

**DOCUMENTS OF THE CIVIC
FEDERATION OF NEW
HAVEN, NO. 12. HOUSING
CONDITIONS IN NEW HAVEN**

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FOREWORD.

The Committee on Tenement House Conditions of the Civic Federation present the following report on "Housing Conditions in New Haven" with the feeling that it will commend itself to all those who give their time to its perusal. The Committee decided on such an investigation in the early part of the year 1912, and, with the approval of the Civic Federation, Dr. Aronovici was secured.

While the completed report has been in the hands of the Committee for almost a year it has been deemed inadvisable to give it publicity up to the present time for several reasons, the principal one being that the publication of such a report before anything had been done to better the bad conditions shown to exist, would serve only to advertise New Haven's shame, and, through aroused antagonism on the part of her citizens and officials, would lessen the chance of betterment.

The Committee feel sure that this opinion was justified, and, while much remains to be accomplished, they can report a number of betterments and the adoption of a number of the recommendations included in the report. New Haven *has* a Tenement House Inspector under the Health Board; a State Housing Association *has* been formed; amendments to our laws and ordinances *have* been secured, largely through this report.

The thanks of New Haven's citizens are due both to the Health Department and the Building Inspector for the manner in which they worked to secure the enforcement of the laws dealing with housing.

The Committee hopes that this report will be read by every New Haven citizen and that with the reading will come a desire to work for better housing in New Haven.

THE SECTION ON TENEMENT HOUSE CONDITIONS.

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Housing Conditions in New Haven.

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN NEW HAVEN

By CAROL ARONOVICI, Ph.D.

Director of the Bureau of Social Research of New England

INTRODUCTION.

The examination of housing conditions was undertaken under the auspices of the Housing Committee of the New Haven Civic Federation for the purpose of studying the various problems that present themselves in the poorer sections of the city with a view to determining upon a constructive policy of reform to be undertaken by the Federation in coöperation with other agencies in the community.

The present report is based upon the data gathered in the course of an investigation which was carried on during a period of about one month.

FIELD OF INVESTIGATION.

Three separate districts, occupied mainly by Jews, Italians, and Negroes, were selected. In all, 1,427 apartments in 256 buildings were examined in the course of the investigation. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining accurate information and to conditions which made complete returns impossible, the facts concerning only 1,343 were noted upon field cards. Aside from this number of apartments an examination was made of 207 apartments located in 57 new buildings, constructed prior to 1911, and all (103) buildings with 548 apartments constructed since the 1911 law went into effect, for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions which prevail in the newest tenements, and also for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of the manner in which the building regulations affect conditions.

While we have not been able to cover the entire field which would generally be classed in the tenement districts of the city, the investigation was sufficiently extensive to be representative of the local conditions.

METHOD OF WORK.

The field cards used for recording data were of two kinds, namely, building and apartment cards.

The field notes as entered upon the cards are on file in the office of the Civic Federation and at the disposal of all persons interested in the improvement of existing conditions.

THE PEOPLE.

The most important element in a housing investigation is the population and its relation to the accommodations which the apartments examined furnish. The differences in standards of privacy, the desire to occupy sanitary and comfortable accommodations varies with different nationalities and industrial conditions. In the present study the following significant aspects of populational distribution were considered: age, family relation, nationality of head of family; each having its bearing upon the housing conditions under which the families are living.

The distribution of the population according to age was found to be as follows:

AGE	NUMBER	PER CENT.
Adults,	3,452	53.49
Under 5,	1,057	16.38
5-14,	1,292	20.03
Over 14,	652	10.10
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Total,	6,543	100.00

It is to be noted that 53.49% or considerably over one-half the population residing in the apartments examined was adult and that the next largest age group was from 5 to 14 years. The fact that such a large proportion of the population is of mature age should be taken as significant in the consideration of housing accommodations, since the space required by adults is larger than the space required by children, and also because considerable of the disproportion that exists at the present time is due to the large number of recently-arrived immigrants, mostly males, who have no family connection and who are living in private families in no way related to them by blood relationship. Of the 3,452 adults 764 or 22.12% were lodgers. This is a considerable proportion of the adult population. That this condition is due to the ethnic composition of the people considered cannot be doubted.

A comparison between the total population and the number of lodgers in the apartments examined in New Haven shows that 11.28% of the population was made up of lodgers. When compared with the conditions found in other cities examined during the last eight months we find the following:

Housing Conditions in New Haven.

	POPULATION	LODGERS	PER CENT.
			LODGERS
Buffalo,	1,714	220	12.7
Fall River	5,980	601	10.2
Stamford,	3,031	298	9.8
Waterbury,	5,620	1,235	21.98
New Haven,	6,454	764	11.28

It appears from the above figures that the conditions prevalent in the districts examined are not above the average, although a large number of Italians and other nationalities which keep lodgers very frequently were considered.

The families which expose the privacy of their homes to the intrusion of lodgers, although not as numerous as in other cities recently examined by the writer, include 329 families or 26% of the total whose homes were examined. When considered from the point of view of the number of persons affected by the practice of keeping lodgers we find that 329 families examined include 2,027 persons, or 22.19% per cent. of the population.

The desire to congregate and rely upon the common language and companionship which a common ethnic origin gives is one of the most potent, if not the most potent factor in the increase of the lodger evil. To what extent congestion per room is affected by the practice of keeping lodgers we will endeavor to show later.

ETHNIC FACTORS IN HOUSING.

Recent changes in the ethnic composition of the population of many of the American, and particularly the New England, cities have created aside from a variety of social and economic problems a serious sanitary problem which finds its strongest expression in housing. So great has been the problem of housing the foreign elements that we have come to believe that the foreigners have actually created the housing problem, not because of lack of proper accommodation, but because of their presence and through their own mode of life. That such is not the case may be realized from the fact that the most hopeless and unsanitary conditions, at least in New Haven, exist among the native elements which in the advance of industrial development have fallen by the wayside, the victims of their own inefficiency. That a relation between the conditions of the homes and the nationality and racial character of the population exists cannot be denied, but this relation is mainly economic in character and depends upon the adequacy of the housing accommodations available in the community and

the control exercised by law through the municipal and State administrative machinery. In the course of the present inquiry it was decided at the outset to give little, if any, consideration to the ethnic factors since the selection of the territory was made in such a way as to include the main sections occupied by the Jews, Italians and Negroes. It was found, however, as is shown by the table inserted below that while the main elements found in these sections were of the above-named racial characters, there were also a considerable number of other nationalities which are either being replaced by the newer elements or are replacing the residents settled in these sections of the city.

NATIONALITY	POPULATION	LODGERS	PER CENT. OF LODGERS
Italian,	3,483	399	11.45
Jew,	1,123	78	6.88
Negro,	450	43	9.55
Irish,	405	46	11.11
American,	323	62	19.10
Polish,	243	79	32.51
German,	78	—	—
Armenian,	3	—	—
Hungarian,	14	—	—
Greek,	21	3	14.28
Russian,	29	12	41.38
Austrian,	4	—	—
Welsh,	3	1	33.33
Swede,	20	10	50.00
Belgian,	9	—	—
English,	14	—	—
Lithuanian,	28	3	10.69
Syrian,	14	1	7.13
Roumanian,	5	—	—
Danish,	2	—	—
French Canadian,	27	5	17.51
French,	10	6	60.00
Swiss,	2	—	—
Norwegian,	5	2	40.00
Nationality not given,	139	13	9.35
Total,	6,454	764	11.84

When analyzed in percentages the figures concerning the nationalities show the following distribution:

NATIONALITY	PER CENT.
Italian,	53.97
Jewish,	17.24
Negro,	6.92
Irish,	6.29

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American,	5.00
Polish,	3.76
German,	1.21
Unknown,	2.15
All others,	3.16
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Total,	100.00

It is evident that the whole territory covered by the investigation was occupied mainly by people of foreign parentage, most of whom were of foreign birth. Only 5% were born in the United States and of American parentage. With the exception of the Negro there were only 11.29% whose nativity was of English-speaking character. That the standards of housing under which the Italians are living leave much to be desired is indicated by the fact that in the course of the investigation it seemed advisable to gather a larger quantity of facts from the quarter inhabited by this class of people than any other. . . .

The preceding table shows that the Italians had the largest number of lodgers, and that 11.45% of the Italian population are living in families with which they had no family connection. This is by no means the largest proportion found, since of the Poles, of whom only 243 were found, in the territory covered, 32.51% were living in families of their compatriots. The most interesting fact shown by the table is that of the 323 Americans found 62 or 19.10% were lodgers. That this is an abnormal proportion for Americans cannot be doubted. The conditions under which the Americans in the poorer sections of the city live tend to be practically the same as those under which the foreign elements are living, if the economic conditions are the same. This would seem to show that economic rather than racial standards are the controlling factors in housing. Had the distribution of the population among the ethnic groups been more even some interesting conditions might have been revealed. With the material at hand, however, comparison beyond the five groups as represented by the Jews, Italians, Negroes, Irish, Americans and Polish would be hazardous. The figures concerning these groups show that the Poles being the most recent arrivals are more commonly without family connection and, therefore, resort most frequently to the practice of living as lodgers in the families of their compatriots and friends.

The family integrity and the desire for family privacy seems to be strongest among the Jews. This was found to be the case in all the localities so far studied, where the number of Jews was sufficiently large to admit of comparison.

ACCOMMODATIONS.

The problem of congestion of population has frequently been the subject of discussion when the problem of populational distribution over the city's area is considered. The problem of taxation, the extensive and intensive use of lands for building purposes and the crowding of population into small land areas have been the most seriously considered within the last few years. That these important factors have a fundamental bearing upon the sanitary, moral and educational standard of the community cannot be denied, but in what relation these accommodations stand to the actual living conditions and the type of building has seldom been made clear by any of the recent investigations. . . . Cases of 35% of the land being covered by buildings were found frequently in New Haven in houses which provided accommodations for only one or two families and yet the conditions were not such as to be classed as very far superior from the point of view of congestion. . . .

Let us consider the room accommodations found in the apartments examined. As the character of the accommodations may be determined to a certain extent by the use to which the rooms are put the following classification has been used:

USE OF ROOMS	NUMBER	PER CENT. OF TOTAL
Kitchens,	1,206	27.07
Bedrooms,	2,743	56.68
Sitting rooms and parlors,	532	11.37
Dining rooms,	134	2.88
Total,	4,676	100.00

The above figures show that over one-half of the rooms were used for sleeping purposes. To the number above mentioned must also be added the ten kitchens and two parlors which were also used for sleeping purposes. The number of rooms occupied by a family unquestionably determines the standard of privacy and comfort that the family tries to maintain. The number of sleeping rooms would indicate the amount of crowding when considered from the point of view of total persons using them. . . .

It was found that the 4,676 rooms were occupied by 6,453 persons, or 138 persons per hundred rooms. An examination of the figures concerning the homes in the families in which lodgers are kept raises the number of persons per hundred rooms from 138 to 145. When