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ABSTRACT

The communities that individuals have created are endlessly diverse. They have followed ancient patterns and have experimented boldly with innovative ideas. This publication and the exhibition it complements present only a few of the many ways that individuals have found to live together. It is divided according to the specific forces behind the creation of communities in the United States: "Family Ties" and "Ethnic Environment" show associations organized around those basic bonds; "The Dollars and Sense of Community" describes groups that form for economic reasons; "Plans for Perfection" examines religious and secular utopias; and "From Crisis to Community" deals with people forced by circumstances or discrimination to congregate. Census pages, petitions, maps, photographs, and other federal records are included. Individually, these documents can tell only incomplete stories of the specific groups represented. But taken together they reveal some of the subtleties and complexities of the U.S. style of congregation--and of the human bond itself. (JAG)

TIES THAT BIND

COMMUNITIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TIES THAT BIND

COMMUNITIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

By Lisa B. Auel

An exhibition at the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Washington, DC

Spring 1992 through Spring 1993

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Cover "*Mountain Meeting*," by David Lambson, 1848, from Two Years Experience Among the Shakers
Courtesy of Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Designed by Serene Feldman Werblood, National Archives

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PREFACE

"The ties that bind the lives of our people *in one indissoluble union are perpetuated in the Archives of our government . . ."*

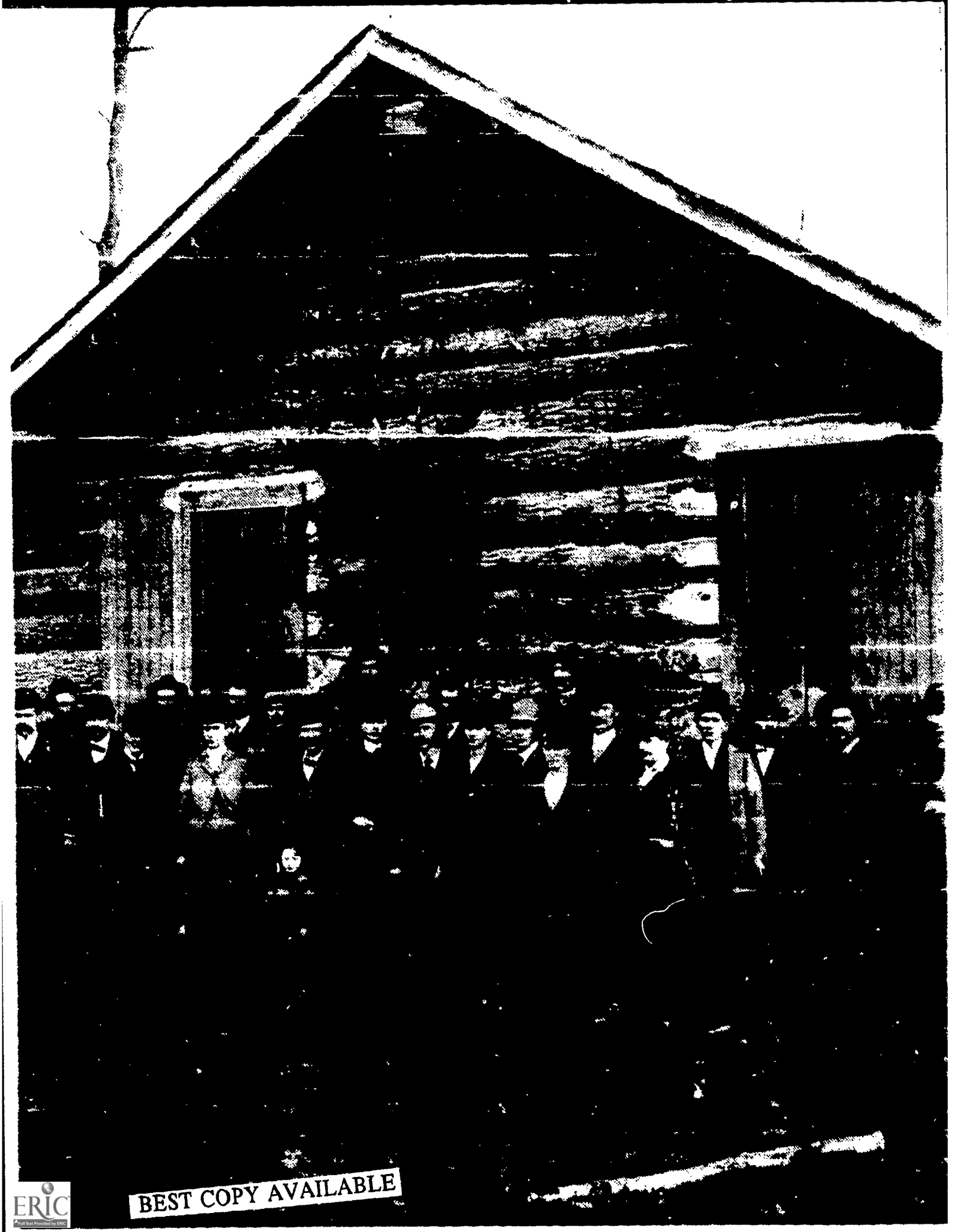
Inscription on the National Archives Building by its architect, John Russell Pope, ca 1930s

In the Rotunda of the National Archives, visitors wait in hushed lines to view the great documents of American democracy and history. Seeing the handwritten, original copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights is often stirring: Americans of all ages and backgrounds describe the experience as awe-inspiring, reverential, moving. As expressions of the values and freedoms that all Americans cherish, the Charters of Freedom are powerful symbols of our collective beliefs and ideals. They are the tangible links that unite Americans in a vast, national community.

The freedoms accorded United States citizens by the Charters have also encouraged the creation of an infinite variety of more intimate communities. As early as 1831, when Alexis de Tocqueville traveled through the United States, he noted with some curiosity and admiration the American inclination to associate. Americans of all ages, conditions, and dispositions, he wrote, constantly form associations of a "thousand kinds, religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive." Indeed, the history of this country is rife with the successes and failures of every imaginable kind of community. Their stories are an important part of our collective past: they tell us something of the freedoms and constraints of American democracy and of the organization and experience of American life.

This book presents documents from the National Archives that are the tangible traces of that experience—of the ties that bind us to one another as Americans, and as human beings. It accompanies the 1992 National Archives exhibition "Ties That Bind: Communities in American History." The Office of Public Programs of the National Archives prepared the exhibition and this book; Lisa B. Auel of the Exhibits Branch was the author of both. Serene Feldman Werblood of the Development and Production Branch, Publications Division, designed the publication. For all of their generous contributions of time and support to the "Communities" project, special thanks are extended to Stacey Bredhoff, Bruce I. Bustard, Anne DeLong, Stephen Estrada, Henry J. Gwiazda, Martha Merselis, Kitty Nicholson, Marilyn Paul, Thomas D. Saunders, Emily Soapes, and James D. Zeender.

Don W. Wilson
Archivist of the United States



INTRODUCTION

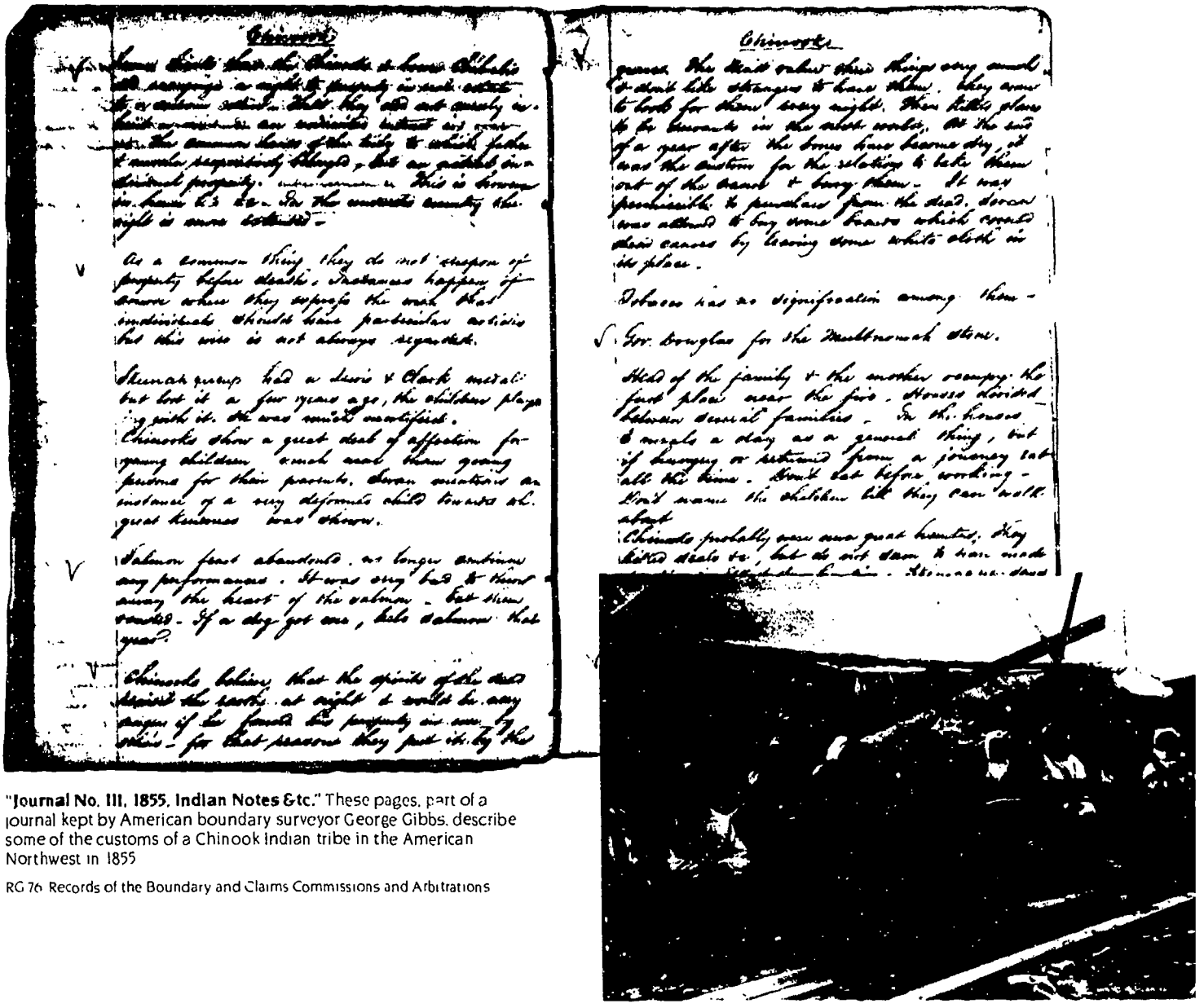
The communities that Americans have created are endlessly diverse: they have followed ancient patterns and have boldly experimented with innovative ideas. This book and the exhibition it complements present only a few of the myriad ways that Americans have found to live together. It is divided according to some of the specific forces behind the creation of community in this country: "Family Ties" and "Ethnic Environments" show associations organized around those basic bonds; "The Dollars and Sense of Community" describes groups that form for economic reasons; "Plans for Perfection" looks at religious and secular utopias, and "From Crisis to Community" deals with people forced, by circumstance or discrimination, to congregate.

The census pages, petitions, maps, photographs, and other federal records shown on the following pages were produced or collected by the U.S. government for many different reasons. In most cases, they were not kept in order to fully portray particular communities. Individually, therefore, these documents can tell only incomplete stories of the specific groups represented. But taken together they reveal some of the subtleties and complexities of the American style of congregation — and of the human bond itself.

Blackfeet Indians on the shore of Two Medicine Lake, Glacier National Park, Montana, ca. 1890.

RG 79, Records of the National Park Service (79-PGN-1161)

WE ARE ALL BORN INTO THE MOST INTIMATE COMMUNITIES THAT WE'LL EVER KNOW: OUR FAMILIES. **TODAY** THESE GROUPS, WHICH ARE USUALLY THE MOST MEANINGFUL ASSOCIATIONS OF OUR LIVES, CONSIST OF SMALL NUMBERS OF IMMEDIATE RELATIVES, AND OUR "COMMUNITIES" INCLUDE THE UNRELATED PEOPLE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, PROFESSIONS, OR GENERATION. **BUT PRIOR TO** THE 1600s, WHEN EUROPEANS BEGAN TO COLONIZE THE "NEW WORLD" IN EARNEST, MOST AMERICAN COMMUNITIES WERE BASED ON EXTENDED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. **IN THE NATIVE** POPULATIONS OF AMERICAN INDIANS, INUITS (HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS ESKIMOS), AND HAWAIIANS, THE INTRICATE RELATIONSHIPS OF KIN AND CLAN DETERMINED THE CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITIES. **SUSTAINED BY** THE SENSE OF LOYALTY AND OBLIGATION INHERENT IN SUCH FAMILY TIES, THESE EARLIEST AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS FLOURISHED. **AS EURO-AMERICAN** CULTURE INEXORABLY ADVANCED ACROSS NATIVE LANDS, HOWEVER, THEIR CHANCES FOR CONTINUED SURVIVAL DIMMED.



"Journal No. III, 1855, Indian Notes &tc." These pages, part of a journal kept by American boundary surveyor George Gibbs, describe some of the customs of a Chinook Indian tribe in the American Northwest in 1855

RG 76 Records of the Boundary and Claims Commissions and Arbitrations

An Eskimo orchestra in Point Barrow, Alaska, ca. 1900, by Stanley Morgan.

RG 111 Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer 111-SC-103683

Native Americans

Though many Native American communities were based on kinship associations, individual communities varied greatly. When John Smith and other British colonists sailed into the Chesapeake Bay in 1607, over 2,000 indigenous languages were spoken in America. The number of native tongues bespoke the great diversity of Native American cultures: some were aggressive, others were peaceful; some farmed and traded in the Southeast, others followed seasons and herds on the Alaskan tundra. The communities built by Native Americans ranged from small bands or villages to larger, more complex societies, each practicing its own religion, producing its own art, and conducting its own government. Religious ceremonies, feasts, athletic contests, and shared beliefs about the natural and spiritual worlds cemented relationships and sustained community life.

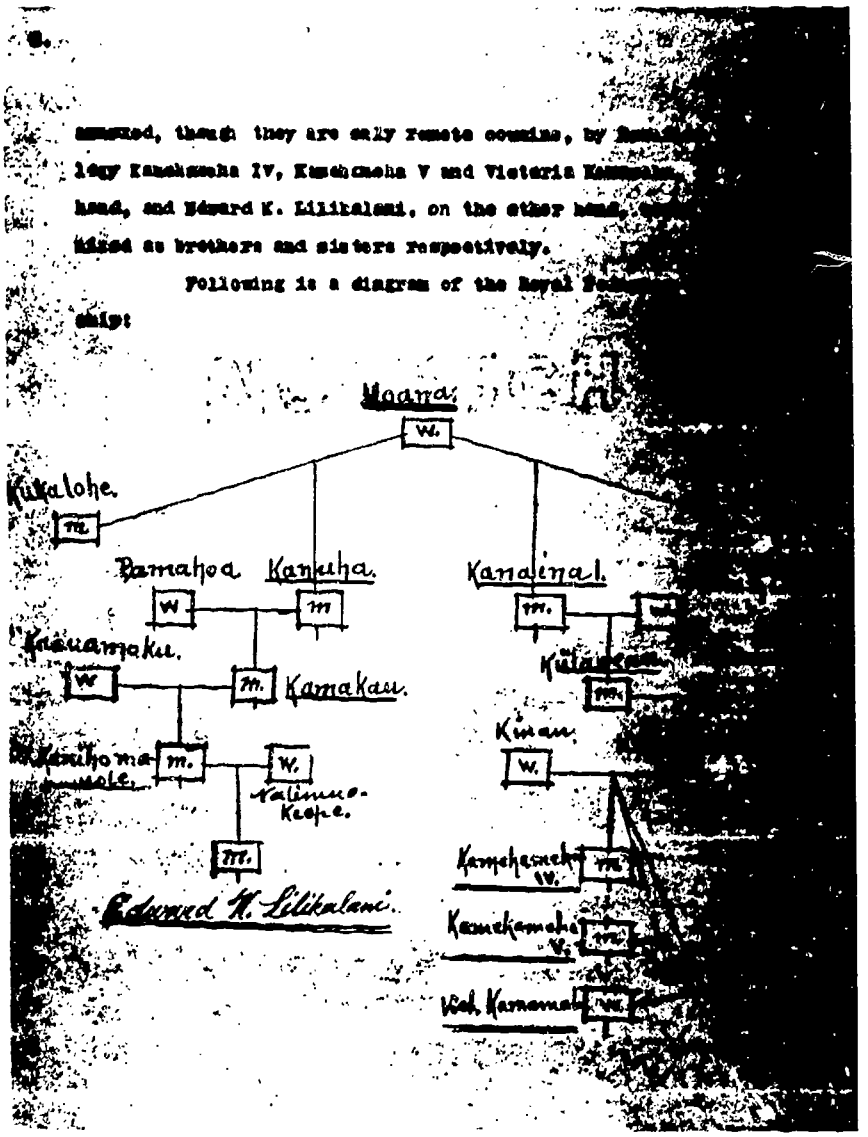


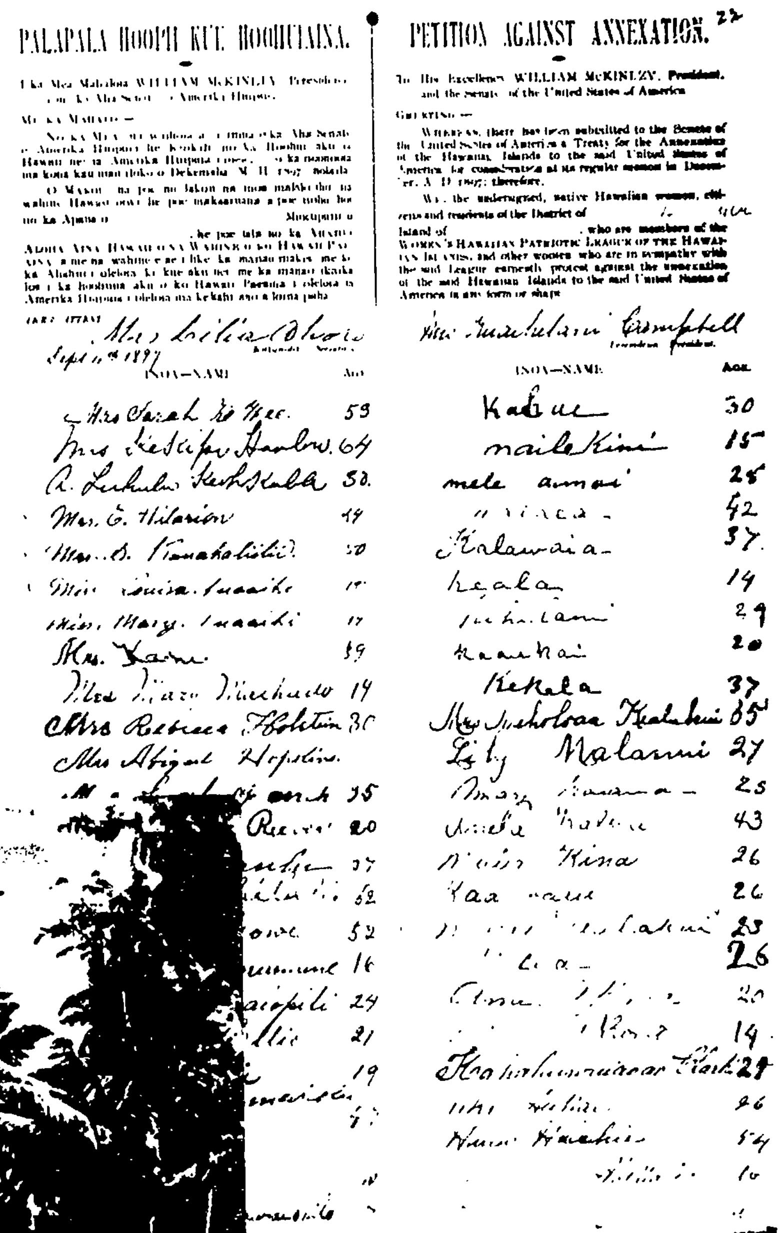
Diagram showing the family line of the Kamehameha royal family, ca. 1893.

RG 233 Records of the U.S. House of Representatives
Reproduced with permission of the House of Representatives

Native Hawaiians

Villages and towns on the Hawaiian Islands also developed along clan lines, but the population as a whole was more homogenous than that of the American mainland. Polynesian voyagers colonized the islands between 300-400 AD, and by the arrival of British explorer Capt. James Cook in 1778, a royal family governed the islands and a uniquely Hawaiian culture had developed. In communities throughout the islands people truly shared their daily lives — property and food were held in common, and work was a communal effort. *Ohana* (family) and *puwalu* (cooperation) were universally the most treasured Hawaiian values.

As on the mainland, the traditional way of life on the islands was challenged and changed by the introduction of European and American cultures. When the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, the dissolution of native communities and lifestyles was virtually assured. Today a small number of native Hawaiians attempts to preserve their culture in ceremonies, traditional activities (such as the hula), and experimental communal societies.



PALAPALA HOOPII KUE HOOHUIAINA.

PETITION AGAINST ANNEXATION.

To His Excellency WILLIAM McKINLEY, President, and the Senate of the United States of America

GREETING: —

WHEREAS, there has been submitted to the Senate of the United States of America a Treaty for the Annexation of the Hawaiian Islands to the said United States of America, for consideration at its regular session in December, A. D. 1897; therefore,

We, the undersigned, native Hawaiian women, citizens and residents of the District of ______, Island of ______, who are members of the WOMEN'S HAWAIIAN PATRIOTIC LEAGUE OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, and other women who are in sympathy with the said League, earnestly protest against the annexation of the said Hawaiian Islands to the said United States of America in any form or shape.

INOA—NAME | AGE

Page from an anti-annexation petition from the Women's Hawaiian Patriotic League, opposing U.S. annexation of the islands, 1898.

RG 46 Records of the U.S. Senate
Reproduced with permission of the Senate

Members of a fishing village on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, work together to pull in the day's catch, 1953, by Ewing Krainin.

RG 306 Records of the U.S. Information Agency (306-PS-53-10170)

Irish clam diggers in Boston, 1882.
RG 22, Records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (22-CF-428)

A NATURAL EXTENSION OF FAMILY-BASED COMMUNITIES ARE THOSE UNIFIED BY ETHNICITY OR CULTURE. **DESPITE** ITS POPULAR IMAGE AS A MELTING POT, THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN HOME TO THOUSANDS OF ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND CULTURAL GROUPS THAT HAVE REMAINED DISTINCT FROM OTHER AMERICANS. **SOMETIMES** THIS SEPARATION WAS A CONSCIOUS CHOICE. **NEW IMMIGRANTS** USUALLY FOUND THE TRANSITION FROM OLD WORLD TO NEW EASIER WHEN THEY WERE SURROUNDED BY FAMILIAR FACES AND CUSTOMS. **FOR OTHER GROUPS,** SEPARATION FROM THE LARGER SOCIETY RESULTED FROM BOTH OVERT AND INSIDIOUS SEGREGATION: VERY OFTEN THE LOCATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS HAVE BEEN DETERMINED BY THE PREJUDICES OF THE MAJORITY POPULATION. **WHETHER CREATED BY** CHOICE OR FORCE, ETHNIC TOWNS AND NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE BECOME A COMMON FEATURE OF THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE.

Immigrants

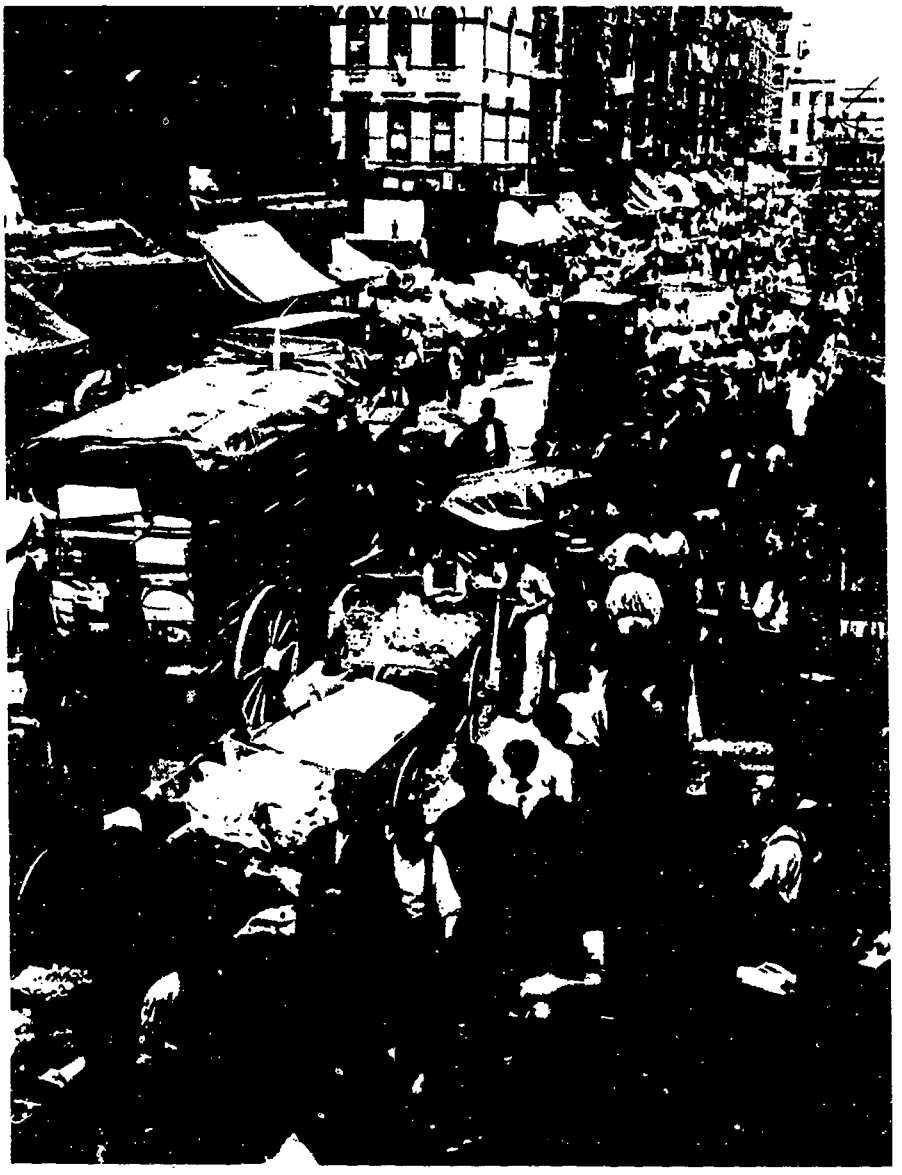
Some of the earliest immigrants to America crossed the Atlantic in small groups, hoping for new opportunities in a new land or seeking refuge from political or religious persecution. Upon arrival here, these groups often stayed together, creating small, closely knit, ethnically homogenous communities. When the first British colonists arrived, for instance, they remained together in small settlements rather than dispersing into the wilderness. Such settlements offered more protection and comfort than lonely homesteads: the compact New England towns were designed to be easily defended. They also fostered close community relationships, provided economic security for inhabitants, and imposed a British sense of physical and social order on the alien land.

In 19th-century America, immigrants often settled in ethnic neighborhoods in large cities. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Chicago — all had quarters or sections that were inhabited largely by immigrants from the same country or region. Many of these communities became compact, vibrant versions of home: the sound of native languages, the aroma of familiar foods, and the prevalence of traditional dress or architecture helped define community boundaries and cushioned the cultural shock of a new and urban world. Traditional religious and social practices also persisted, often longer than any visible manifestations of ethnicity or culture, and these customs wove strength into the fabric of neighborhood life.

Once settled in the United States, immigrants did not always find themselves living the American dream. Discrimination and the challenges of assimilation became obstacles to the realization of the promise that the United States seemed to hold. For many immigrants, poverty, disease, and death were constant companions, and home and community were contained in squalid city tenements. To combat these and other problems, some immigrant groups formed their own social, legal, and economic organizations. Such associations served immigrants in established ethnic communities and also those who lived outside the community's protective embrace. Ethnic organizations provided the structure and comfort of a culture-based community even for immigrants dispersed throughout the country.

Children in Harlem, August 8, 1937.

RG 69 Records of the Work Projects Administration
(69-N-16195-D)

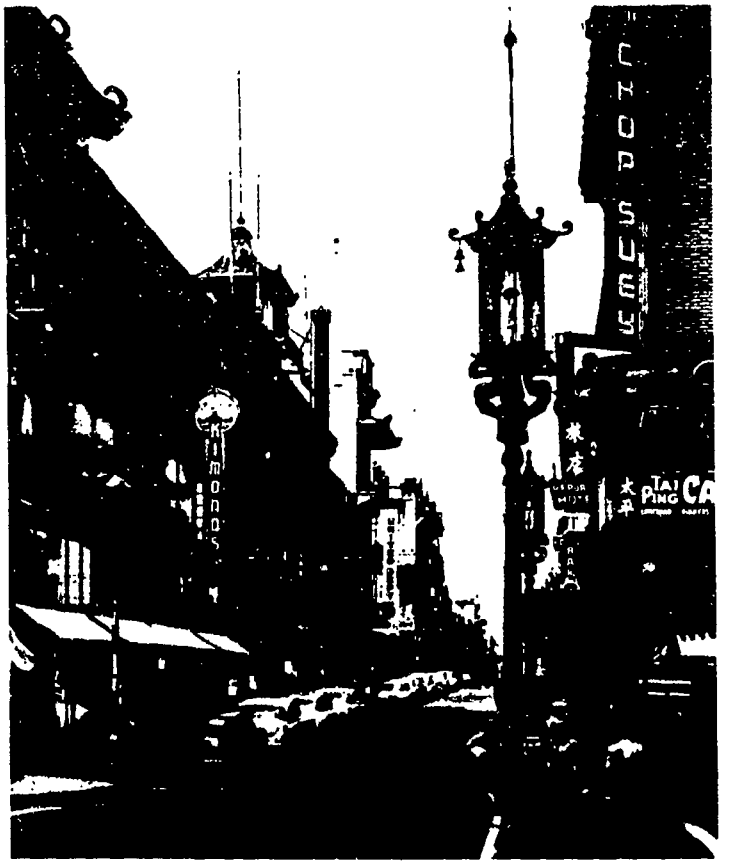


Hester Street, in an area of New York City heavily populated by immigrants, ca. 1903.

RG 196 Records of the Public Housing Administration [196-GS-xxx]

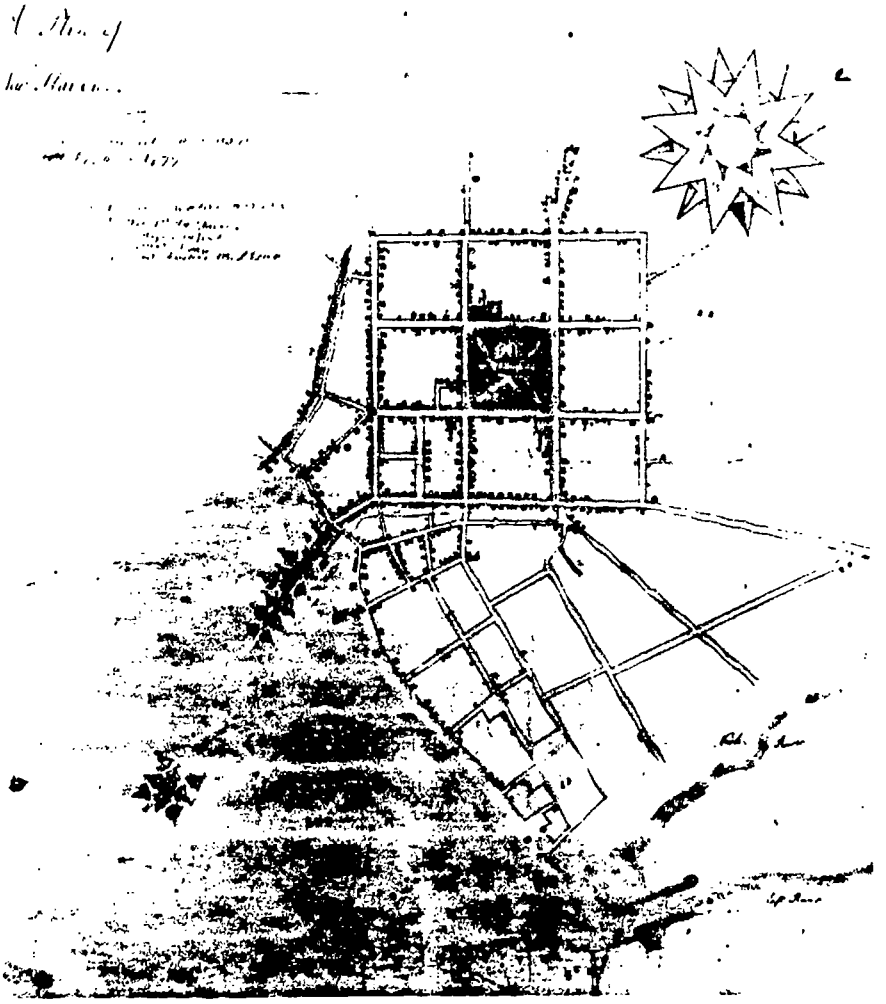
El Cerrito, New Mexico, April 10, 1941, by Irving Rusinow.

RG 83 Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (83-G-37802)



Grant Avenue in Chinatown, San Francisco, California, ca. 1954.

RG 306 Records of the U.S. Information Agency
(306-PS-B-54-10427)

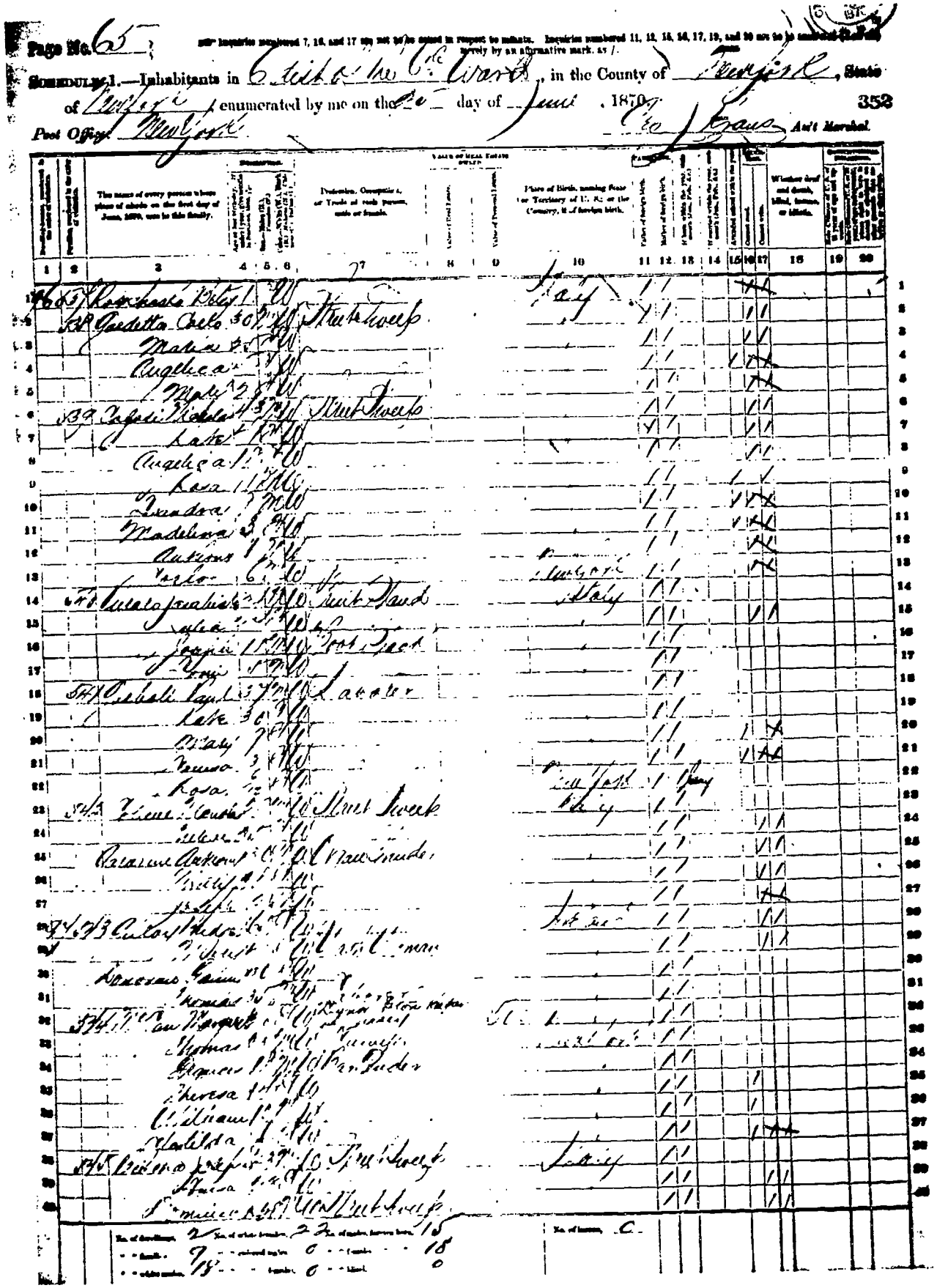


Town Plan of New Haven, Connecticut, 1776 or 1777, by Samuel Hopkins, Jr. Not all towns in New England exhibited the distinctive grid pattern evident in this map of New Haven. But most villages – whether tightly compact or more dispersed – meant "community" to early American colonists.

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society New York City

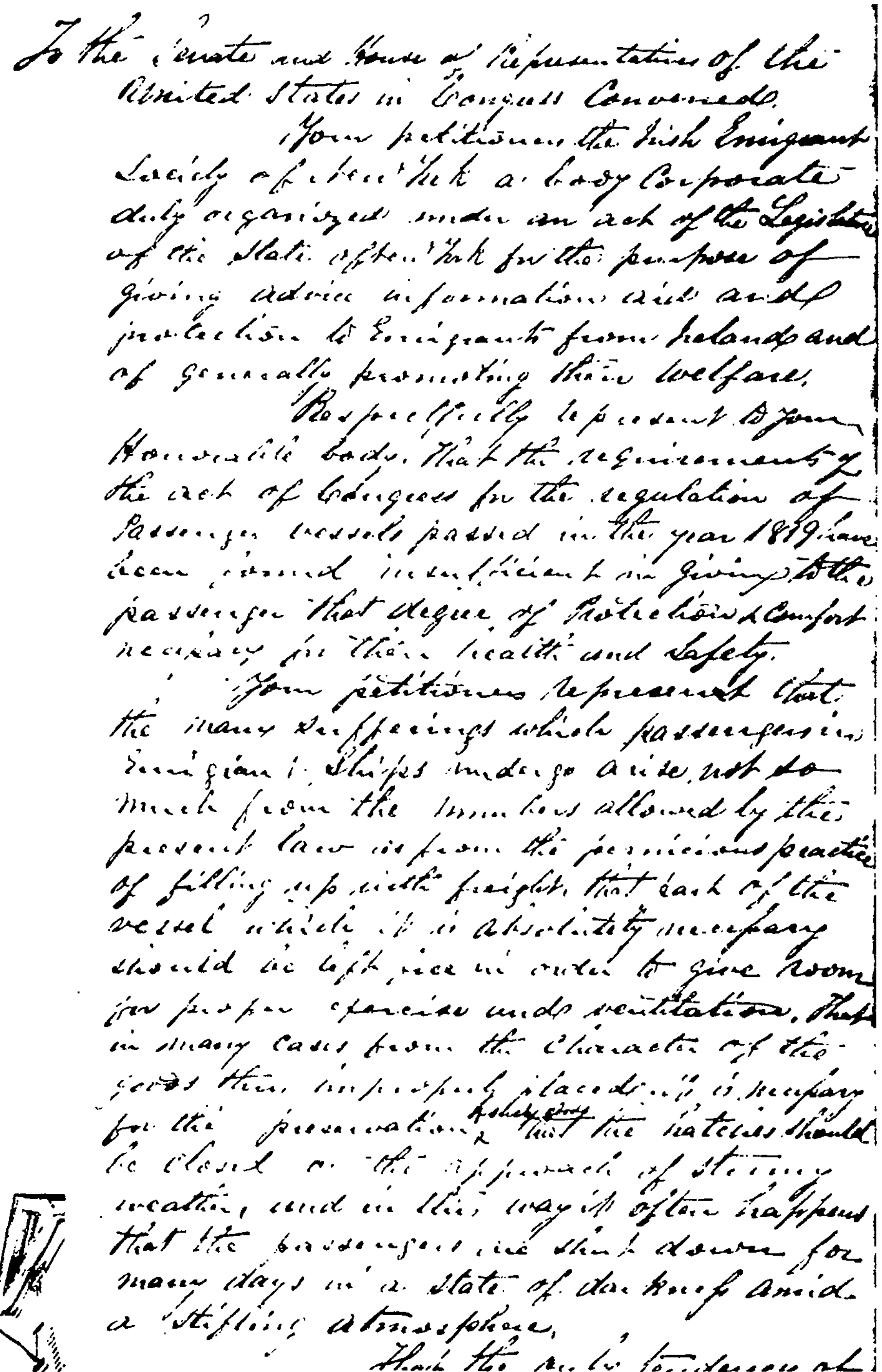
Czechoslovakian immigrants and descendants in Lidice, Illinois, ca. 1940s.

RG 208. Records of the Office of War Information (208-PR-17S-41



Census schedule for an Italian immigrant community in New York City, 1870.

RG 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census


To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Convened.

Your petitioners the Irish Emigrant Society of New York a body Corporate duly organized under an act of the Legislature of the State of New York for the purpose of giving advice information aid and protection to Emigrants from Ireland and of generally promoting their welfare.

Respectfully represent to your Honorable body, That the requirements of the act of Congress for the regulation of Passenger vessels passed in the year 1819 have been found insufficient in giving to the passenger that degree of Protection & Comfort necessary for their health and safety.

Your petitioners represent that the many sufferings which passengers in Emigrant Ships undergo arise not so much from the numbers allowed by the present law as from the pernicious practice of filling up with freight that part of the vessel which it is absolutely necessary should be left free in order to give room for proper exercise and ventilation, That in many cases from the character of the goods thus improperly placed it is necessary for their preservation as they say that the hatches should be closed on the approach of stormy weather, and in this way it often happens that the passengers are shut down for many days in a state of darkness amid a stifling atmosphere.

That the rule [illegible]

Petition to the Congress of the United States from the Irish Emigrant Society of New York, January 26, 1847. The Irish Emigrant Society assisted immigrants in the United States. In this letter to Congress, the Society requests attention to the plight of Irish immigrants on board passenger ships

RG 46 Records of the U S Senate
Reproduced with permission of the Senate

Residents of Pelham, Massachusetts, walk down a well-trod path to the town meeting house, November 1943. Following a tradition begun in colonial times, the community still congregates regularly in some New England towns to discuss and decide matters of local importance

RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information (208-N-17333-PBS)

African Americans in Harlem

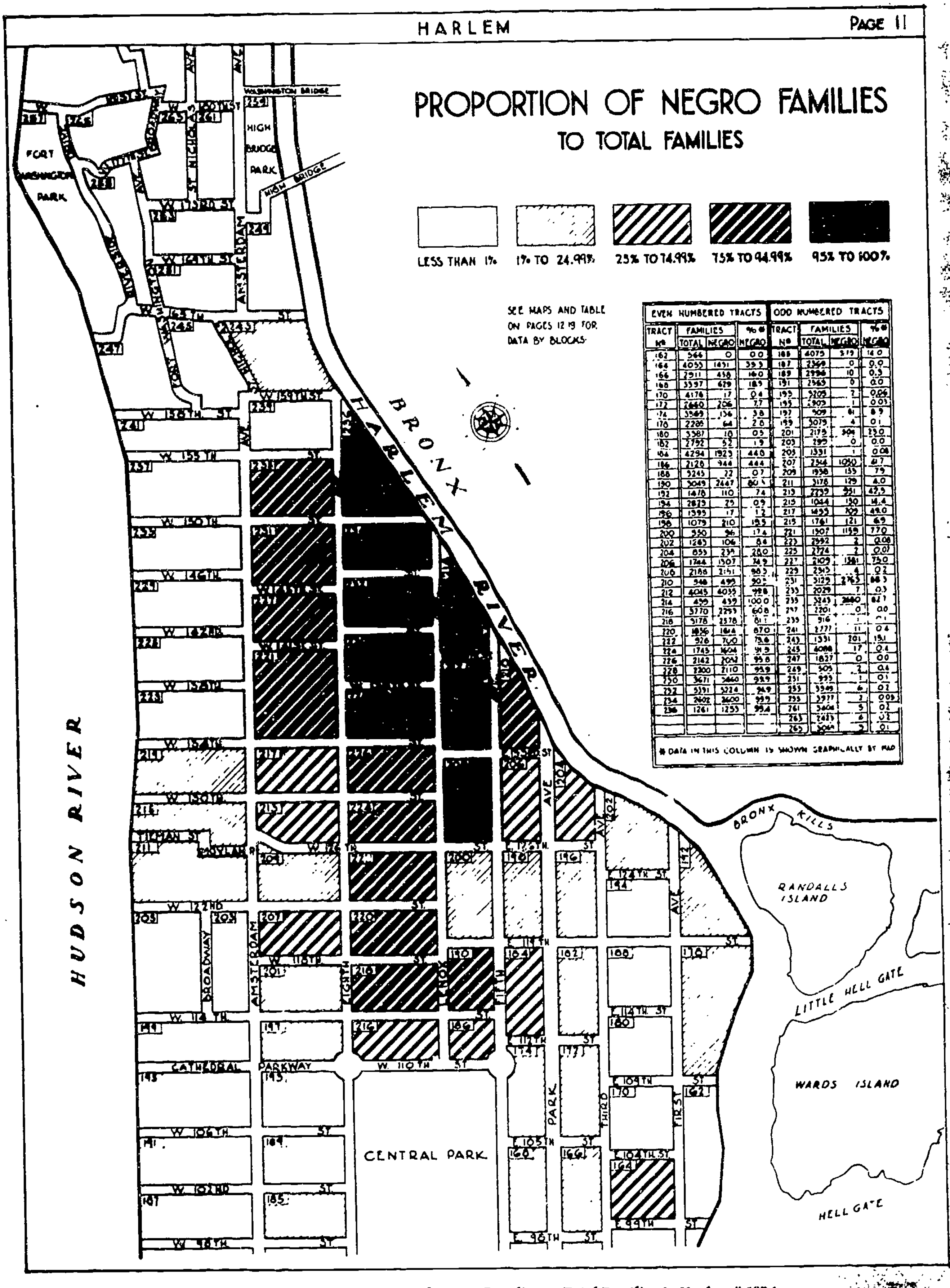
The problems faced by African-American communities perhaps exceeded those of any other ethnic group. Since their arrival in America as servants and slaves in the 17th century, African Americans have been one of the most visible and most persecuted minorities in this country. Even after the passage of the 13th amendment in 1865, discrimination persisted: blacks were denied voting rights; equal access to jobs, education, and housing; and in many places the right to live among the white majority. As a result they often created — or were forced into — their own racially restricted communities.

The kinds of communities that African Americans created were diverse. In the mid-19th century, for instance, groups of blacks bought land and formed their own frontier towns in the American West. In the later 19th century, as former slaves migrated north in search of work, they often created enclaves in cities that were much like those of other ethnic groups. By the early years of this century, Harlem, in New York City, became the largest African-American community in the United States.

In the 1920s Harlem was the center of black consciousness and political power in the United States. Leaders, such as W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey, and African-American artists and intellectuals living there drew the world's attention to the community. At the same time, however, Harlem also emerged as the largest black ghetto in the country. Discrimination, poor education, and unemployment created relentless poverty and suffering. Harlem residents found many ways to protest and combat these conditions, often working through political organizations (like Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association), church groups, and social clubs. Despite individual and community actions, however, the struggle against discrimination proved long and laborious. In Harlem, and throughout the United States, African Americans found that America held for them both hope and hardship, both opportunity and oppression.

Parade-goers in Harlem, February 17, 1919.

RG 165 Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs (165-WW-127-24)



EVEN NUMBERED TRACTS				ODD NUMBERED TRACTS			
TRACT Nº	FAMILIES TOTAL	FAMILIES NEGRO	% * NEGRO	TRACT Nº	FAMILIES TOTAL	FAMILIES NEGRO	% * NEGRO
162	566	0	0.0	185	4075	579	14.0
164	4055	1451	35.8	187	2369	0	0.0
166	2911	436	16.0	189	2996	10	0.3
168	3397	629	18.5	191	2565	0	0.0
170	4176	17	0.4	193	3205	2	0.06
172	2660	206	7.7	195	2903	1	0.03
174	3569	136	3.8	197	909	81	8.9
176	2286	64	2.8	199	3079	4	0.1
180	3387	10	0.3	201	2175	504	23.0
182	2792	52	1.9	203	295	0	0.0
184	4294	1925	44.8	205	1331	1	0.08
186	2126	944	44.4	207	2544	1050	41.7
188	3245	22	0.7	209	1938	155	7.9
190	3049	2447	80.3	211	3178	129	4.0
192	1478	110	7.4	213	2239	951	42.5
194	2873	25	0.9	215	1044	150	14.4
196	1399	17	1.2	217	1455	709	49.0
198	1079	210	19.5	219	1761	121	6.9
200	550	96	17.4	221	1507	1159	77.0
202	1263	106	8.4	223	2592	2	0.08
204	853	239	28.0	225	2724	2	0.07
206	1744	1307	74.9	227	2109	1581	75.0
208	2188	2151	98.3	229	2315	4	0.2
210	548	495	90.3	231	3129	2763	88.3
212	4045	4035	99.8	233	2029	7	0.3
214	439	439	100.0	235	3243	2660	82.1
216	3770	2293	60.8	237	2201	0	0.0
218	3178	2578	81.1	239	916	1	0.1
220	1856	1614	87.0	241	2777	11	0.4
222	926	700	75.6	243	1331	201	15.1
224	1745	1604	91.9	245	4088	17	0.4
226	2142	2052	95.8	247	1827	0	0.0
228	2200	2110	95.9	249	505	2	0.4
230	3671	3460	92.9	251	995	1	0.1
232	5591	5224	94.9	253	3549	6	0.2
234	2602	2600	99.9	255	3977	2	0.05
236	1261	1255	99.4	261	3404	5	0.2
				263	2423	6	0.2
				265	2049	2	0.1

* DATA IN THIS COLUMN IS SHOWN GRAPHICALLY BY MAP

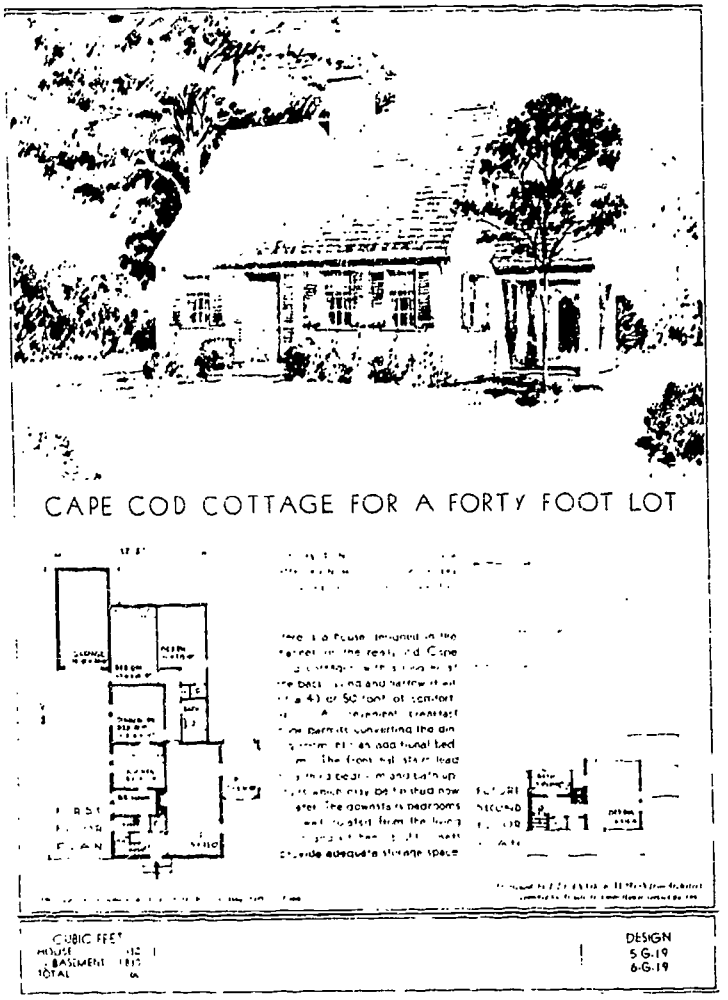
Map showing the "Proportion of Negro Families to Total Families in Harlem," 1934.

RG 31, Records of the Federal Housing Administration

"Baltimore," by Palmer Hayden, date unknown.

Courtesy of the Harmon Foundation
RG 200. Records of the National Archives Gift Collection

THE CHARACTER OF MANY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES WAS DETERMINED NOT ONLY BY THE CULTURE OR COLOR OF THEIR INHABITANTS; THE TENOR OF THE COMMUNITY WAS OFTEN SET BY THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE GROUP LIVED. **INDEED,** ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCE HAS PROVIDED THE IMPETUS FOR MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF AMERICAN COMMUNITIES. **BOOM TOWNS,** WITH THE PROMISE OF QUICK RICHES, DREW PEOPLE TO THE REMOTEST CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY; COMPANY TOWNS ATTRACTED RESIDENTS BY OFFERING SIMPLY JOBS AND SURVIVAL. **EVEN TODAY** MOST AMERICANS LIVE IN COMMUNITIES SHAPED BY ECONOMIC INFLUENCES. **IN URBAN** AND SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS, THE MOST COMMON DENOMINATORS ARE INCOME AND ECONOMIC CLASS.



"Cape Cod Cottage for a Forty Foot Lot," a familiar suburban houseplan designed for the low-to-middle income suburbs near Boston, Massachusetts, ca. 1930s or 1940s.

RG 195 Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board

The Suburbs

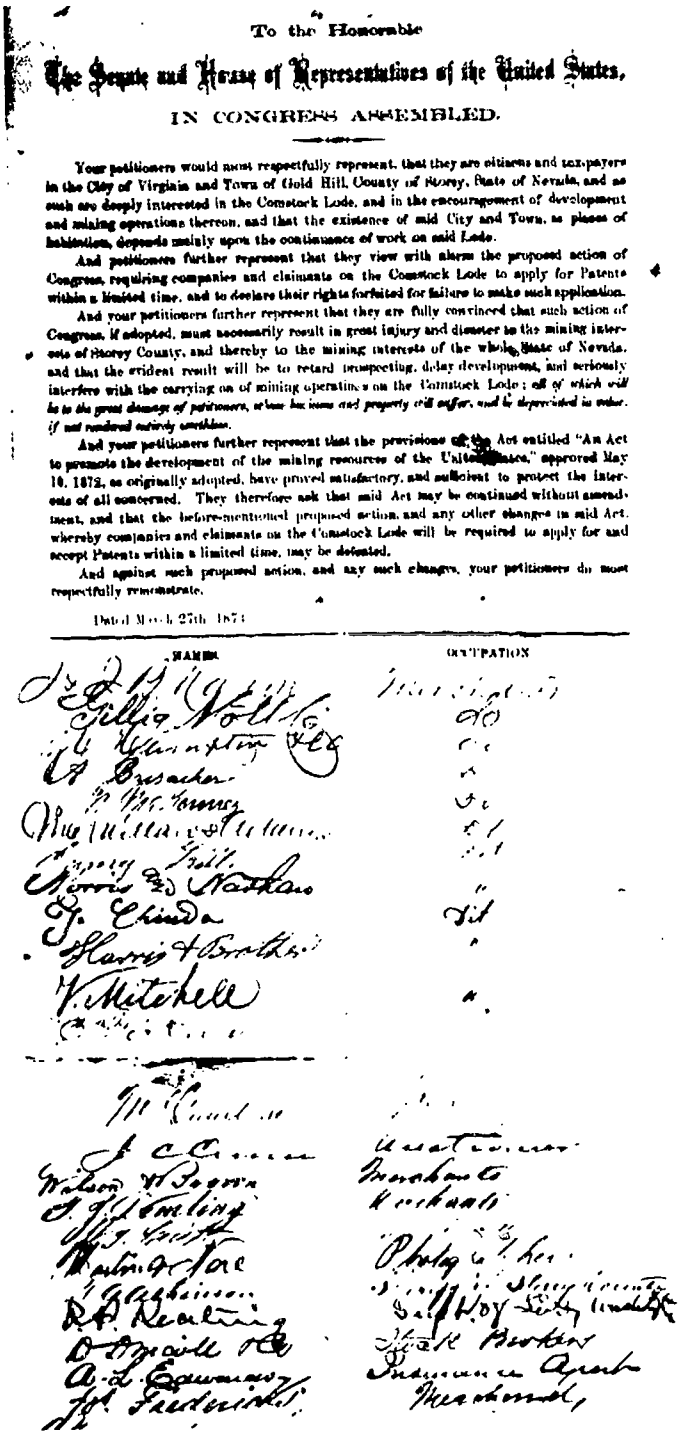
Suburbs began to develop in the United States in the 19th century as communities of summer residences for the wealthy. When railroads and streetcars made it possible to live there year round and commute to work in the city, many people abandoned overcrowded urban areas for greener pastures.

In the 1920s accessibility to the automobile spurred the democratization of the suburbs. Cars allowed greater numbers of people – possessing a wider range of incomes – to work in the city and live somewhere outside of it. For more and more people, peace and quiet, green lawns, and affordable, single-family homes became symbols of the American dream.

After World War II the suburbs boomed; new ones grew seemingly overnight from large tracts of land, dotted with similar (and similarly priced) houses. Criticism of suburban life also grew at this time, with charges that mass-produced housing encouraged a deadening conformity among residents and megalopolisitic trends in land development. Critics, however, often did not take into account the variety of lifestyles in the suburbs or the internal structures that emerged there. Despite the appearance of uniformity, suburbia seems capable of containing communities that are diverse and that generate satisfying human associations. In some cases, such communities have been cohesive enough to attempt to battle as a unit the suburban problems of unguided development, traffic congestion, and increasing crime.

Teenagers socialize in a community center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, an affluent suburb of Washington, DC, July 2, 1951.

RG 306 Records of the US Information Agency [306-PS-B-52-10611]



To the Honorable

The Senate and House of Representatives of the United States,

IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

Your petitioners would most respectfully represent, that they are citizens and tax-payers in the City of Virginia and Town of Gold Hill, County of Storey, State of Nevada, and as such are deeply interested in the Comstock Lode, and in the encouragement of development and mining operations thereon, and that the existence of said City and Town, as places of habitation, depends mainly upon the continuance of work on said Lode.

And petitioners further represent that they view with alarm the proposed action of Congress, requiring companies and claimants on the Comstock Lode to apply for Patents within a limited time, and to declare their rights forfeited for failure to make such application.

And your petitioners further represent that they are fully convinced that such action of Congress, if adopted, must necessarily result in great injury and disaster to the mining interests of Storey County, and thereby to the mining interests of the whole State of Nevada, and that the evident result will be to retard prospecting, delay development, and seriously interfere with the carrying on of mining operations on the Comstock Lode; all of which will be to the great damage of petitioners, whose business and property will suffer, and be depreciated in value, if not rendered entirely worthless.

And your petitioners further represent that the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to promote the development of the mining resources of the United States," approved May 10, 1872, as originally adopted, have proved satisfactory, and sufficient to protect the interests of all concerned. They therefore ask that said Act may be continued without amendment, and that the before-mentioned proposed action, and any other changes in said Act, whereby companies and claimants on the Comstock Lode will be required to apply for and accept Patents within a limited time, may be defeated.

And against such proposed action, and any such changes, your petitioners do most respectfully remonstrate.

Dated March 27th 1874

NAMES | OCCUPATION

Petition to the United States Congress from the residents of Virginia City and Gold Hill, Nevada, expressing concern about their claims on the Comstock Lode, March 27, 1874.

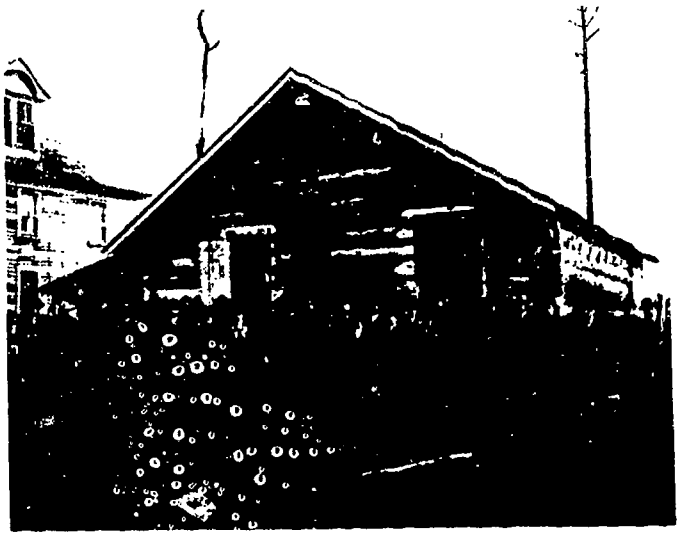
RG 46 Records of the US Senate
Reproduced with permission of the Senate

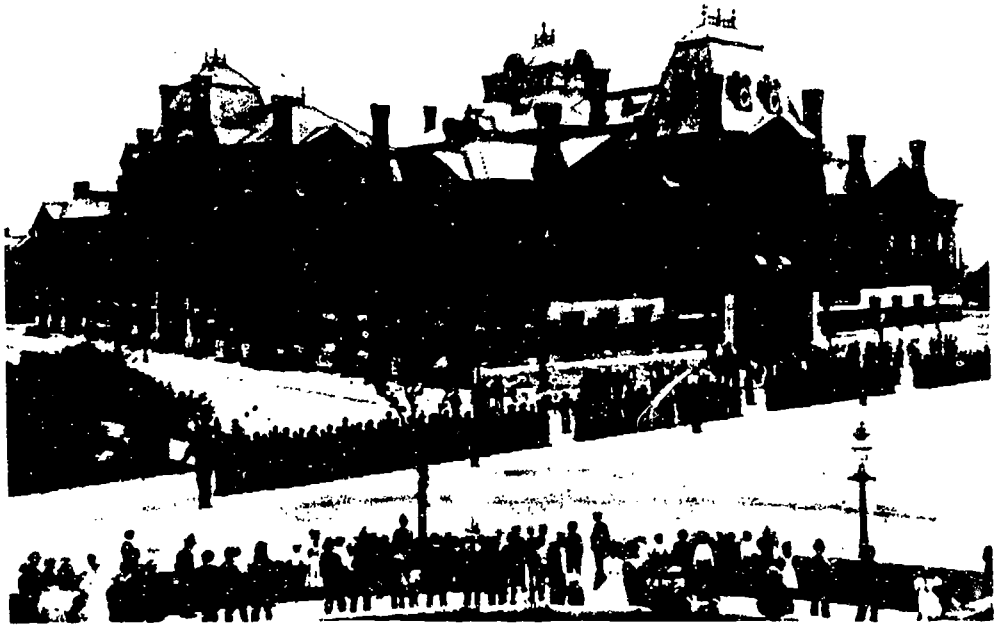
Boom Towns

American boom towns were assemblages of diverse individuals with one common goal: to get rich quick. With the discovery of gold, oil, or other valuable natural resources, adventurers rushed by the thousands to distant regions of the country — clustering together in towns like Andarko, Oklahoma, and Gold Hill, Nevada. Hastily built banks and saloons sprang up on main streets, and town populations ebbed and flowed as fortunes were made or lost. Because their existence hinged on the well-being of individuals and not of the community, most boom towns did not have the strength to withstand the depletion of a gold vein or an oil field. Many became ghostly silhouettes of themselves, others, such as Houston, Texas, and Valdez, Alaska, grew into successful cities.

"The O.A.M. Social Order of Copper River Prospectors at Valdez," Alaska, 1902, by the Miles Brothers. Valdez has boomed twice as a copper and gold mining town in the late 1800s and currently as an oil distribution port

RG 111 Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer (111-AGD-113)





The National Guard in Pullman, Illinois, during a workers' strike against the Pullman Palace Car Company, 1894.

Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-21195)

Workers' homes, owned by the Highland Yarn Mills Company, near High Point, North Carolina, ca. 1930s, by Lewis Hine.

RG 69 Records of the Work Projects Administration (69-RP-2621)

Company Towns

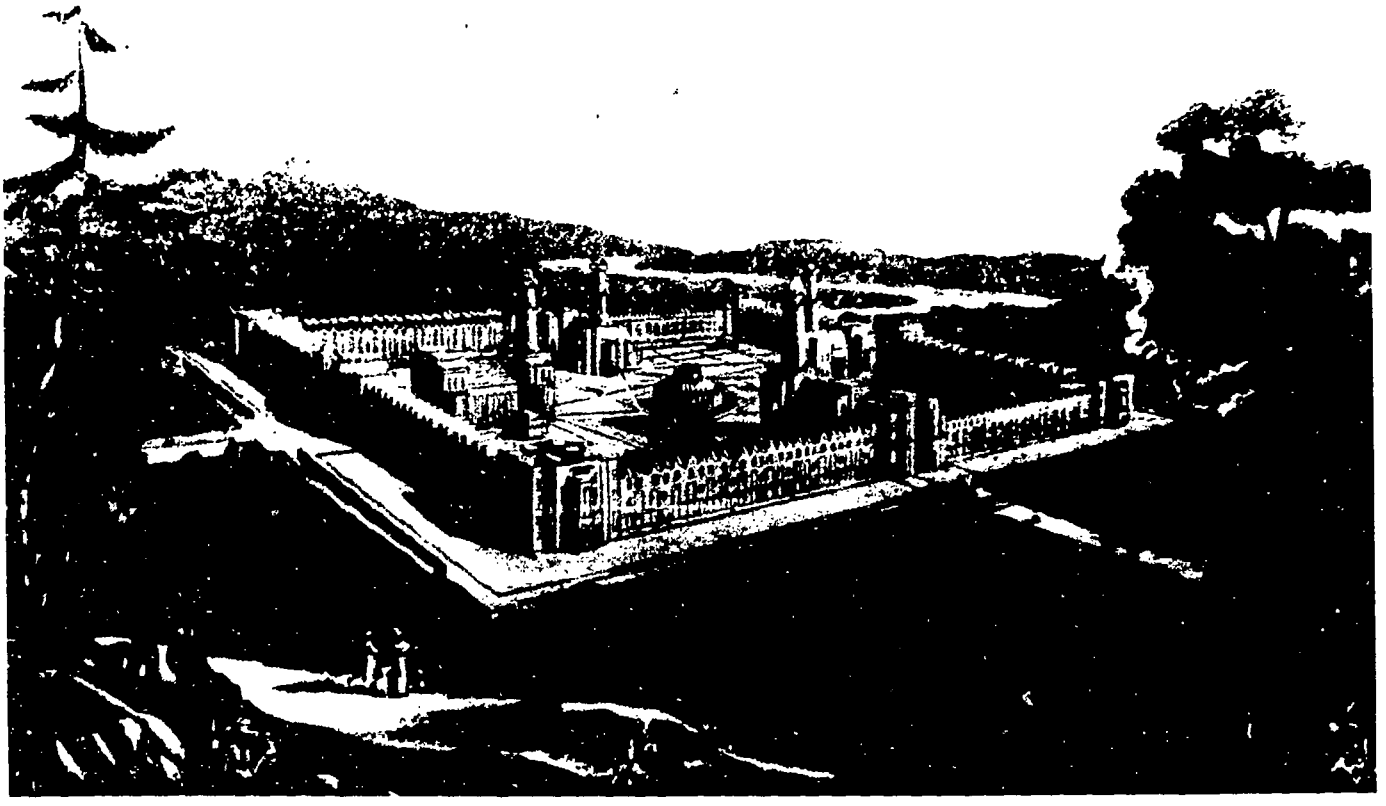
In contrast to haphazardly created boom towns, company towns were carefully planned by private companies to attract employees. These ready-made communities came complete with houses, streets, stores, and schools -- amenities that companies hoped would keep workers happy and productive. More importantly, companies also expected to benefit economically from the ability to control workers' lives.

Company towns varied greatly in size, appearance, and location. Small, dusty coal mining or mill towns contrasted sharply with the likes of Pullman, Illinois, a larger and more sophisticated railroad car company community. Economically, however, company towns varied little. Companies not only determined workers' wages, they also controlled their financial solvency by paying wages in scrip instead of cash. Workers were thus forced to patronize company-owned establishments and were subject to the prices that the company set for food, clothing, and other goods. Furthermore, the company controlled rents and utility and medical costs. When economic times got tough, companies raised prices and maintained or cut wages. The suffering this caused among workers and residents sometimes incited strikes and violent confrontations—and too often bloodied the streets of company towns.

"Corn Planting," by Olof Krans, 1896. Settled by Swedish immigrants in 1846, the Bishop Hill Colony was a religious utopian community in western Illinois. It was known for its efficient business enterprises and successful farming techniques (pictured here), but it failed in 1861 because of financial problems.

Courtesy of the Bishop Hill State Historic Site, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

SOME COMPANY TOWNS, SUCH AS PULLMAN, INITIALLY WERE UTOPIAN ATTEMPTS AT COMMUNITY BUILDING. **THEIR CREATORS** ENVISIONED A WORKFORCE "ELEVATED AND IMPROVED" BY A CAREFULLY PLANNED ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURE. **SUCH IDEALS** WERE PART OF THE BROADER HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT COMMUNITY. **IN ADDITION TO** INDUSTRY MAGNATES, REFORMERS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND EVEN BUREAUCRATS HAVE PLANNED AND BUILT EXPERIMENTAL TOWNS IN HOPES OF RESHAPING AMERICAN SOCIETY. **SOME** PLANNED COMMUNITIES SOUGHT TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE WORKING CLASS; OTHERS CHALLENGED PREVAILING NOTIONS ABOUT PROPERTY, LABOR, FAMILY, AND MARRIAGE. **BUT EACH** EXPERIMENT PROPOSED THAT WITHIN THE CLOSE BONDS OF COMMUNAL LIVING, PEOPLE WOULD FIND THE IDEAL EXISTENCE.



"Owen's Proposed Village," of New Harmony, Indiana, ca. 1820s.
Because the community dissolved after only a few years, Owen's plans for New Harmony, shown here, were never realized.

RG 97, Records of the Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry

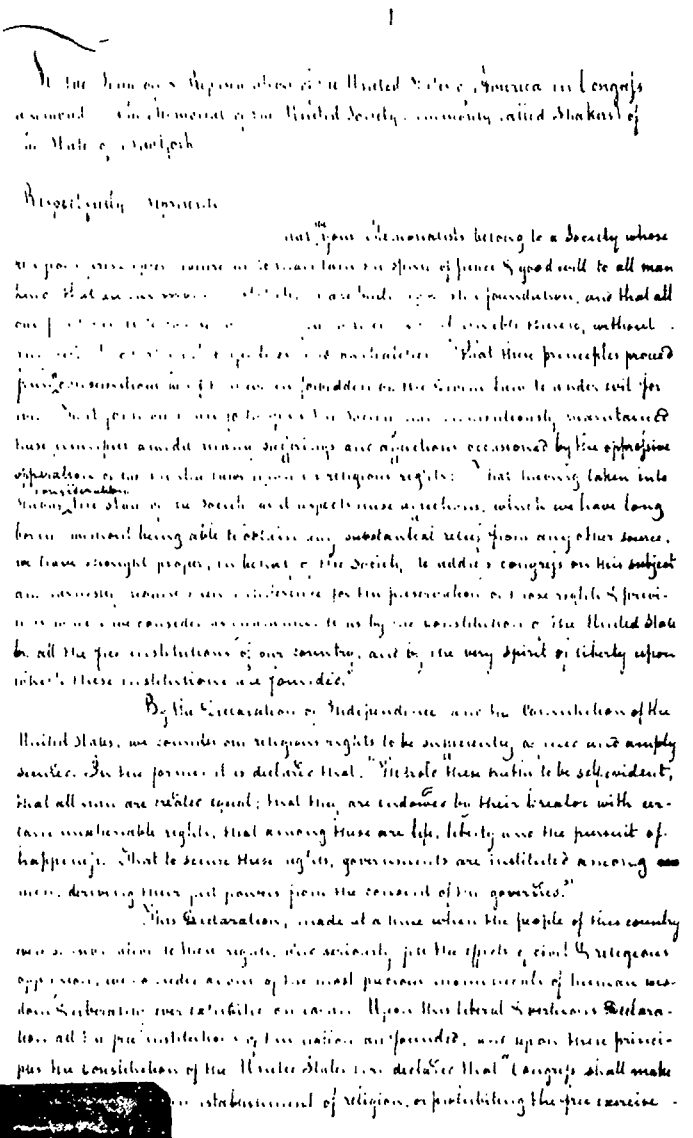
Utopias

Dozens of utopian societies formed in this country in reaction against traditional American politics and economics. In the 19th century, the cold competitiveness of industrialization provoked the creation of communities with alternative, reform-oriented political and social systems. At New Harmony, Indiana, for instance, Robert Owen founded a community in the 1820s that opposed the American capitalist order and attempted to embrace complete economic, political, and sexual equality. In the 1890s, the Kaweah Colony in northern California similarly proposed that egalitarianism, socialist aims, and communal living would foster an "enlightened civilization" both within the community and in the outside world. Seventy-five years later, in the 1960s, some Americans again left mainstream society to live in communes, where work, economic success, and day-to-day living were joint endeavors. Unity in utopian societies did not always prevail, however: internal conflicts, financial hardship, and the lure of capitalism often shortened the lives of these American experiments.

The Shakers

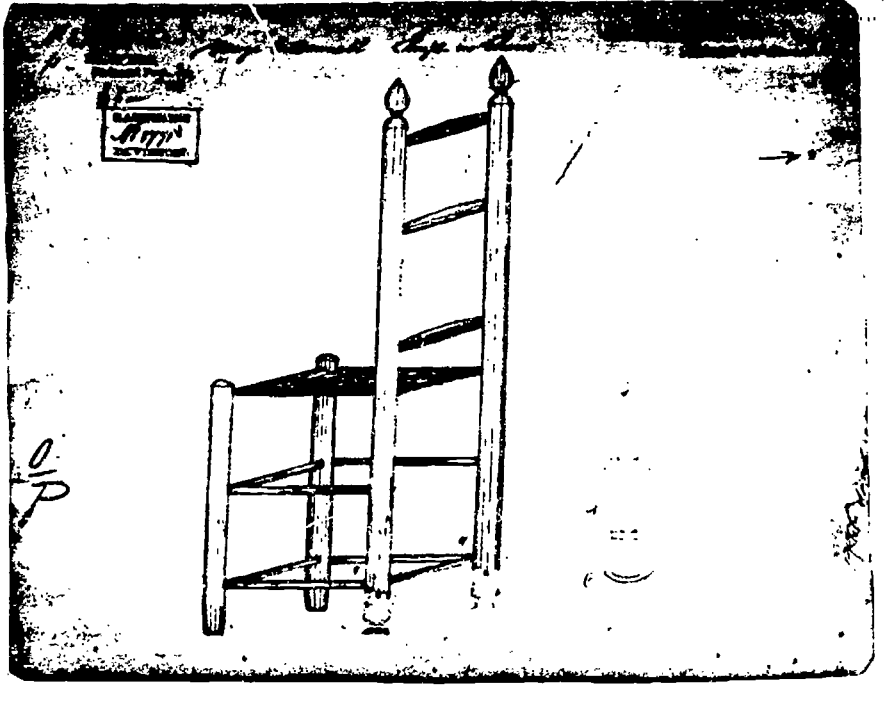
Many utopian communities in the United States have been based on religious ideals. Some of the first Christian planned communities were established in the 1780s by the Shakers. Followers withdrew from the outside world, living together in small villages and seeking spiritual perfection through worship and devotion to their faith. They shared all property and work and believed that men and women were truly equal. These principles, along with a broad social concern and a strict belief in celibacy, encouraged a unique unity of purpose among community members.

Shaker unity and faith were expressed in their work. Crops and livestock were lovingly tended, and objects were crafted with attention to function and simplicity. Today their craftmanship is world renowned: individual Shaker chairs can sell for thousands of dollars, and the Shakers' architectural legacy is carefully preserved in a handful of restored villages. The few Shakers who remain, however, hope to be remembered not for their furniture or architecture, but for what such objects represent: a communal quest for a perfected, sanctified way of life.



"The Memorial of the United Society (commonly called the Shakers) of the State of New York," requesting exemption from military duty, March 3, 1824.

RG 46 Records of the U S Senate
Reproduced with permission of the Senate

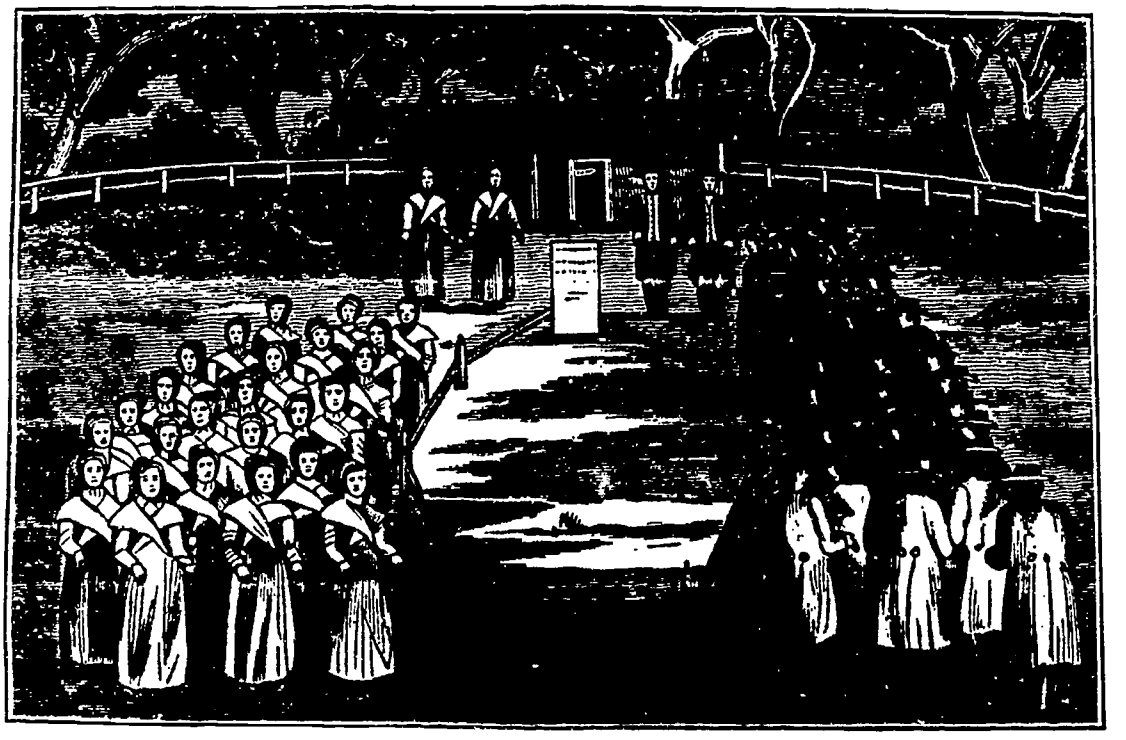


"Improvement in Chairs," patent for a chair tilting device, by George O. Dor nell, a Shaker from New Lebanon, New York, March 2, 1852. Their many inventions (including a buzz-saw and a revolving oven) testify to the Shakers' love of innovation. However, inventions were seldom patented; individual achievement was secondary to its contribution to the community.

RG 241 Records of the Patent and Trademark Office

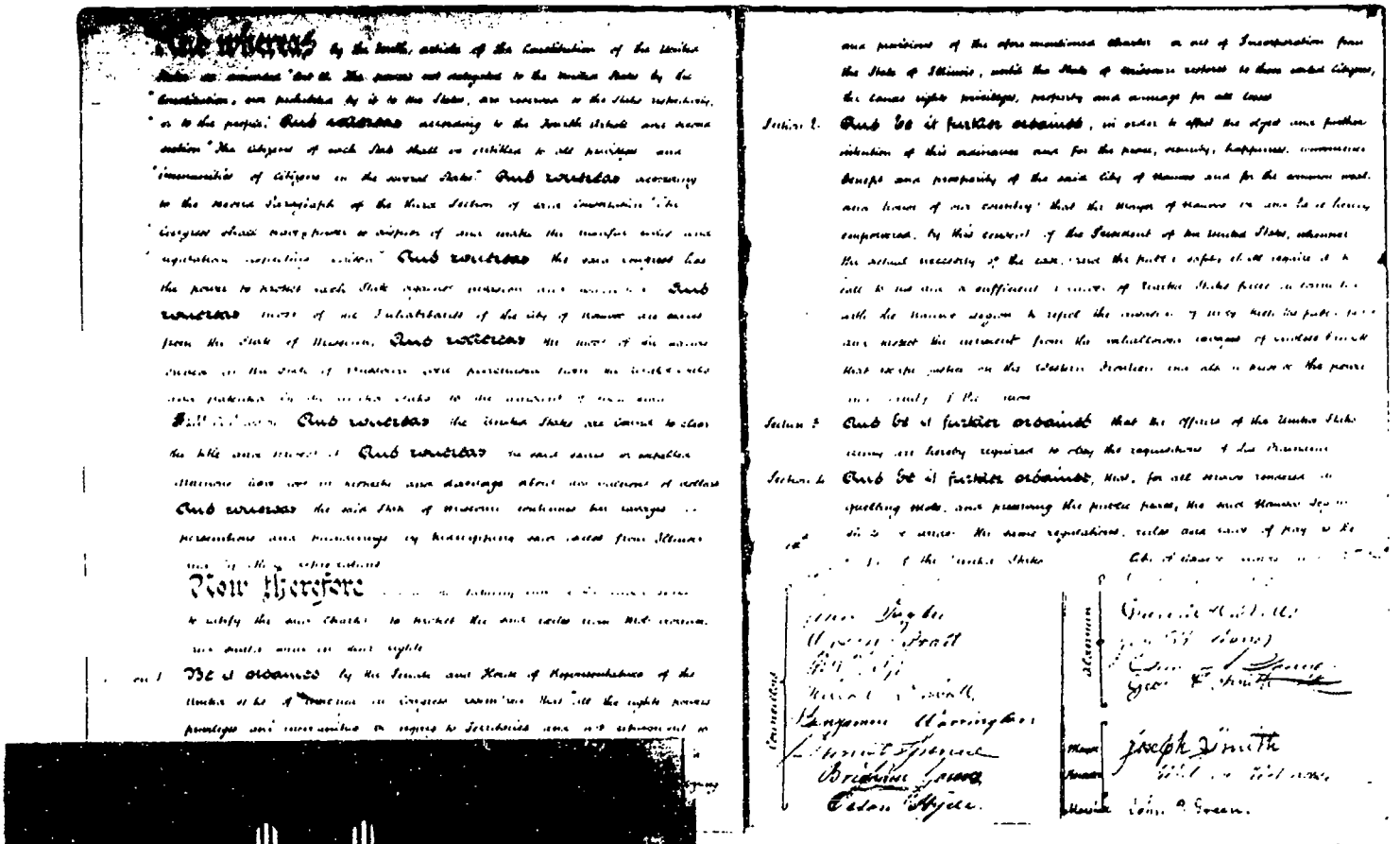
Shaker women on an apple-picking outing, Canterbury, New Hampshire, early 20th century.

Courtesy of the Canterbury Shaker Village Archives, Canterbury, New Hampshire



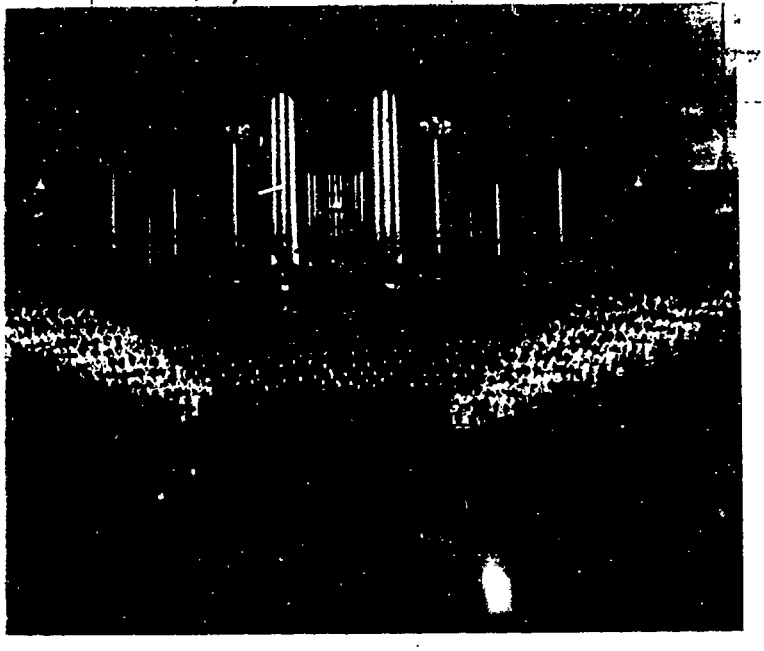
"Mountain Meeting," by David Lambson, 1848, from *Two Years Experience Among the Shakers.* Worship was a social act for Shakers, involving praying, singing, and dancing (their unique dances, in fact, gave the Shakers their name). These activities were an integral part of communal life

Courtesy of Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Massachusetts



Excerpt from "Memorial to the Senators and Representatives of the United States from the City Council of Nauvoo," December 21, 1843.

RG 46, Records of the U S Senate
Reproduced with permission of the Senate



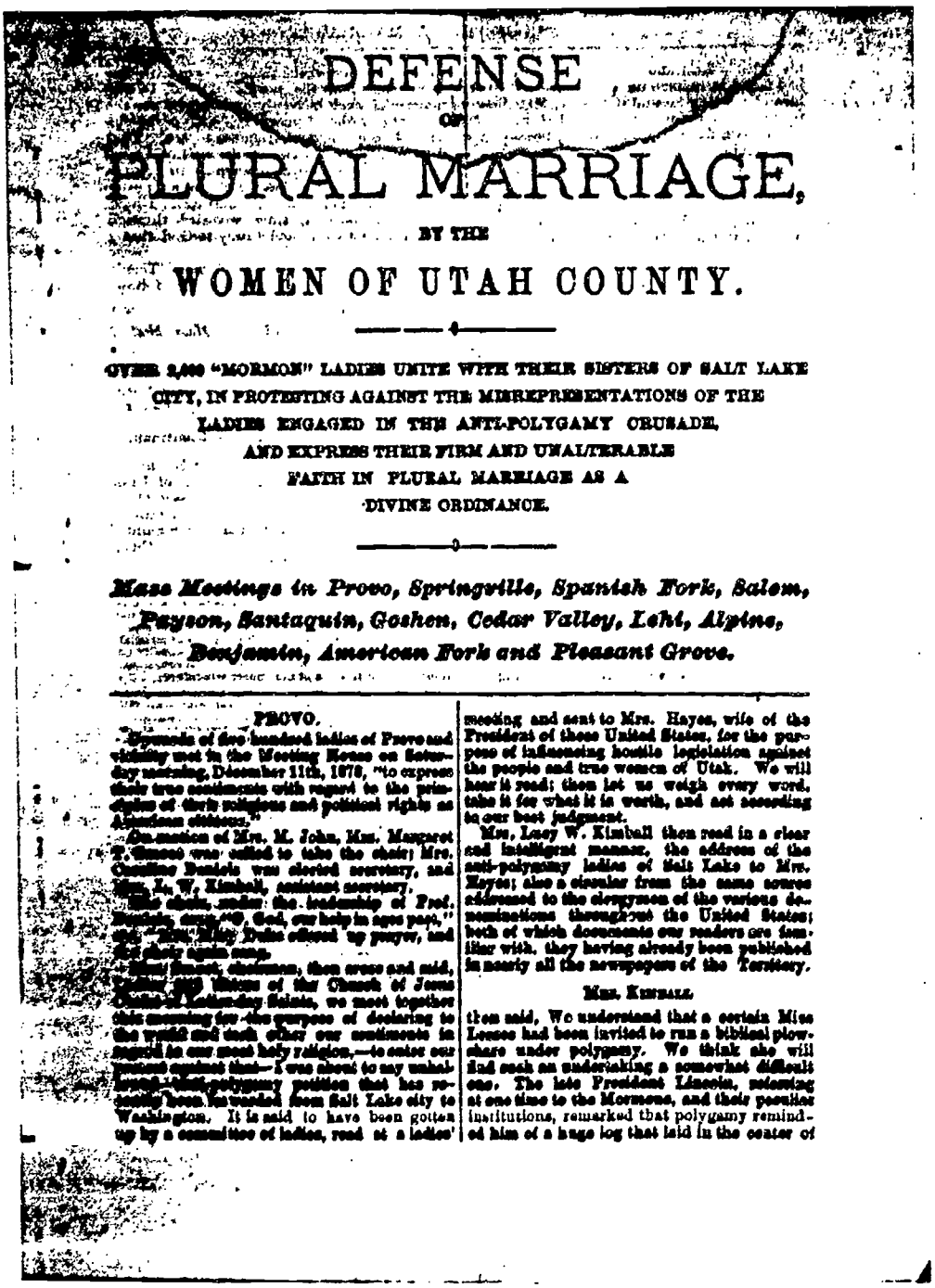
The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, ca. 1950s.

RG 306, Records of the U S Information Agency
(306-PS-B-50-16765)

The Mormons

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints also began as a utopian, communal religious society. In 1830 a heavenly revelation inspired Joseph Smith to found the religion. He and his followers, known as Mormons, removed themselves from worldly influences and lived together in closely knit settlements. Through the repentance of sin, missionary work, and strict obedience to the laws of the church, Mormons believed that salvation — and a special relationship with God — could be attained.

Mormons created highly ordered communities. Most men held positions in the church; work was shared by (and benefited) everyone; systems of aid and assistance provided for the disadvantaged. In addition, Mormon economic ventures were often cooperative in nature and very successful, helping to foster large and prosperous Mormon communities such as Nauvoo, Illinois. But these successes—and the communal inclusiveness of the Mormon religion — were threatening to outsiders. Many denounced the religion as heretical, and others plagued Mormon communities with violence and legal harrassment. To escape threats, intimida-



DEFENSE
OF
PLURAL MARRIAGE,
BY THE
WOMEN OF UTAH COUNTY.

OVER 2,000 "MORMON" LADIES UNITE WITH THEIR SISTERS OF SALT LAKE CITY, IN PROTESTING AGAINST THE MISREPRESENTATIONS OF THE LADIES ENGAGED IN THE ANTI-POLYGAMY CRUSADE, AND EXPRESS THEIR FIRM AND UNALTERABLE FAITH IN PLURAL MARRIAGE AS A DIVINE ORDINANCE.

Mass Meetings in Provo, Springville, Spanish Fork, Salem, Payson, Santaquin, Goshen, Cedar Valley, Lehi, Alpine, Benjamin, American Fork and Pleasant Grove.

PROVO.

Upwards of five hundred ladies of Provo and vicinity met in the Meeting House on Saturday morning, December 11th, 1878, "to express their true sentiments with regard to the principles of their religious and political rights as American citizens."

On motion of Mrs. M. John, Mrs. Margaret T. Gimmet was called to take the chair; Mrs. Caroline Daniels was elected secretary, and Mrs. L. W. Kimball, assistant secretary.

The choir, under the leadership of Prof. Stenhouse, sang, "O, God, our help in ages past," and Mrs. Mary Dyke offered up prayer, and the choir again sang.

Mrs. Gimmet, chairman, then arose and said, "We, the ladies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we meet together this morning for the purpose of declaring to the world and each other our sentiments in regard to our most holy religion,—to enter our protest against that—I was about to say unbelieving—that polygamy petition that has recently been forwarded from Salt Lake city to Washington. It is said to have been gotten up by a committee of ladies, read at a ladies' meeting and sent to Mrs. Hayes, wife of the President of these United States, for the purpose of influencing hostile legislation against the people and true women of Utah. We will hear it read; then let us weigh every word, take it for what it is worth, and act according to our best judgment.

Mrs. Lucy W. Kimball then read in a clear and intelligent manner, the address of the anti-polygamy ladies of Salt Lake to Mrs. Hayes; also a circular from the same source addressed to the clergymen of the various denominations throughout the United States; both of which documents our readers are familiar with, they having already been published in nearly all the newspapers of the Territory.

MRS. KIMBALL

then said, We understand that a certain Miss Leonce had been invited to run a biblical plowshare under polygamy. We think she will find such an undertaking a somewhat difficult one. The late President Lincoln, referring at one time to the Mormons, and their peculiar institutions, remarked that polygamy reminded him of a huge log that laid in the center of

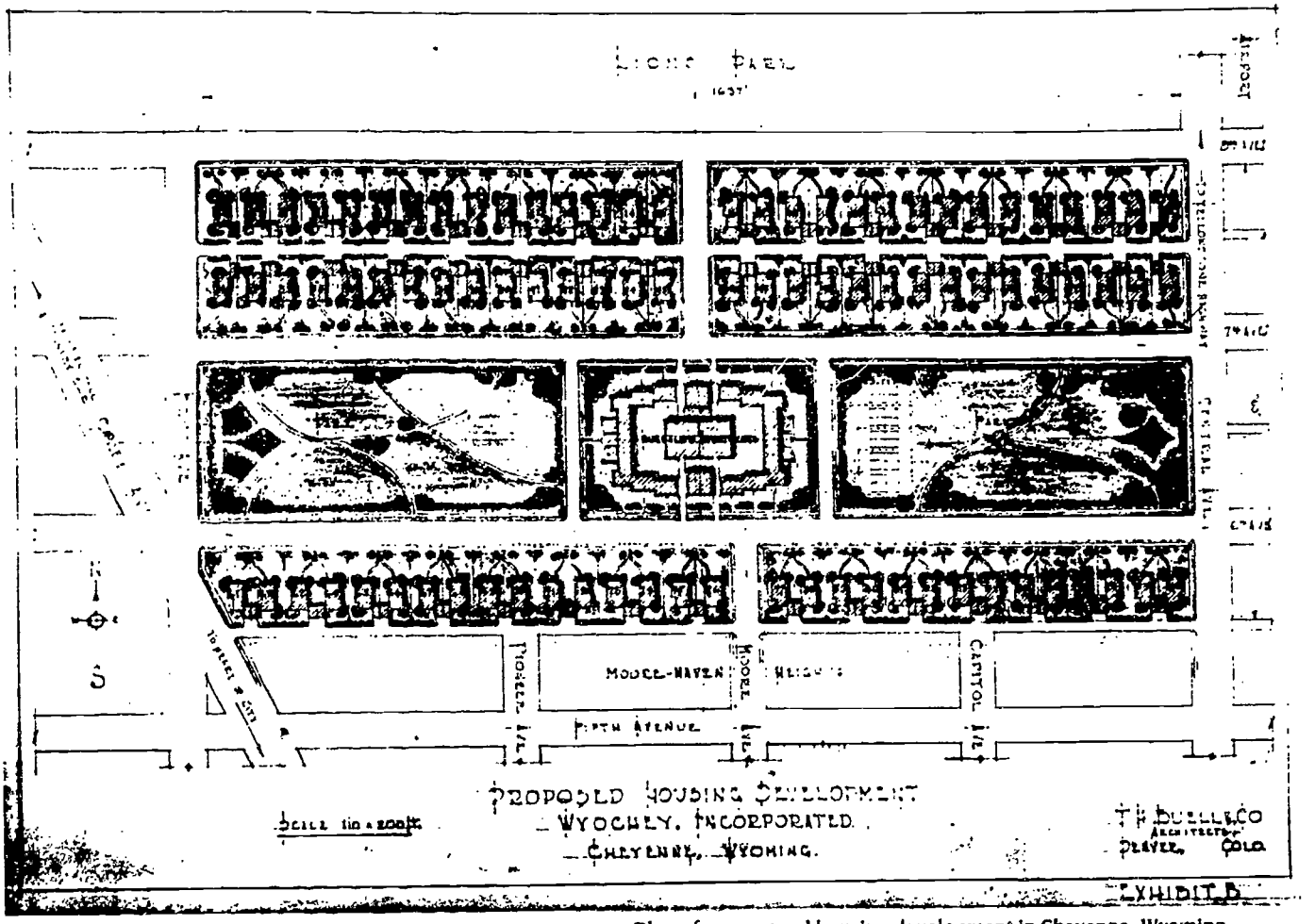
"Defense of Plural Marriage by the Women of Utah County," ca. 1878.

RG 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior

tion, and danger, Mormons were forced to move from place to place.

In the 1840s a large group of Mormons reached the deserted plains of what would become the Utah Territory. Thinking they had finally found safe haven in so isolated a location, they built Zion (later renamed Salt Lake City) and lived according to the tenets of their faith. But one tenet — polygamy — still incited hostility among outsiders and the U.S. government. As a result, Mormons lost territorial voting rights, Utah's statehood was deferred, and battles erupted between followers and federal troops. Under such pressures, Mormons abandoned polygamy in 1890.

Temples, universities, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir are familiar symbols of the modern Mormon community. Though now dispersed throughout the country, their commitment to their faith and their enduring cohesion make Mormons an influential force in American religion and society.



Plan of a proposed housing development in Cheyenne, Wyoming, February 1933. Designers of this neighborhood purposely placed parks amidst houses and apartments. They thought that a centrally located community space would help create a "close harmony" among residents.

RG 196 Records of the Public Housing Administration

New Towns

In modern America urban planners are among those who have taken on the challege of creating the ideal — or at least the improved — community. Their designs present alternatives to shapeless, anonymous suburban sprawl and to the economic and social segregation of metropolitan areas. In the 1930s, New Deal planners created Greenbelt Towns. These planned communities combined a new land-use pattern and a cooperative system of community government in a radical attempt to improve American towns. More recently, the private sector has attempted similar experiments. Through innovative zoning laws and architecture, modern new towns have sought to enhance the relationships among the residential, business, and open spaces in communities, and ultimately among the residents themselves. All of these new town planners have hoped that a carefully laid out physical environment would nurture a warm community spirit.

A summer day in Greenbelt, Maryland, one of three Greenbelt towns built during the New Deal era, June 1939.

RG 196, Records of the Public Housing Administration

Refugee Camp Number 2, Hickman, Kentucky, 1912, by Captain Elliot. After the great Mississippi River flood of 1912, refugee camps drew formerly scattered area residents together in quickly assembled communities.

RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (92-MRF-5-A)

IN CONTRAST TO THE CAREFULLY CRAFTED COMMUNITIES OF CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORIC IDEALISTS, SOME COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN THE PRODUCT OF DIRE CIRCUMSTANCE. **CRISES** CAN PROPEL INDIVIDUALS TOGETHER IN SEARCH OF HELP, COMPANIONSHIP, AND COMPASSION. **DROUGHT,** HURRICANES, AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS OFTEN CREATE BONDS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN THE AFFECTED AREAS; NATIONAL DISASTERS — SUCH AS WAR — CAN UNIFY THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. **AT OTHER TIMES** THE COMMUNITY ITSELF HAS GENERATED CRISIS. **PLANTATIONS,** RESERVATIONS, AND RELOCATION CAMPS HAVE BEEN USED IN THE UNITED STATES TO FORCIBLY CONTAIN AND CONTROL CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION. **THESE** INVOLUNTARY COMMUNITIES DISPLACED AND DESTROYED LIVES. **BUT IN THE MIDST** OF MANY SUCH CRISES, THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF DESTRUCTION AND RECOVERY FORGED MEANINGFUL, LASTING TIES.

Slave Communities

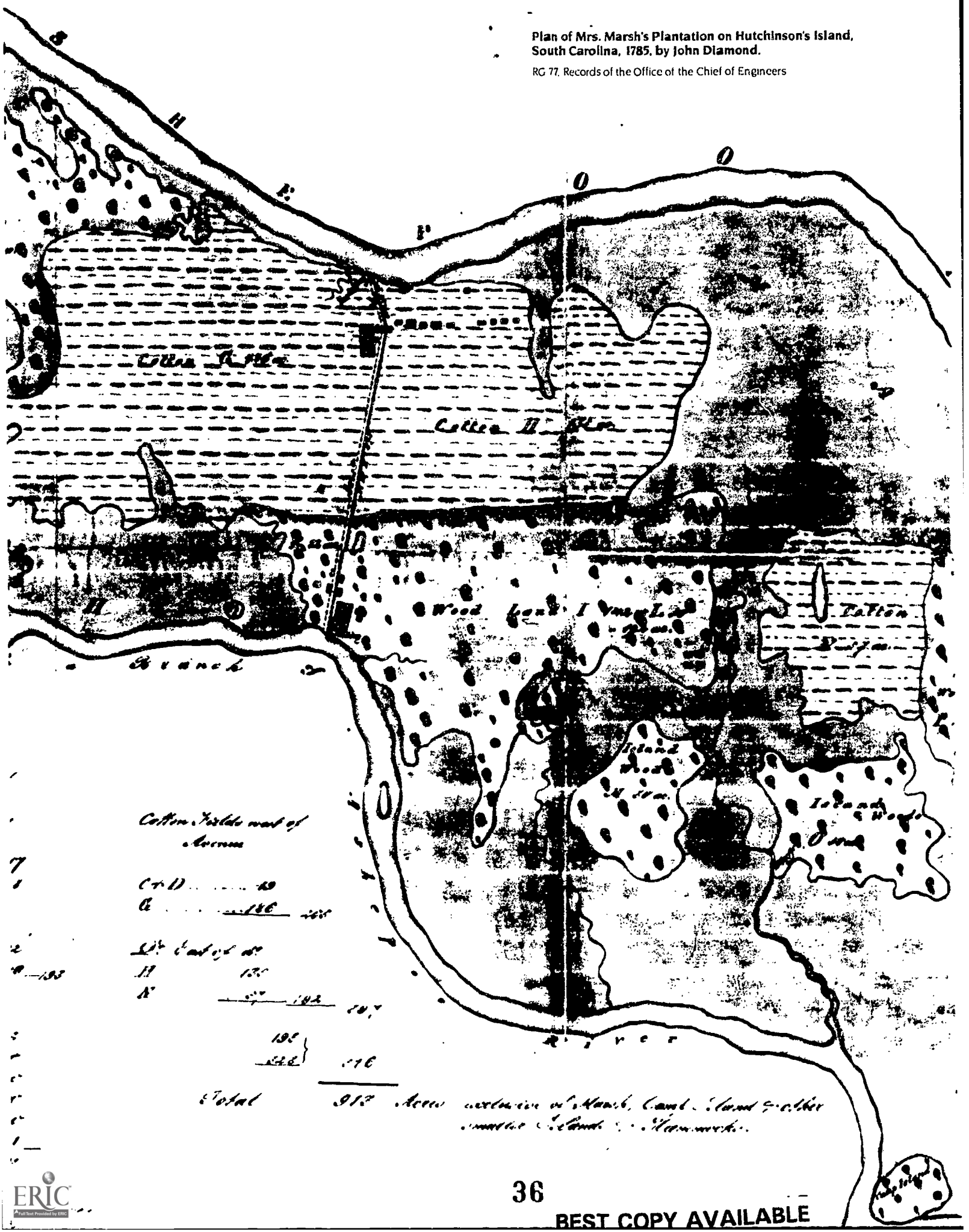
Prior to the Civil War, slavery was a fundamental economic institution in the American South. While plantation owners benefited from this system of free labor, African Americans suffered unimaginably. The slave trade ripped Africans from their homes and families and subjected them to brutal working conditions and merciless mistreatment. On southern plantations Africans from completely different cultures were thrown together, sometimes unable even to communicate with one another. Still, in the shared hardships and close quarters of plantation life, enslaved Americans managed to create communities that defied efforts to destroy them. On South Carolina's Sea Islands, for example, ties were so strong that some communities evolved into villages and towns, retaining many of the traditions, languages, and relationships that developed during slavery. Today, however, the land, livelihood, and lifestyle of these people are threatened by land development pressures.

"Group at Drayton's Plantation," Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, 1862, by Henry P. Moore.

Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord

Plan of Mrs. Marsh's Plantation on Hutchinson's Island, South Carolina, 1785, by John Diamond.

RG 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers

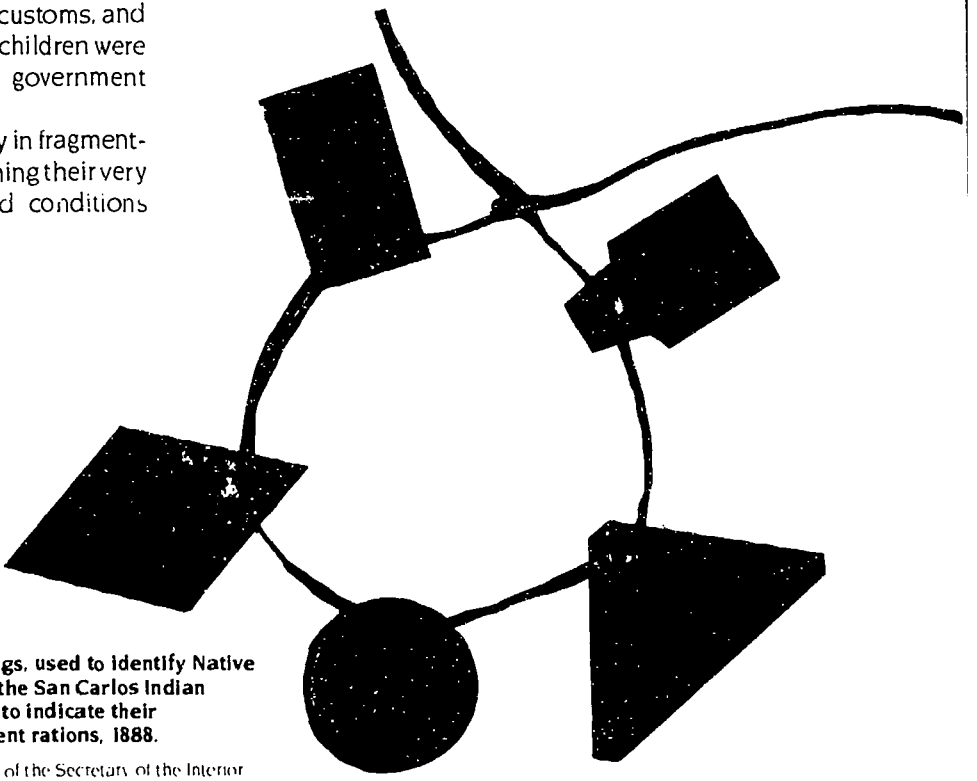


Indian Reservations

Indian reservations were also involuntary collections of people. In 1830 the Indian Removal Act authorized the exchange of land inhabited by Native Americans in the eastern United States for open, unsettled land in the West. By the 1870s this "exchange" became the forced enclosure of American Indians on government reservations.

Native American communities struggled for survival on reservations. Uprooted from ancestral homes, tribes lost traditional means of self-support. They now depended on the federal government for such basic necessities as clothing and food, and traditional dress, dance, social customs, and government were prohibited. Native American children were often separated from families and sent to government schools to learn Euro-American ways.

For many years federal policy succeeded only in fragmenting American Indian communities and threatening their very existence. New laws in the 1930s improved conditions somewhat by allowing American Indians a voice in reservation administration. They also encouraged the reestablishment of tribal governments and reinstitution of traditional customs. But the destructive policies of the past inflicted social and psychological wounds that still linger. Native Americans continue the struggle to increase their opportunities and to transform their reservations into the cohesive communities that once existed outside of federal boundaries.



Indian identification tags, used to identify Native American residents of the San Carlos Indian Agency in Arizona and to indicate their eligibility for government rations, 1888.

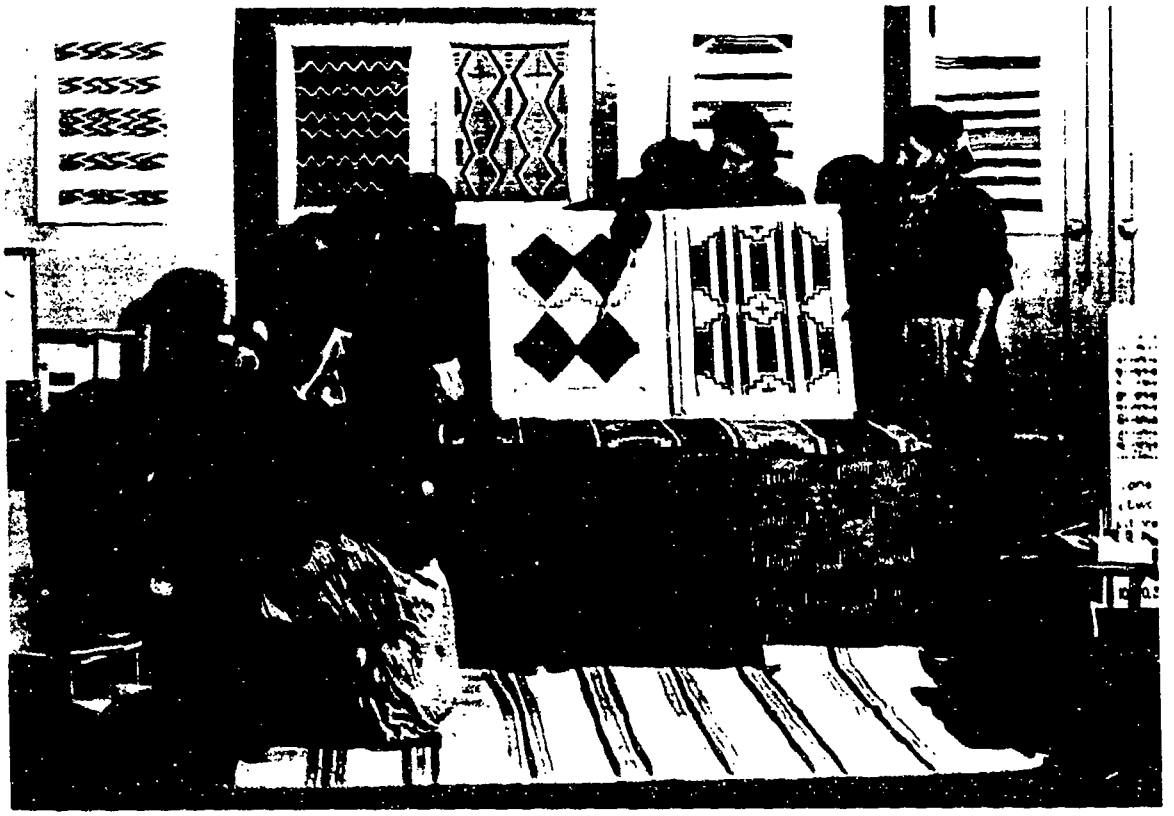
RG 48 Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior

ARTICLE IX -- TRIBAL EXPENSE IN CARE OF AGED, ETC.

This being a grazing country with the sheep industry as primary source of income, and in appreciation of tribal responsibility for the aged and incapacitated, there shall be maintained a flock of sheep not out of proportion to the total sheep population, the returns of which shall go to care for the aged and incapacitated. The returns coming into the hands of the Representative Tribal Council from any portion of the flock assigned for general tribal purposes may be used to meet actual expenses of the tribal organization.

"Constitution and Bylaws of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe," ca. 1937. Following the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 many American Indian communities wrote tribal constitutions. This excerpt expresses the unique concerns of one reservation community.

RG 75 Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs



Navajo women learn ancient weaving techniques, May 7, 1943, by Milton Snow. Traditional practices such as rug-weaving renew Native Americans' ties with their heritage and are a source of needed income as well.

RG 75 Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (75-NG-NC-3-59(A))

Navajo Tribal Council, 1968.

RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
(75-TLA-19-TG-19)

Baseball players in a huddle at the Manzanar Relocation Center, Manzanar, California, July 2, 1942, by Dorothea Lange.

RG 210. Records of the War Relocation Authority
(210-G-10-C773)

Japanese Relocation Camps

In the 1940s the federal government again forced collections of people into contrived communities. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, waves of fear and paranoia swept the country, and West Coast Americans of Japanese ancestry were ordered into internment camps.

The War Relocation Authority established ten camp communities that each housed 10,000-12,000 residents. Schools and recreation centers simulated normal life, but armed guards and barbed wire plainly stated the involuntary nature of these communities. The shock of internment caused profound despair among many of those incarcerated and sometimes split camps along generational and economic lines. More often, however, internees formed social and professional groups and found common ground in both Japanese and American traditions. Such mutual support helped many individuals to survive until 1944, when relocation camps began to close. In the 1980s the federal government made financial restitution to survivors of these communities and their families.

CONSTITUTION OF A BUDDHIST HOME

With firm faith, adore the three treasures.

Buddha is your mind.

Dhamma is your speech.

Sangha is your body.

Your parents brought you into this world.

Your country always protects you.

Your fellow-beings never cease to help you.

And thus you have the Buddha-dhamma with you forever.

Charities are your hands.

Precepts are your feet.

Perseverence is your waist.

Constancy is your brain.

Dhyana is your heart.

And Wisdom and Knowledge are your eyes.

Three devotions, four gratitudes, and six paramitas: these are the foundation of Buddhistic ethics.

"The Constitution of a Buddhist Home," ca. 1940s. In relocation camps Japanese Americans found strength in institutions of family and religion

RG 210 Records of the War Relocation Authority

The AIDS *Community*

The crises that generate communities do not always create localized groups of people. In the 1980s the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) crisis created a new community among thousands of widely scattered Americans.

Intitially AIDS threatened homosexuals, drug users, and hemophiliacs, but slowly it began to claim victims from every walk of American life. Tragically, many suffered alone, abandoned by family and friends. Others have found solace in organizations — made up of doctors, loved ones, civil rights advocates — that battle the disease, discrimination, and death itself. Individuals find in this mutual struggle a sense of community, and in the community the strength and hope to persevere.

The Names Project Quilt, Washington, DC, 1989, by Jeff Tinsley. The Names Project brought together quilt pieces, made by the families and friends of deceased AIDS victims, to form a huge quilt commemorating lost lives and symbolizing unity in the struggle against the disease.

Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution (89-20187)

COM MU NI TY. *n.*

[ME *communite*, citizenry < OFr. *communite* < Lat. *communitas*, fellowship < *communis*, common, shared by all]

Community is the result of the age-old quest for sustenance security, and fellowship. It is a social bond, absolutely integral to human life, that creates a sense of mutual trust and obligation. In our communities we are socialized, supported, and sustained.

In many ways, communities in a modern and complex United States are hard to define and are less distinctive than many of the specific examples presented on these pages. The ties of blood and land (and the recognizable boundaries that they create) do not have the tenacity they once did. Still, in small towns and sprawling suburbs, in professional societies and citizens' groups, and in sympathetic and emotional associations with others, Americans seek — and manage to find — their own versions of "community."

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