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MIDWESTERN MOSAIC: A STUDY OF THE HOMOGENEITY
OF ETHNIC POPULATIONS IN
OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1880

By

KATHLEEN LOUISE FIMPLE

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Science,
Major in Geography,
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1978

MIDWESTERN MOSAIC: A STUDY OF THE HOMOGENEITY
OF ETHNIC POPULATIONS IN
OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1880

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for the degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Dr. Robert C. Ostergren
Thesis Advisor

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Dr. Edward P. Hogan
Head, Geography Dept.

Date

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Kathleen Louise Fimple
Brookings, July, 1978

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the Study

A major feature of American history is the massive immigration and settlement of Europeans during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This transplantation of people has been the subject of numerous studies, most of which are quite grand in scale.¹ At a more detailed level there has been considerable work in recent years on rural settlement by immigrant groups.² Fewer in number are detailed studies of urban settlement.³ Yet the ethnic pattern in America's cities was just as present as it was in rural areas. People tended to congregate in areas

¹See, for example: Maldwyn Allen Jones, American Immigration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Marcus Lee Hansen, The Immigrant in American History (New York: Harper and Row, 1940); Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951).

²See, for example: John Hudson, "Two Dakota Homestead Frontiers", Annals of the Association of American Geographers 63:4 (December, 1973): 442-462; John Rice, Patterns of Ethnicity in a Minnesota County 1880-1905 (Geographical Reports, published by the Department of Geography, University of Umea, 1973).

³See, for example: Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in The New Urban History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); David Ward, Cities and Immigrants (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

known to be predominately occupied by a particular group. In so doing they formed spatial communities focused on institutions that sought to preserve their European identity. Robert Park and Herbert Miller state in their book, Old World Traits Transplanted, "The immigrants here tend to reproduce spontaneously the home community and to live in it."⁴

The existence of these communities or neighborhoods is more or less common knowledge. Anyone who has lived in or visited American cities is aware that certain areas are considered to be ethnic. The literature of the social sciences abound with material on life in these communities. What we do not have are detailed studies that delimit the extent and makeup of these areas. This is partly because little empirical evidence exists and that which does exist is extremely difficult to sort out. As stated by David Ward, "Adequate data on the internal spatial structure of the American city in the middle decades of the nineteenth century is extremely sparse except for the manuscript schedules of the census enumerators."⁵

⁴Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1921, P. 146.

⁵David Ward, "The Internal Spatial Differentiation of Immigrant Residential Districts", Special Publication Number 3 (Northwestern University, Department of Geography, 1970), P. 27.

The aim of this study is to delimit neighborhoods in an urban setting using the ethnic homogeneity of the population as the major criteria. The study will seek to compile data at a very large scale--i.e., city blocks or streets--and present cartographically an accurate delimitation of community and neighborhood. In addition, some analysis of the ethnic homogeneity of such areas will be carried out in order to assess the selective inclination of certain national groups to concentrate spatially. The specific study area is Omaha, Nebraska, in the year, 1880.

Before one can begin such an investigation, an understanding of what it is that distinguishes community or neighborhood must be achieved. Sociologists have determined several elements that can combine in various ways to influence the formation of a neighborhood. One is geographic. This includes physical barriers such as roads, transportation lines, parks, etc. that separate one area from another. A second element is the ethnic or cultural homogeneity of the inhabitants. A third attribute is the psychology or spirit of the people.⁶

⁶For additional reference see: Suzanne Keller, The Urban Neighborhood: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Random House, 1968); Walter Firey, "Sentiment and Symbolism as Ecological Variables", American Sociological Review, 10 (1945):130-148.

This study views the second, cultural homogeneity, as the most important formative factor, because it is the most basic of the three. Repeatedly, scholars emphasize the desire to preserve the familiar past in the old country, to seek the protection of one's own kind or to simply share a common language, religion or set of values as key motivations for group cohesiveness.⁷ Geographic features are a key ingredient in delimiting neighborhoods but are not in themselves a formative force. The psychological factor is indeed formative, but very elusive in historical research. Neighborhoods, then, will be defined initially on the basis of cultural homogeneity, although other elements may be used as supporting evidence.

1.2 Choice of Time and Place

The specific area to be studied is Omaha, Nebraska, in the year, 1880. Certain criteria governed this selection. This study required first of all a city of some size, although not too large, and secondly, a city with a sizeable foreign population. Omaha had a population of

⁷See, for example: T. Earl Sullenger, Studies in Urban Sociology (Omaha: Bureau of Social Research, Municipal University of Omaha, 1933), P. 73; Jones, P. 136, and Ward, Cities and Immigrants, pp. 118-119.

30,000 in 1880. This, coupled with the fact that approximately one-third of the population was foreign born, makes it a very suitable choice.⁸ In addition, the author is a native Omahan and would be benefitted by a working knowledge of the city.

Availability of data dictated the choice of the year 1880. Omaha was not platted until the 1850's and was fairly small until the 1870's. The population schedules for 1890 were badly damaged or totally destroyed by a fire in the Commerce Department Building in 1921 and the schedules for 1900 have not yet been released. This leaves the census years, 1870 and 1880. In addition to the rather small population in 1870, that year has the disadvantage of only giving the place of birth of the person enumerated. The 1880 schedules on the other hand, recorded the place of birth for every person as well as the place of birth for both parents. The ability to determine not only foreign birth but also foreign stock (where ones' parents were born) is most desirable, and, therefore, 1880 was chosen for the study.

⁸When not merely foreign born but also foreign stock is considered, this number rises to well over 50% of the population.

CHAPTER II

OMAHA IN THE 1880'S

2.1 Site and Situation

Omaha was founded in 1852 on the west bank of the Missouri River some distance upstream from the mouth of the Platte River. The city was sited on the bluffs overlooking the river bottoms. The strong possibility of the mighty river overflowing its banks caused the first settlers to establish themselves on high ground. In this their suspicions proved correct more than once. The existence of Cut-off Lake (now called Carter Lake), a remnant of the pre-1877 river channel is a grim reminder of the strength and unpredictability of the river.

From its earliest days the city exerted a commanding influence over the vast hinterland opening to the west. It was chosen the capital of the new Nebraska Territory. Even more exciting was its rather obvious potential as an eastern terminus for a trans-continental railroad. By the late 1850's the town was inundated with real estate speculators, merchants and prospective railroad men. In December 1863 ground was broken for the beginning of the Union Pacific Railroad. At that ceremony George Francis Train, chief of publicity, heralded the decade that was to come: "The President shows good judgment in locating

the road where the Almighty placed the signal station at the entrance of a garden seven hundred miles in length..."¹

People were already investigating Train's seven hundred mile long garden. The Homestead Act, passed in 1862, lured settlers to the rich Nebraska soil. The valleys of the Republican, Blue and Platte Rivers in the south and the productive loess soil in the east beckoned to homesteaders, most of whom passed through Omaha, often stopping for extended periods of time. In 1866 Grenville Dodge took over as chief engineer for the railroad. Under his guidance, the crews began to make real progress and anyone who supplied anything that the railroad might need prospered.

The Union Pacific made Omaha its headquarters and as it prospered, so did the city. An economic lull followed completion of the line but the railroad's colonization activities quickly picked up the slack. The railroad needed people to sustain it and extensive recruiting was undertaken in Europe. Many of these people made their home in Omaha along with former railroad workers, discouraged homesteaders, merchants and laborers. By 1880 the city had grown to over 30,000 people, almost a third of whom were foreign born.

¹George R. Leighton, Five Cities: The Story of Their Youth and Old Age (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), pp. 151-152.

2.2 Layout and Development

By July 1854, 320 blocks had been plotted on the high ground above the river. The street numbering system changed frequently in the early years but by 1880 had basically reached its present form. Dodge Street was the major east-west thoroughfare and also the dividing street. The east-west streets all had names (rather than numbers) and each was located by the number of blocks it was north or south of Dodge.² The north-south streets had numbers, starting with First Street at the river and increasing westward.³ Since the line of bluffs curved gradually to the west in the northern section of the city, and the bottom lands were occupied only by transients or a few farmers, the lower numbered streets did not exist in many parts of the city (Figure 1).

Although Dodge was the "dividing" street, the focus of settlement prior to 1880 was clearly further south.

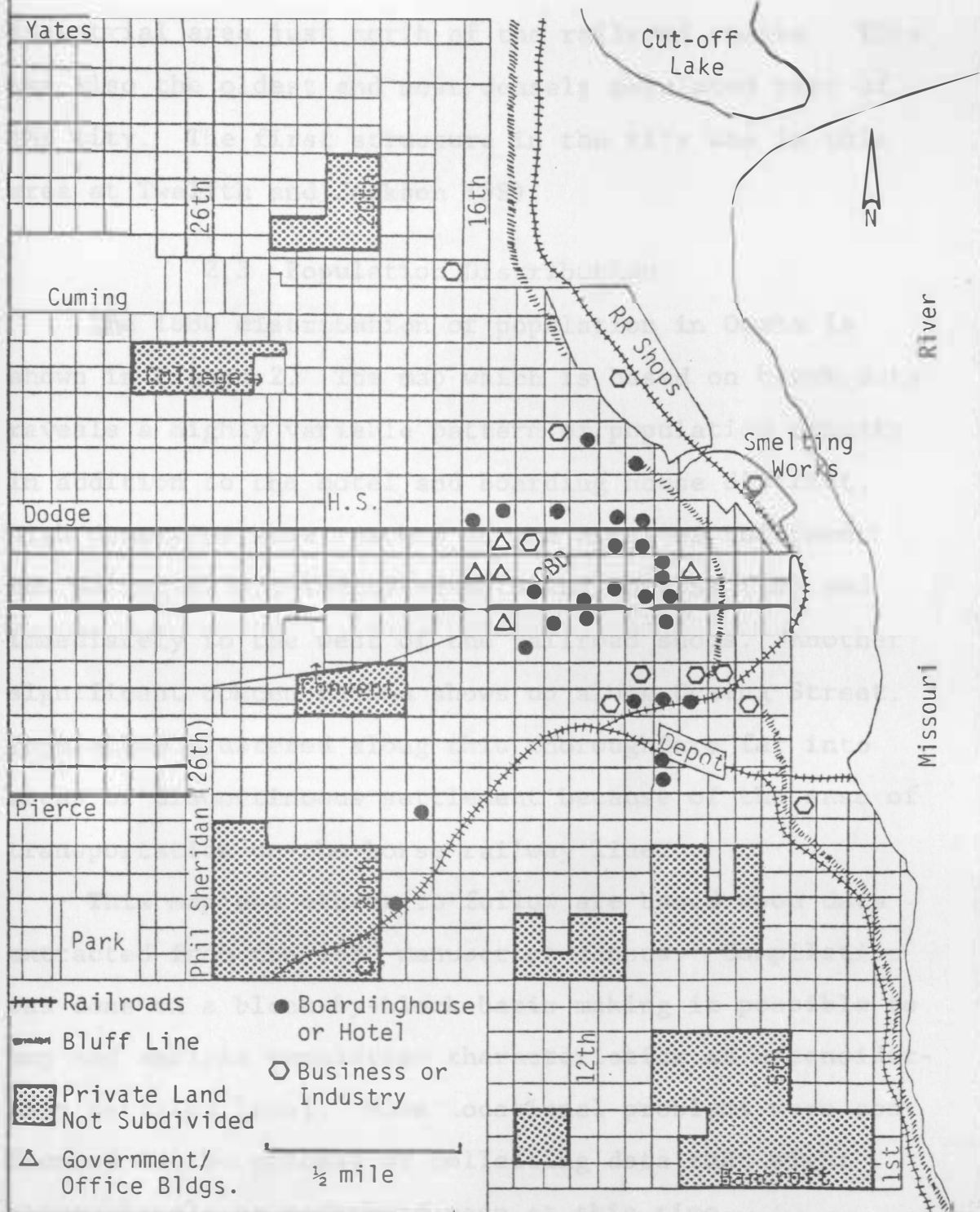
²Throughout the text, a notation system is used to facilitate the reader in locating named streets on the maps. The notation consists of a number and the letter "N" or "S"--e.g., Farnam (2S). The former indicates the number of blocks from the dividing street (Dodge) and the latter indicates the direction (north or south).

³A few notable exceptions to this "north-south-numbers, east-west-names" rule existed. St. Mary's Avenue, south of Dodge, ran diagonally from Seventeenth Street to Twenty-sixth Street. Sixteenth Street north of Nicholas Street (10N) was called Sherman Avenue. Twenty-sixth Street south of Harney (3S) was called Phil Sheridan.

The business district followed Dodge and Douglas (1S) especially in the area between Twelfth and Sixteenth Streets. Figure 1 shows a core of office buildings centering on Sixteenth and Farnam (2S). Four blocks south and to the east lay a belt of factories. In 1880 there were two breweries, an elevator, a flour mill, a gas works and a distillery in this section of the city. Omaha boasted almost two dozen churches, numerous grade schools, both public and private, a high school and Creighton College. The high school occupied the landmark site of the old Territorial capitol, extending for two blocks north of Dodge between Twentieth and Twenty-second Streets. Another city landmark, Hanscom Park, in the southwest part of the city was donated in 1872.

Local traffic depended on the Omaha Horse Railway Company, which through the extension of its lines reinforced the circulation pattern of the city and compartmentalized its residential structure. Externally, the city was serviced by several railroads. The major line crossed the Missouri and entered the city just east of the Union Pacific Depot. From this point a south bound line followed the river bluff, while a second cut diagonally to the southwest. The north bound line took advantage of a break in the bluff just north of the depot and descended to the river bottoms and the railroad shops before leaving town.

Fig. 1. OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1880



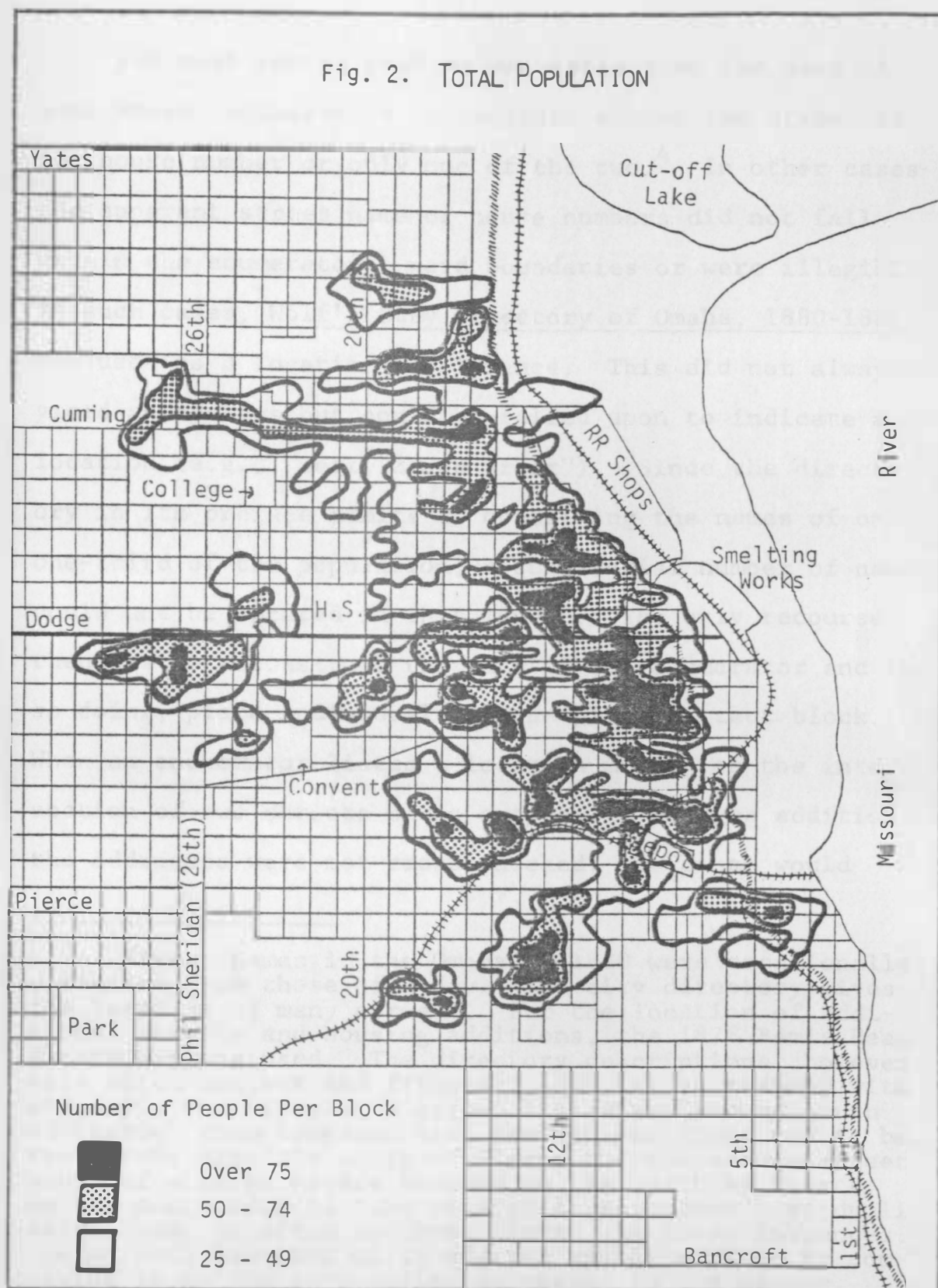
The majority of the hotels and boarding houses were located in the area between the business district and the industrial area just north of the railroad tracks. This was also the oldest and most densely populated part of the city. The first structure in the city was in this area at Twelfth and Jackson (5S).

2.3 Population Distribution

The 1880 distribution of population in Omaha is shown in Figure 2. The map which is based on block data reveals a highly variable pattern of population density. In addition to the hotel and boarding house district, high densities were reached in the areas of Thirteenth and Walnut (13S), Twenty-seventh and Douglas (1S) and immediately to the west of the railroad shops. Another significant concentration shows up along Cuming Street. Population clustered along this thoroughfare far into areas of discontinuous settlement because of the ease of transportation on the horse railway line.

This map and others to follow are based upon data extracted from the 1880 manuscript census. Compilation was done on a block-by-block basis making it possible to map and analyze population characteristics at a considerably detailed level. Some locational problems were confronted in the process of collecting data that might appropriately be commented upon at this time.

Fig. 2. TOTAL POPULATION



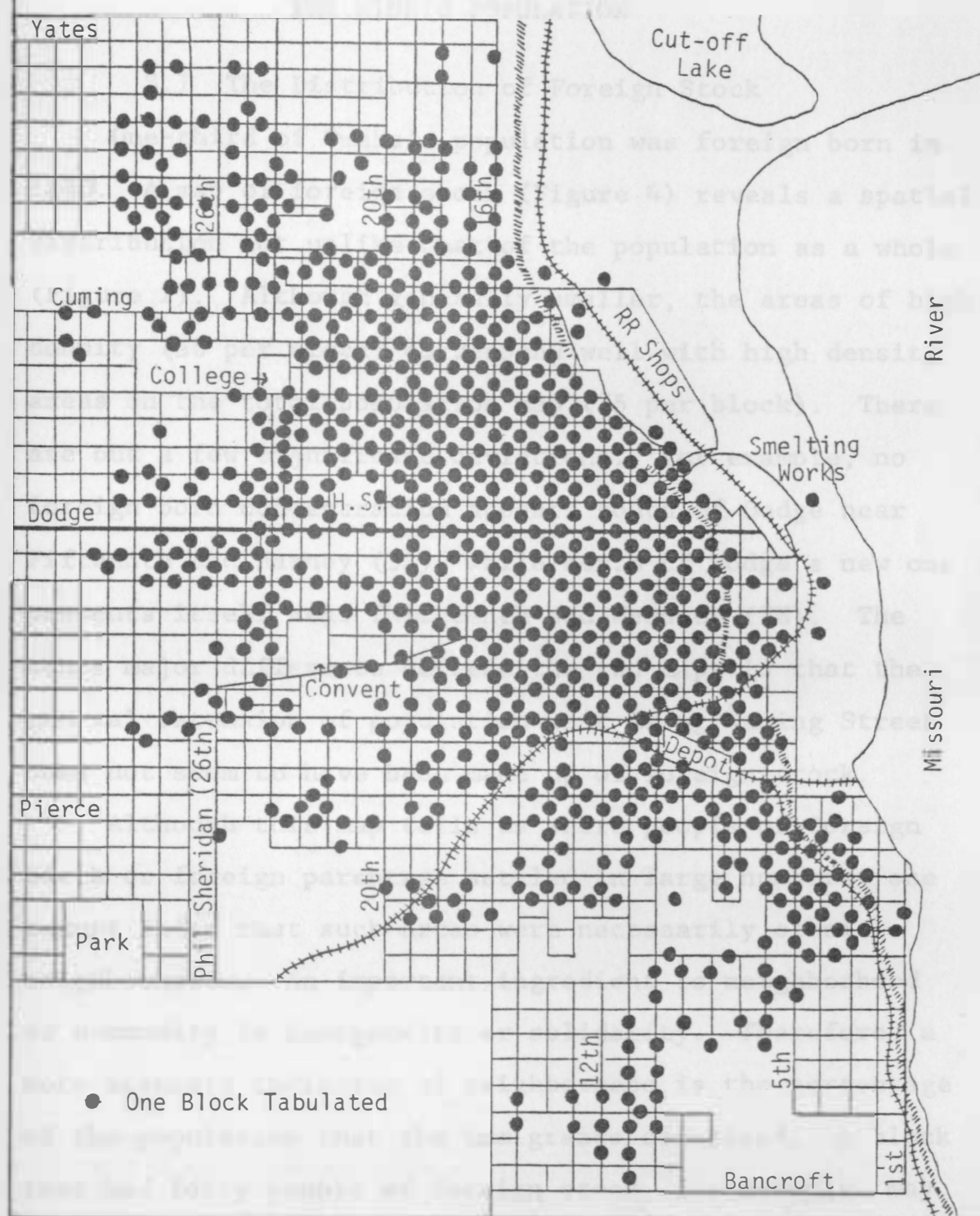
The most vexing problem was failure on the part of some census enumerators to indicate either the street or the house number or only one of the two.⁴ In other cases the apparent street name or house numbers did not fall within the enumerators' ward boundaries or were illegible. In such cases, Wolf's City Directory of Omaha, 1880-1881 was used as a locational reference. This did not always yield an address but could be relied upon to indicate a location (e.g., "near 12 and Arbor"). Since the directory in its preface admits to containing the names of only one-third of the population, a substantial number of names could not be located in this manner. The only recourse then was to reconstruct the path of the enumerator and in so doing, place individuals on the proper street block. When an enumerator listed a location merely as the intersection of two streets or as a specific housing addition, the addresses were not cross checked. To do so would

⁴Street names in the Omaha of 1880 were occasionally different from those of today. The city directory gives the location of many streets. For the location of additional streets and housing additions, the 1878 Bemis Real Estate Map was used. The directory descriptions, however, were often unclear and frequently did not correspond with the map. For example, a street listed as "second south of Pierce" when compared with the map was found not to be two blocks directly south of Pierce but the second street south of a large estate bounded on the north by Pierce. On the south edge of town several street names were duplicated, some as often as three times. In these instances, the correct location of an address was determined by comparing it to the surrounding addresses in the census.

have been too time consuming. Most enumerators included pages at the end of their district called "Omissions and Corrections." These could occasionally be located on their correct block, but frequently were totally unidentifiable and had to be omitted from the study.

Such difficulties made this job of assigning Omaha's 1880 population to distinct areal units tedious and at times frustrating. For the most part, however, they were satisfactorily overcome. The bulk of the manuscripts were quite clear about location and approximately nine hundred blocks were eventually tallied (Figure 3) leaving relatively little of the data unuseable.

Fig. 3. STUDY AREA: BLOCKS TABULATED



CHAPTER III

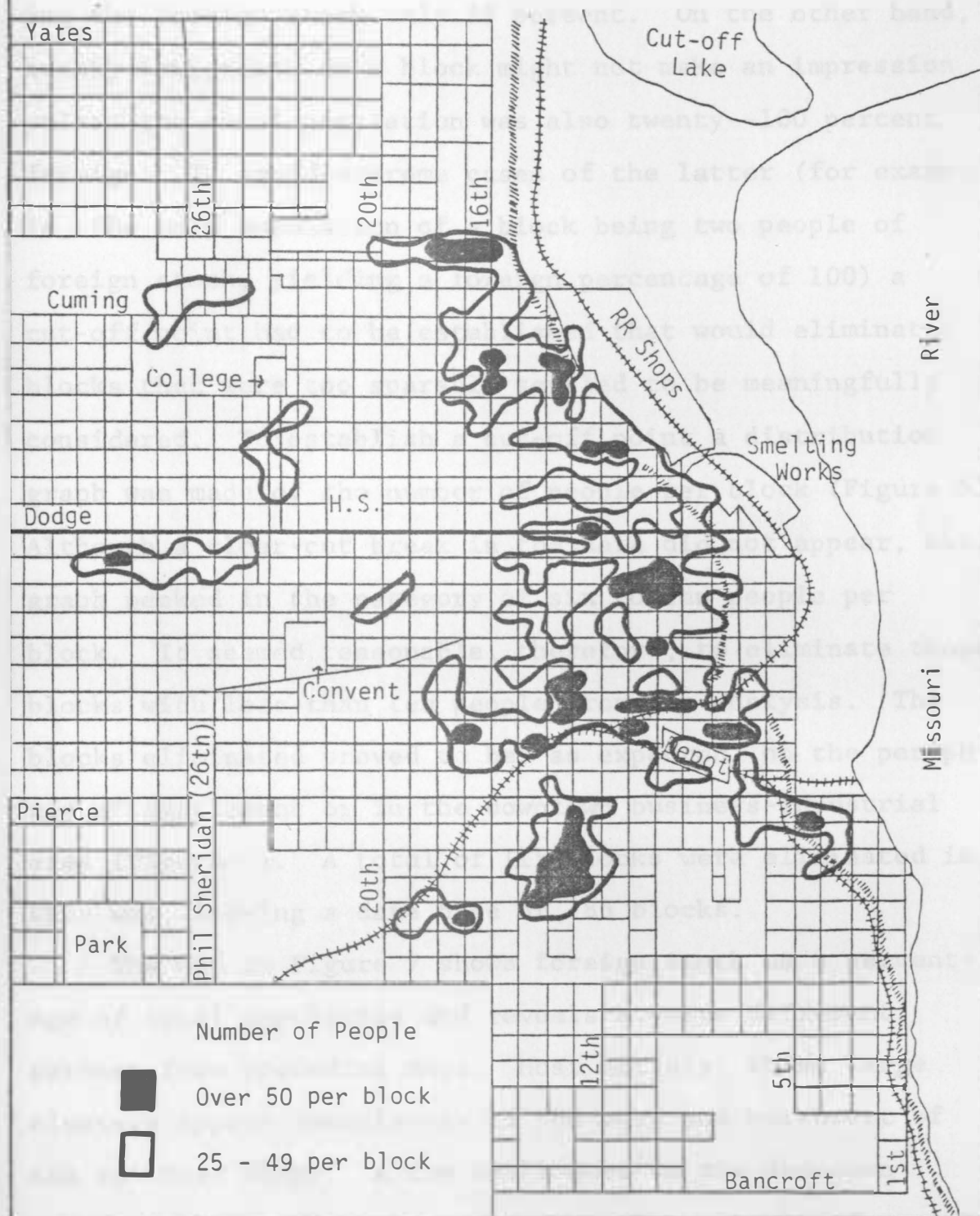
THE ETHNIC POPULATION

3.1 The Distribution of Foreign Stock

One-third of Omaha's population was foreign born in 1880. A map of foreign stock (Figure 4) reveals a spatial distribution not unlike that of the population as a whole (Figure 2). Although generally smaller, the areas of high density (50 per block) correspond well with high density areas on the total population map (75 per block). There are but a few significant deviations. For example, no foreign born concentration appears south of Dodge near Fifteenth and Harney (3S), while north of Dodge a new one presents itself near Thirteenth and Webster (7N). The other major difference between the two maps is that the general extension of population west along Cuming Street does not seem to have been made up of foreign stock.

Although this map tells us where people of foreign birth or foreign parentage settled in large numbers, one cannot infer that such areas were necessarily ethnic neighborhoods. An important ingredient to neighborhood or community is homogeneity or solidarity. Therefore, a more accurate indicator of neighborhood is the percentage of the population that the immigrants comprised. A block that had forty people of foreign stock, for example, may

Fig. 4. FOREIGN STOCK POPULATION



appear quite significant, until further investigation shows that there were 120 people living on the block, making the foreign stock only 33 percent. On the other hand, twenty immigrants on a block might not make an impression unless the total population was also twenty--100 percent foreign. To avoid extreme cases of the latter (for example, the only population of a block being two people of foreign stock, yielding a foreign percentage of 100) a cut-off point had to be established that would eliminate blocks that were too sparsely settled to be meaningfully considered. To establish a cut-off point a distribution graph was made of the number of people per block (Figure 5). Although a clear-cut break in the data did not appear, the graph peaked in the category of six to ten people per block. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to eliminate those blocks with less than ten people from the analysis. The blocks eliminated proved to be, as expected, on the periphery of settlement or in the downtown business-industrial area (Figure 6). A total of 115 blocks were eliminated in this way, leaving a data base of 785 blocks.

The map in Figure 7 shows foreign stock as a percentage of total population and reveals a quite different pattern from preceding maps. Most notably, three large clusters appear immediately to the west and northwest of the railroad shops. A few small ones in the downtown

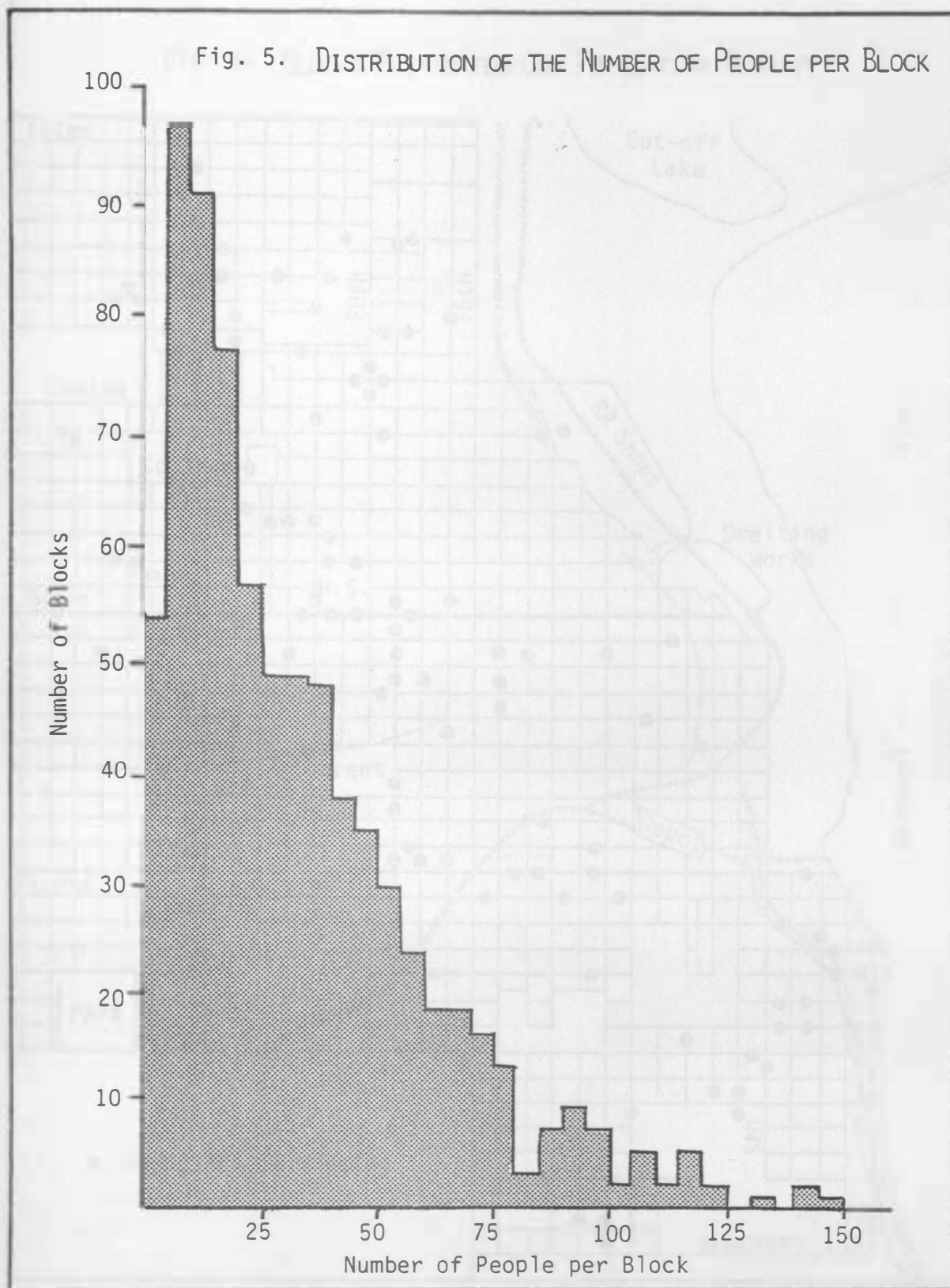


Fig. 6. BLOCKS ELIMINATED: LOW POPULATION DENSITY

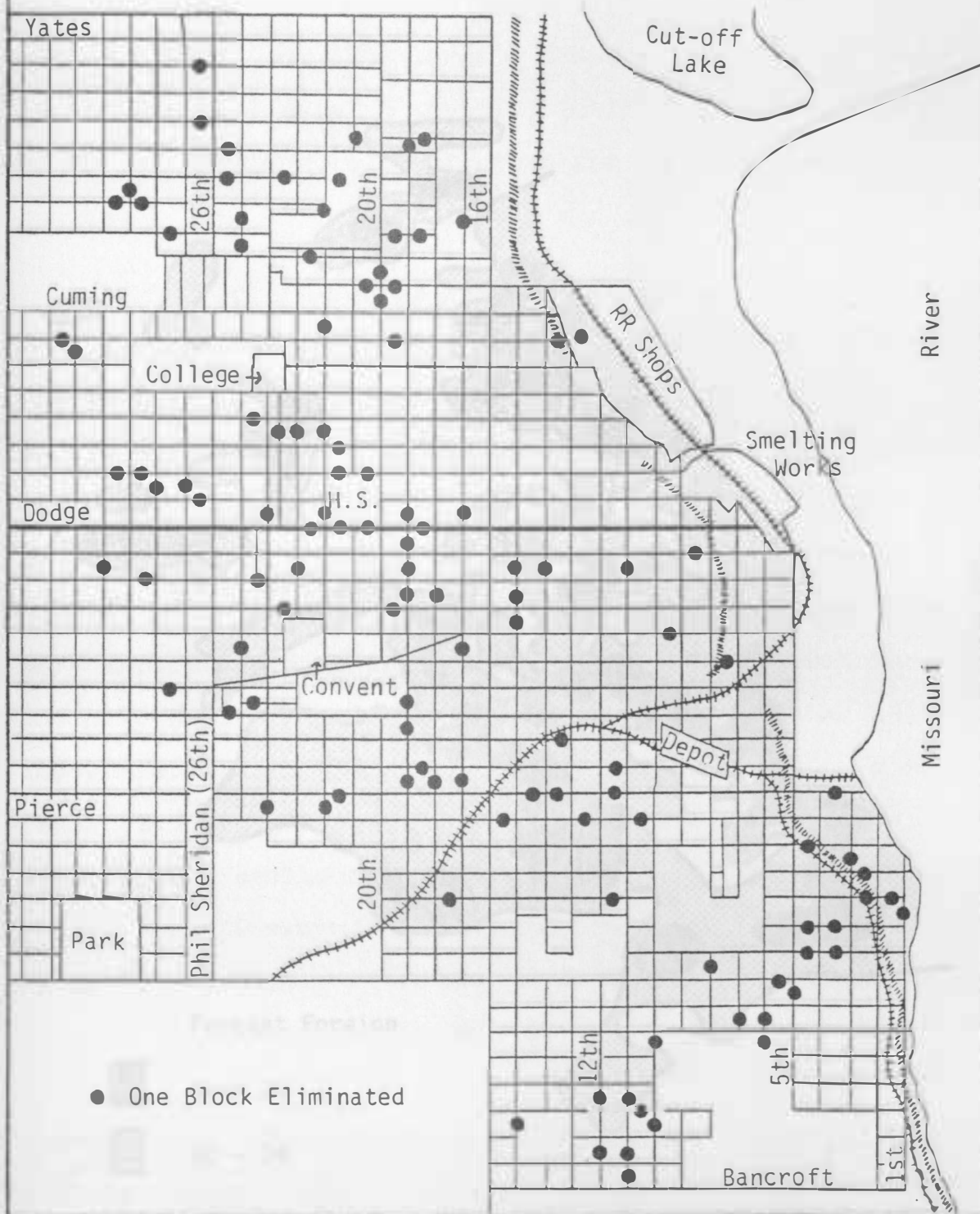
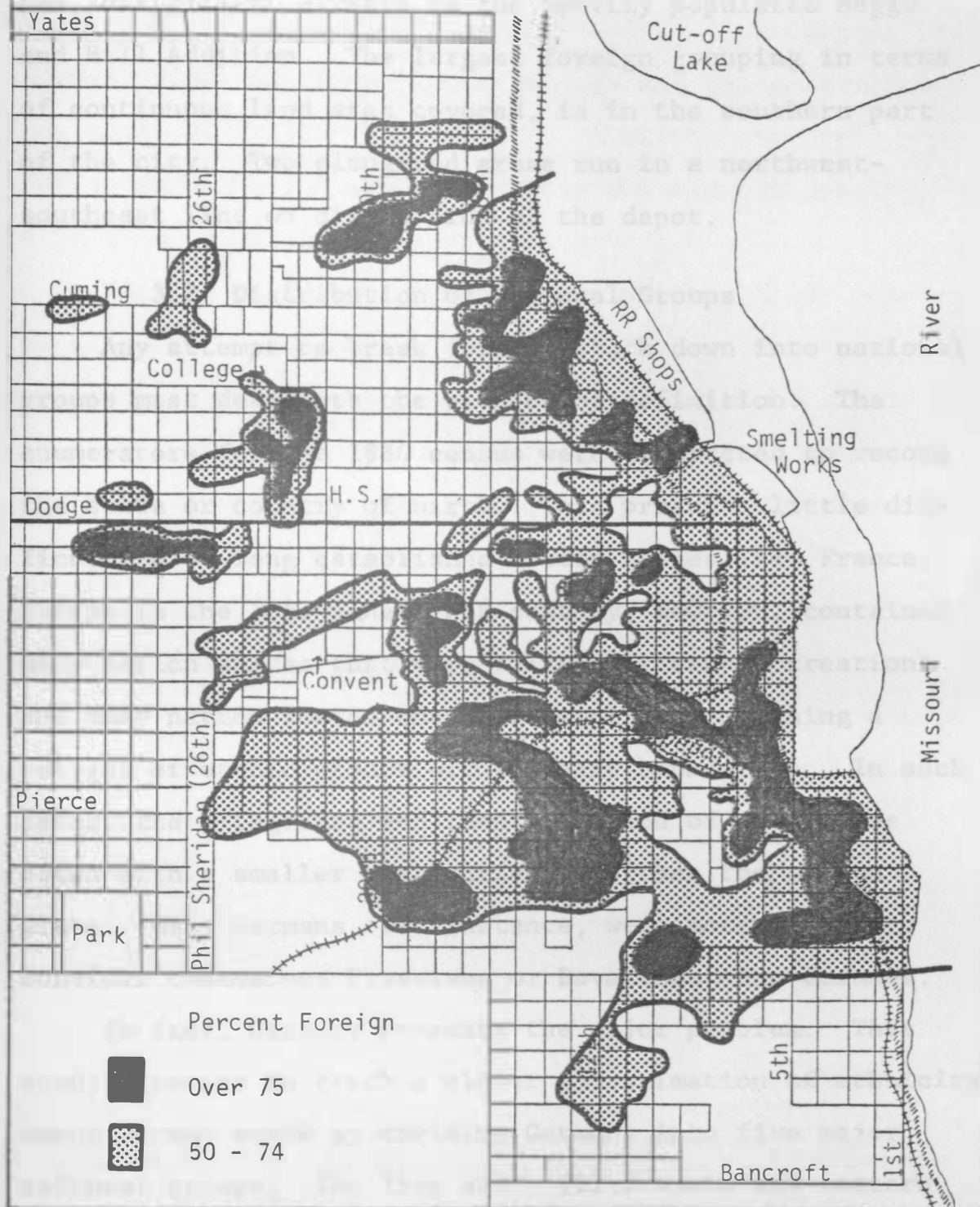


Fig. 7. FOREIGN STOCK AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION



area frequently correspond with hotels. The section just to the south of Dodge between approximately Twenty-fourth and Thirty-first Streets is the heavily populated Boggs and Hill Addition. The largest foreign grouping in terms of continuous land area covered, is in the southern part of the city. Two elongated areas run in a northwest-southeast line on either side of the depot.

3.2 Distribution of National Groups

Any attempt to break foreign stock down into national groups must deal with the problem of definition. The enumerators for the 1880 census were instructed to record the state or country of birth. This presents little difficulty with long established nation states like France. Europe in the late nineteenth century, however, contained many nation states that were relatively recent creations and many nation states that were empires containing a polygot of ethnic groups within their boundaries. In such cases, the allegiance and identification of people was often with a smaller territorial unit than the nation state. Many Germans, for instance, were more likely to consider themselves Prussians or Bavarians than Germans.

In fact, Germany presents the major problem. This study attempts to reach a closer approximation of ethnicity among German stock by dividing Germans into five major cultural groups. The five are: (1) Prussia and eastern

Germany (Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxony), (2) northern Germany (Hamburg, Hanover, Holstein, Schleswig), (3) the Rhineland (Westphalia, Hesse-Darmstadt), (4) southern Germany (Bavaria, Baden, Wurttemberg) and (5) Austria and her possessions (Croatia, Tyrol). A sixth category, "other German", was added for those who did not specify a particular German state.¹

Figures 8-13 show the locations of the larger ethnic populations in Omaha. In nearly all cases, core areas are readily identifiable, and in many cases, the closeness of the map contours indicate the sharpness with which the ethnic areas break off. The spatial characteristics of the major groups in Omaha are as follows:

1. The Irish (3,584) were among the first immigrants to arrive in Omaha. They were recruited to work on the railroad. They were the most widespread of all the ethnic groups, although their strongest areas of concentration lay just to the west of the railroad shops.

2. The English (1,562) were not nearly as widespread as the Irish. Many of them were found, however, in areas where the Irish were concentrated.

¹Overall, this group was of moderate size, varying within different enumeration districts. Whether this variation was due to lack of knowledge on the part of the enumerator or the population was impossible to determine.

Fig. 8. TOTAL IRISH POPULATION

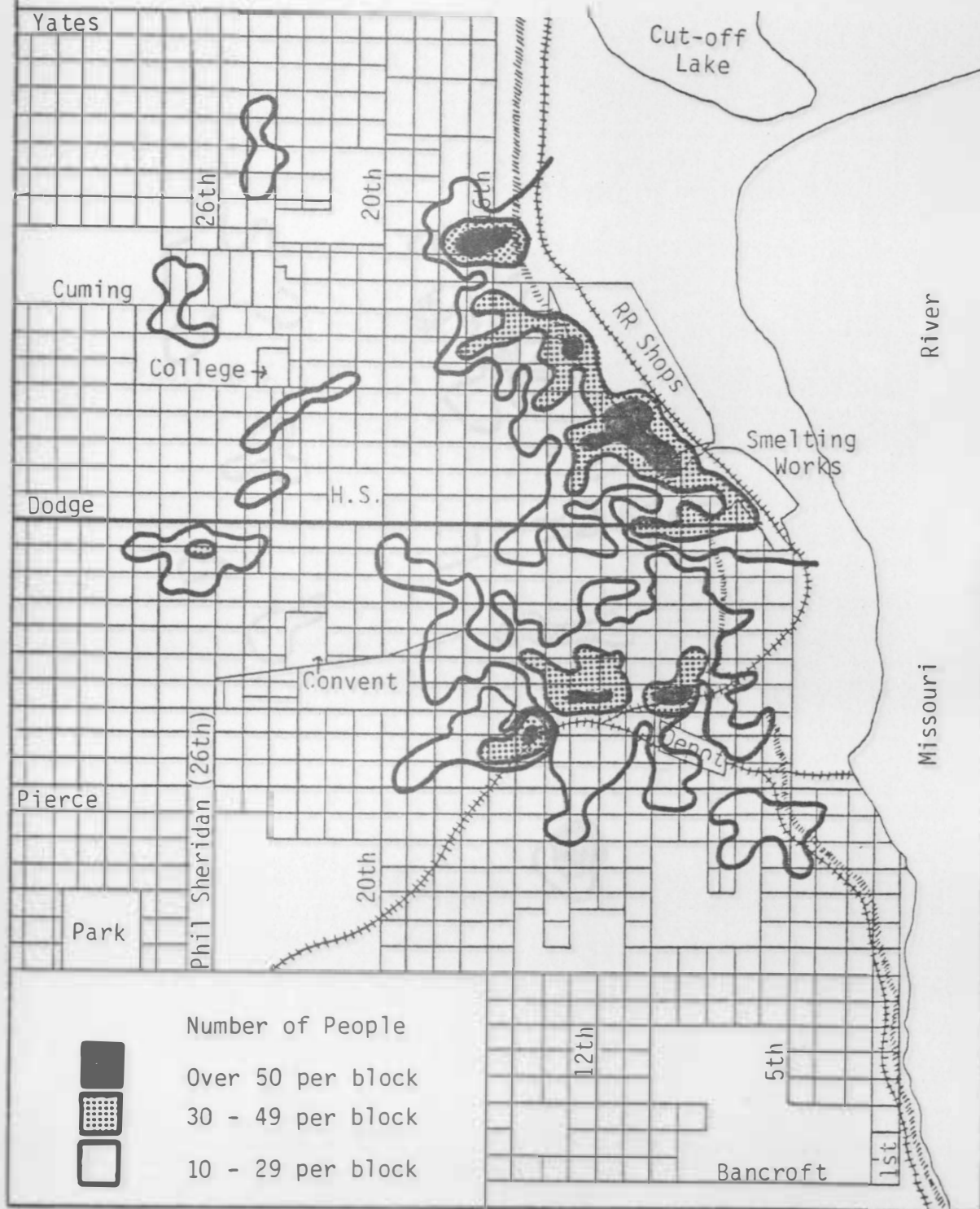


Fig. 9. TOTAL ENGLISH POPULATION

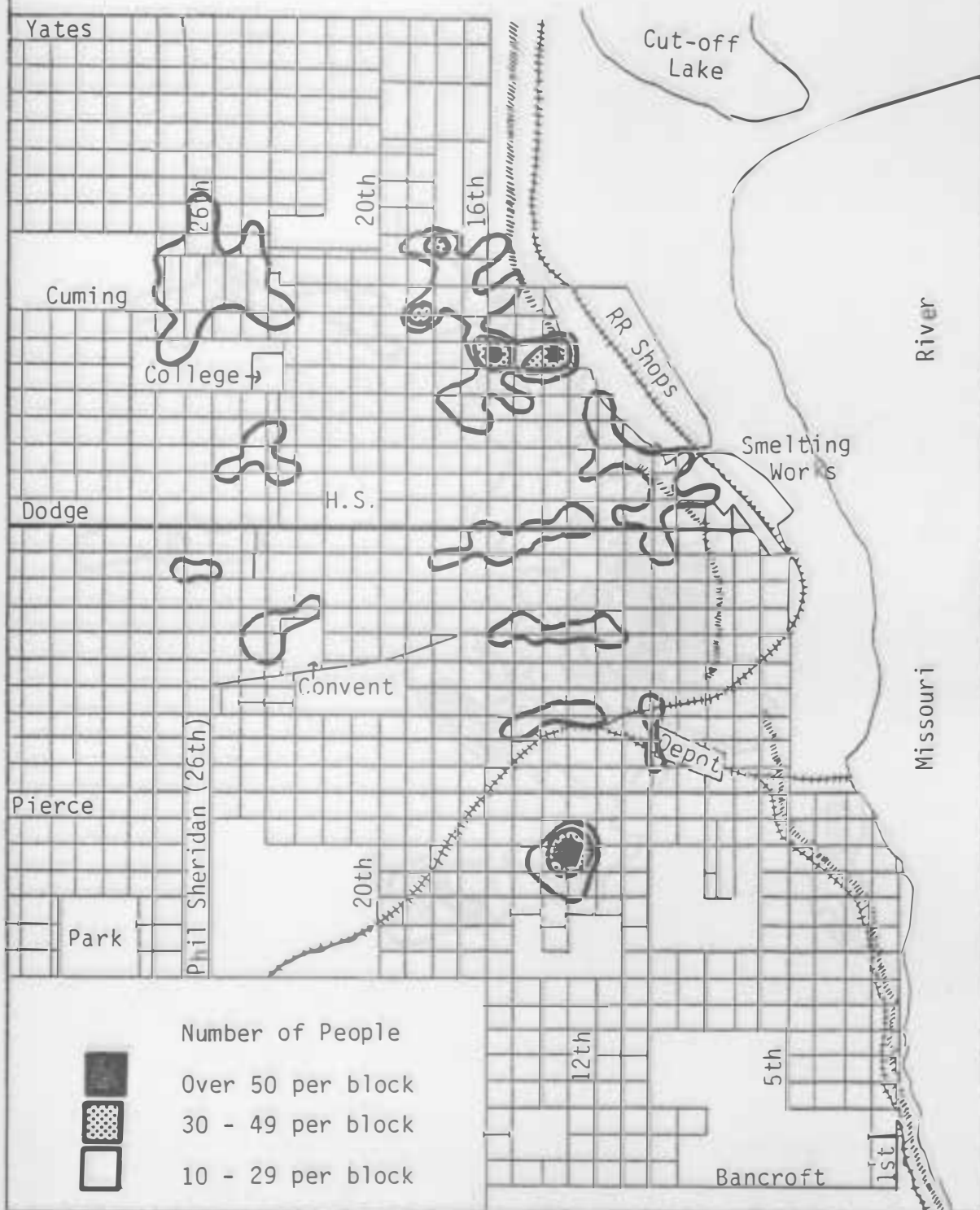


Fig. 10. TOTAL GERMAN POPULATION

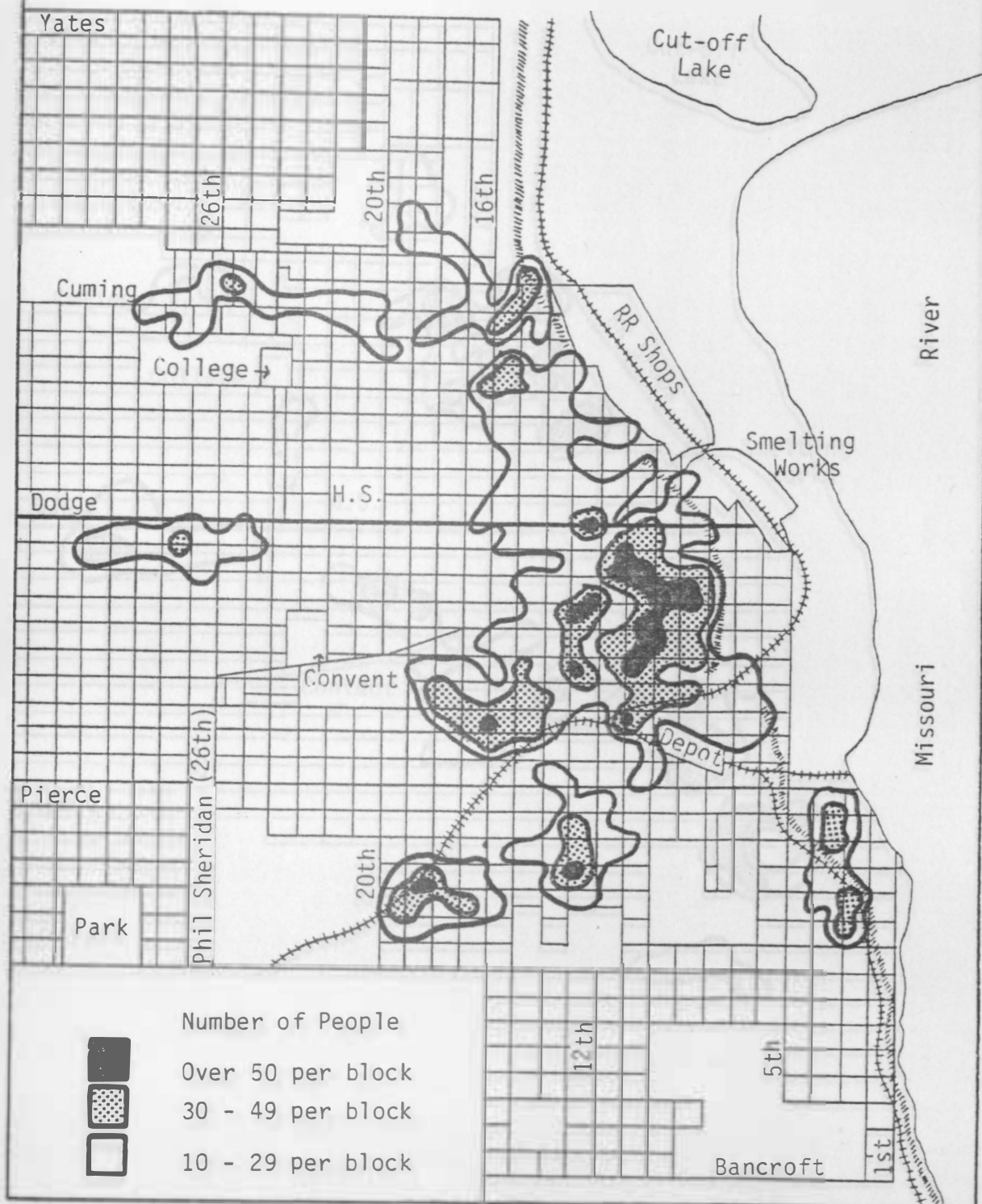


Fig. 11. TOTAL SWEDISH POPULATION

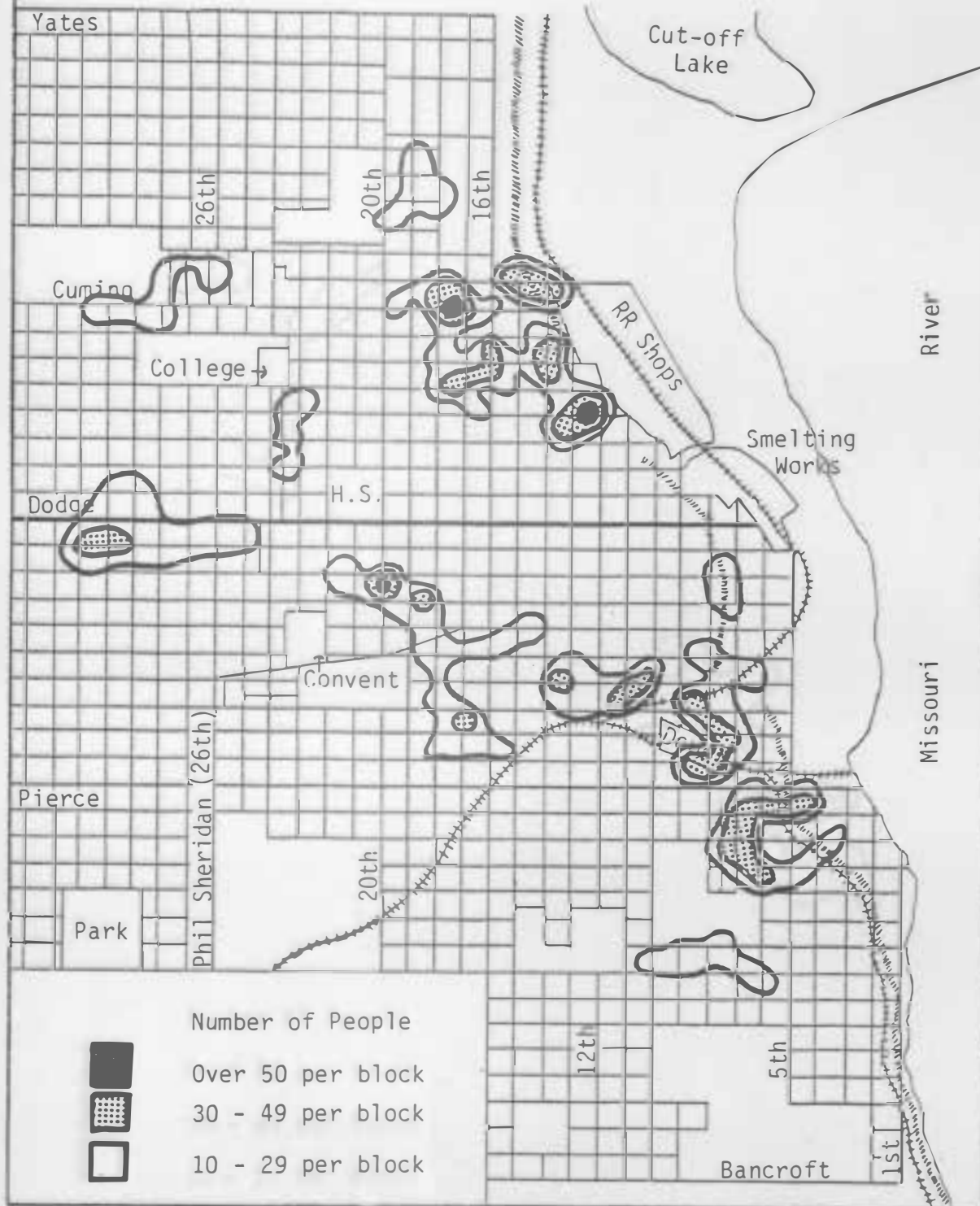


Fig. 12. TOTAL DANISH POPULATION

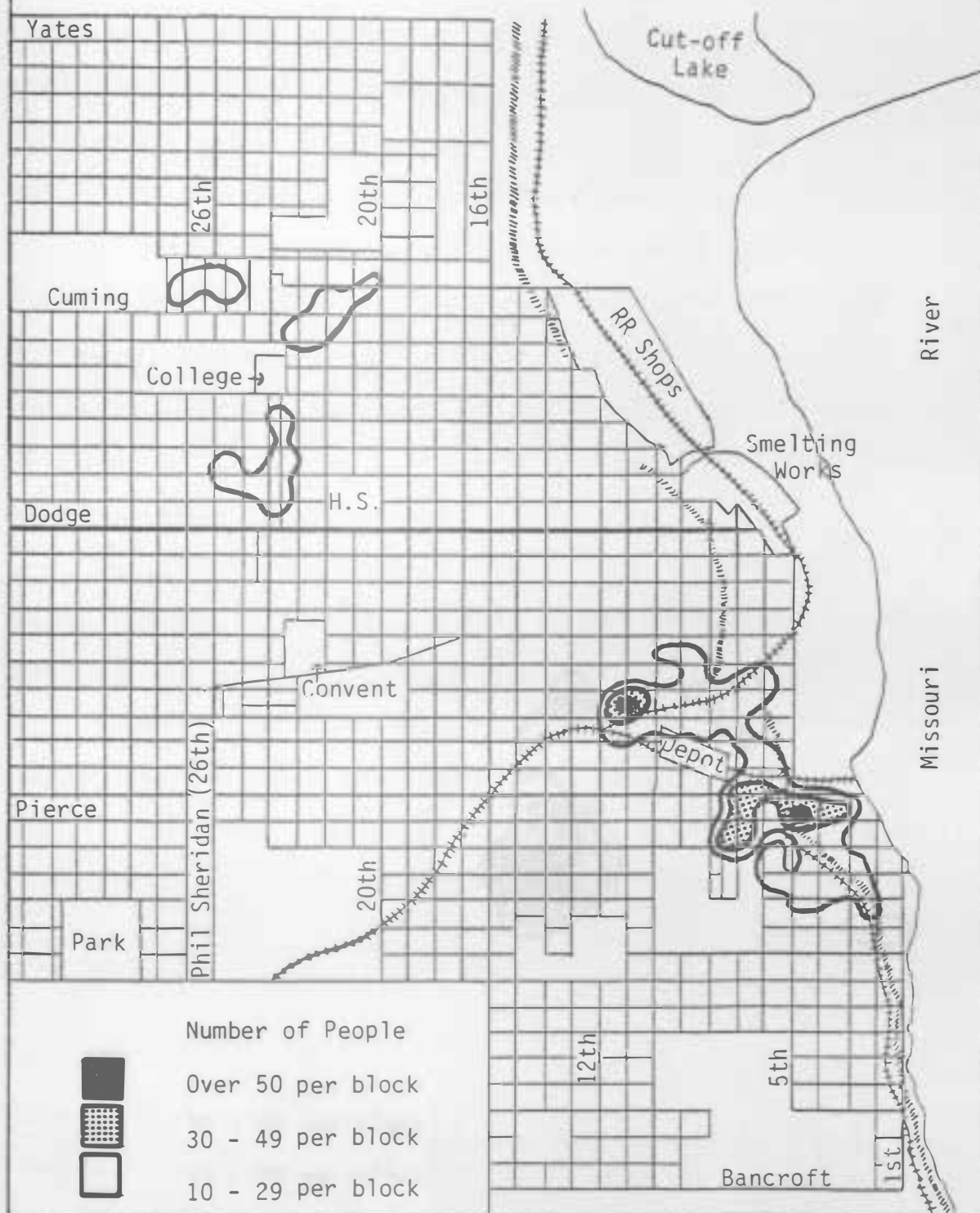
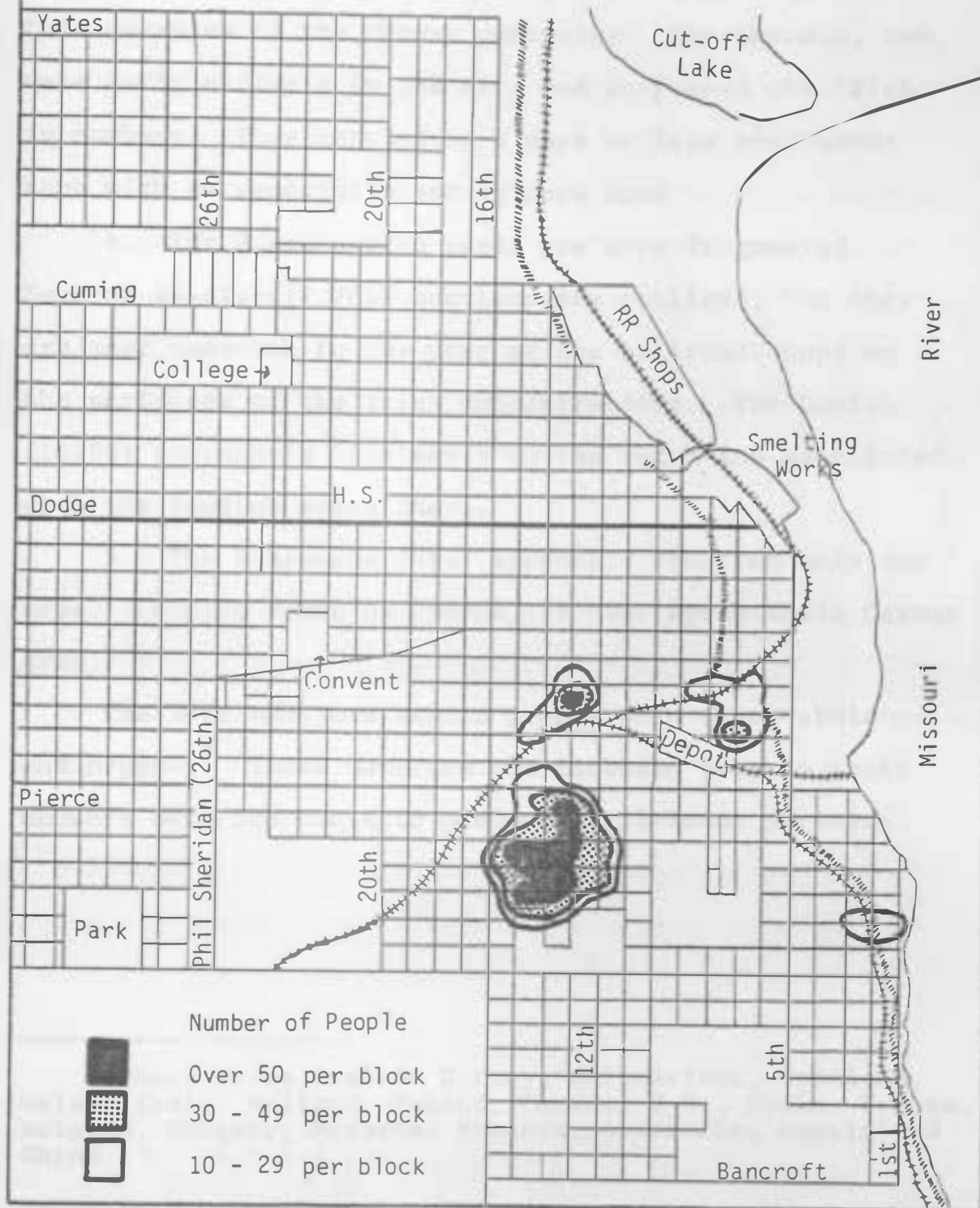


Fig. 13. TOTAL BOHEMIAN POPULATION



3. Although the Germans (4,262) were tabulated in six different categories, a total figure was used for this overview of the German community. The Germans, too, were early arrivals in the city and surpassed the Irish in numbers. They settled in a more or less continuous zone with an especially strong core area.

4. The Scandinavian areas are more fragmented. Several Swedish (1,701) sections are outlined, but they are most numerous to the west of the railroad shops on the periphery of the Irish concentrations. The Danish (1,106) stronghold is clearly to the south and associated with the Swedish areas there.

5. The Bohemians (893) virtually occupied only one area. Located south of Pierce, it overlaps a small German area.

The less numerous ethnic groups were also tabulated and mapped.² These maps are not included because their numbers were too small to produce significant patterns.

²These areas include Norway, Switzerland, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Holland, Poland, Canada, U.S., Spain, France, Belgium, Hungary, Moravia, Romania, Australia, Russia and China.

CHAPTER IV

ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOODS

4.1 Neighborhood Cores

The mapping of national groups in Omaha has shown that to a remarkable degree these groups chose to settle in different parts of the city. Yet on the whole, there was considerable overlap in the distributions. German dominated areas, for example, were by no means exclusive of Irish or other groups. In addition, a substantial "Yankee" population was mixed with foreign groups throughout the city.

The delimitation of ethnic neighborhoods can not be based on the presence of large numbers of a particular group alone. Human communities that display the strongest preservation of culture and customs are normally those that can exclusively lay claim to a piece of space.¹ What is needed is an area that is homogeneously populated, where an attachment with place can be fostered, where a "we-they" attitude toward outsiders can arise. Studies of such communities in rural areas have shown

¹See Robert C. Ostergren, "Cultural Homogeneity and Population Stability Among Swedish Immigrants in Chisago County", Minnesota History, 43:7 (Fall 1973) 255-269.

that the control of space by the group in question increases as one moves toward the center of the community.²

The maps in Figures 14-19 offer a more refined look at the ethnic pattern than the raw number maps presented earlier. They delimit areas in terms of their homogeneity. They were constructed by drawing isolines around areas where: (1) 25 percent or more of the total foreign stock belonged to a particular group, and (2) 50 percent or more of the total foreign stock belonged to a particular group. In terms of culturally homogeneous neighborhoods or communities, the lower valued line may be thought of as marking the periphery--the area influenced but not necessarily controlled by the group. The 50 percent line may be thought of as defining the core of the community.

In this way, a very definite picture of the extent of the Irish neighborhoods emerges (Figure 14). They form a nearly continuous swath averaging two to three blocks wide from north of the railroad shops to south of the smelting works, staying very close to the shops. A break appears along Douglas and Farnam Streets (1 and 2S--the central business district). To the south there is a more fragmented area, centered around the depot. This area

²See Peter Munch, "Segregation and Assimilation of Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin", Norwegian-American Studies and Records, 18 (1954) 102-140.

Fig. 14. IRISH CORE AREAS

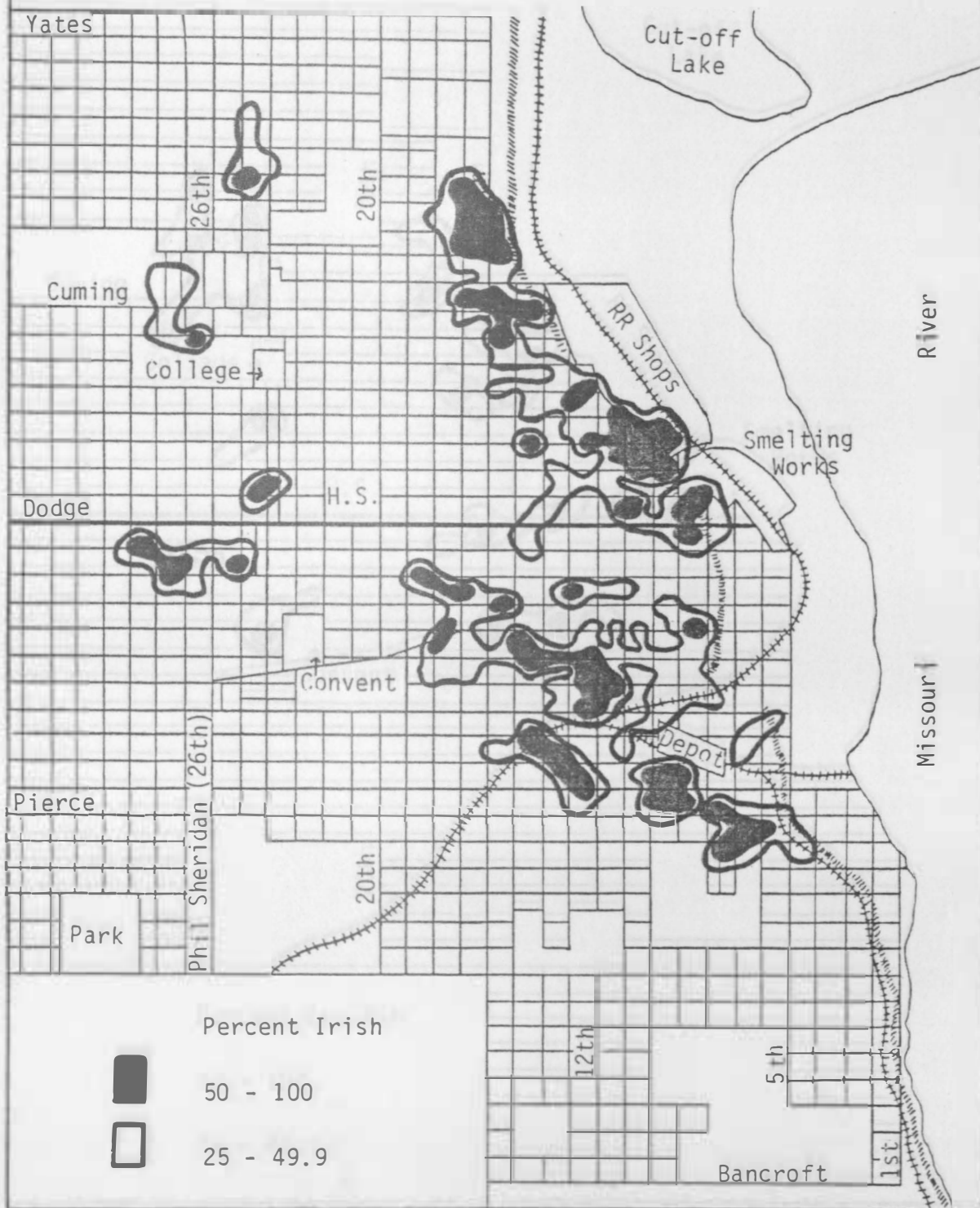


Fig. 15. ENGLISH CORE AREAS



Fig. 16. GERMAN CORE AREAS

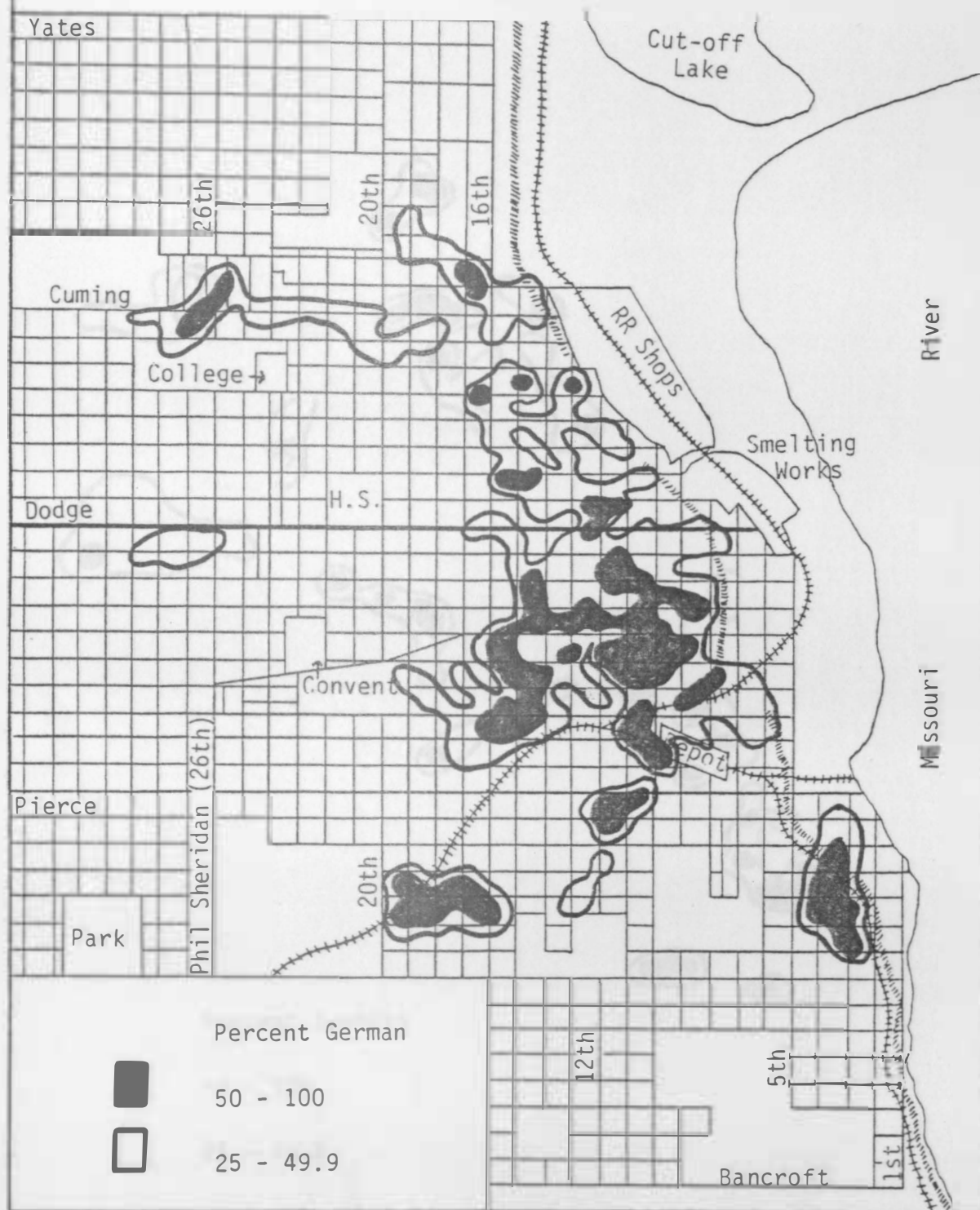


Fig. 17. SWEDISH CORE AREAS



Fig. 18. DANISH CORE AREAS

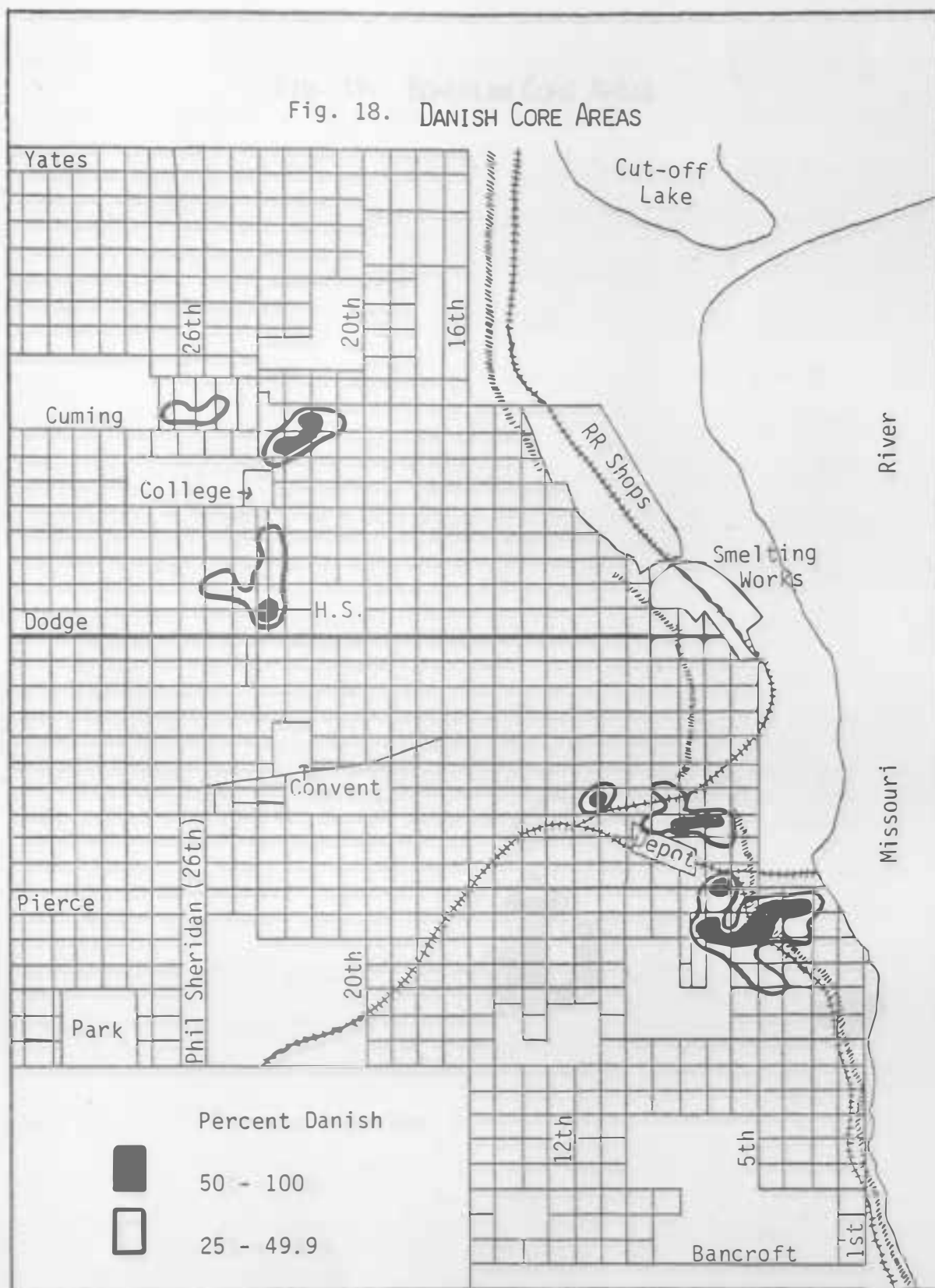
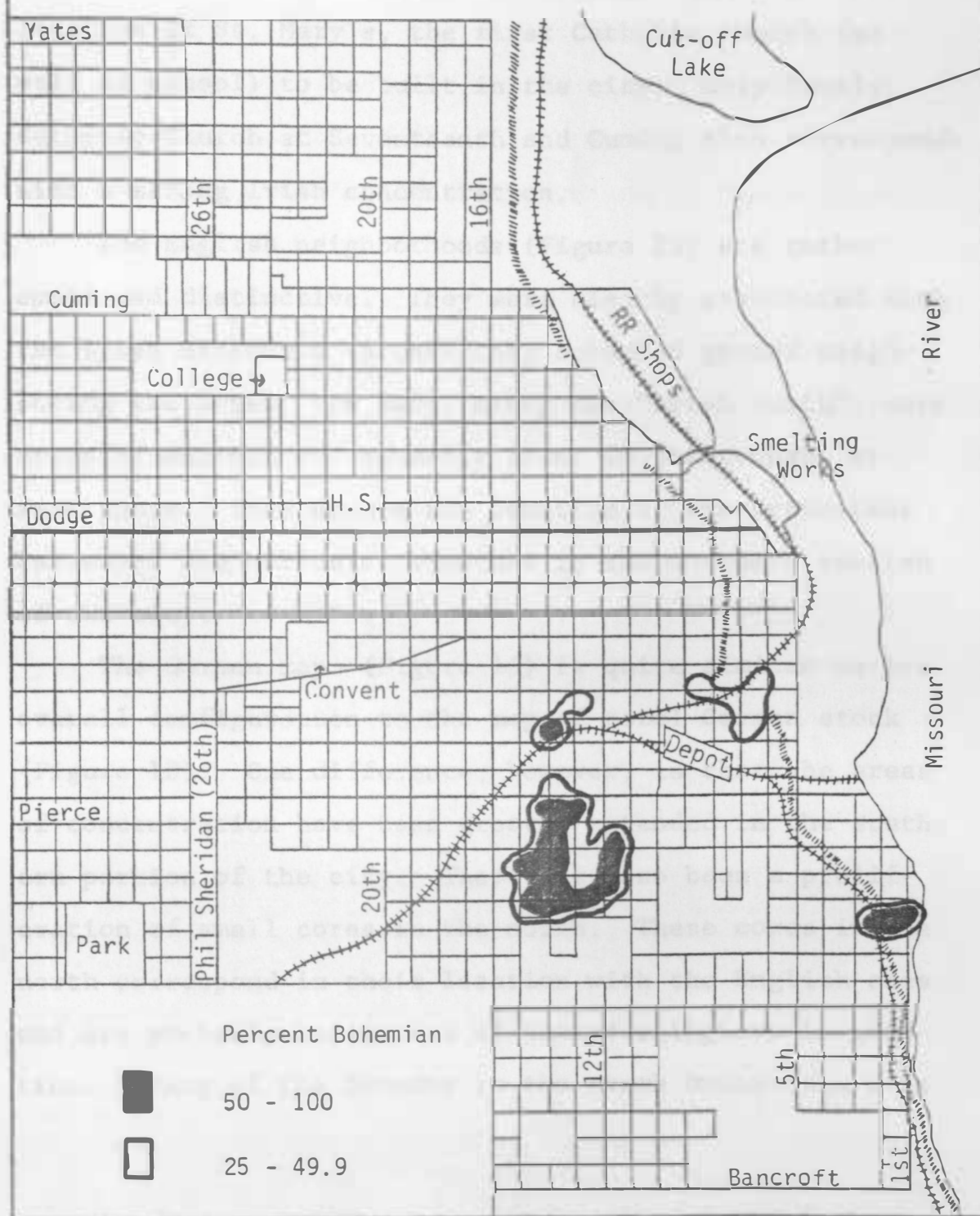


Fig. 19. BOHEMIAN CORE AREAS



settled by the Irish, a largely Catholic group, shows a strong concentration in the 800 block of Howard (4S), the location of St. Mary's, the first Catholic church (as well as school) to be built in the city. Holy Family Catholic Church at Seventeenth and Cuming also corresponds with a strong Irish concentration.

The English neighborhoods (Figure 15) are rather small and distinctive. They were clearly associated with the Irish districts in that they occupied ground neighboring the Irish. In fact, along the "Irish swath", core areas of English are commonly found in the troughs or weak spots. They denote the location of the Protestant Episcopal and Methodist churches in the northern section of the city.

The German map (Figure 16) is quite similar in its overall configuration to the map of total German stock (Figure 10). One difference, however, is that the areas of concentration have been greatly extended in the southern portion of the city. There has also been a proliferation of small cores in the north. These cores in the north correspond in their location with the English ones and are probably indicative of shared religious institutions. Many of the Germans in the north Omaha area were

Protestant and belonged to the Congregational Church.³

In the breakdown of Germans many of the people from Prussia and East Germany, generally a Protestant region, were found in the northern part of the city. The more extensive German neighborhood that branched to the southwest was largely Catholic while the one to the southeast was Protestant.⁴

The Swedish and Danish maps (Figure 17 and 18) show scattered but well defined communities. The distance between core and periphery is in most cases notably small, indicating a steep gradient. The Swedish and Danish communities are in close proximity to one another in most cases but mutually exclusive.⁵

Very little changed between the two Bohemian maps (Figure 13 and 19). Both show very homogeneous regions. The largest one surrounds what Rose Rosicky, in her book, A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska, calls the

³The German Congregational Church (listed in the city directory as the Evangelical German Reformed Church) was located between Twelfth and Thirteenth on Dodge.

⁴The Methodist Episcopal Church and First Lutheran Church were both located between Eleventh and Twelfth on Jackson (5S).

⁵Scandinavian institutions include the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church at Twenty-Third and Davenport (2N) and the Scandinavian Hotel on 700 S. 11th Street.

Czech "Business District"--on Thirteenth, north of Williams (14S).⁶ Along this strip was a general store, grocery, dry goods store, bakery, dance hall, the Prague Hotel and St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.⁷ Directly north of this, in a smaller area, was the first Czech butcher shop, a dance hall, saloon and boarding house, summer garden, grocery and general store.⁸

The map in Figure 20 is a composite picture of the core areas delimited in Figures 14-19. It clearly shows the ethnic mosaic of Omaha in 1880. On this topic, Howard Chudacoff, in his book, Mobile Americans, has stated: "Although immigrants comprised one-third of Omaha's population in 1880, there were virtually no neighborhoods which could be identified with any particular nationality."⁹ Figure 20, however, reveals distinct ethnic neighborhoods with little overlap in boundaries.

⁶Rose Rosicky, A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska (Omaha: Czech Historical Society of Nebraska, 1929), P. 179.

⁷Ibid., and Vladimir Kucera and Alfred Novacek, eds., Czechs and Nebraska (Ord, Nebraska: Quiz Graphic Arts, 1967), P. 89.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Howard Chudacoff, Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha 1880-192 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1972), P. 65.

Fig. 20. ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOODS

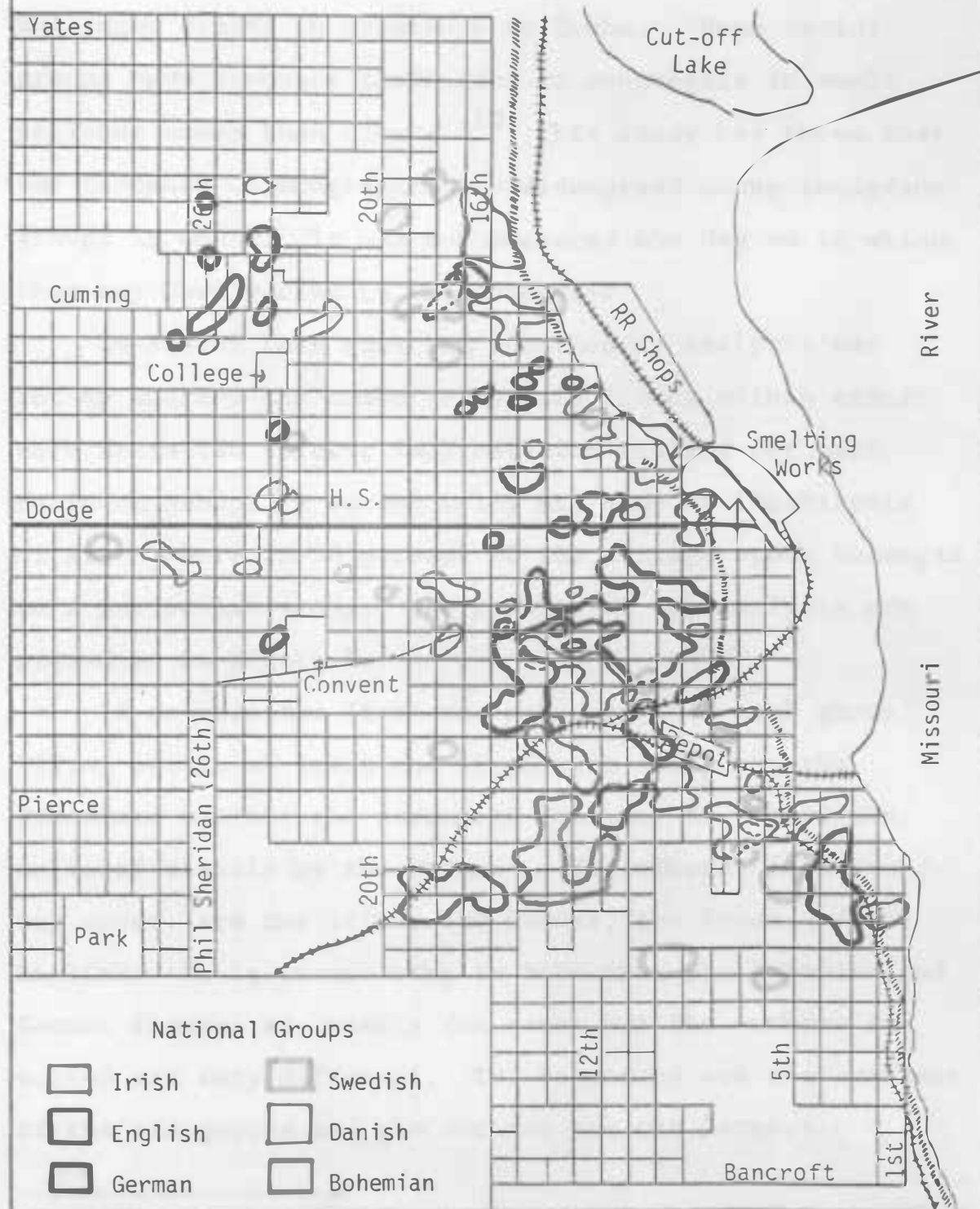
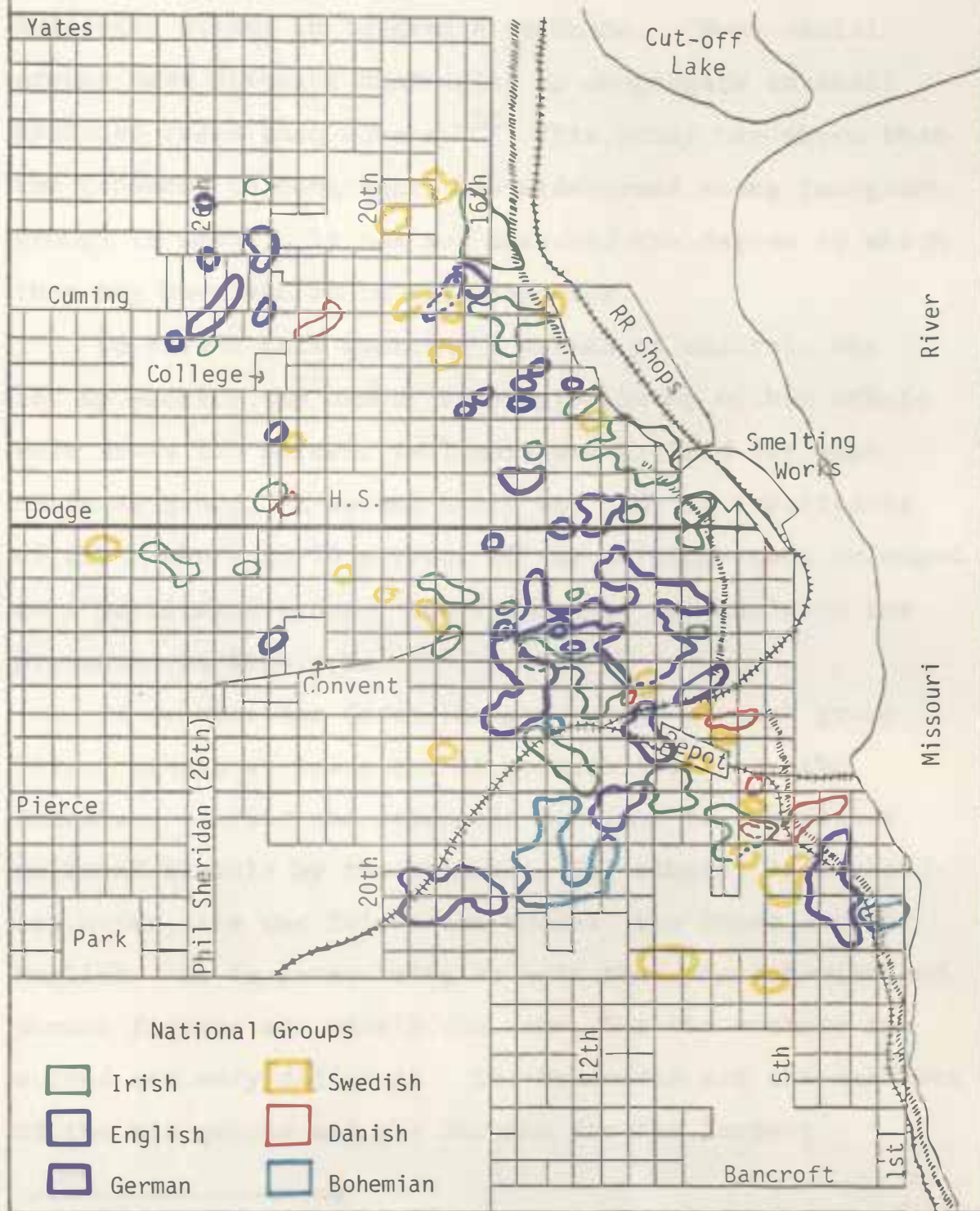


Fig. 20. ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOODS



4.2 Community Homogeneity

In his book, Studies in Urban Sociology, T. Earl Sullenger states in reference to Omaha: "Some racial groups have stronger tendencies to congregate in small isolated areas than others."¹⁰ This study has shown that the tendency to congregate was widespread among immigrant groups in Omaha. It has not measured the degree to which they may have varied in this behavior.

To answer this question a method of analysis was set up whereby the number of people living within ethnic core areas (50 percent isolines) was tallied for each national group. A second tally was made of inhabitants of areas where 25-50 percent of the foreign stock belonged to a particular group. The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 21.

If we consider first the percentage of each group living within at least the 25 percent isolines, the Bohemians exhibit the strongest tendency to congregate, followed closely by the Germans. The others, in descending order, are the Irish, the Swedes, the Danes and the English. It is interesting to note that the Bohemian and German figures are nearly the same, but the numbers involved are very different. The Bohemians are the smallest of the six groups and the Germans are the largest.

¹⁰Sullenger, P. 74.

FIGURE 21. COMMUNITY HOMOGENEITY

Ethnic Group	Irish	English	German	Swedish	Danish	Bohemian	Totals
Total Foreign Stock	3,584	1,562	4,262	1,701	1,106	893	13,108
% Total Population	11.7	5.1	13.9	5.5	3.6	2.9	42.7
# Within 50%	979	155	1,442	413	237	423	3,649
% of Ethnic Group	27.3	9.9	33.8	24.3	21.4	47.4	27.8
# Between 25 and 50%	1,012	303	1,433	441	174	184	3,547
% of Ethnic Group	28.2	19.4	33.6	25.9	15.7	20.6	27.1
Total # Within 25%	1,991	458	2,875	854	411	607	7,196
% of Ethnic Group	25.5	29.3	67.4	50.2	37.1	68.0	54.9

If only those living within neighborhood core areas (50 percent) are considered, the order is the same. The spacing, however, is different. The Germans have fallen back considerably from the Bohemians. The Danes have strengthened their position and the English have definitely weakened. The loss of strength among the Germans is due to the relatively large numbers that live not in the core areas but in the peripheral 25-50 percent zones. The improved Danish position reflects the relatively slight importance of the 25-50 percent area in their communities. The English show a remarkably low proportion of their numbers in core areas. Whereas other groups are able to put at least half of their "community populations" within the cores, the English have only about one-third.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the settlement pattern of immigrant groups in Omaha, Nebraska in 1880. The study organizes for the first time the raw data of the manuscript census and presents its patterns cartographically. The central effort of the study was to delimit neighborhoods on the basis of the cultural homogeneity of areal populations. Both the data organization and the single criteria used to delimit community are but initial steps. Both can be further refined in future work. The fact that the 1900 census will soon be released makes further research feasible and probable.

In the area of data organization, computerization would be most useful. Data compilation for this study was done by hand, a time consuming task. It was necessary, however, that the first effort be done in this fashion because of the difficulties of sorting out the exact location of the population. New discoveries frequently forced extensive reorganization of the data, a process that would have made a shambles of any preconceived computerization system. Now that many of these difficulties have been ironed out, the computerization of the 1880 data and the 1900 manuscripts would be a manageable task.

Future research would also benefit from a widening of criteria used to define community. Religion and language, for instance, are important indicators. A study of churches, schools and newspapers in Omaha might greatly refine the measurements attempted in this study.¹ Another area might be the study of occupation. Occupation data is available on the census manuscript on an individual basis and is, therefore, comparable to the data on ethnicity.

Clearly, the scope of this research is nearly unlimited. Throughout the city's history the various Omaha neighborhoods were reinforced, transplanted or dissolved.² Which communities survived and which decayed? What cultural forces influenced these processes? With improved data collection procedures and more extensive information on cultural homogeneity one could readily investigate these unanswered questions about the fate of Omaha and its ethnic neighborhoods.

¹Numerous church and school records and enrollments are still in existence. More questionable is the fate of foreign language newspaper circulation lists. Many were short-lived, but some such as the Czech Pokrok zapadu had relatively long life spans and could add much to the study.

²For additional information, see: Rosicky, P. 30; Jones, P. 50; and Chudacoff, pp. 75-77.

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