



DELINQUENCY AREAS IN OKLAHOMA CITY

J. J. Rhyne, Norman

A study of the home addresses of 339 juvenile delinquents coming before the Oklahoma County Juvenile Court in 1926-27 showed that 39 per cent came from one square mile. Of 243 cases coming before the court in 1929, 26 per cent came from this same square mile. Of 303 cases coming before the court in 1930, 16 per cent came from the same area. When studied in terms of the rate per 10,000 of the general population, significant differences were found. The rate varied all the way from four in one square mile to 78 in each of three square miles. In other words, certain sections of Oklahoma City are apparently much more productive of delinquency than are other areas.

The area having the lowest rate was a residential section occupied for the most part by people slightly above the middle layer or strata of the Oklahoma City population. No exclusive residential section was included in the area. The square mile immediately to the west, on the other hand, was one of the three areas having the highest rate of delinquency. There were relatively few persons living in this square mile and a large proportion of the group was composed of marginal families. Some were squatter tenants. It lay at the extreme western edge of the city limits and a rather large number of families were being assisted by the social agencies. Another of the three square miles having the highest rate was the section having the largest absolute number of cases. This area stretches from the business district to the river and has its eastern bounds formed by the Santa Fe tracks. The third section having the highest rate lies immediately to the east of the last mentioned section. A large part of this square mile is in the oil field. The river cuts across the middle of the section. Until the channel was dredged and straightened, the area was repeatedly subjected to overflow. In times past the river apparently changed its course and left sand deposits which covered practically the entire square mile. There are no paved streets or sidewalks. The sand in the streets is frequently so deep that it is difficult to drive a car. One of the principal dumping grounds of the city is here. There is a school, but no park in this area. In brief, in each of three sections having the highest delinquent rate there is no park that deserves the name. In the square mile having the largest numbers of delinquents and one of the three having the highest rate, there is a small tract of land that was set aside for park purposes, but on account of frequent inundations, it has not been developed. Furthermore, the areas showing high delinquency rates practically inclose the business district.

A study of the home addresses of adults brought before the police court revealed the same general pattern. However, there was a relatively

greater concentration in a very small area. Approximately half of all arrests made by the police came from a rectangular area roughly three blocks wide and four blocks long. This area lies immediately south of and includes a considerable part of the business district. The area corresponds almost exactly to the principal rooming-house district. Where the number of adult cases begins to decrease, the juvenile cases become more numerous. In other words the two areas are not absolutely identical, chiefly because there are relatively few children in the rooming-house section.

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