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1905

Chicago - Playgrounds



*See...*

# A PLEA FOR PLAYGROUNDS



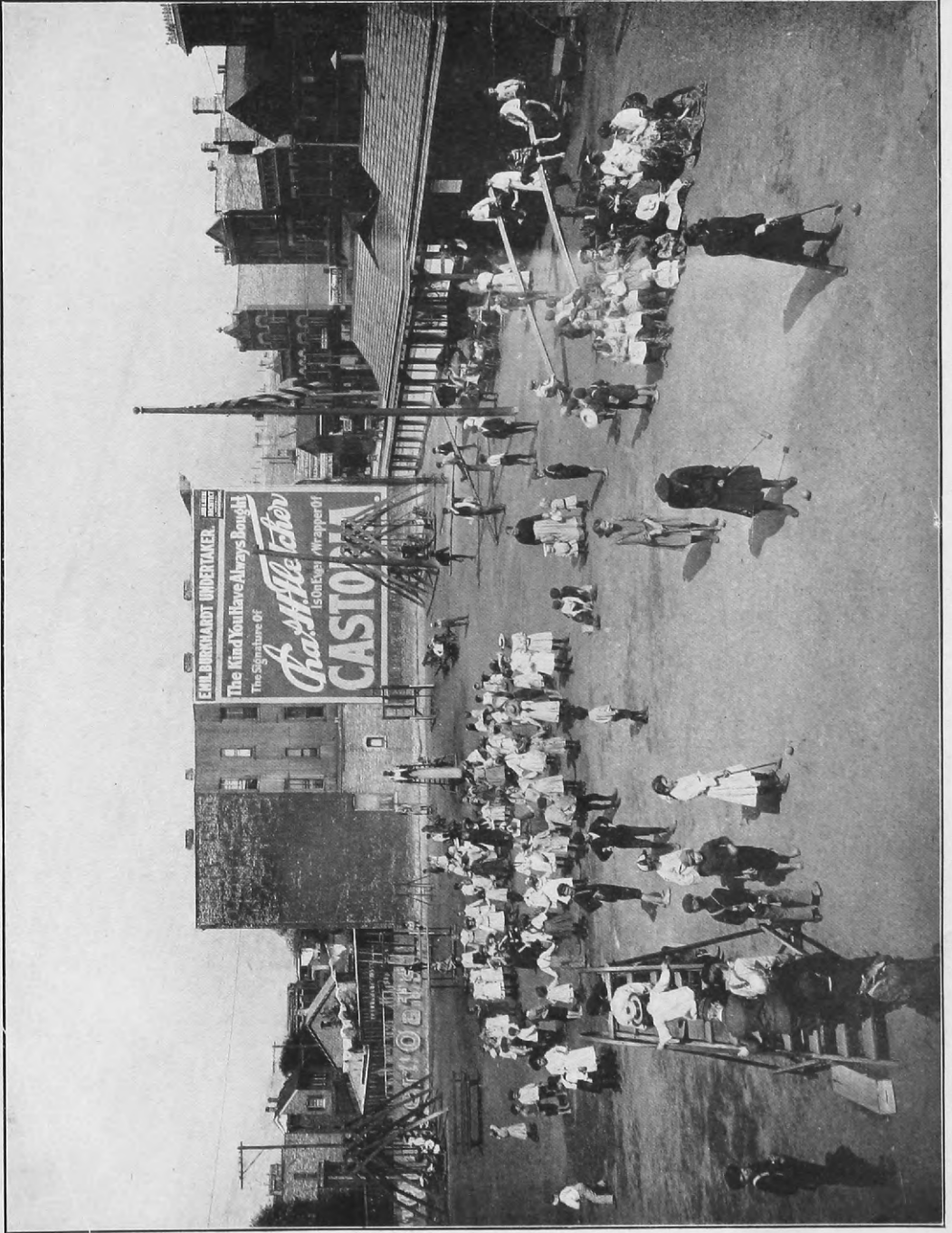
ISSUED BY THE

*Chicago*  
Special Park Commission

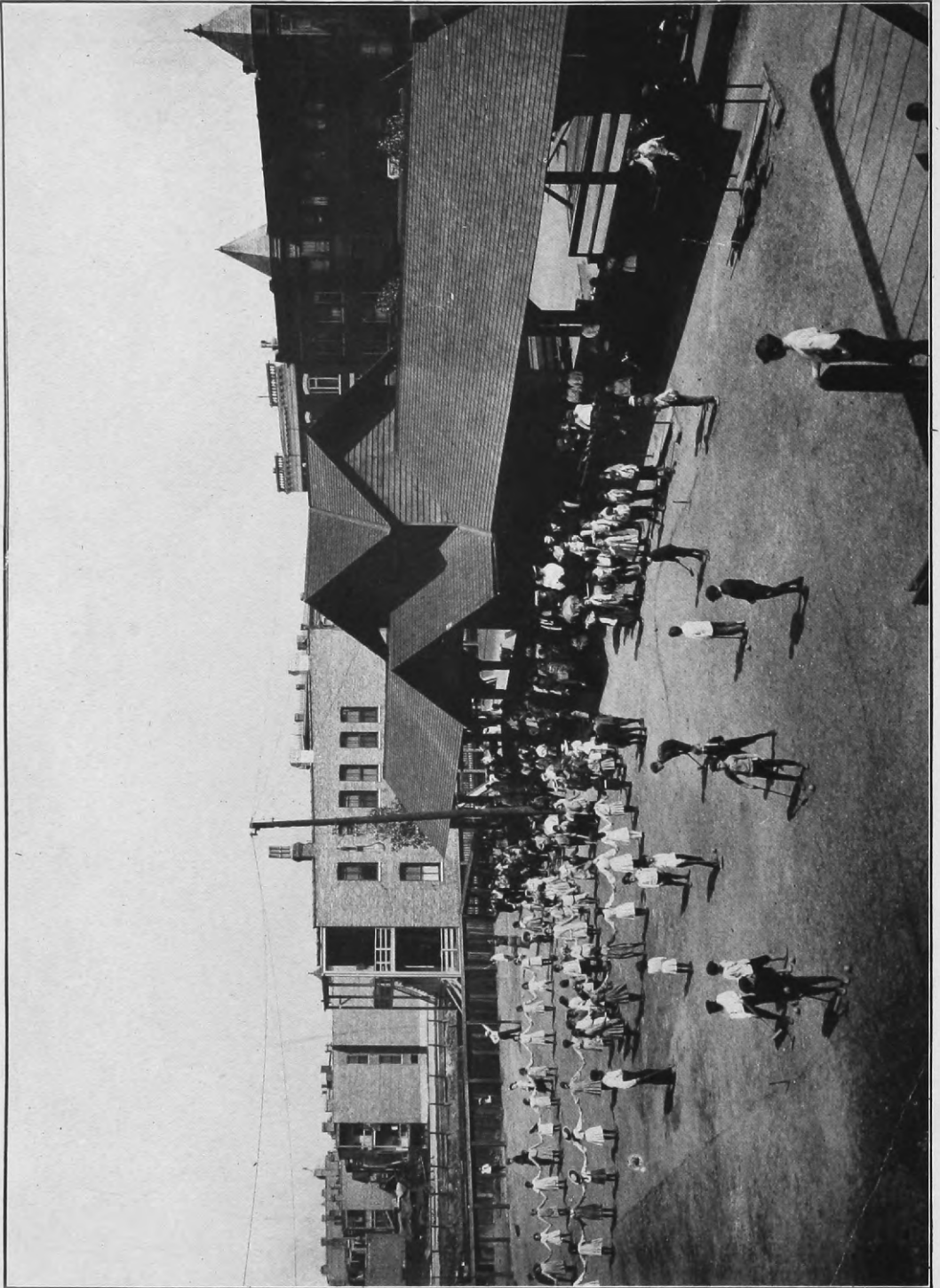
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LINCOLN PLAYGROUND—West Chicago Avenue. Use of land donated by J. A. Spoor. Afternoon Pastimes, King Dance and Raffia Weaving.



McLAREN PLAYGROUND—West Pulk and Latlin Streets. Kindergarten Exercises and Croquet Playing in the Field.

# AN APPEAL

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF CHICAGO

FOR FUNDS TO ESTABLISH

# PLAYGROUNDS *for* CHILDREN

OF THE WEST SIDE.



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ISSUED BY THE

*Chicago*

SPECIAL PARK COMMISSION,  
CITY OF CHICAGO

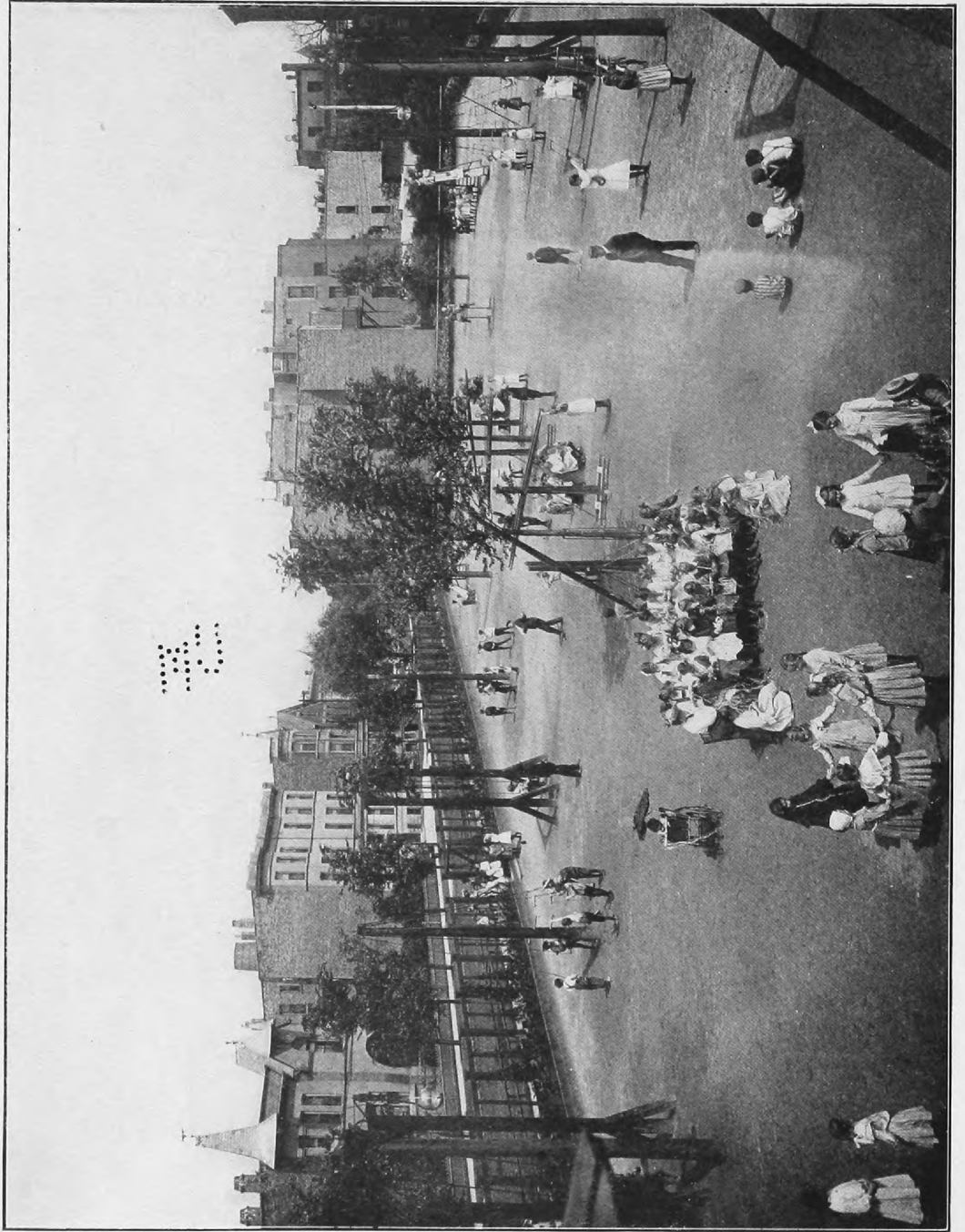
AND ENDORSED BY

HIS HONOR, MAYOR EDWARD F. DUNNE

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1905





ADAMS PLAYGROUND—Seminary Ave. and Center St. Morning Play; Instructing a Class in Raffia Work. Site donated by George E. Adams.

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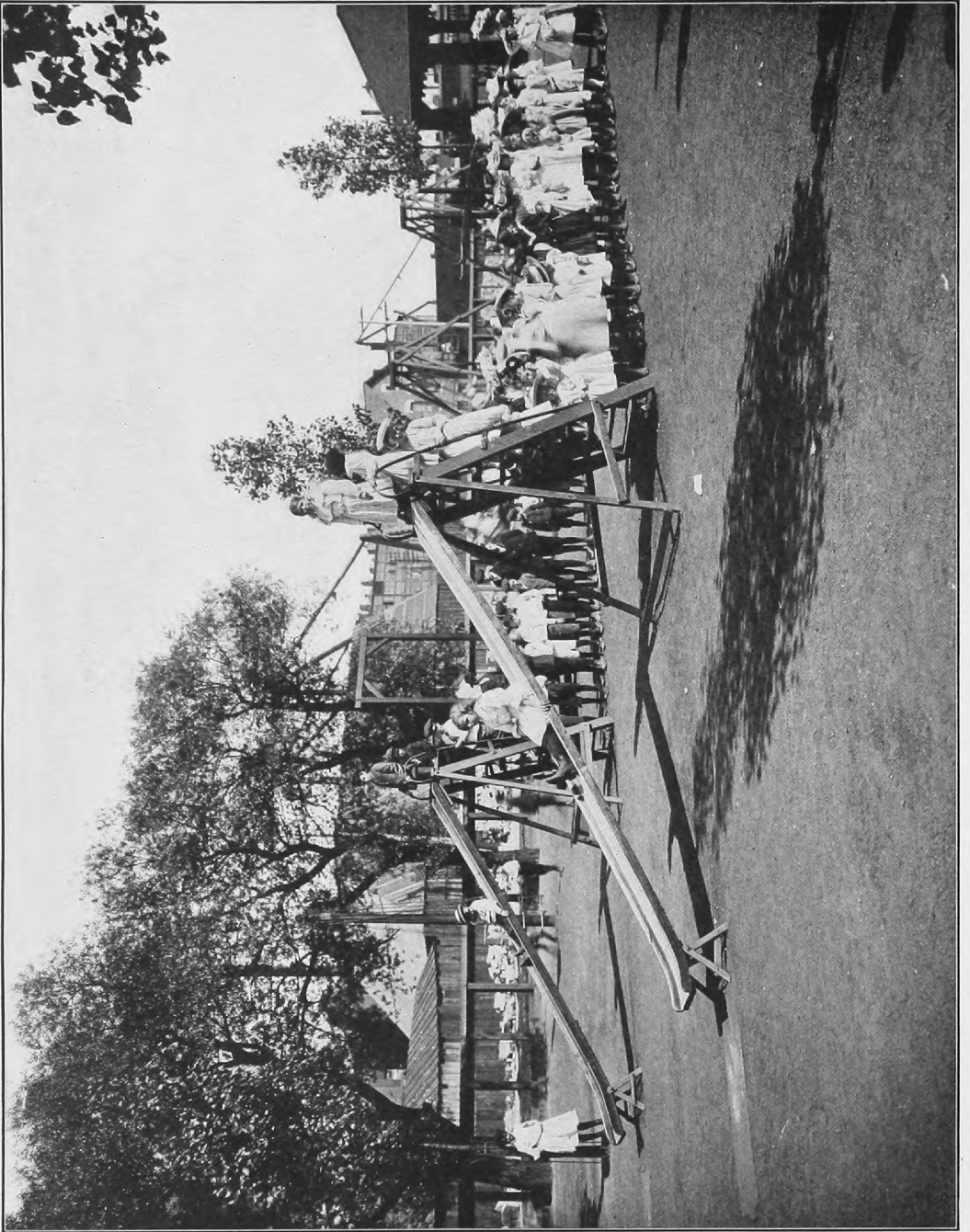
WHERE PLAYGROUNDS ARE NEEDED.

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WHY THEY ARE NEEDED.

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CONDITIONS WHICH SHOULD TOUCH THE  
HEARTS AND POCKET BOOKS OF ALL  
WHO HAVE REGARD FOR THE  
WELFARE OF CHILDREN.



WEBSTER PLAYGROUND—Thirty-third and La Salle Streets. "Shooting the Chutes;" a Line-up of Little Ones.



## Special Commission—What it Has Done.



THE SPECIAL PARK COMMISSION of the City of Chicago was organized by authority of the City Council in 1890, for various purposes, all having for their object the extension of the public recreation area in City and County.

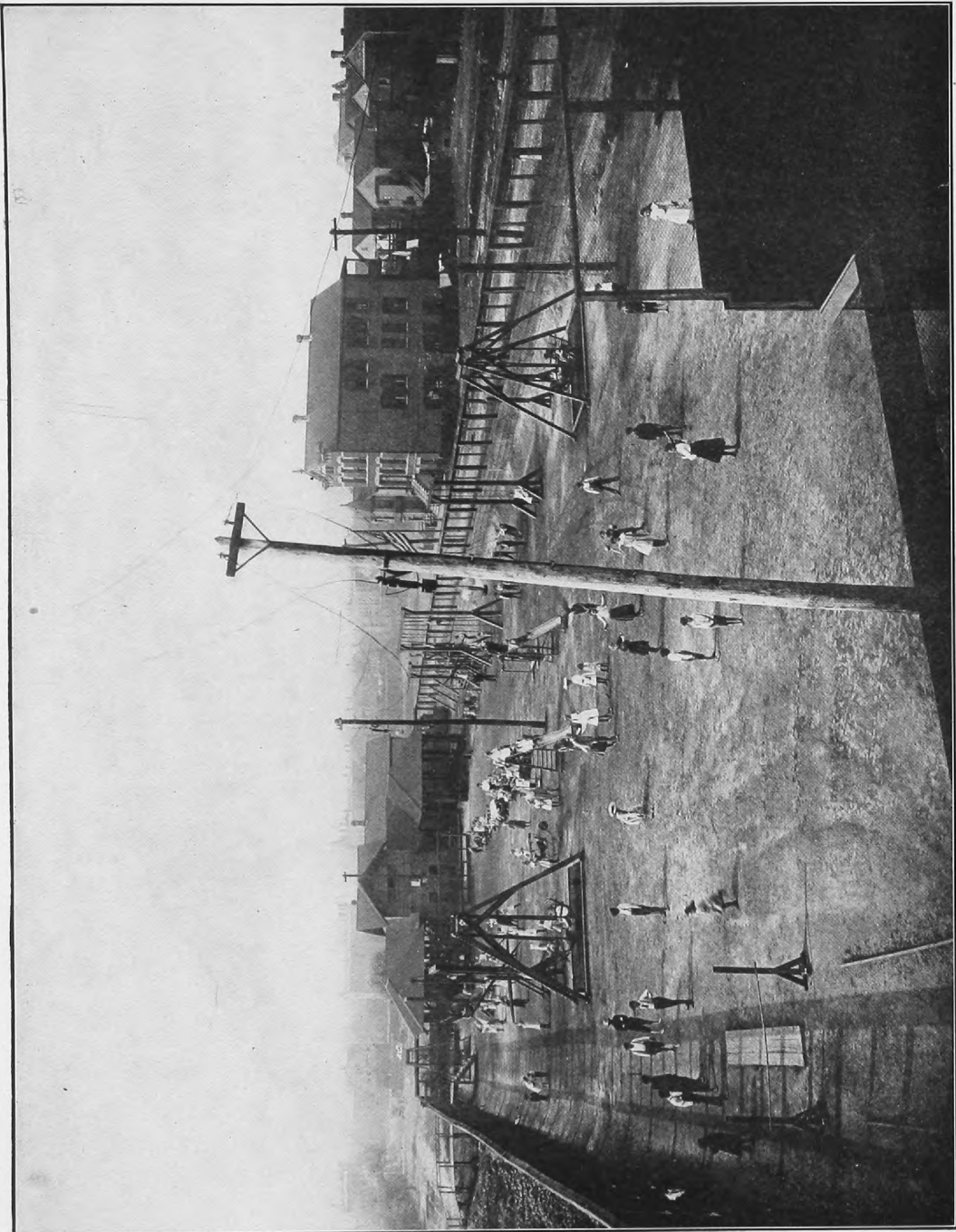
The Commission considered the most urgent need was to get small parks, playgrounds and breathing spaces for the tens of thousands of toilers and their families who are compelled to live in the congested and ill-favored portions of the City. So the Commission's first work has been along those lines.

Members of the Commission are appointed largely by the Mayor, nine being Aldermen and the remainder either representatives of other official bodies, or else private citizens of public spirit, who are interested sufficiently to serve the City without pay.

### **Hands are Tied by Lack of Public Funds.**

The City Council has never been able to carry out its original intention of providing the Commission with funds each year to purchase sites for small parks and playgrounds, hence the restricted work of the Commission.

There is a mistaken idea that funds raised for various park extension plans since 1901 can be used for the benefit of all parts of the City, and that therefore the millions from bond issues authorized by the last three General Assemblies should be spent partly on the West Side.



HOLDEN PLAYGROUND—Bonfield and West Thirty-first Streets. A Hot Afternoon near the "Archey Road," in Bridgeport. Site donated by the University of Chicago.

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## A P L E A F O R P L A Y G R O U N D S

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The City does not get one dollar of this bond issue money. It is up to the limit of its bonded indebtedness. The proceeds of these park bond issues can only be spent in the respective park districts as specifically authorized in the various Acts.

Not a dollar of public money has been spent for park extension, for small parks or playgrounds on the West Side, since the original park system was laid out thirty-five years ago, except for two playgrounds established by this Commission.

### **South Side is Well Taken Care of.**

Much has been done by the South Park Commissioners in the establishment of small parks and playgrounds, also in the enlargement and improvement of its park system generally. That Board has been authorized by the State to issue \$6,500,000 in bonds for those purposes. Of course, they can give the people of the South Side what they need with such a fund to draw on, but the West Side wage-earner, his wife and children cannot find time or car fare to enjoy those South Side small parks and playgrounds.





ADAMS PLAYGROUND—Beautifying Fence and Exterior with Elm Trees, Vines and Cannas.

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## A P L E A F O R P L A Y G R O U N D S

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### Seven Wards Which Most Need Playgrounds

**T**HE COMMISSION'S APPEAL for help is made especially on behalf of the children who live in the seven most neglected and overcrowded wards of the West Division, the 9th, 10th, 11th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th wards.

These wards include the most densely populated parts of Chicago. Four of them are barren of any park or playground. The total population is nearly 400,000.

In the 9th ward, commonly known as the Ghetto of Chicago, there is an estimated population of 55,256. There are no parks or play spaces in the whole ward. A small playground was started in the heart of the Ghetto last summer, but the children soon saw it taken from them because the site was needed for building purposes.

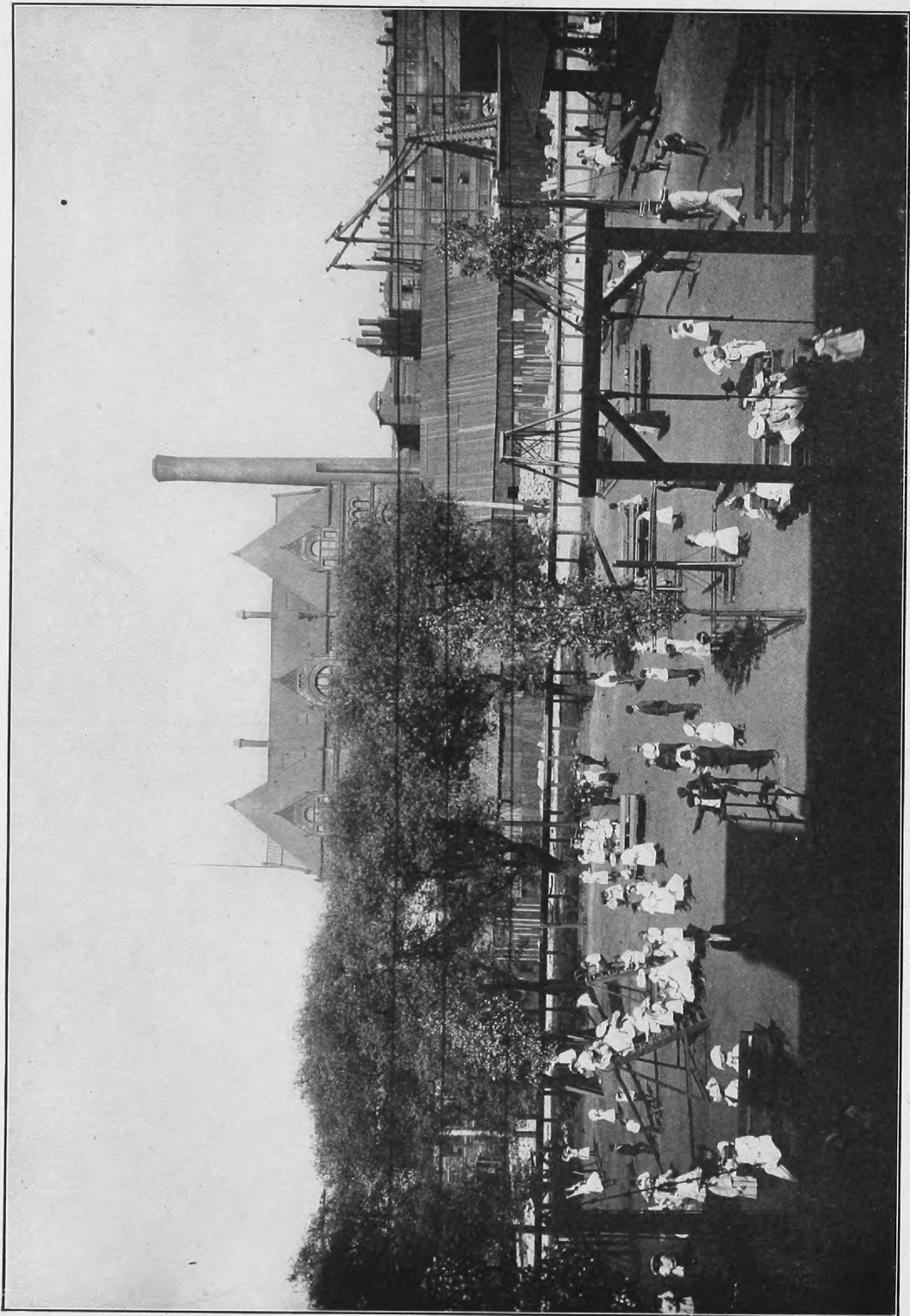
***Will you help the children of the Ghetto to have a decent playground of their own? They have been playing again this summer in the old way, amid dirt, smells and dangers in the narrow streets and alleys.***

#### “Little Bohemia” Barren of Play Space.

The 10th ward is known as the “Little Bohemia” of Chicago. The homes of thousands of children are in large tenements, in most cases covering the entire lot line. For lack of pure air, sunshine and open spaces the occupants become easy victims of disease. This ward is also destitute of a park or playground. Its population exceeds 57,000—a large city without a breathing space.

The residents of the 11th ward, more than 60,500 in number, according to a recent estimate, are largely foreign, of various races, from Germany, Austria and Russia. There is no park in this ward and for the little ones only a small playground in the southwest end conducted by Gad's Hill Center. Long, dreary brown stretches of lumber yards, mills, railroad tracks and factories radiate heat day and night. The people live in a pocket, remote from Douglas Park, their nearest recreation ground.





WEBSTER PLAYGROUND—In the Children's Section; at Play after Sunday School.

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## A P L E A F O R P L A Y G R O U N D S

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***Will you give these youngsters a place to play and a chance to become good Americans, to grow right physically and morally?***

### **A Call for Help from Northwest Centers of Congestion.**

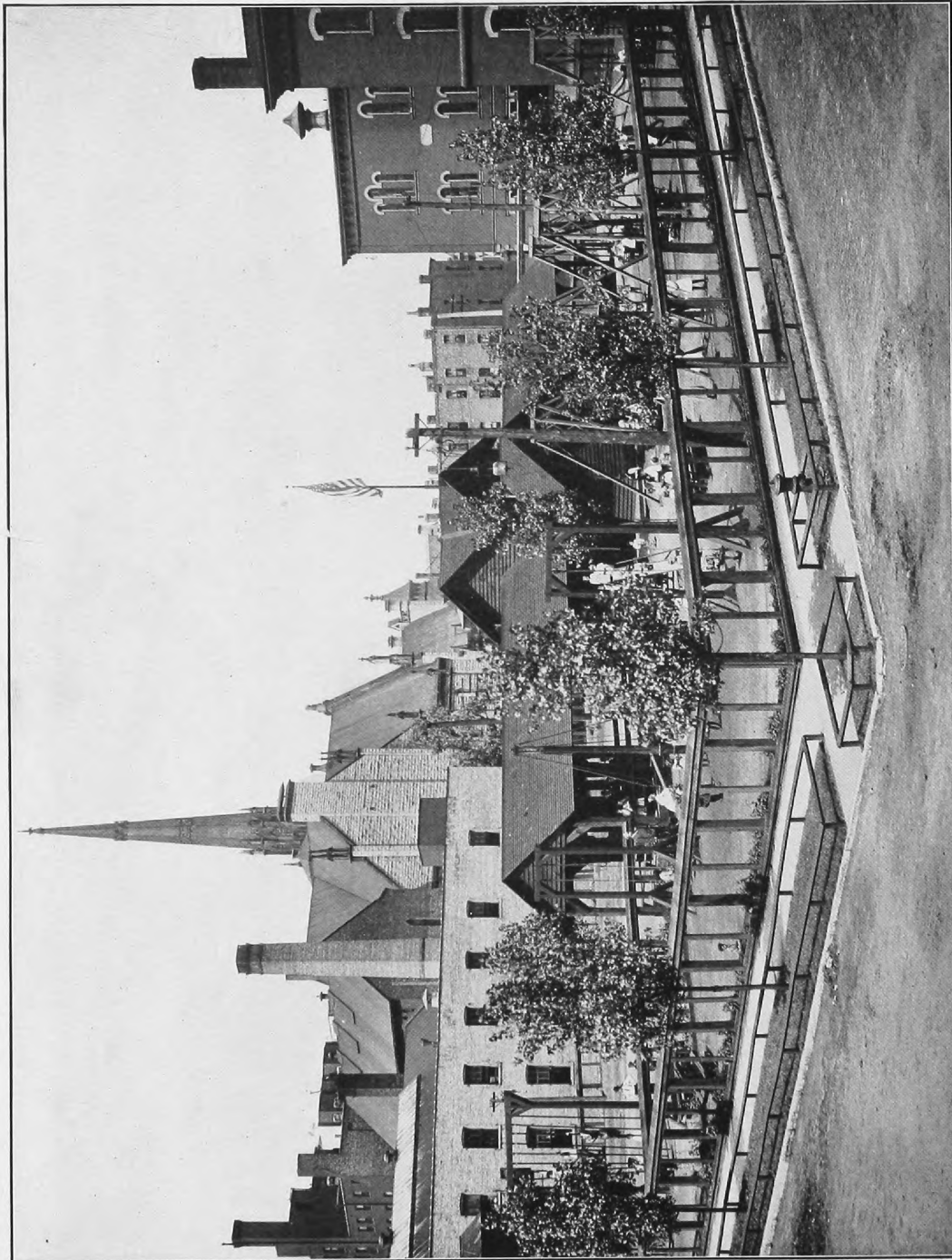
Crossing to the northwest side is the 17th ward. This area contains the densest population to the acre of any ward in Chicago. There are nearly 69,000 people living on 720 acres, almost 96 persons to the acre. The population is the third largest in the City among the wards. The only park is Bickerdike Square, little more than a front yard green of less than an acre. Back yards are a luxury. There is a miniature playground on two ordinary lots at Grand Avenue and Morgan Street.

***Will you give something towards a playground for the children of this square mile of congestion?***

In the 16th ward is the City's largest Polish colony. It is constantly becoming more crowded. The only park space is Wicker Park of 4 acres, but outside the zone of congestion. There is no playground in the ward. The population is 66,000. What can you do for these little Polish-Americans? In one section of this ward is to be found the greatest number of persons to the acre in the whole City, about 350.

### **Crying Needs of the Hull House Region.**

The 19th ward, west of the river, between Van Buren and 12th streets, is the home of a cosmopolitan population. Thousands of Greeks, Italians, Syrians, Bohemians and Jews are crowded into some of the most dilapidated and unsanitary dwellings to be found anywhere. These people came from sunny and picturesque lands, where pure air, sunshine and open spaces were their birthright. All these necessities are lacking in the 19th ward. The population is nearly 54,000. They have only Vernon Park of 6 acres, but that is in the better quarter of the west end. All the children have in the way of a playground is one on Polk Street, near Halsted Street, conducted by Hull House Settlement. This year half the space was taken away for building purposes.



MOSELEY PLAYGROUND—Twenty-fourth St. and Wabash Ave. General View; Carolina Poplars Add Shade and Beauty.

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## A P L E A F O R P L A Y G R O U N D S

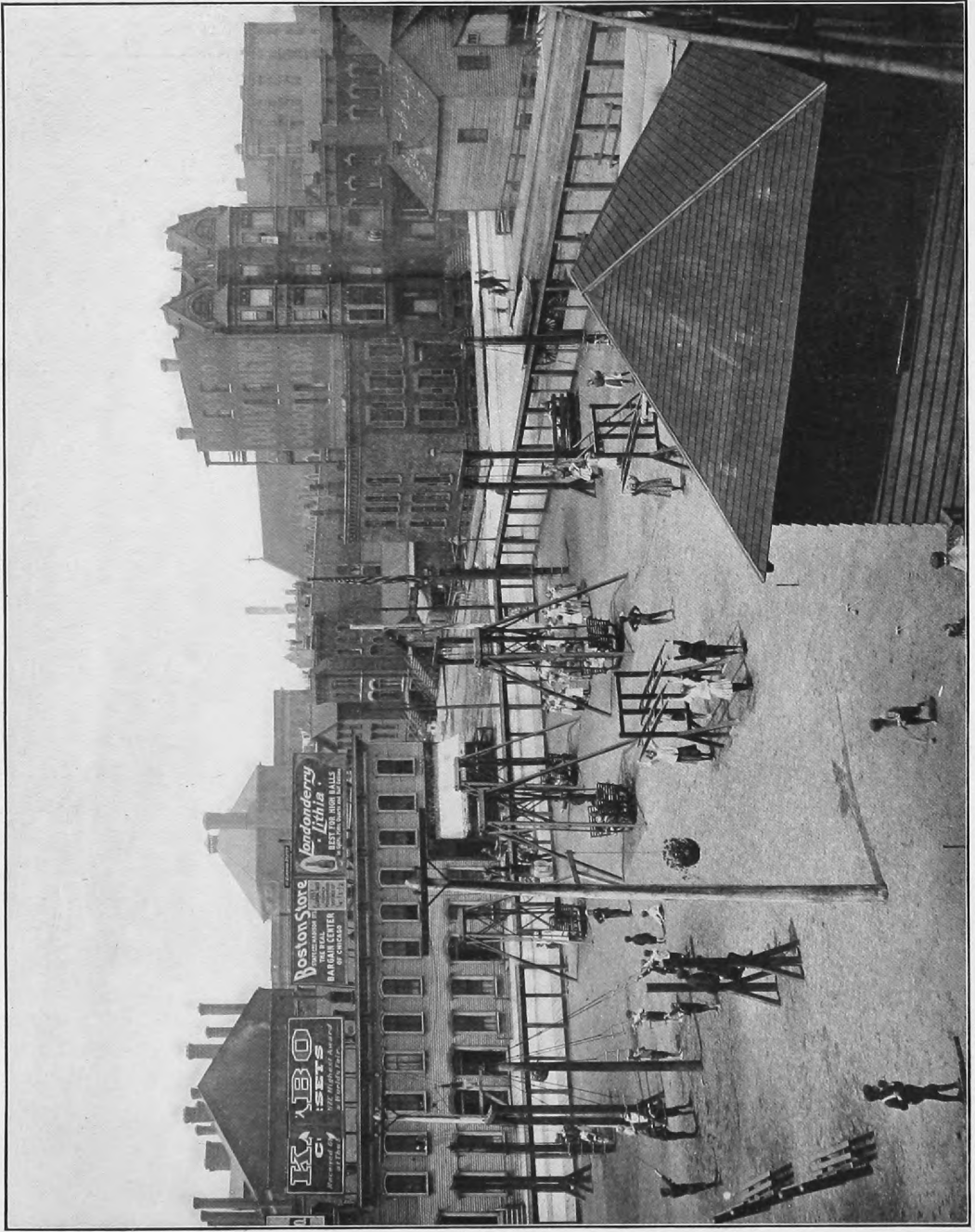
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### Plea for Children of a Shifting Population.

There is an estimated population of 34,000 in the 18th ward, the central river ward. While it contains a large shifting, lodging house population, there are many children who are dragged up—or down—in the most vicious environment. A playground south of Madison Street, between Center Avenue and Halsted Street, would be a boon to these boys and girls. The only playground is conducted by the Forward Movement Settlement on Van Buren Street, in their small back yard.

Outside the wards which have no park or playground, the west side wards mentioned have the following population to each acre of park in the respective wards: 16th, 16,344 persons; 17th, 73,019; 18th, 1,932; 19th, 8,715.





ORLEANS PLAYGROUND—Institute Place and Orleans Street. Started by Miss Margaret S. Watson of Evanston Site donated by the Northwestern Elevated Railroad Company.

## Municipal Playgrounds as Child Savers and Money Savers

**A**T THE MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS during 1904 the total attendance of children was 1,015,000. From that point alone these recreation centers should be stamped a success and a municipal necessity. The average attendance so far this year is much greater at every ground.

The Commission employs a trained director at every playground. When possible a police officer is on duty at each place. If an officer cannot be spared, the Commission maintains an assistant director.

All the Municipal Playgrounds are open day and night, seven days of the week. Where the grounds are large and suitable they are kept open all year, for skating, football, etc.

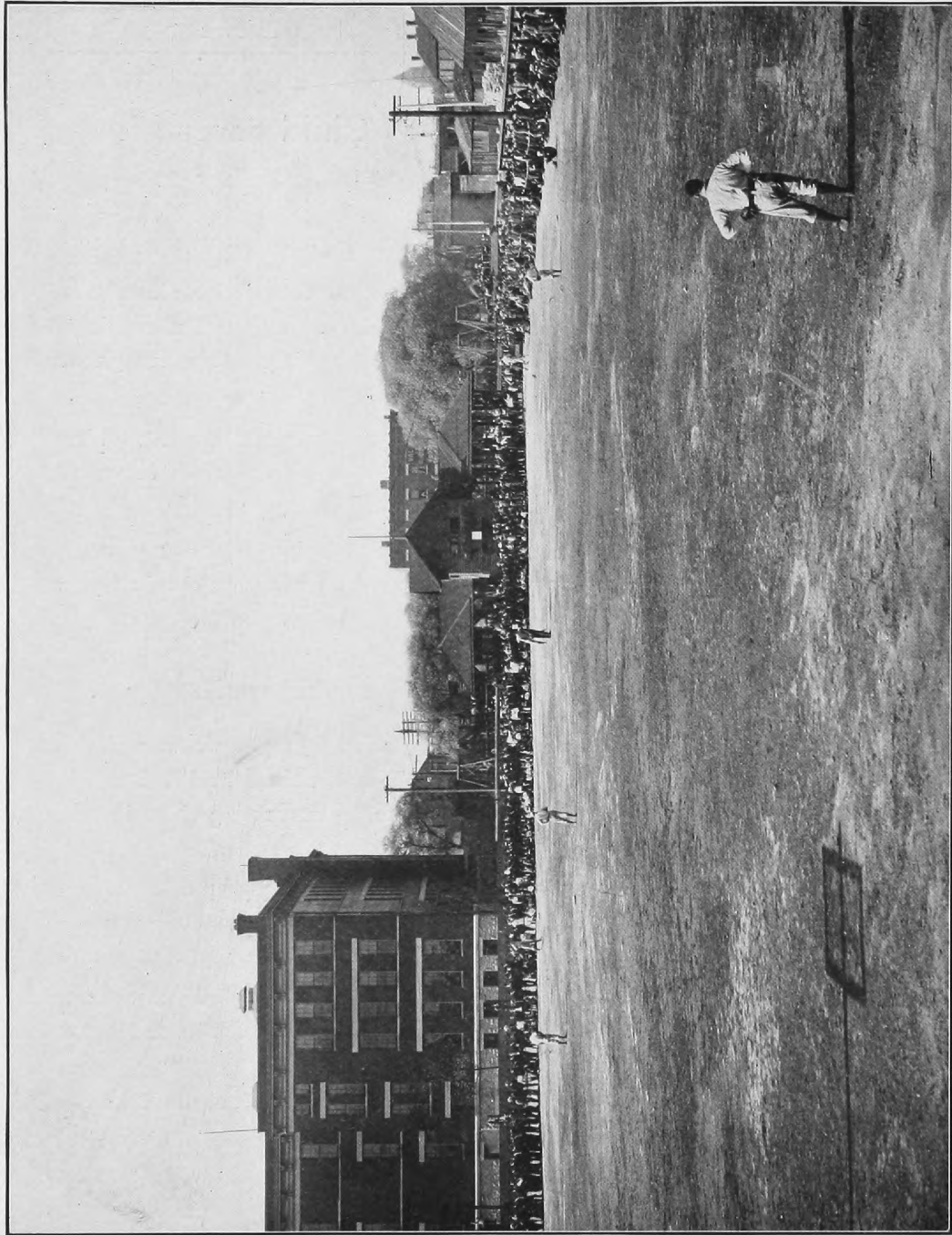
### **Kindergartners and Athletic Director Employed.**

During the summer vacation period the Commission employs an experienced woman kindergartner at each playground. These teachers lead the smaller children in their exercises, games and pastimes, also instructing them in raffia weaving.

A general athletic director is employed for all grounds. In co-operation with each playground director, he coaches the older boys in track and field athletics and supervises the various sports and exercises. This feature of the playground work has saved many a young man, by drawing him away from bad companions and the vicious atmosphere of saloons, dance halls, etc.

### **Certificates from Police and Health Departments and Juvenile Court.**

The Police Department gives credit to the Commission for having lessened its labors through the agency of playgrounds in the prevention of juvenile crime and misdemeanors.



Municipal Athletics at Webster Playground Sunday Afternoon—Base Ball Game Watched by Thousands. Bath House given by J. Ogden Armour.

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## A P L E A F O R P L A Y G R O U N D S

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Records of the Juvenile Court show that where playgrounds have been established there has been a substantial falling off in cases of juvenile delinquency—petty thefts, vandalism and kindred fruits of misapplied youthful energy. The street corner gangs, through the influence of playgrounds, have become the athletic teams of the neighborhood.

The Health Department testifies to the efficiency of the playground as a means of making healthy, robust citizens, and of preventing those diseases which are attributed to want of proper exercise, fresh air and sunshine.

### **School Officials Praise the Playground.**

It is stated by the public school authorities that the Municipal Playground is a preventative of truancy—with its train of mischief—by working off the boy's surplus energy, giving him a zest for study and a natural desire to enter school after play. School principals say that the child who has a playground within reach is an all-round better pupil than the one who has no playground.

Money, equipment, supplies and the free use of playground sites have been given the Commission at various times by individuals and corporations. You are invited to do likewise.

### **The Best is Needed in a Playground.**

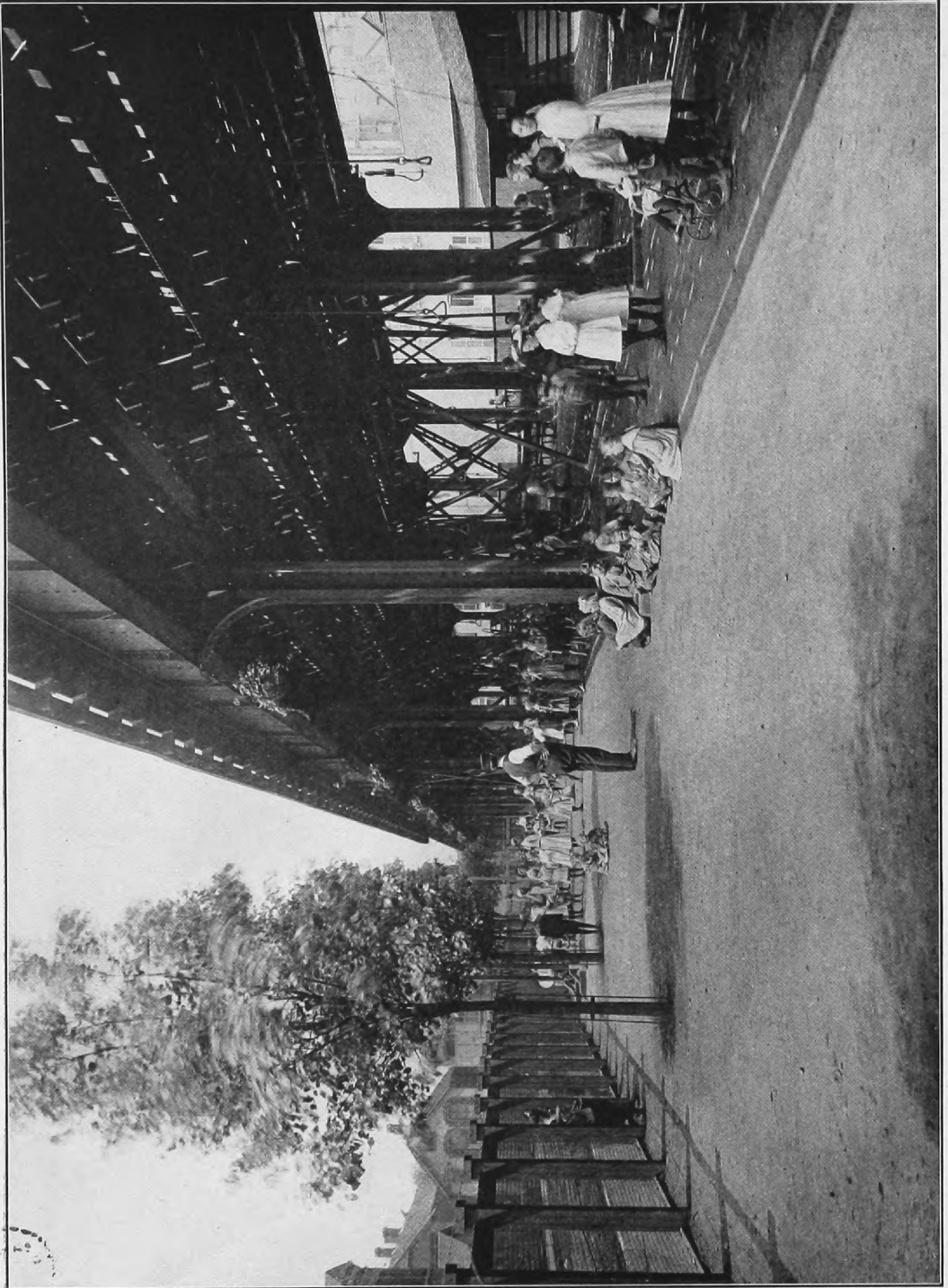
The Commission believes that a playground to do good must be a good playground—thoroughly equipped, properly conducted and policed, everything kept in mechanical, running order—otherwise it will be harmful to the children.

We have done the best we could for the Chicago boy and girl with our means.

We believe the best is none too good for the boys and girls of our City and your City. We should help those who cannot help themselves.

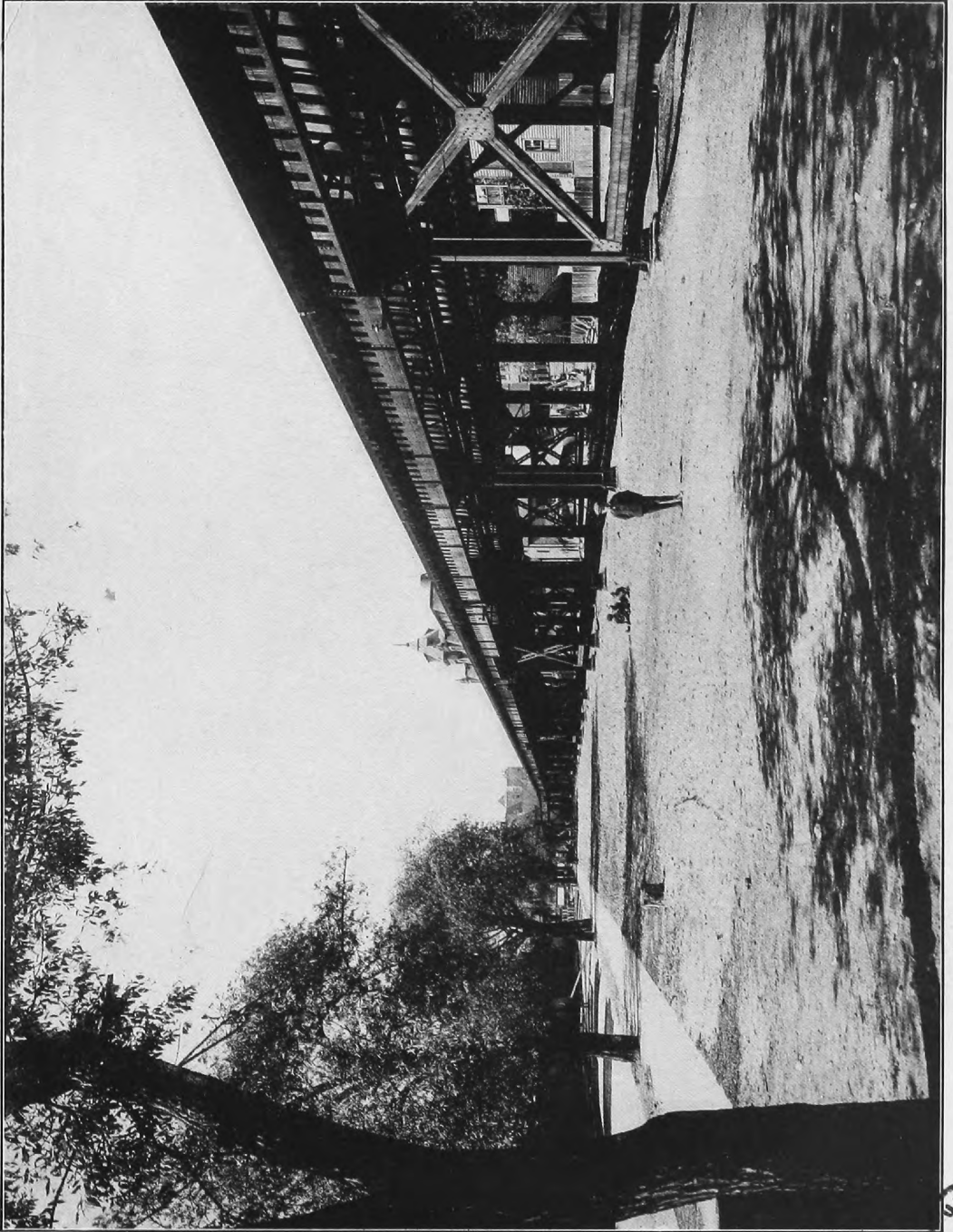
***What will you do for these children?***





NORTHWESTERN ELEVATED PLAYGROUND—Larrabee and Alaska Streets. Equipped by Clarence Buckingham.  
Site donated by Northwestern Elevated Railroad Company.





Playground Site on Orleans Street, at Schiller Street Station,  
Donated by the Northwestern Elevated Railroad Company. Waiting for Equipment Funds.

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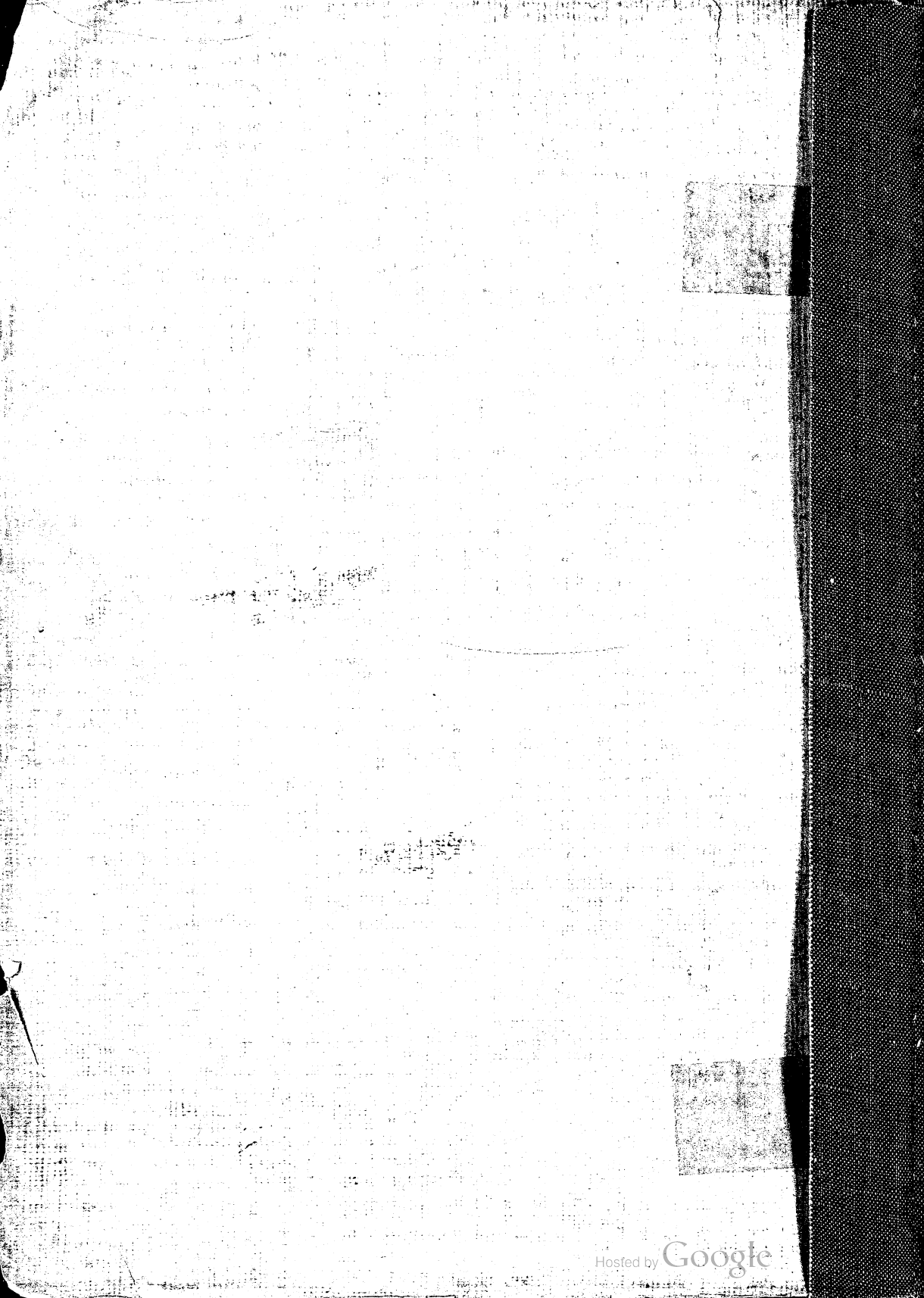


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***“Public playgrounds are necessarily means for the development of wholesome citizenship in modern cities.”***

*—From President Roosevelt's Message to Congress, December, 1904.*





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