the medium of the personal interview. Outlines were prepared for use during the most casual as well as the carefully-planned interviews with individuals specially qualified to give information on particular phases of the study. Early pioneers, school and church authorities, business men and club leaders contributed the most valuable data. The author did not consider individual reactions as scientific data but rather as suggestions of tendencies in the community. Information given by one was frequently verified by others.

Interviews were purposely planned to direct the course of conversation into the desired channels and bring out evidences of social change and trends. Through this means valuable notes showing the feelings, attitudes, and experiences of interviewees were obtained. Although attitudes are emphasized they do not give a complete measurement of the societal situation at hand. Those consulted represent a cross-section of the population, ranging from the most indigent to those considered the "best" people; occupations represent unskilled laborers to professional persons. The author sought a true sample of the population of the community as well as sufficient outsiders to serve as an adequate basis for conclusions.

The few who showed indifference or refused to cooperate were persons
who either had an antipathy for the community or were unable to understand the value of social study. It will be noted in the text that some names are given while others who divulged information requested that they remain anonymous.

The subject of a comprehensive questionnaire for obtaining data from each home was seriously considered, but during the initial interview with the Ashland Park Board of Education, the matter was discussed and the idea abandoned on the grounds that possible misunderstandings or repercussions might result. After it was discovered that only a little data relating to the district could be obtained from available records, it was decided to augment the material by using a simple questionnaire on personal matters which could be answered objectively by the school children with the understanding that they were not to sign their names. Questionnaires representing 284 or 32.7% of the homes in the community were filled out by the children, the teacher making a tally from raised hands in the lowest grades. A fair cross-section of homes was thus revealed.

Availability of Materials

Available records consisted of personal, club, and public documents which included census reports, city and county records, court files, school records, State Reports, Year Books, newspapers, and periodicals, diaries, scrapbooks, clippings, programs, old letters, club papers, and minutes of club meetings. These documents and other data tell little regarding problems of social life, for they record events only as they have affected certain people or institutions, and much observation and study were required before facts and figures could be determined. Especially regrettable is the lack of certain records which might have proven valuable in this investigation had they not been destroyed by the Court House fire in 1919.
In order to obtain uniformity in statistical data throughout the thesis the summer of 1957 has been selected as a period of final analysis. One or two exceptions bringing statistics to June, 1958 are included where they do not affect earlier parts of the study.

Limitations of Study

The chief limitations of the study are caused by the almost total absence of official records of Douglas County pertaining to the community as a unit. Thus a true picture of certain social situations, such as crime, delinquency, sickness, pensions, and the like, is not possible.

School District No. 4 records are the only sources of information relating to the district proper, but these offer only information concerning school matters. The school, the center of social life of early days, does not begin statistically until 1897, thirty years after its inception. This also prevents a statistically true and complete account of school life in the district. Another condition offering limitations is an incomplete record of the religious life of the community from earliest times because the Presbyterian and Catholic churches did not appear until 1913 and 1921 respectively.

In order to present a continuity of all the above-mentioned phases of social life from the beginning, it was necessary to do intensive research in order partially to supply lacks or to augment institutional data. The writer has attempted to present an orderly account of the data at hand and trusts that her efforts to bring about a clearer understanding of the social situation in School District No. 4, Douglas County, Nebraska, will not have been in vain.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOREWORD</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Interested</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes of Study</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique Employed</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Materials</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of Study</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART I ASHLAND PARK DISTRICT IN PANORAMA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. General Description</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. First Impressions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Definitions of &quot;Neighborhood&quot;, &quot;Community&quot;, and &quot;Suburb&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Memories of the Past</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Early Development (1854-1885)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Later Development (1885-1915)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recent Development (1915-1957)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Summary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART II A GLIMPSE AT THE POPULATION</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Classification</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sex</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Race</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nationality</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Analysis</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Growth</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Density</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Segregation</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mobility</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Looking In On Family Life</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Home Life of Early Times</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Houses in Which They Live</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. From Cradle to High School</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth and Age</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Marriage and Making A Home</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Summary</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART III EARNING A LIVING</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Struggle for a Living</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How People Make a Living</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Transition From Agricultural to Industrial Economy</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Economic Status of Families</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Status Classified</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Economic Aspects of Community Life</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Business Enterprise</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Retail Buying</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Development of Transportation</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Summary</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARTS IV AND V SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES
A. The Public School
   1. First and Second Schools and Their History
   2. Third School and Its History
   3. Present School and Its Beginning
B. Church Life
   1. Holy Ghost Church and School
   2. Mosher Memorial Presbyterian Church
C. Summary

PART VI GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
A. Machinery of County Government
   1. Description
   2. Observance of Law
B. Political Interests
   1. Political Background
   2. Elections and Voting
C. Summary

PART VII COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SANITATION
A. Natural Advantages for Healthy Living
   1. Well-water
   2. Other Advantages
B. Health Conservation
   1. Agencies for Promotion of Health
   2. Sewage Disposal
C. Sickness versus Health
   1. Relationship of Poverty to Sickness
   2. Sickness and School Attendance
D. Accidents and Safety Measures
   1. Automobile
   2. Fire
E. Summary

PART VIII HOW LEISURE HOURS ARE SPENT
A. Necessity of Wholesome Recreation
   1. Importance of Early Associational Life
   2. Individualism in Modern Recreation
B. Church and School as Leading Force
   1. Influence of Early School
   2. Attempts to Provide Proper Recreation
C. Outside the Fold of Church and School
   1. Attempts Toward Balanced Recreation
   2. Recreation in the Home
S. Commercial Amusement 219
4. Informal Leisure 225
5. Non-Local Affiliations 232
D. Summary 233

Conclusions 256
Recommendations 240
Bibliography 241
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Number by Voting and Non-voting Age</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Number by Sex</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Sex of Youth of Compulsory School Age</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Racial Distribution</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Foreign and Native-born Parentage</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Parentage of Predominating Nationalities</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Population of Douglas County and District No. 4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Size of Families</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>Children Under 16 per Family</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Number of Families Benefited by Public Utilities</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>Conveniences in 284 Homes</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>Employed Mothers</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>Size and Capacity of Feed Lots</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>Receipts, Expenditures and Value of District Property</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>Denominational Preferences</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>Taxes Based on $100 Assessment</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td>Voting Habits</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Percentage of People Voting</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>Sex of Voters</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td>Radio Program Preferences</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td>Subscription to Newspapers and Periodicals</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII. Types of Periodicals</td>
<td>216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII. Types of Pictures Preferred</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV. Favorite Actors and Actresses</td>
<td>221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV. Attendance at Movies</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CHARTS

### FIGURE

1. Foreign-born Parents of Ashland Park Children 39
2. Growth During Five-Year Periods 118
3. Growth in Enrollment of Ashland Park Since 1916 121
4. Comparison of Population Growth 125
5. Indexes of Employment and Payrolls 65
6. Distribution of Workers 71
7. Growth of Ashland Park and Neighboring Schools 123
8. Contrasting Daily Attendance in Schools 121
9. Functional Relations of School Activities 139
10. Comparing Graduates with Neighboring Schools 157
11. South High Graduates from Ashland Park School 157
12. Enrollment of Holy Ghost 1925-87 161
13. Relative Strength of Political Parties 188
MAPS

NUMBER

I. Position of District in Douglas County 3

II. Proximity to Omaha 7

III. Churches, Schools, Cemeteries, Park 15

IV. Population Density 49

V. Distance of District to Packing Center 69

VI. Water and Gas Mains 77

VII. Roads 99

VIII. Proximity of Neighboring School Districts 114

IX. Position of Ashland Park School and Grounds 114

X. Comparative Area of District No. 4 and Holy Ghost Parish 161

XI. Douglas Precinct Subdivided 185

XII. Highway Accidents 203
First Impressions. The casual motorist driving on the west Q or L Street arterials beyond the Omaha city limits at 42nd Street observes a countryside dotted with neat, painted houses of the cottage type, built rather closely together, some on well-tilled acreages, while others occupy space consisting of no more than a city lot. Nearly every house has a garage. Upon closer inspection the cars are found to be of substantial quality and in fairly good repair. People seem to be moderately well-dressed and other signs of comfort are in evidence. Further observation reveal an occasional cow and several chickens on the rolling countryside.

Besides the public school at 48 and Q Streets, the church and parochial school at 56 and Q Streets, the feed lots at 48 and L, 60 and L, and 60 and Q Streets, and the cemeteries at 42 and L and 47 and Q Streets there is nothing that the motorist would distinguish from other outskirts of agricultural cities and such a person might, in passing, remark: "Just touching the southwest border of Omaha."

At first the community impresses one as that of a peaceful and fairly prosperous section and one naturally concludes from cursory examination that the district is not what one would generally term a "poor" community. But if the observer were to inspect some of the neighborhoods beyond the rolling horizon, an entirely different picture, resulting from poverty, would come plainly into view.

Little does the stranger stop to think that beneath the physical surface there is a tangled web of interlocking social forces affecting the daily hopes, lives, and destinies of the inhabitants, which is in-
variably seeking some kind of adjustment.

The territory is known as Ashland Park Community. It is located in Douglas County, Township 14 North, Range 13 East, including all of Section 7, and part of Sections 8, 5, and 6. Legally it is known as School District No. 4. The boundaries, which are determined by the state legislature, are 42nd Street on the east, 60th Street on the west, F Street and the Chicago Northwestern Railroad on the north and the Douglas County line, or Harrison Street, touching Sarpy County on the south. This comprises a total area of 1660 acres or 2.59 square miles.

In this setting the people of Ashland Park Community live. A description of their activities and problems is given in the following pages with an attempt to show the relationships of all these activities and problems to the process of change.

Closer scrutiny of the community would reveal that its boundaries are not obvious because there are no natural boundary lines and the district becomes gradually assimilated with the edge of the city. The proximity to the city lines on both north and east deprive the community of that strictly "rural" atmosphere. A resident living far from any highway and who lacked modern conveniences stated that "ours is not a rural community but rather a city community without city advantages." On the other hand those who enjoy city conveniences have indicated that they "have all the advantages of the city and yet pay less taxes." These opinions represent widely separated economic groups. The dual aspect denotes a fusion with metropolitan life which ultimately proves to be the dominating factor in the course of social change.

1 A. E. Sheldon, *Nebraska Civil Government*, p. 236.
2 Special Survey by Douglas County Surveyor's Office.
MAP No. 1

MAP SHOWING POSITION OF DISTRICT NO. 4 IN DOUGLAS COUNTY.

LEGEND:

- School District No. 4.
Nearness to the packing houses and stock yards as well as cheap rents account for most people choosing to live there. Since it was an agricultural area in the beginning a few residents have remained loyal to the original occupation of farming. Agricultural colleges encourage an appreciation of farm values in the district through their extension services while advantages of urban life are incidentally brought to them.

Much of both is done by the Extension Division of the Nebraska Agricultural College through the medium of the Douglas County Farm Bureau. However the real values of rural life are fast disappearing because Ashland Park is being considered a residential community as time goes on. This peculiarity, as will be shown later, influences persistence in various phases of community life.

Definitions of Community, Neighborhood, Suburb. Hereafter the terms "district" and "community" will be used interchangeably throughout the treatise. Legally, the area under investigation is School District No. 4 and a district, according to Webster's New International Dictionary, is "a division of territory; a definite portion of a state, county, country, town or city, etc. made for administrative, electoral or other purposes." R. E. Hieronymous defines a community as a "group or company of people living fairly closely together in a more or less compact, contiguous, territory, who are coming to act together in the chief concerns of life." Ashland Park Community is not a true community in the light of this definition because its inhabitants have never been known to "act together" in the chief concerns of life. Lindeman describes a community as a

---

3 1934 Edition.
4 E. Lindeman, The Community, p. 10.
5 Ibid., p. 11.
"social group that is more or less self-sufficing," but this, too, does not describe the true nature of the area under discussion because there is no economic or social nucleus exerting enough influence to cause it to be "more or less self-sufficing." In a strictly scientific sense Lindeman doubts if there are any open country population groups which can be called true communities. In referring to the district as a rural community, E. L. Morgan states that such a community is "composed of a more or less well-defined group of neighbors having many interests in common..... boundaries are indefinite..... and within civil districts, townships and towns there may be communities....." This description is inadequate in that the inhabitants have very few interests in common and its boundaries are well defined. Perhaps a suitable but not complete description is that of Dwight Sanderson who states that "a rural community consists of the people in a local area tributary to the center of their common interests." In this instance the "center of their common interests" is the live stock and packing industries as well as the metropolitan life of Omaha to which most of the population gravitate for their social and economic needs.

The term "neighborhood" cannot be used in defining the area because a neighborhood is a group of people living in close proximity and forms a division of the larger organization of society, the community, which is often made up of several neighborhoods. As a community Ashland Park

---

6 Ibid., p. 55.
7 Ibid., p. 11.
8 Ibid., p. 12.
9 B. A. McClenahan, Organizing the Community, p. 7.
district consists of several neighborhoods. According to Mabel Carney, "rural social areas held together by one or two common interests are neighborhoods and not communities in the true sense of the term." Ashland Park Community consists of many neighborhoods whose common interests are governed by the media of church, school or economic status.

According to H. Paul Douglas the area cannot be strictly classified as a suburb because a suburb is "a community in which the social consequences of separations from the city have become clear and demonstrable and have registered in such a way that they can be recorded. It is more than a distant fringe of the city. It develops according to a distinctive social pattern." Although the district is intermediate between country and city and definitely within the sphere of urban influence, it has no clearly demonstrable social consequences which indicate a distinctive social pattern. However, the Federal census states that a suburban area is one in which people live ten miles beyond the municipal limits. Therefore in a broad sense Ashland Park District may also be referred to as a suburban area.

Memories of the Past

Early Development (1854-1885). Ashland Park Community derives its name from the old Ashland Park Addition which was originally a tract of land centering around what is now 48th and Q Streets. Because the public schoolhouse was situated on this property and for many years the only means of affording a "sense of community" to its inhabitants, the terri-

12 Ibid., p. 39.
Legend:
- City Boundary
- Boundary of districts which have been annexed to Omaha
- School District No. 4
- Railroad Tracks

Map No. II
Map Showing Proximity of School District No. 4 to Omaha, Nebraska
tory became known as Ashland Park District.

This district was organized as a political unit on May 2, 1869. As time went on various territorial changes took place. Additions were made in 1872, 1873, and 1875. In 1888 a part was set off to Ralston District No. 54. In 1893 a portion was transferred to South Omaha until stabilization was finally secured as shown through the present boundary lines. (See Map on page 7) The locality comprises an area of 1660 acres. It is one and one-half miles wide east and west and one and three-fourths to two miles long north and south.

Investigation discloses that many of the earliest settlers did not remain. Definite reasons for their leaving are not known, but no doubt they sought their fortunes elsewhere. Changes in land laws helped movement of settlers westward, and through newspapers and friends people throughout the nation were encouraged to buy and settle in Nebraska and other midwestern states. A settler in Nebraska in 1854 could take 160 acres and after living on it six months buy it from the United States for $1.25 an acre. This was called a pre-emption. In 1863 the homestead law went into effect. Under this a settler could take 160 acres and have it free for living upon it five years. In 1873 the timber claim act was passed. Under it one could get 160 acres by planting ten acres of it to trees and taking care of them for eight years. All three of these laws were in force from 1873 to 1891 and under them a settler could in a few years get 480 acres of land. Some pre-empted land and sold out as quickly as they received a government grant, thus realizing a fair profit. Among these speculators and outstanding name is that of Griffin, a man who

---

13 G. Dorsey, County Surveyor's Office, Douglas County Court House.
14 A. E. Sheldon, History and Stories of Nebraska, p. 270.
never settled there permanently but owned much land and sold in 160 acre
tracts to early settlers.

The very first family to arrive on the south side was that of John
Begley, who, incidentally, was the first white settler. He established
a farm on what is now 32nd and F in the year 1854. Although he did not
settle on the present Ashland Park site his family's interests were ab-
sorbed with those of people who settled in the district proper. During
his stay boundary lines were not yet defined. The Begley family later
moved across the county line into Sarpy County.

Other first arrivals were those of Patrick Corrigan, 1854; Philip
Cassidy, 1854; James and Patrick McEvoy, 1854; Tom Ryan, 1855; Joe and
John Toner, 1855; Bernard McCaffrey, 1856; Barney Hughes, 1857; John
Svojtek and Frank Vlcek, 1861; Chesley D. Layton, 1869; Michael Melia,
1870; Lawrence Wyer, later known as Weir, 1883; Andrew Bonderson, 1878;
and William Anthony, 1880.

The earliest death among first arrivals was that of James McEvoy I
who died on a boat as the family crossed the Missouri River to settle in
the district under study. His body was the first to be buried on the
land known today as St. Mary's Cemetery.

Although most of these families and others to follow had Irish names
they did not, as previously stated, arrive in groups or colonies but
rather in single family units from different parts of the country and
Canada. Neither had they known each other previously, excepting in the
case of a few families from Johnstown and western Pennsylvania who suf-
fered from hard times due to floods and fires prior to 1856. With these
difficulties plus the western "fever" they satisfied their spirit of ad-
venture by following friends into eastern Nebraska and beginning life
anew. At no time in the history of Ashland Park Community was there any colonization in the strict sense of the word although Irish Catholics from everywhere gravitated into the new settlement.

None of the descendants of these early folk are to be found in the immediate district, yet today there remain within the city limits on what was their original property the three daughters of Barney Hughes, the Misses Rose and Mary Hughes and Mrs. Catherine Howe.

The early settlers found an attractive rolling countryside of good, fertile farm land known as silt loam in the loess hill area. This was especially adapted to the raising of corn, wheat, oats, potatoes and cattle which provided the chief sources of income. The holders of the largest farm lands were the Corriganis and Cassidys. The open range system of cattle raising was prevalent and only cultivated portions were enclosed. A creek flowing through the territory afforded sufficient water supply for cattle, but was never known to have flooded. The prairie was originally broken by oxen and horses while mules were later utilized for the purpose because of a plentiful supply of mules from a nearby mule company. The women occupied themselves with raising garden products and buttermaking. In one family the latter was an important industry, butter being sold on a large scale in the nearby city. Nowhere in the district was there any sub-marginal land which might have produced an insufficient supply of food or farm products.

There were no forests to clear and as one pioneer, Miss Rose Hughes, aptly phrased it: "There wasn't even a cottonwood in sight." With the exception of a natural grove across the Sarpy county line all trees had to be planted by the early comers. Each spring when weeds and tall grass

At the time of final revision of this paper Mrs. Howe's demise took place January, 1938.
were burned it caused blazes comparable to prairie fires. Snakes were numerous.

The pioneers were of sturdy stock, well able to make a successful fight against odds, of which fortunately there were only a few. The winters were long and cold and snows were deep but they found the other seasons of the year rather agreeable in spite of their extreme variability. In general, winters were cold and dry, springs cool and rainy, summers hot and dry and the falls characterized by mild, pleasant weather with a few rainy spells. The annual rainfall averaged about thirty inches and the mean annual temperature was fifty degrees Fahrenheit.

The grasshopper plagues of 1875 and 1878 and the drouth of 1894 affected this region but slightly. The grasshoppers arrived in small numbers and ate the leaves from the trees for a few days and left, not causing a great deal of damage. The summer of 1894 witnessed a loss of crops due to drouth. Mr. J. B. Root in his description of that summer stated: "Everything was going fine up until the middle of July when a hot south wind came along and in a few days crops were burned up." Dust storms were totally unheard of at that time. However, due to elemental causes, crops in some years were poor as in 1875 and '76, but there never was a complete crop failure from 1857 to 1911. In spite of hard times from the years 1875 to '78, these staunch folk prospered, their habits of thrift and good management contributing to their success.

The majority, being of common national heritage and numbering only a few families chose to build their homes within close range of each other and farm out on a radius from their homes. Some houses were as close as one-half mile apart. This locality comprised the area which is now 42nd Plat Book 1924, Douglas County, Nebraska. The earliest record of precipitation is noted in the Climatic Summary, issued by the Department of Agriculture in which Bellevue, five miles away, began keeping permanent climatic data in 1858. The Omaha office opened in 1870.
and Q Streets and its environs. As other settlers moved in many clustered about the original group which included some Dutch, Czech, Scotch, and French families.

Those who pre-empted the land first lived in soddies, then built log cabins or frame shanties which were later occupied by succeeding families. As the size of families grew, substantial homes containing several rooms sprang up. The average family consisted of five to eight children, although a few families had more.

Transportation did not present serious problems at any time of the year. Everybody owned a team and wagon for utilitarian needs and horse and buggy were used on lighter missions or when pleasure bound. The spring wagon was popular for shopping tours into the city. When mud was too deep travel was by horseback, mud not being a serious hindrance or an objectionable feature of pioneer life. Neither did deep snows retard travel generally. One exception, however, was the deep snow of 1858 which held folks snowbound for two days. Otherwise communication was always maintained with the city. Since neither Q nor L Streets were cut through, travel was by way of anybody's farm land in criss-cross fashion in order to reach the avenues into the city.

Since South Omaha as a village was not in existence all trading was done in Omaha. The following places were popular with the early traders: Tootle and Jackson, dry goods, Megeath's General Store and Buffet's, Gladstone's, Pundt's and Fred Lang's grocery stores. The last-named was located at 15th and Jackson Streets and catered to the farmers who exchanged butter, eggs and poultry for other articles. A corral, shed and stables were provided for the farmers and a saloon was attached to the store.
Postal service as early as 1854 and 1855 was carried on by Alfred D. Jones, the first Postmaster who carried his mail in his hat and when he met the recipients of the mail he would deliver on the spot. On June 5, 1855, pioneers who wished their mail came to the first official Post Office which occupied the front room of the cottage of William W. Wyman on the southeast corner of 12th and Harney Streets.

Mail order trade was as yet unheard of and as Mr. Flynn expressed it: "It did not come upon us suddenly—it came quietly and gradually as a thief in the night."

Adjustment to the new environment was rapid in spite of many early settlers having been city bred. A general sense of satisfaction was felt in the new community as every member of each family was kept busy at his particular tasks. There was no farm machinery in existence then, everything being done by hand; but as time went on agricultural implements were sold in large stocks by implement companies located in the city.

There was neither a "rich" nor "poor" class of people. All owned their own homes and lands and lived in fair comfort according to the standards of the time. There were no particular people "in control" of social situations although some owned vast properties while others had as little as eighty acres. The strong character of these early folk caused them to deplore debts and every effort was made to pay off mortgages and other financial obligations as quickly as possible.

Money was scarce and although bartering was done on a small scale, debts were generally paid in cash. Economically, the early settlers had much to gain, and, with their fine inherent personal qualities and

One of South Omaha's first business men.
common interests, they created their own social environment in which they were content.

The first school house was built in 1869 on the Peter Cassidy farm, the location of the present school, but was moved south and west of what is now Graceland Park Cemetery and used as a home. The second school house, also a frame structure, was built in 1875 on the same property as the original, and became known as District No. 4 School. It was the first means of organized effort along social lines for it provided a sense of community to the inhabitants because all organized activity was centered around the school.

The high regard in which the settlers held morality and religion were shown in their regular church attendance. Since there were no churches in the vicinity they went to their respective places of worship in Omaha, five miles distant. The majority, being Catholic, attended St. Mary's Church on 8th Street between Harney and Howard. It was built in 1856 although in the summer of 1855 a priest by the name of Father Edmonds came to Omaha and celebrated his first mass in the State House. The Protestants attended the Methodist Church which was built in 1856 on 13th and Douglas Streets, the first Protestant service in Omaha having been held in the State House in the spring of 1855.

In regard to political interests only the men exhibited concern because women's suffrage was not an issue at the time. Incidentally there was no need for the sheriff in the community as the people prided themselves on being law-abiding. Government by County Commissioners proved satisfactory.

These early people never lacked for sociable moments. Every Saturday night after chores were done there were gatherings of young people in
MAP SHOWING CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, AND CEMETERIES
different homes, bent on enjoying themselves in dancing and merry-making. In the summertime there were picnics and dancing on a platform at Layton's Grove, built in 1886. The latter proved a popular center of amusement and continued as such until, in later years, a few unscrupulous young persons came forth with liquor. One resident described in curt manner his feelings: ".....and such behavior squelched the dancing at Layton's Grove." In the winter sleigh riding provided the chief sport and amusement. The children were not forgotten for they, too, participated in these events. Occasionally Mr. Toner was known to have driven a load of boys into town to show them the sights, at which they were thrilled. Surprisingly, in spite of friendly relations, there were no intermarriages between early families. Mates were found through acquaintances resulting from city or other outside contacts. At the turn of the century only three marriages of old families could be ascertained.

When asked what was missed in their new environment the replies were "church," "big house in the city," "scarcity of fruit," and others of lesser importance. One woman, lonesome for the east, had bought a cow and if she could have sold it soon afterward she would have returned to her home in the east. The reaction toward the present seems to be as some old settlers stated: "cannot compare with the good old days when people were more fraternal," "like two separate civilizations, the present one rushing around getting nowhere."

Little or no societal friction existed in those days. Neither were there rivalling factions nor problems creating disturbance or social disintegration. Sociableness and cooperation in all matters typified their feelings toward each other. In times of sickness or misfortune all families would cooperate in relieving as far as possible the distressed family.
When a death occurred the entire community, regardless of religious beliefs, respected the situation by not going to work in the fields from the time of the death until after the funeral. All had a deep regard for high ideals and respect for others' rights, and character training was a great part of the education of the young. At no time was there a scandal or even a hint of unsavory reputation among any of them. Quarrels, lawsuits, delinquency, divorce, and other social problems became manifest only as more people began to settle in the community.

Scattered widely throughout the territory, which is now part of South Side, Omaha, were several small slaughter houses which catered to the needs of the city, the first being that of David Cook who attempted a small packing plant in 1871. Mr. James Boyd established a plant in 1872, J. P. Roe in 1874, and Sheeley & Company in 1880. Other packing houses later catering to a large volume of trade were those of Colby, Sheeley Brothers, Harris and Fischer, Aust and Knuth, and F. Hickenstein, who were located in the same area near the railroad in what is now called "Sheeley-town." A soap factory, which utilized the fats of the plants, was established by P. J. Quealy near the source of supply. As the larger and more important plants of Hammond, Omaha Packing Company, Armour's, Cudahy's, and Swift's were built in the middle eighties, the entire region southwest of Omaha took on a new character. Changes were rapid. Railroads were built, packing houses and stock yards expanded and the village of South Omaha, frequently referred to as the "Magic City" was showing surprising growth. It was thought that South Omaha would some day be the center of population for the city of Omaha.

Later Development (1885-1915). In the twenty-five year period from 1885 to 1910 many families settled in the community, the growth of the
packing houses being responsible for such rapid development. However, the interests of the majority were fast becoming associated with agriculture on a much smaller scale than formerly. Extensive sheep raising and growing of alfalfa had started about this time and markets for all products were found locally. A few retired business men came out because they were tired of city life and wished to try living on an acreage. All seemed satisfied with their new environment, many of them having previously lived in similar circumstances in eastern Nebraska, Iowa, and other so-called "western" states. Consequently these people did not miss very much and those coming from the cities had few, if any, complaints. Some opened up feed lots while others became associated with the stock yards and packing houses.

Among these later settlers there are such family names as Lambert, 1886; Mortenson, 1887; Gall, 1893; Kresl, 1893; Mahoney, 1895; Rieper, 1896; Hurt, 1897; Thell, 1898; Bentley, 1900; Kidder, 1900; Hajny, 1901; Stickley, 1903; Vomacka, 1903; Swanson, 1904; Dietrich, 1905; Tex, 1905; Morrow, 1907; Root, 1907; Beloyed, 1909; Harder, 1910; McRann, 1910; Ruser, 1911; Newton, 1911. Those who have been in the community many years but for whom dates cannot be found are Jurgenson, Hendricks, Risley, Weis, Schnell, Jesse, and others not known to the author.

Today evidences of social and material development are felt as the results of efforts of these families in promoting ideals toward the betterment of their community.

Lands were being broken up from as many as 240 acres to 160, then eighty and finally forty acres. Several Omaha people bought land but never settled on it, later selling to real estate companies for investment purposes.
There was continuous growth from 1900 on, the year 1905 showing extraordinary development. The packing houses and stock yards attracted many foreigners who came as laborers. Nationalities continued to be mixed, the Danish and Swedish predominating. "Swede Hollow" was the name given to the neighborhood that now comprises 45th and 46th Streets, south of Q. About twenty Swedish families lived here and became closely associated through the medium of the old world custom of gathering for 11:00 and 4:00 o'clock coffee in the different homes. Today only four of these original families remain. Later Germans, Bohemians, and Poles arrived in fair numbers. The last named came because they were attracted to a colony of fellow Poles already organized around their church inside the city limits in the neighborhood of 41st and J Streets. Those living in Ashland Park Community form the fringe of this particular group. Adjustment of first generation immigrants was slow but those of the second and third generation quickly responded to American life. As the packing houses and stock yards expanded more people of diverse nationalities moved in and by 1926 Ashland Park School numbered twenty-six different nationalities among its pupils. Assimilation has taken place on the "community" theory which is the development of a culture based on the educational and psychical processes. It represents, by offering the immigrant the best America has and in turn expecting the best from him, the highest ideal toward a perfect fusion of mental and cultural unity.

The homes continued to be of frame structure, containing from two to six rooms. The only discomforts were lack of city water and other metropolitan conveniences which many had enjoyed before coming into the new settlement.

Transportation continued to be by team and wagon or horse and buggy. Frequently when snow or mud were too deep for travel in the lower portions of the road, which now extended from downtown South Omaha to 60th Street, fences had to be torn down and a circuitous path taken through the fields. A great many had to walk to work but did not mind it as most workers walked.

People continued to prosper excepting for the period 1892-94 when the mid-western drouth, though not hindering farming seriously in Ashland Park district, had thrown many packing house workers out of employment and created considerable economic disturbance, adding to the panic already existing. Financial disturbances continued until about 1900, when conditions came back to normal.

As the years progressed, retail buying was done largely at Brandeis Store which was established in 1881 above Brasch's Clothing Store at 13 and Farnam Streets. Here it remained only a short time, later moving to 512 South 13 Street where it was called the "Fair". The stores of South Omaha in the early eighties were too small to permit of much choice in the purchase of commodities, which was the reason for downtown trading. Later, business in the village of South Omaha began to be quite brisk because of packing house trade and implement branches were opened there for benefit of farm trade in the district. Most of the stores in the growing village were clothing shops, among these being the stores of Henry Hyman, Wright & Baldwin, and John Flynn. The latter, who opened a clothing store in 1888, developed his business into what became the largest department store in South Omaha for many years. Up to the time of writing he is still in business and is the only surviving clothing merchant of the earlier days. Clothing businesses were coming up strongly because overalls and men's
clothing were in demand. At that time it was called "a man's town." Other businesses of importance were the following: Melcher Drug Store, Meyer's Drug Store, Fred Etter Groceries, Holmes & Smith Hardware, and J. B. Watkins Lumber Company. The latter is still doing business on the South Side. Business men were able to get along with each other in spite of the normal course of business competition. There were no open conflicts and growth of all businesses was natural and steady.

The capacity of the frame schoolhouse was outgrown, so it was moved away and a substantial four-room brick building erected in its place, the majority of the residents believing it was too great an undertaking for their community.

The Mosher Memorial Church was the first church to be built in Ashland Park Community. It was erected in 1915 and, together with the school, served as a means of organized social contact for those who were affiliated with these institutions. Sunday School services were begun before the building was built. They were held in Ashland Park School. Catholics went to their respective churches in the village of South Omaha.

As population grew and intermingling took place after the turn of the century, marriages between families in Ashland Park Community began to be noticed. As social life became more complex, discussion arose as to the erection of a community center or town hall but nothing ever materialized.

In spite of the distances some lived from each other, people were friendly and cooperation and good will were the tenets of the day. There was no real social isolation in the community. Even though no rivalling factions existed a slight form of segregation began to make its appearance among groups of similar nationality or religious beliefs, thus laying a foundation for future disorganization. However, there was no open conflict
arising from differences in personal matters. All those interviewed in regard to earlier times agreed that they were happier than folks seem today because an atmosphere of peace and contentment pervaded the countryside.

All in all the community fulfilled the economic needs of the early settlers and those following soon after. Their social needs were satisfied by supplementing their own group interests with those offering broader opportunities in the city.

With the influx of new settlers trouble arising from a human source began. Wages were cut, serious strikes arose in 1903 and the interplay of social forces came to the front. No longer was there the tranquillity of the old days.

Farmsteads were beginning to be purchased on a large scale by real estate companies about 1907 for subdivision into acreages and lots. The Melia property was the first known to be subdivided into acre plots as early as 1890. Another early addition was that of Syndicate Hill which was platted out in 1892 into four hundred lot units by the Commonwealth Real Estate Company. This tract, consisting of forty acres, was part of a tract of 120 acres which the government gave in the early fifties to William Taylor as a gift for his services as a soldier in the Creek Indian War. It was in 1857 that he sold his rights to Andrew Orchard who preempted the land and stayed there three years. The remaining lots are now in the hands of Mathew A. Hall, Attorney. Land in Nebraska was frequently taken by pre-emption or given through land warrants issued to soldiers and sailors of the Mexican war. Speculators bought up these warrants cheaply and went to the land office and picked land from the map according to the location desired. In 1902 the Layton property was subdivided. No real estate agency represented this family for they sold direct to purchasers. One-fourth
section of the Toner property called the "Homestead Addition" was opened for subdivision in 1907 by the Bankers Mortgage & Loan Company. About this time many real estate companies began plans of promotion and campaigns to attract newcomers. During this period the following additions were offered to the public for sale by their promoting agencies: Essex Addition, Occidental Building & Loan; Corrigan Addition, Ryan Real Estate Co., now defunct; Hurt and Cassidy properties, Joseph F. Murphy; Reed Acres, Byron Reed & Co.; West L Street Acres, Daniel Carey; Weircrest Addition and Hughes property, H. H. Harper; and South Side Acres, Hastings & Heyden.

Most of the Corrigan properties were sold direct to purchasers. The period 1907-1915 represented the largest influx of newcomers into the district, the largest number coming in 1909. Prices were attractive and terms reasonable as noted by those of the Occidental Loan and the N. P. Dodge Companies which were $1.00 down and $.50 per week per lot. Prices varied according to location and time of purchase, later comers paying more. On one acre Hastings & Heyden required a $10.00 down payment and $10.00 per month while on a half acre it was $5.00 down and $7.00 per month. Subdivision on a large scale continued until 1920.

All the early surviving settlers who sold out were jubilant at the turn of the tide. One or two exceptions were those of conservatives who frowned upon the movement of subdivision because from their point of view "there was everything to lose and nothing to gain." Apparently the income derived from the sale of such properties was of minor importance compared to the desirability of keeping farms intact. The selling points of the agencies were low taxes, easy accessibility to work by foot or street car, and others

---
19 Consensus of opinion of several real estate dealers of the day.
20 The present 42nd & Q, 42nd & L, and the now defunct Ralston-Papillion lines.
such as healthful climate, cool summers, and suitability of soil for garden raising.

The newcomers represented various trades as well as unskilled labor work. As they sought employment in the packing plants and stock yards their acreages served as an added source of income to help pay off home mortgages or supply a means of a living until a job was secured. Enjoyment and competition among the women ran high in the raising of poultry, garden produce, and flower gardens. Love of the soil became a by-product of such activity which was greatly missed when these acreages were further subdivided into lots and the settlement became more thickly populated. Most of the people came because of low taxes and proximity to the city. Others considered the district an ideal place for the rearing of children. One elderly gentleman declared: "I never wanted to raise my children in town. Out here they have learned to work and keep out of mischief and they became better citizens because of it." As the roads were being developed many workers obtained employment by grading roads for the county.

Friction was often encountered with the foreign-born because in the course of conversation they could not be understood and this affected adversely the entire social set-up. They were unhappy at first on account of leaving relatives behind. To them the country was still too unsettled compared with the well organized and socially integrated countries from which they came. They were thrifty and materially well off and on the average fared better than many middle-class American families because "Americans did not learn how to save and make the most of what they had. They are learning now what we knew long ago about thrift."

Stated by an elderly foreign-born resident and substantiated by an early American settler.
As the population increased and the city kept expanding westward toward the district, means of transportation in the community improved. Trails began to be confined to section lines instead of meandering over the prairies. Dirt roads were graded and leveled.

In 1905 there was public discussion in the community regarding the construction of a street car system running between South Omaha and Beatrice which was to have run to West "Q" Street and 42nd, thence south to the county line and on to Beatrice. It was to have been named the Iler Railroad, but the project never materialized. The Ralston-Papillion line became the only street car system ever to run through the district. It operated from 1911 to 1926. Its route was along West Q Street into Ralston and Papillion. It was abandoned when automobiles became common.

Aside from several small stores and a saloon at 45th and Q Streets, there were few other businesses. Two dairies had been in operation at 57th and L Street and 43rd and L, but the former, which was operated by Chris Gunderson closed in 1903 while the latter, belonging to a Mr. Peterson closed in 1920. The demise of these industries was caused by the fact that nearly every family had its own cow. The outstanding grocery stores for many years were operated by Moron's at 49th & Q and Penfields at 56th & Q Streets.

Prior to 1915 the suburban trend gained considerable momentum and Ashland Park District represented a typical example of the movement. Fortunately it became a successful suburb in that it began with cutting up of farms into lots despite a lack of planning and tendencies of growth had shown stability. Such conditions were favorable to its healthy existence for tendencies of growth can sometimes be freakish, causing a suburb to become un-

---

H. P. Douglas, The Suburban Trend, Chap. IV.
successful. A steady growth continued during this period and the only events which upset the equilibrium of the community were strikes and layoffs. A catastrophe caused by natural forces barely missed the district when the Easter tornado of 1913 circled the district to the south and west on its way to Omaha to become one of the worst in the history of the country.

Recent Development (1915-1957). Practically the entire community has been divided into lots excepting the region south of Q Street from 56th to 60th along Harrison Street, the County line, where the bulk of the small acreages are found grouped together. These range in size from one and one-half to five acres each. In this locality there are also a few larger acreages, one being a farm consisting of 270 acres which is rented out and planted in wheat, barley, oats, rye, potatoes, corn, and alfalfa. Large tracts of land left intact for farming in other parts of the district are the old Peter Cassidy place, which rents fifty acres for wheat growing and which is handled by the heirs; the Emil Gall farm which has forty acres in alfalfa, corn, grapes, and garden produce; and the Fred Tex place which has forty acres under similar cultivation inside the district boundaries. The two last-named live on their farms, while the heirs of the former live in the city of Omaha. There remain today several unsold lots and small acreages. Since 1930 there has been no subdivision of land of any consequence, the last stimulation in this direction being in 1920 when a second building boom took place. At no time were these houses empty, even during recent depression years. As the countryside was thus changing genuine farm life was missed by the older people while the younger generation took on interests of city folk.

Steady growth has marked the progress of the community. More families

Ibid., Chap. IV.

with smaller numbers of children have accounted for this steady increase.

Trees formerly planted by old settlers have been cut down to make room for the "invaders" while young trees are seen growing in many places where lots are for sale. The absence of big trees is especially noticeable, small orchards representing the only collection of trees to be seen.

There was very little need for adjustment on the part of inhabitants. The old residents were thoroughly accustomed to their surroundings and many went along with the times rather reluctantly. One old settler remarked that "old dogs CAN learn new tricks when they are forced to it." The second and third generations of foreigners have become completely absorbed into American life and their interests in civic and school affairs is equal to that of those whose families have been here for several generations.

The number of foreign-born today is small in comparison with the general population. (See Table V in Part II) On the whole the community is adjusting itself to the present, its greatest drawback being its lack of social or unified action on the part of all inhabitants for the general welfare of their community.

Many homes are equipped with electricity while a few in the Q and L Street neighborhoods have had water and plumbing installed as city mains have been laid along these streets. Only those situated in a better financial position are able to afford city gas and water which is quite expensive.

When autos invaded the world of trade and industry, Ashland Park Community did not escape. The main highways leading from the packing center were paved and automobile traffic became heavy on west Q and L Streets. Bus service was instituted to take the place of the old Ralston-Papillion

---

An indiscriminate term applied by a few old settlers to immigrants.
line. Many persons complained about the long walk to work or carline when they began noting their friends' purchases of automobiles. When everyone walked there were few complaints.

As the Catholic population increased there was need for a church and in 1919 the Holy Ghost Catholic church and school were built to take care of the needs of the increasing numbers of that faith. Through this means there developed a unity of spiritual and social interests within the Catholic group.

The present Ashland Park school was built in 1909, its growth and influence in the community forming a nucleus around which much of the social life of its patrons revolves. Its reputation in 1925 as the largest rural school in the world has brought it before the public eye on many occasions.

The political views of the people are practically of one accord. The vast majority are Democrats, a Republican seldom being heard of. When women's suffrage came into existence the women were slow to take an interest in politics and government. For the most part their votes were influenced by their husbands. Besides political, church, and school issues, there are no other forces indicative of any form of unification. The political situation is an element which affects all homes temporarily at election time, while the school and church have a permanent status insofar as unity of interests is concerned.

This community is considered by its leaders to be a district high in morality. Crime is rare except "bootlegging," of which the district had its share during the prohibition era. The sheriff was frequently summoned to arrest offenders after raiding hide-outs. Problems arising from the liquor traffic such as drunkenness, child dependency, delinquency, desertion, divorce and others presented social situations to be reckoned with.
The law did much to apprehend and prosecute violators of liquor laws though many escaped. The present so-called "tavern," according to residents long in the community, seems equally as bad if not worse than the saloon of the old days because they are more numerous. They are located on Q and L Street highways as well as along junctions on 60th Street. The county endeavors to some extent to regulate these places and frequently tavern proprietors are brought to trial for excessive infringement of the law. The patrons of these places consist of people outside the district as well as in the district.

The attitudes of the majority of Ashland Park residents toward their community reflect a tone of satisfaction. A few successful business men or leaders exhibit enthusiasm for the place in which they live, expression being shown mainly through their interests in churches, schools, or the Weircrest Improvement Club. Only a negligible minority indicate dissatisfaction. The comments of the satisfied were: "cheap rents," "close to Cudahy's and stock yards," "cooler summers," "a good place to raise children," "close to nature and not too close to neighbors," "more freedom and independence in family life," "do not have to 'keep up with the Jones's,'" "people are more or less alike out here and no one feels he is too good for his neighbors and can be independent." The last two comments point to absence of social control insofar as the majority are concerned.

Those who are zealous about their community are those who have gained much by living there and their reactions in the main are as follows: "we have nearly all the privileges of city life and the advantages of suburban life and yet pay less taxes," "we enjoy watching progress and think we have a future out here." This group represents the most socially-minded of the community.
Views of those having a negative attitude are as follows: "too far to walk to work," "don't care for the place anymore because I can't raise anything on account of the drouth," "don't like it here as much as I did because people are not like they used to be; they are more selfish, less friendly, and untrustworthy and I do not care to associate with them," "automobiles have ruined the homely virtues in people by distracting them too much," "original plans can seldom be carried out because of our fast way of living; something comes along to change them and new plans must be made," and "children are not contented as they used to be." It is easily noted that most of these complaints come from older residents. A booster of a later generation remarked "people don't take care of their houses and property and they do not keep them in good shape like they did when I moved here twelve years ago." This statement no doubt was directed at the tenant class and home owners who suffered losses in the depression. However, many reside in Ashland Park Community who are totally indifferent toward their surroundings. These constitute people from all walks of life, including prosperous business men down to indigent transients.

Organized community life has never gone forward. On the contrary it has regressed. The wide divergence of ecological factors have affected individuals and groups in such manner so as not to foster a community spirit and as a result there has been a social disunity to which most people are apathetic. This situation has retarded progress toward community consciousness.

Conditions in the past five years have intensified the situation further by a higher rate of mobility depending on increase and decrease of incomes. Mobility was the greatest single factor causing much concern to the school and church officials during these years. Having little or no direct
contact with the basic institutions and mores of the community, these families were detached from any kind of group control in the district and lived in a world of their own making, thus developing a culture resembling that of the stranger. H. A. Phelps points out that such a situation, although not constituting a major social problem, presents a serious pathology in social relationships. Although no records on mobility in this section are available, school officials report a diminishing number of mobile families in the past year.

The drouth added to difficulties by causing a decrease of income from gardens, consequently bringing about a higher cost in living to those depending on garden stuff for added revenue. In a casual conversation one resident remarked: "we were satisfied until it quit raining." Diminished funds from this as well as employment sources brought about a retardation in progress of all things social and the ideal of community solidarity was dealt a crushing blow. The tavern, a post-depression product, is a disintegrating feature of no small moment and is playing a deteriorating role in the welfare of the community.

Summary

In outward appearance Ashland Park District No. 4 differs little from outskirts of other cities. The majority of houses are built in the conventional pattern of the average working class district while the schools, churches, cemeteries and feed lots on the rolling country-side are the outstanding features to the casual observer. No natural boundaries are in evidence.

In the past fifty years the territory has changed from a peaceful agri-

Contemporary Social Problems, p. 394.
cultural section to a more complex, semi-urban locality where invention, industry, transportation and commerce have made their inroads through the advent of packing houses and stock yards.

Since the district is neither strictly rural nor urban, the characteristics of both are closely interwoven in the make-up of home, school, church and recreational life. The community cannot be classified as rural because from the standpoint of human values it has urban tendencies.

The term "district" is the most accurate classification of the area under study because of its legal ramifications while the references "community," "neighborhood," and "suburb" are made only when the district answers in some degree to these terms.

The three major periods of development of the community have to do with the (1) advent of the packing houses in the middle '80's (2) the suburban trend reaching its height in 1915 (3) the post-war and depression eras.

The first period is characterized by a tranquillity and a fusion of interests, both personal and general. The second period emphasizes the arrival of the packing industries on a large scale, affecting the peace and unity of former days. A variety of nationalities were attracted, adding to the complexity of the situation. The third period marks the post-war building boom, prosperity and the depression.

There were few struggles or changes in earliest times. After the packing houses were established struggles emanating from economic causes began to appear while of late years the depression caused hardships and discontentment unknown before.

Adjustment to the new environment was rapid because the earliest settlers were Irish Catholics who had lived in the United States prior to their
emigration westward. As immigrants from Europe arrived adjustment became slower, but the second generation was quickly assimilated. As families of varied background continued to arrive, their adjustment was rapid and the occasional foreigner's dissimilarity did not greatly hinder the social pattern. A heterogeneous population was the result.

For the past fifty years the mixture of nationalities has persisted. Residents have continued to come in by family groups, no colonization within district boundaries ever taking place.

On the whole the community satisfied the needs and desires of its inhabitants until drought and depression appeared. Most are tradesmen or packing house workers, who, when employed, are satisfied with their environment. As a class they are thrifty and home-loving. People of earlier times were happy in spite of the absence of city conveniences while today those well-off are not content until they possess all the physical comforts available in the district. Except for the early log cabins, there has been little change in the homes which remain largely the cottage type.

As a rural community Ashland Park District was partially self-sustaining in social and economic life, as the nearby city supplied any lack in these needs. Later the pull of the city, growing out toward the district, caused an interpenetration of urban life. This gradual change finds the people in the community living in a rural district but with urban characteristics. At the same time a certain persistence is shown in that the great majority raise at least a garden; thus agricultural tendencies tend to link the present with the past.

Transportation was never a serious problem. Three arterials, now paved, pass through the district. The advent of the auto as well as the building booms of 1907-15 and 1920-29 were the greatest contributors to physical
change.

The earliest settlers and those soon following were more religious than people are in general today. They were all known to attend church regularly. Church leaders express regret at the indifference now shown in many quarters toward theological teachings. Morality has maintained a fairly high level, no major crimes having been perpetrated in the community in the memory of people living there.

The school has grown with the steady increase of population. The present school has been preceded by three others all of which have served as the only source of recreational and educational interests for those associated with school life. When Holy Ghost Parish was established in 1917 the Catholic church and school formed a nucleus around which Catholic social life revolved. This church and school and that of Ashland Park are the largest institutions in the community in point of size and patronage.

Consisting largely of laboring class people the political affiliations of the community have been in the main Democratic. The same situation prevails today, indicating a persistence in political views. A change in the field of politics is shown in the interest women are taking today whereas their sisters of another generation had nothing to do with politics.

There seems to be little in history to throw a light on present attitudes because changes have been so great. Few of the older settlers who cling to old ideals in spite of their forced acceptance, at least outwardly, of the new order of things, still remain. The last two generations keep well within modern ideas and conditions. The attitudes of the present as well as former generations toward their community indicate general satisfaction, thus showing a persistence of feeling of all generations toward the
place in which they live.

As cultural changes occurred there were many conflicts, but these were generally between home and group interests involving old and new elements. The conflicts seemed to settle themselves without coming to the surface as a disconcerting note in the even tenor of community life.

Social disintegration is perhaps the greatest concern of individuals interested in the community. Although organized groups within the district promote interests in their own behalf, very little evidence is shown that anything has been done for the general welfare. Cooperation exists only among personal friends or through affiliation with organized groups. Indifference of citizens toward the community in which they live presents the greatest single obstacle to complete integration.

The depression and climatic changes in recent years have affected employment and agriculture in a new way. The resulting loss of revenue in the home has brought about a general regression in culture.
PART II  A GLIMPSE AT THE POPULATION

Classification

Many population elements enter into the making of Ashland Park Community. The only official but incomplete figures available are those of the school census and the election commissioner's books. The former shows only the number of individuals from five to twenty-one years of age while the latter discloses only names of voters, who are over twenty-one years of age. Further difficulties arise in the fact that voting boundaries of one of the precincts extend beyond school boundaries thus including many voters outside the district whose names must be eliminated.

Age. For the purpose of this study a special count of all individuals living in the community was made at the time the annual school census was taken in June, 1937. Thus a distribution of the population by voting and non-voting age is determined in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 21 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Population</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Voting Adults</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 5-21</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3538</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since persons in the age groups under twenty-one comprise a total of 45.2% of the entire population indications are that this is a young community.

1 Miss Bird Claybaugh, census taker.
2 General Election, November 5, 1936.
Sex. Sex of all individuals in the community is noted in the following table.

Table II
Showing Numbers by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over 21 Years</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting Population</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>1277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Voting Adults</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-21</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>1191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>1683</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>3538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III
Showing Sex of Youth of Compulsory School Age 7-16 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>362</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those of compulsory school age represent 59.9% of all persons under twenty-one or 21.8% of the total population.

It is apparent from these tables that there is a preponderance of the male sex in all groups except the non-voting population in which women are in the majority.

Race. Racial problems are non-existent as may readily be seen in Table IV.

There are no colored persons under twenty-one years of age living in the community. With the exception of four Negroes no other race is represented in the district. In one Negro home there is a woman, her daughter, and a boarder. The other family consists of a colored man and white wife. Thus in reality there are only one and one-half colored families in Ashland
Park Community. In the history of the school not more than ten colored children have been accounted for by school authorities. Of the many thousands employed in the yards and plants few have located in the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IV</th>
<th>Indicating Racial Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colored or other Races</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 21 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Population</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Voting Adults</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 5-21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nationality. Ashland Park district is heterogeneous from the standpoint of nationality. Of the total population, 365 or 10.2% are foreign-born. It is impossible to determine number of foreign-born or native-born voters as there is no law in Nebraska requiring registration of electors in rural districts prior to voting. The election officer in charge is expected to know all persons coming to vote and is permitted to question new residents in the community regarding their eligibility to vote.

A computation of foreign and native-born parents of children attending Ashland Park School revealed twenty-seven nationalities distributed as shown in Fig. 1. Two foreign-born children are in attendance at the school. One is from Germany and the other is from Czechoslovakia.

The number of foreign-born fathers and mothers compared with native-born parents of Ashland Park School are shown in Table V.

---

3 Ashland Park School represents 284 or 35% of the families in the district. In these homes dwell 1545 individuals or 43.6% of all persons living in the community, thus affording an excellent cross-section of individuals for purposes of examination. Holy Ghost School cannot be included because parish boundaries extend beyond those of the school district.
FIG. 1

CHART SHOWING NUMBER OF FOREIGN-BORN PARENTS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL

Scale:
1/6 inch = one parent

CZECHOSLOVAKIA 95
POLAND 82
GERMANY 42
SWEDEN 26
LITHUANIA 21
DENMARK 16
YUGOSLAVIA 11
HUNGARY 10
ITALY 10
AUSTRIA 8
NORWAY 6
IRELAND 5
CANADA 4
BELGIUM 4
CROATIA 4
RUSSIA 4
SERBIA 3
HOLLAND 2
ENGLAND 2
BULGARIA 1
SCOTLAND 1
MEXICO 1
BRAZIL 1
FRANCE 1
ROMANIA 1
LUXEMBOURG 1
GREECE 1
Table V
Foreign and Native-Born Parentage of Ashland Park Patrons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-Born</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-Born</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety-five or 16.7% of the school's patronage is of foreign or mixed parentage. Since there are 363 foreign-born persons living in the community and ninety-five of these have children in the school it appears that 26% of the foreign-born are associated with the school.

Assimilation of the immigrant has been gradual and almost complete. Many factors enter into his attempts of becoming adjusted to his new environment. Among these are the securing of employment commensurate with his knowledge of English; understanding and tolerance of the community toward the foreign-born and great heterogeneity of foreigners which forces him to accept the English language and American mores in order to live harmoniously with others. Another important element in the process of assimilation has been the attendance in Americanization classes held in the school.

Foreign language is spoken in homes where both parents come from the same country. Children of these homes have learned the language of their parents while those of American-born parents seldom speak another language.

While the earliest settlers were nearly all Irish today there is only a small representation of Irish-born. When the railroads and packing houses were being established there was a predominance of Mexicans compared to one Mexican-born living there today. Other national groups have remained about the same.

The three predominating nationalities are the Czechs, Germans, and Poles. They represent 53.3% of the foreign-born patrons of Ashland Park.
School, as is indicated in Table VI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parentage of Predominating Nationalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other twenty-four nationalities constitute 45.8% of the foreign-born patrons.

Czechs.

The Czechoslovakian group, which constitutes the largest number of foreign-born, is composed of the Moravians and the Bohemians, two branches of the Slav race. A few settlers came to the district as early as 1861 and several of their descendants still live in the community. As a rule these people are industrious, thrifty, family-loving, and have a keen sense of humor, these traits causing them to be an asset to the community. Most of them converse in several languages. They become naturalized rapidly and have been the most enthusiastic group in the night Americanization classes at the school. The majority own their own homes and are fond of gardening and poultry raising. Wherever a flock of geese is to be found, it may well be identified with a Czech home.

This group is more completely organized than any other nationality within the community. Their associations in the community are between family groups and most of them are affiliated with the Sokol Organization and fraternal lodges of South Omaha. Family life is strong among them and they possess a deep sense of personal honor. Because of the political and religious

---

background of the Czechs, most of them belong to no church. In Ashland Park Community there are a negligible number who belong to any church. As a result of education and contacts through work and social interests they become absorbed in the general life of the community and make a desirable group of citizens. There is sufficient leadership within their own group but they are not leaders in the community at large. Only two have ever been outstanding in leadership. Their reserved nature when dealing with Americans is the result of their inability to express themselves clearly in the English language.

Poles

Perhaps the group commanding most attention are the Poles. They are all Roman Catholic and belong to St. Stanislaus Parish which touches the northeast boundary of the district. About fifty families live outside the borders and overflow into Ashland Park Community and children from this group who attend Ashland Park school go to St. Stanislaus on Saturdays for religious instruction. These families consist mainly of young people who were born in the old country. Only about ten of these parents are American born. Adjustment of the foreign-born Pole offers no great problem to himself because he lives among fellow-countrymen and adjustment is gradual. There is no need of his going outside his group for social contacts because his church provides these. Thus little or no friction is encountered with the American world about him. He adjusts readily to his work-day routine and finds his status as a foreigner no particular hindrance to his happiness.

The Poles in the community are from different countries of Europe.

R. I. Kutak, A Bohemian-American Village, p. 41.
Those from Galicia, Austria and German Poland are assimilable to a high degree while those from Russia assimilate much more slowly. The latter adhere to old culture patterns and do not care to speak English. This may be attributed to the laissez-faire policy of the "melting pot" theory which has done nothing regarding assimilation. Their lack of education in Russia has aggravated this condition. In Russia as long as the eldest child went to school and learned to read and write it was not considered necessary for the others to go to school. This attitude toward education derives from the days of the Czar when local supervisors of education could be bribed into reporting children in school who were not attending. Thus many Russian families of Polish descent had no desire to take advantage of schooling offered them either in Russia or the United States. This group of Poles, however, are in the minority in the community.

Germans

The third largest immigrant group is composed of Germans. Most of them did not come directly into the community from Germany, but first settled temporarily in other parts of Nebraska and Iowa. After the packing houses and stock yards were built they began to move slowly and steadily into the community for a period of twenty to thirty years. Through thrift and hard work they soon accumulated sufficient funds to buy acreages. Very few immigrant Germans have moved into the community since the World War.

The German immigrant became easily assimilated and soon developed into a useful citizen. His jovial nature and the love of law and order have made him a desirable settler. With a good grade school education and an excellent cultural background he became a valuable contributor to the community.

In general, the Germans in the community have prospered and have become

---

an integral part of its economic and social life. Their belief in education has caused them to work hard in order to give their children more schooling than they themselves had. Most of them are Protestants of various denominations, the earliest Germans having been Lutheran.

The other nationalities are scattered throughout the community and have no identity as organized or segregated groups, although they form an important part in the social pattern of community life.

**Analysis**

**Growth.** Early records of community growth are not available but there are indications that it has enjoyed a growth corresponding to that of South Omaha. The establishment of the stock yards and packing houses brought people by the thousands into South Omaha. During the summer of 1885 the population increased very rapidly and "Chicago transferred large numbers of commission men and these were young men without families." South Omaha experienced a boom in 1890 when the town was only six years old and had a reported population of 8062. By 1900 South Omaha had a population of 26,001.

It is apparent that the greatest growth or "boom" came in the beginning of the industry but later growth which was steady, was the outcome of economic advantages such as labor supply, shipping facilities, raw material, ready markets and social factors such as homes, churches, schools, public buildings, and many important businesses. Its reputation as the home of the wage-earner and home-seeker was spread far and Ashland Park District was not neglected in campaigns as a desirable place to locate. In 1915, the year it

---

8 Savage & Bell, *History of the City of Omaha*, p. 658.
was annexed to Omaha, South Omaha had a population of 30,000.

In the absence of a federal census of the District the only sources that may serve as indexes of population changes are the district school census and school enrollment. These, of course, are incomplete in that they show only changes regarding persons under twenty-one years of age. However, since the community may be classed as a young community the results, as shown in Fig. 2, present a fair estimate of growth.

Steady growth in numbers of those from five to twenty-one is noted, although there has not always been an increase in percentages in the last five year period. The age group showing the greatest percentage of increase during every five year period is that of sixteen to twenty. Those of legal school age (7-15) increased 114.5% from 1917 to 1937, while those under and over legal school age increased 25.0% and 228.3% respectively. A decrease in growth of all age groups excepting that of 11-15 is noted in 1937 over the previous five year period.

Fig. 3 indicates total enrollment at Ashland Park School in the twenty year period beginning 1917. The greatest changes are shown in the years 1921-22 when there was an increase of 19.4% over the previous year and a decrease in 1927 of 9.7% over 1926. Where decreases are shown they have not started a general decline. Instead there has been a rallying to higher figures, always showing a gradual increase over the highest of previous years.

In the six ten-year periods beginning 1870 growth of District No. 4 by school census is compared with the Omaha school census and the federal census of the entire population of Omaha as shown in Fig. 4.

Increase and decrease in all three groupings are not consistent. The great increase between 1900 and 1910 as shown in the District census is due
to the subdivision during this period of the vast Toner property near the school, called "Homestead Addition." In contrast to this sudden growth the year 1910 saw the least growth in Omaha school population since 1870. The unusual increase between 1880 and 1890 in the federal census is inaccurate because census takers at that time were paid according to the number of names turned in. Consequently many fictitious names were included and there was no way to have eliminated these.

According to real estate owners there was a sudden increase in building from 1907 to 1915, followed by a subsequent decline. The opening of Homestead Addition near the public school aided in bringing to the community families with children of school age at this time. In 1916 there were fifty-five children in the first A class which pointed to the appeal of the district to younger parents.

Four chief reasons attributed by residents to growth of the settlement are: low taxes, cheaper rents, good schools, and proximity to place of employment. A combination of two or more of these factors have been of special advantage to families with children.

Effect of Urban Life on Growth

Although the people of Ashland Park district are politically rural they are functionally urban because the occupational side has developed around the growth of the packing industry and allied fields. Consequently there has been a domination of the city over its rural life not only through employment, but also through the mediation of radio, newspapers, banks, theaters, high schools, mainly South High, and other cultural and commercial centers. Further evidence of the pull of the city is noted in a statement by R. D. McKenzie in which he states that "almost three-fourths of the nation's total increase in population in the last decade is accounted for by
the growth of metropolitan areas, their role as a focal point of population concentration being quite apparent.9 Ashland Park Community merely represents an extension of metropolitan growth instead of a decline in rural population. Where formerly life was rural it is rapidly urbanizing. In its spread the city continues moving and developing to the north and east of the district.

Density. According to R. Mukerjee in "The Ecological Outlook in Sociology,"10 growth and density of man's numbers is the reflection of his success in the struggle between human throngs and species and the adaptation to this condition in his particular region. Distribution of the population of Ashland Park Community may be observed in Map No. IV as the result of such competition. The data in this map was obtained through a special count of all homes taken with the 1937 census. New conditions constantly compel new spatial arrangements11 such as mobility, transportation and cheaper living conditions. Since the population tends toward the most efficient distribution it is obviously noted that concentration is found near the city and highways leading to the city. This situation may be considered a response to economic necessity, the base of which is nearby South Omaha.

Examining the population from unit of land there are 1366 inhabitants to the square mile or an average of 2.1 persons to the acre. The area of the district comprises 1660 acres or 2.6 square miles.

In contrast with the population of Douglas County, by sex, Table VII

---
9 R. D. McKenzie, the Metropolitan Community, p. 19.
10 The American Journal of Sociology, XXXVIII: 349.
is self-explanatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VII</th>
<th>Showing Relationship of Population of Douglas County to District No. 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District No. 4</td>
<td>1855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas County (Not including Omaha or District No. 4.)</td>
<td>8258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Segregation. There are no definitely fixed geographical divisions based upon similarity of economic interests although there is a grouping along national lines among the Polish. They are located in the northeast section of the district. With the exception of a few families of similar nationality grouped together in different parts of the community, there is no decided colonization of other foreign families. However, there is evidence that grouping by nationality is diminishing because of greatly reduced numbers of immigrants entering the country. Disintegration is not apt to occur among the Polish as their entire social life is centered around the church.

From an economic point of view there is a slight tendency for Q Street to form a line of demarcation. The north portion is being settled more by the "white collar" type of workers than any other while the south half continues to be inhabited by acreage owners and the laboring class. However, this is not discernible on first sight and outstanding exceptions are found on both sides. According to Steiner, this process of separation among

---

12 U. S. Census for 1930 Modified by General Outdoor Advertising Co. in 1935.
13 J. F. Steiner, The American Community in Action, p. 15.
MAP No. IV

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF 868 HOMES IN
ASHLAND PARK COMMUNITY
social and economic groups is ordinarily regarded as a phenomenon of urbanization, especially characteristic of large industrial centers where there are people of various nationalities and economic standing.

It cannot be truly said that there is a definite segregation along economic or national lines although in the future there may be an economic division along Q Street. Nationality lines are breaking rapidly.

**Mobility.** There has always been a population shift for economic reasons. Most of it takes place between outlying districts around Omaha whose topography and economic advantages are the same as Ashland Park. Thus adjustment is fairly easy. As families leave to seek fortunes elsewhere replacements are rapidly made by others desirous of taking advantage of low rents, gardening and possibly goat raising. Thus the shifting process is one of rotation.

The other mobile groups are small, yet they play a significant part in social disorganization. A few families go to the city and live in apartments when winter comes, while others move to the city when better positions are secured. Modern city conveniences are the attraction.

McKenzie points out that our mobile population seems to be very sensitive to relatively slight differences in economic opportunities. This contention was exemplified in an interview with such a family when one of the children remarked: "Daddy has a better job now so we're going to move to the city." Frequently when the "better job" terminates and income decreases they find themselves moving back to the district where rent is lower. Some are even compelled to live with relatives until the emergency has passed. It does not necessarily follow that these families are socially maladjusted. On the contrary, many are a good class of tenant people who prefer modest and healthful rural environment to that of drab city existence when income
Another mobile group is that of folk who, as unskilled laborers, find more work in summer in the packing plants and on farms than in the winter time. By moving closer to the source of employment in the spring and with opportunities to raise a garden and poultry this type of family finds living in the community a convenience.

Another minor mobile element is that of transient families who come or go according to the duration of employment. These are usually strange families from distant places whose heads are seasonal laborers or constant job hunters. With cheap transportation and the breakdown of primary group contacts which attach families to one locality, their residence tends to become as changeable as their jobs. Members of this group will frequently become rooted during the winter season in homes from which landlords hesitate to evict them during the cold months.

There are frequent cases of intra-mobility in which families change residence within the district. Many move from place to place because of inability to pay rent. Others change residence as the family increases in size or where older children earn more money, resulting in a demand for larger or better homes. An amusing example of intra-mobility was found in the case of a young girl who moved from her home located on an unpaved street into another situated on the pavement because her suitor found her former home inaccessible when roads were muddy. An infrequent example is that of families whose improved status through education or higher position causes them to move to a better residence in the city. In such instances mobility is both vertical and horizontal.\(^\text{15}\)


\(^{15}\) Vertical = psychological. Horizontal = physical.
Very often old people who have resided in the community for a number of years move away after their children marry and no longer live at home. These old people usually seek a quiet spot in the city to live out their days alone in a fair degree of comfort.

On the whole these mobile groups, with the exception of the older people, manifest no pride or civic feeling for the places in which they reside. The depression has intensified the situation, mobility reaching a relatively high peak. Delinquency has increased because of the lack of personal relationships necessary for stability. The carefree, restless spirit of these families has had a harmful psychological effect on their children. School authorities have found the problem of adjustment on the part of children from distant places to be a serious one because of conflict of culture patterns. When there is added to restlessness the discontent that grows out of economic maladjustment it is easy to understand why these families never remain long in one place. ¹⁶

The group showing least mobility are the Polish families whose home ownership, church and national ties contribute to their stability. Their orchards and acreages which supplement the family income are additional economic reasons for their stability.

Looking In On Family Life

Home Life of Early Times. The earliest homes were simply but comfortably furnished. Since there was no commercial entertainment for miles around, the home served as the nucleus around which recreation was planned. Neither was there any feeling about "keeping up with the Joneses" for all were on the same social and financial plane. Families took part in affairs

¹⁶ J. F. Steiner, The American Community in Action, p. 146.
by groups rather than individually or in couples as is the practice today. There was no discrimination between "adolescents" or other groups. This "open-door hospitality" of an earlier day has passed with the increase in numbers of families and the acceleration of modern life. Transition from rural to urban ways of home life has been gradual for those living in the community. There is no indication of confusion or breakdown of family ideals in the interim.

**Houses in Which They Live.** There are no flats or apartments and each house is a single family unit except one, which houses two families. Since 3538 people live in 868 homes the average number of persons per household is 4.1. This number is coincidental with modal size[^17] as pointed out in Table VIII.

### Table VIII
**Size of Families[^18]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family</th>
<th>Kindergarten &amp; Primary Grades 1-2-3</th>
<th>Intermediate Grades 4-5-6</th>
<th>Upper Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Total Families Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>283</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median 5.7
Mode 4

[^17]: That part of the range of distribution which includes the greatest number of cases.

[^18]: Data for this table were devised from a questionnaire distributed in the school with the eldest or only child in school reporting.
Most of the home owners possess more land than the lot on which the house is built, except in localities of greater density such as are found close to the public school or bordering the city limits. Homes here are frequently found on single lot units measuring 25 by 121 feet. Houses furthest away from the highways are on acreages or plots containing several lots.

Very little home building has taken place since 1930 and at the time of writing there are ten vacant houses. Homes in the community can be classified in three groups: (1) the fairly large homes which are well kept and well furnished are owned by the upper middle class workers or fairly well-to-do business men; (2) the simple cottages, which represent the majority of homes, range from four to six rooms with modest furnishings and in nearly all cases are owned by the average laboring men; (3) the poorly kept and crowded homes that are supplied with bare necessities of life. These are occupied by seasonal workers, people on relief and the more or less shiftless type. In one such two-room, a poverty-stricken home, nine children were reared. From another home in which many people lived a child declared: "There is so much quarreling at home that I don't care whether I ever go back there or not."

The second class of home predominates. Many of them are furnished with second-hand but well chosen furnishings. The first and second groups have the modern conveniences that are available in the community such as electricity, telephone, and furnace, while those more fortunate avail themselves of city water, gas, (where lines are installed) indoor bathroom, oil heat, and electric equipment such as wash machines, and refrigerators. One mother who worked hard to attain some of these comforts remarked: "Even though we have modern appliances we have to work and skimp so much harder
in order to keep them." Another who has city water in the home states: "We may pay less taxes but we are paying out more for city water so it matters not to us whether we are in the city or country as cost is the same." Although homes are furnished more comfortably than formerly, they do not serve as the social center that they once did.

The homes which are not seen from the highway consist of ten tar paper shacks a box car and two basements with improvised roofing called "cellar houses." During one severe winter when it was twenty-one degrees below zero, a family lived throughout the winter in such a basement structure with a tent top covering. A small boy from this home was clean, bright, and well liked. He was a thinker and leader and his parents took interest in and cooperated in school matters. The home life in this case was simple and normal and there was no suffering on the part of the children from inferiority complexes. From another such home the children are often heard to say, "Papa forgets to come home, and we have nothing to eat, and everybody quarrels."

According to the storekeepers, food habits are related to the types of homes from which the customers come. In the majority of cases the standard of living is based on the family income, although some of the very poor will "splurge" when they come into possession of money.

Some of the homes have been adversely affected by the depression since owners have not had the means with which to keep up their property. A frequent comment among the older residents is that "people do not keep things up like they used to" but since the depression many take advantage of home loan opportunities offered by the Federal Housing Administration to retain or improve their property. The socially-minded individuals of the community feel that more people should understand the purpose of the Federal Housing
Act and take advantage of it. The great majority own their homes and have been able to retain their property in spite of difficulties.

From Cradle to High School

Many of the young parents are conscious of the fact that it is the home environment in which the child makes his first discoveries and has his first social experiences both of which ultimately form the child's most vital contacts for the earliest years of his life.\(^\text{19}\)

The children of today have very little work to do compared with the children of earlier days. A parent who arrived in the seventies stated that "youngsters had a more serious outlook on life than they have today." They had no "frills" and were sturdy youngsters. Children are having better opportunities for an education than their parents had.

Families were much larger than they are today. The subdivision of farms into lots and acreages has been a factor in the diminishing economic value of children. Yet parents of past and present generations living in the district are strong in their belief that it is the only place in which to bring up a family. An owner of one of the larger tracts of land remarked: "I wouldn't raise my children in town. With a knowledge of the soil they become better citizens because they have learned to work." Another parent who lives on the Q Street highway is much concerned about the embryonic "gang" situation in which her boy is frequently involved and which she fears will become serious. Although the few loosely organized gangs do not constitute a social menace, they are a nuisance as their rough and uncouth manners in their respective neighborhoods cause annoyance to citizens and schools. Generally speaking the people of the community believe

that theirs is one in which children should be raised as they believe the city is congested, selfish, and a breeding spot for delinquency. Harmful influences on younger children are not considered a problem of serious moment at the present time.

The central activity of younger people in the home is listening to the radio. Their behavior and attitudes indicate that they do not make great demands upon home and society and when they mature they frequently settle in the community in which they were raised and begin life anew in much the same manner as their parents. In relation to their own family life they are not much different from children elsewhere. They enjoy city amusements when they can afford them but in the main parents cannot provide the means for frequent commercial entertainment in the city.

Since Ashland Park School presents an example illustrative of children under sixteen living in the community, the numbers are summarized in Table IX.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Family</th>
<th>Kindergarten &amp; Primary Grades 1-2-3</th>
<th>Intermediate Grades 4-5-6</th>
<th>Upper Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>276</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median 2.9
Mode 1.
Youth and Age

In comparing the number of young people of District No. 4 with that of Douglas County it will be found that there are 1191 persons between the ages of five and twenty-one in the District and 4492 in the remainder of Douglas County. The District thus contains 21.0% of the youth of the entire county.

The problems, joys, and hopes of young people in District No. 4 are no different from those found in similar communities in the United States. In early days there was combined activity of younger and older groups in the home, whereas today there is a wide divergence of interests in the different age groups. Young people of the same groupings are inclined to act independently, to the chagrin of elders who seek to advise or protect them. Perhaps the greatest single problem facing the parents today is that of neighborhood beer taverns which cater to the young people.

Another problem confronting both old and young is associated with the insufficiency of funds for recreational purposes. In one respected home the young girls declared: "We cannot afford to go to the city for entertainment and we refuse to visit neighborhood taverns so there is nothing to do but stay home and listen to the radio."

Activities in which both old and young participate include weddings, religious ceremonies and celebrations such as are frequently found in foreign groups. Among such groups young people are taught the mores of their forbears and demand that such control by their elders be changed to conform to the American point of view. Perhaps those who hold to old customs in largest numbers are the Polish. The rising generation is outgrowing immigrant patterns although retaining some of the ideals and culture of the mother tongue.
Youth considers age too conservative and believes this attitude is meant to curb enthusiasm and ambition. Examples could be stated in which the chief disagreements concern "dating" in which the family car is involved. One large family who "followed the horses" provided an instance of youth and age which were in perfect accord. The parents wanted their young boy, who was small in stature, to become a jockey, so they encouraged him to smoke in order to stunt his growth.

Age looks upon the behavior of young people with skepticism and deplores their lack of restraint. Lamenting the absence of control of the home, they nevertheless view with amazement the adventurous and buoyant spirit of the young. One elderly gentlemen, a severe critic of youth, remarked that "young folks today are much quicker about getting into things than we were, but many who do not obey their parents are going to the dogs."

Today there remain but a few old people who have resided long in the community. They believe in work and hobbies even for themselves. The territory is inhabited mainly by parents of growing children and many older people move into the city after their families are grown. On the whole the desires of the older generation have been fulfilled. They seem satisfied while youth continues to be restless. They came because they chose the spot in which to live and rear their children and only in rare instances is an older person found to be dissatisfied. One person commented thus: "Had I settled further west I would have been rich today."

Marriage and Making a Home. Many marriages are the result of courtships started through church and school contacts. Young people who marry and remain in the community begin with simple necessities in their attempt to establish a home. However not a few married couples move into the city to begin life in apartment houses.
The number of women working after home and family have been established were found to be forty-four out of 228, or 19.2% of mothers who are patrons of Ashland Park school. They are employed as clerks, factory workers or charwomen.

The tendency is to marry quite young, spinsters being rare. Homemaking is considered a serious matter by the young housewife and she does the best with the resources at her disposal. Her goal is to own her own home. With this in mind she often follows the example set by her mother and grandmother in thrift and general housekeeping although she also tried with her limited means to modernize her home as rapidly as she finds it financially possible. She will cook meals that her mother and grandmother taught her, especially if she is of foreign descent and will undertake canning, sewing, or other domestic duties when these become necessary. If circumstances permit, she wants as much as her friends have.

Upon closer scrutiny her rooms will be found to contain products of the machine age which she believes are important to the management of the household. With smaller families and less work, the housewife has more time for leisure. Although methods of fifty years ago are partially retained in training in the home, and attitudes toward moral and other issues have changed little in many homes, it is obvious that in culture conflicts the inner values change more slowly than the externals. This inconsistency in a period of change is known as "cultural lag". When asked in what way people seemed modern and at the same time old-fashioned, one older resident remarked simply but effectively: "People look upon life in the manner in which they were reared but act in a more modern way because they are educated to the ways of the day."

---

20 School Questionnaire; twelve did not answer this question.
The majority of young married couples are hard-working, thrifty, and hospitable although their hospitality no longer is of the "open door" type. Friends or members of their social group are welcome. Especially hospitable are the foreign groups, notably the Polish, who are known for their kindness and generosity toward visitors in whom they have confidence.

Summary

Ashland Park district is essentially a young community with growing families, the male sex predominating. There are no race problems as 99.9% are white, a significant fact because of proximity of the community to the packing center where many Negroes are employed. The packing industry has attracted persons of many nationalities, of which twenty-seven are represented in the district. The Czechs, Poles, and Germans predominate.

Growth of population has been coincident with industrial progress of South Omaha and with the exception of early boom days development has been steady. The community is not suffering from rural depletion in point of numbers but its rural tendencies are disappearing as the people gain cosmopolitan experience.

Concentration along highways and near urban borders will continue as long as the packing industry, which furnished the economic base, exists. There is no center of population in the district although there is a tendency toward the direction of higher density. Otherwise the population is fairly evenly distributed.

With the exception of the Polish group the district is one of low national segregation. There is a trend toward division along economic lines as the community becomes more thickly populated. The problems of population concern quality rather than quantity, economic status and mobility playing important roles.
Mobility is prevalent, most of it being an inter-change between communities of similar type. Confined to those whose restless spirit and insufficient income combine to prevent establishment of a stable home environment, mobility increased considerably during the depression.

Family life has changed gradually. Activities which included the entire family have practically disappeared, and the home no longer serves as a social center. Most houses are cottages, modestly furnished. The large up-to-date homes and the "hovel" type are in the minority. The trend is toward more comfortable and modern homes.

The community is definitely young because of its appeal to parents of young children. Children under sixteen do not share the responsibilities of home life as did children of an earlier day, but their problems are more complicated. Their greater opportunities for an education help solve those problems. Modern youth imitates city life while children of pioneer days accepted rural life as they found it and were happy in their environment. Young people are viewed with alarm by their elders, who admit that the younger generation is farther ahead than were the older folks at a corresponding age. There are only a few old people living in the district today.

Home-making is on a higher plane because of modern conveniences, but most young couples begin married life in simple cottages much as their parents did. They desire more material comforts, however, but their mental and cultural demands have remained the same. When viewed in perspective, home life appears to involve the psychology of fifty years ago as far as certain ideals are concerned, while in material matters concessions have been made to modern methods.

Although change is continuous stresses often arise from failures to change. These occur where immigrants make little attempt to adjust or where youth deserts the tenets of their elders.
According to R. Murkerjee, earning a living is the natural outcome of man's work and competitive efforts which belong to the cycle of the various life processes in his region. The process of making a living was purely agricultural in earlier days but as life progressed the struggle for existence became in large part an industrial struggle. With the disappearance of the frontier and cheap land, agriculture was forced into the background by the inroads of manufacturing during the last part of the nineteenth and beginning years of the new century. It was during this period that the packing industry made its appearance. The change from a rural to an urban mode of earning a living is reflected in the tendency of the population to settle near the city because of its proximity to economic resources, chiefly the packing plants, stock yards and allied industries. (See Maps No. IV and V)

Struggle For a Living

How People Make a Living. An estimate of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce as to numbers employed in the stock yards and packing plants of South Omaha gave five hundred for the former and six thousand for the latter. Many workers of Ashland Park Community must be included in this estimate. A tabulation of occupations of all workers in the district has resulted in the distribution shown in Fig. 6.

---

3 Data based on census report for 1936 at which time a special count of occupations and numbers employed was taken to determine amount of unemployment and general economic conditions in the community.
Among the skilled packing house workers were listed four different occupations, including meat inspecting and expert butchering while among the skilled workers outside the plants were noted nine different occupations such as tailoring, machine work and the like. Most of the clerical workers were employed away from the plants while practically all in the executive and managerial groupings were associated with the packing industry or allied fields. Because of the shifting labor population and changes in the industrial world, Fig. 5 is not intended to portray accurately employment conditions during other years, though percentages pertaining to occupational groupings remain essentially the same.

Although the 1956 computation shows a total of 19.1% for unemployed and W.P.A. labor, an estimate at the time of writing (March, 1938) indicates that about fifty per cent of the family heads in the community are either unemployed or on the W.P.A. This contrast may indicate that the year 1956 was marked by an amelioration of the unemployment situation throughout the country. General improvement in economic conditions in 1956 are reflected in Fig. 5 which shows the most steady and most pronounced increase in employment and wage scales of any year of the recovery period.

4 Evidence of Miss Bird Claybaugh, principal of Ashland Park school understands social and economic conditions of the community better than any other individual. Her contact with all families each year when the census is taken by her and her deep personal regard for the welfare of her patrons' families also affords her an insight into family life which few others are in a position to have.


6 Ibid., p. 68.
It is significant that there was a practically uninterrupted rise throughout 1936 in the aggregate number of persons employed.

Attitudes Resulting from the Depression

That unemployment and lessened income have brought about family demoralization, destruction of a worker's efficiency and the tendency to blame others for one's failure is acknowledged. With the loss of employment as the outstanding problem since the depression began, an abnormal attitude toward the struggle for a living has resulted in the feeling on the part of some that "the country owes us a living." Other remarks frequently heard are as follows: "If they hadn't killed off so many pigs we

---

E. A. Ross, Civic Sociology, p. 59.
would have work today;" "If the drought hadn't struck we would have had gardens to help us along;" "Everyone who wants work badly enough can get it; if nothing else, there is the W.P.A." and "The situation is improving through the leadership of the President." Other reactions range from a deep pessimism to the brightest optimism. Most of the residents are waiting for "old times to come back." The psychological effect of fear of losing their jobs has caused those who are employed to become suspicious of the future or lose confidence in the hope of advancement. That this state of mind toward conditions causes the entire depression to become a psychological phenomenon is pointed out by H. Bart who emphasizes the importance of "having courage to go forward in the face of adversity."

Transition From Agricultural to Industrial Economy. The three periods denoting a change in the conditions of making a living are herewith emphasized. Within three generations the community has witnessed an almost complete elimination of farming as the main pursuit. The trend toward a diminishing agricultural economy is further demonstrated by Secretary Henry Wallace who stated that in Iowa about nine-tenths of present farm labor could be replaced with machinery without diminishing the total production. The population thus displaced would be forced into industry or trade or service occupations. Ashland Park Community is an example of this tendency to replace agriculture with manufacturing as a means of obtaining a livelihood.

Early Farm Life

Immediately after the city of Omaha was established in 1854, the sur-

9 C. Bryson, "Can the Farmer Be Saved?" Survey Graphic, XXIII:371.
rounding prairie, including the territory under investigation, was broken by oxen and planted to farm crops. The upland loess soil which grades from silt loam to clay loam, was especially adapted to the raising of crops and garden produce. At first only crops needed for immediate family use were grown, wheat and oats later comprising the first money crops. Corn was not produced for market until 1867. The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 stimulated agriculture by providing ready access to markets and acted as a spur to the westward movement. "No sooner did the trains begin to carry passengers to points beyond the Mississippi than multitudes of home-seekers began to swarm over the vacant lands." Even though weather was extremely variable if not frequently unpleasant, and the drought of 1894 detrimental, the early settlers were fortunate in always making a good living, for prosperity at that time depended on the rise and fall of the farmers' agricultural fortune.

Disappearance of Farm Life

Agriculture dominated the middle west until the railroads, followed by the packing industry, changed economic life. Before the opening of the Union Stock Yards in 1884, eighty-eight per cent of the stock was shipped away for packing. Leaders with vision persuaded large packers, chiefly at Chicago, to establish branches in Omaha whose shipping facilities and natural advantages were emphasized. These conferences eventually brought about the establishment of plants mentioned in Part I.

When the stock yards and packing plants made their appearance, the

10 Douglas County, Nebraska, Plat Book, 1924.
11 Ibid.
12 S. E. Forman, Rise of American Commerce and Industry, p. 245.
countryside took on a new appearance with the division and subdivision of farm lands. Most residents were agriculturally inclined although their chief means of livelihood was the yards or plants. Tilling of the soil or other agricultural pursuits such as poultry raising, fruit raising and truck gardening were for augmenting income. Marketability of products became a strictly local matter. Surplus feed was sold to livestock feeders while surplus garden stuff was disposed of through house to house solicitations by the children.

With the rapid development of South Omaha the agricultural community of Ashland Park lost its identity as a strictly farming section. Subdivision of farm lands was begun during the greatest growth of the "Magic City" (1887-92) and continued indefinitely. With most of the land subdivided into lots and acreages it is apparent that economic growth has caused the section to lose its status as a community of farms. Today only one family is known whose subsistence depends upon purely agricultural efforts.

A definite indication that farming is rapidly disappearing is the almost total absence of representation in the Farmers' Union. Out of 272 members listed in Douglas County in 1936 there was only one from District No. 4. The purpose of the Farmers' Union is to "improve the condition of agriculture and to increase the net returns from farming, thereby making possible a more abundant life for farmers and their families." Further evidence that people are foregoing agriculture as a means of livelihood is the fact that no residents from the Ashland Park area are members of the Douglas County Farm Bureau. The Bureau, which collaborates with the Ex-

---

13 J. B. Erion, The Eagle, April 25, 1891.
NEBRASKA BEEF CO. - 36 AND I - 22 BLOCKS
EAGLE PACKING CO. - 4402 S. 34-24 BLOCKS
M. MANEROWICH - 4640 S. 31-26 BLOCKS
OMAHA PACKING CO. - 3B AND M-18 BLOCKS
LEWIS PACKING CO. - 36 AND L - 19 BLOCKS
SOUTH OMAHA PACKING CO. - 27 AND L - 28 BLOCKS
STOCK YARDS - 20 BLOCKS
ARMOUR AND CO.-30 AND Q - 20 BLOCKS
CUBANH PACKING CO. - 33 AND Q - 17 BLOCKS
WILSON AND CO. (FORMERLY DOLI) - 27 AND Y - 31 BLOCKS

LEGEND:
= RAILROAD TRACKS

MAP No. II

MAP SHOWING DISTANCE TO PACKING-HOUSES AND STOCK-YARDS
tension Service of the College of Agriculture at Lincoln, is made possible by the Smith-Lever Extension Act of 1914 and provides for diffusion among the people of useful and practical information relating to agriculture and home economics. Occasionally residents from the district call upon the County Agent's office for aid when difficult problems, such as that of grasshopper elimination, arise. Interest in the Bureau is in proportion to the size or kind of farming operations. Only two distinct groups in the community take advantage of the practical and cultural services offered by the Farm Bureau: the 4-H clubs of Ashland Park school and a Home Betterment group for women. Both groups will be discussed in the part on schools as they are included among the school's extra-curricular activities. In spite of opportunities of associations benefitting agricultural interests, the residents of the community prefer to act and think along metropolitan lines, thus indicating that farming is dying out in the district as a source of a livelihood.

Dependence on Industry for a Livelihood

After industrial forces invaded the peaceful countryside, modes of obtaining a living changed and with them points of view and habits. Later settlers were almost certain of employment in the nearby yards and plants and it was necessary for older inhabitants to make proper adjustment to a rapidly changing environment. By 1900 a great majority of family heads were making their living in the yards or plants. Practically all were laborers. As time went on gradual changes took place regardless of how or where people made their living. Those not connected with yards or plants are still in the minority. (See Fig. 6) As the district becomes more

---

LEGEND:
BLACK = EMPLOYED FULL OR
PART TIME IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY.
RED = NOT ABSORBED IN
PRIVATE INDUSTRY.

Fig. 6

Chart Showing Percentage Distribution of Workers In
Ashland Park Community For Year Ending June, 1936,
thickly populated the trend is toward diverse occupations which have no bearing on the packing industry. The most recent addition of workers are employees of the W.P.A. who find work in the city, on streets, in factories, shops, and office buildings.

Meat packing has always been and still is the largest single item in Omaha's manufacturing set-up, its growth and that of the live stock market being synonymous with the growth of Omaha as a packing plant center. As long as the stock yards and packing plants remain on the south side of Omaha they will be the chief source of a livelihood for large numbers of the population in Ashland Park Community.

**Economic Status of Families**

As tillers of the soil early settlers were economically homogeneous, belonging to one income group. Today there are three different income groups in the community. The existence of twelve packing plants and numerous related industries, together with the banks and businesses of South Omaha, make possible a multitude of occupations, leading to different economic groupings.

**Status Classified.** In Ashland Park Community all family heads fall into one of the following classifications:

1. the high income group, of which there are only eight or ten;
2. the moderate income group, representing the middle working class;
3. the low income group, which constitutes the largest number, consisting of the poor, very poor and lowest poverty classes.

The high income group represents heads of large scale business or stock feeding establishments, stock yards salesmen and commission men,
whose incomes range from about $2,500 to $10,000 per year. The moderate income group embraces a few professional persons, commercial people of lesser incomes, tradesmen and skilled and semi-skilled laborers. The packing houses pay on a graduated basis according to competence. Incomes in this group range from about $1200 to $2500 per person. The third or low income group includes unskilled laborers whose work may or may not be steady. Those employed steadily in the stock yards receive on the average about $1000 to $1200 annually while the packing house laborers receive $700 to $1000. Laborers who work by the day earn on the average sixty cents per hour. There are many who cannot find employment in spite of efforts. Some are kept out of employment because they are over fifty. There are a few families in the district whose incomes are practically nothing due to inability or indifference on the part of the family head.

The Institute of American Meat Packers states that, according to the monthly employment and payroll indexes of the United States Department of Labor, payrolls of the meat packing industries are now considerably higher, in proportion to the volume of employment, than in American manufacturing industry as a whole. Consideration must be made, of course, of the fact that the volume of employment in the packing industry varies with the quantities of live stock and meat available, and is at the present time considerably lower than before the recent drought and the crop reduction program.

Social Aspects

Social stratification in minor degree is in evidence as a concomitant of economic status. Fortunately for the masses, who occupy the medium level

---

16 Letter (dated Nov. 4, 1957) from Chicago, Illinois.
and low income sections, such distinction is little felt. Conflict between the three economic classes is purely psychological and may be attributed to the lower income groups comparing their economic deficiency with the apparent adequacy of those above them.

The economic status of families is not necessarily determined by the section of the community in which they live, but in the future, segregation on economic lines may be expected at Q Street. (See Part II "Segregation") Since the trend of population is away from farms and acreages and toward areas near the city where property values are higher, there is every indication that the region around L and that north of Q Streets will some day house residents belonging to the "white collar" class, or those in the moderate or higher income groups. A glaring exception is found in the northeast corner of the district in the neighborhood of I and J Streets where may be found several indigent families.

Home Ownership

Ashland Park district is known as a home-owning community. When lands were opened to subdivision, buying a home on easy terms was a feature of advertising campaigns for the attraction of settlers. With almost a certainty of securing permanent work in yards or plants and homes near the place of employment available on easy payment plans, hundreds of families realized their ambition of home ownership.

It is practicable to ascertain how many of the 868 homes are owned by occupants, but a fair estimate has been obtained from a cross-section representing 284 homes in the district. Of this number of homes, 179, or

---

17 Statement by the following real estate companies who have sold lots in the various additions through the community: Hastings & Heyden, Jose. F. Murphy, H. H. Bilby and Daniel Carey.

18 School Questionnaire answered by children in Ashland Park school.
63.0% answered in the affirmative to the question of home ownership, while 103, or 37.0%, replied in the negative. Two failed to answer the question. Those making payments on a home were included among the affirmative answers.

With one exception all homes are single family dwellings, averaging four to six rooms. Most homes are modest and unassuming but on the whole quite comfortable. There are some basement houses, tar paper shacks, and tiny shanties which provide the bare necessities of shelter. Home ownership has been the result of ambition and effort. From both inside and outside appearances of the homes, there is every indication of thrift and industry. On the whole, home-owning inhabitants are considered by teachers, storekeepers, and newspaper circulation managers to be a substantial lot whose sense of responsibility offers a significant index of social stability in the community. Interest in political matters is encouraged because it is only through persons voted into office that material improvements in which home owners are interested are ever made. In the World-Herald of April 3, 1938, an article entitled "Home Ownership Gains are Listed" states that interest in civic affairs as well as security, social background for children, play space, and development of responsibility are among the gains.

It is surprising to note that while no new building took place after 1950, no broken down homes were in evidence although there was frequent postponement of needed repairs. Many have been forced to relinquish their homes and return to renting while others have taken advantage of offers of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. Rents in the district range from $8.00

---

19 Kimball & Young, Madison Community, p. 99.
20 From Freehold Magazine, for Real Estate Dealers, p. 164, March 1938 issue.
21 A governmental agency created for the purpose of relieving distressed home-owners in cities.
to $25.00 per month. Next to home ownership, bank deposits are a significant factor in determining economic status. In the school questionnaire, the question was asked: "Does anybody in your family have money in the bank?" One hundred and eighteen affirmative and one hundred and fifteen negative replies were received. Sixteen did not know or failed to answer. In other words, 47.4% of 249 families have deposits in banks, mostly in South Omaha. The families just referred to represent 249 of a total of 284 represented in the school.

Home Conveniences

Modern conveniences in the home may well denote the economic status of the family. Tables X and XI reveal the number of such services enjoyed in the entire district.

| Table X |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Showing Number of Homes in the Entire Community Benefited by Public Utilities |
| | No. Homes Supplied | No. Not Supplied |
| | | % | |
| Electricity | 779 | 89.6 | 89 | 10.4 |
| City Water | 290 | 33.4 | 578 | 66.6 |
| Telephone | 227 | 26.1 | 641 | 73.9 |
| City Gas | 66 | 7.6 | 802 | 92.4 |

It is apparent that the telephone, electric sweeper, electric refrigerator and inside bath are still considered luxuries by the majority of families. City gas is the only utility not readily available in most parts of the district; water mains are making rapid inroads along highways and thickly populated areas near the city. (See Map No. VI) Water and gas rates are the same as those in the city. Expense of laying mains and in-

Compiled by the writer from records of Nebraska Power Co., Metropolitan Utilities and Northwestern Bell Telephone Co.
Map showing water and gas connections

Legend:
- Gas mains
- Water mains
- Railroad tracks

Map No. VI
installation into the home make the initial cost prohibitive for many families. Women moving out from the city are dissatisfied when they find they must get along without city water, gas, or electricity. It has been pointed out in this connection by D. H. Palmer in "Mechanical and Electrical Goods for the Consumer" that "nothing so awes the mind and builds up uneconomic desires in the breasts of the American people as a new mechanical or electrical gadget or an old and familiar device revamped in chromium plate, with ebonized handles or new trick lights or levers, or supplied with an extra cylinder or two, and selling at a price, often in installments, 'within the reach of all.'" On the other hand the sentiment toward these "luxuries" is that such inventions are fine for those who have the means but those who buy and really cannot afford them must work harder and worry more in order to pay for them. Many prefer to be without those luxuries and keep from worry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conveniences Found in 284 Homes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Unans.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electric Light</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Washing Machine</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Vacuum Cleaner</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Refrigerator</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile (family car)</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Water (just in kitchen)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside Bath and Toilet</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The computation on the telephone in Table X denotes 16.5 persons in the district to one telephone (homes only) while the Bell Telephone Company figures that in the country as a whole there is a telephone for every seven

References:

23 Annals of the American Academy, 175:43.
24 From School Questionnaire.
Management in Low Income Families

Management of the decreased income of the laboring classes has given rise to various social and economic problems in the community. Most of the difficulty lies in poor management plus the inadequacy of the family budget. Expenditures are often for excitement such as taverns, movies, prize fights, and drinking, and not enough for wholesome foods. Undernourished children are the outcome of this unwise spending. Since the family with a small income should budget more than half its income for shelter and food such families are not spending the proper proportion on foods. One child expressed the situation thus: "When papa brings home money there is whoopee."

In some cases of social pathology there have been found indolence and absence of the desire for economic independence. Such a condition is usually accompanied by a complete lack of knowledge of management. In one family, notorious for poverty and delinquency, the mental age of the mother is estimated by teachers as ten or twelve, and the children state that "Papa always forgets to come home." Some of the older children who have established families of their own are repeating the social condition found under the parental roof. Another family well known for its indolence just waits for someone to bring in food and supplies. The mother will not send her children to school unless they have had breakfast. This is frequently not forthcoming, so the children remain at home. When the father brings in money there is the usual series of "feasts and famines."

26 L. L. Jones, Our Business Life, p. 142.
27 Expression heard among teachers and social workers.
(1) Relief

The Civil Works program has offered a means of meeting the needs of destitute unemployed and many have availed themselves of this means of livelihood. No statistics are available on the amount of relief and unemployment in the community at the present time, but it is obvious that since the community consists chiefly of the working classes, there are many out of work who are forced to accept relief. In some families acceptance of relief has been humiliating, such feeling having psychological consequences of great significance.\(^28\) There has been no discrimination because of race, creed or political affiliation in the granting of relief, the basic regulation being that aid be extended to all needy persons and their dependents.\(^29\) It is difficult to differentiate between families in the district receiving employment or direct relief, for the shift from one form to the other is frequent in the same families.

A significant form of public aid designed to enable the family to carry on as a unit is the mothers' pensions which are received in three homes in the district.\(^30\) Various forms of direct relief are extended to homes of eighty-four children who are orphans or half-orphans, or where one of the parents is incapacitated.\(^31\) Three blind adults are specially provided for while fifty-two elderly persons benefit by the Old Age Assistance provisions.\(^32\)


\(^{30}\) Taken from records of Dorothy Melotz, Douglas County Court House, Social Worker for this territory.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.
(2) Working Mothers

The crucial economic problems which result where wages suddenly stop for many workers in industrial plants are responsible for the many working mothers in the community. Although the exact number is not certain, a fair estimate may be gained from results tabulated in the school questionnaire. Children were asked if their mothers went out of the home part or full time to earn money. The results are shown in Table XII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed Mothers Among Patrons of Ashland Park School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working Mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Unanswered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority are employed in banks and office buildings, as stenographers or as charwomen and others as sausage workers in the packing houses. This indicates an increase in numbers of married women in industry which is prevalent throughout the country. According to C. G. Woodhouse the number of married women working outside the home increased sixty per cent between 1920 and 1930 in the United States. Compared to conditions of working women of an earlier day, there are many improvements today. Prior to 1916 the alarm went off in many homes at four o'clock in the morning and in many cases women responded who were due at work at six o'clock. In the evening they left work at 5:30. Working hours today average from thirty-three to forty per week for regularly employed labor while wages range from $50 to $60 per month.

Economic Aspects of Community Life

Business Enterprise. Though District No. 4 is regarded by residents and realtors as a community of homes, it is not without its businesses. A list of businesses no longer in existence is herewith presented to show the change in kinds of businesses established in the community.

Early Businesses

The industrial growth of South Omaha disturbed the complacence of farm life by intrusion of different business enterprises. Those now defunct are as follows:

- Brickyard at 48th & W (McCaffrey Bros.) - - - - 1890
- Saloon at 48th & Q which flourished just across the road west of the schoolhouse but was burned down in 1890 and never rebuilt.
- Glue Factory near Sarpy county line and B & M railroad which was not popular in the neighborhood because of odors - - - - - - - - - 1893
- Depot near the glue factory - - - - - - - - - - 1893
- Dairy at 57th & L (Winkler) - - - - - - - - - - 1898
- Dairy at 42nd & Q (Mann) - - - - - - - - - - 1898
- Mushroom-growing plant at 54th & F - - - - - - 1915
- Mid-West Potash & Fertilizer Co. at 49th & J which was existent in name only as no potash was ever processed and little or no fertilizer prepared. It lasted less than a year - - - - - - - - - - - 1919
- Cement Block factory and Coal & Feed Yard at 42nd & R (H. H. Bilby) - - - - - - - - - - 1934
- Large scale Grocery at 49th & Q (Joseph Moron) - - 1935
- Grocery at 51st and Q (Vanderlaan) - - - - - - 1937

During the prohibition era a few persons made their living through sale or manufacture of liquor illegally but the situation in each case had no permanence because of general uncertainty and possible legal entanglements. Such families suffered temporary social isolation. In one or two instances there is evidence to indicate that former operators en-
Modern Businesses

Today there is an approximate total investment of $707,650 in business enterprises in the district. Eight of them have capital investments ranging from $3500 to $500,000 each, totaling $688,300 while smaller businesses have a combined total capital investment of $19,350. These consist of eight grocery stores, three garages, three filling stations, nine beer taverns, and four small retail and service stores. Because stores are far apart in the rural community, each grocery carries its own meat department. There is no evidence of new business enterprise of any consequence in the district since the depression. The only vacant store is that of the former Moron Grocery at 49th & Q Streets.

Most of the larger operations bear some relationship to the stock yards or packing industry, such as the serum plant, slaughter house, nine feed lots and the fertilizer plant. Large business enterprises not connected with the live stock or packing plants are a hatchery, cement-block factory and a coal and feed yard. A description of the more important ventures follows, in order of size of operation.

(a) Large-Scale Establishments ($5000 and Up)

The Corn States Serum Company, a corporation with its plant at 4420 U Street and offices in downtown Omaha, represents the largest business activity in size and capital investment. It has manufactured serum for protection against hog cholera since 1914 and is known as the largest and most completely equipped single establishment of its kind in the United States. Physical holdings alone are worth $500,000 and company-managed distributors of serum are found in twenty-three cities throughout the territory where hogs are raised. As many as 125 men have been employed at one time although...
the average pay roll numbers seventy-five men, fifty of whom live in the
district. Consequences of the defunct Agricultural Adjustment Administra-
tion which was intended to increase prices of agricultural products in re-
lation to the general level of prices\textsuperscript{35} together with decreased volume of
business during the depression, have reduced the number of employed from
the district to thirty-five at the time of writing. Several professional
workers and laboratory experts are employed. Skilled work is necessary of
even the laboring groups and under normal circumstances employment is steady
throughout the year. A forty hour week prevails, the minimum wage being
forty cents per hour for the least skilled worker.

The next largest business in the aggregate is that of nine feed lots
scattered over the countryside, ranging in size from one-half to thirty
acres each. Owing to the proximity of the district to the South Omaha mar-
ket, thousands of head of cattle and sheep are purchased at the Stock Yards
and fattened in these lots. The following table presents the size and capa-
city of the lots:\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Name & Address & Acres & Cattle & Sheep \\
\hline
Wertheimer & Son & 50th & J & 30 & 5,000 & 10,000 \\
Berry & 48th & N & 4 & 300 & 3,000 \\
Lambert & 48th & O & 1-1/2 & --- & 2,000 \\
Kight & 51st & Q & 1 & --- & 3,000 \\
Ruser & 50th & J & 2-1/4 & 500 & --- \\
Murphy & 50th & L & 1-1/2 & 200 & --- \\
Root & 48th & L & 1-1/2 & 150 & --- \\
McAvoy & 57th & L & 1-1/2 & 150 & --- \\
Schinkle & 47th & Orchard & 1/2 & 50 & --- \\
\hline
TOTAL & 43-3/4 & 6,150 & 18,000 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table XIII}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{36} Compiled by A. E. Ruser, Live Stock Exchange.
The valuations of the feed yards, exclusive of cattle and sheep costs, range from about $500 to $22,000. The approximate total valuation of all feed lots in the district is $55,500. The largest is operated by a foreman; one by a renter; while the rest are all operated by the landowners. The Wertheimer lots require supervision of a foreman who lives on the land and ten to twenty men to assist in feeding and sorting. The lot has railroad sidings connected with two railroads. In lots of this kind where commercial feeding takes place the work is carried on throughout the year. Skilled labor is unnecessary as work consists in proper mixing and administering of feed and transporting of animals to and from the lots. Stock feeders keep in touch with the stock market through radio and daily patronage of the stock yards. Subscriptions to feeders' organizations or publications are not considered necessary in order to keep up with business trends.

Another successful large enterprise is the slaughtering house of John Roth and Son who established the plant in 1889 and who still live in the community at 5502 South 43 Street. Skilled work is required, the average number of workers being fifteen. Half the employees are from the district and their average pay is $39 per week, the lowest being $25. The work is not seasonal and workers usually remain permanently employed. Marketability of products extends over the entire state of Nebraska. The depression has not had any serious effect upon the business as the better class markets are solicited and have been retained throughout the depression.

The Nebraska Fertilizer Company, with plant at 49th and J and offices in downtown Omaha, is a corporation which was organized in 1919 after taking over the interests of the Midwest Potash and Fertilizer Company. It is the only fertilizer plant in the community. Usually seven employees are required to operate the plant, which runs to capacity only about eight or nine
months of the year. During the winter the plant is closed. No chemical or other substance is added to the natural product which is only dried and shredded. This provides a basis for complaints about odors emanating from the vicinity. Plant officials justify its existence through employment that is given to residents living in the community. The product is sold in the cotton districts of the south and to truck farms in the east rather than locally. Keen competition is felt from the manufactured product of the packing plants.

The H. H. Bilby Cement Block Company, at 5302 South 42 Street, did a thriving business from 1926 to 1935, when it was taken over by the J. B. Watkins Coal and Lumber Company. The first owners lived in the community; the second do not. A large capital investment is represented, and five men from the district are constantly at work. A forty hour week and average weekly pay of $20 are maintained, skilled work not being required. A larger output of cement blocks is noticeable in the summer while more coal is sold in the winter. Cement blocks are shipped to points within a radius of twenty miles of Omaha.

Another coal yard, handling also feed, is the West Q Coal & Feed Company at 43 & Q Streets which has been in business in the same place for the past ten years. The proprietors do not live in the community. From three to six unskilled laborers are employed from the district. The winter season increases business, most of it coming from customers in the neighborhood.

(b) Small Scale Establishments (Under $5000)

Establishments representing a capital investment of $5000 or less, the proprietors of each owning and living on the premises, are herewith described.

The Penfield Grocery at 56th and Q Streets is the largest and most completely stocked in the district. The original owner, Mr. C. F. Penfield,
father of the present proprietor, began in 1910 with an original investment of $2.50. The three employees live in the neighborhood. The telephone and growth of population have effected changes in the grocery business more than in any other in the community, the daily frequency of calls being greater than in other businesses in comparison with the volume of trade. Without this invention the present speed of progress in business of the last two generations could not have been reached. Extension of credit to customers during the depression has presented the worst difficulty in the grocery business, most bills contracted having been a 100% loss. The granting of credit has historically been associated with most retail establishments for generations, but this practice has brought unfortunate consequences occasionally to the merchant but rarely to the customer. Mr. Penfield expressed the social angle to the situation in these words: "This state of affairs is having an unwholesome effect upon the young people of parents who do not pay their bills. They have lost their pride and by not learning to assume their obligations a great many have become professional 'dead-beats.'"

Representative of a smaller capital investment in each case but nevertheless holding a significant place in the business life of the community are the other grocery and service stores. They are as follows:

Grocers:  Klich's, 42nd and L
          Majko's, 48th and L
          Jensen's, 60th and L
          Pallas', 49th and U
          Remis', 50th-51st on Q
          Sandusky's, 42nd and H (grocery and tavern)
          Zagozda's, 45th and L (grocery and tavern)

Other services: Harder, 56th and Q
Filling stations: Rowland, 48th and L
Woracek, 46th and Q
Homestead, 52nd and Q (and garage)
Burdick, 44th and K (and garage)
Boyd's, 47th and Q (and store)
Beauty Shop, 50th and Q
Laundry (Shea) 5502 South 42 Street

The Otis Hatchery is one of the newer ventures, started by Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Otis at 6202 South 42 Street. The buildings have a capacity for two thousand baby chicks and accommodations for growing poultry. The work is done on a scientific basis. In addition to poultry, feeds, remedies and equipment are handled. It is the only hatchery in the vicinity of South Omaha. The work is seasonal, the hatching season being from February to May. Baby chicks are sold chiefly to farmers or poultry raisers while older fowl, usually at eight weeks, find their way to local restaurants. The effect of the drouth was noted in decreased sales of poultry because of the high cost of feed.

The Bassett mushroom cellars are located on a quarter acre plot at 49th and J Streets. Started during the depth of the depression, this project required much effort and patience before any profits were realized. The product is more or less seasonal, winter being the time for growing and marketing mushrooms, although some are grown the year round. The grocery stores and hotels of Omaha are the purchasers of the mushrooms. Few sales are made direct to consumers.

Another interesting activity in the community is that of W. S. Duckworth, a pigeon fancier, who lives at 5215 South 50 Street. Although the business of breeding and training birds has been a hobby it was at one time a business undertaking as well. Hundreds of birds were raised as show birds, racers and homers, while thousands were sold as squabs. The owner has won prizes in local and national pigeon shows. A club organized for
pigeon lovers proved an incentive for fanciers such as Mr. Duckworth, but since it was disbanded in 1933, enthusiasm for the hobby has died out. However, considerable interest is still shown at the Duckworth place. Since there is no open market in Omaha, the business is carried on through pigeon or poultry magazines which reach interested persons throughout the country. The depression has practically ruined the business, the high cost of feed being a major factor.

Nine taverns are doing business at the present time. The existence of most is short-lived, but they are quickly replaced by others. The open country attracts many keepers whose intrusion is looked upon with disfavor by progressive citizens. Besides the filling stations, taverns are the newest addition to business life in the community.

No dairy operates in District No. 4 today. Most of the milk is delivered from the city or from dairies west of 60th Street.

(c) Relationship to the Community

The few industries and small businesses in the district have never attracted enough workers to provide a basis on which the entire community could rely for a living. The number of families dependent upon local enterprise ranges from 105 to 195, depending upon season and volume of business. At the present time 146 or 16.8% of the families in the community depend upon local business for a livelihood; twenty-seven of these represent families of proprietors and employees of smaller places of business.

There has never been much unity of action in the district among business men for they represent a small minority and a variation of business and social interests. Cooperation for the good of the community under these conditions is not probable because of insufficient pull in the same direction. There are, however, a few socially-minded business men who live in the dis-
trict who are interested in the welfare of the community. In the case of those who show no inclination to interest themselves in the affairs of the community, the attitude is that of satisfaction so long as nothing interferes with the course of regular business. Some justify this attitude on the grounds that there is lack of patronage on the part of residents in the community. Local business men are leaders in their own right from a business point of view and have cooperated when material improvements such as pavements, sidewalks and the construction of L Street viaduct were needed. The real leaders are those who live in the community, regardless of where they have their work. Relations between business and the community in general have been agreeable excepting in the cases of the fertilizing plant and the taverns.

Retail Buying. At no time has there been a general store or trading-area in the community around which retail business converged. The community's retail trade was, and still is, linked largely with businesses of South Omaha to which the general trade of the district gravitates. It is therefore meet to trace the beginning and rapid growth of retail interests and general buying habits of early South Omaha, which is the suburban sub-center of Omaha.

History and Growth of Retail Business in South Omaha

Before the advent of the stock yards and packing industries in the eighties, buying was done in Omaha as the village of South Omaha was not yet in existence. Shopping usually took place at Brandeis Store, located then at 13 and Howard Streets. Good merchandise of durable quality was demanded by these early farm folk. The distance and inconvenience of reaching town made the trip an event which usually took place on Saturdays though at infrequent intervals. The pioneers made most of their own gar-
ments, including some of the men's clothing. They raised much of their foodstuffs, and purchased only staples.

With the establishment of the yards and plants, representing the beginning of South Omaha, stores quickly appeared. The number was greatly increased from 1883, the year of incorporation of the Stock Yards Company, until September, 1886. There were three general stores, a drug store, one newspaper, four meat markets, two dry goods stores, three blacksmith shops, two lumber yards, two coal yards, a feed and flour store, hardware and tin shop, shoe store, livery stable, barber shop, nine saloons, three doctors, one attorney and real estate dealer, seven hotels, and boarding houses without number. By the end of 1888 South Omaha boasted 243 business establishments, and by the close of 1889, there were 286. The village of South Omaha was then known as the "Magic City" because of its rapid growth. By 1892 there were 377 businesses. Saloons flourished in overwhelming numbers.

Most of the businesses were retail stores whose main stock in trade were supplies and provisions for those connected with the yards or plants and consisted of such things as butchers' jackets, overalls, boots, and the like. Farmers' supplies were also much in demand. It was a "man's town," for men did most of the buying. Business was brisk. The pioneer storekeeper, W. G. Sloane who became mayor in 1891, maintained a stock of goods in his provisions store consisting of everything from drugs to boots. He considered $400 in cash proceeds in a single day's business not unusual.

By 1892 growth in the "Magic City" continued unabated. As population increased in and around the new city, the retail storekeepers improved their stock to the satisfaction of the people in and around South Omaha. Prior

---

39 Savage & Bell, History of Omaha, p. 638.
40 Ibid.
to this period women buyers of Ashland Park Community traded exclusively in downtown Omaha. Improvement ultimately attracted business from the community but when a variety or unusual type of goods were desired, the downtown stores continued to be patronized.

Retail Trade Today

The retail section of South Omaha boasts many fine stores at the present time. Of 757 business establishments on the South Side today, 616 offer goods and services to the retail trade. Space not permitting description of all, only the most significant are noted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Business</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobiles, (accessories, services and related fields)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer gardens</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor stores</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drink parlors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garages</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling stations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorneys</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors of medicine</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug stores</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty shops</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal and lumber</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal and feed</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's apparel</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry stores</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General merchandise</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio shops</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakeries</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florists</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing stores</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department stores</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five and ten</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry goods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaners and dyers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture stores</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no store in South Omaha which directly serves the farmer although several shops and large stores, including a branch of Sears Roebuck, keep on hand some supplies occasionally desired by rural folk. When supplies out of the ordinary are needed, visits must be made to downtown business houses which make a specialty of carrying such lines. Chain stores are constantly increasing in numbers in South Omaha. The trend is in keeping with the gain throughout the country in which sales volume in chain stores is greater than that shown in any type of retail institution. 41

---

businesses in South Omaha have a geographic advantage in that they draw trade from a radius of five miles on the east, south, and west, including Ashland Park district, the border of which is eighteen blocks from the heart of South Omaha.

It is difficult to measure buying habits of Ashland Park people because of the presence of many nationalities and the diversity of interests due to the influence of city life. An inaccurate yet fair estimate is gained from experiences recounted by men long in business on the South Side whose knowledge of buying habits of residents adjacent to Omaha throws light on the question. Following annexation of South Omaha to Omaha in 1915 and the improvement of transportation, business on the South Side ceased to be as brisk as in former days, but did not suffer any sudden decline. On the contrary there was constant but gradual growth. Trading in South Omaha still is confined almost entirely to inhabitants of the community not owning cars. They find the long street car or bus ride to downtown Omaha tedious and only go there for unusual purchases. To save time even those with cars do much buying on the South Side. In the matter of foodstuffs little or nothing is gained by coming to the city as prices are similar, especially in the case of chain stores.

There is much installment buying in the district because low income families find this means of buying very useful. The possibility of acquiring goods under the installment plan has caused millions of consumers to satisfy wants which otherwise would not have been possible. For families who budget their income this means of buying has proven an aid. In the case of the former there is a tendency to sell easily in hopes of getting

---

paid in the uncertain future while those constantly in the habit of buying on credit "do not or cannot learn the value of a dollar."  

There has been little mail order trade in Ashland Park district owing to easy accessibility of South Omaha and Omaha stores. Appearance of mail order business was described by Mr. John Flynn, one of South Omaha's first business men, as follows: "Mail order houses came unannounced and crept up slowly like a thief in the night—but they did not seem to affect trade." Though mail order buying eliminates expenses of certain types of services and costs, ultimately bringing the cost down, it has never gained a foothold in the district because inspection and trying on, which are often necessary, were easily available in the nearby city.

The character of the community has always determined the kind of goods bought. When the district was a strictly farming district, quality and simplicity, rather than style or showiness, were sought. Price was secondary as early folk were not poor but thrifty. Transition of the district from a rural to a semi-urban community has changed the buying practices of the inhabitants. Since the majority of inhabitants range from a low to a moderate income group, purchases must of necessity conform to the modernity of the times yet be in a price level commensurate with low incomes. Today storekeepers indicate there is no noticeable distinction between purchases made by persons from the district and city customers from similar income groups. The tastes of the young people of Ashland Park change as rapidly as the tastes of those living in the city, the demand being that goods be inexpensive yet up-to-date. The style movement permeates all classes in

43 P. H. Nystrom, Retail Selling and Store Management, p. 254.
the community excepting the lowest poverty group. According to Bloomfield
the basis for increased desire for style is an improvement in tastes and
decreased tendency to be dazzled by mere ornament. The whole situation is
accelerated by commercial exploitation of style.

Improved transportation, such as the paving of the main highways run­
ning through the district has not affected any changes in buying habits.
The 24th Street viaduct built in the nineties formed a link between the
two Omahas and no doubt affected the volume of south side trade to some
extent, but not its demands or choice of goods. The recent completion of
the paving projects on 15th Street, as well as that on Missouri Avenue, has
brought about quicker transportation into Omaha for those living in the
eastern half of South Omaha and the result will undoubtedly be more buying
in downtown Omaha. In spite of this probable future lag residents of Ash­
land Park Community and other outlying districts will continue to buy in
South Omaha.

The types of goods and services offered in Ashland Park Community from
a retail point of view have already been reviewed. They provide goods for
immediate consumption needs such as groceries and gasoline, and business
never thrives to the extent of great prosperity although it provides a
fair living. The area from which the groceries draw represents a radius of
about a half mile while the filling stations and taverns know no trade
boundaries as customers come from distant as well as nearby places.

Before the period of decline people on the whole paid prices asked
but during the depression a change was noted in that they, in the jargon
of bargain hunters, "shopped around more" indicating a search for lower
prices together with post-war developments of fear of falling prices and

45
D. Bloomfield, Trends in Recent Distribution, p. 458.
increased fear of rapidly changing styles and designs.  

According to business men the effects of the depression were not felt as keenly in South Omaha as in other industrial centers. The packing houses continued operation in spite of the shortage of animals brought about by selling and killing of hogs and cattle under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, approved in May, 1933, for the specific purpose of increasing farm prices in relation to the general level of prices and thus raising the net income of farmers. Many lay-offs but no shut-downs took place. Ashland Park inhabitants suffered a large share of unemployment since a large majority make their living in the yards and plants.

Development of Transportation. Transportation in its various phases has touched the community directly or indirectly, and has undoubtedly had a greater bearing on life than any other single factor. The nearness of the district to the metropolitan area has intensified the change and readjustment which transportation automatically brings into play. Mode of travel in the early days did not present serious problems. There were two well-traveled roads skirting the district on their way to Omaha, five miles away. Earliest settlers traveled over their neighbors' lands in criss-cross fashion to contact roads going into the little city of Omaha. In spite of difficulties due to undeveloped roads, road transportation has served well as a means of carrying on from the early days to the present. A county road, which offered the chief means of road travel into Omaha, was opened in 1860  and started at what is now 36th Street at the Sarpy county line. It continued north until it reached the vicinity of F Street

---

46 Ibid., p. 151.
48 Douglas County Surveyor's Office, Court House.
where it took a northeasterly course over what was then known as the South Omaha boulevard continuing to 16th and Leavenworth Streets.

A later road into Omaha started at Papillion and continued in a northeasterly direction until it reached 44th and Spring Streets and stretched northward until it reached the grounds of the "poor farm" at 42nd and Leavenworth Streets, which at that time was a landmark out in the country. Nearly all travel from the southwest into Omaha came on these two roads.

The first road in the district to be surveyed was L Street. It was opened to 42nd Street in 1865 and to 60th Street in 1871. Trees, planted along roads and around farm houses to serve as windbreaks, also contributed toward improving the landscape.

In 1871 a road running north and south was cut through on what is now 48th Street from L to Sarpy county line. Q Street road, the most heavily traveled today, was not opened until during the boom days of South Omaha. In 1885 it was cut from the railroad to 24th to 36th Streets and in 1886 to 48th Street. In 1878 it was connected with 60th Street. At the east ends of both Q and L Streets roads contact was made with the "old Bellevue road," now south 25th Street which went north and touched 24th and A Street. From there it continued to Vinton and to 13th Street, thence north into the city. This was the main route between Omaha and South Omaha. The Bellevue road became the third road from the southwest into Omaha, but its existence was a result of the packing house era.

In 1885 the nearest paving to the packing center was at 13th and Hickory Streets. Travel between Omaha and South Omaha on this road was

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 F. Spear, Unpublished history of South Omaha.
not easy because there were no "dummy" trains (those used for inter-city travel), no street car lines, and to make matters worse, the roads were in poor condition. Since 13th Street was the main traveled road to the packing center, paving gradually made its appearance along the entire route to South Omaha.

The first paving from South Omaha westward into Ashland Park Community was on Q Street from 24th to 60th in 1923. Sixtieth Street was paved from Center to Q in 1922 and from Q to the Sarpy line in 1925. Paving on L Street to 60th was laid in 1925. All other streets and roads are gravelled. The year 1916 saw considerable progress in road building when Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act and South Omaha and Ashland Park Community received benefits from this national stimulus to highway improvement. The heaviest traffic is found on Q Streets, beginning at 13th Street and running through the heart of the district on its way west to Gretna where it enters number six highway to Lincoln. L Street begins at the new South Omaha bridge on 13th Streets and continues straight west to 84th Streets. Sixtieth Street is another heavily traveled road. Running north from Ralston it borders on the west of the district. The excellent roads in the district, primarily furthering the interests of the packing industry and stock yards by facilitating the movement of truckloads of cattle, have also helped build property values in Ashland Park Community.

Since there is no nucleus in the community around which economic life revolves, the roads do not lead to a central point. Instead they run parallel in squared fashion through the district. The main arteries of traffic are Q, L, and 60th Streets. In going to work in town no short cuts can now be taken over others' property as in former times. Today in many

---

MAP SHOWING TYPES OF ROADS.
places the streets are cut through and numbered or named, especially those emanating from L and Q, where they are cut at every block. Streets running east from 60th have yet to be cut through in most places. Areas farthest away from the highways have no through streets. Complaints from school officials indicate there are not enough roads or streets giving access to the schoolhouse. From certain neighborhoods children are forced to walk great distances around large properties in order to get to school.

With few exceptions, the main roads in the district are easily accessible. They afford rapid means of transportation in all kinds of weather excepting perhaps when there is ice-coating on highways. The widening of Q Streets to thirty feet in 1951 is evidence of the part the automobile plays in community traffic today. Other indications of its significance in district traffic are the building of two modern bridges and several culverts for the protection and advancement of automobile traffic. Changes from poor roads and horse-drawn vehicles to good roads and automobiles have been radical and the inter-relation of social and economic activity are responsible for the automobile and vice versa.  

Efficient road maintenance is fostered by Douglas County which also authorizes bonds to be voted from the entire county when paving is considered. It is a recognized fact that without good roads the benefits of the automobile would be small. Roads are supervised by overseers or maintainers of each road district of which there are twenty in the county. Divisions are the same as political precincts, and Douglas precinct, which includes three voting precincts because of its size, has one overseer. His duties are to see that roads, bridges and pavement shoulders in his

---

district are in proper condition. The road overseer and his men complain that they do not have enough work to do since labor under the W.P.A. has been hired for the work.

The three main highways, Q, L, and 60th Streets, are designated as arterials and all the side roads carry stop signs before entering the main highway. The arterials are also state highways. Six deputy sheriffs appointed by the county sheriff and four state patrolmen patrol the Omaha area. The State Patrol is a newly instituted organization which became effective in November, 1937.

Street Cars and Busses

The street car system revolutionized transportation to and from South Omaha. Previously trains and horse-drawn vehicles both of which were expensive and inadequate, handled the traffic. A brief history of the early street car system in Omaha brings out inconsistencies and struggles which affected citizens of South Omaha and surrounding country.

The first street cars in Omaha were cable cars operated by the Cable Tramway Company, incorporated in 1884. Cars were used only on the steep grade on Dodge Street from the heart of the city as far west as the Omaha High School. Soon another company, the Omaha Horse Railway Company, made its appearance. It developed until by 1889 the southern terminus for the new company was 16th and Vinton Streets. Horses were kept in a barn at 24th and Vinton Streets. Both companies operated at the same time but neither reached South Omaha. A third company, the Omaha Motor Railway Company, was organized for the purpose of running cars between Omaha and South Omaha. It was incorporated in 1887, the people of South Omaha grant-

---

55 Omaha World-Herald, November 25, 1937, p. 5.
56 Omaha Street Railway Department, Traffic History.
ing the franchise by vote of the people. Eight-minute service was inaugurated when the line was opened in 1890. The line started at 16th and Vinton Streets, continued west to 24th and Vinton, south on 24th Street and then to N Street in South Omaha. Thus three rival companies were operating in Omaha at the same time.

After considerable friction the companies merged and were called the Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway Company because cars also traveled to Council Bluffs. All were electrically propelled. As South Omaha grew a small company, the Metropolitan Street Railway Company, opened a short horse-car line from Q Street to the lower part of the territory called Albright's Addition.

In the midst of South Omaha's growth street cars found their way westward and later to Ashland Park district. The first car line into the Stock Yards from 24th Street was instituted on L Street during the latter part of 1886. Many years elapsed before cars were run further west on L. Finally in 1910 tracks were laid to 35th and in 1914 to 42nd which touches the eastern border of the community under study. Track was also laid on Q from 24th to 39th in the nineties and from 39th to 43rd in 1909.

Street car service today means much to residents of Ashland Park district who live within walking distance of both car lines. Cars run at eleven-minute intervals during the day and at three, four, and five-minute intervals during the rush hours which are from seven to eight-thirty A.M. and four-thirty to six-thirty P.M. The evening schedule is fourteen-minute service. At the time of writing street car tokens sell three for

57 Globe Journal, March 19, 1886.
58 Date unknown to Street Car Company, Traffic History.
twenty-five cents or ten cents per single ride. High school children have recently been given five cent rates.

The only car line ever to pass through District No. 4 was begun in 1909 along Q Street from 24th. Cars were the single truck open vestibule type known to residents as their "Toonerville trolley." The line was owned by a stock corporation called the Nebraska Traction and Power Company. Cars operated between South Omaha and Ralston. In 1915 the company put on two immense dark green cars. Each had double truck foundation and contained a special baggage and freight compartment in the front part immediately behind the motorman. Seating capacity was fifty-two. The cars went beyond Ralston into Papillion.

In 1915 the Ralston—Papillion line was purchased by the Illinois Traction Company which used the name "Omaha and Lincoln Railway and Light Company." In 1926 application was made to suspend operations and substitute motor busses as the latter could be operated more cheaply than street cars. Permission was granted and tracks torn up and bus service instituted. The movement to secure bus service was advocated by proprietors of garages and filling stations along the way who knew that abandonment of the street car would be favorable to their business interests. The company continued bus service until 1927, when they sold out to the Mentz Bus Company who in turn sold to F. W. Stiles of Ralston in July, 1930. The service is still owned by Mr. Stiles but he discontinued the run to Papillion in 1951 and extends it only to Ralston. Four busses run on an hourly schedule and on the half hour during morning and evening rush periods. The rate from South Omaha to

F. W. Stiles, Owner of the present bus line.

Letter from Nebraska State Railway Commission (Dated May 11, 1937).
56th Street is one token, the same that is used on the Omaha street car lines and busses. The full trip to Ralston costs ten cents. People of the community consider the present system of transportation slow. They object to the infrequency of busses as compared to city schedules. Many prefer the use of private cars. Some feel that if bus intervals were more frequent more people without cars would move into the district. Paying two fares, one on city street cars and one on the bus, does not appeal to residents without automobiles.

The proposed Omaha-Lincoln-Beatrice street car line in 1913 which was to have skirted the district on the east and known as the McKinley line never materialized. Peter Iler of Omaha was the promoter. The line was to have started at 42nd and Q Streets, continued southward to Sarpy Mills, three quarters of a mile away, and on to Lincoln and Beatrice. A road bed was built to Sarpy Mills, a summer resort and site of a flour mill, now vanished. Besides building of the grade and planning of the route and other preliminary work, nothing was done. Many considered the plan a wild-cat scheme.

Railroads

There are two railroads in the district, neither one playing any important role in the life or growth of the community. The railroad to the south was called the Burlington and Missouri which had a depot close to the Sarpy county line. Regular stops were made at first but later these were discontinued and stops made on signal only. Another railroad station of the Burlington and Missouri, built under the bridge at 38th and L within three blocks of the district, is still in existence. The railroad is now part of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. The railroad which

61 Evidence of several early settlers.
skirts the northern border of District No. 4 was formerly the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad, later absorbed by the Chicago Northwestern.

**Miscellaneous**

For transportation of goods by express, freight, truck or air the residents of Ashland Park Community may deal with branch offices of various companies located on the South Side.

The sidewalks in the community cannot be overlooked. Sidewalks were laid along the arterial highways in 1936 as a safety measure. They are thirty-eight and one-half inches wide but have no curb and consist of a tar composition over a rock base. Walks begin at the city limits on 42nd on both L and Q Streets and run westward to 60th where they join with the sidewalk on 60th Street, making a total of forty-one blocks. Because the top wears or melts away easily, sidewalks have disappeared in some places while in others mud has washed down and make them impassable.

As a means of communication within the community as well with the outside world, transportation in all its phases has been a fundamental factor in economic growth.

**Summary**

The semi-rural economy of Ashland Park Community is the outgrowth of the founding of the town of South Omaha by the Union Stock Yards Company. The community, formerly a farming region, was chosen as a residential district for workers in nearby yards and plants who wished to augment their livelihood by means of small farms and acreages. The spread of Omaha and cheaper living conditions in the community have also brought workers in other fields into the district.

Ashland Park district moves along at a variety of gaits in the struggle
Many families still cling to the benefits of the soil in augmenting family income while those in the more densely populated areas manifest no such interest. The mechanical age has filtered down to the once rural community through institution of modern methods in industry but new inventions are not yet available in a great number of homes.

The status in which those more fortunately situated find themselves is determined by their own efforts. The general attitude toward job-holding is favorable as long as material desires are satisfied on the incomes earned. The depression has left much irregularity in the ability to earn a living, thus resulting in hardship on the lower economic groups despite continued operation of the packing houses.

Though the majority of workers are associated with the yards and packing plants there is a small grouping in the upper social strata resulting from higher incomes in diverse fields. A satisfactory social relationship due mostly to physical distance between homes exists among the graduated economic groupings.

Because home ownership is the feature of community settlement, social stability is evident. With one exception homes are one-family dwellings, the majority owning or paying for them. Civic interest is shown by owners more than non-owners through the ballot, improvements being often obtained through politicians elected to office.

The depression has decreased the number of home owners and increased the number of renters. Luxuries as the result of the modern mechanical age are practically out of reach of the majority, who belong in the medium or low income levels. The problem of relief has so greatly increased that reliable estimates indicate fifty per cent depending on some form of economic aid.
Metropolitan inroads are responsible for the disappearance of many earlier businesses, but little change is shown in types established in early days compared to those of today because most were related to the packing industry. Stores are small and widely scattered and incapable of satisfying all economic needs. The greatest change in smaller business is found in the increased number of grocery stores, filling stations and taverns. Storekeepers complain of indifference of debtors toward payment of their debts as a psychological result of the depression.

Annexation of South Omaha together with improved transportation have to some extent affected adversely the volume of South Omaha retail business from the district although the changing character of the community has not influenced greatly the kinds of goods bought since industrialization of the community. Tastes were always simple and commensurate with a modest income. The force of change has merely set the retail pattern on a similar basis with metropolitan trends.

In keeping with the trend toward improved transportation as a fundamental economic factor there is a better and broader outlook. With improved roads and sidewalks there is faster communication within the community and at the same time a coordination of the community's interests with those of the city and the rest of the world. Better transportation conditions are of inestimable service to commuters working in the city. The ease of transportation is the greatest single factor in bringing about the disappearance of rural interests, but it also takes business away from the community into downtown Omaha. The greatest change in transportation facilities is shown by the condition in which the roads are kept or the accommodation of the heavy auto traffic that prevails today. Persistence is indicated in the election of a road overseer whose services are not needed because of employment of government labor on the roads. Lack of
enough open roads to the school is an old complaint which has not been satisfactorily answered.
The two schools and two churches play an important part in the social life of Ashland Park Community. Adapted to the needs of the district, these institutions have become valuable media for social relationships.

Schooling in earlier times presented an altogether different picture from that of today. Comparison of early with present church life cannot be made because the churches are of comparatively recent date.

The Public School

First and Second Schools and Their History. The first school in the district was a one-room frame structure built in 1868 on a rolling stretch of land which is now that part under the 42 and Q Street viaduct. Though it was the District No. 4 school, it was called the Cassidy school because the land on which it was built belonged to Edward Cassidy. The first teacher was Edward Kelley, who was succeeded by Daniel and Kate Sullivan. The desks and seats were long plank-like affairs placed in circular fashion around the room. Ten to twelve pupils were in attendance during the busy season on the farm while the director's report of 1869 revealed twenty-eight children by the end of the school year. Pupils furnished their own textbooks. Among the first pupils of the school were found the children of the Hughes, McCaffreys, Hoards, O'Rourkes, Daltons, Cassidys, William Ryans and John Bagleys. The last-named lived in Sarpy county. The earliest board of trustees, who served in the late sixties and early seventies, consisted of William Ryan, Patrick Corrigan, John Toner, and John Bagley.

In 1875 James McEvoy II, a farmer, sold a corner square acre of land, no written record on school or teachers prior to 1896 is available. Data on history obtained through interviews with twelve former pioneer residents.
now the northeast corner of 48 and Q Streets, to School District No. 4 for $75.00. The property was situated a half-mile west of the original site and the second school house, built by Chesley D. Layton, a carpenter, was erected upon the land in the same year. The surrounding area later became known as Ashland Park Addition because of the many ash trees planted in the vicinity by earlier settlers and the school and frequently referred to as Ashland Park school. The first board of trustee consisted of James McEvoy II, Peter Cassidy and Mr. Layton.

The teachers in their order of arrival in the community were John B. O'Donohue, Mrs. Mary Allen, Lizzie Walker, James B. Rustin, Mary Callely, Mary Conway, Alfred Moore, Percy Pike, Mary Conroy, Allie Power, P. G. Delaney, Ella G. Bates, and Mary Lonergan. There was frequent interchange of pupils between Ashland Park and Drexel schools. The latter belonged in District No. 3, east of District No. 4, and was located on the present site of the Stock Exchange Building.

The school district boundaries were not known by streets as they are today but by section lines or definite landmarks. The Pappio creek, at 68 Street, bounded the district on the west; Cassidy's graveyard, now St. Mary's Cemetery at 36 Street, on the east; Sarpy county line on the south; and the first section line north of the railroad on the north. A few pupils came from beyond these points, some living a quarter-mile west of the banks of the Pappio while others came from one mile south of the Sarpy county line. Three miles was the longest distance travelled to the school by any child.

Description of Second Frame Building

The school was painted white with green solid board shutters which were seldom closed except during vacation. A board fence, four boards high, enclosed the school yard. The

Mrs. W. Steyer, nee Mary Mortenson, a pupil from 1887 to 1892.
posts had been sawed off at a uniform angle and finished by boards nailed flatwise on top of this slant. This made a fine 'walk' to test the powers of balance and it was considered quite a feat to circumnavigate the yard without a tumble (just one of our amusements.) There was only one gate for admittance into the yard and this was on the south side facing the school entrance. The building was quite close to the road with a 'boys' door' and a 'girls' door' in front leading to their respective halls or cloak rooms.

"The inside of the schoolhouse had much the same appearance as others throughout the country at this time. There were three rows of double seats facing the blackboards on the north wall which had no windows, but the seats often held three children during the winter months when the 'big boys and girls' were released from the pressure of farm work to snatch a few months' schooling. Many of them were in their early twenties, for there was then no compulsory school law and pupils came and stayed as long as they pleased, just so they made no trouble for 'teacher' who was apt to be much younger than her pupils."

Early School Life

The spring term usually lasted two months, April and May, while the winter term continued for six months. Attendance varied from about thirty pupils in the spring and fall to nearly fifty during the winter. There were no compulsory school laws and attendance was irregular.

Textbooks which were furnished by the children prior to 1886, were now supplied by the county but were a "conglomeration to daunt even a stout-hearted instructor." It was not until 1889 that a uniform textbook law was enforced in the district and the school board furnished the children with books more suitable such as the Eclectic Geographies, Webster-Franklin Readers, Harvey's Grammars, Barnes' Histories and White's Arithmetics.

According to Mrs. Steyer's account, several attempts were made to sink a well but all were failures.

"The pupils 'went for water', an esteemed privilege, either to the sexton's house at the east side of the cemetery, to Toner's west of the school or occasionally

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
up the hill to Lambert's on the north. This water, usually lukewarm when it arrived, was passed by the fortunate water carrier to his appreciative schoolmates. Sanitation did not worry the children or the teachers; all drank from the same tin dipper, pouring the dregs on slate rags and sponge.

"There would be several occasions of intense excitement when a cowboy would dash up to the school house on his pony warning of an enraged steer that escaped from the stock yards pen. The children sought safety until the posse armed with rifles and followed by the butcher in his cart overtook and killed the fear-crazed animal.

"Entertainments consisted of Friday afternoon 'exercises', Home Talent evening performances, Spell and Cipher downs and Christmas Programmes. 'Last days' constituted the school's contribution to the social life of the community.

"The Great Blizzard of January 12, 1888, is an outstanding event in the school's history. Miss Ella Bates, teacher, conquered the situation with her calm courage and competent preparations. She kept her group indoors and closed all the shutters and made a good fire. She did not leave the building until each child had been called for by an adult or neighbors. Mr. Hibbeler had come afoot for his children and, tying them all together with a clothesline, led them safely home across the prairie in the face of the blizzard. That storm has gone down in Nebraska history as it lasted for several days and many lives were lost throughout the state."

The population in the vicinity of the school showed increased growth. Soon lots, streets and alleys were surveyed and subdivided accordingly.

As the community continued to grow through real estate development arising from the South Omaha boom, then at its height, other additions were opened, bringing increased population and more children into the school.

Third School and Its History. The old frame school became over-crowded, and a new brick building was erected in 1890. The frame house was moved to 60th and U Streets where it is now part of a dwelling. The new school continued to be named Ashland Park which persists to the present. The streets were now numbered and 48 and Q was designated as the location of the school. Brick was supplied from McCaffrey's brickyard nearby. The three members of
the school board were C. D. Layton, Edwin Lambert, and Mads Mortensen. Otherwise popular and strong in leadership the members came in for severe criticism because they let a contract for so large a building. "Three rooms could never possibly all be used!" and "such a waste of tax money on a brick school house" were warnings of many residents. The misgivings came partially true as only the large downstairs room with its broad front bay window was used for several years because of the collapse of the building boom. The two smaller upstairs rooms were used for play and storage purposes.

This adverse economic condition affected the school situation only a short time for business soon revived and the school grew until the downstairs room was partitioned into two rooms and the upstairs was completed and used as class rooms. Soon the school reached its capacity.

When compulsory school laws were first established there was effort on the part of a few families to violate them.4 Excuses were that children were needed on the farms or that it was necessary for them to secure employment in the packing plants. Such parents contended that it was not necessary for their children to obtain any schooling as long as they were going to work anyway. About the turn of the century school laws began to be more generally respected. As children started to school and continued in regular attendance parents took more interest in their children's education and in turn the school became the social center for group activity in the community.

As education began to command respect among the people, enforcement

4 A. E. Sheldon, Nebraska Civil Government, p. 465. In 1901 a compulsory educational law was approved. In 1907 this law was supplemented by the Child Labor Law which depended upon school authorities chiefly for its enforcement.
MAP NO. IX

MAP SHOWING POSITION OF ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL AND GROUNDS IN ASHLAND PARK ADDITION

MAP NO. VIII

MAP SHOWING PROXIMITY OF NEIGHBORING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO RURAL DISTRICT No. 4.
of compulsory school laws met with practically no resistance. Patrons felt that their brick school was superior to rural schools elsewhere, and they were proud of its growth and attainments. Because of this regard many children living beyond the Sarpy county line attended the school.

The first teacher in the brick building was Miss Kate O'Brien who taught from 1890 to 1895. Others to follow were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year Appointed</th>
<th>Service Ended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. A. Risley</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Anna Smith</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie Boag</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Anthony</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannie Kracht</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna Prey</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. M. Ware</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Nelson</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. T. Gilbert</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattie Nelson</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy G. Carr</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabel Parker</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn Kehoe</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Yeats</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Kietrick</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattie Hoobler</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances Als worth</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna V. Smith</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An event which took place each year while Mr. Lambert was on the board was the planting of Ash trees on the school grounds on Arbor Day, conducted with special ceremonies under his sponsorship. This continued for many years afterward. Some residents erroneously believe the name of the school was derived from this practice.

Present School and Its Beginnings. The brick building, which was on a level with the German Catholic cemetery across the road west burned down in May, 1909. After the ruins were razed and the ground graded considerably below the level of the cemetery, a new building facing west, was put up. This comprises the west and older half of the present structure. There was
delay over getting bonds properly arranged and dispute as to the size of the new building. Many urged a four-room structure, while others insisted on not more than six rooms. Decision was finally made to erect an eight-room, square building and complete at first only four rooms on the main floor. This proved a good plan as enrollment doubled in the seven years that followed.

School opened that fall on November 15, 1909, carpenters still pounding and hammering at their work. It was at this time that Miss Bird Claybaugh, present principal, came to the school as teacher of the seventh and eighth grades. Miss Frances Alssworth taught the fifth and sixth grades, Miss Anna Smith, the third and fourth, and Miss Mary Johnson the first and second. Miss Elsie Peterson was the fifth teacher to be added in a few weeks. The board of education consisted of Messrs. J. B. Root, Otto Weiss, and Edwin Lambert.

School was kept to the tune of carpenters' hammers and saws until work on the four rooms was completed. Children came to school every other Saturday that year in order to make up the time lost. With the settlement of Homestead Addition near the school the enrollment increased and it became necessary to finish work on the upstairs rooms.

The building was as modern as it was possible to have it in the country. At first water for the school was carried in, but later a windmill was constructed which pumped water to a tank under the roof. The building was steam-heated, and drinking fountains were placed on both floors. Window placements were correct for proper lighting. Basement toilets replaced old-fashioned out-buildings. Other conveniences were telephone service and electric lighting.

With the large enrollment and the expense of buildings and maintenance
high in proportion to tax receipts, the board was able to provide only bare necessities. Paid entertainments, it was felt, performed the double duty of raising funds for purchase of equipment and of saving residents carfare which would be needed to visit downtown amusement places. In this manner pictures, a victrola, a piano, and much other equipment were bought.

By 1916 eight teachers and a janitor were employed and 299 pupils were in attendance. Fifty children of the district of school age were attending nearby parochial schools in the city. About this time friction appeared in school board elections but conflicts were not serious nor brought to public attention. A few years later Holy Ghost school made its appearance.

Growth continued and it became necessary for Ashland Park school to expand. The east addition was completed in 1917, making a total of fifteen rooms plus a large auditorium on the second floor. City water was installed in 1924 and basement toilets removed to the first and second floor near the auditorium. In August, 1919, lot twenty of block four directly east of the school was purchased for additional playground space and in 1932 a small parcel of land was purchased in the northeast section to form a perfect rectangle. In September, 1926 two rooms were constructed out of a section of the north side of the auditorium. An "opportunity room" was opened in 1927 in line with an experiment in Nebraska rural schools; its purpose was to accelerate the progress of slower pupils according to their special needs. Progress was watched and recorded by the State Teachers' Colleges. Owing to financial difficulties the room was abandoned in 1932.

The old Word method of reading and other age-old books were replaced with text books in keeping with the modern educational viewpoint. Among the texts used by the school were a series of "Young American Readers" which were more than readers in the ordinary sense of the word. They gave a child
School Census Report Showing Growth During Five-Year Periods Beginning 1917
an insight into his relationships with family, school, community, and nation which aimed to develop his social as well as mental powers. Agriculture was and still is included in the curriculum of the school but it was more practical in the early days when children had more contact with the soil.

The old country school and its local practices does not exist any more. "Spelldowns", although still conducted as a simple classroom procedure, have been supplanted by contests of skill in which pupils have shown remarkable winning ability in county, state, and inter-state matches. In this regard the school's fame has spread far. In penmanship the school won eighty to ninety percent of the awards at the County Fair in 1925 and in 1926, and in a mid-western contest it won first place for two consecutive years, receiving a silver medal and a loving cup.

The school was brought to public attention on many occasions in the '20's because of its educational achievements and superior leadership. It has the reputation of the most outstanding rural school in the country.

Description Today

East of the school from 48 Street are homes of city workers. Clusters of mail boxes line the road. To the west are farms and acreages, though homes of persons who labor in the city are also found there. In this setting are enough farmers' children to give the school something of a rural character notwithstanding its urban appearance. In the World-Herald of October 10, 1926, the proximity of the school to the packing center was described as follows: "To the east can be seen the smoke from the chimneys of packing-town and on days when the wind is blowing their odor comes vividly though perhaps not more so than it comes to downtown Omaha when the wind is in that direction." It may be said in passing that the menace is now relegated to the past.
Ashland Park school is a two-story, red brick structure with a capacity for 650 pupils without crowding. It has served as a landmark in the many years of its existence. Its rectangular form is along simple lines, the line of demarcation between the old and new sections being plainly visible. The big pipe of a fire escape runs down the east side. There are now eighteen classrooms. The original entrance facing west and the newer ones facing south and north are the passages by which the building is entered. Except for city gas connections the school is modern in every respect.

Continued growth necessitated conversion of the second floor auditorium into class rooms so the ground underneath the newer half of the building was excavated in 1934 and 1935 and a new auditorium built. Labor was furnished by the government to the extent of $24,000.00 under arrangement with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, a difficult organization to work with in comparison to the Works Progress Association of today insofar as hiring of labor is concerned. The low construction of the building created a problem for the engineers in which new foundations and special bracing were involved. The district purchased materials amounting to $8,000 while an additional $1,000 was expended for materials used in converting the old auditorium into two classrooms, a library, and a principal's office. Nine months were required for the work. The new auditorium is a large well-lighted room with seating capacity of six hundred. There are two dressing rooms and a stage. The stage fixtures, drapes, drops, scenery, curtain, and other equipment did not cost the district anything as Mr. John Harder collected $200 for advertising painted on the curtain, with space apportioned according to amount of the contribution. A well-equipped modern kitchen adjoining the auditorium is used to advantage when serving large numbers of persons.
CHART SHOWING GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT IN ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL FROM 1916-1937
The playground, which is none too spacious, necessitates supervision of four teachers at a time. It surrounds the building rather evenly, a high wire fence enclosing the whole. Because of its proximity to the city, which results in frequent exchange of pupils with city schools, Ashland Park maintains A and B divisions.

The school enjoys the reputation of being the largest rural school in the world. To date the assertion has not been challenged. Confusion must not be made with consolidated schools, some of which may be larger, but as an organized rural school Ashland Park holds first place in size.

(1) Enrollment

Since those of compulsory school age number 708 and the average daily attendance of the Ashland Park school term ending June, 1937 was 526, the school thus represented 74.3% of all youth living in District No. 4 of compulsory school age. Real estate development has not been consistent with increase in enrollment as in the case of former years. From 1930 to 1937 there has been no evidence of home-building, yet the enrollment of the school between those years has increased. The chief reason has been the moving together of relatives in times of financial stress. Other causes were the arrival in the district of large families on account of cheaper rents.

Enrollment, indicated by average daily attendance for the past twenty years, is shown in Fig. 7 in contrast with enrollment of neighboring as well as all elementary schools of Omaha. The year 1919-20 showed the greatest growth of Ashland Park school during the period. In spite of mild set-backs in the periods 1922-23, 1926-29, 1932-33, 1935-37, growth has been steady, there being no evidence of sudden rise or decline since the boom days in the '90's. The opinion prevails in some quarters that

---

5 Compare with enrollment in Part II, Fig. 3.
Fig. 7

Showing comparative growth of Ashland Park School with neighboring schools and with Omaha Elementary Schools by average daily attendance.
during hard times the drop-out from parochial schools is followed by increased attendance at the public school where tuition is free. Fig. 8 does not necessarily support this contention.

**Fig. 8**

**Contrasting Average Daily Attendance in Ashland Park and Holy Ghost Schools from 1932 to 1937**

The average daily attendance has been chosen as a criterion in the above measurements on account of its stability. Although figures submitted are accurate and represent the enrollment situation insofar as each school is concerned, a problem arises which does not make for accuracy in the final analysis since there is possibility of duplication of enrollment in two or more different schools in the same semester.

Absences play no little part in the enrollment situation. Barring

---

6 Rev. J. H. Ostdiek, Diocesan Supt., states that since consideration and extension of time are given to families receiving lessened income, the matter of decreased membership in parochical schools is complicated by other factors such as mobility, etc.
epidemics and other causes that bring wholesale absences, the average daily attendance runs ninety-one percent of the membership, thus affording a fair index to the enrollment. In 1955 and 1956 a scarlet fever epidemic resulted in decrease in attendance which is evident in Fig. 7. According to some patrons, absences often considered truant cases by school authorities are caused by the great walking distance from homes at the farther ends of the district which in a few cases is eighteen blocks. There is one family with children who live between the railroad track and F Street and who belong to District No. 4 but since they live closer to Prairie Center school, District No. 55, they receive permission to transfer to this school.

Although these patrons recognize the value of unification of all neighborhoods into one large district they believe the factor of distance, when it must be walked, makes difficult the appreciation of advantages in the larger school. Some through the Improvement Club have advocated building of another school. On the other hand the duplication of expense in view of the small demand has been taken into consideration and it is believed the time is not ripe for the erection of another school.

(2) Effect of Mobility

The problem of mobility necessitates constant adjustment on the part of school, pupil, and teacher. Although the situation causes instability in enrollment, in the long run total figures are not affected to any appreciable degree. This is because replacements are constantly taking place. In cases of children who have previously attended the school there seems to be a tendency to enjoy the commotion they create while teachers try to bring about readjustment. In one family, which lived ten years in many different houses in and around Omaha, there were children of school age, who, according
Comparison of Population Growth of District No. 4 School Census, and Federal Census of Omaha from 1870-1930

Legend:
- District No. 4 School Census
- Federal Census of Omaha

Scale: 1 inch = 10,000 people

1870: 2,518
1880: 2,285
1890: 24,520
1900: 30,765
1910: 30,518
1920: 44,555
1930: 51,700
1940: 102,555
1950: 124,096
1960: 140,452
1970: 191,600
1980: 214,006
to one of the teachers, "felt important because so much fuss was made over them, for in no other way would they have the chance to feel important." According to Steiner\(^8\) moving about from place to place is a "habit of life which provides a welcome break in their monotonous existence," and the attention children receive in the schools satisfied in some measure their adventurous urges.

Since mobility takes place mostly between communities of similar type, transfers are made with rural schools in areas about Omaha as follows: Pershing, East Omaha; Loveland, 84 and Pacific Street; Underwood, 80 and Underwood Street; and Oakdale, 96 and Center Street. Occasionally exchanges are made between Albright and Sarpy county schools. In the past five years the outlying districts have been developing and decrease in mobility is being noted.

Personnel

(1) Pupils

"The privilege of attending public school is one which springs from the State and not the Nation which is often implied. Therefore, the child cannot assert a constitutional right to admission."\(^9\) Through the state and local agencies it has been made possible for every child to receive a common school education. Those who go to school are children between ages of five and sixteen, although Nebraska State Law indicates seven years as the minimum compulsory school age. A District No. 4 board ruling recently passed designates that those starting under five in the kindergarten in September must be five years old on or before December first while those

---

8 J. F. Steiner, The American Community in Action, pp. 146-7.
starting in mid-year are to reach five on or before the first of May. Since it is only a school board, and not a state ruling, there have been attempts to defy the decision which have resulted in friction. No kindergarten pre-tests are required of children first entering the school.

A whole-hearted school spirit at Ashland Park exists. Children who are economically better or worse off than others intermingle to such an extent that their status is not readily discernible. This situation leads to a democracy which has always been fostered in the school, snobbishness being unknown. An important factor which contributes to the contentment of the children is the fact that board members live in the community and are able to take a close personal interest in their welfare. There is an attachment to principal and teachers, who seldom change, which is another reason why many parents who were former pupils send their children to the school. All these facts contribute to the happiness and subsequent loyalty of children to the school.

Pupils know each other well not only from school contacts, but also through activities which take place in the evenings. Consequently the school occupies a large portion of the social life of the child and makes possible enlarged social contacts. Next to the home it is the most constructive force in the formation of life's attitude and interests. 10

West Q Street has always been known as "tough" in the jargon of South Side residents. This reference is made to groups of boys in the city whose mischief and occasional destructive actions are of police concern, and which erroneously become associated with Ashland Park school boys. It happens that this district, joining the city on west Q, extends too far west on that street to be included in the category of "toughs." However, the

---

10 T. E. Sullenger, Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency, p. 95.
school is not exempt from having its own uncouth element which has always existed but which has never created a major problem. One teacher described the situation as follows: "Their natures may be turbulent outside of school but as long as the policy exists to let the school take authority during school hours we find these same boys to be sufficiently peaceful so as not to cause much disturbance." If any of these boys line up with the more notorious groups of the city it is unknown or not enough mischief is perpetrated to command attention of school authorities.

In the classroom Ashland Park children are not different than children in semi-rural communities elsewhere. They are no brighter nor slower than others. Educational standards are not lowered to meet the capacity of slower children, although modern teaching methods are doing much to assist such children. A delicate situation arises occasionally when children of prominent citizens fail to pass in their grades.

Many teachers notice that children attain a maturity over the three month's vacation. "A" groups in the fall seem nearly always to be making faster progress than "A" groups in mid-winter. When the "A" group entering in fall goes into the "B" class in winter rapid progress is noted. Groups thus run fast and slow alternately.

(2) The Principal

The reputation that Ashland Park school has enjoyed as the largest and one of the most progressive rural schools in the country is due largely to the efforts of the principal, Miss Bird Claybaugh, who came to the school in 1909. She was born on a farm in Mills County, Iowa, near Emerson and attended school at Greenfield. Her early teacher's training was received in the State Normal College in Peru, Nebraska, and her advanced work was done in that institution and the Municipal University, Omaha, and Midland College, Fremont, Nebraska. Her teaching career was begun in 1904 in
school District No. 22 near Valley, Nebraska, at which place she has retained her home up to the present time. Miss Claybaugh is not only a principal but a real teacher as well. Her success is attributed to her social as well as psychological understanding of pupils, teachers, and community in general.

In 1926 Miss Claybaugh won the American Teacher Award sponsored by the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia. She was chosen to represent Nebraska as the most outstanding teacher in the state. The occasion was the 150 anniversary of American Independence, each state sending the most outstanding teacher and boy and girl pupil. This was the highest tribute that could be bestowed upon a teacher as it was a recognition of the important part youth and teachers of America have played in the development of the nation. Selection was made on the basis of accomplishment of the greatest good for pupils and community. The committee for the award which was appointed by the governor comprised persons high in educational, religious, and business life. Leaders of various organizations also served on the committee. Miss Claybaugh has won distinction as club organizer of rural projects in connection with 4-H clubs in which she won national prizes and many trips, one of which was to Detroit in 1924.

Having been born and reared on a farm, Miss Claybaugh is familiar with environment and problems of country children. Because she realizes that rural children do not always have the benefit of the best offered in the field of education, she has put forth effort to keep with the best in newer educational movements. She has also devoted herself in many other ways to the interests of the children, frequently to the point of personal sacrifice. Her automobile has been available countless times for the benefit of the children, especially in emergencies, and her direction of traffic
in front of the school before the patrol was organized was noteworthy. Miss Claybaugh's personal coaching of pupils in spelling and 4-H club work has won for herself and her pupils considerable distinction. She is alert to all situations pertaining to mental and physical phases of child life. Her recognition of the fact that problems of research in child welfare lie in the area of social relationships has enabled her to cooperate in studies which might throw a light on child welfare.

Under the supervision of Miss Claybaugh, teachers have received splendid training, some believing it to compare favorably with an advanced training course. However, one complacent teacher, who looked upon Miss Claybaugh as efficient in the superlative degree, remarked that since she was not cut out to be a teacher Miss Claybaugh's efforts to make her over were not appreciated. The general reaction of teachers toward Miss Claybaugh as their principal is that she is a diligent and unselfish character whose example inspires them to higher professional ideals. Miss Claybaugh believes that teachers who have interests in common with pupils and parents outside of school hours, such as those manifested in extra-curricular activities, add much to their value to the school.

Miss Claybaugh's influence has been far-reaching. Not only has she developed a social consciousness in those associated with her, but she has also promoted movements for the development of the community along economic, social and health lines. Through her efforts she has developed the school into a social center for those associated with the school and for outsiders eligible to participate in certain kinds of club work. Among groups which the principal has organized whose activities are beneficial to the community

---

are the Parent Teacher Association, Mother's Club, Home-Making classes, Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H clubs, Americanization classes, and orchestra. The two last named groups do not function at the present time. Miss Claybaugh does not fail to stress health and character building in their relation to community well-being.

Her attitude toward her position in the community is reflected in her statement: "I take the census. For many years I have taken the school census at Ashland Park school, and feel it is the best means of orientating myself in the community. One of the standards for recognition of better rural school teaching is, 'Have you visited or called in the home of each pupil this year?' I have. The teacher must be in sympathy with the community and its needs if she hopes to create the desired relation of the community to the school and of the school to the community."

The attitude of the community at large toward Miss Claybaugh is one of respect. No expression of homage can be stated that would justly describe her influence for good over a long period of years. Her own words, in a letter to a friend, reveal the unselfishness which characterizes her: "I am wishing for all continued happiness and good fortune and ability to live and serve."

(3) Teachers

Besides the principal, nineteen women teachers are employed, two of whom are special teachers, one part-time penmanship in all grades and the other music and art in all grades. At one time special teaching was done in physical training, but this was abandoned in 1932.

All teachers have at least a two year certification beyond high school while five hold college degrees. State requirements demand at least a normal training course in high school or an equivalent of twelve weeks of col-
lege work in addition to an examination in seventeen subjects. Teachers at Ashland Park school are selected carefully by the principal and school board who require personal interviews with all applicants. Because of the school standing and proximity to the city there has always been a greater supply than demand for teachers. Consequently there is a wide choice of teachers for selection, many of whom have training far exceeding the minimum requirement. Teachers value their experience at the school, especially if they should seek positions elsewhere. They frequently take more courses in psychology, sociology, and scientific teaching methods which afford a different outlook toward their work. Such study provides a "satisfactory understanding of the child in the second decade of life, which requires some detailed knowledge in terms of the general culture of the group, area or social class. The period and its characteristics are socially determined."¹² The teacher studies the child in his setting and pays attention to his handicaps, family background and social relationships. She also tries to create conditions so that children will have an opportunity to develop mentally, physically and socially in a normal environment. Effort is put forth to prevent the unadjusted child from becoming maladjusted.¹³

The teaching force is a social unit, its influence being far-reaching. Its leadership through extra-curricular activities helps to bring about an understanding and cooperation not only with the student body but with the community as well. The attitude of patrons and children toward the teachers is that of love, respect, and loyalty. Teachers who have left the school for marriage or other positions often return to visit as sentiment for the

---

¹² Ibid., p. 423.
¹³ T. E. Sullenger, Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency, p. 9.
community never seems to die.

(4) Board of Trustees

The present members of the school board are: J. B. Root, secretary; John Harder, moderator; George Cunningham, treasurer. Other members are August E. Ruser, E. W. Boggs, and Emerson Griffith. All live in different sections of the district and have been residents and home owners of many years. Since their occupations and interests vary, they are qualified, as a body, to understand the community and its needs. They are respected citizens whose office represents achievement in the field of education for children. Incidentally "these prerogatives and responsibilities form part of the successful man's conception of himself and part of the world's expectation of him." Election takes place at the annual school meeting each June to which any one living in the district may go. Two new members are voted in and two automatically go out of office each year. The term of office is three years. At this time a report on the school's finances is made as well as a general overview of activities and accomplishments during the year.

The board has the power to elect teachers and custodial help and renew their contracts. Married teachers are not considered and should a teacher marry during the school year her contract becomes automatically void. The board is responsible for supplies, maintenance, improvements, and expenses incurred therein. It handles other problems and emergencies affecting school life. Members cooperate with the principal who is present at all meetings which are held in the school building the last Wednesday evening of each month.

The relationship of the board to the teachers is that of friendliness.

---

and helpful understanding among board members themselves. Occasional differences of opinion arise which is wholly a normal situation. It is expected that "organization rather than disorganization will be the final outcome of these conflicts between the dominant personalities in the community."

Responsibility for the finances of the school rests with the board of trustees. At the annual district meeting a budget is estimated for the ensuing year. After allowing a certain percent for non-collectible funds, a mill levy to meet the amount is computed as follows:

\[
\text{Estimated budget} - \frac{\text{assessed property valuation}}{\text{budget}} = \text{mill levy.}
\]

The mills are then levied on every $100 assessed valuation, the number of mills changing in proportion to increase or decrease of the budget or assessed property valuation. The Douglas County Treasurer is recipient of all taxes paid and amounts collected for the school tax revert directly to the school district treasurer. Other sources of income for the district go into the general fund and are noted with expenditures in the attached Annual Report blank which is filled out and sent to the County Superintendent.

Funds raised by clubs and classes are usually kept in their own treasuries and used in the manner each club deems necessary. Amounts thus raised are not placed in the general school fund unless they are specifically declared for that purpose.

Table XIV reveals income, expenditures and value of district property for the ten year period ending June, 1937.

\[15\]

J. F. Steiner, *The American Community in Action*, p. 37
Table XIV
Showing Receipts, Expenditures and Value of District Property for Ten Years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Receipts</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>Value Dist. Prop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>$27,538.74</td>
<td>$27,215.04</td>
<td>$62,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>25,676.84</td>
<td>24,488.48</td>
<td>62,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>26,325.64</td>
<td>25,964.61</td>
<td>62,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>25,150.41</td>
<td>24,863.16</td>
<td>61,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>26,578.58</td>
<td>26,126.85</td>
<td>61,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>26,657.92</td>
<td>26,424.13</td>
<td>61,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>24,281.82</td>
<td>24,013.72</td>
<td>61,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>23,288.54</td>
<td>23,074.18</td>
<td>61,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>32,158.85</td>
<td>31,857.81</td>
<td>72,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>25,292.12</td>
<td>25,137.58</td>
<td>62,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>25,601.20</td>
<td>23,454.73</td>
<td>50,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these figures it may be noted that expenditures have not exceeded receipts in the entire ten year period and that district property value has decreased by $12,500 in the last year along with general decrease in property values.

The valuation of school property included the following items:

- School house $40,000.00
- Text books $2,500.00
- School site $2,500.00
- Apparatus $2,500.00
- Furniture $2,500.00

The per capita (pupil) cost furnishes important information when contrasting costs with other schools. It is determined by dividing the total expense by the average daily attendance as follows:

\[
\frac{23,454.73}{526} = 44.59
\]

The present indebtedness of the district is $10,500.00 on which $2,100 is paid annually. By 1942 the District expects to be free of debt.

(5) Relationship to County Superintendent

"The modern democratic program is a program of state promotion of public education. The state is the organized instrument for collective action, and education is the most thoroughgoing example of collective action." 16

The intermediary between the state and those seeking free public education in rural Douglas county is the County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Henry Eaton, who has held that office since 1921. His duties consist of interviewing prospective teachers, examining both teachers and pupils, issuing and renewing of teachers' certificates, holding of two-day institutes each year, cooperating with the local school board, seeing that all children of school age are attending some rural school and that Nebraska school laws are enforced in the county. He also compiles reports of each district for the State Superintendent of Instruction.

The Nebraska Course of Study is in the hands of every teacher and each year quarterly examinations based upon this course of study are sent out by the county superintendent. It is given to each class from the third to the eighth. Papers are graded by the teachers and pupils must make passing grades before they can be promoted. Every spring the eighth B class takes the final examinations given to all pupils in the county, which they must pass before they can be graduated.

What Is Done There

Administration of the school is similar to that of the larger city schools, yet the school is almost wholly independent of outside supervision. Some of its features not generally enjoyed by other rural schools include:

- Library
- Playground apparatus
- Two kindergarten rooms, A and B groups
- Wide range of extra-curricular activities
- Special teaching of music, art and penmanship
- Teaching of manuscript writing in grades 1 and 2
- A and B classes in all grades and semester promotions
- Weekly Readers, a children's newspaper graded to the child's ability to read

(1) Curricular Work

The course of study, approved by the State Superintendent and conform-
ing to standards similar to those of the Omaha grade schools, is elastic. It outlines subjects for each grade and designates a minimum amount to be covered each quarter and semester. A brief outline of each subject to be taught is given as a guide to teachers. Safety, character education and flag etiquettes are not overlooked. To meet the increased complexities of life, the new course of study covers a broader field and the outlines are more detailed than formerly. The new course represents the combined effort of educators, assisted by Chloe Baldridge, Director of Rural Education. Included is Miss Claybaugh's contribution concerning the division of history in the fifth grade into quarters.

Teaching along lines most natural to child life is encouraged and attempts to integrate subjects are made. Introduction of work-books throughout the grades coordinates subject-matter, the spelling material offering an especially important means toward this end. Examples of coordination frequently take place in dramatized form. Recently the 3A and 3B rooms, under the direction of Misses Stone, Adams, Mueller and Butcher, presented a joint pageant depicting early Nebraska life in which Indians, squaws, explorers, traders, trappers, and pioneers were characterized. Nebraska flowers, fish, birds, and butterflies played their part in symbolizing the natural life of the state.

In teaching reading the new method of presenting the whole concept of the word in the beginning prevails, the practice of teaching letters separately being no longer in evidence. Agriculture, which is correlated with geography, is one of fourteen subjects taught in the eighth grade. It is presented in a more scientific form than in former years. The present method of teaching agriculture, the only association with the soil for most children, is an indication of the trend away from rural life and toward
urban civilization. The study of the relationship of alcohol and narcotics to health is begun as early as the third year. This is a state requirement.

County examinations, based on the course of study, are given in the first to the eighth grades every nine weeks and are corrected by the teachers and results sent to the county superintendent. The graduation examinations, which begin in the seventh grade and end in the eighth, cover fourteen subjects. It is necessary that a student make a passing average if he wishes to graduate. At the end of the school year in May the examinations are taken in the school, while mid-winter graduates take them at the Court House in the superintendent's office.

Commencement is perhaps the outstanding event of the entire school year. Exercises are held jointly with other schools in the county in May. The time and place are determined by the superintendent. Places of meeting have been at Ashland Park school, Underwood, Valley, Waterloo, and the Court House. The winter graduates participate in the county wide graduation exercises in May. Local graduation exercises are now held by both classes separately. In the winter of 1936 admission to graduation exercises was by ticket only in order to keep out hundreds who had no direct interest in the graduates. The plan proved successful and lent dignity to the occasion.

Teachers arrive before 8:30 A.M. and may leave at 4:00 P.M. Morning school hours are from 9:00 to 12:00 except for the kindergarten and grades I and II which dismisses at 11:30. There is a fifteen minute recess at 10:30 and an hour for lunch. Afternoon classes begin at 1:00 and end at 3:50, primary classes dismissing at 3:30. The afternoon recess begins at 2:30. Time lost during the poliomyelitis ban upon opening of schools in the fall of 1937 has been made up by having ten minute recesses, lengthening the school day twenty minutes and holding classes during Christmas vacation, the
only day free having been the 24 of December.

A recent innovation is the use of an electric bell coordinated with an electric clock. The purchase was made by the Parent Teacher Association and proceeds from the milk fund. Previously a hand bell was used by the principal outside the main door when children were to line up outside. Time and energy are saved by the abandonment of lines as the children pass into the building. Children come in natural, not military order, and there is little or no discipline. Now within five minutes of the ringing of the first bell wraps are usually off and children in their rooms ready for work, many already working before the second bell.

A routine matter is the noon-day lunch period, which creates various problems. An excessive number of children bring their lunches, including those within a few blocks of the school. Reasons given by the parents are bad weather, muddy roads, and children are hurried too much by coming home for lunch. This deprives the teachers of any opportunity for rest or relaxation during the noon hours.

(2) Extra-Curricular Activities

Most organized activity aims at a single purpose although elements such as socializing values and development of new projects enter to form a combination of purpose. The classroom, the focal point of all interest, plays an important part in developing activity-consciousness in the school and consequently the community.

(a) Scholastic

The school library was begun in 1924. Patronage of the south side branch library could not be depended upon because of the distance and the fee required of non-residents. The Mothers' Club made it their definite project and by 1926 three hundred dollars' worth of library books was furn-
ished. Growth continued until today there are approximately two thousand volumes. The Mothers' Club attends to repairs and older children serve as librarians. There is a library period each week for children in the first, second, and third grades who do not take books home.

Other activities having a scholastic as well as entertainment value are educational movies shown during the day. An admission charge of two cents is made to cover costs. Usually three short subjects are covered in thirty or thirty-five minutes' time.

Orchestras have been formed from time to time according to availability of talent. The first one was organized twenty-five years ago and called the "community orchestra." Outsiders participated. The last one to serve the school was conducted three years ago. The City Civic orchestra under the Works Progress Administration has given concerts at the school without cost to the children.

The school is represented each year at the county fair at Waterloo and the state fair at Lincoln. At the county fair exhibits from the kindergarten to eighth grade are on display. Among honors won are those in Spelling in which the school placed first at the county fair 1925-1927. One of the contestants, who was taken to Missouri for an interstate match, won both the oral and the written contests. Exhibits in Penmanship have won many prizes at fairs. The school won first place in a mid-western Penmanship contest in 1927.

Agricultural exhibits are frequently sponsored in the upper grades, with grains, fruits, and vegetables grown in the county on display.

(b) Character-Building Clubs and Activities

At one time every room in the school beginning with the third grade was organized into a "Knighthood of Youth" club. At present only three
rooms, consisting of the combined classes of 4A - 4B, 7A and 8A are keeping up the work. The ideals of the club are "Happiness through service and self-improvement for everyone." It is a character-building club sponsored by the National Child Welfare Association of New York City. The State Department of Public Instruction cooperates with teachers and pupils in this movement.

Boy Scout Troop No. 54 was organized at the school in 1923. Being non-sectarian, non-military, and non-partisan, it has succeeded in leading boys of the school into an appreciation of the ideals for which it stands. Character, good citizenship and mental and physical health are stressed in the oath. It is comparable to the oath the young Athenian citizen took when he became seventeen years of age. The scout is reminded of his "daily good turn" and his duties to society. Boy Scouts, like other organizations, resort to various means of raising funds, the most recent being a bridge party to which all in the community have been invited. This form of raising money is a deviation from older methods. The first scoutmaster, Mr. Joe Maracek, held the position until succeeded by Sidney Spencer and Mr. John Anderson. Mr. Edward Urbanek is present Scoutmaster.

The Camp Fire Girls Organization is interested in the all-around development of girls and the recognition of good accomplished by them. The girls are made to realize that membership offers them a field for vital service. Appeal is to the thoughtful type of girl who desires to invest her time and work where it will yield valuable returns. "But wherever a real interest in her own development has been aroused in a girl, wherever she has learned cooperation and thoughtfulness for others, wherever ambition and purpose have

---

17 Knighthood of Youth, Club Guide.
been awakened, there the club has become a vital force for good in life."\textsuperscript{19} Activities are centered around seven "crafts:" home, health, hand, nature, camp, business, and citizenship. Sale of milk to children during the noon hour was started by this group under the leadership of Miss Pearl Carsch, but now the project has become a general school activity supervised by the principal. Present leaders are Mrs. Agnes Buntzen and Miss June Glidewell.

The 4-H clubs represent the youth movement on the American farms. The work is constructive. It inspires boys and girls not only to better agricultural methods and home life but also gives them guidance in the formative period of life. 4-H club members receive a vision of the possibilities of agriculture as a life work.\textsuperscript{20} The emblem is the four-leaf clover signifying the fourfold development of head, heart, hands, and health. The work is a publicly-supported and directed educational enterprise of the United States Department of Agriculture with State Agricultural colleges and county governments cooperating. These clubs are less active in this district than formerly because community interests are less agricultural.

Among the clubs that have been organized were calf, rope, sewing, canning, cooking, garden, and health. At present there are two sewing clubs and one boy's tool and woodworking club. Efforts are made to enliven club routine to make the work more interesting. Many county, state, and national honors have been won in 4-H club projects in the past fifteen years in Douglas county. Several members have won trips to the International Live Stock Show in Chicago. Miss Claybaugh has assisted in county 4-H work. Winning projects were demonstrations or judging teams in the fields of can-

\textsuperscript{19} H. Ferris, \textit{Girls' Clubs, Their Organization and Management}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{20} 4-H Handy Book, Pub. by National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work, Chicago.
ning, cooking, health, or gardening. A three-day camp is held each summer throughout the state in which several counties combine for recreation and enlightenment in club work. These camps receive the cooperation of the Extension Service of the University of Nebraska specialists who are sent out to assist in different phases of camp life.

(c) Health Activities

Each fall a doctor examines children for defects of eyes, teeth, ear, nose, or others suggested by the teachers. Findings are reported to the principal who notifies the parents and cooperates in correcting the situation, frequently by recommending free clinics.

In 1935 immunization was made against smallpox and diphtheria, at county expense. Children who have been out of school with contagious or infectious diseases, must obtain a certificate from the physician before they are allowed to return. Waves of absences in the past have been caused by epidemics of flu, diphtheria, impetigo and scarlet fever, though at no time has an epidemic reached major proportions. Absences from school, mostly due to colds, are slight, an important index to the health of the community. Two nurses employed by Works Progress Administration, working under supervision of the County Superintendent, visit all county schools. One comes to the school every Monday to examine children who need attention, especially those who have been out of school and have returned.

Physical training was once a part of the school curriculum but was abandoned for economic reasons. It is not taken care of by teachers in their own rooms. Considerable physical activity, however, takes place on the well-equipped playgrounds which are supervised by teachers at all times while children are out of doors. This results in a minimum of fights, accidents or molestation of little ones. A program of safety and fire pre-
vention in all grades included, recently, a study of accidents in the district. It was revealed that most accidents by automobile to pedestrians have occurred upon entering or crossing the roads at L, Q, and 42 Streets. Most accidents occur in the area between 42 and 48 and L and Q Streets. In line with the accident prevention project, under the direction of Miss Frieda Mueller, the eighth grade prepared a large map showing paved, gravelled, and dirt roads on which are placed colored tacks indicating places where accidents or deaths have occurred. It is an attempt to make pupils conscious of hazards in their community. The "Safety Patrol," consisting of dependable boys, is on duty in front of the school at dismissal time.

Fire prevention also plays a conspicuous part in the routine activities. Fire drills take place once a month. At the signal pupils walk out in orderly fashion, the fire tubes not being used.

Another all-school activity pertaining to health is the sale of milk during the lunch hour. The cost is five cents per half pint bottle with straw and cookies added. At one time hot lunches were served by different clubs for profit but the milk sale has proved more practical.

The state outline on Hygiene includes teaching of the effects of alcohol and narcotics, beginning in the third grade. Approximately forty minutes per day is devoted to the study of Hygiene, half the period being devoted to study while the other half is spent in recitation.

Another activity devoted to health is the Red Cross. The entire school is enrolled by rooms and the work is supervised by Miss Agnes Adams, teacher representative for the building. The program seeks "to promote health, to develop the altruistic tendencies in children, to give practice to good citizenship, and to promote international friendliness among the children of
the world." The program is also developed to influence kindness and consideration in home, school, neighborhood, country, and world. Subscriptions to the Junior Red Cross magazine does much to foster Red Cross ideals and international correspondence.

4-H Health Clubs, which symbolized one of the four H's, were active at one time but they do not exist today. Maintainence of good health was likened to a game in which rules had to be observed. Competitive and cooperative spirit awakened in club work what individual effort failed to accomplish. Emphasis was placed upon diet, posture, care of teeth, and feet through the media of health contests, dramatization, posters, demonstrations, and exhibits. Club leaders made health problems vivid. Demonstration teams won honors at county and state fairs. The clubs won first prize for three consecutive years at the state fair.

Disappearance of Physical Training and 4-H Health Clubs and the introduction of all-inclusive health activities with emphasis on mental hygiene indicated considerable change in the health program during the past ten years.

(d) Community Educational Activities

--Parent Teacher Associations--

"A good citizen is one who thinks in community terms. In order to achieve certain ends for his community, he allies himself with agencies and institutions which render definite services." The Parent Teacher Association which is the largest and strongest organized body of adults in the community is such an organization offering opportunities for services. It was organized in September, 1923, for the purposes of (1) promoting the physical

21 The American National Red Cross Pamphlet, Issued in Washington, D.C.
22 Sunday World-Herald Magazine Section, October 26, 1930.
welfare of the children, (2) organizing a Boy Scout Troop, and (3) developing friendly relations between parents and teachers. The first officers were: Mrs. S. C. Alter, president; Miss Bird Claybaugh, vice-president; and Mrs. E. D. Quimby, secretary; and Mrs. L. D. Snyder, treasurer. The objectives of the meetings were defeated at first because programs were unintentionally planned from an entertaining rather than from an inspirational or informational point of view. The parents came with their children, five or six hundred sometimes attending. Order was difficult to maintain as parents allowed the children to group together in front where they could see. Since there was no restraint from their elders, children were noisy and adults were not able to see nor hear the proceedings. The idea of guidance for the child, the original club purpose was neglected at these programs. After considerable campaigning and planning, parents began to attend alone for they realized they could not discuss the child and his needs in his presence. The original purposes of the club were accomplished together with other projects such as Americanization classes, School Banking, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H clubs, home talent plays and in earlier years a school orchestra. Each year father-son and mother-daughter banquets are sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association, attendance at the former averaging ninety while that of the latter being about one hundred and twenty-five. Equipment and pictures for the building have been purchased through the efforts of this organization. In 1932 a small irregular parcel of land adjoining the playground was purchased for $75, giving the school property a rectangular shape.

The present officers are: Mrs. Otto Spriester, president; Mrs. Ruth Tallman, first vice-president; Miss Bird Claybaugh, second vice-president; Mrs. Guy Chipman, secretary; Mrs. Joe Ling, treasurer; and Mrs. O. A. Dethlefs, historian. Term of office is one year, officers not being permitted
to serve more than two consecutive years. Election takes place in April and installation in May. Leaders keep in touch with the state and the national Parent Teacher Associations with which the local group is affiliated. Meetings are held the third Thursday evening of each month in the school auditorium. Projects under way are discussed and educational and instructional programs offered. The element of entertainment is not overlooked. Community singing and a half hour of socialized recreation under able leadership takes place after meetings. Afterwards refreshments are served. Annual dues are twenty-five cents per person.

Meetings are attended mostly by paying members although others are welcome. Everybody is invited to witness projects or other special programs. Membership from the beginning to the present has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be noted that membership in the first few years was not constant, but in the past five years it has remained almost the same.

The Ashland Park Parent Teacher Association was the first of its kind in Douglas County outside of Omaha. It has been instrumental in assisting other parent-teacher groups in Douglas County to organize.

---Mothers' Club---

The Mothers' Club was organized in 1925 as a home betterment club to cooperate with the Adult Education division organized under the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. Headquarters were in the City Hall of Omaha. The first officers were Mrs. Helen Gall, president and Mrs. Katherine Noe, secretary-
The Mothers' Club has not only built and maintained the library and fostered good will among mothers of the school but has also paid for the installation of a modern kitchen equipment. The present officers are: Mrs. Gail Clifton, president; Mrs. J. Wiley, vice-president; Mrs. S. Considene, secretary; and Mrs. Joe Middleton, treasurer. Term of office is one year, elections being held in May. Membership consists of from thirty-five to forty mothers who meet the second Wednesday of each month. The club winds up its year with a picnic to which the children are invited.

--Extension Project Club--

The Project Club was started in September, 1926 by a group of women wishing to learn and put into practice definite ideas concerning home development. The work is one of the groups of services offered by the University of Nebraska State Extension Service of the Home Economics Department, with the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. The local
Farm Bureau with headquarters in the Court House supervises the projects. Individual circulars of plans and suggestions are issued to each member. A definite topic of the year is selected and each month separate lessons are studied. Occasionally an Extension Specialist comes from Lincoln to assist in planning and working out projects. Six lessons complete the year's work and at the end of the year an Achievement Day is held at which time friends are invited to attend a program to witness the accomplishments of that year.

Because the women lived in a community that was more rural than it is now, earlier projects embraced gardening, poultry, and the family cow. Topics which are chosen today are more urban and include such topics as "Nutrition," "Living at Home," "Arranging the Home," "Safe Buying," " Beautifying the Home Grounds," "The Convenient Kitchen," and "Home Accessories." The subject of gardening is one of the few topics recently chosen which was also popular years ago.

Membership is open to any woman in the community regardless of race, creed, or school connections. Meetings were at first held in homes but membership became so large that two groups containing twenty-five members each were organized. Now membership in the club is limited to thirty and meetings in the last two years have been held at the school every fourth Thursday at ten o'clock in the morning. After the business meeting the group divides into two separate study classes, each of which is presided over by two leaders. Dues are ten cents per year, each member paying additional fees as the occasion demands. Four to six women are responsible each month for refreshments which add to the pleasure of the meetings.

Present officers are: Mrs. Floyd Flynn, president and Mrs. Burns Jedynek, secretary-treasurer, whose offices run for one year. Four project
leaders are elected, two each year. The latest to be elected are referred
to as leaders "B" while the senior officers are called leaders "A". Project
leaders "A" at the present time are mesdames: W. W. Carlson and O. A. Deth-
lefs. Project leaders "B" are mesdames Walter Gladwell and E. W. Boggs.

Broader contacts of the club are made as outside matters present them-
selves. In 1952 the club sent representatives to the state legislature
when the position of the county agent was in jeopardy. There is also af-
filiation with the state council, and two cents per member is charged in
order to send a delegate to state meetings.

(e) Miscellaneous

Among miscellaneous activities in the school was a dramatic club whose
work was halted in 1913 when the large original auditorium was diminished
in size through the conversion of part of it into classrooms. Obstacles of
this sort did not daunt the spirit of the progressive young people. They
turned their energies to other channels such as collecting old rubber and
paper from the sale of which a start was made on a fund for a victrola.
The final purchase of the machine was considered an important event. Con-
certs, which were given after the school hours, paid for the victrola and a
few good records. Tastes and ideals of the homes were brought out by rec-
ords which were frequently loaned by parents to the school. Other uses of
the victrola included furnishing accompaniment to kindergarten games, march-
ing, physical training exercises, and penmanship drills. Records of songs
of various birds native to this country supplemented bird slides. In addi-
tion to the victrola there were purchased pictures, a piano, and office
furniture and furnishings.

The School Board, Parent Teacher Association and Mothers' Club combined
to pay for a typewriter, a mimeograph, and, more recently, the electric bell
and clock.
National holidays and special days are observed in the school, in the classrooms or at day or night assemblies. In 1931 a pet show was conducted in which all children were invited to participate. Recently puppets were made and shows presented by the eighth grade pupils under direction of Miss Frieda Mueller.

Among non-profit activities of the past were the Americanization classes and school banking. Miss Agnes Adams taught evening classes for immigrants in the school from 1927 to 1928 and 1931 to 1932. Since the quota of foreigners has restricted the number entering the country there has been practically no demand for re-opening of classes. Bank Day, promoted since 1926 by the National Thrift Service, was abandoned in the early days of the depression.

Among adult activities which were an outgrowth of the economic depression was a sewing unit which operated under the Women's and Professional Division of the Works Progress Association and met in the basement of the school. Work was begun in the winter of 1936, continued through the summer, and ended in the winter of 1937. Hours were from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Three or four hours a week were devoted to instruction in budgeting, diet, and nutrition, and general home management. Afterwards many joined the only unit operating at the present time, in the old M. E. Smith building in Omaha. From thirty-seven to forty-five women took advantage of this project which netted the $55.00 monthly unskilled labor wage. Most were unable to sew when starting but were taught the work. Women's and children's dresses, underwear, comforts, and quilt tops were made. The finished product was turned over to another project called the "Commodity Distribution" which gave the articles to relief families. The work is still carried on in the city.
Ashland Park As A Social Force

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt recently stated: "If the rural school of the future can make a really useful community center, we shall be on the road toward making rural life pay dividends not only in money, but in other types of satisfactions." Ashland Park school, though not strictly rural, is achieving this goal from the standpoint of social "satisfactions" through its many activities reaching hundreds of persons. In this way the school has become the greatest single social force in the community. It has been suggested by ambitious leaders that the school should take the initiative, or at least an active part, in all matters with which the community is concerned. Some believe that the school should go so far as to assume the role of community organizer. It is doubtful that such proposals will become an issue because of the pull away from the school as a central force owing to metropolitan invasion.

(1) Values of Extra Curricular Work

Extra-curricular activities are an important factor in the school's value as a social force. Under the supervision of Miss Claybaugh, extra-curricular activities have received much attention and their social values have been emphasized. Such interests not only knit more closely together the teachers and pupils but create a better understanding between school and community. An example of the dependence of the school upon the good will and faith of the people of the district is expressed by the principal as follows: "If you were to take from our building the accessories which we have acquired through community spirit, our school would seem lifeless indeed." Parents, on the other hand, learn to appreciate efforts the school is making in behalf of their children. By participation in these activities, parents, teachers, and children all see each other in a different light.
Children and patrons become more loyal to the school. A broader outlook is gained by all, and there can be no over-estimation of the socializing value of such activities.

(2) Leadership

The school's position in the community is strengthened by its outstanding leadership among both children and adults. Through association with others, leaders develop an appreciation and toleration which results in a sense of loyalty. 24 Eighth grade graduates reflect the training received as leaders in various activities which prove valuable to them when they assume similar responsibilities in high school.

Many women have made club work a career in which they "hold together more strongly their families or raise them to new positions. It is possible to have a career in an avocation as well as in a vocation." 25 Such women have opportunity to develop personality, poise, self-confidence and social-consciousness otherwise denied them. In rare cases over-confidence and self-importance are results of leadership. It is through influence, responsibility, and recognition that leaders have affected the social order and made their community better places.

Conflicts among leaders are uncommon but those existing are usually the result of primitive struggles for power and prestige, or, more often, jealousy. 26 The economic depression, accompanied by its interplay of social forces, has intensified this feeling. Reactions of discordant parties are

indicated through grumblings which have not become issues involving opposing factions. In spite of occasional friction, which is not destructive, there is no disunity. A social consciousness and a social mind are present where such stability prevails. Quitters are seldom known and children of leaders often possess the quality of perseverance. Though individuals in the school may clash, there is no conflict between the school and any other group or organized body in the community.

After the School Life is Ended

(1) Graduates

Graduation from Ashland Park school is anticipated with much eagerness as it represents a fulfillment in the elements of education accompanied by public acknowledgement. For many the experience does not repeat itself in higher forms of education. Thus graduation is considered the most important event of the school year.

In comparison with neighboring city schools, the number of graduates of each is shown in Fig. 10.

(2) What They Make of Themselves

After graduation in earlier years many girls of foreign parentage sought employment in homes as domestics or in packing plants as sausage workers. Boys usually went immediately to work in the plants and yards as laborers. Today the urge to go to work for most graduates still persists, but since many are under sixteen years of age and positions are not available, high school entrance is the only alternative. Although drop-outs are heavy, many finish high school who did not originally plan to do so. Most of the Ashland Park graduates attend South High School, thirty blocks east of Ashland Park School. The number graduating from South High School in

---

Ibid., p. 248.
COMPARING GRADUATES OF ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL WITH NEIGHBORING SCHOOLS FROM 1920 TO 1937

LEGEND:
- ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL
- GEALS SCHOOL
- ROBBINS SCHOOL
- CORRIGAN SCHOOL

FIG. 10

SOUTH HIGH GRADUATES FROM ASHLAND PARK SCHOOL

FIG. 11
recent years is shown in Fig. 11.

Great elation in the homes is noted as the economic burden is lifted when a young person has "found a job." People are content and their demands upon life are not many as long as they are able to make a living. There is no incentive in most families for a higher education although they desire to become useful citizens.

The financial status of families is the determining factor in entrance into a university. Those from Ashland Park school who have acquired higher education are: James Dille, M. A., Howard Hull, B. A. Elsie Chizek Rosenquist and Doris and Viola Root. Those still in college are Dale Ruser and Libbie and Lillian Blazkovec.

Interruption of young people who have attended the school frequently takes place. Many of the young couples, providing their financial status does not change, prefer to establish their homes in the community in which they were brought up. Regardless of the small, even "tiny," size of most homes, they prefer the domestic life offered by one family dwellings. In view of this attitude there can be no "movement" to the city as they already share in its social and economic life. After marriage former students frequently visit the school, their interest and loyalty persisting. Such loyal patronage has helped build the school's spirit of enthusiasm and success. 28

**Church Life**

No attempt has been made to determine the relative social value or comparative influence of either schools or churches in the community because District No. 4 boundaries are not identical with those of parish boundaries. School District No. 4 contains 324 square blocks or 32.1% of the territory

---

of Holy Ghost parish while the sphere of influence of Mosher Memorial Presbyterian church is more or less confined to the locality around the church. Each institution is treated separately in the light of its own value to its people and the resultant value to the community.

Although it is not possible to determine church preference of all the inhabitants of the district under study, a fair sample has been obtained through the school questionnaire. Out of 284 families represented, 187 or 65.5% claimed membership in some church while ninety-one disclaimed membership in any church. Six did not answer the question. One hundred and ninety-seven families, irrespective of affiliation, had contact with some church as shown in Table XV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table XV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing Denominational Preferences of 197 Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light House Mission 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is readily observed that the Catholics and Presbyterians, representing the only two churches in the community, predominate. Although no statistics are available, there seem to be fewer potential members moving into the community. According to recent United States census figures, J. M. Gillette\(^\text{29}\) states that only about forty per cent of the rural population are church members but whether or not this fact has a bearing on the status of the churches in the community under discussion is not known.

There are definite deterring elements to church growth at the present

\(^{29}\) Rural Sociology, p. 440.
time, such as lowered income, excessive shifting of population, and attitudes toward religion the effects of which pastors and lay leaders are striving to overcome. Both churches are endeavoring to play their proper role in modern community life. According to E. C. Lindman the church group should have a clear and scientific knowledge of the child, his impulses, and instincts if the church is to achieve its goal. Both churches, especially the Catholic, are making gains based on this principle. Thus the church body proves to be one of the most vital and powerful associations of life.31

Holy Ghost Church and School

History and Growth

Since Holy Ghost church and school are closely inter-woven, they will henceforth be treated as a definite social unit rather than as two separate institutions.

Although earliest settlers and many to follow were Irish Catholics there was no Catholic church or school in the community until the present structures were built. Omaha's first Catholic church, Saint Mary's, built in 1856 at 8 and Harney Streets, was attended by the earliest pioneers of the community. After the "Magic City" came into being, Catholics attended church in South Omaha. The first mass was celebrated in November, 1885 in the Ryan school house on 27 Streets between N and M Streets in the same building in which the Union Sunday school was organized earlier. Both services were held here until October, 1886, when old Saint Bridget's mission, part of Saint Patrick's parish of Omaha and located at 26 and F Streets, was

30 The Community, pp. 34-5.
31 Ibid., p. 35.
INTERPOSING MAP SHOWING COMPARATIVE AREA OF DISTRICT NO. 4 AND HOLY GHOST PARISH.

ENROLLMENT (NOT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE) OF HOLY GHOST SCHOOL FROM 1925 TO 1937
opened by Reverend John Jeannette and later taken over by Father D. W. Morearity. The frame chapel was dedicated to Saint Bridget. Later a school, the first Catholic school in South Omaha, was opened under the Sisters of Mercy, but it lasted only a year. In 1889 Saint Agnes' church and school were opened at 23 and Q by Reverend Morearity who was appointed for a new area embracing the entire city of South Omaha. He became the first resident parish priest in the new city, and the Sisters of Mercy continued in charge of the school. For the next five years Saint Bridget's was attended simply as a mission.  

Saint Agnes' Church is known as the Mother church of South Omaha and was counted among the important institutions of the fast-growing city, with many members attending from outlying districts, including that of the community under investigation.

Before Holy Ghost church was built, Catholics from the district went in all directions for worship. Some continued at Saint Agnes' while others attended Saint Mary's in South Omaha and St. Joseph's in Omaha. The church of their choice often depended on the nationality of its membership.

A mission was started in Ralston by the Augustinian Fathers in July, 1917. First an upstairs hall in the Skinner building, later destroyed by fire, was used and next an empty store building was turned over to the mission. Many from the western part of the district under discussion went there to worship. The Catholic population grew, and realization of the purpose of the mission having come to pass, the parish was established. Activities in Ralston were transferred to the present site, which was originally a cornfield of about six acres purchased many years before by the Omaha

---

32 Rev. J. H. Ostdieck, Catholic Education in Omaha, p. 11
33 M. Williams, The Catholic Church in Action, p. 211.
Diocese and resold to the Order of St. Augustine in October, 1917. About eight active families participated in the move. In March, 1918 the rectory, a frame building containing the chapel, was the first structure to be built. By 1921 the number of Catholic families had increased to the extent that building of the present brick structure was warranted. It was completed in 1922 at a cost of $50,000. Valuation has increased to $60,000 by 1937.

Among the early leaders in the present parish were Alfred Adams, Charles Martin, Max Pitzel, Mike Thell, Sr., Mrs. Mary Sullivan, Chester Penfield, Anton Prusha, and John Pop. Father Gabriel Salinas was the first priest in charge. This socially-minded group possessed the faculty of knowing that "wherever work is done for man, wherever humanity is benefited and lifted upward, God's sweet religion is there."\(^{34}\)

Prior to 1935 the church had been the Mother House for the Recollect Order of the Augustinian Fathers of whom Father Salinas is the Vicar Provincial in the United States.

Description

As one travels up the hill west on Q toward 60th the attractive, rectangular, brick building, situated a-half block to the south, commands a beautiful view of the open countryside. The church occupies the second floor, the school the first floor and the parish hall, the basement. Original plans included transformation of the entire building into a school in the event of future increase in Catholic population in the community. The stucco rectory to the south, the first frame house previously mentioned, contains a classroom to supplement space in the main building.

The boundary lines of Holy Ghost parish extend beyond those of School District No. 4. From east to west boundaries are 42 to 84 Streets while from

north to south the territory extends from I to Harrison Streets. The farthest distance traveled to the church is twenty-eight blocks.

The present pastor of the church is Reverend Henry Cajetan Zaranton, of the Augustinian Recollect Order, who, as Father Henry, has not only won the esteem and admiration of all who know him, but also commands deep respect and loyalty of all his parishioners. Rev. Zaranton, A. R., was born in Madrid, Spain, where he received two years' of education for the priesthood, followed by advanced training at St. Benedict's College, Atchison, Kansas. He took up the pastorate at Holy Ghost in November, 1937, after having spent some time in observation with Father Gabriel Salinas, whom he succeeded. In addition to the celebration of the Mass, the highest function of the priest, he is teacher, preacher, inspirer, friend, and consoler. In all these responsibilities Father Henry has not only endeared himself to his parishioners but has proven a worthy leader in the community.

One hundred seventy-five families belong to the church. Persons of different political or economic views may oppose each other on various issues but as they assemble in worship their interests are of one accord. People worship and work together, but the manifold nationalities frequently cause a divergence toward other forms of social contact such as family cliques, clubs, and lodges where a foreign language is spoken, a natural condition. English is the language spoken at Holy Ghost.

It is conceded by most people that Catholics are foremost in establishing parish schools, and Holy Ghost was not slow in getting its school started. Only lack of material means prevents it from accommodating all Catholic children. In 1923 Father Milkulski founded the school which was organized under the direction of the Urusuline nuns of York, Nebraska. By 1926 there

---

Ibid., p. 205.
were 192 pupils. The school contains five classrooms and conducts grades one to eight. A high school course up to the tenth grade was inaugurated in 1925 but was discontinued in 1930. At the present time 175 are in attendance although the years 1929 and 1950 witnessed a total enrollment of 225. The economic decline is undoubtedly a contributing factor to the decreased enrollment. There is no financial assistance from the outside, income constituting amounts received from patrons and friends of the school. Despite conditions the school is running to capacity.

Pupils attending Holy Ghost are no different in background from those attending other schools excepting that practically all are from Catholic homes. In a few cases where distance to the public school is too great or hazardous for walking very young non-Catholic children are accepted. There are four teachers, nuns of the order of Servants of Mary, whose Mother House is located at 74 Military Road, northwest of Omaha. There are no lay teachers at the present time. Educational requirements for the sisters are the same as those for other teachers in the state.

In 1919 a law was enacted which compels all private and parochial schools to conform substantially with the public schools of the district in course of studies, number of days of school session and qualifications of school teachers. All the sisters at Holy Ghost have at least a two-year certificate, which is above the legal minimum. The depression has been felt by the teachers as their salaries have been decreased considerably. Contacts between pupils and teachers are more frequent than those found in the public school because of church affiliation of the entire family. Consequently loyalties toward school and church are interwoven and form the basis of the social life of the group.

36 Rev. J. H. Ostdiek, Catholic Education in Omaha, p. 7.
The course of study is similar to that of other rural schools in Douglas County, excepting that the element of religion is embodied to form an integrated whole. The correlation of church and school is based on the philosophy that where religion is made an integral part of education a happy and peaceful social and public life are likely to prevail.\footnote{Editorial, "The Catholic Family and the Community," Catholic Action, XVII:18.}

In addition to the teaching of secular subjects, twenty-five or thirty minute periods are devoted daily to formal religious instruction. The history of the Catholic church in America is treated as a separate subject and religion is correlated with Civics, History, and other social studies.

Supervision of the school is under the Diocesan Superintendent of schools, Reverend J. H. Ostdiek, whose jurisdiction covers the Catholic grade and high schools of the diocese of Omaha which includes twenty-three counties of northeast Nebraska. The office of superintendent acts as an intermediary between the State Department of Public Instruction and the Catholic schools. His duties include carrying out of courses of study prescribed by the state, certification of teachers, abidance by general school laws and preservation of the identity of the Catholic schools.

Mobility in the district, which has increased since the depression, is not favorable to the interests of the school or church for mobile families fail to take hold and lend support. Such families do not feel rooted in the community life and therefore do not commit themselves to participate in any of its problems nor are they interested in its future.\footnote{R. S. Lynd, Middletown in Transition, p. 188.} Morally, socially, and financially, mobile families are a liability although the church does not reject them.
Activities

Church and school activities, as well as the curriculum, serve the church although each activity has its lighter and less serious purpose of recreation and sociability. However, activities cannot be regarded as distinct from each other for the unity of Catholic life embraces them all. 39

The Blessed Virgin Sodality is a federated society for young girls whose object is works of charity and prayer. Among pleasures indulged in are roller-skating parties in the basement hall once a week. Smaller children have access to the hall for skating on Sunday afternoon.

The Newman club for high school boys and girls is organized to bring together youth of the parish to increase their service and loyalty to the church. Dances are sponsored by the group every other week; and card parties and games at other intervals.

The Holy Name Society, which is for young men, is a branch of one of the largest Catholic Societies in the world for the teaching of religion. It is of Dominican origin and is mainly under Dominican direction. 40 Its devotion and responsibility in philanthropic work and the advancement of the church are not exceeded by that of any other group.

The Ladies' Altar Society consists of married women who take care of the altar linen, the surplices of priests and altar boys, and the adornment of the church and altar.

A women's choir, directed by Sister Germaine, furnishes music for both religious and social activities. This singing group and a five-piece orchestra contribute to the enjoyment of all who benefit by them. Private music lessons are offered by the sisters to any who wish to take advantage of such

40 Ibid.
training. A library which the sisters have built up for their own use continues to be enlarged.

An all-school paper consisting of about seven mimeographed sheets with illustrations is issued monthly by children and sisters of the school. It is called the "Flash" and the staff consists of an editor, assistant editor, and reporters from grades three to eight.

A baseball team is active each spring. It competes with other parish grade school teams in and around South Omaha. Physical Training was once a part of the regular school program, but currently less emphasis is placed on the physical and more the spiritual, mental, and moral phases of life. The health of the children is guarded by nurses sent out from the City Health Department. Thus health supervision and services are looked upon as a community function while health education is regarded as a school responsibility. There is a feeling that since the church is in a rural community most children walk a considerable distance to school, thus receiving plenty of exercise.

There has never been a Boy Scout troup, but Father Henry is planning to organize one in the spring of 1933. A non-religious but all-school activity is the selling of Red Cross seals in the community each Christmas. Other activities which include both church and school are plays, card parties, and chicken dinners to which all the community are invited.

Leadership among the laity is the chief need in the fulfillment of their mission. Ideals and leadership are reflected among men and women who are resolute, reliable, and well-trained in faith and morals, who "form after their own character the mass of their fellow-Catholics." All the faithful, in their desire to infuse into society the spiritual life of Christ, are

41 Arch. J. Ireland, The Church and Modern Society, p. 234.
leaders in their own right in that they represent the Church in movements making for truth and moral goodness.

All efforts on the part of the devout to increase the effectiveness of the church are looked upon with favor providing the endeavor is guided by the principles of Catholicism.

Although Catholics consider themselves a community within a community, it does not imply that they wish to become isolated. On the contrary, their teachings encourage interest in the general life of society and consciousness of the definite part each must play in the community.

Forms of action to meet the new needs of this age, as well as intensification of older traditional forms, are constantly held in view. An example of community morality, which local residents regard as high, is shown in the church's initiative in suppressing the unwholesome influence of taverns in the district. The church has often succeeded in getting the taverns closed but political influence is sought to reopen them. Such church action indicates an orientation to problems of the modern world by putting into action the ethical factors of the Christian religion.

Mosher Memorial Presbyterian Church

History and Growth

The Protestant churches in the early days of Omaha were not visited by the first settlers of the community for few, if any, were Protestants. As South Omaha grew churches of many denominations were organized, and these were often attended by residents from the community. The first church service in South Omaha, the Union Sunday school, was organized by Reverend Charles Savidge and held in the Ryan school house on 27 Streets between M and N Streets. Services were begun in September, 1884 and continued until 1886. The first Protestant churches and their organizers were as follows:
First Methodist, Rev. T. B. Hilton, 1886; South Omaha Presbyterian Mission, Rev. G. W. Dodge, 1887; Baptist Church, Rev. F. W. Foster, 1887; German Evangelical Lutheran Zion, Rev. E. J. Frese, 1888; Episcopal Church Society, Rev. R. L. Knox, 1889. In 1889 and '90 there were formed two branches of the Presbyterian mission. One was in the fourth ward. The other, on 13 Streets south of Missouri Avenue, was later transferred into the community under investigation to constitute the present Mosher Memorial Church.

There was no Protestant movement in the community until 1902, when a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Lambert, decided to start a Sunday school. No other place being available, they held it in the Ashland Park school building for eight years. Sunday school teachers from Wheeler Memorial Church came out to teach until local talent was available. The work was carried on until 1910, when permission to use the school building was withdrawn. It was then that Dr. R. L. Wheeler of the Wheeler Memorial church in South Omaha became interested. A branch of the church, the mission of the Minnie Maxwell's Kings Daughters, the one referred to before, was moved physically in the summer of 1910 to the present location at 49 and S Streets. The Lamberts continued their work until Mr. Lambert's employment kept him away from home so much of the time that it retarded his progress in church work. About this time Mrs. Emma Mosher, a woman who lived in modest circumstances on a small acreage at 60 and Q, became interested in enlisting children as well as adults in the church. Her white horse and buggy were in constant use as she called on people in the community in her capacity as parish worker until her death in 1913. The church now bears her name. Mrs. Mosher was a leader in the real sense that her leadership included organizing, discovering, and inventing in her direction of natural and social force.  

Rev. Wheeler's supervision others took up the work where Mrs. Mosher left off.

In 1924 Elmer J. Larson, an elder of the Third Presbyterian church who was studying for the ministry at the Omaha Presbyterian Theological Seminary, was engaged as student pastor. He brought with him Mrs. Kate Kopeland of the same church who assisted as parish worker and held mid-week prayer meetings. In 1925 four elders, four deacons and four trustees were elected and about one hundred and twenty people were received into the church by Rev. Elmer Emhoff of Wheeler Memorial Church. Thirty-five adults and twenty-five infants were baptized. In April, 1926, Rev. Larson became resident pastor of the church and served until March, 1928. Part-time ministers served from that time until the fall of that year. These were Dr. Julius Schwartz, Rev. George S. Bancroft, and Rev. R. R. Elkin. In September, 1931 Rev. J. C. Cummings, came. About this time there were three hundred and twenty-six members. Members moved in and out, but there always remained a small loyal group willing to carry on.

The present minister is Rev. Edward Holub, a full time pastor who succeeded Rev. Cummings in April, 1934. From the standpoint of personality he impresses those who know him as kind and sympathetic, yet forceful when occasion arises. He is highly "sociable" and thinks in terms of service to his community. There is every indication of a highly socialized personality capable of wielding great influence. His congregation is happy under his leadership and reflects appreciation of his efforts to build up church life in all its departments. He is frequently referred to by his congregation as an "excellent spiritual leader" and "number one preacher." The elders of the church at the present time are Messrs. E. Griffith, G. Haacke, and L. Munsinger.

43 Ibid., p. 53.
About the time the church was receiving its start a small group of Swedish Lutherans, under sponsorship of the Gethsemane Swedish Lutheran church of South Omaha, met and held services in the Smithberg barn at 46 and Q Streets, but later the group dissolved and members went to various Lutheran churches in the city.

Description

Mosher Memorial church is a small white frame building located on a level stretch of ground in the midst of many cottages, two blocks south of Q Streets. Its dimensions are twenty-four by forty-eight feet with ten foot studding. The church auditorium, which is fourteen feet high, is on the main floor, elevated several feet above the ground. The basement, excavated and completed in 1922, is used for Sunday school and recreational purposes. Besides the building, the church property consists of two lots which were donated by the Homestead Real Estate Company which had converted one hundred and sixty acres of the Toner property into nine hundred and sixty lots. The lots had a valuation of $260 a piece. There was a slight difference in opinion regarding the location of the church but this was overcome without dissention. In February, 1915 the church received title to the property, which has a present valuation of about $4000.

When the building was made ready for occupancy, with the assistance of the Presbytery, there was much rejoicing and an increase in general activity. Like other small country churches, it moved in cycles of greater or less activity.

The membership, of eighty-five, represents 4.4% of the adult population over twenty-one. Nearly all members live in the community but represent many different nationalities. For many years about ten families have formed a staunch nucleus around which church life evolved. Attendance at church at
the present time is about forty; about twenty-five families living in the community are inactive. The farthest distance that members come to the church is two miles. The nearest Protestant church is ten blocks away.

Early conflicts among church members have been few and of minor significance. Among these was an incident which arose over the installation several years ago of a radio in the basement to which young people were invited to listen to baseball games and other news. Some contended that the church should not be used for such programs but objections were withdrawn as the radio became popular and programs more varied. Early broadcasts attracted many young people to the church and formed part of their recreation. Now that this form of entertainment is easily obtained in the homes it no longer has appeal at the church. Attempts are constantly made to satisfy wants in the field of amusement, recreation, and sport. A church which can maintain the spirit and ideal of social service besides that of its chief function, sectarianism, will be vigorous and vital, and all these things the leaders of Mosher Memorial church strive to do.

Activities

In addition to the regular Sabbath service, special prayer meetings are held every Tuesday evening. An annual meeting of the entire congregation takes place at which time a summary of the year's work is reviewed. The oldest and most active organization is the Ladies' Aid Society, now called the Ladies Missionary Club, which functioned long before the church came into being with thirty to thirty-five members, meeting in different homes. Its organizers were Mesdames Lottie Schroeder, Amy Duff, and Rev. Wheeler. The first president was Mrs. Emma Mosher and other officers were Mesdames Churchwell, Lambert, Pearson, Risley, and Carlisle. The financial problem

---

was always one of great concern, but the ladies took the initiative in raising funds by sewing, quilt-making, conducting luncheons, ice cream socials, and bazaars, now called "fairs."

The Men's Club, organized in recent years, has been active in the religious and social interests of the church. Today it has a membership of fifty. Religious meetings are followed by programs and a social hour both of which help make church interests more vital. Other recreational activities sponsored by the men are plays and moving pictures. A ball team functioned during previous years. In place of a father-son banquet the Men's Club cooperates with the entire church group in observing "Family Night," which includes a dinner to which the whole family are invited. At the time of writing the club is raising funds for a substantial fence around the church grounds. The officers of the Men's Club are: E. Griffith, L. Kreeger, and E. Mullin; president, vice-president, and treasurer respectively. The young people's organization, known as the Christian Endeavor, also functions as a devotional body, meetings being held on Sunday preceding the evening service. Before the meeting luncheon is usually served and afterwards there is the social hour during which the young people enjoy themselves informally and become better acquainted. The group also sponsors picnics and hikes into the country. The children of the church meet in Sunday school in the basement every Sunday morning one hour before the eleven o'clock service. The attendance averages 190 each week. Among activities of the Sunday school are pageants, plays, and picnics, which are often combined with adult outings.

A printed weekly paper called the "Mosher Memorial Visitor" contains not only news of religious and recreational activities of the church but also general community news. It is supported by advertising of local and
South Omaha firms. At one time the paper had a circulation of one thousand, requiring the services of one editor, six assistants, three managing editors and four carriers. Today its size and circulation have decreased. Church topics and local news rank high in appeal to readers as the Omaha daily papers carry little or no news concerning the community. Programs and circulars are printed as occasion arises.

Activities in all departments of the church at the present moment are enjoying a state of renewed activity after a period of languishment due to the economic depression and the accompanying shift in population. Mosher Memorial has passed through other periods of growth and decline but vigorous leadership has always brought the church back. One of the outstanding leaders in the past was Reverend Larson who, during his four-year pastorate, worked zealously to overcome difficulties and did much to revive, if not exceed, the spirit of other days. Reverend Holub is also making strides toward a revival of church interest which is already showing results. The tendencies on the part of such leaders to think, act, and achieve form the basic elements of personality and leadership.

Perhaps the most deterrent factor today is the mobility of the population. The tendency of people moving into the district is to rent, rather than purchase, their homes. Such a situation creates a trend away from home ownership, a condition opposite to that of the earlier settlers. Consequently the development of established institutions such as church and school, are likely to be affected. Other forces besides the depression and mobility that must be taken into consideration are the proximity to the city and rapid means of transportation. Many pass up the smaller church on their way to the larger city churches whose attractions are larger because

---

they have more finely furnished buildings, well-trained choir and superior music, higher salaried and more experienced preachers. All these tend to withdraw members from the neighborhood meeting house, thus making it difficult to find sufficient support and lay leadership, mobile inhabitants feeling no responsibility for keeping up the social and moral life of the community. 46

In spite of elements of decline in church growth, Mosher Memorial is often found crowded and at times over-crowded when special activities take place. Former members and friends have not wholly lost their interest and affection for "the little country church" which meant something to them in an earlier day.

Summary

The churches and schools are Ashland Park school, Holy Ghost Catholic school and church and Mosher Memorial Presbyterian church. As institutions of learning and religion they are of the highest social significance because of their influence upon the general life of the community.

It is also in these institutions that the cooperative spirit of the people is most evident. These three institutions, as separate units, are today social centers and social unifiers for their own people. The earliest form of institutional life in a broad sense came with the establishment of compulsory school laws at the beginning of the century. The community became more completely socialized, the building of the first brick school being an early example of social consciousness despite friction regarding its construction. Citizens watched the school's progress until today its classroom and auditorium are practically in constant use, thus exemplifying the school's aim of becoming a socializing force in the community.

The churches, which came after the establishment of the public school, have become deeply rooted as a dynamic force in individual as well as community life. In the realization of the concept of the Catholic church, the school is not separated from religious education, and religion permeates intellectual learning in all its branches. The Protestant church, on the other hand, is concerned with religion only, although leaders in this church are frequently leaders in public school activities.

Although Ashland Park school was the social center of the rural community before the advent of the churches, it would be impossible for the school, in spite of its planned social program, or for the church, to assume general leadership today. The wide breach in views concerning religion and the absence of religion in the public school accounts for the condition. However, all three institutions are a vital force in the community and each makes its own attempts to solve new problems as they arise. Sectarian conflicts are unknown, there having always been a harmonious existence of the churches as they function in their own spheres. There was no known friction in the early days of the little country school, close harmony existing among all concerned. As the community became more thickly populated, conflicts began to appear as a result of transition from the old to the new. Though conflicts among present leaders arise within the group they do not form any particular deterrent to progress. There is little possibility of conflict in Holy Ghost circles crystallizing into an issue because there is, from a religious, social, and intellectual point of view, a singleness of purpose engendered by the tenets of the Church.

The churches, and Ashland Park school, offer the main and perhaps only contact with group life. Consequently these institutions have for many persons become a means of group control for their respective adherents or
participants. The socializing influence of church and school have brought about more intermarriage than that found in early community life. The church, as an institution restricted to persons subscribing to a certain religious faith, cannot hope to become a community agency because at best it includes, like the school, only sections of the population. However, neither is unmindful of its duty toward the social and civic life of the community.

Social conditions since 1932 have increased mobility, thus resulting in excessive interruption of affairs in both church and school, the latter especially viewing the condition as a major problem because of its daily occurrence and multiplicity of adjustments. Despite the lessened activity during the period of low ebb, these institutions have put forth considerable effort to maintain an equilibrium as well as to cope with new problems arising from economic difficulties.

The social life of the community has changed with the advent of established institutions. The school was the first to affect change through its introduction of new ideas into the community, whereas in pioneer days the family had assumed the responsibility of social relationships. The school itself is no longer the "little country school" either in appearance or in curriculum. During the years of transformation from a small white frame building to a large city-like brick structure there have been vast changes in teaching methods and courses of study. The teaching of agriculture, although on a new basis, persists in spite of the rapid disappearance of rural life. A recent trend is the placing of emphasis upon mental hygiene rather than upon physical health. A pronounced trend toward things metropolitan in the school indicates that the school will eventually be dominated by urban rather than rural influence.
The educational status of the people in general is neither progressing nor declining to any great degree, although the level of common schooling is a little higher than it was years ago. The rising generation feels that a social need has been fulfilled by the school and church during their growing years and they settle down to live their lives in much the same manner as have their parents.

The greater differentiation of the social structure today has not caused much change insofar as the church is concerned. Religious dogma is the same, but there has been considerable change in the methods of coping with social problems brought about by urban influences. A significant change has taken place in the attitude of tolerance in matters of religion.
PART VI GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Machinery of Government

Description. The local unit of government for the Ashland Park community is Douglas County, the chief subdivision of the state for local government. Headquarters are in the Court House at the county seat in Omaha. The Commissioner-Precinct plan, organized in 1856 by the territorial government, is still in use. Laws for creation of smaller subdivisions such as precincts, road districts, and school districts were made at this early date. Formerly a rural precinct had considerable governing power through the election of many of its officers such as assessors, constables, justices of the peace, election boards and road overseers, but today the precinct has practically ceased to function as a unit of government. Duties, with the exception of those of road overseer and justice of the peace, are now taken over by the county. The Road Overseer, who sees that roads are properly maintained in his district, exercises little authority because most of his duties are absorbed by the county and state since the inauguration of the Public Works Administration.

Persons in Control of Government

The county form of government provides for five representatives called the Board of County Commissioners who are elected by the people for a term of four years. The government as a whole is carried on by them. Alternately three and two are elected every two years in order that all members will not be new at the same time. The county is divided into five commissioner districts as nearly equal in population as possible, and each commissioner

1 A. E. Sheldon, Nebraska Civil Government, p. 179.
2 Ibid., p. 180.
is responsible for the proper conduct of the affairs in his district. Ashland Park Community comes under the fourth commissioner district headed at present by Commissioner Charles E. Burns. The Board may legislate by enacting rules and regulations relating to county affairs as long as they do not conflict with state or federal statutes. It also decides all county questions, holds and controls county funds, determines the amount of taxes to be levied and has authority over highways and bridges. Projects recently completed with assistance of the P.W.A. in District No. 4 include laying of sidewalks, erecting mail-boxes on poles and building an auditorium at Ashland Park school.

County officers, whose specified duties are prescribed by general law, are elected for a period of four years except in a few cases where the term is two years. Salaries of both commissioners and officers are determined by acts of the legislature. Unfavorable reactions from Ashland Park Community regarding the county payroll are seldom heard, perhaps because of the present financial straits of the county and resultant irregularity of salaries.

County officials, both past and present, have assumed considerable responsibility in problems of health and sanitation, protection of life and property, and care of the sick and indigent. County funds have not permitted extensive projects for social betterment but much has been accomplished in the way of road improvements through cooperation with the W.P.A. County authorities have shown no interest in contemporary movements such as playgrounds or community halls. A few citizens have put forth efforts toward social progress but little headway was made because of lack of funds and general community support. Lindeman states that in the future the newer sciences of sociology and economics will play a far more important role in
the development of governmental affairs than they do today. In the not far distant future this situation may come to pass to the advantage of residents in Ashland Park Community.

**Financing of Government and Public Agencies**

Operating the government and administrating to the public welfare involves many different kinds of taxes paid by the people. Taxation, according to J. R. Trowbridge, manifests itself as a form of economic control, and in Ashland Park Community such control is apparent through the numerous levies placed upon the people. These are apportioned as shown in Table XVI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table XVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxes Based on $100 Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Levy, 2.64 mills. Produces a tax of $ .26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Levy, 5.26 mills. Produces a tax of .53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Levy, for District No. 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund, 20.00 mills- - - - - 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Fund, 2.5 mills- - - - - .25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Fund, 2.6 mills- - - - - .26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL TAX on a $100 VALUATION -- $3.30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition there is the $2.50 Poll tax for males between the ages of twenty-one and fifty who are not liable under provisions of the law regulating cities and villages. The tax is specifically a road tax. There is also the Old Age Pension tax of $2.00 for both males and females between twenty-one and fifty years of age. For computation regarding school levy see Parts IV and V "Board of Trustees."

The taxes above apply to property such as an automobile, household

---

5. Special report for this study by F. R. Tesar, County Treasurer Office, Douglas County Court House.
goods, real estate, and other forms of physical property. Taxes have decreased considerably in the past seven years because market values of property are down and assessed valuations tend to drop to the lower valuation level. There has been a decrease of $500,000 in property valuations in District No. 4 during this period, the present assessed valuation being $1,177,230.6

A tax not applicable to ordinary residents is the license fee for taverns which is $25 plus the occupation tax fixed by ordinance in Omaha because it is the nearest incorporated city in the same county. The occupation tax in Omaha is $100 and the amount is credited to district school funds.

Views of the average person toward government are passive. No radicalism is evidenced and soap box oratory, which would be possible in the concentrated areas if there were lighted streets, has never taken place. There is evidence that a few among the working classes have communistic tendencies, but they have never been known to promote subversive activities.

Observance of Law. The general opinion among those interested in the welfare of the community advocate more localized control of taverns and closer supervision of roads because of the district's nearness to the city. At the present time there are six deputy sheriffs in the county, under direction of the county sheriff, patrolling the roads.7 Radio equipment in police cars is valuable in the performance of duty on highways.

Many residents are of the opinion that members of the road patrol should be required to have special police training in the handling of traffic violations, disorders and other matters requiring police attention. The speed

---

6 J. B. Root, member school board, in annual report to district board meeting.
7 Information from County Sheriffs Office, Court House, Omaha.
limit is fifty miles on county roads, lower speeds being expected when passing school houses or entering the city. Occasionally deputy sheriffs arrive at the schools at dismissal time to protect children on the highways, but this duty is not a specific or regular assignment.

Bootlegging has been common in the past, much of the evil being attributed to the patronage of city visitors. The liquor menace has caused much concern to the principal and teachers of Ashland Park school because a place, located near the building, was selling liquor and patrons' automobiles were parked around the school. These cars were a source of danger to children.

Easy dismissal of offenders in the district did not help to improve or eliminate the situation. There were some attempts to locate and break up other haunts. In the opinion of some, bootleggers did not have as evil an influence upon young people as taverns have today because patronage was not so widespread. When corruption is permitted there is evidence of defect in government which reveals a condition of poverty or economic distress. Such a condition has been notoriously manifest in county affairs in the past few years.

Statistics for crime in the district are not available, but within the memory of old residents no major crime has been committed. One criminal from the district served in three penitentiaries and later became notorious for his campaign against crime. His offenses were breaking and entering, robbing and forging of checks. He blamed his crime career on the law itself. Before his death recently, he reverted to his career of crime.

8 Ibid.
9 C. A. Ellwood, Sociology and Modern Problems, p. 293.
10 Told in confidence to the writer by one of his sympathizers.
LEGEND:

- = DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

- = DISTRICT NO. 4

- = RAILROADS

- = ROADS

MAP NO. XI

SHOWING DOUGLAS PRECINCT SUBDIVIDED
Crime fresh in the memory of residents consist of three holdups, too sex crimes and several cases of speeding and reckless driving. Excepting one a little past thirty years of age all the criminals were young men around twenty-one. At the present time two are in the state penitentiary and one is serving time at the state reformatory. Their offenses were not largely the result of defects in government and law which are considered the most potent causes of crime. 11

The community as a whole has never been disparaged by those who know it. Even critics of lawlessness consider such incidents irregular and consider the community, generally speaking, wholesome and little in need of discipline from the law.

**Political Interests**

**Political Background.** The radio and newspaper have displaced older methods of interesting people in politics in order to secure their votes. At election times house to house calls by persons influential in the community and friends of supporters have been encouraged to speak to their acquaintances about certain candidates. They naturally expected some compensation for this trouble. Occasionally political meetings have taken place in the garage of Fred Tex, Sr., at 60 and L Streets but in recent years other places have been selected for political gatherings.

House to house canvassing is becoming outmoded and soon will be a thing of the past. At the present time radio, circulars, newspapers, and political meetings in the community are replacing older methods of getting the vote. Shortly before elections meetings are held each week in different neighborhoods throughout the community. Advertising the meetings by

means of telephone, newspaper, or personal association is done several days in advance in order to attract as many persons as possible. Extemporaneous speech-making is no longer in vogue. Talks are planned and delivered according to schedule. No outstanding political leaders have been developed in the community.

The Democrats in the community have been stronger in number than the Republicans. Most of the Democratic club meetings take place at the club's headquarters in a combined garage and tavern at 51 and Q Streets while others are held in homes, garages, and barns. The club functions only at election time. Republican pep rallies have been held at various places, a garden adjacent to a local tavern serving as a place for frequent meetings. The school board of Ashland Park school does not permit political meetings in the school house. Taverns seem to be the only places where meetings of this kind can take place because of the ample space they afford. The basement of Holy Ghost school has occasionally provided a more satisfactory meeting place for both Democratic and Republican rallies as evidenced by the presence of more women.

In 1922 there were thirty-five Republicans and 320 Democrats living in the community compared with 172 Republican and 1070 Democrats in 1936. By 1924 the Republicans vote suddenly rose to great proportions because of activities and improvements brought about by John Briggs, a county commissioner living near the district at that time. In later years the number has declined but Republicans throughout the district are preparing for the time when they expect to regain their lost strength.

Since there is no newspaper devoted to community needs, there is no

---

12 All election figures in this part obtained for County Election Commissioner A. J. Tusa and D. A. Kerr.
Fig. 13

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES FROM 1922 TO 1936 IN DOUGLAS EAST PRECINCT SHOWING VOTES CAST FOR GOVERNOR AT GENERAL STATE ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Democrat
- Republican
- Miscellaneous
- Number not voting

TOTAL:
- 426
- 586
- 535
- 883
- 661
- 1037
- 942
- 1320

1070

Showing votes cast for governor at general state election.
local political influence from the press. Opinion is formed to a certain extent by city newspapers which hold the metropolitan viewpoint. Since the community has always been strongly Democratic very little pressure from Democratic quarters was needed to swing opinions. Fig. 13 reveals Democratic dominance in Douglas east precinct which includes all of District No. 4 but which was subdivided in 1935 into Ashland and May because of the increased population.\textsuperscript{13} (See Map No. XI) The power to determine or redistrict boundaries is in the hands of the election commissioner whose office was created by the legislature in 1913. In earlier times the precinct voted at Prairie Center school at 60 and Grover Streets, but in 1908 the voting center was moved to Fred Tex's (Sr.) farm at 60 and N Streets where a large summer kitchen served as a polling place. Today the basements of Ashland Park and Holy Ghost schools are the polling places for Ashland and May precincts, respectively.

The vote for governor has been used in Fig. 13 because it is considered a criterion of the political strength of each party.\textsuperscript{14} The 1932 vote represents the Democratic landslide for Franklin D. Roosevelt. The entire region circumscribing District No. 4, including South Omaha, has always been a Democratic stronghold.

\textbf{Elections and Voting.} Registration prior to voting is not required by law in rural districts or towns under seven thousand population. At the primaries rural people may ask for the ballot of any party, thus indicating party preference, while city people must vote the way they have registered. Persons living in the precinct are usually known to one or more of the judges of the election board, their eligibility to vote having previously

\textsuperscript{13} Nebraska law stipulates that a voting precinct must not contain more than 700 or less than 300 voters.

\textsuperscript{14} Election Commissioner's Office.
been determined. Irregularities with reference to qualification of voters in country precincts bordering the city, where often voters move in and out in large numbers, may be caught by a method devised by Election Commissioner Anton J. Tusa. A survey is made in advance of elections of residents living along city borders to verify their qualifications. The voting habits of the people in 1936 of the community are noted in Table XVII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table XVII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Votes Cast in Both Precincts, 1936. Showing Party Affiliation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Election April 14th</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After elimination of names of persons not living in District No. 4 it was found that only five in the primary and forty-three in the general election were to be omitted from the total, thus revealing 414 electors at the primary and 1277 voters at the general election. The miscellaneous vote consists of persons asking for the Union Labor, Independent, Socialist, Communist and Progressive party ballots. The percentage of people voting indicates a consciousness on the part of adults of their civic responsibility.

Comparison of voting population to total population of Omaha and Douglas county are shown in Table XVIII.

The people of District No. 4 have fewer voters in comparison with popu-

---
15 In the presidential vote the Union party represented the count for the miscellaneous group. It is an established fact that when voters feel dissatisfied with the main political parties they usually line up with a third faction, the latest of which is the Union Labor group. At different times other parties have appeared in Nebraska.
lation than the remainder of Douglas county. The district claims 15.8 percent of Douglas county voters.

Table XVIII
Showing Percentage of People Voting in Omaha and Douglas County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District No. 4</th>
<th>Remainder of Douglas County (Not including Omaha or Ashland and May precincts)</th>
<th>City of Omaha</th>
<th>TOTAL FOR DOUGLAS COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>3538</td>
<td>15438</td>
<td>221423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Voting Population</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>8094</td>
<td>39031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Voting</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political interest is of short duration. Perhaps the outstanding example of political interest in the past was during President Wilson's second term when people wished to keep out of the World War. Political issues were keenly discussed. Mothers of sons were deeply concerned about prospects of the United States entering the war. Consequently women followed political developments closely and their knowledge of current issues was broadened. In 1919 the franchise was given to Nebraska women and many in the community took advantage of the privilege to vote. Wives usually belong to the same party as their husbands, many of them declaring that their "menfolk had more judgment and got out more among people" as the reason for accepting their political counsel. Today 42.4 percent of the voters in the community are women as shown in Table XIX.

It is apparent from this table that considerably fewer women than men vote at the primaries, the sentiment being that since the primaries do not

---

16 Omaha City Directory, Jan. 1, 1937.
17 Courtesy of General Outdoor Advertising Company.
determine final decisions it is not imperative that women vote. Other reactions toward the political situation are that "too many run for office who make promises and boast about their ability, yet we know they cannot make good;" also "many ne'er-do-wells run for office because they cannot make a living any other way." The majority being Democratic are satisfied with the political situation and have faith in a favorable political future not only for their community but for the country at large.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table XIX</th>
<th>Showing Sex of Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Election</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14, 1936</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Election</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 3, 1936</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Government and politics played a relatively small part in the life of this community prior to the period of economic depression, since which citizens have become more cognizant of governmental affairs. Because control is dissipated over a wide territory, government is not so closely felt as in the case of incorporated areas. Under ordinary conditions definite interest in politics or governmental matters is shown only at elections or critical times.

The absence of a centralized government makes meeting of certain social

---

18 This is an official record of men and women voters in the community under investigation, as names of persons living beyond District No. 4 borders have been eliminated in order to produce the exact number of voters in the district.
and civic needs an impossibility. Although there have been minor adjustments to rising needs, there has been no change since territorial days in the form of government, the Commissioner-Precinct plan. Law enforcement is necessary chiefly where beer taverns or traffic violations are concerned, crime being negligible. The community at large regards itself as highly moral in respect to arrests of local citizens.

County, state, and federal governments are felt in the daily affairs and conduct of inhabitants. The attitude toward government in many quarters is that "the government owes us a living." Contribution of W.P.A. funds towards definite projects and direct relief, a drastic departure from methods to which the county has been accustomed, has done much to win public favor for the party in power. The Democrats, however, have always been in the majority.

The extent of the densely populated areas have a bearing on determining political boundaries. The recent division of a larger political unit, that of Douglas East precinct into two smaller sections, shows evidence of political structure keeping in line with economic and population expansion.

Developments of printing and radio have revolutionized the technique of vote-getting, and the advent of women in politics, though fewer in numbers than men, has widened the political horizon of all voters. There is a growing intelligence in political matters which carries over into civic, social, and economic affairs which in themselves are in their early and unorganized stages.

The tendency on the part of inhabitants is to believe in a satisfactory political future. They are content with county government as it is. Few are cognizant of the fact that the steady force of metropolitan influence may ultimately lead to annexation.
PART VII  COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SANITATION

Natural Advantages for Healthy Living

Ashland Park Community is considered, by observers as well as inhabitants, a region conducive to healthy living. The question of water supply, of prime importance in matters of health, concerns itself, strangely enough, with the installation of city water because of convenience, though well-water is easily obtainable. The deciding factor is the ability to pay for city water. Families living on streets where water mains have been laid usually avail themselves of the opportunity if they can afford it. (See Part III, Map VI) A few exceptions are found in quarters where residents of higher economic status believe that well-water is superior to city water and consequently hesitate to put in the latter even when available.

Well-Water. Hundreds of families procure their water from wells. According to the Omaha City Chemist's office, well-water in the district is in good condition. Though this department has no jurisdiction over the territory, analyzing for bacteria is done gratis upon request.

State health inspectors do not make a routine inspection of wells, but should a resident desire to have his well tested he may write to the State Board of Health, for a sterile container in which to send a sample of water for examination. The sender is charged fifty cents for postage.

In many places digging for well-water presents no problem but in other sections there is difficulty due to geological formations which affect the quality of water. "A good well is one that is sunk into a water-bearing stratum that is separated from the surface by an impervious layer of clay, slate, or similar material. It should be curbed, lined with cement from top to bottom, and provided with a tight fitting cover that has sufficient pitch
to throw off all rain water."¹ There are many wells in the community which come up to these specifications for protection. In the past there have been springs, but today none are known to exist.

Other advantages. Gillette offers a contrast of the wearing and tearing out of the human stock in the city to the tendency toward repose and longevity in the country.² A natural advantage of significance in the district is the rolling terrain which permits drainage and prevents accumulation and stagnation of water. The abundance of fresh air and absence of smoke from the packing plants are other factors attracting people to the community. The single family dwellings not closer than a house to a lot, and this close only in areas nearest the city, provide a sufficiency of fresh air. The peaceful and beautiful countryside contributes to mental health while the absence of unhealthful or unsightly areas such as dumps and neglected property add to the general mental and physical well-being.

Health Conservation

The saying "public health is public wealth" stresses the importance of the comfort and convenience of individuals in relationship to the general wealth and prosperity of the community.³ Natural advantages, plus the agencies for health conservation, are ecological factors contributing greatly to the health of Ashland Park Community. The factors which conserve and promote physical health are outlined in the following paragraphs:

Agencies for Promotion of Health. Everything in the economic reach of public and private means is being done for the conservation and promotion of

¹ J. M. Gillette, Constructive Rural Sociology, p. 240.
² Ibid., p. 115.
³ Blackmar and Gillin, Outlines of Sociology, p. 191.
health. State laws are concerned chiefly with the protection of life and health while county jurisdiction touches more closely private and public health with facilities such as doctors and nurses. State and county action are usually taken upon the request of residents. Because sickness is often a cause of poverty, E. A. Ross contends that sickness should be "looked upon as public enemy and attacked at the public expense."\footnote{Civic Sociology, p. 169.} The school, often with county, state, and federal aid, seeks to educate as well as protect in matters of health.

Organized Effort

The legislature of 1911 made it "obligatory upon county and village boards, if a local board exists, to enforce the quarantine rules and regulations of the state board of health."\footnote{Nebraska Blue Book, Publication of the Nebraska Legislative Bureau, p. 481.} When contagious diseases have been prevalent free immunization for diphtheria and vaccination for smallpox have been provided in the schools for children whose parents gave consent.

The Visiting Nurses Association is called when private nurses are beyond economic reach. This Association offers skilled nursing care in the home to those who require such services and teaches care of the sick. It also aids in the prevention or control of communicable diseases. According to Leta Holdrege, director of the Visiting Nurses Association of Omaha, the number of calls in District No. 4 are increasing. In 1936 there were 2798 calls and in 1937 three thousand visits were made in Ashland Park Community. Nurses hired under W.P.A. visit the two schools. (See School Parts IV and V, "Health Activities")

Though no count of doctors' calls is available it is known that senior medical students from the medical colleges in Omaha attend cases of illness,
especially maternity cases in homes of the lowest income groups. These families are encouraged to take advantage of the dental and medical clinics available in the city.

The schools devote a definite amount of time each week to the interest of health. Physical examinations by doctors in the fall, as well as periodic visits of the county or W.P.A. nurses have aided in raising the hygienic standards of the school age children. In many cases there is insufficient follow-up by parents of recommendations made by the doctors or nurses. Chief reasons for this are lack of funds and inability of parents to take children to doctors or clinics when mothers are employed. Extra-curricular activities in Ashland Park school (See Parts IV and V) such as 4-H clubs, Red Cross, Knighthood of Youth, and Camp Fire, do much to make the young people health-conscious.

Industry has come to realize the necessity of assuming responsibility in sickness and accidents and there is an increased tendency on the part of packing plants to take interest in the health of their employees. Workers in the plants are offered the services of company doctors and nurses while on duty. Employees are made to understand that if they do not report even minor accidents they are liable to dismissal. In a recent investigation of accidents, reported under the title, "Is It Safe to Work?" statistics show that seventy-five percent or more of all accidents in industry can be avoided.

Insurance companies are offering health education through the distribution of pamphlets on health and accidents. They also have their own nurses who go into the homes for a short time in case of illness. Every free health service available to the community has been utilized.

6 R. S. Lynd, Middletown, p. 452.
Individual Endeavor

Housewives study food values and have learned how to buy healthful foods according to income and prepare them to best advantage for economic as well as health reasons. There is more buying of fresh vegetables and fruits in the winter and less dependence upon canned and dried products than formerly. Newspapers, magazines, and radio are doing much to educate housewives along dietary lines. Knowledge gained in the schools regarding health and hygiene is often put into practice in the homes by the children, while mothers may join modern study groups such as the project clubs at Ashland Park school.

No doctor or dentist lives or has an office in the community. Services of doctors or dentists are obtained readily in South Omaha and Omaha, and hospitals are within a half hour's drive.

Sewage Disposal. Ashland Park Community has no sewers. At one time drainage was a serious problem, but since roads have been graded and culverts built, most swampy spots have been eliminated. After a rain or storm the flow finds its way to Pappio Creek which crosses Q at 68 Streets. When rainfall is excessive the creek is not always capable of carrying away the water and frequently backwater is found in the ditches.

Since there is no exceedingly crowded condition, sewage disposal presents few problems and health conditions are not jeopardized. The community as a whole is not concerned over lack of sewage facilities, but there is a growing need for a more sanitary method of sewage disposal in the areas of greater density nearest the city.

The Nebraska board of health law, originally enacted in 1891, and amended in 1903, provides for a state health inspector. The community has not

8 Nebraska Blue Book, Publication of the Nebraska Legislative Bureau, p. 214.
warranted close supervision from this office because conditions are not considered dangerous. Sanitation laws are necessary to the social welfare of a community even though such a community as Ashland Park has not caused the enactment of such laws. Sanitation laws in a community are intended to "increase its labor power, prevent disease, pauperism and crime, and develop happiness and prosperity." In one instance several years ago, complaint reached health authorities regarding objectionable disposal of sewage in certain places but steps were taken to correct the situation and today there is not known to health authorities any improper handling of the matter.

Garbage is fed to poultry and pigs, burned or buried. Families of foreign extraction are usually the ones who utilize waste in the former manner, families living close to the city resort to the latter method of disposal.

Out-door toilets create an undesirable, though not especially unhealthful, situation. In a fair cross-section of the population it was discovered that only 24.6% of the homes had indoor bathrooms. (See Part III, Table XI) Insufficient income accounts for the large proportion dependent on outdoor facilities. Because of the high cost of installing city water an economic lag is noted: to all appearances houses are modern and well cared for but closer inspection usually reveals a total absence of plumbing. Since sewers are not provided for those having indoor plumbing, use is made of septic tanks which consume waste, and cesspools which are underground receptacles for refuse. Cesspools are more commonly used than the septic tanks because of the higher upkeep of the latter. J. M. Gillette is opposed to use of

---

9 Blackmar & Gillin, Outlines of Sociology, p. 131.
10 Constructive Rural Sociology, p. 240.
cesspools because "they merely place the sewage out of sight and unce-
mented cesspools allow the saturation of the surrounding soil and thus
create a menace; cemented ones crack and cause the same danger. They are
troublesome to operate, and necessitate frequent cleanings."

Sickness Versus Health

Statistics regarding sickness and death rate in the district as a
unit do not exist as such figures are included in summarized tables for
the entire county in reports compiled by the State Department of Health,
Division of Vital Statistics.

Relationship of Poverty to Sickness. Since a vast majority of citi-
zens in this community are in the low income group there is little money
budgeted for health. When illness occurs, families are reluctant to call
in the doctor because of the expense involved. As a result home remedies
and patent medicines are prominent in the treatment of sickness. "It is a
recognized fact that poverty provides a fertile condition for ill health
because it represents insufficient food, clothing, fuel, and housing and
last but not least, medical attention and protective health measures."

Some accept medical and dental care as long as it is free and while
claiming they cannot pay for such services they have no scruples about
spending for non-essentials. This coincides with the findings of Dr. Morris
Fishbein, Editor of the American Medical Association Journal, who states
that the average family of the middle classes pays annually only $24.00 to
the doctor while it spends $25.00 for drugs and patent medicines, $150.00
for automobiles, $37.00 for gas, $67.00 for tobacco, $37.00 for candy, $35.00
for theaters and entertainment and $34.00 for drinks and chewing gum. In
other words four times as much is spent for autos, recreation, tobacco, and

J. M. Gillette, Constructive Rural Sociology, p. 147.
confections as for medical care. Only four percent of the income is spent on medical care. There are also in the community conservatives who desire to receive nothing without paying for it and often do without proper medical and dental care.

The conditions of ill health among the lowest poverty groups are well brought out in a statement by H. A. Phelps as follows: "Ill health and high death rates occur with unusual severity among families in poverty. Conversely, health, longevity, and lower death rates prevail as income increases." According to the United States Children's Bureau, infant mortality ranges from "twice to three-times as high where the fathers' incomes are $500 or less than where they are $1,250 or more. This is all the more true when mothers are forced out to work." In other words, infant mortality decreases as income of the father increases.

Sickness and School Attendance. Regular school attendance provides a fair index of child health. The common cold is the chief cause of absences in cold weather. Occasional epidemics have caused great numbers to remain out of school at times. The following contagious diseases have affected school attendance since 1932: diphtheria in December, 1932; chicken pox in January, 1934; measles in 1934; mumps in 1935; scarlet fever in 1935, and 1936, and poliomyelitis in September, 1937. These diseases have mainly affected younger children.

Though epidemics in the past few years have been widespread, they have been less severe than earlier ones. Difficulty has been encountered with a few parents whose children have light cases of disease and do not feel that

12 From notes taken by writer during lecture of Dr. Fishbein in Omaha, October 26, 1936.
13 Contemporary Social Problems, p. 176.
14 J. M. Gillette, Constructive Rural Sociology, p. 146.
isolation is necessary. There have been no epidemics known in the community caused by poor sanitary conditions in the district.

**Accidents and Safety Measures**

**Automobile.** Many families choose this outlying district not only because of healthful conditions but also because of the playground space. "Getting away from dangers of the automobile" is a remark frequently heard. Yet families living near the main highways and chief crossroads must exercise as much, if not more care, than families living in the city. Most accidents occur on highways between L and Q and 42 and 48 Streets. (See Map No. XII) In the past eight years all deaths that have occurred in the district were along Q or L Streets, the former taking a toll of ten and the latter three. After autoists leave the city limits they apparently drive faster. They do not realize that there is much walking to and from school and places of business. Sidewalks do not give adequate protection because there is no curbing.

According to statistics of the American Automobile Association, thirty-five percent of the traffic fatalities in the United States were pedestrians on rural highways. A pamphlet, of this organization deals with the responsibility of the driver and pedestrian regarding traffic and safety, stresses the importance of society lending assistance with legislation, enforcement, engineering, and education. The schools are doing much to educate children in the community in safety campaigns while the school patrol boys, deputy sheriffs, and the state patrol are exercising their authority to diminish the number of accidents. The school patrol frequently make reports which lead to the arrest of those driving at unreasonable speed past the school.

15 This map was made with the cooperation of Miss Lucile Shields, County Sheriff's office, and Miss Frieda Mueller, eighth grade teacher at Ashland Park school, whose class worked on a similar map as a safety project.

HIGHWAY ACCIDENTS AND DEATHS FROM 1935-1938
Frequently the Omaha Police Department is called but since city police do not go outside the city limits, the call is transferred to the county sheriff's office which then sends out deputy sheriffs. If the state patrol, which works in conjunction with the county sheriff, are available, they also go to the scene of an accident. The county owns one ambulance which is used in emergency cases as well as for transportation of indigent patients to and from the county hospital.

Fire. Most fire hazards in the homes are cook stoves and oil stoves, kerosene lamps and the burning of weeds on vacant lots. Since the district has no means of fire protection and the Omaha Fire Department is not obliged to come to the district, some property owners pay an extra fee on their house insurance policies known as "rider insurance." In case the fire department from the city is called to extinguish a fire the insurance company pays $100 to the city for the trip. The Occidental Building and Loan Association of Omaha carries a great number of such policies in the district.

Should a fire spread toward the city limits trucks will go into the community even though they know they will not be able to collect for the trip. "However, such a situation works a hardship on the fire station near that district because it may receive a city call and the trucks might be out in the county extinguishing a fire just at that time." Teaching fire prevention is part of the school program. Literature furnished by the National Safety Council, the Red Cross, the National Board of Fire Underwriters and the State Department of Education aid the teachers in presenting the subject.

Summary

One of the reasons for rapid settlement of Ashland Park Community was

17Fire Chief Arthur Olsen, City Fire Department, Omaha.
the attraction of healthful, natural environment. Organized and individual efforts of county, state, school, and family have sought to conserve and protect the general health with some success. There are drawbacks to a complete realization of high health standards over the entire community because of poverty, which in some instances is coupled with ignorance or indifference. On the whole, the reaction toward betterment of health conditions is favorable. It is not known that poor sanitary conditions among the indigent have brought about sickness or ill-health, but a definite relationship of poverty to malnutrition has been noted. Low economic status is responsible for inability to pay for installation of city water which is necessary for indoor bathroom facilities. The majority, being in the lower economic groups, and usually distant from water mains, are without such conveniences. Even though sewage disposal is not provided fairly satisfactory individual arrangements.

School attendance is greatly affected only when epidemics prevail. In recent years epidemics have been more widespread than formerly though less severe. Conflicts have arisen between school and parents as to the necessity of isolation.

Living along the Q, L, and 60 Street highways has proven more dangerous to pedestrians than living in the city because the open country seems to tempt autoists into faster driving. They do not realize that the district is densely populated and that pedestrians may appear on the almost invisible sidewalk next to the road at any time of day or night. Fire hazards are increased because there are no water hydrants and when the city fire department is called out, a fee is charged by the city. An ambulance owned by the county provides free transportation in emergency cases.

A cultural lag is evinced in the absence of modern facilities in the
homes, often accompanied by indifference toward care of health, in contrast to the modern school buildings where the care and promotion of good health play an important part. In spite of health disadvantages from the modern viewpoint there is a compensation for these in the natural healthful environment.
PART VIII  HOW LEISURE HOURS ARE SPENT

Necessity of Wholesome Recreation

The human impulse to play is as strong in the Ashland Park district as in similar communities anywhere. The daily routine seems to call for the relaxation of interests which only the informality of rest and play can offer. Play not only rehabilitates but recreates life. It brings the individual to a balanced attitude toward the world about him and he becomes more conscious of changes and development of his fellow beings. The community has never lost sight of the values of proper recreation, though means of accomplishing recreational aims represented a highly sociable state in early times in contrast to the individualism of today.

Importance of Early Associational Life. When all inhabitants were farmers, busy at hard physical work, there was need for mental and social stimulation to counteract the effects of physical labor. Each family considered it essential to provide recreation, then called "pleasures" for its adults and children, who worked harder than do young people of today. Children had few of these "pleasures" and appreciated them when they received them. Association was a social desirability not only for amusement but for mutual assistance.

Individualism in Modern Recreation. Since early pioneer days there has been no general associational life, the absence of which has been the chief factor against achieving social solidarity in the community. Because of the difference in preferences due to age, habits, and ideals of the different national, religious, and economic groups, the tendency in recreation has been toward individualism. Commercial amusement has intensified this tendency. No longer is there the "all-for-one and one-for-all" attitude of

1E. S. Bogardus, Essentials of Social Psychology, p. 50.
an earlier day. The pull of the city has tended toward further social disunity. This disorganization becomes apparent when the lack of facilities for wholesome recreation for the entire community is noted. Commercial amusement has provided one of the chief outlets for satisfying the natural desire for pleasures because patronage may be an individual as well as group affair.

**Church and School as Leading Forces**

The primary institutions, home, church, and school, carry on the only attempts in the district to provide wholesome forms of recreation. Their results are partial, however since their influence does not project sufficiently into the general social life of all people. Much is done to provide the bulk of recreational life for their adherents if they so choose.

**Influence of Early School.** The little country pioneer school was the leading recreational force in an earlier day. School "programmes" followed by a social hour were popular, all in the community being invited to attend. The school long continued to be the leading power in community recreation. Perhaps the most influential group to promote community spirit was a dramatic club which existed in the years immediately preceding and following 1916. In it were young people who were employed mainly in stores and offices. The club offered considerable opportunity for recreational diversion not only for its members but also for the community at large. The enthusiasm created an atmosphere of community consciousness. The school held first place in social life until the district became more thickly populated with different nationalities, followed by the eventual establishment of the Catholic church which launched its own recreational program.

**Attempts to Provide Proper Recreation.** Recreation offered by church and school has furnished a far-reaching physical, mental, moral, and social
training. A bar to the fulfillment of the ideals of the American Play­
ground Association regarding playground space exists at Ashland Park
School where there are 42.9 square feet per pupil. The Association recom­
mends one hundred square feet per child. Map No. IX shows relative size
of school and grounds. Church and school have been first in the community
to recognize that the leisure time of all is steadily increasing because
of the effects of inventions and the successful fight labor has made for
shorter hours. "With constant improvement in apparatus and more intelligent
management, still shorter hours will become a necessity."² Attention to
recreation because of increased leisure hours is constantly being given by
church and school, but many make no contact with these institutions. This
latter group either seeks social life in the city and holds itself aloof
from the community or else enjoys, through choice, or lack of finances, no
social life whatever. This socially isolated group concerns leaders more
than any other. Such individuals do not fully understand nor appreciate the
value of properly sponsored recreation or supervised play, which lead to
fairness, good moral conditions and development of the social instincts.³

Outside the Fold of Church and School

Attempts Toward Balanced Recreation. Organized institutions of the
community do not provide a complete recreational program if all forms are
taken into consideration. The moving-picture theater, the chief form of
city diversion, is considered a luxury for most families because of distance
and price of admission. For many the problem of distance is overcome by the
use of the automobile, while those who have no car but live near the city
avail themselves of street car service.

Even though the district is rural, a balance in recreation is noted in its urban attitudes toward recreation. When entertainment or leisure-time activities of schools or churches do not measure up to city standards of amusement, there is a reaction of disappointment among the more sophisticated. This dissatisfaction has been especially keenly felt when distance and financial resources do not permit going to the city. On the other hand, the depression is causing a change in the gradual ability to enjoy simple pleasures and quiet surroundings heretofore unappreciated. The plain and sincere attempts of the church and school may tend to lessen the demand for excitement in recreation, considered by the emotionally unstable the only type of recreational life.

Recreation in the Home. The depression has been beneficial to family life though many are not aware of the fact. Lack of funds for commercial amusement has caused both young and old to center their recreation around the fireside. Although the radio which plays an important part in home recreation, has increased expenditures which some could ill afford, but the savings and advantages of not spending money otherwise has repaid the initial investment. The radio has also brought about a home-consciousness which has strengthened family ties.

Radio

The radio ranks first in importance in home entertainment. The quality as well as wide choice in programs accounts for the popularity of this invention. In the school questionnaire 252, or 88.7% of homes under study indicated possession of radios. Their presence can be attested to by Miss Claybaugh, who takes the census in each home and who commented that "everywhere the blare of radios were heard." Most were of the small, inexpensive, portable type. An inconsistency is noted in some homes which have the ex-
pensive console types while all other furniture is of cheap quality. Many
car-owning families state they are spending less money on gasoline than
formerly for pleasure-riding because certain radio programs keep them home.
Radio preferences of adults have not been measured but the school question­
naire, representing an age range of five to sixteen years, offers sample of
first or second, or both, choices in radio entertainment of young people.
(See Table XX)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio Program Preferences—Indicated by Ashland Park School Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Names</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan Annie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Busters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Benny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Bowes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry and Ted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos 'n Andy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn Dance (Uncle Ezra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall (Fred Allen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bing Crosby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty and Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie Cantor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibber Magee and Molly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd Gibbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Man's Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns and Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lux Radio Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showboat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dude Ranch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Penner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today's Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Dunn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight other programs were popular, with three children favoring each,
twenty-seven were favored by two children each while one program was preferred by only one child. Twenty-eight did not answer, either because they had
no radio or had no particular choice in programs. The group not included in Table XX includes mostly upper and middle grade pupils who are responsible for the diversified decisions.

Although a broadcast intended for children was most popular, a program of blood-curdling crime stories came second. The first type appeals mostly to the youngest while the second is chosen by upper grade children. Comedy, which ranks third as represented by the Jack Benny program, shows a heavy preference in the lower grades while the Major Bowes hour is enjoyed mostly by middle and upper grade children. Diversified preferences are indicated by older children.

It is apparent that dialogue holds first place and music second. Dance music is in minor position due no doubt to the fact that few under sixteen dance. It is generally conceded that the choice stated by the children may be influenced by older members of the family, for many favorite programs are family favorites. Thus the questionnaire may reveal radio preferences of the families included in the sample of the population investigated.

Reading

The earliest settlers spent most of their leisure time reading newspapers and periodicals of the day.

When South Omaha became organized the first newspaper printed there was the "South Omaha Globe" established in 1885. In the early part of 1886 the Globe and Omaha Live Stock Journal consolidated to form the "South Omaha Globe Journal," which in turn sold out in June of the same year to J. B. Erion, who issued a daily paper and named it the "South Omaha Stockman." The paper continues today as a daily publication for the benefit of cattle raisers and is known as the "Daily Journal Stockman." There are no subscribers to this paper in the community today as those interested in cattle
are feeders rather than raisers of animals. Many other papers which made their appearance in the fast growing town of South Omaha, were also read in the districts around South Omaha. These early papers were:

- The Hoof and Horn, 1887, later the "Daily Drovers Journal".
- The Times, 1887, first Democratic and later Independent.
- The Boomer, 1889, Independent.
- The South Omaha Tribune, 1890, a Democratic paper.
- The News, 1890, Independent.
- The Enterprise, 1891.
- The Eagle, 1891, a weekly pamphlet which later consolidated with "Omaha Republican".
- The Bulletin, 1892, a commercial sheet.

It is readily seen that there was no shortage of reading matter in the boom days despite the fact that some papers did not continue very long.

As the years went on the metropolitan trend decreased interest in reading. The schools, especially Ashland Park, with its library facilities, have encouraged reading at home. An interest on the part of the grown-ups is especially reflected during bad times, and books that children bring home are often read by adults. Though statistics are not available on the reading habits of the entire community, it is generally conceded that such habits reveal a limited scope. (See Table XXI and XXII) In view of the economic status of most families and the cost of use of the South Omaha branch of the Public Library, practically all reading matter must be purchased, thus creating a hardship on the few who are inclined to do much reading. The Omaha Public Library reports that any one living outside the city limits but inside the state may receive a library card upon payment of a dollar per year, or fifty cents for six months. High school students living in the community are entitled to free library service.

Books are too expensive to purchase so very few books are in evidence in the homes. An interesting exception is that of a poor family living in a basement home who were found to possess a copy of the Lincoln Library and
other worthwhile books. The children from this home were intelligent and were respected by other children and teachers. Reading preferences of children in the first grade are reflected in their choice of folk tales, though children up to ten years enjoy these. Animals and Indian stories rank second in choice with this group. In the age range, eight to twelve, fairy stories predominate, while upper grade children up to sixteen years prefer stories from real life.

In the school questionnaire of May, 1937, which represented 284 homes scattered over the district, the answers to the question "What newspapers and magazines do you take regularly?" were tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No. Subscribers</th>
<th>% Homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Omaha Sun (free)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World-Herald</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee-News</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Stories</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer's Wife</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictorial Review</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delineator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies Home Journal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Evening Post</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Homes &amp; Gardens</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman's World</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Housekeeping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Periodicals having two subscribers each were: American Boy, Boy's Life, Child Life, Detective, Gentlewoman, Mothers' Home Life, National Geographic. Those having one subscriber each represented eighteen different magazines.
Although these figures show a pitifully low number of regular subscribers to periodicals it must be borne in mind that the figures apply to regular subscriptions and that most families are of the working class who have been most seriously affected by the economic depression.

A broader view of tastes in reading matter over the entire community has been gained from a count made for this study of periodicals brought in during a paper sale at Ashland Park school. Table XXII is the result of the tabulation of seven rooms taken at random.

This table is self-explanatory and presents a somewhat brighter picture than the preceding one. It may be considered a fair indication of the type of reading matter enjoyed throughout the community. It must be kept in mind that expensive magazines, if there are any, would not be readily given away and hence are not apt to be found in a paper sale. Thus a true measurement of types of reading material cannot be shown.

A reading list recommended by the State Extension Department for the Project Club (adults) of the school contains six books in home economics and related subjects; six biographies; five travel books; five history and social science studies; ten fiction and eight children's books. Of this list there are eleven in the school library.

It might be pertinent to record the reactions toward the community expressed by the circulation or business managers of the three Omaha daily papers. Summed up they are as follows:

World-Herald and Bee-News (Omaha)

The routes are not treated as definitely rural. Dis-

---

Series A.


Consolidation took place October 1, 1937.
### Table XXII
Showing Results of Periodicals Counted in Seven Classrooms During a Paper Sale in May, 1937

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I GENERAL FICTION</th>
<th>III FARM, HOME, AND FAMILY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Evening Post</td>
<td>Successful Farmer 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>McCall's 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collier's</td>
<td>Boy's Life 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitan</td>
<td>Ladies Home Journal 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Book</td>
<td>American Home 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Capper's Farmer 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Book</td>
<td>Better Homes and Gardens 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Humor</td>
<td>Pictorial Review 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Wallace's Farmer 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainslee's</td>
<td>Good Housekeeping 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman's Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Companion 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II EMOTIONAL APPEAL</td>
<td>Woman's World 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Screen</td>
<td>Country Gentlemen 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Story</td>
<td>Delineator 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Child Life 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photoplay</td>
<td>Family Circle 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wings and Sky Fighter</td>
<td>House and Garden 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollywood</td>
<td>Farmer's Wife 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective Stories</td>
<td>Plymouth Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td>Monthly 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Culture</td>
<td>Poultry Tribune 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Confessions</td>
<td>Parents' Magazine 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Stories</td>
<td>American Boy 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Stories</td>
<td>Comfort 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Stories</td>
<td>Friend to Friend 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Home Arts 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argosy</td>
<td>Home Craft 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Experience</td>
<td>Parent–Teacher 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Fun</td>
<td>Our Junior Farmer 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Romances</td>
<td>Swine World 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Book</td>
<td>IV HOBBIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Detective</td>
<td>Radio Guide 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion Picture</td>
<td>Aero Digest 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Outdoor Life 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs in Everything</td>
<td>Hunting and Fishing 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Fox</td>
<td>V SOPHISTICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelette</td>
<td>Esquire 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playhouse</td>
<td>Life 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phantom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Romance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI MISCELLANEOUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward (church)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Garden (church)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Digest</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Neighbors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad Trainsman</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lariat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
strict No. 4 is part of several city routes.

There is still much circulation of foreign-language papers but the younger generation are demanding American newspapers. This demand is causing a gradual increase in circulation which is considered average to good as compared with other outlying districts.

Debts to the paper are surprisingly low—the foreign element will cut off regular subscription before running up a bill but will buy an occasional paper on the street.

Unemployment and mobility have affected seriously the newspaper subscription in this area.

Large families are more desirable subscribers than small ones.

Besides news of the day people especially like pictures and comics in which a story is told. They also pay close attention to advertising of bargain prices and their buying power is as good as any district elsewhere of the working classes. Brandeis basement and chain store ads have the greatest appeal.

Carriers are able to assume responsibility and can be depended upon as much as boys from wealthier districts. They require only one trip to town to settle their business and seldom is there misunderstanding.

Boys help out at home with their earnings. Many carriers have been with their respective papers from four to six years.

The South Omaha Sun, published on the South Side, has local appeal which reminds one of a well-edited small town paper. It is complete in every way even to cuts and comic strips. The Sun is delivered free to each home including those in the community through a distributing agency whose routing is efficiently planned. Its existence is made possible through advertising. The publication is a weekly and contains twenty 12 x 17 pages. It is read in all homes as far as can be ascertained, the "locals" being of special interest. South Side news of importance that never finds its way into the Omaha papers will usually be found in the Sun. The paper is an exponent of the old South Omaha booster spirit. The people of Dis-
strict No. 4 find much to peruse in the South Side Sun and it is considered by them an important adjunct to their reading material. The business manager presents his opinion of the people in the district as follows:

A great many show that they have not gone through the American educational system.

People are on the whole thrifty, industrious and honest.

They are very serious about their opinions when writing to the paper. Contributors are older persons who are frank and sincere about their praise or criticism of anything. Young people do not write or react in any way unless they are asked for definite information.

The large ads, as well as advertising of circulars, are read carefully for low prices.

On the whole residents of the community are held in high esteem by all the papers, the managers of which agree in most ways on their characteristics and tendencies.

Hobbies and Games. The few home hobbies in the district are found mostly among old people, women, and children. Interests among the first two include knitting, crocheting, stamp collecting, flower raising, and quilt making. Among the makers of quilts is a very old gentleman who puts together many quilts a year. There are "side-lines" among the young and middle aged, which bring an income, such as poultry raising or gardening. Of course there are the faddists who try every fancy that comes along. Among the men, both in and away from home, the following sentiment expressed by many reveals the situation: "Hobbies are fine for those who have time for such things, especially if they don't interfere with regular work, but in my case I am too tired to be interested in hobbies." Such is the result of the daily grind for many! However a few are known to bowl, while several boys, who have caddied are taking up golf. In a few cases there is complete

F. R. Ackerman.
lack of interest.

Active games in the home are practically a thing of the past. Card playing is enjoyed by a great many adults. A few women have been known to carry a deck of cards with them wherever they go. Children's parlor games, of the ten cent store variety are often in evidence. Tap dancing has occupied much leisure time among the young since tap dancing lessons were given in the community several years ago by a teacher from Benson.

Commercial Amusement. "The leisure time of the people--that great reservoir out of which should come the creative expressions of the community--is turned over to commercial agencies who entertain for revenue only." Such places, because of their specialization discourage attempts in the community to create local means of recreation in which all can freely participate.

Movies

The moving pictures, which appeal to both business and working classes, constitute the chief form of commercial amusement for the majority. Much has been done, through writing and campaigning, to improve the quality of pictures as they occupy such a large place in the leisure of most people. Residents of Ashland Park Community are just as interested in movies as are urbanites.

The response to the query in the school questionnaire "What kind of pictures or actors do you like best?" is shown in the tables that follow. One hundred forty-one indicated kinds of pictures preferred, as noted in Table XXIII while one hundred six stated favorite actors shown in Table XXIV. Thirty-seven did not answer.

The following other classifications had one vote each from upper grade children: cartoon, fighting, sports, and technicolor.

\[E. C. Lindeman, \textit{The Community}, p. 204.\]
Table XXIII
Types of Pictures Preferred by 141 Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind Preferred</th>
<th>8-7-6</th>
<th>5-4</th>
<th>5-2-1 &amp; Kdg.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comics &quot;Funny&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery (Mostly murder)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance (love)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be kept in mind that school movies have influenced the choice of some children. In the Table XXIV commercial pictures have influenced the choice of favorite actors.

Many expressed a double choice both of which are included. The tables are self-explanatory. The two tables are not necessarily consistent because favorite actors are not always found in the type of play preferred by the children.

In a check of the number of times 284 children of Ashland Park school went to the movies, the results are shown in Table XXV.

It may be assumed that where there were brothers or sisters in the family they were allowed the same privileges as those questioned. It is not unusual that sixty-five did not answer because some older children went so few times that they may have felt embarrassed about answering while the younger children could not estimate the number of times they went to the show, or perhaps they never went at all. There are those who have never been to a commercial theater, their pictures having been brought to them through
Table XXIV
Favorite Moving Picture Actors and Actresses
Indicated by 106 Children of Ashland Park School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>8-7-6</th>
<th>5-4</th>
<th>3-2-1 &amp; Kdg.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Temple</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17'</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Withers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck Jones</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick Powell</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger Rogers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Benny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Gable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Mix</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Taylor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cagney</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Harlow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bing Crosby</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionne Quintuplets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Weismuller</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby Keeler</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Faye</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deanna Durbin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gene Autry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Fonda</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Blondell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe E. Brown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Maynard</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others voted for were:

Two votes each:
- Al Jolson
- Ann Sothern
- Bob Steele
- Don Ameche
- Eleanor Powell
- Eleanor Whitney
- Eric Linden
- Fred Astaire
- George Brent
- Robert Cummings
- Sylvia Sidney
- Una Merkel
- Jim McCoy

One vote each:
- Jackie Cooper
- Jeannette McDonald
- Kay Francis
- Lionel Barrymore
- Mae West
- Martha Raye
- Myrna Loy
- Nelson Eddy
- Richard Dix
- Rochelle Hudson
- Tyrone Power
- Pat O'Brien
- Irene Rich
- Joe Cook
- Joe Penner
- Loretta Young
the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Often Visited</th>
<th>8-7-6</th>
<th>5-4</th>
<th>3-2-1 &amp; Kdg.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in two weeks</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in three weeks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in two months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four times a year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two times a year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is evidence, however, that indicates a relation between the depression and picture preferences. Movie patrons want humor to supply the lacks in their own existence, and movies depicting happiness, gaiety, evening clothes and general joviality are well attended. Even the "fairy-tale" type of picture is gaining favor because it provides an escape from grim reality. Those with less money to spend are more selective about their pictures. They read newspaper and Liberty magazine comments and attend only three and four-star pictures, thus unconsciously raising the general level in tastes. Movie attendance is summed up in the frequently heard remark that people do not go as much as formerly because it is "too much of a luxury" to go often. Yet "movie money" holds an important place among the expenditures of a great many families.

Children and older people who cannot go to downtown theater houses must be content with "subsequent run" pictures at the Tivoli and Roseland theaters, the only two now running on the South Side. Prices are twenty-five cents for adults and fifteen cents for children. The theater managers as well as the patrons are interested in presenting "good" films to patrons. The Saturday matinee for young children is a feature of the Tivoli and Roseland Theaters. According to Mr. Samuel Epstein, president of the Epstein Theaters' Corporation, which operates a chain of theaters in outlying districts, including those in South Omaha, the Saturday matinee is given special attention. Saturday is a heavy shopping day in South Omaha and attendance at the picture houses increases. People come to buy from within a radius of fifteen miles around South Omaha including Ashland Park district, and parents with children invariably find the children's matinee, costing five cents from one to four P.M. for children under twelve, a convenient and not unwholesome means of occupying the youngsters' time while parents are shopping. With this in mind, attempts are made to please the children by presenting special programs such as Mickey Mouse, historical pictures, or child actors.

The older generation looks upon the movies as a means of relaxation while the small children take the movies as an exciting event. Adolescents view moving pictures not only with enjoyment but as an integral part of their daily living. Behavior is patterned after their favorite stars whose pictures adorn their rooms at home and lockers in high school. What passes for personality is often a conscious imitation of what the adolescent believes his favorite star would do under similar circumstances.

---

A trade term meaning pictures which have been shown first in downtown houses.
Taverns

No description of commercial amusement would be complete without considera­tion of the large place occupied by the nine taverns in the district. They are conveniently located on the highways or crossroads. Recreation­ally speaking, if persons are not occupied with the social life of the church or school or social life in the city, there is, according to a few young persons, "nothing left in the community to do but stay home, float along by oneself, or patronize the beer taverns." Some manage their leisure time so as to include all three.

Taverns are rapidly increasing in the community and leaders comment that people used to go to town to drink but now the saloon has come out to them. On every hand there is testimony that "There is much more drinking than formerly....Before it was done at 'bootleg joints' but today it goes on in the open and no one seems disturbed about it."

Some tavern proprietors observe regulations while others have been known to violate them. The latter no doubt take advantage of their favorable position in the country where they are not under the close scrutiny of law enforcement agencies. The law stipulates that no hard liquor be sold; thus only beer can legally be handled. Minors are not permitted and closing hours are 2 A.M. Failure to enforce laws occurs when politicians fear not being re-elected and in the language of some citizens, they "pass the buck." There is unquestionably a need for places of social meeting in the community though many persons do not agree that the tavern should occupy first place as a means of affording social intercourse. It is the only media at present which satisfies this need for informal social contact for the working classes at any desired time. Lynd\(^{12}\) states that such institu-

\(^{12}\) Middletown in Transition, p. 276.
tionalized places of social meeting, which leave acquaintance to chance, operate as an important agency for social acquaintance in places which are inadequately served by other means of contact. Lynd further indicates that, psychologically, the less aggressive personalities use this means which affords the spontaneity needed in social intercourse. Especially is this true where the constrained environment of the daily grind keeps workers in a mental "strait-jacket."

Most dancing is done at taverns. There are no public dance halls in South Omaha but there are three halls, the Eagles', Odd Fellow's, and Butcher's halls, in which private club or lodge dances are held and to which outsiders are often invited.

Paid lectures, book reviews, dramas, or concerts are seldom attended by residents of the community. The average reaction is that they do not care for them unless such occasions are sponsored by school, church, club, or lodge. In such cases there usually is no admission charge.

Informal Leisure. Before South Omaha came into existence, and the district was strictly a farming community, there was a social cohesion which was brought about by large-scale recreational activities which do not exist today.

Recreation and Social Control in Early Days

Social control by way of recreation was absolute in pioneer days. The home was the center of winter social activity while the out-of-doors served the people in the summer. All persons, young or old, came together for social enjoyment. The chief forms of diversion in winter were school programs, house parties, and sleigh rides, while in warm weather there were hayrack parties to Layton's cottonwood grove at what is now 47 and 48 from

\[\text{Ibid., p. 277.}\]
Q to Sarpy county. There was dancing on a platform. Since groves of trees were scarce on the prairie in the pioneer days picnickers went either to Layton's or to a few shady spots in Sarpy county. Social life took on a new complexion after the stock yards and packing industries were established. The change was resented by residents who loved the tranquil sincerity and general whole-heartedness of associational life in the community. To this should be added the cynical comment of one whose family was among the last to capitulate in sub-dividing his property: "The 'big growth' ruined our peace and pleasures by bringing the railroad and foreigners in here." Thus social control was showing signs of weakening, though South Omaha's social life in later years afforded interesting leisure-time activities which compensated for the total breakdown of social control in the community.

South Omaha social life began in 1885 with a 4th of July celebration under the willows at Lake Pivonka which was near the first Stock Exchange Building. All in the surrounding territory were invited but the residents of Ashland Park Community did not enter into the spirit of South Omaha's earliest entertainments for two reasons: namely, their antagonism to its intrusion upon their own social life and their belief that South Omaha was too "rough" as there were so few women in the fast growing little city. A short time later, about in 1886, when "some of the best citizens tripped the light fantastic toe and drank lemonade," thus showing some resemblance of culture, different families of the community became interested and attended social functions in South Omaha. There were also special trains into Omaha conveying people who wished to attend an opera or banquet. Musical, dram-

14 Savage & Bell, History of Omaha, (Mrs. J. C. Carroll's account of leisure in South Omaha) p. 664.
15 Ibid., p. 664.
atic, and literary clubs were formed in South Omaha in 1887. Thus social control through recreation in Ashland Park Community was broken down with the establishment of South Omaha's own cultural activities.

Later Attempts of Organized Recreation

The packing house era, followed by subdivision of lands in the community, was responsible for a club, known as the "Homestead Club" whose chief purpose was to attract settlers to Homestead Addition. It was the first locally organized group to improve the locality and promote leisure-time activities. The club not only made life happier for its members but it promoted a community-consciousness. The club was most active in 1912. The Occidental Real Estate Company which sponsored the club donated two lots for clubhouse purposes but indecision and inaction eventually caused the lots to be transferred to the Presbyterian church group which was then meeting in homes. Interest in the club dwindled and community spirit waned. Nothing was done to revive interest in the community until the Weircrest Improvement Club made its appearance in 1925. Its purpose was primarily to foster a booster spirit although many recreational activities were promoted. Meetings were first held in front of the grocery store at 60 and M and later in the open country. The meetings in themselves proved interesting leisure-time activities at which time local civic feeling was developed through the encouragement of any projects in or around Omaha which in any way affected community life. The club embraces only a part of District No. 4, boundaries ranging from 56 to 72 and from Harrison to Grover Streets.

Among recreational undertakings of the Weircrest Improvement Club were two carnivals and ice cream socials which were held in the open at 60 and M Streets and two dances in Ralston. When some large project elsewhere affecting the district needed boosting, several improvement clubs came together
in the community and held parades. The club is still in existence but not as active as in former years. It continues to sponsor sociable activities such as card parties and family socials.

A hope which the socially-minded have for public welfare of a recre­ational nature, is a piece of property consisting of one and one-half acres which has been reserved by the county for park purposes. The land is known as Fay Park and is located in the west central end of the district. (See Map III, Part I) An artistically planned boulevard, called Fay Boulevard enters the grounds at 56 and Q and leaves the park at about 60 and P Streets. Very little in the way of landscaping or development has taken place owing to depletion of county funds, but the Weircrest Improvement Club has included in its future program the improvement of the park. Plans include a well-equipped playground for the children and a pavilion where groups in the community can meet. Should a greater community spirit be revived, compared to an almost total absence of it today, the Weircrest Improvement Club will come forth as an organized effort to promote the healthful and wholesome recreation so sorely needed in the community today.

The breakdown of social control is now unmistakably more manifest than in former years. There is constant conflict of attitudes between older people and young people on how to spend leisure time because of this breakdown. The community's position as a "young" community adds to the importance of its responsibility in the recreational problem. The social control that gripped the pioneer and later families has vanished while today there is a great loosening of the bonds which once held together the social relations of young and old. Older people say that young folk are "going to the dogs" by pointing out habits of smoking, drinking, and excessive joy-

---

16 J. F. Steiner, The American Community in Action, p. 236.
riding. Boys and girls who indulge in such pastimes insist that "all young people do it." Such diversions, however, do not appeal to the tastes of all. Some deplore the lack of other inexpensive facilities for leisure in the community. Such persons feel compelled to stay home and listen to the radio or visit with friends or go to town if they wish to find enjoyment. Especially is this situation keenly felt where there is little or no money to spend on pleasure:

(1) Lack of Recreational Facilities Contribute to Breakdown of Social Control

Although the metropolitan trend has been blamed for the breakdown of social control in the community, there is sentiment that the alienation of young people from the older philosophies toward recreation need not have been so severe had there been more facilities provided near the home. The lack of facilities is evident. A tennis court is desirable, for players must now go to the city for games. The younger boys need a sandlot for playing baseball. They now take possession of any empty space available, providing no one complains. Loafing comes in for its share of attention as a considerable number of young boys are affected. Filling stations, garages, and especially taverns are well-established hangouts for these "time-killers." Prank-playing boys get together during the summer vacation and idle away their time while younger boys and girls of different neighborhoods get together for games and gossip after the supper hour. In this manner the "gangling" is formed. Question has arisen whether absence of street lighting is a help or hindrance to street loafing, but nothing can be done as the district is outside the city limits. The strain and stress of adolescence is not alleviated in the least by such laissez-faire social methods. Though erratic behavior is assumed to be the normal expectation during these
years, greater danger occurs when the recreational environment emanates from a state of social disorder. Such a state may be prevented if proper recreational facilities are made available.

(2) Relationship of Lack of Facilities to Delinquency

Though the community may justly be proud of its record regarding crime, it may do well to pause and concern itself about the delinquency situation. According to a juvenile court officer, Ashland Park Community is one of two districts contiguous to Omaha whose delinquency records are the most serious of all outlying districts. The situation has improved in the last ten year period due, perhaps, to the work of school and church. Many different kinds of offenses are committed. Boys are mainly charged with stealing while girls are accused of sex crimes. There are more boys in proportion to girls, which coincides with general delinquency records throughout the country. "Less attention, therefore, has been centered on crime-prevention organizations for girls but as social and moral dangers become more prevalent, delinquency will increase among girls." Truancy is involved in all delinquent cases. H. A. Phelps shows the relationship of delinquency and crime in the following words: "In general, behavior-problem children are in a pre-delinquent state which is closely connected with truancy, and truancy is regarded by most psychiatrists as the kindergarten of crime."

The relationship of lack of recreational facilities to delinquency has been pointed out by Doctor T. Earl Sullenger in the significant statement

18 Mrs. Flora Potter, Juvenile Probation Officer, Douglas County.
19 Ibid.
20 T. E. Sullenger, Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency, p. 301
21 Contemporary Social Problems, p. 638.
that over ninety percent of criminal acts are committed during leisure time. All authorities on crime and delinquency agree that trouble begins during leisure hours and that the lack of recreational facilities and opportunities for play and guidance are largely responsible for juvenile delinquency and lowered moral standards. Thus it is important that some concerted action be taken for the provision of playground space or some other kind of social center before serious consequences result.

Loosely Organized Adult Groups

The natural urge for social contact is shown in the formation of loosely organized clubs and cliques for pure enjoyment. The "Birthday Club," which organized in 1912 and disbanded in 1935, consisted of a group of Swedish people living between 44 and 46 south of Q Streets, who celebrated birthdays of the members of its group. The Swedes are now scattered and less nationality-conscious so the club has had no further reason for existence. There was at one time a "Larkin" club which included any women in the community who wished to join. The purpose was commercial and involved entertainments at which prizes and premiums were awarded to those placing orders with Larkins in South Omaha. The "Mavis" club was organized in 1915 and is still in existence. It is a local group of women of the business class who find they have much in common. The purpose is purely social. There is no local club embracing the working classes today, but there are numerous "cliques" in all neighborhoods which come together for card playing, conversation and dancing. The playing of cards, especially bridge, is a popular form of diversion at the present time, although some call it the "high-toned man's game." The reason for the vogue of bridge in American life is well analyzed by Lynd who states, summed up, that nothing supplies the sense

22 Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency, p. 6.
of social participation in small social groups as bridge. A great many people are not satisfied unless they are aligned with some definite group in the community. Lack of funds often prevents this and the result is social isolation and unhappiness.

Non-Local Affiliations. A great many families are associated with some church, lodge, or club which meets in the city.

National and Religious Organizations

Recreation among national and religious groups plays a large part in the leisure of those so affiliated. With the adult foreign population the religious and national ties are strong factors in their social relationships, and if they do not find similar contacts in the community, they go to the city. (Holy Ghost Church and recreational activities having been discussed in Parts IV and V, the present discourse treats of only non-local organizations) These comprise the Polish Home and Church, Scandinavian church activities, and many others who are associated with their respective groups in the city and find recreational activity among them. All activities sponsored by religious or national bodies seem to keep their members interested, some saying that they could attend affairs several nights a week if they so desired. National groups are often accused of being "clannish" because their social and recreational sphere includes blood relationships many times removed, but as the years go on it develops that it is not necessarily national ties which bind but the similarity of social status and recreational tastes which brings them together. The older people have an intense love of European music and certain European traditions. Families usually join in celebration of weddings, christening parties, anniversaries, and the like.

---

23 Middletown in Transition, p. 270.
Fraternal and Industrial

A great majority of the many Bohemians living in the district belong to the well-known "Sokol" organization as well as to the many lodges. No attempt is made to enumerate all the fraternal lodges to which members from the community belong, but it is known that this number is large.

There are many non-local labor and business mens' organizations to which members of the community belong and from which they and their families benefit insofar as recreation is concerned.

In former years the packing industry recognized the need for supplying proper facilities for wholesome leisure-time activities for its employees. Family outings, picnics, parties, and dances were frequent. Today there is evidence that the movement has waned. Each plant has some form of employees' organization which sponsors social activities in proportion to the dues that are paid. The plant itself is not known to provide for recreation. The employees' clubs, however, are active and support many forms of recreation such as banquets, children's Christmas parties, and various athletics, such as bowling, baseball, and golf.

Summary

The proper use of leisure-time has become one of the most pressing social problems during recent years due to the semi-urbanization of the little farming community, mechanization in the packing industry and the invention and improvement of the automobile. The result is shorter working hours and more leisure-time than was the rule in the old farming days. Aggravation of the situation has been caused by a complete lack of public facilities for recreation, and those not associated with the local institutions such as church or school, the leading forces for organized recreation, seek their pleasures elsewhere. Consequently, many, owing to low costs, participate in the jovial
tavern life of the community or else stay at home. A few with financial means dissociate themselves completely from the recreational life of the community and become absorbed in social activities of the city.

The natural desire for a balanced recreation has not been fully satisfied by institutional means. The social disorganization of the community makes it almost impossible to control night life and to promote athletic or other generally approved forms of recreation. Because of the low expense, easy accessibility and general spontaneity afforded by tavern life there is little or any possibility of such means of leisure being voted out of existence by the working classes who patronize them. However, the schools and churches through their recreational program are branching out as far as possible in the recreational field.

The normal desire on the part of the young for a good time has been manifest in various ways though the older generation look upon the more extreme forms as an uncontrolled desire influenced by the general unrest of the times. Many consider any leisure spent in extreme modern ways a contribution to the breakdown of social control, and, in turn, are considered old-fashioned by the younger folk. This change in attitudes between the old and new generations results in a conflict which shows only a little tendency to meliorate. The rapid change from strict rural social control to a less restrained urban order accentuates the pace of the conflict. Nevertheless the home plays a greater part in the leisure of Ashland Park residents than before the depression as purchasing power has decreased and the invention of the radio which has become available in nearly all homes, has increased the tendency to remain at home. Very few people stay at home for purposes of reading, their literature indicating preferences for the lighter and popular types of fiction. Choices in radio programs among children are distinctly
mysteries, while child actors and western pictures were first choice in the moving picture vote. Hobbies and games are found mostly among older people and small children.

Free dancing at taverns has diminished the importance of public dance halls to those seeking this form of diversion. Little effort is made to pay admission to an all-evening public dance unless it is sponsored by some organization in the city to which members belong.

Persistence is shown in loafing from the days of the blacksmith to the present era of automobiles. Garages, filling stations, and taverns are hang-outs for loafers today and the danger of the gangling to develop into an anti-social gang is ever-present. Though the community is considered a highly moral district insofar as crime is concerned, there is nothing to prevent its losing this status if healthful outlets for desirable leisure-time activities are not found. Though social center work or other inexpensive means of recreation are needed they will perhaps never be established because of economic conditions and an almost total lack of community consciousness. The present hope of the community is the Weircrest Improvement Club whose weak but socially-conscious attempts toward a more healthful leisure for the community may some day bear fruit.
IN CONCLUSION

A. Generalization

This study does not intend to compare Ashland Park Community with similar communities or with any definite standards. Societal facts have been brought out in accord with sociological data collected over a three-year period. Generalizations have been difficult because of the general state of social disorganization resulting from the absence of a closely knit political unit.

Known mainly as a community of homes, Ashland Park District has no distinctive traits other than that its inhabitants are mostly associated with the live stock or packing industries and that it is a highly mobile area. Proximity to the city makes it difficult for inhabitants to strive toward a goal of unity; consequently there is not the community consciousness that gives a community personality or character.

The problems of disorganization grow primarily out of the heterogeneity of the population. Few matters exist today which directly concern the welfare of all. This state of disunity causes a social non-progressiveness in spite of population growth. The greatest handicap to a satisfactory realization of an integrated state is the lack of leaders. The present disorganization may be regarded as an inevitable accompaniment of modern metropolitan growth.

The attitudes of the inhabitants toward their community reflect in the main a general satisfaction; only a few are enthusiastic or disgruntled. Public opinion on becoming urban politically is decidedly negative. There is no doubt, however, as to ultimate urganization, for not only is the trend of population of Omaha westward, but recent United States census figures also
indicate trend away from rural to city areas.

B. Ecological Factors Summarized

Eighty-four years ago the first settlers came to what is now District No. 4. They secured homesteads and suffered hardships in contrast with the comforts of their former places of abode. They planted trees on the open prairie, favoring especially the ash tree, whose name and memory are preserved in the community school name today. The land provided a good living. Families were large, and opportunities for accumulating land were good. Social life was unified through the one-ness of nationality, namely, Irish. The little country school served as the institutional focus of attention for group life.

The advent of the packing and related industries changed the social and psychological pattern of life in the rural community. Many different nationalities filtered into the district, until by the turn of century, the community showed a distinct trend toward small homes and acreages. Disintegration of social life was the inevitable result.

Today the district remains politically a rural area although it insists upon approaching as far as possible the pattern of metropolitan life. Because of this tendency it is difficult to term the area a rural district in the fullest sense.

A link between the remote past and present is agriculture, represented today only by small farms and acreages. A more recent and stronger link is the packing industry which keeps the community alive. Pioneer rural life was self-sustaining, but today the community is not capable of satisfying major economic wants. The growth and development of the community depend largely upon the packing industry and allied enterprises.

Social control is a matter of institutional, rather than community
control. The public school has been the largest single force for social control since the beginning of community life. The churches exert a strong, though not so widespread, control in the district. Their influence has been hampered by the inequality in the rate of their development. The churches and schools are the only agencies in the district which promote spiritual, moral and educational standards. They have been most instrumental in keeping their own groups integrated and progressive. To the extent of their patrons, the public school and the churches exercise social control.

Superimposed upon a state of disintegration are various political, judicial, police and tax-levying bodies which have failed to become adjusted to the rapid physical growth of the community. This has been keenly felt, especially during the depression, and now constitutes a major problem in government. Poverty and mobility also intensify political difficulties. Few attempts are made toward political and social adjustment. Eventually absorption into the metropolitan sphere will take place, but present views in the community are opposed to political urbanizing. This conforms to the economic inability of most residents to pay higher taxes for the privilege of joining the city.

Healthy living conditions on the one hand, and a total lack of public recreational enterprise on the other, constitute the community's greatest advantage and disadvantage. The absence of wholesome recreational facilities, excepting those of church and school, an outgrowth of the community's unorganized state, is a cause for concern. Adolescents and young people are the ones who suffer most.

The trend of the community is toward overgrowth and submergence of rural characteristics into city ones. Its destiny is bound to the industrial life of Omaha, and the future of Ashland Park Community will be determined not by
the forces within itself but rather by the total course of city life.

Where ash trees once dotted the open country, hundreds of little rural cottages now stand, challenging the nearby city for supremacy over territory which no longer knows the ash tree except in the name of its community school.

It is the hope of the writer that this study has pointed out the way to a deeper insight into problems of social guidance which may well be the subject of further research.

C. Social Change Analyzed

This study gives a large place to factors affecting social change. Life in the open gives the impression of a simple social situation, but a surprising array of contending forces brings about constant change and complicates any study of an open community. In fact, the problems of community life are problems of social change. Adjustments to new conditions such as accompany metropolitan inroads, proceed in no smooth and uniform manner. Where changes are not apparent there was stress arising from failure to change. Inventions such as the automobiles and home conveniences and the expansion of credit have widened the horizon and brought great changes in material life. Culture conflicts have arisen as changes took place, for the inner, or psychological values were slow to change. Cultural lag is especially noticeable in the attitudes of the young compared to those of the older generation. Because in some ways habits are modernized and attitudes remain old-fashioned, a state of balance between stability and change exists.

Among the situations that show a change or a failure to change are the depression, the delinquent situation, election campaigns, indifference to church or education, the younger generation, "corrupt politics", the traffic
situation and many others. An attempt has been made to show change or persistence in each major topic of the study which constitutes a definite ecological factor.

D. Conclusions Listed

1. The existing state of political disunity is responsible for general social disorganizations.

2. The church and school will continue to be the only forces for social integration.

3. As long as the packing industry and allied fields exist the community will be populated chiefly by white workers in the industry.

4. The cultural traits of an agricultural economy are being replaced by those of an industrial economy.

5. Metropolitan inroads will continue until final absorption into the city takes place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The solution to the problem resolves itself into the building up of a community spirit through church, school and home to develop a sense of responsibility for general community and home improvement.

2. All people and organized groups should join working forces to solve their common problems under the direction of qualified leaders.

3. Long-term planning cannot be recommended because ultimate urbanization is inevitable.

4. The district should be zoned to keep single family dwellings separate from business areas. No point should be out of sight of open spaces. The esthetic value of gardens and landscape should be preserved.

5. Permanent tenure of homes should be encouraged.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Almack, John C., Research and Thesis Writing, Houghton-Mifflin Co., Boston, 1930
Blumenthal, Albert, Small Town Stuff, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1932
Bogardus, Emory S., Making Social Science Studies, Jesse Ray Miller, Los Angeles, 1925
Brunner, E., Surveying Your Community, Doran Co., New York, 1925
Brunner, E. and Kolb, J. H., Rural Social Trends, McGraw, 1933
Butterfield, K. L., Christian Enterprise Among Rural People, Cokesbury Press, 1933
Elliott, Mabel and Merrill, Francis, Social Disorganizations, Harper & Bros., New York, 1934
Elmer, M. C. Technique of Social Surveys, Lawrence, Kansas, 1917
Elmer, M. C., Social Surveys of Urban Communities, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1914
Ferris, Helen, Girls' Clubs, Their Organization and Management, E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1918
BIBLIOGRAPHY - BOOKS

Landis, B. Y., Rural Adult Education, MacMillan, New York, 1933
Lindeman, Edward C., The Community, Associated Press, New York, 1921
Lorge, Irving, American Agricultural Villages, American Statistical Assn., New York, 1933
Lynd, Robert S. and Helen M., Middletown, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1929
Maciver, R. M., Community: A Sociological Study, MacMillan, New York, 1924
Moley, Raymond, Review of the Surveys of the Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland, 1923
Nebraska Blue Book, Nebraska State Legislature Reference Bureau, Lincoln, 1934
Nystrom, P. H., Retail Selling and Store Management, John D. Appleton Co., New York, 1920
Ostdiek, J. R. (Rev.) Catholic Education in Omaha, Omaha, 1927
BIBLIOGRAPHY - BOOKS

Park, R. E. and Burgess, E. W., The City, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1925
Ross, Edward A., Civic Sociology, World Book Co., New York, 1926
Savage, James W. and Bell, John T., History of Omaha, Nebraska, Munsell & Co., New York, 1894
Sheldon, Addison E., Nebraska Civil Government, The University Publishing co., Lincoln, 1935
Sims, N. L., Elements of Rural Sociology, Crowell, New York, 1954
Sorensen, Alfred, The Story of Omaha, National Printing Co., 1889
Sorokin, Pitirim A., Social Mobility, Harper & Bros., Chicago, 1927
Sorokin, Pitirim A., Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology, University of Minn. Press, 1932
Spear, Frank, "Unpublished History of South Omaha", April, 1938
Sullenger, T. Earl, Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency, Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1936
Sullenger, T. Earl, Studies in Urban Sociology, Bureau of Social Research, Municipal University of Omaha, Omaha, 1933
Williams, Michael, The Catholic Church in Action, MacMillan, New York, 1934
Young, Kimball, The Madison Community, Madison, Wisconsin, Wisconsin, 1934
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Periodicals


American Junior Red Cross Magazine, Issued in Washington, D.C., November, 1937

Boy Scouts of America, Revised Handbook for Boys, 1927

Bryson, C., "Can the Farmer Be Saved?" Survey Graphic, Vol. XXIII:371, August, 1934


Douglas County, Nebraska, Plat Book, 1924

Economic World Review, U. S. Department of Commerce, p. 67, 1936

Elmer, M. C., "The Evaluation and Scoring of Human Activities", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXV

Erion, J. B., The Eagle, April, 1891

Farmer's Union, "What It Is and What It Is Doing", June, 1928


Flanders, Dwight, "Blighted Urban Residential Areas," Alpha Kappa Delta, October, 1937

Four-H Handy Book, Published by National Committee on Club Work, 1930

Freehold Magazine, Editorial, Real Estate Dealers, March, 1938


Globe, Journal, March 19, 1886

Hall, C. E., "The Busy, Friendly Place", Omaha's Own Magazine and Trade Journal Review, January, 1928


Knighthood of Youth, Club Guide, State Department of Public Instruction, 1933

Omaha City Directories, 1890-1937
Omaha Street Railway Department, Traffic History, Library in Union State Bank Bldg.


Queen, S. A., "What is a Community?", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIII:422, November, 1937


Trowbridge, J. R., "Taxation as an Economic Control", New Outlook, Vol. 163:50-3, April, 1934

World-Herald, Sunday Magazine Section, "World's Largest Rural School and the Woman Who Runs It", October, 1926