They Came Like Gypsies in the Night:
Immigration Regimes, Race, and Romani Representations in New York City 1890-1960

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all my American Romani friends and interlocutors in New York City and especially to my friend Mike.

Acknowledgments

Many journeys start with a light or spark which illuminates a path ahead. This journey started many years ago when I first became interested in Romani lives and histories. I had the initial push from my family, especially my mother Penny and my sisters Ceedron, Lenise, Daleen, and Ciprian. Along the road, I met my wife Willow who has put up with my long days and nights with laughter, hugs, and the shared company of our pets. My dear friends Stacy, Kristi, Joseph, Kayla, Liv, Rueben, and the rest of the Heins clan all humored my strangeness for the last 20 years and I am eternally grateful for their kindness and humor. My dissertation committee has been some of the kindest and most helpful mentors as I rambled along this journey and a huge thanks to Alaina Lemon, Stephen Berrey, Jason De León, and Hakeem Al-Rustom for joining me along the way. My first intellectual interlocutors were people like Clifford Geertz, Ian Hancock, and my adviser Alaina Lemon. Their works inspired me to reach further and look deeper into stories of human contact, conflict, and negotiations. They pushed me to examine the idea of "culture" on multiple levels and across multiple mediums. I am indebted to their spark. Along the way, I ran into more scholars who inspired me further and pushed me to expand my research and critically examine the role of race in everyday exchanges. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, David Roediger, Mathew Frye Jacobson, Neil Foley, Natalia Molina, Kelly Lytle Hernandez, Daniel HoSang, Stephen Berrey, Jason De León, Michael Omi, and Howard Winant all inspired me to re-examine race beyond the scope of law or policy. There were also the thinkers who I found insightful, passionate, and difficult at times. Elders like Claude Levi-Strauss, Marcel Mauss, Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams all challenged me

as I pondered my work. Recent works by Romani Studies scholars like Giovanni Picker, Becky Taylor, Jodie Matthews, and Aidan McGarry all impacted how I examined Romani lives and history. A huge debt of gratitude goes to my friends both inside and outside academia as they dealt with my form of "Gypsy Madness" over the years. People like Drew, Allison, Troy, Kristen, Clara, Kleighton, Laura, Dan, Jeff, Maddy, and many others all put up with my oddities and still called me friend. My colleagues in the Anthro-History, History, and Anthropology departments at Michigan all did their best to keep me sane and still manage to have some fun. My good friends Matt Villeneuve, Christine, Quincy, Gyata, and Aya, Sargeant, Aspen, Katie, Leak, Janaki, John, and Irene all remind me daily what kind people and great scholars they are. Finally, it was an honor to learn alongside those members of the 2016 cohort and although many of us have gone our separate ways, I appreciated their compassion and commitment to our shared intellectual endeavor during a particularly difficult period.

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Note on Language and Terminology

I have chosen to utilize the term Roma (plural), Rom (singular), and Romani (adjective) throughout this work when I am describing the people who were often called "Gypsies." These are the people who have historic, cultural, and linguistic roots in North Indian lands and are found throughout the world today. Current estimates of the population of Roma and Romani subgroups worldwide range from 11 million to more than 15 million.[1] Largely, these groups employs their own ethnonym for their subgroups which have their own histories, cultural traditions, and linguistic differences. Currently the scholarship tends to utilize "Roma" as an umbrella term which collects all of the disparate groups together in a socio-legal classification useful for policy making and organizing but imperfect on the ground. For instance, the Council of Europe states:

> "*The term 'Roma and Travellers' is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies."*[2]

The Council of Europe (CoE) and the United Nations (UN) both ascribe to a fairly broad definition of Roma to design policy which reaches the broadest audience as possible, yet both

[1] These estimates are based on reports from the Council of Europe, United Nations, and Open Society Foundation reports. It should be noted that all of the published numbers are estimates based on incomplete census data but are generally accepted in scholarly and policy related documents. For more see Rita Izsak, "Comprehensive Study of the Human Rights Situation of Roma Worldwide, with a Particular Focus on the Phenomenon of Anti-Gypsyism," 3–4; Council of Europe, "Council of Europe Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma Issues"; Council of Europe, "Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion."

[2] Council of Europe, "Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion," 7.

CoE and the UN struggle, at times, to identify and implement policies and programs which impact various Romani people throughout the world. I have chosen to, although imperfectly, also use the terms aforementioned as they signify a social and political hope for those groups to establish more active ties with one another and utilize their combined strength in numbers when advocating for necessary changes in treatment and social classification. Other scholars have recently employed the term "Romanies" as a way to signal the broader group identity which includes people who do not actively identify and in fact at times distance themselves from the term "Roma." I have chosen not to follow this avenue as I do not believe it reflects the current political and social organizing which utilizes the term "Roma." My hope is to gesture at continuities in Romani politics which are both constrained and energized by this term.

I have also chosen to use Gypsy with a capitalized "G" when discussing the people who utilize that term who are often now called or were called "Rom" internally. I have chosen to use "Gypsy" in this work for several reasons. First, as "Gypsy" was often the term utilized by Romani historical actors I retain its usage to be faithful to the record that they put forth in their own words or writings. Furthermore, I believe the term is still useful as a political and social statement currently being renewed in many groups as a source of pride and history which connects people in the present to those in the past. I recognize that the term "Gypsy" is very much fraught with meanings that are negative and can be harmful to organizing around the more accepted term "Rom" or "Roma" but feel that it has a place within this discussion of representations and physical existence. To that end, I often utilize "Gypsy" or "Gypsies" in quotations to signal the times when individuals or meanings are based upon a representation,

stereotype, belief, or ideas which derives its meaning from an exonym referring to Romani people. Likewise, I also modify the word with the addition of representation or figure after "Gypsy" to signify the difference between the actual people (Roma) and the meanings connected to a cultural mirror of said people utilized by others. This is an imperfect and often messy way of dealing with the interactions between ideas and the material world but it is nonetheless a productive way to distinguish those differences at least rhetorically. I only utilize "gypsy" with a lower case "g" when citing historical material or when explicitly told to do so by Romani people themselves.

Throughout this work, the reader may also find terms which are in Romanes—the language spoken by many Roma. I have chosen to utilize those terms when they fit within the material as historical descriptors, or when my Romani interlocuters elected to employ them in conversation with the material. For each of those terms I include a foot note or in-text description to ease those language shifts. I contend that Romanes as a language is useful and important in working with material that is produced by or about Roma themselves. I largely utilize the language as a political stance which offers me a means to redirect focus on Romani lives and experiences in their own language. There are many different dialects of Romanes present in the world today and in the past similar linguistic differences could be found amongst the groups I write about. In order to simplify those diffuse differences in language I have chosen to use the most widely used Vlax dialect of Romanes called Kalderash but recognize that it is also an imperfect tool to signify meaning for others. Significant work on Romanes has been published

which linguistically trace the root language to its probable origin in the lands of Northern India.[3] Efforts to standardize the language have largely been met with issues around access and what some scholars call a "Kalderasocentric" attitude, meaning Vlax Kalderash has become the driving and sometimes only dialect used in international and transnational organizations seeking to advocate for Romani populations.[4] While I am not equipped to wade into such linguistic debates around standardization, I maintain the primary usage of Kalderash as it the language utilized most frequently by my interlocuters and authors of historical material. Further information about the linguistic debates and discussions being had about Romani linguistics can be found in the bibliography section of this work.

Nonetheless the reader will hopefully forgive my imperfect usage of Kalderash and recognize the importance of language to signify meanings for groups beyond the Anglo-centric hegemonic control of linguistic value. For my Kalderash speaking Romani friends I apologize for any misspelled or imperfect usages as I am not fluent in the language nor am I always aware of the different usages in practice which shift. I only hope my usage at least draws a hearty laugh

[3] Key examples of works by linguists studying Romanes are Ian F. Hancock, *Problems in the Creation of a Standard Dialect of Romanes. Working Papers in Sociolinguistics, No. 25*; Ian Hancock, *A Handbook of Vlax Romani*, 13–33; Milena Hübschmannová, "Rom of Czechoslovakia"; Milena Hubschmannova and Jiri Neustupny, "The Slovak-and-Czech Dialect of Romani and Its Standardization"; Yaron Matras, Peter Bakker, and Khristo Kĭuchukov, *The Typology and Dialectology of Romani*; T. A. Acton and Gary. Mundy, *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, 182–89; Victor A. Friedman, "Romani Multilingualism in Its Balkan Context"; Yaron Matras, *Romani*; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, secs. 2–4; Victor A. Friedman, "The Balkan Languages and Balkan Linguistics"; Yaron Matras, "Transnational Policy and 'Authenticity' Discourses on Romani Language and Identity"; Yaron Matras, *The Romani Gypsies*, chap. 4; Victor A. Friedman, "Seven Varieties of Arli."

[4] See more about standardization in Ian F. Hancock, *Problems in the Creation of a Standard Dialect of Romanes. Working Papers in Sociolinguistics, No. 25*; Milena Hubschmannova and Jiri Neustupny, "The Slovak-and-Czech Dialect of Romani and Its Standardization"; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, chap. 8; and see more about Romani identity and politics in Aidan McGarry, "Roma as a Political Identity."

if not an understanding but scrutinizing glance. When this work is transformed once again I will be sure to utilize a more inclusive and consistent form of spelling for Romanes as dictated by those Romani community members and scholars alike as conventions are actively being worked out both in academic and social settings.

Abstract

From 1890 to the 1960s there was a significant increase in the numbers of "undesirable" people coming to New York City from afar. These "undesirable" people were affected by immigration concerns involving those "likely to become a public charge", which was revitalized prior to World War One with the massive influx of immigrants into New York. Immigration officials, often lacking a completely cohesive or comprehensive federal policy, were tasked with establishing practices and policies which would ensure the "right kind" of people entered the City of dreams. In turn, officials utilized existing racial sciences and emerging technology to categorize groups of peoples based on often murky understandings of their origins and histories. Romani people or what officials called "Gypsies" were one of these oblique categories of people deemed "undesirable" and persistent strangers. Utilizing visual representations, popular culture, and accounts by "Gypsyologists", this research argues that "Gypsies" became a unique American stereotype in the pivotal period between 1890 and the 1960s, at the same time that ongoing discourses around racial fitness, citizenship, domesticity, and culture were shaping American identity.

American "Gypsies" became both despised New York "ethnics" and a representational means of escape for burgeoning middle-class values through racial performances where Americans "Played Gypsy". This research examines the ways in which "Gypsies" like other racial "undesirables" formed relationships on the streets, in neighborhoods, and were discursively portrayed in popular culture. More than just a story about the history of "Gypsies" and Roma in, what one "Gypsyologist" called, "the Gypsy Capital", this dissertation examines

how from New York “Gypsies” became a legible American category of strangerhood and race. Importantly, this dissertation argues that “Gypsies” were and have been a part of the American discourse of race and belonging for hundreds of years. “Gypsies” have been left out of the larger historical and anthropological narratives which clump together smaller demographic populations into the category of “others” or “undesirables”. The lack of information about “Gypsies” in the United States and their novel “stranger” status led to their outsized role in shaping New York’s racial formations and impacting popular culture’s power in the country’s debates about American identity, race, and citizenship. This work amends the historiography by examining the forces and discourses which shaped Americans understanding of “Gypsies” at the same time that it exposes a long history of Romani participation in and with New York City. Far from being a small minority population amongst the masses, American Roma influenced the practices and policies of immigration officials, lawmakers, police officers, and lay people alike.

Introduction

Early one Monday morning, I received an inquiry from a reporter hoping for my comment on a story. The reporter's email explained that they were reaching out to get a quote about a local business which was utilizing "Gypsy" in its name. Would I care to comment? Immediately, my brain was flooded by memories of scholars and activists arguing over the use of this term, a scholarly debate which had occurred without many actual Roma in the room. As I contemplated my reply, a second memory clouded the first. Far from the halls of the academy, I remembered a conversation I had with my Roma friends in Queens, New York. As we sat smoking cigarettes and listening to music, blowing the smoke out a noisy window onto the neighborhood, we discussed the use of the term as a matter of experience. I was drawn back to that time and space as I shared my ideas and stories with my friend and interlocutor about the complicated past and present associated with the term. Now, sitting in front of my computer screen composing a response, I yearned to go back to that time and space abound with laughter, jokes, cousins, sisters, brothers, food, and language. Shaking the fog of memory out of my head, I finally typed a reply back to the reporter.

Sometime later I spoke with the reporter for an extended period of time about the term "Gypsy" and the connotations which for years had been tied firmly to its historical and modern usage. As I talked with the reporter, my mind wandered back to my friends in New York City and my own grandmother and kin who shared that label. Returning to our conversation I made sure to emphasize my belief that while the term is very much associated with Romani people, it has also had a life of its own apart from them; its circulation far outpaced the Roma themselves.

Noting my distaste—paired with an outright condemnation of the usage of the term in the particular case in question – the reporter moved on to a more general line of questioning. Several weeks later, the reporter's article appeared on the internet. It featured only a small smattering of my comments, and largely ignoring the bigger issues I had highlighted in our conversation. Despite my efforts to gently steer such dialogue, It seems the ever-present allure of the "Gypsy" had won out yet again.

This dissertation is, in many senses, my own grappling with the term "Gypsy" as I look at American history. Much to the surprise of many Americans, "Gypsies" have indeed been part of that history from the very beginning of the nation, both as individuals and as representations whispered in quiet corners and painted into ornate works later to be simplified and shared as handbills on street corners. Both aspects of the word and its people make it into the history of the United States, whether or not they are in a child's textbook is another story. Yet this dissertation also focuses on the first part of that history of the actual people who had linguistically, emotionally, and physically carried those whispers and representations with them as they sought a meaningful life. Fragmentary and scattered most evidence of the people we now call "Roma" is difficult to come by and even harder to verify when looking at the official historical accounts. Yet, those people were here not far from where I sat smoking cigarettes in Queens, in fact they were in the same room and in the streets playing soccer and discussing cars.

I began this endeavor some years ago when I first came across the "Gypsy" in my own life in the form of my grandmother, a tenacious woman who often enunciated my name with a soft "D" and a hard "Len." Through our relationship as grandson and grandparent, I learned more about life and the ever-present struggle and joy than I did about that annoying word "Gypsy." But I also learned hard truths about history, loss, violence, love, and family.

Throughout my time with my grandmother, I always wondered what had made her identify with her English Romanichal ethnicity and what made her an "authentic Gypsy." Setting authenticity aside, years after her passing, I found something that made her perhaps at least a Gypsy in practice: It was hope, the undying and steadfast belief that there was too be a better tomorrow. In that determination, even in moments of hopelessness, I witnessed the same thing that I saw in the eyes and actions of my Romani friends in Queens a world away. That hope led me down this path. As I slog through scribbled notes, tattered pictures, and the abundance of newsprint which captured the history of Roma people in this country, that attitude continues to brighten my darkest days. In short, this dissertation is also about hope.

My belief is that this work will add some additional clarity to the history of Romani communities in New York City at the same time that it explores the moments when "Gypsy Madness" gripped the American public. The slippages between historical events and discourses about those events have long been highlighted by historians seeking to rectify White normative progressive histories of humankind. While those slippages most definitely make their way into this work and can be found everywhere where Gypsies or Roma reside the slippages most illuminating are the ones found between Gypsy, Roma, and the "Gypsy" representation.[5]

The term "Gypsy" has made its way into literature, law, and popular culture from an early period, perhaps even before many individuals encountered Romani people themselves. The "Gypsy" of that initial period in the Middle Ages was largely restricted to Western Europe and parts of the Middle East but made its way to the "New World" of North America soon after its supposed discovery by Europeans in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. By the

[5] For further clarification on the terminology see "Note on Language and Terminology" on page xiii

colonial period of North American history it had successfully traversed a giant ocean and settled into the homes of European and non-European colonizers. The early "Gypsy", as scholars have noted, was largely built upon the xenophobic belief that individuals unlike those within a certain locale were indeed barbarians seeking to disrupt what little stability there was. The late Enlightenment further cemented the role of the "Gypsy" as a foreign invader, exotic Oriental, and mystical nomad. By the time the colonizers in the Americas settled up with the "Gypsy" it also became a burden on the newly emergent Anglo-centric designs for a normative and orderly society in what is now the United States and North America. Elsewhere in the Americas "Gypsies" shared their distasteful subservient status with the first African enslaved peoples and drew on an Iberian representation of "Gypsies" as lustful characters who, like the Moors, darkened the continent. By and large the early "Gypsy" found in the North American lands was a largely Eurocentric representation which highlighted the constant fear of mobile non-subjects who might be that stranger at the gate. In short early ideas about "Gypsies" were largely a constellation of fears made up of xenophobic beliefs borne out in Europe and transported to the "New World."

At the same time, Romani people, hailing originally from Northern Indian lands, were forcibly and often violently brought to the "New World" as unfit labor carried out through punitive measures as if to excise the cyst from Europe's cancerous core.[6] To be sure, some came willingly and made their way to the Americas as colonizers themselves but the vast majority, having spent years as Europe's lowest subjects often came without a personal choice or say in the matter. From the 18th century up until the creation of the United States in a war which

[6] For a basic primer on Romani migration and early interactions see Ian Hancock, The Pariah Syndrome; David Crowe, A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia; Ian Hancock, We Are the Romani People: Ame Sam e Rromane Dzene; Becky Taylor, Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

solidified inequality for years to come, Romani groups lived their lives undocumented by the nationalizing and racializing histories of the new United States. When they are mentioned it is often in passing or in accounts which until recently often went undisturbed and undisclosed.[7] By the time that New York City became the gem in the United States democratic crown in the later 19th century, Romani groups had already called the place home for years even as many of them relied on mobile economic opportunities to survive.

There in the City of dreams Roma and "Gypsies" interacted in spaces in ways that their predecessor likely never imagined and never intended. New York City's dense urban environment facilitated many instances of Roma and "Gypsy" representations interacting more than other spaces throughout the country. New York City was also the place which the new republic looked too for leadership in law, culture, and social practices. So New York City became the place where I too sought the answers to my questions. In typical "historical" fashion I have chosen to utilize a chronological and topical approach to my work focusing on the years when Romani communities make it into the historical record, but also when the "Gypsy" representation was commercialized, circulated, and visualized for many different groups and classes of people. I have chosen to focus on the formative years between the 1890s and the 1960s as they best illustrate the changes within New York City and American Romani communities. Within those 70 years or so the Romani communities in New York City underwent massive internal reorganization at the same time that outside forces pushed changes burdened with ideologies of race, nationalism, white supremacy, and xenophobia amongst others. In those messy and complicated years of hyperbolic fear and shifting urban spaces Romani people

[7] For more recent colonial period historical accounts of Romani people see Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "'An Egiptian and Noe Xtian Woman': Gypsy Identity and Race Law in Early America"; Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "Contextualizing American Gypsies: Experiencing Criminality in the Colonial Chesapeake."

captured the imagination of people from officials to street hawkers as potential Americans—albeit not quite productive Americans. The "Gypsy" meanwhile proceeded to push a representation of lackadaisical freedom, primitivism, and deviance. It was in this period which the "Gypsy" and Romani people often slid past one another aided at times by popular culture, media coverage, and spaces of urban leisure and pleasure. Throughout those exchanges non-Roma and Roma alike came to acquaint themselves more fully with those ideas which undergirded their social fields.

The interactions, exchanges, and circulations of those ideas and practices in turn led to the hardening of a "Gypsy" representation which had more in common with other twentieth century American racial categories and stereotypes than the original "Gypsy" which had come ashore in the seventeenth century. Likewise, the Romani people in the United States themselves began to engage with new American ideas and structures of meaning than they had prior to the 1890s. This dissertation is about those interactions and structures which helped create meaning for individuals in New York City. Simply put this work is about the history of Romani people and the "Gypsy" representation in New York City as it underwent massive changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time it is also about the other New Yorkers who made their own engagements with the structures and practices of the urbanizing world. To adequately tell the story of American Roma and the American "Gypsy" those other non-Roma *must be* included in this work as they engaged with the urban world coevally, influenced and were influenced by both Roma and "Gypsies" alike. This work is also an enhancement of previous scholarship about American Roma where more often than not the subject is tightly focused on Romani culture or on Roma and non-Roma (often termed *gadje)* interactions. I would be remiss to not give a hearty sign of gratitude for those works that preceded this undertaking at

the same time that I seek to enhance and reframe their findings. Without our elders and ethnologists we would surely be less compassionate and have a less nuanced view of others unlike ourselves. My intervention thus seeks to not only constructively work between their previous findings but also to shift the focus away from a pin holed view of Romani worlds and "Gypsy" worlds to a wider aperture which includes those beyond the rigid frame.

Race, racialization, and the relationships which those ideologies and practices represent influence a substantial portion of my analysis herein. I have chosen to center race as an analytic due to its overt and, at times, covert influence upon the decisions and actions made by individuals and groups within my narrative. Likewise, I have chosen to explore race as its tendrils can be found within most of our modern histories. While, critiqued as a concept politically and socially, race is none the less real materially for those who have been racialized. Romani people share their racialization and racial projects with many others in the United States, yet we often read of these connections as exceptions to an unspoken rule about separation between experiences. I contend that race is central to understanding the significance of the Romani community on New York and of New York on the Romani community. While ethnicization also occurred especially internally amongst Romani groups, I believe that claims about or reference to so-called immutable traces of race are most evident when discussing the ways in which Roma were categorized by others. Thus, I focus more on the racial discourses which painted the Roma as inherently racially different from White Americans.

I also utilize the term discourse and discursive formations frequently in this work. Following from the insight of Michel Foucault, where discourse is categorized as a historical contingent system which produces knowledge and meaning, I see discourse as a powerful tool which is expanded upon by Stuart Hall. For Hall, discourse is what is *made to be true* not

necessarily what is true, and like Hall I use discourse an analytic when examining the ways in which truth through representations are created, circulated, and re-configured.[8] I best understand discourse as a social field which consolidates the different modalities of human interactions with the world into a chain which signifies and closes the gaps found between physical, cultural, intellectual, and symbolic experiences. For example, even without a biological or physical "truth", race operates through popular culture because it signifies perceived social, intellectual, and cultural differences which are hardened and solidified by the discourse formation which emphasizes the whole chain and strategically glosses over the broken links. Thus, discursive formations are the chains of significance themselves which function in the material world through a shared social system and manifest in cultural mediums amongst others. For the purposes of this dissertation I focus heavily on the popular cultural discourses which create *truth* about difference in shared social world beyond statements or texts.

Representations figure heavily in this work and I have chosen to utilize this term in its connection to the work of Stuart Hall and other cultural theorists when discussing the ideas which signify imperfect copies of actual people. For Hall, representations both serve as a way of talking about how things exist outside of material in a mimetic representation and as a constitutive, and not simply a reflexive, force. As such, much of this work employs this term, perhaps *ad nauseum*, to signal the categories of meaning which are shared such as stereotypes, tropes, allegories, allusions, visual creations, and the discourses which serve as "truths". Being such an expansive category, representation is an imperfect term which might feel clunky for the reader but I urge them to stick with the term in its capaciousness and consult the visual evidence for concrete examples of my meaning. I also use the terms stereotypes, and tropes separately

[8] See more in Stuart Hall, *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, chap. 17.

from the term representation when they apply to certain objects or meanings although they still fall under the broader category of representations in Hall's work.[9]

Similarly, I privilege the power of culture in its artistic and representational form and utilize an analytic which takes those aspects of culture to be effective forces which structure and influence the relationships between people in the City. As such, I rely on many visual and representational artifacts to draw conclusions about the effect of said items on the behaviors and practices of individuals and groups. In doing so I risk overreaching and perhaps even do so at times, yet I find them to be productive means into discerning the meanings and intentions behind those individuals and groups without many other forms of evidence. I recognize that culture in its representational form is not the only way in which individuals and groups engage with one another and by using them paired with other socio-legal-economic actions I hope to expand upon their material and psychological effect on my subjects. In instances where my thinking becomes more speculative I strive to adhere to views which have been corroborated by my Romani interlocutors in the City itself.

I attempted to the best of my ability to engage with Romani communities and individuals who currently call New York City home as a way to discern information about certain actions and behaviors by historical actors which needed interpretation. I stand by the interpretations made by my interlocuters and found their input within my work to be interesting, insightful, and compassionate. Having spent several years building relationships with individuals and groups I can truthfully say I am indebted to their kindness, humor, and patience in allowing an outsider into their homes and lives asking questions which often were personal and sometimes difficult.

[9] Although I have chosen to utilize "representations" as a broad category, it should be noted that some signs are actually indexes or fall under the schema of Peircean semiotics. For more information see James Hoopes, *Peirce on Signs*, chap. 8;16.

In many ways they are the reason that I chose to continue my work when the world sometimes felt dark and my research stalled. Their contribution as my friends and interlocutors meant that I not only was able to garner more insight into historical accounts but was also able to learn from them what it meant to be American *and* Roma. I hope to someday spend more time writing about the experiences with those communities but in its current state this work represents their ghostly presence over my shoulder and explicitly in some introductions to chapters. I add this to not only enlighten the reader about the process that I utilized, which mirrored long term field ethnography but also to highlight the importance of Romani people in working and writing their history in the United States. I hope that future work will more substantially and prominently foreground Roma contributions in their own words.

There are three major methodological choices I have made when conducting this work. First, I have chosen to utilize and privilege evidence, which is American made, focused on Americans playing as "Gypsies", and about American Romani populations in New York City. The most recent estimate of American Romani in the United States is around 1 million individuals (including all sub-groups).[10] Throughout Europe there are about 8 to 10 million more Roma who have an extensive amount of scholarly interest focused on their histories.[11] I have largely only utilized this vast literature in comparative or critical moments which best accentuated my argument for a reframing of American Romani history in relation to American

[10] Margareta Matache et al., "FXB Center for Health and Human Rights: Romani Realities in the United States: Breaking the Silence, Challenging the Stereotypes A Study from the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and Voice of Roma," 4.
[11] For more population estimates see David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; Ian Hancock, *We Are the Romani People: Ame Sam e Rromane Dzene*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*; Yaron Matras, *The Romani Gypsies*; Margareta Matache et al., "FXB Center for Health and Human Rights: Romani Realities in the United States: Breaking the Silence, Challenging the Stereotypes A Study from the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and Voice of Roma."

racial formations, legal histories, and immigration concerns. As such, this work can not cover many of the vast differences between the groups within Europe nor can it fully tease apart the long-standing transnational kinship connections between the communities. Even within the United States there are many different communities of American Roma who hail from different national, linguistic, and cultural origins which likely impacted communities ability to organize and advocate as a unified group. Due to the diversity of experiences amongst Romani groups, I chose not to focus fully on one family or one group of American Roma. I do highlight several historical actors in this work to emphasize their complicated relationship with those in power and internal dynamics within their communities. My choice to focus on certain actors limits the details I am able to provide about other historical actors and their kin. Instead I center New York City itself as the landscape on which my actors lived and worked as a way to adjust from a micro to macro scale exploration, explaining historical processes and representations which cut across both scalar interventions.

Secondly, I choose to utilize collections of images that were largely taken by non-Romani Americans throughout the early decades of the 20th century. The collections of images, many of which are archived under general headings like "Gypsies", all focus on Romani people but suffer from a lack of Romani presence in the actual creation, distribution, and selection process of said images. Although I recognize the lack of Romani presence in the process I still believe the stories and interpretations surrounding the images are useful in framing the effect of "Gypsy" images for the lay public and show a complicated political and social agenda beyond pure novelty. Likewise, many of the selections I have made of "Gypsy" imagery in newspapers, pamphlets, illustrations, and film are limited to the items which I believed would best represent the impact of "Gypsies" in American thought and cultural discourse. There are hundreds and

perhaps thousands of images throughout the 20th century of "Gypsies" in popular culture and some do include actual Romani people. Those images also impacted the public's meaning making processes around "Gypsies" and Roma but I choose to narrow my focus on the images which I could definitively show were created, circulated, and consumed in New York City during the 20th century.

Thirdly, I chose to focus on an analysis of culture which highlights the tension between representation and lived differences and less on the somewhat standard definition of culture which relies on a bounded grouping of shared meanings and meaning making forces. By this I mean that much of what has been written about Roma within Romani studies scholarship is largely focused on certain aspects of inter-group dynamics, traditions, language usage, or mobility. I chose to utilize a cultural analytic which does not focus on those somewhat structural components of culture and instead highlighted the representational forms of culture in historical performance and visual social networks. As such, I do not spend much time giving the reader an exhaustive list of all of the components which make Romani cultures unique or exceptional but instead take my historical actor's understanding of their culture at face value. This choice obviously limits my ability to expand our understanding of distinctive Romani cultures *but* does allow for more in-depth analysis of the ways in which representations or culture in the artistic sense was utilized in creating and maintaining distinctions between Roma and non-Roma, and in turn, "Gypsy" and non-Gypsy. This methodological choice means that I often will refer to Roma and Romani communities as somewhat fluid and porous identities without homing in on distinctions which they themselves may have made between groups and individuals. This is a necessary level of abstraction (and was likely the very level of Americans understanding of Roma) to highlight the messiness of neighborhood and community social politics and liminal

ethnic identities that were being formed and reformed through the proliferation of cultural representations. Additionally, I utilize an understanding of power which highlights the discursive nature of social exchanges which often circulate before physical power is exerted over individuals and groups. While physical displays of power in disciplining individuals, through the pseudo-legal institution of the police are included within this work, I believe that most of the power concentrated in those non-physical forces are more long lasting than individual or group's physical forms of power. In practice this means that while the NYPD and other people in political and social positions of power focused on disciplining Roma, which led to more strategies of avoiding those circumstances by American Roma, the representational and cultural power of the "Gypsy" remained salient long after jail time or monetary fines were paid.

This work is also an attempt to place the Roma and the "Gypsy" representation back into the minds of people who often disregard their effects on American history. I believe that without the Roma and the "Gypsy", Americans would not have a durable and long-standing people and representation which to draw upon as means to assert their American-ness in opposition too. Furthermore, the actual Romani history within places like New York has had an outsized impact upon the ways in which certain communities formed throughout the early twentieth century with places like Maspeth and Queens remaining "Gypsy" areas long after the original communities moved on. The "Gypsy" figure has been a part of our shared culture toolkit long enough for many of us to forget its existence at the same time that Romani people are often classed in with "other ethnic groups"—even as they constantly surprise us with their real material existence apart from the "Gypsy." I believe at the current moment the time is right to rethink and reexplore the world of the American Roma as it is also our world in many ways. By exploring the Roma

and the "Gypsy" I believe that we can find some semblance of truth and meaning while also answering a call for more inclusive historical narratives.

In order to reconstruct the world in which Romani people encountered upon their arrival to the United States, I begin with a chapter focused on the history of people within New York City before the 20th century. Chapter one brings together the disparate peoples in the City to explore race as a new "scientific" construct that shaped the lives of those people who were racialized as "foreign" and "non-white" as they went about their urban lives. I rely on a relational lens of race which centers the relationships both materially real and imagined between different racialized peoples in New York City. In part, this choice is influenced by formative scholars within the fields of ethnic studies, immigration, labor, and cultural histories such as Natalia Molina, Daniel HoSang, David Roediger, Matthew Frye Jacobson, Alaina Lemon, Jason De León, Stephen Berrey, and the great Stuart Hall amongst others. Throughout this first chapter I relay the ways in which various groups racialization not only relates to others but also how we might start to imagine Romani racial projects intersecting them. Focused largely on the period between 1890 and 1920 the chapter sets up a framing which allows a more nuanced picture of New York beyond the story of individual ethnic groups and introduces a more relational way of thinking through experiences in urban spaces which includes Roma. Throughout the first chapter immigration and new ethnic interactions are explored to highlight relational racial discourses which impact many different groups of people simultaneously.

Chapter two begins with a look at the iconic site of immigration in New York City—Ellis Island—and follows Romani people through its auspices. At Ellis Island officials and immigrants first interacted on American soil (albeit not on the mainland) and began to construct practices and processes in which to engage with one another. Individuals such as William Williams, an

early Commissioner of Ellis Island and immigration specialist of the era, show how the practices of the Island were often made less through policies on high but instead shaped through individual trial and error on the island itself. On this view the practices of officials often interrupted the imagined polices which dictates who could enter the United States. It is also at Ellis Island where the reader finds the first Romani people in my work as they attempted to immigrate from Europe and beyond. These first encounters with Roma vis a vi the influence of the "Gypsy" shape the ways in which officials and immigrants themselves came to view these people who were different from themselves. Yet, the lessons learnt by the Roma, who were often deported or not allowed entry past Ellis Island, did not go to waste. They were followed by more and more Roma making their way into New York through subtle tweaks to their own practices and the unknowing eye of the officials attempting to slot them into categories which were already being disrupted.

Furthermore, chapter two shows not only the gaps and contingencies between the immigration officials and their wards, the immigrants, but also the bridges that many people managed to make in order to traverse those faults. One of the ways I illustrate this important dynamic is through an analysis of photography on the island. Early photographic technologies and emerging cultural practices became tools for sorting and categorizing people while also fixing them in history as racial types deemed "fit" and "unfit" or alternatively "desirable" or "undesirable." I show that throughout the period of mass immigration between 1890 and 1924 many of these innovative technologies were used by both officials and lay people alike to understand their changing world and construct a more expansive racial formation which included many different "Whites" and "non-Whites." The Roma certainly fit within this emergent

formation but the question of where entirely had yet to be worked out by the time the nativists got there way and the Gates were shuttered.

Chapter three picks up from those concerns first discussed openly on the Island and follows their maturation into the streets of New York. Once the various peoples made their way to their new homes they found a swirling cauldron of cultural forces ready to reshape their identities for non-Roma consumption. In the City the appeal of popular culture, shifting gender and social norms, and new ethnic alliances shaped the Romani experience at the same time that the "Gypsy" became a distinct American representation.[12] In the 1920s and 1930s the fever of "Gypsy Madness" struck New Yorkers and influenced the ways in which they engaged with ideas about the past, American values, and popular culture. At the same time, the "Gypsy" was also tied to an actual people who had made parts of the City there home and had fascinated and appalled the public with their lifeways and relationships. At the height of "Gypsy Madness" Roma also caught the fever utilizing the public's fascination with their supposedly fixed racial type to create alliances and relationships with people both as economic sources and as potential advocates under the restrictive laws which governed their existence in the City. Again, the pull of popular culture such as photography, film, theater, and radio all helped push a representation of "Gypsies" which would hold sway over the public for many years and to some extent still does. By the end of the decade with the fall of the stock market and the social reckoning of the Great Depression the "Gypsy Madness" seemed to be cured. Yet the Roma still remained in the

[12] While Romani groups in Europe and throughout the world likely had at least a passing familiarity with representations of "Gypsies", what made the American experience different was the small population of American Romani impacting widespread cultural representations and mediums in a place with many different racialized groups. The novelty and scarcity of actual American Roma aided in the mass interest in the representations of "Gypsies" unlike in Europe where Roma were (and are) the largest ethnic minority with constant physical interactions and exchanges. For more about "Gypsies" in European literature and popular culture see Katie Trumpener, "The Time of the Gypsies"; Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*; Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt, *The Role of the Romanies*; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*.

City itself and were treated once again as “undesirable” and un-Americanized populations needing more punitive forms of control. Play gave way to policing.

Chapter four centers that punitive racial project focused on policing American Roma and expands upon the social organizing that occurs during the Depression era with “Gypsy Kings” acting as liaisons and culture brokers between groups. In the 1930s the Romani communities in New York City underwent another realignment with the emergence of a unified front, and charismatic “Gypsy King” who played with the “Gypsy” representation to maintain order and present a front of respectability and worth to skeptical American audiences. This chapter centers on “King” Steve Kaslov and his supporters as they navigated the precarity of their racial situation and the economic uncertainty of the City at large. Kaslov and others manage to utilize the “Gypsy” representation not only as a fantastical trope but also as a source of pride, hope, and value for non-Roma alike. His relationships with those in power likewise drew the attention of everyday Americans weathering the economic storm and captured the attention of social reformers, New Deal era politicians, and artists. Photographers and social commentators influenced by the earlier Progressives found “Gypsies” perfect subjects to capture, circulate, and promote in art installations and in public as “Americanized” peoples worthy of attention and support. Further works by photographers captured intimate moments unlike those every captured before highlighting not only the Romani peoples cultural and ethnic differences but also their shared experiences of life’s ups and downs. Through the efforts of both the “Gypsy Kings” themselves and their supporters the 1930s become a largely productive decade for Romani organizing and growth in the City establishing themselves more fully into the economic and

social fabric of the communities that they reside in and alongside.[13] However, also in the 1930s more and more Roma were being targeted by the NYPD as they cracked down on people desperate for hope. The cantilever between the positive changes in the 1930s and 1940s and increased policing and racial projects ultimately collapsed with the onset of World War Two and the loss of certain "Gypsy Kings" like Kaslov.

Chapter five cements the "Gypsy" as an American representation bult on years of efforts by non-Roma and Roma alike to control its various meanings. Ultimately, I argue the "Gypsy" had become untethered to many of the actual Romani lives that it supposedly represented and is instead marketed to the American public as a facet of post-war consumerism in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, the loss of the "Gypsy Kings" in New York meant that the positive rehabilitation of the "Gypsy" hoped for by many Roma proved a flimsy defense from city officials and the NYPD, which began to enforce laws which targeted Roma. In this way, the NYPD represented the "Gypsy" as a burden on society and policed the Roma as such. It was also during this period that the counterculture revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s picked up the representation of the "Gypsy" as an outsider but inverted this stranger status. Instead of being an undesirable figure the 1960s "Gypsy" representation was a desirable outsider, a counter cultural icon to be placed alongside the American "Indian." This resurgence of the Gypsy figure represented another turn towards anti-modern primitivism of the 1920s but was imbued with new anxieties about modern middle-class values, scientific expertise, and social expectations placed upon young adults during the period. By the end of the 1960s the "Gypsy" existed as a popular marketing representation built upon years of failed attempts by Roma and non-Roma alike to

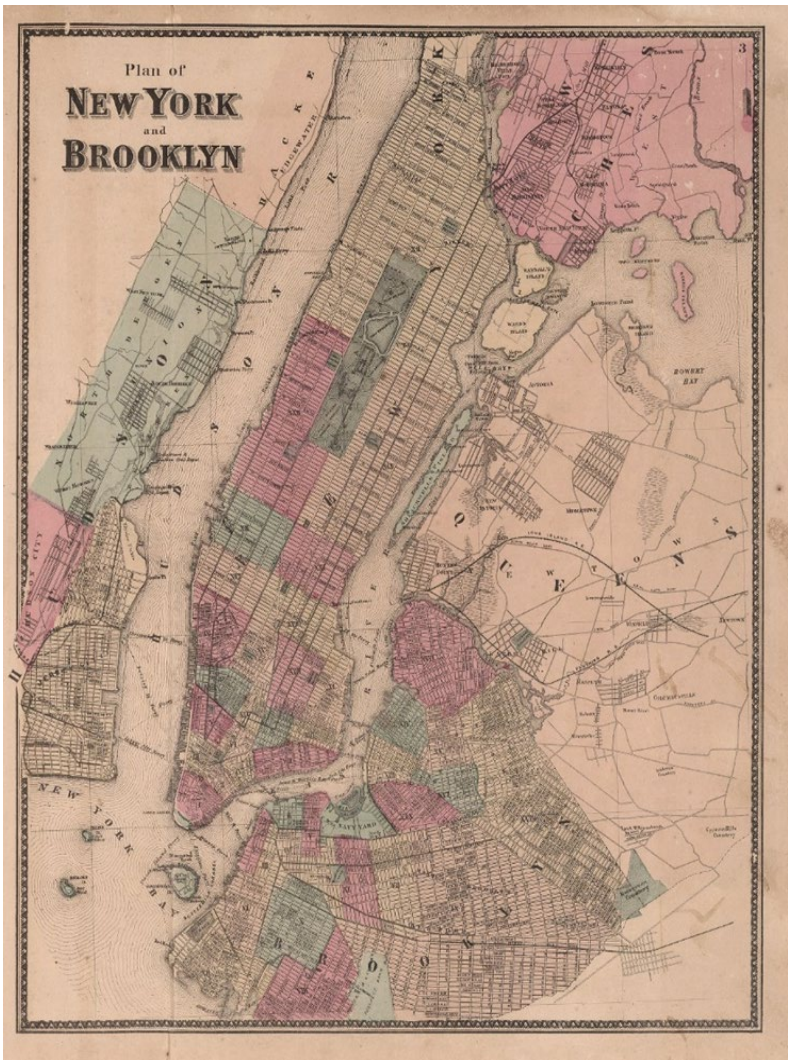
[13]During the 1930s many Romani organizations in Europe formed their own newspapers, unions, and associations advocating for their needs and seeking funds through Romanian and other national institutions to address issues around inclusion, settlement, and education. For more see Petre Matei, "Between Nationalism and Pragmatism"; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism."

control the meaning behind its representation. With the lack of a unified and visible presence of Romani groups in the City many Americans once again equated the sexualized "Gypsy" with cultural ideas about deviance, desire, and freedom further excising the actual histories of the Roma from the representation which once was in part controlled and managed by their efforts. In the end the chapter shows how racialization for Roma acted most effectively on a discursive and relational plane while downplaying the actual lives of the people.

The conclusion of this dissertation actively attempts to weave together the various threads which are found throughout the five chapters. Ideologies about race, ethnicity, national origin, deviance, normativity, and cultural representations all make their way into this history of American Roma and the "Gypsy" representations often in subtle ways. Throughout this work I show that American Romani history is at the forefront of New York City's history even if it not acknowledged as such by the works yet written by scholars and lay people alike. American Roma have been both the victims of racial projects and the victors of their own stories of resistance and adaptation. The "Gypsy" meanwhile also has a place within this history as it weighed heavily on the minds of New Yorkers in leisure spaces, parlors, and businesses catering to non-Whites and Whites alike. To separate the "Gypsy" from the actual Roma is difficult—and at times impossible—yet both have made their mark upon the urban landscape whether it be in blocks still considered "Gypsy" blocks (Roma) or in the flashing signs of Broadway selling perfume, alcohol, and theater experiences. Through the actions of non-Roma like the NYPD, City officials, immigration pundits, and urban renewal experts American Romani lives are seldom visible and their struggles are often unheard. But both have an outsized role to play in our understanding of the strange and exhilarating place called the Big Apple and both have even more to teach us about being human in a world of chaotic encounters and passing strangers. My

hope is that for the time the reader spends with this work they find themselves identifying with the peoples and stories within because they are the stories of cosmopolitan beings much like ourselves called humans who came to New York like “Gypsies in the night.”

Chapter 1 : Relational Racial Formations in Turn of the Century Gotham



Map 1: Plan of New York and Brooklyn 1867

On a research trip to New York City, I found myself standing on a subway platform staring intently at a copy of a map that I had just pulled out of the archives. I was so enraptured by its depiction of the nineteenth century City that the clanking of the subway car and the hiss of the air brakes interrupted my daydream. Summoned back to the present, I stepped into the number 2 subway amidst the afternoon crush of people seeking shelter towards the back of the car. After a few months in the City I had grown accustomed to the daily slog from the border of Queens and Brooklyn where I was staying to the midtown Manhattan library archives where I had found the map in question.[14]

[14] Rumsey, "David Rumsey Map Collection", n. Plan of New York and Brooklyn 1867

Avoiding eye contact, the ever-present game played by Manhattan commuters, I looked back at the map. It purported to document New York and Brooklyn from 1867. Its lines are straight, and its avenues and blocks of houses represented as perfect shapes that conjures the image of a neat, tidy, and ordered metropolis. However, I could not help but think that even at the time of its publication, this depiction would have masked the harsh reality of life in the City. The realities of the people on the ground during the time period were likely that of constant movement, brutal working conditions, limited access to clean water and food, and the threat of rampant disease. In fact, a mere four years earlier, the City itself was up in flames from the 1863 Draft Riots, bedlam which claimed the lives of many New Yorkers, destroyed several buildings, and displaced many more African American residents.[15] Even so, people poured into Gotham even as some, like the African American population, were driven out of central areas of the City. Nor does the map show the stark divide between racialized populations in the City, with peoples starkly divided between "Whites" and non- "Whites." The map also fails to show the complicated nature of encounter places, exchange points, and social commentary venues such as Five Points, the Bowery, and Greenwich Village. The often-blockaded streets and "play areas" for children are not shown neither is the haphazard construction that spilt into the streets. The forces shaping the movement and displacement of African Americans, Asian Americans, and other people of color are illegible. The machinations of corrupt officials and pandering politicians on the landscape are absent, as is the ever-present racial discourse which echoes through the halls of progressive organizations and immigration offices alike. Instead, the Gotham in this map is pristine, straight, and orderly. This is a representation of an urban space replete

[15] See more in Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, chap. 50.

with boxes and perfect corners, offering no indication of the ambiguous and unruly nature of the City's social boundaries.

Long after my subway reverie, what the map shows and does not show continues to bother me. This frustration is exacerbated by a second map from 1891 featured to the right. By 1891 the map would document a City that looked very different: with the Statue of Liberty installed on Bedloe Island, Queens and Brooklyn established as proper cities in their own rights, and reliable transportation lines between the areas. This map still depicted the City with the same straight lines, perfect shapes, and artificial order as its 1867 predecessor. Yet between 1867 and 1891, New York underwent a massive demographic change, with influxes of immigrants but also domestic travelers making their way to Gotham. In the state census of 1865, there were 1,080,495 people counted in New York City (Manhattan), Brooklyn, and Queens. The number of "aliens" was 208,217, and the count of "colored persons" was



Map 2: New York City 1891

14,952.[16][17] According to authorities, there were roughly 49,000 "Black" persons and 140 American Indians in the State of New York during that period.[18] By 1890 there was an additional set of racial categories included on census data, including the option to check: "Whether White, Black, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, or Indian."[19][20]. Altogether, by 1890 there was roughly 2,321,644 people in New York City and Brooklyn (excluding Queens)[21] representing a 114% increase in population from 1865.[22] The number of foreign born in 1890 was 630,980 representing many different "races" with the Irish eclipsed by Germans and increasingly with Russians, Slavs, "Magyars", "Hebrews", and "others."[23] New York City was often the final destination of many immigrants in 1890 with over 30% and up to 42% of the population foreign-born depending on the ward.[24] With such dynamism, the reluctance of cartographers to document the social makeup of the City might be quite rational. Maps pin things down, freeze them in time and space. New York in the 1890s was hardly conducive to this kind of documentation. And yet, it is within this reformulation of New York's racial makeup that peoples from all over the world converged within the city. The streets and orderly boxes which dot the maps of the City cannot capture how race was made, unmade, and remade in New York

[16] Secretary of State, "Preliminary Report on the Census of the State of New York", 26, 29, 34.
[17] It is a bit more difficult to get a complete picture of the racial demographics during that time as race was not collected in the same manner as in later censuses.
[18] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States."
[19] "Measuring Race and Ethnicity across the Decades: 1790—2010 - U.S. Census Bureau."
[20] These additional racial categories, which would eventually include "other" some 20 years later, speaks to a concern by officials to categorize people more thoroughly and notes the idea of blood quantum and racial science of the era.
[21] A substantial portion of the census data for 1890 was lost in a fire in 1921 and most of the aggregate records are scattered across departments and holdings.
[22] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States"; "Measuring Race and Ethnicity Across The Decades: 1790—2010 - U.S. Census Bureau."
[23] Industrial Commission, *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration, Including Testimony, with Review and Digest and Special Reports and on Education, Including Testimony, with Review and Digest*.
[24] Campbell Gibson and Emily Lennon, "Tech Paper 29: Table 19. Nativity of the Population for the 50 Largest Urban Places: 1870 to 1990."

during the great wave of immigration. As the first (and often last) destination for many of immigrants to the United States during this period, how New York City shaped constructions of race would have an enduring impact on racial discourses across the entire country for years to come.

This chapter reconstitutes the maps' missing fragments and instead represents the City by depicting the discursive relationships between New Yorkers and their representations. Part of this effort is not only to highlight the importance of New York's racial formations to the national racial politics, but also to situate the Romani people and the "Gypsy" figure within this strange era when race became a mechanized and modernizing force. To accomplish this, I utilize the theory of relational racial formations first suggested in part by Howard Omi and Michael Winant's *Racial Formations* and expanded upon by Natalia Molina, Ramon Gutiérrez, and Daniel HoSang in their work *Relational Formations of Race: Method, Theory, and Practice*.[25] Racialization, as they assert, is a complex and interactive process which is made both in relation to theories of Whiteness and to other marginalized and racialized groups. They state, "racialization describes the formation and reformation of these relationships, legible through a range of cultural categories [including] sexuality, bloodlines, propriety, innocence, fitness, violence, citizenship, savagery, morality, and freedom."[26] Thus, to understand how a group becomes racialized in the United States requires an exploration of the antecedent racial relationships in communities upon which they are entering. Recognizing group formations do not exist in a vacuum, relational racial theory shifts its analysis to the spaces people occupied, discussions within groups describing others, and discourses shared by groups across space and

[25] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*; Natalia Molina, Ramon Gutiérrez, and Daniel HoSang, *Relational Formations of Race*.
[26] Natalia Molina, Ramon Gutiérrez, and Daniel HoSang, *Relational Formations of Race*, 7.

time. This is especially critical for understanding the process of racialization Romani people would encounter as they made their way to the United States largely after 1860.

Whiteness theories and studies of Whiteness have become the most prominent avenue to discuss immigration and race in the United States. However, Whiteness and Blackness are hardly the only categories that were being created and remade during this formative period of immigration. A relational approach decenters a homogenous and hegemonic theory of Whiteness and instead considers Whiteness as a fluid and diverse category which is made alongside other racial categories. Instead, Whiteness and Blackness are put in the same formation as "swarthiness", "puggish", "yellow", "brown", and the coded language of "uplift", "assimilation", and "fitness", ideas which were applied by many White Americans to Romani people.[27] Consequently, this chapter will detangle the often-homogenous view of White identity and White supremacy to explore how race worked and changed over time for people in the City. Instead of only focusing on the experience of European migrants, I explore the ways racial identities and positions were structured relationally and discursively through the everyday encounters of New Yorkers on the streets of their city and in the ensuing cultural representations that were made. These encounters are transcribed in journals, policy documents, novels, and visual mediums throughout the period. Utilizing such sources and homing in on historical actors' understanding of relational racial politics will illuminate some of the racial projects in action.

Importantly, photography's ability to circulate images across classes, races, and other identities made it a powerful vehicle for which racial projects were carried and shaped during

[27]For more on the discourse around immigrants and whiteness see David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness : Race and the Making of the American Working Class*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues : The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*; Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible : Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*; David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*.

this time. Thus, in this chapter photography and the idealized racial and geographic landscape of New York City will be explored in conjunction with the historical actors' accounts of their lives in the city. Following Stuart Hall's insight that race "is a sliding signifier" and its meanings are largely constructed through meaning making of discursive formations, the analysis within this chapter frames racial formations as being constructed ultimately through discourse.[28] What I call "discursive racial formations", which I argue is the way that Roma become racialized, derives from Hall's take on racial discourse overall. Hall states that,

> " racial discourses produce, mark, and fix infinite differences and diversities of human beings through a rigid binary coding. That logic establishes a chain of correspondences both between the physical and cultural, between intellectual and cognitive characteristics; it gives legibility to a social system in which it operates; it allows us to decipher different signifiers from the racial fixing of the signifier 'race'; and through that reading it organizes, regulates, and gives meaning to social practices through the distribution of symbolic and material resources between different groups and the establishment of racial hierarchy." [29]

Hall's discursive understanding follows from the idea that race as an ideology needs discourse to operate in practice produced by the circulation of ideas relying heavily on representations. As race is a "scavenger ideology" which picks clean the bones of national, class, gender, and religious ideologies to construct its powerful discourse, its power comes from its overwhelming fluidity, being cobbled together over time.[30] The focus on discourse ultimately works to collapse the divide between "pure ideas" and "brute practice" and insists instead that "all human, social, and cultural practices are always both, that is they are always *discursive practices*."[31] In short, "discursive racial formations" in New York are ultimately made meaningful through practices of the power and the ideas found in popular culture's representations through photography and

[28] Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, chap. 1.
[29] Stuart Hall, *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, 330.
[30] George M. Fredrickson, *Racism*, 8.
[31] Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 46; In the case of the Roma, Alaina Lemon makes a similar point as Hall where specifically race is a discursive practice. See Alaina Lemon, "Without a 'Concept'?", 54.

visual reproductions. As Mathew Frye Jacobson states, "race is not just a conception; it is also a perception. The problem is not merely how races are comprehended, but how they are seen."[32] I contend that racialization in the period when immigration was at its peak largely occurred through the combined power of law, social organizing, and, most importantly, through a discourse pushed along by representations of difference.

Scholars and laypeople alike have acknowledged the instability of race and its racist biological foundations, but to claim that it is simply a social phenomenon does not always help highlight the material and discursive power that it has within our world.[33] Matthew Frye Jacobson states, "Because racial classifications so successfully masquerade as features of the natural landscape, they are seldom commented on overtly." [34] Relational racial formations' power comes from this same obliqueness, where race is interjected within many aspects of daily society, and thus its ubiquity actually occludes its pervasiveness. The relationships between people both material and imagined shape the way race is constructed for groups in interactions and discourses found throughout the City. Of course, the shifting ideology of Whiteness is hardly irrelevant. Scholars have shown how Whiteness developed during this period from being a seemingly stalwart defense against Blackness, to a variegated fluid set of racial categories which demonstrated not only its weaknesses but also its relational politics.[35] Those who were "White", but racialized differently, had advantages compared to African Americans, colonial subjects, Native Americans, Asian-Americans *and* Romani Americans. But the complicated history of

[32] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 9.
[33] Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 39–43.
[34] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 52.
[35] Scholar Thomas Guglielmo's work is useful to consider here as he highlights the ways in which some immigrant groups, in his case study Italian Chicagoans, were "White on Arrival" but occupied a racially inferior classification which highlighted how certain groups were colored White and racialized as White while others were racialized as non-White but were "White." See more in Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival : Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*.

race in New York City requires an expansive, relational, and discursive lens to discern and negotiate the same politics that people on the ground lived as they encountered one another in city streets and cultural productions alike. By neglecting the relational racial history of New York, we risk framing immigration history as an anomaly within American racial formations, rather than a part of a long history of negotiations and tensions which began when the first Native Americans were pushed west.[36] Racialization of groups was, *from the beginnin*g, and remains, a relational and discursive project where groups' fitness, integration, and adaptability were judged in relation to others, not wholly, as separate entities.

Instead of merely looking at the ways in which historical actors in power practiced their racial politics, I also highlight how certain racialized peoples practiced their own relational politics, often attempting to position themselves closer to the coveted power position. Therefore, when both the historical actors of this chapter and the groups themselves thought through racial categories, they sorted peoples based on diverse markers of difference displaying an understanding of racial positionality in relation to one another. The racialized people in this chapter show that race making and re-making were integral in the creation and practice of immigration regimes, the expansion of popular culture, and discursive circulation of ideas about difference and value in turn of the century New York. Photographs idealized these forces and discursively shaped the way that "New Yorkers" and "Americans" were represented, circulated, and consumed. It was upon this changing map of race and through increasingly visual representations of difference that Roma people would soon appear *in media res.*

[36] See Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Settler Colonialism as Structure."

1.1 The Most "American" City

Walking through Queens today, one can find any kind of food, entertainment, and novelty from around the globe while still remaining firmly planted within the hustle and bustle of America's most well-known Megacity. New York City, and especially Queens, is a diverse and hectic place of cross-cultural encounters, exchanges, and discourses. Because of such diversity, New York City in the 1890s (and today) is a place where racial formations began, reformed, and circulated across the country. Multiethnic from the beginning, New York has functioned as a port of entry, a mobile human transfer point, and industrial hub where crony capitalism and politics reigned supreme.[37] Manhattan and the surrounding areas were first utilized by many Native American groups before and after the first European colonization in the 17th century.[38] When the Dutch first landed and set up a small colony in 1626, trade and extraction of natural resources was their main goal, largely regarding the City as part of its imperial trade project spanning from Europe to the Caribbean. However, Dutch explorers and tradesmen were joined by various European populations by the time New Amsterdam reached its peak, with British subjects soon landing in larger numbers. By the time the British Empire convinced the Dutch to surrender the land in a largely bloodless transfer in 1664, trade expansion inland and the beginnings of an industrial revolution were already underway.[39]

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[37] Several texts which greatly influenced my understandings of this period and which go into much greater detail than this dissertation will be able to, are Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace's "Gotham: A History of New York to 1898" and Mike Wallace's "Greater Gotham: A History of New York City from 1898 to 1919."[37] Both of these expansive volumes cover the intricate histories and events of life in New York and are used extensively throughout this chapter to narrate the period from early New Amsterdam (York) to the end of WWI. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*; Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*.

[38] For more see Evan T. Pritchard, *Native New Yorkers*; Evan T. Pritchard, *Henry Hudson and the Algonquins of New York*.

[39] George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*, 21; See more in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*.

The British imagined New York as the premiere port for a permanent colony on a scale far beyond Dutch aspirations. As part of the British settler colonial vision for New York, the City had already become a site for ambitions of the largest scale. English-occupiers built New York into a thriving center of commerce and immigration. Even with other major ports being expanded and built by the British throughout the 18th century, New York remained a vital lifeline for the crown, transferring the wealth of the New World to the Metropole and exchanging goods—including human beings, both free and enslaved. Over three million enslaved persons entered the British colonies from 1680 to the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade in 1807. [40] Before the African Slave Trade, indentured servitude of Europeans was the main source of unfree labor, although starkly different from chattel slavery. Throughout the colonial period, New York's ports served as vital transfer points for their human cargo from ship to the growing agricultural power of the South.[41] Before the United States had even been created, the City of New York was already a place shaped by encounters between Indigenous, Black, and Euro-Americans.[42]

After the American Revolution, New York City briefly served as the first National capital and remained at the center of American politics and commerce. As a result, the City became major destination for immigrants. Approximately 3,742,532 immigrants entered New York between 1820 and 1860, many starting their journey from Western Europe[43]. Between 1820 and 1839, an estimated 667,000 immigrants arrived in the United States, with 75% of them passing through New York City[44]. Coined the era of "Old Immigration" from 1815 to 1880, New York was the landing place for various ethnic and religious minorities from Europe including Jews,

[40] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, pts. 2–3; George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*, chaps. 1–3.
[41] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, pt. 2.
[42] See more in Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan*. Foote's work highlights the interactions between the colonial peoples in detail and is an excellent reference for those interested more in that period.
[43] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, 39.
[44] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 736.

Quakers, Swiss Methodists, and Lutherans. As more and more immigrants made their way to the United States from France (and its colonies) and Ireland after the failed revolution in 1798, there were religious and political tensions.[45] But by the nineteenth century, the political tension subsided and Congress did not renew the Alien and Sedition laws used to target some of the immigrants after 1800.[46] By 1810, New York City had become the largest city in America with the most valuable imports and exports, making it a mecca for those seeking their fortunes and those building new lives.

The main driver of immigration to the United States in the era of "Old Immigration" was economic opportunities, but there were also political asylum seekers after the failed revolutions in 1848 with many younger people fleeing the tyranny of the older regimes in Europe.[47] Between 1840 and 1859, immigration from Europe dramatically increased with a peak in 1854 of 428,000 immigrants entering the United States, with 75% of those immigrants ending up in Manhattan, more than the entire population of the City just 14 years earlier.[48] By 1855, two out three residents of the City were foreign-born, and many American born workers often came from the surrounding areas to work on the massive development projects that the City had undertaken in 1830s and 40s.[49]

In the middle of the nineteenth century, two new waves of immigrants appeared. By 1855 Manhattan had its first of its ethnic enclaves, with Germans residing in a five-block area known as "*Klein Deutschland*" (Little Germany), making them the largest population of Germans

[45] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, chap. 33; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, chaps. 2–3.
[46] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, chap. 3.
[47] See more in Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*.
[48] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 736–37.
[49] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, 737.

outside of Berlin and Vienna[50]. As the City grew larger with the influx of more German and Irish immigrants in the early to mid-19th century so too did its urban planning problems. Housing was a constant source of tension, and the City's newly remapped streets and lanes were overrun with ad hoc houses and poor sanitation. This period of German immigration also saw increased nativism after the economic downturn in the late 1830s and 40s. Germans were targeted as being clannish, strikebreakers, charged with decreasing wages, and acting unruly during important days such as the Sabbath.[51] Different in degree and kind from the racism and nativism that Irish encountered, most Germans kept to their separate enclaves and did not participate in street gangs and overt criminal activity as some of the Irish did. The Irish were targeted for their religious differences, brutish violence, and as unfit for wage labor; in fact, signs throughout the City could be found stating "No Irish Need Apply"[52]. For Irish immigrants, racial characteristics were highlighted through their physical characteristics and by their labor choices: they had "big hands,", "coarse skin", and "puggish noses", and operated as Tammany Hall's incompetent lackeys.[53] Further shaping the racialization of the Irish were their political positions, actively acting against the Anglicizing of Americans, with some Irish embracing their "Celtic" racial position as a separate "free White" race.[54]

Many of the stereotypes, reputations, and representations of these immigrant groups were created and consolidated when New Yorkers met one another in the City's burgeoning

[50] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, 75–76; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 745.
[51] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, 75.
[52] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, 75.
[53] See more about the connection between Irish, race, and politics in Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*.
[54] See more about Whiteness and the Irish in David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*.

leisure spaces. Important cultural practices also emerged during this era of immigration with a huge upsurge in theaters, opera houses, and saloons. These cultural practices directly impacted how immigrants navigated emerging Whiteness practices, including racial performances which denigrated different "races" and impacted how New Yorkers navigated those spaces. Some practices subtly reinforced a narrative of superiority, while others deconstructed hierarchical ideas through art and entertainment. At the same time, from the saloons and bars, members of the organized crime underworld schemed and implemented plans often targeting immigrants for their money and goods, feeding into the nativism and uncertainty for the lower classes of the City. The practice of luring unsuspecting immigrants with female criminals to docks and abandoned alleys before bludgeoning the hapless immigrant and stealing their valuables was commonplace and reinforced the schism between foreign born and native-born Americans [55]

An important practice which highlighted the ideological processes of early racialization and xenophobia was the urban minstrel show. Increasingly popular prior to the Civil War, these shows not only stereotyped African Americans but also Irish, middle- and upper-class New Yorkers, and women. [56] Immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe were often compared to the African Americans of the City, and for a time New Yorkers could find Blackface minstrel shows with Irish and other "undesirables" on the same stage playing out their racial inferiority for a mixed audience.[57] Edwin Burrow and Mike Wallace state that Blackface minstrelsy "afforded artisans and immigrant audiences, who feared their declining economic status might be seen as racial slippage, a chance to collectively display their Whiteness by dissing their only

[55] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 756–59.
[56] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, chap. 42.
[57] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, chap. 64; Karen Sotiropoulos, *Staging Race*, chap. 1; Eric Lott, *Love & Theft*, pt. 1; See also Rhae Lynn Barnes, "Darkology."

inferiors."[58] These practices of performing tropes and characters so detested in the City allowed groups to fashion and perform *a discursive sense* of "Whiteness." This "Whiteness" created through minstrelsy was a relational form which directly connected a discourse of play and deviance to racial performance, blurring the lines between racial formations but for a brief time. For example, a performance that included Irish, German, Native American, and Black characters might highlight how Irish, German, and to a certain extent Native Americans have similar racial statuses, while reinforcing Black people's distance from "Whites." These performances further highlighted the wider relational politics of the period, where African American characters shared the stage with the "Irish Drunk", "Italian Crook", and the "diseased Chinese", showing the ways in which racial identities were not a binary construction between Blacks and Whites but formed through the discourses within the streets and the leisure houses. Popular culture refracted and reflected these ideas throughout the period, and minstrelsy showed the class and racial divides as immigrants from farther afield entered the United States.

Throughout the nineteenth century, racial ideologies were also formed in the dwellings of the working classes. Most of the accommodations were substandard, overcrowded, and owned by corrupt landlords eager to turn a profit no matter the cost. Immigrants, who resided mostly in tenement housing in mid-nineteenth century New York, were seen as racially inferior, diseased, and pathologized as vectors of transmission. [59] Instead of directly combatting these issues, many

[58] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 758.

[59] The uplift of immigrants and benevolent reform efforts soon coalesced around municipal politics in housing. Tenement conditions by 1850 were horrendous with many buildings lacking basic utilities, and with little regulation and rising rent costs and declining wages the landlords often cut corners and provided space which was overcrowded and overpriced. Tenement houses were commonplace in New York and throughout the 19th century and beyond the war between the reformers and the landlords was played out in buildings, senate chambers, and in newspapers. For further information see Jared Day's *Urban Castles: Tenement Housing and Landlord Activism in New York City 1890-1943.* Likewise, the grandiose sanitation plans of the era were far from being uniformly implemented and thus disease spread quickly amongst the overcrowded buildings. Typhus, cholera, and tuberculous all ravaged the poorest areas with tuberculosis causing soaring death rates amongst immigrant and Black communities by 1852. Burrows and Wallace state that, "the infant mortality figures were particularly horrifying {...}. Between 1850 and 1860 more

elites left the City whenever there were outbreaks of disease, eerily similar to the COVID19 response.[60] Compounding these conditions was the Civil War and its aftermath, and the recessions of the 1870s, making life in the city even more difficult. Yet even as domestic issues worsened, the "Old" countries overseas had their own troubles, and ethnic "others" continued to immigrate to the United States and its preeminent urban community.[61]

By the 1880s and early 1890s, Italian and Eastern European immigrants far outnumbered other groups making their way to the United States.[62] Much like the French and Irish in the previous century, nineteenth century Southern Italians were scrutinized not only for their somatic differences but also for their Catholic faith. Between 1870 and 1890, the population of Italy and Eastern Europe increased by 25%, with overpopulation concerns exacerbated by disease, food shortages, and widespread oppression.[63] By 1892, the majority of new immigrants to the United States were extremely poor, with an average of eleven dollars to their name – and most came through New York City.[64] Italians were concentrated in slum conditions throughout Manhattan,

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than half of those under the age of five died each year--seven of every ten under the age of two--figures equal to the worst of the English factory districts." They further highlight that, "by 1856 more New Yorkers were dying each year than were being born. Without the continuing torrent of immigration, said the City inspector, 'the City would in a few years be depopulated" (Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, 790.) Clearly, the issues of sanitation, poor and overcrowded housing, and the rise in crime and homelessness had led to many parts of the City being places where the poor were left to fend for themselves. As one newspaper put it in 1859: "Should {…} cholera visit us next summer {…} It will find in New York a gala festival of death. Our tenement houses are worse than ever, and the poor population has greatly increased since 1832"("The Lower Phases Of New York Life." *Evening Post*. October 5, 1859.)

[60] During the summer of 2020, many wealthy New Yorkers left the City during the COVID-19 pandemic forcing neighboring states to seek out New Yorkers and force them into quarantine.

[61] Tara Zahra, *the Great Departure*. Zahra's book highlights the ongoing nationalist efforts on the part of emerging European populations and their efforts to expel unwanted "others" through immigration agents, bribery, and circulation of false hopes for freedom and prosperity in the United States.

[62] Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door*; Jerre Gerlando Mangione, *La Storia*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*; George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*; Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival : Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*.

[63] See more in Jerre Gerlando Mangione, *La Storia*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 1121.

[64] People like Jacob Riis provide a primary source account of these experiences which illustrate the issues facing immigrants and the poor of the era. See Jacob August Riis, *Out of Mulberry Street*; Jacob August Riis; Jacob August Riis, *A Ten Years' War*; Jacob August Riis, *The Battle with the Slum*; Jacob August Riis, *The Making of an American*; Jacob August Riis, *The Children of the Poor*.

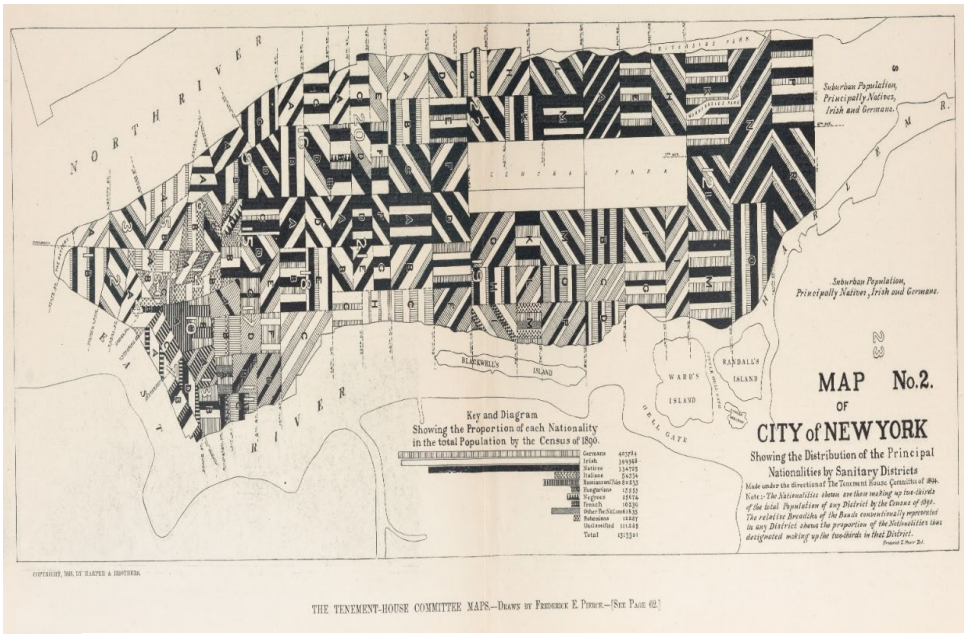
with many working as scabs for dock and labor disputes. Gradually the Bowery district, once an Irish area, was supplanted by Italians living in cramped and wretched conditions. [65] Over time, Italian immigrants reshaped the ethnic makeup of New York and quickly became the targets of racial and social politics, adding fuel to the xenophobic fire which was long smoldering.

By 1898, after the five boroughs consolidated into one mega City, New York City truly became America's first well known metropolis.[66] The growth of New York City's ethnic communities led to the creation of a new federal immigration regime to regulate the flow of immigrants. Prior to the establishment of Castle Gardens in 1855, most European immigrants largely entered the United States with little scrutiny from the state. Human passengers were largely regulated by federal and state acts which dealt with trade goods; immigrants were assigned into the category of cargo. However, some immigrants, such as Irish, were targeted for extra scrutiny based on their national origins.[67] New York, whose laws regarding immigration were especially harsh in the mid nineteenth century, often chose to deport destitute Irish even if they were lawfully admitted, which was explicitly illegal even at the time. Fueled by anti-Catholic sentiment paired with concerns about the economic burden of more poor people, New York officials called for enhanced deportation policies, a factor which shaped some of the federal acts after 1880. [68] Nevertheless, the earliest immigration controls were rudimentary and less focused on restricting people as long as they were not Irish or poor, and more on controlling labor flows and goods.

[65] Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door*; Eric Homberger, *Scenes from the Life of a City*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*, 1122; Paul Moses, *An Unlikely Union*; Stephen Paul DeVillo, *The Bowery*.
[66] See more about consolidation in George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*.
[67] See more discussion of pre-Ellis Island exclusion in Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor*.
[68] Hidetaka Hirota, 4–5.

But it was not just the federal officials and immigration advocates who had a stake in the processes that were being created; it was the lay public, scholars, immigrants, and politicians who drove new mechanizations of immigration after 1880. Racial science and physical anthropology inspired much of the scientific community while dime novels, theatrical performances, popular culture, and street discourse began to show the everyday American what it was to fear of the new other—the immigrant.[69]

Simultaneously, new mapping technologies and increasing scrutiny from politicians and progressive reformers alike meant that non-Whites were being mapped and tracked as never before. New tenement reforms and slum clearance measures created an impetus to determine the racial makeup of the City and such measures were widely shared in political documents and in the popular press. A prime example of this is the 1895 map published in Harper's Weekly on January 19th. [70]



Map 3: City of New York showing nationalities

[69] See more about this period in George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution; Essays in the History of Anthropology*; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*.

[70] "No. 2. Map of City of New York showing the Distribution of Principal Nationalities by Sanitary Districts. Made under the Direction of The Tenement House Committee of 1894" in Frederick E Pierce, "The Tenement House Committee Maps - Cornell University Library Digital Collections."

The map, which was interpreted in the report by Kate Holladay Claghorn, one of the founders of the NAACP, shows the racial makeup of the City in 1894 by district.[71] The races are listed as "Germans, Irish, Natives, Italians, Russians and Poles, Hungarians, Negroes, French, Other Foreign Nations, Bohemians, Unclassified", with the Germans and Irish outnumbering the "Natives" by 50,000 people. Claghorn's analysis of the map points out the spatial distribution of the races and notes the influx of new immigrants in the City which was upsetting certain areas and making the map incomplete even as it was being made.[72]

Angela Blake points out that " the power of the maps (as with most maps)—and of the commission's reports as a whole—lay in the *impression* they gave of having assessed a complex problem, thus giving the appearance of *control* over that problem."[73] Instead, the tenement house maps are complicated pieces of data which reflect a bounded racial reality which did not wholly exist. This fallacy of racial spatial separation falls apart once the accounts of those peoples are read and their interactions and encounters with others are analyzed. To do that work requires looking at not only the groups themselves but the spaces and discourses they shared as they went about their chaotic lives in turn of the century Gotham.

1.2 Relational Racial Formations in turn of the century New York City

Racial formations – and what Omi and Winant call "racial projects" – are constantly in motion: "racial projects connect what race *means* in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experience are racially *organized*, based upon that

[71] Industrial Commission, *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration, Including Testimony, with Review and Digest and Special Reports and on Education, Including Testimony, with Review and Digest*.
[72] Industrial Commission.
[73] Angela M. Blake, *How New York Became American, 1890-1924*, 35.

meaning."[74] In other words, racial projects are the means by which individuals and groups are racialized in spaces, such as the "Whites only" sign in a theatre house in 1890s New York. Upon seeing that sign, an individual and/or group would connect the meaning of Whiteness to their own somatic and social identity and thereby gauge if they were deemed "White" or not. These racial project markers are both explicit (like the signs for businesses and advertisements for products) and implicit as coded messages present in social interactions and discourses. Importantly, the racial projects allowed for what Sara Ahmed calls "encounters" between "strangers"—where to encounter someone involves both surprise and conflict—both individuals are *made* as subjects in those spaces, whether it be on the street or in the circulation of discourses.[75] For New Yorkers in the turn of the century, these encounters happened on the streets, where a poor tenement house resident might shop at an Italian run butcher shop, drink at an Irish Pub, purchase "exotic" goods from Chinatown, and procure packages through the labor of a Black porter. But these encounters also occurred when seeing pamphlets about labor strikes run by Germans, Poles, and "Bohemians", watching a minstrel show in the Bowery, or seeing a lynching photo horrifically captured and circulated as a post card. All of these cultural encounters destabilize the idea of bounded racial enclaves and instead highlight the porous and, most importantly, relational and discursive context in which race was made. In New York City, racial projects were made in *shared* physical, cultural, and discursive spaces.

To understand how Roma people would fit into New York's existing racial projects in the late nineteenth century, it is necessary to explore how the City's social groups and prominent historical actors imagined and acted within a given racial formation – without necessarily

[74] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 56.
[75] For more about "Strangers" see Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*.

focusing on a "White center."[76] Some "White races" that occupied parts of New York had already succeeded in staking their positions as the dominant groups, albeit with racial and class distinctions amongst the groups, hence the plurality of "Whiteness." Irish, Italians, Germans, and others were largely better off than the new Southern and Eastern European immigrants, African Americans, Asians, Latinx folks, and American Indians in New York. However, each ethnic group *was also racialized* through their physical, spatial, and discursive connections to *other* racialized groups, and not only to access to "Whiteness" or a somatic difference. Thus, equally important to this exploration is the often-neglected African American, Asian American, and American Indian histories within the context of immigration history. Adding these histories does more than expand context; it also centers racial projects as processes that change throughout time and utilizes non-European populations as markers of difference and historical encounters. Native American, African American, and Asian American racial projects of the nineteenth century converged and informed how new peoples were scrutinized, categorized, and racially informed. While it is impossible to wholly capture the entirety of the racial formations histories in New York from the 1890s to the 1920s, it is important to explore how each of these populations encountered each other in the shared social field while occupying different racialized positions. Connecting these histories through the lens of race and racialization allows for a complex picture to be shown; where many peoples were in flux and individual actions and inactions positioned groups within the racial formations emerging.

1.2.1 African Americans and Romani Relational Racial Projects

[76] In Relational Formations of Race the authors use a similar tactic to destabilize "Whiteness" as the normative analytic. For more see Natalia Molina, Ramon Gutiérrez, and Daniel HoSang, *Relational Formations of Race*.

African Americans after 1890 were entering an era which scholars have called the "nadir of race relations", where Jim Crow and restrictive norms superseded previous achievements in the decades after the Civil War.[77] In New York, African Americans faced not only the racial hostility embedded within the police force and government officials but also from the urban reformers, social welfare organizers, and women suffragists.[78] The responses to a new generation of African Americans moving into spaces in New York varied wildly, from tacit acceptance to all out violence. Over time, places such as Harlem slowly transitioned from "White" areas into areas where Black identity and expression could be tested by multiethnic Black residents, even as property and wealth disparities continued to hamper the growth of an inclusive Black community.[79]

Harlem was created largely through the forced movement of Blacks from Greenwich Village due to new immigrants and the aftermath of the Race Riots of 1900.[80] African Americans were constantly displaced throughout the City, even as their populations expanded with Southern African Americans fleeing to seek reprieve from the coming era of Jim Crow. By 1900, the estimated 35,000 African Americans in New York City had started moving from their older settlements between 66th street and 7th avenue to Brooklyn and Harlem.[81] Even as the population grew, African Americans continued to be the reviled in many areas of the City outside Harlem, both by "Native Whites" and by new immigrants who attempted to separate themselves from the

[77] See more in James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns : A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*; Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*; Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*; Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*; Leslie M. Alexander *African or American?*; Julie A. Gallagher, *Black Women and Politics in New York City*; Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*.
[78] See more in Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*; Cheryl D. Hicks, *Talk with You Like a Woman*; Julie A. Gallagher, *Black Women and Politics in New York City*; Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate*.
[79] See more in Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*; Shannon King, *Whose Harlem Is This, Anyway?* Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate*.
[80] Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*, 6.
[81] Allon Schoener, *Harlem on My Mind*, 22.

Black population in many ways. While race and color were not always discussed in conjunction in all racialized populations[82], *both* race and somatic color differences were constantly referred to as part of the reason that African Americans were inferior to "Whites", and even "immigrants." Many anti-immigrant organizations, such as the National Civic Federation, highlighted the ways in which African Americans and immigrants were alike in their biological inferiority.[83] However, these comparisons often stopped after European immigrants were "Americanized" in the first decades of the 20th century, becoming citizens while African Americans remained outside the civil and racial imaginary as full beings.[84] New York City illustrates the limits of racial "uplift", where Italians and Poles could become "White" but any African American was subjected to constant reminders of their inferior status through Jim Crow plays, housing restrictions, physical violence, discursive acts, and legal classifications.

Similarly, in the burgeoning field of scientific education, Native Americans' educational needs were compared to those of immigrants and African Americans. These comparisons and racial analogies were not only seen in the "White" world of academia and civil society, but also in the streets and enclaves of New York. African Americans, Jews, and immigrants of all sorts were in close proximity, and these racial spatial topographies illustrate lived relational politics, where African Americans and others experienced racial projects coevally. In the 1890s the population density of New York was over nine hundred people per acre, almost twenty times denser than in 2020.[85] People literally were living side by side and the "enclaves" described by historians may be better understood as porous and ever shifting.

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[82] See an example of race and color being destabilized in Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*.
[83] "National Civic Federation Papers."
[84] For more about Americanization campaigns see Leslie Ann. Hahner, *To Become an American Immigrants and Americanization Campaigns of the Early Twentieth Century*.
[85] Frederick E Pierce, "The Tenement House Committee Maps - Cornell University Library Digital Collections;" Jacob August Riis, *A Ten Years' War*.

For Romani people who arrived in the United States during the second wave of immigration in the 1880s to the 1920s, their status was often related to African Americans deemed non-White. While not depicted as wholly Black, many Eastern Roma found themselves deemed "non-White foreign born" in their documentation and, unlike other European populations, had few advocates in power to combat racial projects which vilified their very existence in the country. Part of the difficulty in organizing amongst Roma came from the diverse national origins with many different subgroups speaking different dialects, occupying different economic roles, and appearing somatically different. By the early 1900s many of the Roma that made their way to the United States came from Eastern Europe and quickly outnumbered the earlier immigrants from Western Europe.[86] Like African Americans, Roma were often represented as children who needed a guiding hand to lead them to more "Americanized" ways. Characters in plays, literature, and visual images all cast Roma via the "Gypsy" as simple minded and governed by passion.[87] Likewise, by 1920 American Roma (some who had been in the City since the middle 19th century) were often displaced to less desirable areas, often occupied by African Americans. By 1900, many American Romani families were found throughout areas like Harlem and the upper East Side, where African Americans were the majority.[88] This spatial proximity to African Americans and Black politics meant that Roma would be caught in the dragnet of official scrutiny, whether it be during raids on houses or during urban projects which sought to "clean" up areas.[89] While ongoing

[86]Irving Brown, a prominent "Gypsylorist" of the 1920s estimates that by 1929 there were between "50,000" to "150,000" Romanies in the United States with the majority coming from Eastern Europe Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America," 146. Difficulty in ascertaining exact numbers of Romani immigrants means that most numbers from the era vary widely and even more recent scholarship finds it hard to quantify the number of Romani immigrants in the period.
[87] For more about Romani representations in Western literature see Katie Trumpener, "The Time of the Gypsies."
[88] See Chapter 3 and maps in Chapter 5 for more information about these moves.
[89] See more about the spatial overlap between African Americans and Roma in Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*; Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1899 1895; Police

relationships between Black New Yorkers and Romani New Yorkers are difficult to trace, both were represented as inferior beings of the urban spaces throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the initial period before 1920, many American Roma moved more frequently than established Black New Yorkers, and thus also were able to have episodic negative experiences with authority, whereas Jim Crow solidified many of the racial projects for African Americans in the City and influenced the priorities of the NYPD related to policing Black bodies.[90] Romani bodies, while also racially inferior and undesirable, were less policed than Black New Yorkers as a result of their mobility, small numbers, and ability to "pass" more easily as a foreign non-White instead of "Black."

1.2.2 Chinese, East Asian, and Romani Relational Racial Projects

Black New Yorkers were not the only racialized group to navigate spatial confinement in the city. Chinese and East Asian immigration to New York had largely been contained to small populations isolated in what was to become Chinatown. Much of the Chinese immigration occurred between 1850 and 1882 before the Chinese Exclusion Act.[91] The limited community of Asians in New York City largely lived alongside many other immigrants and people of color, and it was not until the 1950s when more Asians were allowed to immigrate that distinct communities arose and expanded in Chinatown. With "yellow journalism" stoking up fears of Asian immigration and Chinese vilification, most Chinese attempted to stay out of the public eye

Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1909 1905; Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*"; Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, chap. 2; Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Konrad Bercovici, *The Story of the Gypsies.*, chap. 11.

[90] See more about Romani mobility and Black interactions with other groups in the pre-World War 1 years in Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Konrad Bercovici, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance"; Konrad Bercovici, *Around the World in New York*; Konrad Bercovici, *The Story of the Gypsies.*; Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*.

working in laundries and as domestic servants scattered around the City. Even so, the popular Orientalism which sparked the imagination of many White Americans meant that Chinese spaces were continuously represented as exotic, primitive places, where sin and debauchery thrived.[92]

Similar to the Orientalism which targeted many Chinese Americans in the City, representations of "Gypsies" also painted American Roma as exotic usurpers who polluted the City with their mystic beliefs.[93] Like those of Chinese Americans, Romani communities were also comparatively small. These small communities of people, while not explicitly linked in their spatial proximity to one another in the City, were nonetheless both excluded from immigration on the basis of their inherent racial inferiority.[94] With exclusion both in law and in practice in places like Ellis Island, both Chinese and Roma had limited ability to organize politically for better conditions. The discursive power of public opinion and "yellow journalism" meant that disproportionately both Chinese and Romani communities were racialized as diseased and deviant groups wholly unlike the Anglo-Americans who dominated the City's politics and power.[95] Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries both Roma and Chinese also were tied to illicit and illegal activities with the Roma being targeted for their "thieving nature" and Chinese for their connection to opium and sex trafficking. Both representations of exoticism and illegality continued to impact American Romani and Chinese American communities throughout time even with the eventual acceptance and celebration of "Chinatown" in New York.

1.2.3 Latinx and Romani Relational Racial Projects

[95] For more about the relationship between disease, "defectives", and "undesirable" migrants and East Asian and Romani representations using those categories see Chapter 2.

New York City has been home to many Latinx populations throughout time with Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and eventually Dominicans making up the largest groups. Cubans, and especially Afro-Cubans, immigrated to the United States en masse during the Ten Years War (1868-1878), but there were Cubans in New York prior. Many Cubans and Afro-Cubans were forced out of the City during the 1863 Draft Riots alongside other people of color. Pushed out of Manhattan, Cubans and other people of color made the outlying boroughs their homes. This spatial geography also reveals a relational racial formation which occurred both on the ground in mixed neighborhoods but also in discourse, where areas were "Black" prior to the establishment of Harlem. Even prior to American intervention in Cuba, African Americans looked to Cuban politics for enfranchisement and imagined a brotherhood which transcended the territorial United States. Puerto Ricans and Cubans began to form fraternal organizations which published Spanish language newspapers and pamphlets and created classes catering to Black men.[96] By 1890 Cubans had long standing ties to places in New York City and had embedded themselves within labor unions and radical political circles which crossed racial lines; however, the previous aid societies and fraternal clubs were fading. Puerto Ricans in New York City found themselves in similar situations as Cubans as they too fought for independence from imperial rule and imagined a multiracial future. In fact, with the creation of "La Liga", a society created to "elevate the character of men of color born in Cuba and Puerto Rico", Puerto Ricans and Cubans became linked both politically and racially.[97]

Unlike Cubans, Puerto Ricans were stuck in a unique position of being complete subjects of the American government without citizenship after the Spanish American War. After 1902,

[96] Nancy Raquel Mirabal, *Suspect Freedoms the Racial and Sexual Politics of Cubanidad in New York, 1823-1957*, 62–96.
[97] Nancy Raquel Mirabal, 112; See also Jesse. Hoffnung-Garskof, *Racial Migrations New York City and the Revolutionary Politics of the Spanish Caribbean*.

Cubans were under the economic and political influence of the United States but had their own government.[98] In 1900 after the passage of the Foraker Act, Puerto Ricans obtained symbolic control with a popularly elected civilian government but the United States appointed high-level officials and squashed any attempt of independence. Puerto Ricans, who had formed strong coalitions with Cubans, began to diverge in their goals after American citizenship was granted to Puerto Ricans in the 1917.[99] Where once Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latinx people were engaging in explicit relational racial thinking and imagining a multiracial future, by 1920 that future was complicated by anti-Black, anti-Immigrant, and White supremacist ideologies on a national scale. Latinx people in New York City continued to work towards a better future but their complicated statuses, labor concerns, and economic situations all contributed to the dissolution of the pre-World War I communities.

Unlike many Romani communities, the Latinx populations of New York City had fairly stable political organizing throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. The category of "Brown", which would become a signifier of less desirable labor and racial inferiority in the early 20th century, did not apply to Romani people as neatly. New York's Latinx populations were largely made up of non-Mexican nationals during the early 20th century, even after the US Border Patrol was created.[100] But like the policing regime of the Southern border which targeted people on their status as "Mexican Browns", Romani people were apprehended crossing the border as they were "swarthy" and sometimes "Brown."[101] Though the racialization that affected

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[98] See more in Lorrin Thomas, *Puerto Rican Citizen : History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City*, 1–3; Gabriel Haslip-Viera, *Boricuas In Gotham*; Sherrie L. Baver, Angelo Falcón, and Gabriel Haslip-Viera, *Latinos in New York : Communities in Transition*; Paul Ortiz, *an African American and Latinx History of the United States*.

[99] See more about this period in Lorrin Thomas, *Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City*.

100 For more on the BP and the creation of the "Mexican Brown" category see Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra!*

101 See more about this particular example of Romani border crossing in Sheila Salo, "The Flight into Mexico, 1917"; Sheila Salo, "An American Rom Family in the World, C. 1918-1949."

Latinx people also had limited influence on the Roma, it was not until the 1930s when the relational racial projects were cemented into discourse and practice, whereby even presently Romani refugees are apprehended crossing the Southern border as "illegal aliens" and "Brown." In the City itself, Roma likely crossed paths with many of the Latinx communities in areas in Northern Manhattan, Harlem, and Queens and accounts in the middle 20th century also highlight Latinx folks becoming customers of the Romani fortune tellers.[102]

1.2.4 Native Americans and Romani Relational Racial Projects

While the City of New York itself was built on Native land, by 1890 few New Yorkers imagined American Indian people part of the modern city as individuals. Beginning with the infamous "selling" of Manhattan to the Dutch in the 17th century, centuries-long acts of settler colonialism, genocide, and ethnic cleansing had worked to both literally and figuratively erase Indigenous people from the City. By the 19th century American Indians had been pushed out of their former settlements throughout New York and moved westward or onto reservations in the northern part of the state.[103] However while fewer Native Americans remained in New York City, stereotypes and representations about them circulated widely among non-Indian people. [104] As Philip Deloria has stated regarding the founding of "societies" and "organizations" modelled after "Indians", "[non-Indian people] used Indian play to act out a story about their identity as Americans."[105] It was through these actions of Anglo Americans "Playing Indian" that they affixed the representations of American Indians in popular media, politics, and cultural platforms

102 See chapter 3-4 about these interactions with "Puerto Ricans" and other Latinx folks being highlighted as some of the victims of "Gypsies."
[103] See more in Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, chaps. 2–3.
[104] See more in L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*.
[105] Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 62.

around the country and especially in New York City.[106] Tammany Hall itself was named after Tamanend, a 17th century Lenape leader who took part in treaty negotiations which founded Pennsylvania. Indeed, as Deloria continues, "Playing Indian is a persistent tradition in American culture, stretching from the very instant of the national big bang into the ever-expanding present and future."[107] When the cultural practice of Playing Indian is contextualized as a part of relational race formation, it helps us understand how race was shaped in New York. "Playing Indian" not only served to push a national White identity, but also signals a racial project which highlights an ever-present sense of difference, untamed humanity, and defiance taken up from an imagined Indian representation.

What "Playing Indian" does not explicitly signal however is the relational racial theory motivating and rationalizing such play. One New Yorker who understood this was prominent Progressive reformer Arthur Parker. A Seneca man, Parker was employed as an archaeologist by the State Museum and a founding member of the Society of American Indians (SAI). Unlike the social clubs or uplift organizations run by Whites such as Friends of the American Indian, the Red Men and Tammany Societies, American Indians ran the SAI. These progressive Indians addressed issues of education, housing, and citizenship from an Indigenous point of view. Importantly, SAI also attempted to serve as a mediating force between prominent progressives and federal officials that sought to destroy tribal life and those who wanted to preserve aspects. Parker, who wrote on the topic of New York Indians and Indian welfare to large audiences of American Indian and non-Indian people alike, was pragmatic in his approach in forming an Indigenous response to assimilation policy. Parker regarded incorporation via citizenship as

[106] New York City was home to some of the biggest fraternal societies and chapters including the Tammany Society, Society of Red Men, and Improved Order of Red Men—all White organizations.
[107] Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 7.

inevitable, while noting that profound historical injustices had been inflicted on American Indian people by the federal government.[108] Parker and his SAI colleagues utilized relational racial thinking in their publications when discussing the importance of American Indian education and welfare. The SAI Quarterly Journal from 1915 states, "The more ignorant, uncouth and unruly the Indian the greater need of expert help. The Indian will never be civilized by brutality, by the taskmaster, overlord, or by the politically appointed job hunter who has no other qualifications than his pull with the boss."[109] Here, there is an implied reference to the slavery of African Americans and the inability for the American Indian to be "civilized" under such conditions. At the same time, SAI and Parker advocated for education and recognition of their Indian roots by the government, as well as the protection of citizenship to safeguard their lands and their histories. In same the issue of the quarterly there is an article by Dr. Charles Eastman, a prominent Sisseton-Wahpeton activist, physician, and reformer, where he too states:

> "*How has he contributed to the world's progress? By his personal faithfulness to duty and devotion to a trust. He has not advertised his faithfulness nor made capital of his honor. Again, and again he has proved his worth of history and of the world, by his constancy in hardship and death. Racial antagonism was to him no excuse for him to break his word."*[110]

Like Parker, Eastman emphasizes the inherent capabilities of American Indians while noting their racial difference and the racism which exists for them as a group. Parker and Eastman used their experiences as youth on reservations and within communities of tradition to navigate a precarious position between Indian and non-Indian reformers. Parker, using his historical training and position as an archaeologist, manages to insert American Indians into New York

[108] Arthur Caswell Parker and Seymour B. Durst, *the New York Indian Complex and How to Solve It.*; Arthur Caswell Parker, *the Archeological History of New York*.
[109] Society of North American Indians. *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, 4.
[110] Society of North American Indians. 17.

history and emphasizes the "value" of the Indian to the non-Indians. [111] Overall, Parker and the SAI used concepts parallel to those forwarded today by relational racial theorists in their writings, learning from other groups, and highlighting the similarities and comparisons as they advocate for a future where American Indians have more of voice in their own communities and welfare.[112]

While American Indians and Romani people certainly interacted throughout the centuries in the United States, urban interactions between Native people and Roma are harder to come by.[113] However, the most salient link between the relational racial projects of the two groups can be found in the non-Native and Romani peoples ongoing delight in utilizing representations of the two groups to assert their "Americanness" and freedom. Where anti-modern primitivists and those "Playing Indian" may have explicitly drawn on the "Indian" representation, those "Playing Gypsy" also utilized the common thread of nature, mobility, and primitivism to shape the "Gypsy" figure into an American stereotype more covertly. While spatially American Indian people in the City may have never met or interacted with an American Roma by the early 1900s, their representations via popular culture already began to meet and become entangled.[114]

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[111] In many ways Parker uses the relational experiences of Immigrants to emphasize the potential for American Indians to be "Americanized", not through their labor like African Americans, but through their history and their "spirit" tied to the American soil. This sentiment was shared and circulated further by Non- Indians like Joseph Kossuth Dixon and Rodman Wannamaker in department stores, photographs, and "primers" on American Indians. Parker along with SAI draws on the national patriotic fervor of the era and highlights the status of American Indians as the "first Americans" in writing, while Dixon and Wannamaker utilize photography as a moralizing "Americanization" medium. (Alan. Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans*, 211–78.. Arthur Caswell Parker and Seymour B. Durst, *the New York Indian Complex and How to Solve It.*)

[112] It should be noted that SAI and Parker are also critiqued heavily for their support of boarding schools, education, and assimilation policies and their selectiveness in their representations, yet they also utilize distinct relational racial thinking when highlighting the ways in which American Indians interact, engage, and work with others aside from "White" people.

[113] There are examples of the groups meeting however in other parts of the United States and in fact a number of years ago the author was told a story by an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) elder who remembered "Gypsies" coming to the "Rez" in the 1940s. For more see Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Konrad Bercovici, *The Story of the Gypsies.*, chap. 11; Stanley R. M. Fryer, "The Romany and the North-American Indian."

[114] See more in Chapter 3 about "Gypsy Madness"

Throughout the period of 1890-1960, "Indians" and "Gypsies" are often interpreted and represented as two sides of the same coin where performers could make a simple switch in costume to embody the other, a topic which is explored in chapter three. The representation of American Indians had a major influence on the public's perception of the "Gypsy", as they were an accessible and similar representation which signaled similar values and beliefs. While American Indians experienced the effect of non-Native peoples "Playing Indian", the long-lasting effect of those performances meant that New Yorkers already had a "racial script" to draw upon when "Playing Gypsy" for the first time.[115]

1.2.5 Italians, Irish, and Romani Relational Racial Projects

Italians, who had begun immigrating en mass to the United States by 1880, were almost immediately represented as inferior peoples compared to the "Natives" of Claghorn's map.[116] Part of this racialization stemmed perhaps from the demographics of the Italian immigrants. Largely made up of single young to middle-aged men, most Americans saw the new arrivals as potential risks both morally and racially, as they could "pollute" the "White" population and also take advantage of America's riches to send back to their dreaded Catholic homeland. By 1895 with the publication of the "Tenement Housing Committee Report" there were 18,347 Italians enumerated in their tenement house survey, making up the largest "nationality."[117] From the beginning, Italians were scrutinized as dangerous peoples and were discursively and physically abused by "Whites" in New York. Thus, encounters with Italians may have already been

[115] "Racial scripts" are tools which scholar Natalia Molina highlights in her work and are particular useful when thinking about racial performances such as "Playing Indian" and "Gypsy Madness" in the latter 1910s and 20s. For more see Natalia. Molina, *How Race Is Made in America : Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*.
[116] Here "Native" is signaling Anglo-Americans and the emerging "White" consciousness
[117] New York (State). *Report of the Tenement House Committee as Authorized by Chapter 479 of the Laws of 1894.*, 104.

mediated through this sort of "stranger danger" complex, where Italians were created as an idealized "stranger" before they even interacted with others.[118] With these representations came a pseudo-scientific answer for those biological differences in the form of an inherent lack of morality shared by non-Whites. Here, Italians and especially young male Italians shared a racial project with African Americans, as they were also categorized as deviant strangers in their own right. While these dynamics may have gone largely unrecognized or unsaid by many of the people in the streets, more often than not this relational discursive "stranger" status circulated in newspapers, pamphlets, conferences, and legislative halls, and was a powerful basis for the politics of Italians themselves.

According to people like Gino Speranza, an affluent Italian American New Yorker, for Italians to achieve citizenship, they must ensure they were surrounded by others who held similar values. This fits a pattern noted by scholars with many representatives of particular communities advocating for members to form close knit bonds within communities while also learning English, practicing their civic duties, and becoming naturalized.[119] As Molina, Ho Sang, and Gutierrez state in "Relational Racial Formations", "race is not legible or significant outside a relational context….to inhabit, claim, or be ascribed a particular racialized identity or grouping is to be located in an assemblage of historical and contemporary relationships."[120] The relationships and connections that Italians had were discursively highlighted by Speranza, and were not just connected to the coveted White middle class center but also to the other groups who occupied a racialized position close to the Italians. Thus, Speranza's allusions speak to the

[118] See more in Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*.
[119] See more in David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*; David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*; Leslie Ann. Hahner, *To Become an American Immigrants and Americanization Campaigns of the Early Twentieth Century*.
[120] Natalia Molina, Ramon Gutiérrez, and Daniel HoSang, *Relational Formations of Race*, 7.

ways in which people advocating on behalf of immigrants saw their countryman's positions, not completely static but dynamic and shared. The Italians *needed* to highlight their relationships to others to ensure they were not seen as the "cast offs" or "defectives."[121]

Speranza was called to speak to the U.S. Congress on behalf of his Italian countrymen several times between 1911 and 1919, addressing several members of the Dillingham Commission themselves in an attempt to sway their views on Italian restriction.[122] Speranza notes that Italians possessed "different racial characteristics" but those differences were "lost in the mass" and the Italians were "thoroughly Americanized."[123] Speranza points to two different and seemingly antithetical positions where one could be racialized as an inferior person but also be "thoroughly Americanized" and supposedly equal (although we know that at the time of his writing there was clearly inequality built into the laws). This rhetoric mirrors what scholar Thomas Guglielmo found within his study of Italians in Chicago.[124] In Chicago Italians were able to be "Americanized" utilizing labor unions to gain political power while still being represented as racially inferior until after the middle of the 20th century. Whereas Guglielmo shows how Americanization came through their close-knit Italian communities and their unions, Speranza saw a more heavy-handed Americanization efforts by the state as necessary for Italians to survive.

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[121] See more about the category of "defectives" in Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*.
[122] Gino Speranza, "Gino Speranza Papers", n. Box 35. Speranza interestingly claims that Southern Italians are indeed Caucasian and are deficit due to their education. Speranza also discusses with the Immigration Commission his thoughts on William Williams tenure at Ellis Island, whom he calls a "sturdy type."; Benton- Cohen's monograph goes much more in depth into the workings and personalities that made up the infamous Dillingham Committee who ultimately helped shape the 1924 Immigration Act. See Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Inventing the Immigration Problem*.
[123] Gino Speranza, Box 35 Folder 6; this sentiment seems oddly similar to the argument that Wall makes regarding Italians post WWII in Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the American Way: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement*.
[124] Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*.

Irish Americans had a different racial formation during the same period as Italians connected to their racial status as poor colonial subjects of the former American colonizers more than their somatic differences. Irish Americans also did have the advantage of having strong backings from Tammany Hall and were used by the Democratic powerhouse as an ethnic front against other foreign-born Americans. The Irish in many senses seemed to fair better than the Italians and others in the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, as scholar Hidetaka Hirota notes, impoverished Irish in the *first half of the 19th century* were used as fodder for the growing undercurrent of nativism in New York and were often being deported by states utilizing older colonial laws against the poor.[125] For Noel Ignatiev it was precisely this status as closer to "White" which allowed them to climb the racial "ladder" by denigrating and mirroring the racial antagonism towards African Americans while cementing themselves to the Democrats in the City.[126] Irish American quality of life was better once they had established themselves in particular economic and civil positions such as the police force.[127] By the time the 1895 Tenement Housing Committee report was published Irish were the second largest group in the study with 12,519 people in the survey.[128] At the same time, since many Irish had immigrated earlier in the middle of the nineteenth century some of the numbers may be inaccurate as some Irish may have been deemed "White" or "Native" due to their social class and connections. However, it was not just Irish Americans vilification of African Americans and staunch anti-Black rhetoric which created the opportunity for them to eventually be "Whitened"; it was also their ability to form relationships with other groups who latched onto the racial science of the era

[125] Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor*.
[126] See more in Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*.
[127] For more about more recent ethnic solidarity between Irish and other groups see Paul Moses, *an Unlikely Union*.
[128] New York (State). *Report of the Tenement House Committee as Authorized by Chapter 479 of the Laws of 1894.*, 104.

to establish their "White" bona fides. This meant that although they, for a time, were not considered "Caucasian" they utilized their "Celtic" racial status to highlight their imagined history and their connections to great civilizations like the Italians and their "Roman" ancestry. Again, it is evident that looking at Irish Americans in a vacuum limits the fields in which they themselves were entering and interacting. Irish did not always appear as racial individuals, but as racial groups connected to others long before and after their initial immigration. It was through these subtle connections and relationships with spaces and people that Irish Americans discursively shaped their racialization and helped shift their racial projects over time.

Importantly, people like William Bourke Cochran, a well-known Irish born Democratic politician of the late 19th century and early 20th century, made it his mission to speak for his "race." Bourke Cochran spent much of his career working to change public opinion and laws about Irish and other immigrants. Like many of the Irish born Americans in New York, Bourke Cochran fashioned himself as staunchly anti-imperialist and condemned the taking of the Philippines by the United States along with opposing the treatment of Irish and the South African governments by the British Empire. For his part, Bourke Cochran also addressed the racial issues which he, like many others, saw as mostly a "southern problem"—the emergence of Jim Crow and more overt racial animosity. In May 1900, Bourke Cochran travelled to Montgomery, Alabama to speak at the first annual "Conference of the Race Problems of the South."[129] There in Montgomery, Bourke Cochran conveyed a type of relational thinking as he discussed the issues of the "Negro" alongside not only the "White" man but the "Immigrant" and his own people.[130] He, like many of his progressive cohort, often expressed seemingly contradictory views on issues of race, gender, and human rights throughout his tenure in the Senate. Thus, at

[129] William Bourke Cochran, "William Bourke Cochran Papers", fol. Box 23 Folder 7.
[130] William Bourke Cochran, fol. Box 23.

the conference he discusses the absolute distinction between the race of the "Negro" and the "White" man while at the same time stating his disdain for the extralegal lynching's occurring throughout the nation. At the 1900 conference Bourke Cochran states:

> "Plainly, the colored man is the greatest sufferer from this attempt to abolish the natural distinctions of race by constitutional provisions, but the injury to the White man is also grave. To take human life, except under the most solemn sanction of justice, is always brutalizing. To take it outside the law in the name of justice is to trample upon all law. It may well be a question whether a community, going outside the law for vengeance, is not perpetrating a graver offense than any which it might seek to punish."[131]

Bourke Cochran is careful to tread a line of empathy and racial thinking which firmly places groups into absolute siloed categories. At the same time, he notes how coexistence and especially economic prosperity could be achieved utilizing the lessons learnt from the immigrants and the other non-White groups throughout time. Here, Bourke Cochran highlights something that both Italians and Irish relied on to push back against their racialization—labor power. Subtly Cochran makes a rhetorical move which David Roediger highlights in his seminal book *Wages of Whiteness* whereby progressives believed labor power is the driving force behind racial positionality and racial representation.[132] Bourke Cochran further states that "The Black man has a capacity for work and the White man wants him to work… the capacity of the Negro for work refutes the theory {…} that the Negro is essentially a barbarian, incapable of civilization, and certain in a state of freedom to develop irresistible savagery."[133] In the same breath Bourke Cochran makes another relational comparison with the "Indian" who perished under "civilization" while the "Negro" increases in numbers and prospers. While not altogether new in his comparison, it is notable that he makes the relationship between the two groups central while not mentioning the White men who brought "civilization." Cochran, perhaps in line with other

[131] William Bourke Cochran, fol. Box 23 Pg. 8 of speech.
[132] See more in David R. Roediger, *the Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*.
[133] William Bourke Cochran, "William Bourke Cochran Papers", fol. Box 23 Pg. 12 of speech.

intellectuals and politicians at the time, plays with this analogy and utilizes the progressive narrative of racial and moral change to highlight the disappearance of "savages" from the landscape and the march of "civilization" viz-a-viz labor and normative social behaviors. He especially used economic logic to point to the potential for the African Americans of the South to prevail, to succeed in their push for equality, at least under law.

At the same time Roma who were entering into the United States, although not necessarily marked as "Gypsies", still had to endure the scrutiny of their non-White peers. Like the Irish and Italians, early "Gypsy" immigration was met with the fear of unproductive labor and racial mixing.[134] Unlike the Irish and Italians, Roma did not have a similar organizational and social history which to rely on and utilize in different venues. Thus, advocates for the Roma were often not Roma themselves but were early racial scientists and anthropologists more interested in preserving their unique history and race than advocating for social reforms which would allow Romani Americans to thrive. Even Western Roma, who had more somatic similarities to other Europeans, had challenges likely due to their social class, occupations, or social fears borne out a European imaginary which depicted "Gypsies" as vagrants, thieves, and capable of witchcraft and sorcery.[135] Relational racial theory aided through the application of Hall's take on the role of "discourse" in race, allows a more nuanced view of these possible encounters between Americans and newly arrived Roma, as it emphasizes the connections between the populations and highlights the racial formations that Roma were entering into; built

[134] See more about early instances of interactions between Roma and others in Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "'An Egiptian and Noe Xtian Woman': Gypsy Identity and Race Law in Early America"; Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "Contextualizing American Gypsies: Experiencing Criminality in the Colonial Chesapeake"; Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Konrad Bercovici, *The Story of the Gypsies.*, chap. 11.

[135] Angus M. Fraser, *The Gypsies*; Leeds University Library, "Fraser Collection;" Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*; Michael O hAodha and Ian F. Hancock, *Migrant and Nomad*; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*; David Crowe, *a History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; Jodie Matthews, *the Gypsy Woman: Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*.

discursively upon the Irish, Italian, Southern European but also the Black, Asian, and Native racial projects. As the Irish and Italians managed to utilize their social organization, labor power, and political alliances, Roma were forced to circumvent and elude the discourses and material forces which pushed for their deportation and removal from the multiethnic City. Irish and Italians also had the documented history to utilize as a tool regarding their preferred status over time, something which Romani Americans could not point to.

The 1890s becomes a central turning point for New York's racial formations as newly arriving non-White immigrants were met with new "scientific" nativism, disenfranchisement of Blacks, expulsion of the poor, exclusion of Asians, and the closing of the frontier. Racial projects for each group move from being largely based on legal logics to projects which are scaffolded by popular culture and issues of space and separation emphasized through racial science. At the end of the 1890s, the respective social groups discussed had been racialized through various modalities – laws, cultural productions, individual prejudice– not only on the axis of Whiteness, but in discourse and in relation to one another.[136] While African Americans during the Reconstruction period were also subject to discrimination and racial attacks, they had yet to be disenfranchised by the Southern Democrats and Jim Crow laws, and thus had some social mobility and political power. Some African Americans justified their racial positions in opposition to Chinese, and although by most accounts many White peoples (at this time Whiteness was still being made and was fragmented) still viewed African Americans as inferior, they were more desirable than the "damned coolies."[137] However, by the 1890s and the creation

[137] For more on the racialization of Chinese, "coolies" as a category, and the role of popular culture, law, and race in shaping Chinese American experiences see John Kuo Wei. Tchen, *New York before Chinatown : Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882*; Erika Lee, *At America's Gates*; Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America*; Erika Lee, *America for Americans*.

of modernized immigration regimes, African Americans' positions of power were being stripped and their positions within the racial order was denigrated to that of lesser citizens adjacent to Chinese and increasingly Southern and Eastern Europeans. Mexican and Latinx Americans, many who resided in the South and West, were positioned as the eternal immigrant, and although some were accepted because of their connections to Spanish identity, many were also second-class citizens and non-citizens, capable of working the land but without full rights.[138] Roma entering into the United States thus had to find a position in which they "fit."

Unfortunately, due to the power of racial discourses Roma often did not "fit" into established categories nor were they able to rely on existing relationships made between groups. Instead, between 1890 and 1920 Romani Americans navigated a treacherous terrain of race which precluded the possibility of their "Americanization" or "White" status without further support from other racialized and "White" adjacent people.

1.3 The Strange Mechanizations of Race and the Power of the Camera

It is in this period that what we might call the "mechanization of race" occurs on a broad scale through newspapers, ephemera, photographs, and in the modernizing discourse of politics, science, and social order. By 1900 race was highlighted and "played" with alongside the emerging concept of "culture." Stark contrasts between peoples and groups were highlighted while any connections between them were downplayed except when comparing their progression towards "civilization." By analyzing mass media accounts side by side with writings of immigration officials, legislators, labor leaders, progressive actors, and the racialized peoples

[138] For more about the racialization of Latinx folks and the development of a racial-labor-mobility constellation see Neil. Foley, *The White Scourge : Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*; Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra!*; Natalia. Molina, *How Race Is Made in America : Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*.

themselves, the overlaps, interconnections, and relationships become visible. New York City's relational racial formations were perhaps most clear when looking at the immigration photographs and archives of immigration officials during the peak of foreign-born immigration to the United States from 1890 to 1920. It was within the mechanical reproductions of visual race that Roma appear on the American landscape and enter into racialized spaces such as New York City for the first time. It is also during that period when race making becomes a mechanized process visible in immigration regimes, practices on the ground, and circulation of artifacts which signaled racial differences. It is the mechanization of race that makes the period from 1890 to 1920 incredibly important to the rest of the 20th century as the racial ideologies were cemented into the sociopolitical world of Gotham and the United States for decades to come. Likewise, it's from the heart of the most American City that images and artifacts of the "Gypsy" circulated, with a steady increase in "Gypsy" and "Gypped" appearing in media from 1880-1930, making it highly likely that most literate and visual people encountered them in the same period when actual Romani people were first coming to New York in significant numbers.[139]

By the 1890s, New Yorkers also had a new tool to categorize and visualize race: the camera. The rudimentary daguerreotype which had been developed some 60 years prior to the 1890s had changed the idea of art, science, and visual reproduction and altered the idea that "life", or what Walter Benjamin called "aura", could be captured and circulated.[140] But daguerreotypes were expensive, lengthy processes which often precluded many people outside the upper class from having access to the technology. As Alan Trachtenberg points out in his

[139] This impression is based on Google Ngram stats for US English (where the graph increases steadily with the percentage of mentions in books which have been documented by Google from the period) and a keyword search of American Historical Newspapers (378 results) narrowed to the publication area of New York and aforementioned years. Note that this is in no way a conclusive data set but is simply an impression of the number of mentions of the terms. More analysis regarding these terms and artifacts follows in Chapter 3.
[140] Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt, *Illuminations*.

study of Matthew Brady's daguerreotype images of "illustrious Americans" made during the 1850s, daguerreotypists sought to preserve the "moral character" of the portrait and indeed, sought to elevate daguerreotypes and eventually photographs as art and the photographer as the national historian.[141] By framing this early visual intervention in this manner, Brady and others created a market for a national civic consciousness around visual reproductions as representatives of "American" values, which coalesced in the form of White male leadership.

The camera not only created another visual layer to the racial discourse but also lent itself to experimentation, and eventually the destabilization of racial scripts where racialized people themselves captured images. However, in this first period of camera work, photographs were often controlled, created, and circulated irrespective of the subjects themselves and often through the emerging popular cultural venues and routes. By 1890, the film camera had been in use for some time and was steadily increasing in prominence as a way to both portray the life and peoples of the City and as an avenue for social commentary and artistic expression. Photographers became professional and indeed managed to use their skills to capture images for tourists and journalists alike, adding an economic motivator to the once coveted and magical skillset.[142] Architectural and landscape photographs were highly sought by collectors and lay people alike in an effort to show New York "as it was" in the time of change. Photographs like the ones below, taken in 1890 and 1895 respectively, show the scenery of the City, but do not show the people at a scale where one could interpret what was occurring.[143] People like Alice Austen crafted images of "types" of people—perhaps working from the "culture" concept which

[141] Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, chap. 1.
[142] See more in Joseph Byron, *New York Life at the Turn of the Century in Photographs*.
[143] See more in Mary Black, *Old New York in Early Photographs,1853-1901*, 16–17.

was being used to create fixed sociobiological discourses about certain peoples—including "peddlers", and "immigrants."[144]

Meanwhile, an "immigrant" himself, Jacob Riis, changed the world of photography for good when he captured images of social conditions used as "evidence" of inequality and strife.[145] Riis' work fit nicely within the emerging social progressive movement, where the "social" and "society" were often depicted as a festering problem needing to be reformed, all of which became part of the everyday discourse of lay people and politicians alike. It was the documentary



Photographs 1: South Street and the Harbor, 1890



Photographs 2: Coenties Slip, 1895

[144] Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, chap. 4.
[145] See Riis' work in Jacob August Riis, *Out of Mulberry Street*; Jacob August Riis, *A Ten Years' War*; Jacob August Riis, *The Battle with the Slum*; Jacob August Riis, *The Children of the Poor*; Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives, Special Illustrated Edition*.

power of the photographs themselves, and importantly their circulation in media, which made the shift from photography of and for "illustrious Americans" to photography as a tool for socio-political discourses around immigration, labor, and race. In New York City, the crusaders behind the progressive movement utilized photographs to critique the opulent wealthy class and economic bedlam, but rarely drew the solid connections between "race" and "class" that were evidenced in their subjects. Far from critiquing the systems themselves, the photographers and reformers sought to use photographs to show the gaps, not the rotten core. Increasingly, as Alan Trachtenberg outlines in *Reading American Photographs*, what made American photography different was the question of photography as either a tool or an art form.[146] Photographers like Riis and Lewis Hine (another contemporary of Riis) sought to establish photography as a tool for visualizing and sharing social situations, whereas people like Alfred Stieglitz sought to frame photography as an artform in the tradition of the great American artists.[147]

What neither school of thought could imagine were the ways in which the photographs made in the City would add fodder to the discourses around race, used as a tool for people to alternately deny race and elevate it visually. The major circulating photographs do little to highlight the situation on the ground with the shifting populations and dynamic constructions; instead the widely circulated images were those of landmarks, famous individuals, or individual stories of social strife. On the macro scale, the photographs do not fully capture the racial formations of the City as visually complex and interwoven populations of racialized people occupied spaces, but photographs showed contained and clean lines and subjectivities. Even people like Stieglitz who may have been able to break the mold by adding an artistic "lens" to the racial discourse focused more on natural phenomenon like rain, fog, and haze in the streets.

[146] Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, 172.
[147] Alan Trachtenberg, 169; Kate Sampsell-Willmann, *Lewis Hine as Social Critic*; Timothy J. Duerden, *Lewis Hine*.

The alliances and relationships formed through discursive and interpersonal means are absent until the collections of the photographs are collaged together and re-visualized through the lens of race. But even that action would be an incomplete accounting as there is simply a lack of racialized subjects being portrayed as citizens of New York itself. Instead, what we see is that the photographs of the City are mechanized and politicized apart from their racial background, and it's only when we move out to Ellis Island where "racial types" get visualized that we can see how the relational discourse functions.

The 1890s and the beginning of widespread camera use thus serve as a catalyst for the next 30 years of relational racial projects and discourses implemented on the streets of New York. An increasing number of immigrants begin to make their way to the City, capturing the imagination and concern of officials, reformers, and scientists as they try to envision an American polity which includes non-Whites. At the same time, African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, and colonial subjects of color began to make their way to the City and form their own communities alongside and intersecting with the immigrant populations. This myriad of non-White peoples spurred the creation of more complex discursive methods of categorizing and scrutinizing by the state and cultural institutions. No longer were "No Irish" signs the norm, but instead the signs would have to be lengthened, questioned, and likely abandoned as markers of difference were more difficult to ascertain and Irish became "White" or "Native" on the maps. At the same time, those in power attempted to categorize people through legal, social, and cultural means, creating new layers to the racial projects of the era and advancing a more scientific view of race. Legal categories such as "Negro" became more complicated with different markers of Blackness, just as American Indians were being counted throughout the state, and Asian American population growth was mostly flat due to exclusion.

Relational racial theory, which privileges the ways in which different racialized peoples interacted *and were created* through those exchanges, is essential in examining the racial landscape of New York City. New York, more than most places, *is and was* a place of intense racial interactions and relationships, and while it may be neater to quantify and present their stories as bounded communities in maps, it is not reflective of the on the ground interactions and discourses which were being had at the time. By re-envisioning New York and New Yorkers through a relational lens, it becomes clearer that causality and racial projects were murkier than we might hope and more complex than what is written. Furthermore, when this recasting of New York history is done it shows how Roma themselves had to navigate the world built precariously on shifting ideas and projects. Instead of seeing the instances of Romani encounters in New York as flashes which recede into darkness, we must reflect on the ways in which Romani presence structured New York City even without their physical traces on the landscape. Similar to the ways in which American Indians lack of presence in the City physically marked a place as civilized while the abundance of people "Playing Indian" captured the imagined essence of their "savage" nature, the lack of Romani archival presence did little to dissuade the use of the "Gypsy" as a popular "exotic" representation. Throughout the next chapters, I argue that relational racial theory and the power of discourse informs all of the interactions and encounters within the archives, increasingly through more mechanized and "modernized" means. Immigration officials utilizing "modern" science, politicians pontificating on the "American character" of the nation, and reformers offering racial "improvement" and "uplift" all used relational ways of thinking through racial difference as much as their subjects of scrutiny did in their everyday lives. Highlighting some of these historical actors and structures will shed light on the scripts, expectations, and representations that New Yorkers used to make sense of Roma

people. Perhaps no other place exemplifies the convergence of all these processes than the one place where Roma people first stepped foot in New York and in the United States: Ellis Island.

Chapter 2 : They Came Like Gypsies in the Night: Immigration Regimes and Visuality



Photographs 3: "Servian" Gypsies, 1905

A photograph of "Gypsies" haunts my office wall as I write this chapter. Its slightly distorted edges and sepia tones mark it as an artifact from a different era. Yet even while it seems out of place within the confines of my cluttered office, the subjective forms and their expressions visually mark the photo's timelessness. The eyes of most subjects within photographs seem to hold the viewer's attention, as if they were closing the gap between the space and time which often separates one from another. This photograph is no different.

The woman's eyes hold my gaze as I look at them. The woman draws the eyes of the viewer, holding a child on her hip and staring at the photographer. She wears a hair scarf (*dikhlo*), a large skirt, and a blouse. The woman smiles from beneath her *dikhlo* and braids looking towards the photographer. The children seem to catch the viewers' eyes for brief moments with their gazes directed at something out of the frame's confines. The man in the photograph sits to the side with white shirt and dark trousers. He looks at the photographer without a discernible expression. The subjects seem to be outside and the man sits on a bench while the children sit on the ground. Looking at the photograph you can almost see the wind which rustles the hair of the man and the child in the woman's arms. The children are dressed in a variety of garments which are distinct from the other subjects. Who are these people and who took their photograph?

Unlike other photographs of Roma during the Progressive period, this one has a known photographer. His name was Augustus F. Sherman. Sherman was a clerical worker at Ellis Island and rose to a prominent position within the administration of early immigration Commissioners. Sherman, an amateur photographer, managed to take some of the most striking images of the newly arrived immigrants, often wearing their "traditional" garb. Sherman's talent in photography was soon regarded by the Commissioner of Ellis Island as an asset and the media ran photographs of some of the new immigrants as they docked at the station for processing. Sherman's photographs spanned from 1905 to his death in 1925 with many being captured during the first decade of the new century documenting the surge in immigration.[148]

The photograph of the "Servian Gypsies", like many of Sherman's, does not have much accompanying material, aside from hastily written notes or markers of national, and ethnic

[148] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005.

identity. The date of the "Servian Gypsy" photograph is 1905 and was one of Sherman's initial immigration photographs on the Island taken during the tenure of Commissioner Williams and his replacement.[149] The title of the photograph is simply "Hungarian Gypsy family" or alternately "Servian Gypsy Family." A second scribble records their fate: "deported."[150] After passing through the hallowed halls of burgeoning American patriotism prior to World War One this "Gypsy" family was likely shuffled back onto a boat and forced back to whence they came. Only a photograph remains of their imprint upon North American soil.

I chose to start this chapter with the story of the photograph to highlight several of the important themes that this dissertation will discuss:

First, the majority of Roma people who came to the United States passed through a legal, political, and bureaucratic membrane that I call an "immigration regime." I utilize the term *immigration regimes* to highlight the multi-faceted and often contested nature of the immigration policies and infrastructures of the period. Scholar Natalia Molina first utilized the concept of an immigration regime in her book "How Race is Made in America" and highlighted the ways in which legal, social, political, and cultural sources all remade racial categories and equated Mexican Americans with illegality and with being not fully American.[151] I extend her analysis and rework the idea of immigration regimes to highlight the plurality of experiences for other novel ethnic communities like Roma. A key part of my theorization of this immigration regime is the role of individual officials, clerks, and in this case, photographers, who processed the arrival of Roma people. While I argue that officials made contingent decisions about how to process

[149] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Reel 2 Box 5.
[150] William Williams, n. Reel 2 Box 5; Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005, 131.
[151] Natalia. Molina, *How Race Is Made in America : Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*, 1.

immigrants, over time their choices coalesced into patterns. A regime therefore implies the double meaning of something which becomes a repetitive practice often dictated from those in power and something which constrains or maintains those subjects of a governmental system. Hence, by using the term immigration regimes I want to highlight the ways in which those in power created and implemented a *practice* of immigration through their actions while also maintaining the stance that those in power also dictated the overall *process* often disregarding individuals within the regimes purview. Here importantly *process* implies the ideological and often idealized steps to get to the desired outcome whereas *practice* implies the actions taken on the ground. Individual actions sometimes followed said process but also deviated depending on the individual subjectivity, political positionality, and affect.[152]

Although I utilize the term immigration and immigrant throughout this chapter, many of the individuals and groups did not simply land in the United States and stay, many returned and circulated across borders. This is important to note as immigration histories and especially those which focus on European populations tend to frame the migration process as a unidirectional endeavor instead of the multi-directional journeys that many people undertook. For scholars such as Mark Wyman and Tara Zahra, the returned migrants and their experiences in Europe, the United States and elsewhere shaped the national formations occurring on both sides of the Atlantic.[153] Part of that "round trip" or "departure" from places involved newly sanctioned immigration officials, travel agents, business interests, and aid organizations.

[152] Practice theory and literature informed by Bourdieu is useful here when considering individual actions and the practice of daily life. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*; Bridget Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory : Critical Investigations*; Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu : Key Concepts*.
[153]See more about the circulation of immigrants to and from Europe and beyond in Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*; Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*.

Second, by splitting these regimes into two separate categories of analysis I am highlighting the disjuncture and missteps which are otherwise often narrated as monolithic and mechanized beyond human intervention. Rather, processes and practices of immigration regimes are two important parts of the ordering proclivities of both individual officials and the systems that they created. Some immigrants and officials were able to slip unnoticed through the immigration regimes regular ordering and constraining mechanisms even as the power of the immigration regimes were creating an order which would constrain the majority of the population entering the United States and maintaining an order and routine for those working for the regime. In turn, the immigration officials working for the regimes often maintained the stance that they were simply implementing the larger processes and discredited their own practices and individual choices in action.[154]

This chapter critically examines the late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigration regime which Roma people traversed in order to enter the United States. I argue that this regime was composed of two parts—processes and practices—that were formed at the meeting place between systems and individuals. In particular, I focus on William Williams and officials during his tenure who used the practice of photography at Ellis Island. Under Williams, men like Augustus Sherman began photographing immigrants, as a means to document the people officials encountered including Roma. Sherman's personal practice soon offered a template to the nascent immigration service to document and process people at a system-level. Consequently, William's time as commissioner and the accompanying photography he

[154] I also used regimes in the plural form to highlight that there were multiple ways that immigration controls were implemented in different locales and under different jurisdictions. Thus, scholars like Kelly Lytle Hernandez highlight the creation of the Border Patrol as a separate regime of immigration control at the same time that places like Ellis Island, which primarily processed immigrants from beyond continental North America, were controlled by a separate immigration regime. See more in Kelly Lytle Hernandez Migra!

commissioned offers a window into New York's immigration regime where Roma people were captured, documented, described, and ultimately imagined by Americans and the United States Government for the first time. While Roma were the subjects of film long after crossing through Ellis Island, their first depictions on film during Williams tenure offers an important window into the forces which shaped representations of "Gypsies" in the United States.

2.1 Early Roma Immigration to the United States

While most of the chapter focuses on Roma people at Ellis Island in the 1890s onwards, it is important to note the context of Romani immigration to the United States is much broader than this decade and in fact goes back to the colonial period. A brief examination into that history shows that there were already established Romani groups present in the Americas and thus some aspects of their racialization had occurred prior to the influx of the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the 20th century.

During the colonial period and up until the beginning of the 19th century there are several records of Roma entering the United States via the East Coast. According to scholar Anne Ostendorf, the first indication of a self-identifying Gypsy named Joanne Scott in 1695 in the Virginia colony suggests that more Romani people may have already been present in the states and have dealt with the authorities.[155] Likely, these Roma were Romany Gypsies (Romanichal) or Western European Roma who came to the New World as labor and perhaps seeking new opportunities for a better existence than afforded to them in Europe. However, some of these Romani peoples also came as transported individuals to be used for their labor, especially after 1713 when the 1597 Vagrancy Act was reissued, and English Justices were allowed greater

[155] See Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "'An Egiptian and Noe Xtian Woman': Gypsy Identity and Race Law in Early America"; Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "Contextualizing American Gypsies: Experiencing Criminality in the Colonial Chesapeake."

autonomy on deciding punishments for "undesirables[156] Ostendorf shows that far from being entirely new to American immigration regimes, colonial era "Gypsies" navigated their own path through the rudimentary judicial systems.[157]

Joanne Scott's case is interesting in this sense as she is the first to be classified and self-identifying as a Egyptian or "Gypsy" in colonial America and was successfully able to get a miscegenation case dropped due to her status as a "Gypsy" and non-Christian and thus not able to be judged on the same grounds as the English colonists.[158] Scott's case indicates that early colonists had at least a base understanding of early racial classifications borne of their English imaginary and colonial system where laws and culture were lifted from the Metropole to be implemented in the colony. Thus, it is likely that some early colonial subjects had a basic familiarity with the category "Gypsy" and where they fit within their Anglo-centric system as Roma had been in England since at least 1505. The presence of Roma women like Scott in the New World forced Euro-Americans to consider both old and new formations to understand "Gypsies" in what would become the United States.

However, unlike the immigration of Romani groups later in the 19th and 20th century there are little indications within the historical records that there were large groups of Roma entering the colonies or the United States. There are very few reliable estimates of the Romani population in the United States prior to the 20th century. This is partially due to the lack of complete immigration records during the period and also because many Romani people likely worked hard not to be identified due to their continued oppression in European society. Instead,

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[156] See Colin Clark and Margaret Greenfields, *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*.
[157] Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "'An Egiptian and Noe Xian Woman': Gypsy Identity and Race Law in Early America;" Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "Contextualizing American Gypsies: Experiencing Criminality in the Colonial Chesapeake."
[158] Ann Marguerite Ostendorf, "'An Egiptian and Noe Xian Woman': Gypsy Identity and Race Law in Early America."

it is after the massive migration from Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe that many more Roma from a variety of groups enter the United States in the latter half of the 19th century.[159] The initial immigration of Western Roma was complemented by an era of labor migration from Western Europe with Scots, English, and French making their way to New World as either indentured servants or as free peoples seeking land and fortunes. Western Roma entered the United States much in the same way, some as transported servants paying off their debt to society, or as small groups seeking opportunities in the New World. Although scant evidence is available about Romani life in this period it seems evident that most Roma managed to keep a low profile and passed when possible or at least kept out of most communications. That changed slightly with the turn of the 20th century when Eastern and Southern European conditions caused a mass exodus of many ethnic groups, often those that did not fit within the newly emerging world order.

In Europe, Roma and "Gypsies" had simultaneously been exoticized, fetishized, and stereotyped throughout the millennia. "Gypsy" women were especially prone to being represented as fetishized and sexualized objects which projected deviance, freedom, and Orientalist desire, at the same time that they were objects of hatred and state violence.[160] For non-Romani women late Victorian era norms were changing and with them were ideas of women suffrage, individuality, and sexuality. By the late 1890s English women and men were fascinated with the "Gypsies" of the United Kingdom as objects of a primordial mobile past and sought out ways to study, categorize, and catalogue their existence on the landscape. The Gypsy Lore Society was the most notable of these organizations (although it was not the only one), and its

[159] See more in David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities, 1500-2000*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*.
[160] See more in Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*; Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt, *The Role of the Romanies*.

members took meticulous observations and ethnographic journals of their lives in the United Kingdom.[161] One of the founders of the Gypsy Lore Society in 1888 was an American Charles Godfrey Leland, whose presence influenced a considerable amount of support from American enthusiasts and "Gypsylorists" by the early 1900s.[162] But it was not just men whose scholarly interests sometimes melded into personal identity crises, where they "Played Gypsy"; instead it was women who captured the public's imagination with their "Gypsy" lives.

In 1907 a member of a well-known aristocratic family in the United Kingdom sought out adventure and disguised herself as a "Gipsy" travelling the English countryside for several months.[163] Lady Grosvenor became "Sarah Lee" a lowly "Gipsy" woman travelling the countryside, "hawking", living on the heath, and pitching her camp along the roadside. Her story captured the imagination of the reading public for several weeks with her descriptions of life on the road, the hardships, the beauty, and the trials (note that her and her husband had a "manservant" along with and two caravans). Lady Grosvenor's "Playing Gypsy" moment was one of just many amongst the elite in Europe, but this practice eventually arrived in the United States which will be discussed further in this chapter.

Paired with the cultural representations of the early 20th century immigration period where "Gypsies" were everything from fashionable hats[164] to crones and hags, Roma themselves

[161] Several authors came into some prominence during the period, including George Borrow, Charles Godfrey Leland, R.A. MacRitchie, Francis Hindes Groome, and later Dora Yates amongst others.
[162] University of Liverpool, "Liverpool University Library"; Dora E Yates, "Bound Volume of News Cuttings (1693-1914) - Leeds University Library"; Leeds University Library, "Fraser Collection"; Leeds University Library, "Brotherton Collection." University of Liverpool, "Liverpool University Library"; Dora E Yates, "Bound Volume of News Cuttings (1693-1914) - Leeds University Library"; Leeds University Library, "Fraser Collection"; Leeds University Library, "Brotherton Collection."
[163] "Scott Macfie Gypsy Collection Press Cuttings. Vol. 5", fol. 5.1.1. "Scott Macfie Gypsy Collection Press Cuttings. Vol. 5", fol. 5.1.1.
[164] In the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century there was a popular woman's hat called the "Pamela hat", "Gipsy hat", or some variation of the two. In the United States, the references to this hat are present well into the twentieth century along with other fashions coded as "Gipsy" for their colors and cuts. Even today a simple web search produces many new variations of the hat which often features a slight brim, colors, and ornaments.

entered a discursive formation which, similar to the American Indians, they were fictive peoples or travelers lost in time.[165] As scholar Jodie Matthews notes, some of these gendered representations of Roma were not entirely new, but were connected to Orientalist fantasies, sexuality, and fantasies of deviance.[166]What is different is that these European representations had crossed the Atlantic and been paired with Americans ideas about race and difference informed by racial formations which included different groups of people. It is important then to note that these new 19th century and early 20th century encounters with "Gypsies" in text and visual materials become part of the emerging American cultural milieu propped up by signs plastered on every available space, pictures being turned into commercial objects, and texts circulated throughout the cramped City of New York.[167] These representations helped buttress the relational racial formations of the City as described in Chapter 1 and in the end meant that although a small number of Roma individuals were likely present in the City comparative to other groups their representations were already being circulated alongside other racialized groups These representations would also be carried from the City out into the harbor, where they converged with actual Roma people at a famous landmark: Ellis Island.

2.2 Islands of Immigrants and Romani Traces: Ellis Island

With the wave of Irish and German immigrants coming to the United States from the 1840s to 1860s New York City needed a central location to vet immigrants and create practices which would influence policies beyond the City and even the state. This was especially true after the inception of the Board of Commissioners of Emigration in 1847 which created a small paper

[165] See section on Romani racial formations and Chapter 3 for more information about this trend.
[166] Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman: Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*.
[167] See more about the visible texts and statements which overtook the City in the 19th century in David Henkin, *City Reading*.

trail of immigrants coming into the port but immigration policy was still piecemeal and pushed the burden of documentation on the ship owners.[168] A central location was needed to consolidate all of the documentation and actual people arriving in New York City. That place became known as Castle Gardens. Located at the southern tip of Manhattan in 1855 the New York State legislature approved the lease of the land to the Commission of Emigration and Castle Gardens was born. However, it was not until 1858 that the immigration station at the renamed Castle Gardens was occupied and opened for business. The New York State Immigration Commission occupied various buildings in the dockyard area prior to 1858 and were ultimately forced into using Castle Gardens due to rampant disease in the makeshift centers.[169] Castle Gardens changed some of the piecemeal immigration procedures with the passage of the Carriage Act of 1855 (reinforcing the Steerage Act of 1819), which controlled the number of passengers, food stores, and general conditions on passenger ships.[170] However, such acts were difficult to enforce and insufficient in regards to the number of passengers attempting to make the journey from an overpopulated Europe to the United States.[171] Rather than simply one facility located in the fort itself, Castle Garden's was two separate departments with the "depot" at the fort and a "hospital and refuge" on Ward's Island.[172]

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[168] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of New York for the Year 1898", 971; See also Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor*.
[169] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of New York for the Year 1898", 973. The report highlights the issues on the battery area prior to Castle Gardens including outbreaks and issues with local companies.
[170] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*, chap. 2.
[171] See more about this problem in Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*; Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design : Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*; David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses : The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*.
[172] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of New York for the Year 1898", 973.

In the report to the State legislature in 1898, the officials from the Bureau of Labor Statistics state "The immigrants were well cared for", and "those, who through fatal disease or helplessness were likely to become a public charge, were placed under proper surveillance until arrangements were made for their deportation."[173] It was not long before the Castle Gardens facility was endangered by a "class" of people working for booking agents, boarding houses, railroad employees, and the public against immigration, forcing commission agents to "carry loaded firearms in self-defense against the violence."[174] Although it goes unsaid, it may have been that those immigrants slated for deportation were the residents of the aptly named Ward's Island until they were cast off. Those immigrants who managed to pass through Castle Gardens were the first real test subjects of the immigration regime, having their destinations, relatives, travel schedules, and monetary worth being recorded by commission officials. Castle Gardens, though, was not designed as a human transfer point but rather a military fort and was situated at the southern tip of Manhattan thereby allowing migrants ready access to the City. Indeed, it was after the Civil War and the surge in immigration that officials understood that they would need to construct a better solution for the immigration of new migrants to the City.

One of the important developments in immigration law which transformed Castle Gardens into a place for "undesirables" was what became known as the "public charge" rule. Importantly, the 1882 Act included a "head tax" on incoming migrants and created a whole new category of legal subjectivity, those deemed "likely to be a public charge" (LPC) which was largely built on the earlier poor laws of the colonial period.[175] This also was the first push for

[173] Bureau of Labor Statistics, 974.
[174] Bureau of Labor Statistics, 975.
[175] See more about LPC legislation and discourse in Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design : Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*, chaps. 4–6; David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses : The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*, chaps. 2–3; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*, pt. I.

federal control over immigration, with federal customs agents collecting "head taxes" and "Chinese Inspectors" ensured no Chinese entered the country.[176] This precarious situation at Castle Gardens continued well into the middle of the 19th century with the passage of the 1882 Immigration Act continuing Commission control over the depot but with Secretary of the Treasury now receiving "head tax" fees. By 1890 the federal government tightened control and immigration authority at Castle Gardens was handed over to the Treasury department. In the same year Castle Gardens was shuttered and the Commission was dissolved. All in all, according to the 1898 report, 9,725,430 immigrants passed through Castle Gardens in its almost 40 years of existence.[177]

At Castle Garden, a new system of LPC was deployed for the first time. The head tax and the new federal authority which utilized LPC to deport immigrants helped ensure the legacy of selection first implemented at Castle Gardens lived on in the New Ellis Island facility when it opened. Furthermore, by creating an oblique category such as the LPC federal policy gave inspectors, clerks, and administrators on the ground in places like New York the ability to practice their own selections.[178] Immigration officials deviated from the processes that were imagined in the halls of the senate chamber and men (some of whom were lowly recent immigrants themselves) began to hone their individual selection practices and informed "policies" which targeted peoples based on factors aside from wealth. Historian Margot Canaday points to the selection process of immigration officials using LPC as justification as an example

[176] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*, chaps. 3–4.
[177] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of New York for the Year 1898", 978.
[178] William Williams, "William Williams Papers." Margot Canaday, *Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage* Canaday and Cannato both note the power of individual agents and the often-haphazard ways which they decided the fates of the immigrants in question. Cannato also notes that some interventions went as high up as Presidential insight with Taft intervening in a deportation hearing but later being apologetic as the individual was deemed to be an undesirable and LPC

of inspectors' ability to enforce judgement on immigrants not based on an actual crimes committed but as a person who "seemed to be something."[179] She further points out that the LPC clause was utilized effectively because it "aligned with the Progressive era's ideological melding of moral deficiency and economic dependency" and was shaped by the racial and gender politics of the period.[180] Likewise, the head tax stipulation immediately prevented certain migrants from being able to immigrate at all as each member of a family had a tax imposed upon them prior to their disembarkment from their ships.

The institutional history from Castle Garden to Ellis Island is not just the story of New York, but of the United States immigration system. Roma being processed through this location would be ideal fodder for the consolidation of the image of the "Gypsy". Consequently, it is important to understand how the new immigration regime functioned at the intersection of policy and practice. The legacy of the 1882 Immigration Act can best be described as the insertion of federal oversight into what had previously been a state and local administration, as head taxes went to the federal government and federal officials were required to be present onsite for much of the processes.[181] However, individual state Governors still had control over the hiring of officials, the management of the ports of entry, and most practices regarding immigration before and after 1882. In 1891 that changed dramatically—at least in the law. The 1891 Immigration Act which went into effect in early 1892 was the first Act which directly created a federal agency in charge of all immigration concerns nationally. The "Superintendent of Immigration" ensured that enforcement of deportations and exclusions were handled on a federal level and reported

[179] Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 25.
[180] Margot Canaday, 25.
[181] See more about federal policy and oversight in Roger Daniels, *Not Like Us*; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*; David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses : The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*; Joel Perlmann, *America Classifies the Immigrants : From Ellis Island to the 2020 Census*.

directly to the Secretary of the Treasury. Three new immigration clerks supplemented the position of "Superintendent", all of whom were chosen by Presidential appointment and whose authority was largely ambiguous.[182] By 1892 the new positions also warranted a new progressive place for immigration policies and practices to merge. That place became Ellis Island. However, this new processing center was also a place where early eugenics, medical science, and racial ideologies were invented, tested, and refined.

Ellis Island, the iconic symbol of immigration, was opened in 1892 under the auspices of modernization and humane treatment of the masses entering the United States. Roma people were among those immigrants at the island upon whom these ideologies and logics were applied. We might imagine the family from the photograph in 1905 that began this chapter as they navigated the immigration regime coalescing on Ellis Island. Their processing would have started to some extent even prior to their passage on a ship. Based on the fact that the family was photographed and processed on the Island itself we know that they were not passengers in the first-class cabins as they were often "inspected" on board the ship to avoid mixing with the other passengers and due to their class positions.[183] They, along with perhaps hundreds of other immigrants, would have been corralled into small ferry boats and transported to Ellis Island from their steamer. Once they arrived on the Island the immigrants would have been queued up and sorted by family group and ships with their conspicuous "ship number" being marked on their clothing with chalk or with a piece of paper.[184] From the line they would have been moved into

[182] See more in E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*, chap. 4; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*, chap. 1.
[183]See more about the process in Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*, chap. 1; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, pt. II; David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses : The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*, chaps. 2–3.
[184] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, pt. II.

the "great hall" with its benches and rows of pulpits where the inspection agents would have been watching over the immigrants as they waited their turn for inspection.

By 1905 when the Roma family was at Ellis Island there would have been at least rudimentary health inspections as part of the immigration process with visible mental, physical, and "moral" issues being noted by inspectors.[185] It may have been the lack of money, the visible markers of their "Gypsyness", the presumed health of the family members, or the possibility that they would become public charges that warranted their stay in the detention cages. In fact, by 1905 individual inspectors were trained to make those notations about an immigrants "value" based on trainings designed by Williams and his staff prior to his departure from the Island.[186] Thus, their story on the Island likely ended with their removal back to the steamer and back to their port of departure having lost money, time, and perhaps more along the way. Their story is indicative of Romani presence in the immigration process when immigration officials often made arbitrary decisions influenced by more than just immigration politics but also cultural politics which had represented "Gypsies" both positively and negatively.[187]

Early records of the Island are now held by the Ellis Island Foundation with records of Roma or "Gypsies" hard to find based upon a search of their digital records. Aside from looking at common Romani surnames or oral historical recollections and family histories it is difficult to ascertain how many and how often Romani families and individuals might have entered the

[185] See more about screening in Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, chap. 3; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*, chap. 1; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, pt. III. Cannato notes that after 1905 the health inspections would have become more rigorous and would have involved inspections as the immigrants made their way into the building.
[186] Immigration and Naturalization Service, "RG 85 Entry 33-Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 - 2004", nn. 152-1 Old Questions by Examiners. Immigration and Naturalization Service, nn. 152-1 Old Questions by Examiners.
[187] Both Michael O hAodha and Ian F. Hancock, *Migrant and Nomad*; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture* works show how representations of Gypsies during the formative period of global immigration influenced policies and attitudes of peoples, although they don't have much data on the American Roma during this period nor about inspection agents and their positions on Gypsies.

United States from 1892 onwards. Upon a closer investigation with the foundation's archivist's assistance, ninety-one individuals and families were marked "Gypsy" upon their intake paperwork or declarations of nationality from 1903 to 1920.[188]

This small sampling of records of course is dependent on the individual inspector and subjects themselves deciding to be read and made visible in the historical record as "Gypsies" and in no way should mean that they were the only Roma entering the United States during that period. While these sparse records may speak to a small amount of Romani immigration to the United States during this period, it also highlights the likelier issue of Romani identity and (mis)recognition by U.S. officials and the public. In fact, as my conversation with the archivist unfolded, he made a point to note that "Gypsy" was not an ethnicity and thus was not usually an option for inspectors to check, instead they likely would have fallen under the nationality declared under their point of emigration. Thus, many Roma were likely marked as "Austrian", "Magyar", "Rumanian", "Ruthenian", or some combination of those recognized nationalities. For Eastern and Southern Europeans, a massive population explosion, failing empires, and rigid class systems pushed people to move west and on to the United States. This was also true for Roma as many had been recently emancipated in Romanian lands (1840s-60s) and some choose to move west away from their places of bondage.[189] While the data about Roma in this period is largely spotty at best, it is notable that over the course of the 1860s to the 1890s newspapers have hundreds of mentions of "Gypsies" from fashion (hats) to comparisons between "Gypsies" and "Indians." [190] It seems that the representation of "Gypsies" had reached the American shores

[188] Data provided by Ellis Island Foundation archivist. Full data table located in the Appendix B.
[189] See more in David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*.
[190] See bibliography for complete list of newspaper accounts discussing "Gypsies" from 1860-1890.

well before the period, but in fact actual "Gypsies" were only *now* making news in New York City and beyond.

The inspections started at the very start of the immigrants entry into Ellis with "line inspections" taking place as they entered the building. In the line immigrants were examined visually by medical staff as they passed by and then were stopped for a more thorough examination. Bodily inspections included hands, eyes, throats, and observations of their stability, posture, and stamina.[191] As minute as a facial tick or "strange" expression might warrant further examination and possible detainment as some facial features and expressions pointed to mental defects in the physicians minds. Immigrants who were suspected of having mental or physical issues were chalked with a corresponding letter, such as "L for lameness, K for hernia, G for goiter, X for mental illness."[192] After the initial inspection by the medical staff at Ellis immigrants were led into the Registry Room also known as the "Great Hall."[193]

The family was then likely ushered into the hall assigned a bench and were told to wait for up to many hours until it was their turn to meet with the inspector at the pulpit. Along their journey through the "Great Hall" the Roma family would have seen hundreds of immigrants much like themselves being hurried along and across the cordon line Chinese inspection agents, immigration clerks, doctors, nurses, visiting politicians, and missionaries would have looked on. Somewhere along this process, likely after an initial meeting with the inspector amongst the crowded hall immigrants, the family would have been flagged for detention for further questioning and special inquiry. However, the reasoning for the detention and eventual deportation back to the steamer ship is not known. But we can hypothesize that it was largely up

[191] See more in Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 55; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, pt. III; Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005.
[192] Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 55.
[193] See more in Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*.

to the individual inspector who met with the family members and his (and was men at this point) judgement that garnered the extra attention. Or perhaps it was a mistake in paperwork, shipping manifests, or lack of documentation. Either way, clerks and agents had a wide discretion to make decisions about classifications along the way, sometimes pulling immigrants aside for further questioning.[194] Whatever the reason the family was likely herded into a detention area with men and women often separated to await their board of special enquiry hearing, which involved high ranking immigration officials, doctors, and specialized clerks. It was common for immigrants to be housed in detention for sometimes days and weeks depending on the number of hearings.

Those immigrants who had been marked with letters were detained in separate areas often covered with wire mesh resembling cages. Detainees were held for observation sometimes for days at a time undergoing further inspections, delousing, and questioning before being turned away or allowed into the country. Immigrants who were not detained were questioned by inspectors sometimes with an interpreter in the room, and then if they answered the questions to the inspector's satisfaction were allowed entry into Manhattan aboard a ferry.[195]

It was likely during this time of detention when Augustus Sherman was allowed access to the detainees and decided to frame his iconic picture which began this chapter. Sherman's practice of immigration photography enabled some of the idealized processes to be realized whereby "undesirables" like the "Gypsy" family were deported. Sherman's practices, which will be outlined later in this chapter, worked to ensure agents and the public had visual means to identify immigrants. Back on Ellis Island, the Roma family were likely herded back inside to await their hearing which according to Sherman's notation meant certain deportation. For Romani people the promise of the United States economic and social prosperity was a strong draw as long as

[194] Margot Canaday, *The Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 24–33.
[195] See more in Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, pt. III.

they could navigate the intricate immigration system which was being constructed on Ellis Island. At the same time, more and more people across the world were becoming mobile and shifting borders and populations meant that concerns about mobility were exacerbated as Ellis Island came into full operation. For Romani people, being mobile subjects was not something completely new. More accurately, the discourse and representation of mobility was not something new for Roma. Roma had been represented as the archetypical "nomad" of European lands even though generations of Roma had been sedentary in many nations and imperial holdings. While many Americans may not have met or even been able to recognize a Romani person in passing, the representations of "Gypsies"' were readily available to draw upon from literature, and increasingly in photographs.

The misrecognition of Roma in the United States cut both ways, for although the representations of wild and free sylvan "Gypsies" may have been entertaining, while also potentially harmful, the lack of accurate representations and experience with the American public may have allowed many Roma to "pass" as other recognized national groups. Hence, on Ellis Island Romanian Roma may have become "Romanian shepherds" or Hungarian Roma may have been "Folk Musicians" under their occupation and "Austro-Hungarian" under their national and ethnic identity boxes. [196] Checking the "nationality" boxes on Ellis Island may have allowed Roma to be misrecognized and thus perhaps afforded them an opportunity to escape the annoying representations which depicted "Gypsies" as a clear "undesirable" type. However, what some of those Roma, like those in the Sherman's picture, could not escape was immigration regimes which targeted people based on an increasing list of "undesirable" *characteristics*.

[196] See visual representations of these "types" in Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman: Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*.

2.3 Modernizing Policies and Mechanizing Practices

The immigration regime that Romani people encountered at Ellis Island evolved over the course of several decades during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In particular, three factors shaped this development. Restrictionist politics, an ideology of hygiene, and emerging visual representations all played a role in shaping the particulars of the Ellis Island immigration regime which influenced the creation of a "Gypsy" type and the expansion of the category of "undesirables."

New federal immigration law and national politics governed much on Ellis Island even as local practices by officials sometimes circumvented the laws. While Castle Gardens, by the 1880s, seemed a relic from an earlier immigration regime defined by competing interests and state and federal tension, its orderly infrastructure and policies laid the foundation for immigration regimes of the twentieth century on Ellis Island. Castle Garden's progressive influence and concern for containing immigrants through aid organizations and philanthropic ventures meant that immigration and progressive ideologies would continue to be married in the new space of Ellis Island. After the mid-1880s with the passage of the Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act, the immigration regimes unclear jurisdictions and authority began to hamper immigration practices and showed the inadequacies of the system in place. Further complicating the issue was the restrictionist politics surrounding Castle Gardens and immigration in New York, with 90% of the Garden's employees Republican and at constant odds with Democratic City officials like Grover Cleveland. Cleveland himself called Castle Gardens, "a scandal and a reproach to civilization", where poor white immigrants were swindled and undesirables were allowed free entry.[197] With continued corruption and political turmoil over the influx of new

[197] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 44.

immigrants, Castle Gardens and indeed, the immigration system itself became the subject of political reports and findings and eventually newly elected President Cleveland demanded action. Castle Gardens was shuttered in 1890 with the last two ships docking and landing over four hundred immigrants for the last time.[198] Without a new facility fully flushed out and with the New York authorities miffed by Democrats in power, a makeshift operation was created at the Barge Office near Castle Gardens.

Xenophobic politicians had been sounding the alarm about the immigration of "undesirables" for several decades by the time Castle Gardens closed but the shifting tide of the 1890s also brought new charismatic politicians to power who made immigration their political lives. People like Henry Cabot Lodge embodied the new progressive era and utilized their education and expertise to argue for scientific restrictions and exclusion of new undesirables.[199] Exclusion of more and more people would be carried out in the new immigration center on Ellis Island, granted through federal improvement funds of $75,000 appropriated from congress in 1891.[200] Ellis Island had already been held by the federal government prior to the construction of the immigration station as a munitions depot and its location off the mainland meant it had its own social and political ecosystem to work with instead of being influenced overtly by the mainland politics and swindling parties. The Island needed to be dredged, built up, and staffed before the immigration station could be opened and immigrants could be processed. Along with the facility the immigration regime would need new officials to man its offices and implement new federal authority on the Island.

[198] Vincent J. Cannato, 49.
[199] Vincent J. Cannato, 51; See also more about Lodge in Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Inventing the Immigration Problem*; Joel Perlmann, *America Classifies the Immigrants: From Ellis Island to the 2020 Census*.
[200] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 50.

In 1891 with the passage of the Immigration Act, the new Bureau of Immigration was created with the position of Superintendent of Immigration going to William Owen, a major proponent of the Act.[201] On Ellis Island Colonel John Weber was appointed as commissioner under Owen but was in place prior to the 1891 Act after Castle Gardens was shuttered and served until 1893. Weber, the son of immigrants himself, acknowledged his lack of experience with immigration concerns, having been a patronage appointee by President Benjamin Harrison. Weber soon was charged with exploring the issue of immigration by the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Immigration (who oversaw his position). Weber was tasked with conducting an extensive survey in Europe to determine the continued cause of immigration and determine if nefarious motivations were encouraging emigration.[202] The report was released in 1892, and instead of playing into the restrictionists hands, the report took a sympathetic tone, finding that most emigrants from Europe were seeking stability and opportunity. However, reports within Weber's concerned themselves with labor issues and downplayed the issues of persecution of Russian Jews and others. Weber's 1892 report opened the door for more debate and did little to tackle the issue of immigration that Ellis Island would soon contend with.

When typhus and cholera scares hit New York City in 1892 immigrants were blamed for carrying the diseases in and spreading it amongst the lower classes.[203] Weber, considered by some as too soft, was forced to justify his immigration policies on the Island, even though most who succumbed to the disease were in quarantine or were immigrants who had been in country for several years.[204] In response Congress passed the National Quarantine Act of 1893 which

[201] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door : American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*; Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design : Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 62.
[202] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 63; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*.
[203] See more in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*; Howard Markel, *Quarantine!*
[204] See more in Howard Markel, *Quarantine!* Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 85–87.

gave more public health oversight to the federal government and implemented more control over immigration. Nonetheless immigration to the United States continued even though new regulations meant that immigrants had to answer more and more questions before they even entered the facility.[205] By 1893 Harrison was out of the White House and Weber was replaced by Dr. Joseph Senner at Ellis. During the next several years immigration declined due to the continuing health scares in Europe and the declining economy. Senner and his boss the Commissioner-General[206] Herman Stump continued to prioritize immigration policies which weeded out people through the newly formed Board of Special Inquiry and bureaucratic loopholes. Over the next several years the immigration station on Ellis Island continued to operate under the direction of Dr. Senner even as anti-immigrant sentiment was on the rise. Italians especially became the target of anti-immigrant rhetoric and the immigration station was not isolated from those feelings with hundreds of Italians detained and deported over the course of just a week in 1896.[207]

In addition to an ideology of hygiene, machine politics also was a factor in staffing Ellis Island. On June 15th, 1897, the wooden Ellis Island Immigration Station caught fire and was completely destroyed along with immigration documents that had been from the Castle Garden era. Tensions continued to rise as the rebuilding of Ellis was being discussed and Ellis Island Commissioner Senner was replaced by Thomas Fitchie under the direction of newly elected President McKinley in 1897. During the period of Ellis Island reconstruction, the old Barge Office was utilized for immigration inspections and detainments. Back in Washington the

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[205] Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*, chap. 1.
[206] The Superintendent of Immigration position was replaced with the Commissioner- General of Immigration in 1895, reporting to the Treasury Department until 1903.
[207] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 93; See more about this period in Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door*; Jerre Gerlando Mangione, *La Storia*; Kathie Friedman-Kasaba, *Memories of Migration : Gender, Ethnicity, and Work in the Lives of Jewish and Italian Women in New York, 1870-1924*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham*.

political game continued with McKinley shuffling new officials around and replacing Democrats with loyal Republicans. The esteemed labor leader Terrence V. Powderly was named Commissioner-General replacing Herman Stump and immediately began making waves amongst Ellis staff.[208] The inner conflict amongst Ellis Island staff boiled over by 1899 with Powderly and Ellis's second in command Edward McSweeney butting heads publicly and causing internal investigations to be held. In the era of patron politics McSweeney and Powderly were emblematic of the bureaucratic problems borne out of political appointments based on loyalty instead of expertise. McSweeney effectively governed the happenings on Ellis with Commissioner Powderly largely serving as a figurehead and weak leader.[209] The issues on Ellis though did not actually occur on the Island, instead it was the makeshift Barge Office where McSweeney and Powderly clashed over corruption, rough treatment, and disorder. The Barge Office was reminiscent of the Castle Garden's issues and many onlookers saw the same practices happening which had driven Castle Garden out of usage. Finally, in December 1900 the new facilities on Ellis Island were completed and immigrants again began to pour through the brick facilities.

But the internal conflict amongst Ellis Staff and patron appointees continued to sully the mood, with all parties pandering to their chosen allies for support and journalists and muckrakers publishing sensational pieces about the conflicts.[210] When McKinley was shot and killed by a Polish American in 1901 the anti-immigrant fervor reached a climax with anarchists, Jews, southern and eastern Europeans, Italians, and criminals all blamed for issues at home and abroad.

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[208] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 110.
[209] Vincent J. Cannato, 108–9; Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Immigration to the Secretary of the Treasury for 1892-1900*.
[210] "QUARREL ON ELLIS ISLAND.;" "BIG IMMIGRATION FRAUDS"; "LA GASCOGNE'S STEWARD ACCUSED OF BRIBERY"; "ELLIS ISLAND INSPECTED"; "ATTACK ON BARGE OFFICE."

Into this environment stepped Theodore Roosevelt, a bombastic figure who had favored restricted immigration before taking office and still spoke of "American stock" and "American character" in opposition to certain migrants.[211] With Roosevelt in office the squabbles at Ellis soon became the focus of new administration and he quickly went to work cleaning house, eventually firing McSweeney, Powderly, and Fitchie.

Into the breach stepped William Williams. Williams is a crucial part of my work because his two administrations on Ellis shaped immigration policies which were informed by the national concerns about hygiene, racial fitness, and American identity. In a large part Williams was responsible for laying the groundwork for national immigration policy that would live long after his tenure on Ellis and help inform the restrictive acts that changed the United States forever. Williams also implemented policies which consolidated the category of "undesirable", while his employees' practices pushed the category further into popular culture. Additionally, Williams and his staff pushed the Roma into his category of "undesirable" while "Gypsies" were allowed to survive in the upper echelons of society through play, something which will be explored further in this chapter.

William Williams was born in Connecticut in 1862 to a wealthy merchant family. Williams grew up in Connecticut but also travelled some with his family during his formative years and attended college in Germany.[212] Williams then went on to Yale and Harvard making friends with many notable figures of the period including members of the Immigration Restriction League. Williams briefly served in the Spanish American war before he began a successful career as a lawyer in New York City.[213] A prominent but pragmatic Republican

[211] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, chap. 9.
[212] Vincent J. Cannato, chap. 11; William Williams, "William Williams Papers."
[213] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, chap. 11.

Williams was viewed by many of his peers as an efficient, no-nonsense Progressive who abided by the laws and viewed liberal immigration with some trepidation. As the third commissioner of Ellis Island, Williams was personally tasked with modernizing the immigration regime of the United States on the ground while Congress debated immigration policy matters post-Chinese Exclusion. His power, while not absolute, came from a direct appointment by the wildly popular, fellow New Yorker Theodore Roosevelt in 1902.[214] Like Roosevelt, Williams used his position to bypass other checks on his power and promptly "cleaned up" the Island firing several previous Immigration high officials and targeting the corrupt practices of the Island.[215]

Importantly, Williams sought to modernize the process by which new immigrants entered the United States, including Romani people. Unlike the previous iterations of Immigration processing centers like Castle Gardens (1855-1890), Ellis Island served as an offsite location which to vet immigrants prior to them entering the United States proper—a literal rock within sight of the mainland—but importantly separated by water and patrolling boats. There on the rock in the water immigrants from near and far were judged, prodded, and pushed towards the glimmer of potential naturalization or back to the places that they left onboard contracted outbound steamers.

Williams, like many of his progressive colleagues, viewed this grand experiment with immigration as a means to expand the economic capacity of the United States while also ensuring the values and traditions brought by immigrants were subsumed into the new American patriotic fervor of the era.[216] Figures such as Columbia served as visual reminders of this new

[214] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", fol. Roll 1.
[215] Upon his appointment Williams went about targeting corrupt practices on the Island including starting an ongoing feud with immigrant aid societies, food contractors, and inspection agents who were known to be corrupt. Newspaper accounts throughout his two tenures on the Island read much like soap opera titles with Williams being cast as both villain and savior at various times.
[216] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", fol. Roll 1.

founded movement of extreme patriotism and larger than life characters such as Roosevelt himself, which encouraged this rise in patriotic circulation and popular media coverage. New York City itself was caught up in this wave of patriotism from the American Revolution onwards, with the changing of "King's College" to "Columbia" University in 1784 to the founding of the Columbian Order or Society of Tammany (later which was to become the premier political machine of the 19th century) in 1789.[217] Ellis Island's facilities themselves were blanketed with notices about becoming an American alongside notices and signs about health, education, and American values and culture. These visual traces on the facility itself served as constant reminders of the new order and value that immigration officials were attempting to distill in the arrived immigrants. Likewise, they visually propped up the ideological process that Williams and his contemporaries were attempting to implement—racial order and separation based upon a racialist set of principles which deemed immigrants as biologically different from "native" Americans.

Over time, Williams streamlined many of the facilities at the Island including putting in waiting benches and cordoning off areas for medical inspections and screening rooms.[218] He also made it mandatory for immigrants to go through a more thorough medical screening process and highlighted the various medical conditions which would be used to justify non-entry into the United States. Historian Douglas C. Baynton's *Defectives in the Land* lists the set of "defects" which could bar immigrants from entry including:

> "the deaf, blind, epileptic, and mobility impaired; people with curved spines, hernias, flat or club feet, missing limbs, and short limbs; those who were unusually short or tall; people with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities; hermaphrodites (intersexual); men of 'poor physique' and men diagnosed with 'feminism'—a hormonal deficiency…"[219]

[217] John Higham, "Indian Princess and Roman Goddess;" Thomas J. Schlereth, "Columbia, Columbus, and Columbianism", 939; Allison M. Johnson, "Columbia and Her Sisters."
[218] William Williams, "William Williams Papers."
[219] Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*, 1.

Importantly, defects were seen most amongst "undesirable" immigrants and were attributed to their mental defectiveness due to their biological and cultural make up. From the start of his tenure as Ellis Island Commissioner in 1902 to the end of his second appointment in 1913 Williams maintained an idealized orderly environment on the Island cracking down on those officials who robbed or bribed the immigrants.[220] His hardline stance on enforcing immigration laws, which at that point were not very clear, led to intense scrutiny by immigrant welfare organizations and foreign press officers eventually leading to his resignation of his position in 1905. Throughout that first tenure though, Williams attempted to beautify the Island, banned smoking, planting shrubbery, ensuring food rations were distributed, and strictly enforced order within his ranks.[221] Under his watch, Williams aimed to make Ellis Island a respectable place albeit with strict racial restrictions under the Federal law.

However, Williams, like many in power during that period viewed Eastern and Southern Europeans, who were arriving in greater and greater numbers prior to WWI, both as mentally and biologically inferior to White Protestant Native-born men and women. His views, shared by many that even opposed his stances, led him to order close scrutiny of any immigrants who may have been "feeble-minded", criminals, or diseased. Women were especially vulnerable to increased scrutiny as they were often deported based upon their lack of a male counterpart, lack of money, or fears of disease.[222] Indeed, women and those from further east were cited as being the "cast offs" of Europe and were subjected to, as Foucault might claim, a biopolitical regime of immigration controls which underlined their gender, sex, and fears of disease or immorality as

[220] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Roll 1 "Personal Letters."
[221] William Williams, n. Roll 1.
[222] Margot Canaday, *The Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 25–44.

justifications for deportations using oblique categories of diseased, likely to become a public charge, or insanity.[223]

Along with streamlining and modernizing Williams also had more media presence than his predecessors often being the subject of praise and alternately vitriol. Newspapers used these images of the Island to initially praise Williams, but ultimately visual evidence was also used to condemn his actions as despotic and authoritarian.[224] Theodore Roosevelt himself made a visit to Ellis Island to meet with Williams and other officials and to witness the process of immigration at the facilities. Roosevelt, ever the media magnet, was photographed on the Island during these inspections where he smiles for the camera and signals his support for the efforts of Williams. Indeed, even with increasingly vicious media attacks on Williams by 1905, Roosevelt stood by the efforts being done at the Island, sending Williams a personal note of dismay at his decision to resign in 1905.[225]

At the same time various immigration advocates, including many immigrant Americans, worked to pacify the political situation and expressed their views that certain immigrants could be good for the country. People like Speranza and Bourke Cochran advocated for their community's ability to "fit" just as indigenous Americans like Parker made similar arguments to emphasize their racial fitness and utility. Those views expressly utilized a relational logic of race and assimilation, claiming that some non-whites could aspire to become better while others including the dreaded Chinese and African Americans (amongst others) would always be inferior and unfit for citizenship or entry. Thus, while racial science and eugenics were in their fledgling stages, race was always at the forefront of opponents and proponents of immigration regime's

[223] See more about biopolitics and discipline in Michel Foucault and Paul. Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*.
[224] William Williams, "William Williams Papers."
[225] William Williams, n. Theodore Roosevelt Correspondence.

minds. These attitudes and policies in turn not only influenced the immigration regime on Ellis but as I outlined in chapter one, helped establish relational racial formations for immigrants once they moved into the City.

Indeed, the period which fragmented whiteness from a singular "white" also made "Anglo-Saxon" exclusively applicable to those that hailed from England and Scotland. As scholar Matthew Frye Jacobson states, "Whereas the salient feature whiteness before the 1840s had been its powerful political and cultural contrast to nonwhites, now its internal divisions, too, took on a new and pressing significance."[226] Race and republican concerns over "fitness" to self-govern met in this period precisely when "swarthy" immigrants began to come to the United States in swelling numbers. "Gypsies" were increasingly seen at the eye of this gathering storm.

2.4 "Snapshots" and the importance of "Dollie": Images of Gypsies at Ellis Island

Williams' tenure also marked the official arrival of photography at Ellis Island. Photographic advancements meant that many of the areas at Ellis Island were being documented by people like Sherman and Lewis Hine, another well-known photographer of the era. These photographs serve as both important historical artifacts and also material which was used at the time to visually show the immigration process for the lay public and politicians alike. Sherman and others also modelled the new mechanized practices on the Island, where certain individuals were made to present photographic evidence of their presence and others were captured for Island officials to scrutinize and mark in their categories of people. Scholar Anna Pegler-Gordon notes that the practice of immigrant photography actually produced race, focusing her work on

[226] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 41.

how immigration photography "not only represented race visually but also […] regulated which immigrant groups would require representation."[227]

Thus officials, philanthropic and well-connected individuals, and amateur photographers alike selected immigrants who were "strange" in many ways and represented them for others to show those differences. For Pegler-Gordon Chinese immigrants were most prone to be photographed and required photographic evidence to enter the United States prior to the ruling which required all immigrants to show photographic "proof" in 1918 and later in 1924.[228] While Sherman and other officials on Ellis largely photographed immigrants in the process of immigration they also were acting on behalf of officials who were concerned with creating orderly practices and efficiencies which could be ideally located within the Progressive Era's movement towards order and social control.

At the same time, photographs were an incomplete and nonobjective form of proof many times with immigrants themselves disrupting the authority of the officials.[229] Roma also interrupted this ideal order as they were represented as strange, and foreign along with being subjected to ideas about disease, moral deviance, and sexual impropriety. The few photographs of Roma or "Gypsies" on the Island and their limited archival traces mark them as being tangential to the practices being developed, *yet* the representational cultural baggage that they arrived with were fundamentally evidence for the immigration regime's focus on weeding out the undesirables.

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[227] Anna Pegler Gordon, *In Sight of America*, 10.
[228] See more in Anna Pegler Gordon, *In Sight of America*.
[229] Anna Pegler Gordon, 12. Pegler-Gordon notes that Chinese immigrants were able to utilize the photographic requirements to their advantage and created false familial connections to skirt the exclusion measures in the same manner that Chinese created "Paper Sons."

Back on Ellis Island William Williams also helped push an important visual selection process to identify "undesirables", that of "snapshot" diagnosis by inspectors.[230] Inspectors, many who were often cited for infractions against immigrants or disobeying Williams orders, made minute-by-minute decisions about immigrants based on their visual signifiers.[231] Thus, Williams empowered individual agents to use visual signs as markers of intelligence, morality, and health , just as the proper paperwork and minimum monetary requirements were functioning as barriers, agents also used their sight as burdens of proof.[232] With photography still a relatively new technology and with increasing access for lay people, immigration agents utilized their "snapshot" diagnosis and backed it with photographs taken on the Island by people like Augustus Sherman to guide their decisions on entry. Sherman's photographs thus served to capture the immigrant in their most idealized positions, as exotic objects in a new land. Sherman's photographs were keeping with the tradition of creating typologies of the period, ensuring every person belonged to discernable racial types and thus could be judged accordingly.[233]

Very sparse details of Augustus Sherman's life are available, but we know that he was born on July 9th, 1865 in Pennsylvania to a middle-class family. In 1884 Sherman moved to New York City with his brother Henry Handrick, who became a lawyer. Sherman became a clerk at Ellis Island when it opened in 1892 quickly moving up the ranks to senior clerk and by 1906, personal secretary to the Commissioner.[234] Sherman seems to have developed an interest in photography early on and was taking photographs on Ellis during his early years. It was not however, until he moved up the ranks and became a senior official that he began in earnest to do

[230] See more about this practice in Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*.
[231] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Roll 1-2.
[232] William Williams, n. Roll 1-2.
[233] For examples of this typology see William Zebina Ripley, *The Races of Europe*; Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005.
[234] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005, 7.

portrait style photographs of new arrivals. Importantly, due to the hectic nature of the "Great Hall" and docks, Sherman was not able to capture his style of photographs in those spaces, instead he used his position to photograph those immigrants who were detained.[235] The detained immigrants were a critical component of the immigration regime's policies as well as an everyday practice for more than just Sherman. That policy of detainment not only ensured that wily immigrants could not bypass the idealized process but also allowed inspectors time to hone their selection practices and introduced a state of liminality to an already precarious subjectivity.

Photography soon officially supplemented Williams' procedures at Ellis Island. As the immigrants came to the United States, they were not only photographed but "tagged" with identifying ship markers and their names. The incoming ships were docked at a pier near the west side (most often) and then the immigrants were ferried over to Ellis Island with their identification tags on their outer clothing. Medical inspection practices became part of the immigration process after the 1891 Act, which pushed the emigrating country and the United States to preform medical inspections on immigrants at both ends of their journey.[236] By 1893 immigrants also had to answer more questions at their point of departure, or at least they were supposed to. Many wealthy emigrants managed to pay their way to the United States, at least at their point of departure. Steamship companies also were incentivized to ensure the emigrants were at least healthy enough to pass rudimentary inspections, as they were on the line for returned immigrants who were too sick to be admitted.[237]

Sherman took advantage of the liminal state of detained immigrants and was granted exclusive access to their holding areas. Sherman, likely due to his status as a senior official by

[235] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, 8–9.
[236] Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 51.
[237] Alan M. Kraut, 51.

1905-6, bypassed quarantine measures and was able to pose the immigrants in the manner that was consistent with the period. He often captured the immigrants looking directly at the camera or in three-quarter profile.[238] Sherman would often try to capture the immigrants in natural light on the Island's lawn or balcony if he were able to move the immigrants from their cells. When not possible to get outdoors, Sherman would utilize the screens for medical examinations as backdrops or a sheet to create neutral backgrounds. Sherman would position the immigrants in portrait style settings facing the camera with often blank facial expressions. If his subjects were in a group setting however, Sherman would allow them to smile, interact with one another, and display natural and relaxed postures and positions.

Sherman's first attempts at capturing Ellis Island functions were largely underutilized and seemed to be for his own personal usage. But by 1905, Sherman had garnered enough admiration from local officials and been published in magazines that his portraits were becoming known by anti-immigration advocates and scientists alike.[239] Although officially Sherman's photographs were not sanctioned or commissioned by Ellis Island officials they were keeping with the trend of anthropological science of the period. Indeed, photography as anthropologists and lay people were utilizing it alike became a tool for race making and ideally helped create order out of the "huddled masses." Sherman's photos were taken up by several anti-immigration publications without attribution and several photos were published in Reverend Howard Grose's "Aliens or Americans?" in 1906 just a year or so after Sherman had gained some recognition.[240]

Early American anthropology had been utilizing ideas about racial ideal types and physiognomic features as markers of difference for several decades by the time Sherman was active. However,

[238] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005, 9.
[239] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, 10–11.
[240] Howard Benjamin Grose, *Aliens or Americans?*

being able to visually show those types and make them accessible to wider audience was something which was only beginning to be cost effective. In 1899 William Z. Ripley published his infamous "Races of Europe" which advocated for racial classifications through visual means and proposed using racial types to classify immigrants from different places.[241] At the same time American anthropologists working far afield began to take notice of the immigrants entering the country and occupied themselves with classifying and sorting people before they were lost in the masses.[242] Nonetheless, Sherman (as far as we know) never explicitly gave permission for his photos to be used by racial scientists and those that did use his photos largely lifted them from other sources or without attribution.[243]

Sherman's photos increasingly demonstrated his commitment to the "type" style of photography and made it a stable of his collections. The "type" style worked to isolate individuality and stress physical characteristics. These photographs did not have "thick" descriptions and instead relied on simple geographic, physical, or racial markers.[244] Sherman's photos were marked with simple accompanying texts often stating a national origin and a marker of class or occupation. His practices of photography became routinized, mechanized, and a part of his unofficial duties.[245] His camera and tripod, screens, and keys were part of his toolbox over time as much as his paperwork, notations, and correspondences. Sherman never left explicit messages with his photographs nor did he seem to utilize them in some political statement, instead he died in 1925 without much notice.[246] His photographs were utilized by others, picked up for dual usages as markers of inferiority and as symbols of progress and American tolerance.

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[241] William Zebina Ripley, *The Races of Europe*.
[242] See more about this period in George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*; Franz Boas, *A Franz Boas Reader*.
[243] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005.
[244] "Thick" description is referring to Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays*.
[245] See more about Sherman's unofficial role as photographer in Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005.
[246] Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller.

Lewis Hine, a contemporary of Sherman, also made photographs of Ellis Island immigrants but his were not in keeping with Sherman's style. Instead, Hine made sympathetic photographs emphasizing the trauma and humanity that each individual displayed. Hine, a well-known reformer and sociologist, is better remembered for his photographs of industrial workers, children, and poor people's culminating in the child labor movement of the 1930s.[247] But Hine was not employed by immigration officials and had limited access to the practices and ideological policies of the Island. Instead, Hine captured immigrants in transit within natural settings and displaying affective expressions often downplayed in Sherman's photos.

In many ways, Sherman's and Hine's photographs were perfect foils of one another displaying raw human "baggage" and idealized types to be picked out from the masses. It is Sherman whose images capture Romani people in detainment and help archive their opaque traces on the Island and in turn in the United States, through *his practices* of photography. By the time the Immigration Commission was formed in 1907 Sherman had already documented Romani people on the Island along with hundreds of other ethnic groups. The ethnic groups on Ellis Island were increasingly the fodder for fear mongering amongst Nativists. While racial scientists were fascinated with the different bodies of immigrants, measuring skulls, somatic features, and even intelligence, politicians were concerned about labor markets, political instability, and mobile non-citizens.[248]

Further complicating the immigration regime and racial concerns of the period was the arrival of the mass media format of film and movie theaters. The consumable photographs which once held the visual representations of "Gypsies" were upset and complicated by film

[247] See more about Lewis Hine in Kate Sampsell-Willmann, *Lewis Hine as Social Critic*; Timothy J. Duerden, *Lewis Hine*.
[248] See more in George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*; Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*;

adaptations which gave movement and character to the static imagery. A silent film from 1908 called "Adventures of Dollie" is but one example of early cinema representing Roma people.[249] In the film Dollie is a small child whose father gets in an altercation with a "Gypsy" man, portrayed as a darker figure wearing scarves and boots and hawking baskets. The "Gypsy", after unsuccessfully selling baskets, attempts to steal the pocketbook of the mother and is caught by the father. The scene cuts to a "Gypsy" camp with wagons, horses, a "Gypsy" woman smoking a pipe (in a typical caricature of a Gypsy crone) and campfire. The "Gypsies" takes revenge on the family by kidnapping Dollie while the family gives chase. Seemingly frantic, the "Gypsies" put the girl in a barrel and when the pursuing family enters the camp, the "Gypsies" deceive them by pretending not to have the child. Meanwhile the proper looking family ransacks the "Gypsy" camp looking for the child until they move on and the "Gypsies" take the barrel and child away. After Dollie's family departs searching elsewhere, the "Gypsies" are seen fleeing and portaging a river with their wagon. The barrel, with Dollie still in it, falls off the back of the wagon and floats downriver, falling over a waterfall, and is eventually fished out of the waters by a young white fisherman. Dollie, in the end, is triumphantly reunited with her family and the "Gypsies" presumably are gone from the picture, hurried out of town due to their misdeeds. There are several reasons that this film is notable in our consideration of how photography and visual representations functioned as part of the immigration regime at Ellis Island.

First, the film illustrates how the representations of "Gypsies" as child stealers, thieves, vagrants, crones, violent, and swarthy had already become mainstream stereotypes by 1908.[250] Now, this does not mean all the viewers of the film would have automatically seen those coded

[249] D. W. Griffith, *Adventures of Dollie*.
[250] Times, "Kidnapped Boy Slain in Deserted House"; "Think Gypsies Got Him"; "Kidnappers Snatch Boy in Broad Day."

representations as "Gypsies", but it does mean that those stereotypes and traits were ideally developing those association through visual means, making them accessible to those that may not have partaken in the literary stereotype of the "Gypsy."[251] Second, it is the first film by D.W. Griffith, the infamous director of *Birth of a Nation*. This is significant as Griffith cut his teeth playing out racist stereotypes with "Gypsies" seven years before he stoked racial fears with his honorific Southern story of the "Lost Cause" and Black inferiority.[252]

Herein lies a relational racial project for Griffith, portraying "Gypsies" as thieves, stealing innocent young children, and some years later using Black men as similar instruments of defilement. Both "Gypsies" and Black men served to degrade the American bourgeois idealism, both "stole" *the innocent*.[253] Griffith, who had just joined Biograph Films in 1908, quickly moved up the ranks and was the primary director before years end.[254] The "Gypsies" in Griffith's film are less jovial, more mysterious and dangerous even, then what was sometimes portrayed in different mediums as carefree wild folk. The "Gypsies" serve to push the "adventure" part of the plot, pushing the characters from one scene to another, which at the time was a huge feat as most films were single shots.[255] Importantly, the film also does not have text and the audience would have to interpret the action as they watched. Thus, they had to make sense of the representations

[251] David Henkin, *City Reading*. Is useful here as it shows how increasingly the masses of people in New York were becoming accustomed to "reading" the streets through visual markers, signs, pamphlets, ephemera, and graffiti—allowing the illiterate classes to consume some of the cultural discourse without accessing the written works.
[252] See more in D. W. Griffith and Frank Capra, *The Man Who Invented Hollywood The Autobiography of D.W. Griffith*; Melvyn Stokes, *D.W. Griffith's the Birth of a Nation: A History of the Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time*.
[253] In Birth of the Nation Griffith uses white women as the object of domesticity and innocence while in "Dollie" the young girl is cast as the innocent young thing which is living the idealized middle class American existence. For more on Griffith see: D. W. Griffith and Frank Capra, *The Man Who Invented Hollywood The Autobiography of D.W. Griffith*; Melvyn Stokes, *D.W. Griffith's the Birth of a Nation: A History of the Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time*.
[254] See more in D. W. Griffith and Frank Capra, *The Man Who Invented Hollywood The Autobiography of D.W. Griffith*.
[255] See examples of this narrative tool in Katie Trumpener, "The Time of the Gypsies."

on the film using their visual perception and cultural knowledge to understand that these were figures were marked as "Gypsies" and racially different.

Race has always been an unstable concept at best, and although at times, it has been backed by science, perhaps its most virulent and widespread circulator was popular culture in the form of newspapers, dime novels, editorials, and increasingly, photographs. Newspapers and cartoonish stereotypes were commonplace during the first decade of the 20th century and many in the mainstream newsprint circulated ideologies about race and disease along with xenophobic and anti-Semitic visualizations.[256] Along with these anti-Semitic stereotypes "professional beggars" were targeted as undesirable immigrants or worse yet degenerate and criminal immigrants.[257] Again, even as most Americans perhaps could not recognize a Romani person in their midst's they could begin to point to the "Gypsy" within the cultural productions within the opera houses and taverns which prioritized an Anglo representation of Gypsies as child stealers, vagrants, thieves, and deviants.[258] One New York Times article which featured a reporter visiting an American Gypsy camp draws upon George Borrow's representations stating, " But his face showed the gypsy blood; the delicious, barbaric, and gorgeous costuming of the younger women of the camp showed it. Here was a page of George Borrow come to light again, changed, of course, *Americanized*, shorn of many of its features."[259] The "Americanized" Gypsies of the 1899 article do not speak for themselves and instead the author of the article describes in detail the camp, their somatic features, and their mobility. The author goes on to state that the family has spread all across the United States and spends a considerable amount of time discussing the

[256] For more about anti-Semitic stereotypes during the period see Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door*; Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*; Hasia R. Diner, *A New Promised Land*.
[257] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, chaps. 12–13; "Vagrants and Beggars."; "Vagrants and Vagrancy."; O.F. Lewis (of the Charity Organization Society), "The Growing Problem of the American Tramp."
[258] Cromwell Childe, "In a Gypsy Camp."
[259] Cromwell Childe. Italicized by author not in original.

women of the camp and their supposed "happy gypsydom."[260] The article is but one example of this newfound American fascination with Gypsies, culminating in the Gypsy Lore Society being managed from the East Coast by the 1900s.

The "Adventures of Dollie" is just one of films that had "Gypsy" characters within their plots further pushing a representation of racial and sexualized differences while sometimes downplaying their somatic differences on screen making the Gypsies transient in type and in character. For Romani women these categories were not new, as Jodie Matthews highlights in her text "The Gypsy Woman." Indeed, Matthews states that the "Gypsy woman is strange. This is not a perception of Romani lived experience; I mean that the encounter that readers and viewers have with the representations of the Gypsy woman *make her* a stranger. *Mark her* a stranger."[261] Indeed, as a stranger is outside of the normative structure of "subject" and "object" the stranger can get grouped in with queerness, abnormality, and deviance and hence be outside the "desirable" immigrant category which was given more leeway and access to America.[262]

2.5 Excluding "Undesirables" and Domesticating "Gypsies"

By using photography Sherman was able to give Williams and other immigration officials a new quasi-official weapon to justify their restrictionist attitudes. In effect, the camera could classify "undesirables" without having to go through the processes and bureaucracy, it allowed a workaround which in time followed those deemed "undesirable" far from Ellis.

[260] Cromwell Childe.
[261] Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*, 13.
[262] See more in Margot Canaday, *The Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, chap. 1; Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen*, 91–92.

Photography and immigration photos thus circumvented the process of immigration in some ways while also becoming intricately interwoven into the regimes throughout time.[263]

Another important step in the process of excluding "undesirables" from entry was the end of Roosevelt's tenure and the hands-off approach of his successor, William Howard Taft, who took office in early 1909. Roosevelt, still concerned with immigration, had busied himself with appointing the "right" men to positions for Taft to oversee as President and continue strict enforcement of the laws. But alas, Taft was no Roosevelt and focused more on tariffs, slowly siding with the conservative Republicans on matters of conservation, trade, and antitrust. Taft, instead of keeping on Roosevelt's chosen men on Ellis sought to clean house at the bidding of his allies including Prescott Hall, who despised the temperament of the Island after Williams resigned in 1905 and Robert Watchorn was put in charge.[264] Under Watchorn, and Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar Strauss, Ellis Island deportations declined, and immigrants were marginally less scrutinized. Born of German Jewish parents Oscar Strauss enraged anti-Semites like Prescott Hall, who saw Strauss's position as compromised by their ethnic and racial background.[265] Taft pushed out Strauss and Watchorn by early 1909 and turned once again to his fellow Yale graduate William Williams to govern the Island. Williams return also signaled an end to Rooseveltian politics in many ways, with Taft maintaining a hands-off approach to many areas instead allowing his appointees to govern as they willed. For Williams this meant a chance for him to perfect his practices and implement *his* policies once again within a new administration which would have to tackle the oncoming groups of non-whites.[266]

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[263] Scholars like Anna Pegler Gordon point to immigration photos as being central to the racialization of Asian immigrants during their period of exclusion and beyond.
[264] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, chap. 7.
[265] Vincent J. Cannato, 186–88.
[266] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Roll 1.

In many ways the "undesirables" who continued to come to the Island were clogging up the processes that Williams designed and implemented. Each "undesirable" cost manhours requiring extra reviews and enquiry proceedings, paperwork, and precious time, a highly valued commodity when Ellis was at its peak of processing thousands of immigrants each day.[267] Williams had an opportunity not afforded to him during his first tenure as commissioner, to weed out immigrants based on more broad standards of health and oblique "likely to be a public charge" exclusions. With the 1907 Immigration Law "poor physique" was added to the list of excludable causes which was left to the inspectors to define based on individuals.[268] For Williams and his agents this separate clause allowed individual agents more discretion as those of "poor physical" conditions were deemed "Class B" and thus up to the agents to exclude.[269] This blurry statute was further complicated by the disease standards which stated immigrants were to be excluded who had "loathsome or dangerous and contagious diseases", again leaving it up to the inspectors or doctors discretion. Augustus Sherman also noted these individuals, taking photos of them in detention with "types" marked as "deformed", "giant", and "microcephalic."[270] In turn, Sherman's photos effectively determined what "types" of people were upon arrival whether they be "Gypsies" or "giants."

In 1909 Williams issued new rules for exclusion of "undesirables" including those immigrants with things like inflammation of lymph nodes, varicose veins, and stiffness of the joints.[271] Under Watchorn and Strauss the deportation rate dropped significantly even with the

[267] See more about the process of immigration and the legal battles about deportation in David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses : The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, chaps. 10–11.
[268] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*, 410–14.
[269] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 206; Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land*.
[270] See examples in Augustus F. Sherman and Peter Mesenhöller, *August F. Sherman : Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920*, 2005, 94–99.
[271] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Roll 2; Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 207.

increased number of immigrants coming into the United States. Williams saw this second chance to ensure the right immigrants became Americans and more of the "undesirables" were sent back whence they came.[272] Williams noted his strong position on restriction in October 1909 with a half page article in the New York Daily Tribune entitled "The Undesirable Immigrant Defined by an Expert."[273] In the article Williams notes that some 60% of the total immigrants are of "value to the country", while some 40% are "undesirables" with 20% of those being captured by existing laws and some 20% being the "undesirable majority."[274] Amongst the "undesirable majority" able to bypass the laws Williams bemoaned the fact that "the immigration laws of this country draw no line of difference between the intelligent and useful alien and the ignorant man who barely make a living."[275] Williams continued on pushing for something which eugenicists and restrictionists alike clung to: a literacy test.

The idea of a literacy test for immigrants had been floated for many years without much movement by the time Williams returned to the Island. In the 1907 Immigration Act the test was again defeated by reformers and Williams was forced to look elsewhere for another exclusionary test. After regaining his office in 1909 Williams went about the Island noting all the policies and standards that he decided needed strengthening. Immigration laws needed to be strictly enforced in Williams mind and immigrants needed to be put on notice.[276] The "likely to become a public charge" clause was already something that Williams had utilized in his first tenure more than his successors or predecessors and this time around he made sure that inspectors strictly followed *his* guidelines. As historian Vincent Cannato notes, "the government could bar paupers , who were

[272] William Williams, "William Williams Papers", n. Roll 1.
[273] National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Undesirable Immigrant Defined By an Expert."
[274] National Endowment for the Humanities.
[275] National Endowment for the Humanities.
[276] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 194.

already dependent on public funds for support, as well as those whom immigration officials suspected *might* end up as a public charge *in the future."*[277]

Williams realized he could build on this clause and issued a new notice to his inspectors a few months later which essentially added a monetary requirement for immigrants. Citing welfare concerns Williams made it clear that no hard and fast rule could be used for the amount of money immigrants needed to enter the country but cited $25 as the standard *he* would uphold. Almost immediately there was outcry from immigrant welfare groups and especially from Jewish groups who noted the extra scrutiny that Jewish immigrants were receiving at the hands of inspectors.[278] Williams would be tested further as lawsuits stacked up against the $25 rule, eventually downplaying the rule after a visit from Secretary Nagel. Nonetheless the "rule" had an effect as deportations rose over "pauperism" and "likely to be a public charge" justifications, reaching almost 2% by 1910.[279] Even after the peak years Williams was tied to his hardline stance against immigrants he deemed to be "excludable." A 1911 headline captures his sentiment, stating, "Turned Back 14,500 Aliens Last Year: But 735,142 Were Admitted at This Port, Commissioner Williams Reports. Time to Restrict. He Says. 'Put Aside False Sentimentality in Dealing with Immigration."[280] Williams, who had been receiving bad press by 1911 due to his uneven interpretation of the Immigration laws and his crackdown on Immigrant Aid Organizations, continued to defend his exclusionary policies and individual practices. He defends himself further by stating:

> "The time has come when it is necessary to put aside false sentimentality in dealing with the question of immigration and to give more consideration to its racial and economic

[277] Vincent J. Cannato, 195; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 21–25 makes a similar claim in regard to the public charge clause but adds that it applied most readily to "sexually deviant aliens" .
[278] William Williams, "Defends Ellis Island"; "Hearing on Ellis Island"; "Williams Wants Facts."
[279] United States., "Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor for the Fiscal Year Ended ..."
[280] "Turned Back 14,500 Aliens Last Year."

> aspects, and in determining what additional immigrants we shall receive to remember that our first duty is to our own country."[281]

Williams clearly made an argument for exclusion of "foreign undesirable" peoples while noting the domestic concerns of housing, caring for, and feeding the assimilable Aliens and native-born.

In time, Roma were grouped in with an ever-growing list of other undesirables and LPC. Williams had attempted to utilize the term in his first administration for restriction but had failed to expand it beyond the poor, mentally ill, and LPC. But by 1909 this list included various ailments and illnesses along with a much broader interpretation of LPC and "immoral" peoples.[282] Likewise, with Taft in control Williams was able to implement practices which people like Prescott Hall and other restrictionists clung too, including the snapshot "racial" assessments. By creating a catchall category Williams in effect was able to justify exclusion without angering more liberal reformers and officials while remaining in good standing with his new boss. Taft's faith in his fellow Yale man Williams was absolute and he rarely injected himself within any of the Island's practices. Williams essentially had free reign on the Island and his opponents began to cry foul immediately, taking to the newspapers and streets. By 1911, the New York Times was publishing pieces decrying the treatment of the immigrants on the Island as overly harsh and Williams as a despot. Williams hit back with his own pieces in the times responding to his critics, citing his public postings around the Island and his strict stance on corruption as proof of his work. On May 26th, 1911 Williams responded to a previous day's posting with:

> "As a matter of fact, no violations of this order occur [his orders on immigrant treatment]. If the writer above referred to think otherwise, I shall be glad to have her come here and point out the Commissioner how it is violated, so that the offender may be punished. I write this upon the assumption that you do not wish your column to be used as a means of

[281] "Turned Back 14,500 Aliens Last Year."
[282] E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965*; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State : Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 23–29.

> disseminating false information concerning a Government office especially one engaged in very trying work."[283]

But his critics continued to hound Williams claiming his authority was too much and his interpretation of the laws were too strict. Both political opponents and immigration aid societies continued to push for reform and went to congress several times in 1911 alone. Secretary of Commerce and Labor Nagel and Commissioner- General of Immigration O'Keefe both came to William's defense in hearings and publicly claimed that steamship companies and bitter immigrants were to blame for the reports of abuse.[284] By 1912 a New York Times article claimed that Williams was the "Czar of Ellis Island" and had become a tyrant, focusing on his deportations of immigrants, and especially those who had been in country for years.[285] Nonetheless Williams still maintained his control of the Island and continued to push for strict interpretation of the existing laws, or at least his interpretations of said laws. While Williams and the Taft administration were enforcing immigration laws more stringently for LPC people they were also getting more experience with Romani individuals trying to enter the country.

"Immigrant Attacks Guard with Knife…Quarrelsome Russian Gypsies among 227 Aliens Sent Back" exclaimed a New York Times article from 1909.[286] The "Gypsies" in question, fifteen by the newspapers account, were "unruly", but were not in fact the ones who attacked the guards, instead a Polish immigrant was responsible but "Gypsies" were still detained. "Gypsies" get sparse mentions within the immigration material of William's second term, but they do show up in newspaper accounts often associated with deportations, "unruliness", and "swindling."[287]

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[283] William Williams, "Defends Ellis Island.", 12.
[284] The Sun, "Nagel Defends Ellis Island, Williams Not to Blame for Tragedies of Life;" "Williams Wants Facts."
[285] "Czar of Ellis Island."
[286] "Immigrant Attacks Guards with Knife."
[287] See examples such as: Special to The New York Times, "Witchcraft as Aid to Theft"; "Hold Up 250 Gypsies"; Special to The New York Times, "You're Going to Lose Money."

Another 1909 article mentions another group of "Gypsies" slatted for deportation and their desperate attempt to thwart the authorities with a sensational headline stating, "Flung their Babies at the Inspectors, Frenzied Gypsies used Children for Weapons in Savage Battle against Deportation."[288] Twenty-Four "Gypsies" were earmarked for deportation even though they had over $1,500 in cash, thousands in jewelry, and "effects" which surpassed William's $25 idealized fee. Marked as "undesirables" these immigrants were not the "right kind." Instead, they were ushered out and towards their outbound steamer after having their "weapons" taken from them by inspectors.

Still the "Gypsies" would not go quietly, fighting for their ability to stay, leading to sensational accounts of the women using children and nails and feet to fend off inspectors.[289] The "Gypsies" were forced kicking and shouting up the gangplank of a small tug, which "brought the struggling, shouting band to a pitch of madness."[290] Still the "Gypsies" were not done, the "chief, a squatty, dark-haired man of great strength" and some women, being forced onto the boat, fought back with their children being used as battering tools against the inspectors.[291] Undeterred the inspectors and onlookers pushed the "Gypsies" onboard and back to the port whence they came. The "undesirable Gypsies" were kept out and Williams' idealized measures were upheld – all while strategically ignoring the very rules and standards that he claimed to follow judicially.

This example is notable as it captures the fantastical nature of the "Gypsies" with their dark features, violence, and uncouth behaviors were disseminated the New York public. Few details about the actual people are given – no names, identifiable details, or reasoning for their

[288] "Flung Their Babies at the Inspectors."
[289] "Flung their Babies at the Inspectors."
[290] "Flung their Babies at the Inspectors."
[291] "Flung their Babies at the Inspectors"

attempted immigration are provided in the article. This follows much of the trend for such newspaper pieces written about "Gypsies" in the first few decades of the 20th century. Many works simply discuss the "Gypsies" as object of foreign interest and as people that should be excluded from both citizenship and subjecthood.[292] "Gypsies" are mentioned several more times throughout Williams tenure on the Island largely similar to the New York Times account as deported peoples. At the same time that the sensational stories of graft, corruption, and harassment was being reported by William's muckraker opponents, a fashionable trend which involved "Gypsies" was occurring in New York City proper building on Americans cultural discourses about "Gypsies."

In the United States, "Gypsies" remained a fantastical fiction for most people, things of dark forests and legends of Euro-centric worldviews. These representations were made happened during the era of broad public media circulation and the consolidating of New York's cultural power.[293] While these were mostly representations authored by non-Roma, they could be accessed by women and men (to a lesser extent)for strategic subversion of their positions in a changing society. That is not to say that the instances that I outline below were the only tropes accessible to the Euro-American public[294], nor were they particular in many ways to other performances of "Gypsy" tropes elsewhere; yet they occurred amongst American women and became popular during an era of intense "Americanization" and a national identity crisis.[295] Increasingly, what Americans came to know about "Gypsies" during the early 20th century were gendered representations of women.

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[293] See more in David Henkin, *City Reading*; Angela M. Blake, *How New York Became American, 1890-1924*; Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*.
[294] Phil Deloria's "Playing Indian" outlines instances of American Indian "Play" by Euro-Americans and Karen Sotiropoulos' "Staging Race", Eric Lott's "Love & Theft", and Michael Rogin's "Blackface, White Noise" all outline Euro- American "Blackface" play and minstrelsy in the same era.
[295] Angela M. Blake, *How New York Became American, 1890-1924*, chap. 3.

Contrary to what readers of the New York Times may have heard about "quarrelsome" undesirables on Ellis Island, by the turn of the century many "Gypsies" could be found among New York's high society. "Costume Dance for Miss Claflin" proclaimed a newspaper article from 1909; "What the Guests Wore" cries another from the same announcement.[296]By 1909 the gap between social classes in New York was stark, with some sections of the City still brought to their knees by cholera, typhus, and other diseases, while other parts gleamed with golden adornments which royalty could envy.[297] The upper-class New Yorkers spent much of their time in the period attending events in the evenings with recreational entertainment becoming the mainstay of many elite households. From opera to silent films, to debutante balls and society gatherings, New Yorkers of means were enjoying the modern luxuries and bringing subversive play into the mix. Announcements listed the ball's playful costumes with "Miss Virginia Murray went as a princess in black velvet {…} Miss Helen Le Roy Miller was a gay gypsy girl in black, red, and yellow."[298] "Gypsies" signaled both the domestic nature of idealized womanhood (tending hearths, children, and subservience) and foreignness with their gaudy colors, "swarthy" skin, and fortune telling and palmistry from exotic lands.

Over the next several years "Gypsies" in New York high society settings became newsworthy, intermingling with "Princesses", "Indians", and ethnic "types."[299]Also in 1909 are notices of "Playing Gypsy" at vacation houses and at camps with women dressing in gaudy colors and sitting around campfires such as: "A young girl, prominent in New York society, will play the gypsy queen and preside over a tent which will have a huge campfire and a boiling

[296] "Costume Dance for Miss Claflin."
[297] See more about the diseases present throughout the period in Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*; Howard Markel, *Quarantine!* Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*.
[298] "Costume Dance for Miss Claflin."
[299] "Fanciful Costumes in Ball at Sherry's;" "Gay Costume Ball Given for Charity"; Times, "At Virginia Hot Springs."; Times, "'Gypsy' and 'Hobo' Win Prizes"; "Governors Island Fete For Charity"; "Mrs. Kennedy Gives Dance for Daughter"; "Suffragists Open Fete of Nations."

cauldron."[300] Unlike instances of "Playing Indian" outlined by scholars such as Phil Deloria, "Playing Gypsy" masculine representations of "Gypsies" were largely absent; instead, the "Gypsies" were young women acting out a trope which invariably used bright risqué colors, flowing skirts, and jewelry that invoke Progressive-era ideas about mobility, gender, and capital through the performance of women "Gypsies".[301] Much like "Playing Indian" allowed men to show their "savage" nature and prowess, "Playing Gypsy" signaled a possible escape and sign of primordial simplicity for Americans women. Importantly, Phil Deloria's *Playing Indian* departs dramatically from "Playing Gypsy" in the 1910s as "Playing Gypsy" was not as much about redefining and articulating American-ness but re-articulating what was completely outside of the American polity and indeed outside of reality. "Indians" were real enough for people but they were from a bygone time of the American frontier whereas "Gypsies" stood outside of time and were novel stateless wanderers who could not be "Americanized" properly.[302]

But "Playing Gypsy" also became tied to an interesting American phenomenon which joined together ideas of American Progressivism with capital, ideas of empire, and play. For instance, in a 1910 article a fete was organized to benefit the widows of military men with "army girls dressed as gypsies, Maoris, or Japanese maids, {…} waiting to tell your fortune."[303] Here, "Playing Gypsy" was tied to both a subversion of female domesticity replaced with foreignness, and to progressive philanthropy and aid. Open Air Societies, the Peoples Institute, and various ethnic associations had become powerful organizations in the City, so it was no wonder that they sought to capitalize on this trend amongst elite women.

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[300] Special to The New York Times, "Hot Springs Gay as Season Opens."
[301] See more in Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*; and Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*.
[302] For more about the phenomena of "Playing Gypsy" see Chapter 3
[303] "Governors Island Fete for Charity."

Better yet, the article continues with the party goers being herded into a tent of curiosities including, "even more gorgeously clad, {…}Felipe Pablo Malaton Rogaba, Capt. Dorey's Filipino servant, who appeared as a Bogodo chief."[304] Other charity events capture the same fascination with foreign and deviant peoples with "a gypsy camp, with fortune telling by cards and palmistry; a freak show, tintypes and silhouettes…"[305] Some fundraising events took "Playing Gypsy" to the next level with one 1914 article in the New York Times claiming:

> "If anything could be more exciting than that it was the gypsy camp, which was chock full of thrills. In the first place, it had wild-looking young men bandits for barkers. They wore gay colored headdresses and broad scarfs, and inside there were fortune telling, Hungarian dancing and music, a gypsy wedding with tents and wagons and beautiful gypsy girls in beautiful embroidered gowns such as no gypsy girl would ever think of wearing, and much more attractive."[306]

Here is a rare instance where "Gypsy men" are included as "wild-looking", "bandits", and "barkers" signaling their distance from the well-manicured and cultured Progressive American man. Likewise, there is a subtle differentiation made textually between the "Gypsies" and the Gypsies, with those "Playing Gypsy" able to imagine and act on their elaborate fantasy and desire for comfort and luxury while the Gypsies were not able to comprehend such "beautiful, embroidered gowns."[307] Further signaling the foreignness of the "Gypsies" was their association with nations which seemed quite far from America such as Romania and Hungary. Additionally, it was not just the Hungarian "Gypsy" music which underlined the foreign nature it was also the association of Hungarian "Gypsy" music with passion, untamed desire, and a barbarian past. For scholar Mathew Frye Jacobson, these "Barbarian Virtues" were emblematic of the growing concern over American power and reach in the world and at home with millions of those same

[304] " Governors Island Fete for Charity."
[305] "Help Just in Time for Lizzie M'Daid."
[306] "Side Shows at Ball of Vacation Girls."
[307] "Side Shows at Ball of Vacation Girls."

"foreigners" making their way into modern cities.[308] At the same time those "foreigners" with their "primitive" ways were also sublimated into the American reimagining of hardiness, history, and mystique of the old frontier. "Gypsies" became part of that history even as they were represented as foreign and racially different, they also embodied the American spirit of individuality and perseverance along with their claim to nature and natural living which was necessary in the age of mass media, entertainment, and technological advancement.

At the same time as these representations circulated among New Yorkers in newspapers, high society programs, and outdoor excursions, Roma were being turned away on America's doorstep, ushered into boats back to those same exotic lands that so intrigued the upper echelons of New York society. "Hold Up 250 Gypsies" proclaims one 1912 headline, telling the story of "Gypsies" who were harassed by the police on Staten Island due to a man's belief that three women had stolen his money during a fortune telling session (turns out those women weren't with the band).[309] "Witchcraft as Aid to Theft" boldly claims another headline from 1909, where "Gypsies" seeking food took fruits and vegetables from the garden of a New Jersey mayor and told the caretaker, "they would cast a spell on her."[310] These articles mention "Gypsies" already in the United States and in New York at the same time that high society played with their tropes. Not surprisingly, those tropes often skewed towards the witchcraft stereotype perpetuated by stories such as the New Jersey caretaker's. Like the characters in the "Dolly" film actual Roma endured the brunt of the negative imagery of the "Gypsy" trope while those "Playing Gypsy" often turned to the idealized nature of the character. Hence, on screen "Gypsies" could be

[308] See more in Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues : The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*.
[309] "Hold up 250 Gypsies."
[310] Special to The New York Times, "Witchcraft as Aid to Theft."

devious, dangerous, dark and foreign while in high society balls and debutante parties they symbolized the freedom, domesticity, and sexualized youthfulness of women.[311]

While Anglo-Americans seemed to welcome the Gypsy figure into their lives by "Playing Gypsy" it is important to note that on Ellis Island Williams was still pushing for more exclusion. Yet, he seems unaware of the fascination with strangers that is playing out on the mainland as women and to a lesser extent men "Play Gypsy" and imagine themselves as strangers in their own lands. In fact, the former required the latter to make playing "Gypsy" safe and domestic while embodying the Rooseveltian and Progressive ideas of antimodern primitivism. Williams continued to defend his stance with increasing scrutiny by Immigrant Aid organizations and occasional congressional hearings. Williams also pushed for an application of new science on the Island when necessary to advance his ideas about the "right kind" of immigrant.[312] Yet, Williams still had his supporters in Restrictionists with Robert DeCourcy Ward saying that William had done "more than anyone else to keep the blood of our race pure."[313] This meant welcoming the figure of the Gypsy into New York, while keeping Roma people out.

William's tenure on Ellis involved massive reconstructing of immigration practices, with immigrants being more and more scrutinized as they attempted to immigrate. At the same time, Williams managed to exclude more people than his predecessors and his successors. His constant desire to weed out "undesirables" led to more and more categories of people who were deemed unfit for American citizenship, whether that be people who were "likely to become a public

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311 For further discussion of the Gypsy women tropes see Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu, *"Gypsies" in European Literature and Culture*; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*.

312 In 1912 Williams invited psychologist and eugenicist Henry Goddard to Ellis to prove his theories about foreign mental defectiveness. Goddard's results were promising for his theory that mental defectiveness could be traced to race, testing immigrants as they waited at Ellis. Goddard's follow up report in 1917 based on the additional testing done on Ellis in 1913 was highly influential in the academic world, with eugenicists and psychologists embracing portions of his thesis but with limited influence on policy matters.

313 Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 247.

charge", "mentally feeble", or guilty of "moral turpitude." Those expansive categories in turn led to a reimagining of immigration controls at America's border even while Euro-Americans played with their desires to become "aliens" and "Gypsies." Those who "Played Gypsy" did so in an effort to subvert their roles and recast their class and racial positions in safe spaces. They "Played Gypsy" to display their desires and reimagine a European trope within a truly American space. Yet, they were likely unaware of the real Roma who were harassed and excluded as part of the Williams era immigration regime. By domesticating the "Gypsies" Americans, and mostly American women, were able to safely navigate a gendered space of change and uncertainty while maintaining their class and racial positions within their societal trappings. Roma had no such escape and even those that managed to reach the mainland were scrutinized once they were visible and legible as American "Gypsies." It is in New York City and the surrounding areas where Roma and other racialized groups met and negotiated space while navigating the racial formations of the period. It is there in New York City that Roma became "American" and in turn where "Gypsies" became a legible cultural form for all classes to consume.

Chapter 3 "The one primitive people who contact with civilization has failed to exterminate"[314]: Gypsy Madness in the 1920s

With the press of a button, I sent a digital photograph speeding towards New York, along with the query "What do you make of this photo?"[315] That was the question I put to Mike, a Romani New Yorker. Mike had an inquisitive and philosophical side which often came out around me during our hours long conversations about New York. He cared deeply about his people and was interested in exploring some of the issues that we had discussed during my first ethnographic visit to New York. In many ways, Mike was the perfect interlocutor for my work, and was indeed, more than an interlocutor, he was a coauthor—sharing insights from his own family and experience—while giving an alternative interpretation of the American Rom that had little voice from the archives. I suspected Mike would have some insight about the 1900's photo of a Roma family surrounding a car and its accompanying caption. Mike



Photographs 4: Untitled, 1927

[314] Irving Brown, "Gypsy Folk."
[315] Various, "Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection", n. Series 5.

took a few moments to answer via text message, a medium to which we had been relegated due to COVID-19.

I could tell from his lag in response that he was taking time to analyze the photo from an early 20th century newspaper. “It looks like this is a broken-down car that they stumbled upon because the back wheel seems crooked… sort of like they are curious of it and they are exploring it together”, he finally replied. Mike was particularly struck by the caption's visual language. "‘Picturesqueness,’ really?! Like they were a view to behold”, he tapped out on his keyboard with a visceral indignation. "Meanwhile nothing human about whatever picturesque beauty they are mentioning…not one face is shown, just their clothes and mannerisms.” I could tell from our many months of working and living together that Mike was exasperated by the photo and annoyed in the same way that he was about the treatment of Roma as “things” and “crows” in his family’s home country of Romania.[316] “It comes off like they are talking about wild animals coming face to face with modern civilization”, he concluded.

Mike is correct in his visual observations of the photograph: there are no visible faces, no visible markers of race which Americans might note based on skin color, and nothing which gives much context to the scene. But that would not be uncommon for the photographs, visual representations, and performances of “Gypsyness” in the early 20th century. In fact, as we have explored in chapter 2 it was quite common to narrow down the field of focus and mark those

[316] In Romania, a derogatory way to refer to “Gypsies” is “cioară” meaning “crow” signaling their “blackness” and their association with pests and transience.

features which would signal “Gypsy” without allowing much subjective agency to show. Hence a stereotype of the American “Gypsy” was borne out of its abstraction from the real experiences of Roma. This photograph is no exception. , Mike also notes the caption, which suggestively alludes to a primordial sense of savagery juxtaposed by modernity. It marks “Gypsies” as belonging to a natural feature of the landscape much like the “Noble Savage” representation and discourse which signaled “Indians.” Here, Mike marks the familiar trope of “Gypsies” belonging to wild lands, forests, and nature while seemingly out of place with the innovative technology of the automobile. Yet, Mike also points out that the “Gypsies” are exploring, scrutinizing, and perhaps using the vehicle which seems broken in the photo. They are in fact, signaling their ability to use the car, in some manner unlike the “savagery” with which they are associated. There is a tension within the caption and the frame of the photograph which is evident to Mike but perhaps not to those viewers who did not recognize these figures as Roma. With the experience as a 21st century American Rom himself, Mike is able to subtly note the plurality of their representation, the “Gypsy” becomes “they” several times and in turn he signals the fact that Roma were a culture, not simply rare individuals in the wilderness—they were (and are) kinship networks and groups. This, while perhaps unremarkable to the outside observer, is vitally important to the story of American Roma in the 20th century. They were not often loners or pioneers in the wilderness—*they were already established groups, networks, kin, and close-knit families* who lived, worked, and made relationships in the United States. In New York City especially, “Gypsies” became central to the changing story of race and culture while Roma themselves made the City their home and navigated the same changes as those “Gypsies” of the popular imagination.

The years of America's involvement with World War One marked a turning point for many groups in New York City. German Americans became the dreaded "Huns" and their newspapers, organizations, and even food stuffs became suspect with even sauerkraut being renamed "liberty cabbage."[317] Ethnic enclaves across the City were targets for increased policing as the fear of Communism increased with the fall of the Russian monarchy in 1917.[318] Even those immigrants who were longtime residents of New York became suspect and their activities were monitored by police and anti-communist organizations throughout the City. By 1917, hardliners in Congress pushed by Attorney General Charles Warren (a founding member of the Immigration Restriction League), passed the Espionage Act giving the Feds the ability to target domestic "opponents" of conflict raging in Europe.[319] This gave police and anti-communist/ socialist organizations the legal means to justify their continued harassment of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. American entry into the Great War also signaled a new period of immigration restriction and xenophobia, with restrictionists winning hard won battles such as the literacy test for immigrants. New immigration during the War years also plummeted and during Fred Howe's whole five-year tenure (1914-1919) as Commissioner of Ellis there was only about a half a million immigrants allowed into the United States.[320]

The membrane of the immigration regime did not cease to enmesh immigrant people – including Romani people – at the shores of Ellis Island. With decreased immigration and increased power in the hands of the federal government immigration concerns became central to the ongoing racial projects throughout the City. In the City, there was a constellation of

[317] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 308; See also Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You : World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*.
[318] Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*, chap. 19.
[319] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 309.
[320] Vincent J. Cannato, 300; United States., "Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor."

government initiatives, reform groups, and settlement houses which worked in concert to discipline immigrant populations. By the end of the war Americanization campaigns had stepped up around the City and by 1922-23 schools across the five boroughs were receiving federal aid in the form of textbooks and materials for foreign born residents to prove their patriotism.[321] Textbooks included an address by the sitting President, state identification guides, handwriting practice, important American holidays and rites, and guides for naturalization.[322]

As we saw in chapter two, Roma people were depicted at the turn of the century through the lens of photographers such as Sherman on Ellis Island, alternatively as a "fit" or "undesirable" immigrant population. Even for those Roma people who managed to pass through the immigration regime at Ellis Island, we might imagine that their depiction as Gypsies and its association with backwardness, un-cleanliness, and savagery were destined to adhere to them as they began new lives in the City and across the United States. But by the 1920s, the Roma people who did manage to land in Manhattan were met with something they perhaps might not have expected. The image of Gypsies adorned advertisements, newspapers columns, and postcards. In social clubs across the City, women dressed as "Esmeraldas" for a charity functions and social programs. In photography studios, middle class families sat for family portraits dressed as Gypsies, adorned with exaggerated clothing and skinned covered in dark makeup. In the 1920s, Roma people found a City – and a nation – that had entered a new era of "Gypsy madness."

[321] Immigration and Naturalization Service, "RG 85 Entry 30-Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 - 2004." Thousands of textbooks and educational material was sent to schools for adult education courses in various languages including German, Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, and others. The textbook orders and partnerships with schools shows a concerted effort on the part of the INS to target foreign language populations for Americanization and give a snapshot of the possible demographics of the areas around the schools in question.
[322] Immigration and Naturalization Service, "RG 85 Entry 34-Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 - 2004", n. Box 92.

In this chapter, we explore the strange career of the "Gypsy" figure in the early twentieth century. The evolution of the "Gypsy" from an undesirable immigrant to a fashionable, chic, or vogue figure was possible because of the success – at least imagined – of the immigration regime to keep undesirable Roma people out of the United States. At the same time, the associations of the "Gypsy" as a free spirit, nomadic wanderer, and as a mystic managed to filter their way through the immigration regime and into the cultural imagination of Americans. The "Gypsy" figure, first depicted as part the legal immigration regime at Ellis Island, soon became a part of the cultural immigration regime in New York City. The irony is that while "Gypsies" soon proliferated in America film, photographs, fashion, and marketing, far fewer Roma people managed to make their way through Ellis Island with legal immigration capped for all Eastern Europeans at roughly 2,209.[323] This legal restriction made it culturally permissible for non-Romani Americans to increasingly dress, pose, and play as a "Gypsies". In fact, "Gypsy madness" was perhaps one of the most prominent cultural "fads" of the 1920s. These "picturesque" Gypsies circulated in the City and across the nation with greater speed than even the most ambitious Roma traveler could ever imagine. In other words, the "Gypsies" depicted by the photographer exploring an automobile would spread across the United States faster than actual Roma people behind the wheel ever did.

While the phenomenon of "Gypsy madness" may have been driven primarily by non-Roma people, Romani Americans soon recognized it as a moment of opportunity. Some Roma leaders recognized the power of celebrity and the "Gypsy" figures appeal and began to leverage those forces to their own ends—often attempting to carve out a space and recognition amongst New York's ethnic communities. While INS and local partners attempted to convey the necessity

[323] Countries included in this statistic are "Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia" See quota tables in Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects : Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, 28–29.

of becoming "Americanized", American Romani groups were establishing themselves throughout the City and making New York "A Gypsy Capital."[324] In turn, "Gypsyologists" in the United States began to note the different lifeways, kinship structures, and social positions of the newly minted American Roma. Roma people leveraged the era of "Gypsy madness" to try and articulate their own identities as Americans. To document this journey, we begin with the forces which pushed actual Roma people the political and economic margins of New York, subsequently opening up an American cultural center for the "Gypsy" figure to occupy.

3.1 Americanization Efforts and "Gypsies" on the Margins

When Roma people completed the short trip from Ellis Island to step foot in New York harbor, they may have felt as if they had crossed over an invisible threshold into American life. After all, Ellis Island was a gateway to New York and beyond, not a destination. However, once immigrants managed to gain access to New York's mainland and navigate the often-corrupt practices of boarding house agents, baggage handlers, and aid societies, they quickly learned that they had not escaped the immigration regime into which they had first entered at Ellis Island; instead, it had changed its shape. The legal immigration regime at Ellis Island was complimented by a cultural immigration regime commonly known as Americanization. Americanization was not a cookie cutter approach to assimilative politics, instead it was a variable set of ideals and practices which changed with the times and within the philanthropic organizations partnerships with state agencies. More often than not, Americanization in the 1910's to the early 1920s involved a basic level of English language education, civic citizenship lessons, and public displays of patriotism. New York City, while being one of the most diverse places in the United

[324] Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital."

States during the period, was not as clearly targeted for Americanization by official policies or state efforts prior to WWI. Instead, it was largely up to the neighborhoods and philanthropic partners to fill the void in the 1910s. Places like Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland were targeted for more direct Americanization interventions as the population demographics shifted with new immigrants moving westward and being shipped to the industrializing Midwest. New York, on the other hand, had been a multi-racial and multi-cultural landing point for centuries and thus, Americanization efforts took on a different tone. Ethnic enclaves around the City were targeted by Progressive organizations.

An excellent example is the New York People's Institute. The Peoples Institute was dedicated to "moral improvement" and increasingly for children's access to services.[325] In the early days of the Institute the emphasis was on getting education to the masses in the form of weekly lectures and political discussions at Cooper Union Hall. Largely chaired by the most prominent Progressives of the era the People's Institute maintained a community level focus with its main meetings taking place around the City in neighborhood schools and community centers by the 1910s.[326] In fact, it was the emphasis on improving the poor ethnic enclaves that garnered the most attention up until the surge in Immigration in the 1910s. But with rising numbers of immigrants coming into the City from places beyond Western Europe, the Peoples Institute took on a direct role in the Americanization efforts in the City. By the middle of the 1910s the Institute was working in partnership with other Progressive organizations to put forth pamphlets in neighborhoods and teach classes at local schools about "American values" and the importance of naturalization. In 1917 a training manual titled "Community Work and Americanization: The Local Community Needs the Nation; The Nation Needs the Local Community", was utilized by

[325] "Peoples Institute Papers", n. Box 26.
[326] "Peoples Institute Papers", n. Box 26.

community workers trained by the People's Institutes in their rounds throughout the City.[327] Further publications like "Americanizing a City" provide case study examples from places like Detroit for workers in New York to learn from. The publication is clear in its proselytizing message when it stated, "What has been done in Detroit can be done in every City or town that has an unassimilated foreign population and a night school."[328] People's Institute workers rushed to get adult immigrants some rudimentary schooling, usually in the form of free night classes or lectures at the Cooper Union taking their cue from Detroit and Chicago's Progressives while dealing with mass numbers of immigrants and mobile poor in the City.

Reformers had joined forces in late 1890s after the influential work by Jacob Riis, "How the Other Half Lives", spurred renewed interest in improving tenements and crumbling blocks throughout the City. Photography played an influential role in exciting the People's Institute and its donors. At the same time, it began to condition people in tenements – including Roma people – as a objects of pity living in squalor. In so doing, Roma people became enmeshed in a new association of living at the margins of New York. Scholar Leslie Hahn notes that visual manifestations of Americanization not only targeted immigrants but also the ethnic enclaves and multi-cultural urban spaces in middle America.[329] She further states:

> "Displaying oneself as an American not only took on renewed importance, but the work of Americanization narrowed the emblems and acts identifying true patriots. These programs did not simply act upon immigrants, but simultaneously altered public understandings of nationalism. The importance granted the visual and performative display of patriotism is paramount to grasping this shift. Once public enactment and exhibition became seen as central to teaching and affirming allegiance, nearly all Americans were asked to engage in activities guaranteeing their love of country."[330]

[327] "Peoples Institute Papers", n. Box 26.
[328] "Peoples Institute Papers", n. Box 28 file 4.
[329] See more in Leslie Ann. Hahner, *To Become an American Immigrants and Americanization Campaigns of the Early Twentieth Century*.
[330] Leslie Ann. Hahner, xvii.

Hahn's definition is important, as it emphasizes the shared function of performance and photography in the legal and cultural immigration regimes alike. The visual markers of Americanization followed immigrants from their time on Ellis with their photographs being captured by Sherman and others to their Independence Day celebrations and rites would follow the legal process naturalization. William's replacement, Fred Howe (former director of the People's Institute)[331] also sought to "humanize" the approach to immigration in 1914 by bringing Americanization material to the island including large paintings of presidents and notable events along with huge American flags. Howe even added suggestion boxes and let detained immigrants outside to enjoy fresh air and built a playground for children to utilize.[332] But it was not only the visual markers of Americanization which were evident in New York City and on Ellis, but also the pedagogical components of Americanization education with pamphlets and textbooks being created in the immigrants' own languages.[333] In this fashion, the restrictive legal immigration regime at Ellis Island was buttressed by a benevolent cultural immigration regime anchored at organization such as the People's Institute.

Roma, not having a recognized ethnic organization nor a cohesive and large social network like those from other Eastern European countries, were largely left out of the priorities of the People's Institute. Roma were certainly in the City in the 1910s, but their numbers were largely spread out and were often concentrated in extended family groups.[334] Even without being

[331] Howe was a former People's Institute employee and defined his progressive ideals as "sentimentality, or the dreaming of dreams." Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 298.
[332] Vincent J. Cannato, 298.
[333] Immigration and Naturalization Service, "RG 85 Entry 30-Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 - 2004."
[334] See more about Roma settlements in Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*; William MacLeod, "A New World Gypsy Camp"; For more about current Romani groups and settlement patterns see Margareta Matache et al., "FXB Center for Health and Human Rights: Romani Realities in the United States: Breaking the Silence, Challenging the Stereotypes A Study from the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and Voice of Roma."

a priority for Americanization, "Gypsies" still garnered attention by local authorities with a 1910 headline proclaiming: "Little Girl Missing {…} Suspects Strange Man Who Accosted Her Child in the Street—Gypsy Camps Searched."[335] Within the article the only thing which makes the "Gypsies" a target of the raid on their homes is that they are singled out and visible as "Gypsies" by the Detective in charge; a clear sign of racial profiling and subsequent harassment of the "Gypsy" camps in the Bronx.[336] The missing girl was not found in the camps and no further mention of the camps are discussed aside from their locations near Van Cortlandt Park and in the area around Westchester Village. The Roma were marked as "Gypsies" by the people in the area and were thus suspect based upon their visibility and position as *"strangers."* By 1915, when the People's Institute was beginning their Americanization campaigns in earnest, "Gypsies" were being pushed from one county to another. A "band of Gypsies" was driven out of Long Island by sheriff deputies after "many depredations", according to the newspaper account.[337] According to the paper the "depredations" included stealing corn, milk, and more disturbingly assaulting three women and stealing $45.[338] Conveniently, neither the sheriff or the victims involved the courts, nor was there any evidence of their crimes mentioned in the article, instead the "Gypsies" were "moved" along into Queens, following a pattern which would become the norm of the period. "Gypsies" once identified became the target of forced mobility throughout the City, much like some of the other racialized groups who were deemed "strangers"—inferior and undesirable.

These small examples during the 1910s are but vignettes of the trend in discussions of "Gypsies" during the period. The times that "Gypsies" or Roma are mentioned it often portends theft, kidnapping, amusement, longing, and curiosity. At the same time, *other* immigrants were

[335] "Little Girl Missing; Children Aid Search."
[336] "Little Girl Missing; Children Aid Search."
[337] "Gypsies Rob Yoakum Cows."
[338] "Gypsies Rob Yoakum Cows."

being targeted for pedagogical Americanization alongside visual performances of patriotism. "Gypsies" however, were relegated to the stage, the balls, or the streets being hurried along and harassed. But, in many ways what makes "Gypsies" American in the period *is their "stranger" status*, their connection to American tropes and stereotypes about freedom, mobility, sexuality, and deviance. In turn, the "stranger" in the guise of the "Gypsy" was more accessible, tamable, and safe when it could be exaggerated and played with by non-Roma. They, like other racialized groups such as American Indians, become fetishized tropes even while they were pushed to the margins and left out of the great Americanization undertaking. Nonetheless, American Roma managed to create a life for themselves within the space of New York City and its uneven attempts to Americanize its residents. In fact, some "Gypsy" groups managed to thrive and create their own burgeoning communities within areas of the City, which would again become the stuff of headlines after the chaotic period of America's involvement in WW1.

3.2 Gypsies in the City and Changes in the Streets

"There are hardly any tent gypsies now in and about the City", bemoaned Konrad Bercovici in his July 1923 piece for the New York Times.[339] "They live mostly in abandoned, empty stores on the lower east side, on the streets near Avenue C, all through the district from First Street to Ninth Street", Bercovici continues. Bercovici, an avid "Gypsyologist" of the period paints the situation of the Roma in 1923 as dire, degraded from their wandering ways of freedom and good nature. Instead, he claims that their situation is such as the other immigrants stuck in tenement houses and crowded slums eking out a living amongst the crowded masses of the City. Bercovici also notes that, "the contrast in dress is almost gone, as far as the women are

[339] Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital."

concerned, for American women now dress in colors as gay as the gypsies do." [340] This was not Bercovici's first outcry against changing Gypsy lifestyles. In 1921 he opined another New York Times piece entitled, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance" which begins with "Gypsies no longer tell fortunes; they make them! They no longer steal, buy or sell horses; they deal in second-hand automobiles."[341] Bercovici was not the lone voice in this existential "Gypsy" crisis however, the burgeoning American chapter of the Gypsy Lore Society (GLS) had many members of among their ranks who were making it their mission to go amongst the Gypsies and "save" and catalogue the last of the "real" Gypsies. At the same time that GLS members were going about cataloguing, immigration concerns again became the talk of the town with millions of stateless mobile people in Europe looking west.

Throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s there was a rapid change in the other "tribes" of New York with a 14% increase in total population from the 1910 census (which was already up by 25% from the 1900 census).[342] The City itself (including all five boroughs) had over 5 million residents and Queens itself was up almost a quarter million from the 1910 census.[343] Further diving into the 1920 data it seems as though there was about 1.9 million "foreign born whites"[344], 149 Indian, 5,042 Chinese, 2,312 Japanese, and 147,664 people marked "Negro."[345] The census data shows that the massive immigration wave of the 1910s had a profound impact on the concentration of racial minorities in the City further disproving the immigration officials

[340] Konrad Bercovici.
[341] Konrad Bercovici, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance."
[342] US Census Bureau Administration and Customer Services Division, "US Census Bureau Publications - Census of Population and Housing."
[343] US Census Bureau Administration and Customer Services Division.
[344] "Foreign Born Whites" are categorized as people who were from: "Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jugo-Slavia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Scotland, South America, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Wales, West Indies (except Cuba and "Porto Rico"), and "all other countries." US Census Bureau Administration and Customer Services Division. 1920 Census New York pg. 31
[345] US Census Bureau Administration and Customer Services Division.

belief that the immigrants would spread out across the country, instead remaining in their community centers and ethnic enclaves around the City. This was the ultimate fear of many old Progressives. The frontier now moved into the City and the blocks upon blocks of people were a visual world's fair, where the spirit and character of "Americans" looked to be under attack.

The xenophobic politicians soon had their day in the sun and the influx of immigrants into the City staved off in the aftermath of WWI. Partially, this was due to the wartime restrictions which slowed immigration to a trickle.[346] Even without the increased nativism the war had ravaged much of Europe and many people were unable to afford passage or navigate the increasingly rigid bureaucracy of American immigration. Meanwhile other immigration impediments lived on past the war, with the Red Scare of 1919-1920 further adding fuel to the restrictionists fiery view of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. The Wall Street bombing in 1919 initially led investigators to "undesirable aliens" who might have been behind the plot and the discourse around the bombing largely involved "foreign" influence by anarchists.[347] Relentless Attorney General Mitchell Palmer soon pursued all legal and extra legal means to expose the bombers and plotters eventually deporting over 500 "aliens" charging them under the new Immigration Act of 1918 which specifically targeted "undesirables" and included anarchists, communists, labor organizers and other activists.[348] By 1919 the immigration regime on Ellis Island under Commissioner Fred Howe (himself a progressive reformer involved with

[346] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 289; See also David M. Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers : American Identity and the Turn against Immigration*; David M. Reimers, *Other Immigrants : The Global Origins of the American People*; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; Leonard. Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, *Ethnic Americans : A History of Immigration*.
[347] Times, "European Reds May Have Set Bombs"; Special to The New York Times, "2 Held in Detroit as Bomb Suspects:"; "Bomb Plotters from Afar"; "Five Anarchists Sought by Flynn"; "Centre Hunt for Bomb Gang in New York; Man Slain at Palmer's House Identified; Detroit Police Arrest Two Suspects: Flynn Comes to This City"; "Nation-Wide Bomb Plot Unearthed"; "Held as Undesirable Alien."
[348] Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*, chap. 4.

the Peoples Institute) looked less like a port of entry and more like a prison. Immigrants were held for all sorts of minor discrepancies and the Island itself was transformed into a stopover point for radicals to be deported. Further inflaming the situation, the "Spanish Flu" wreaked havoc in New York killing hundreds of thousands across the country and making all "foreigners" suspect once again. Fred Howe resigned his post in 1919 penning in his autobiography, "I hated the new state that had arisen, hated its brutalities, its ignorance, its unpatriotic patriotism, that made profit from our sacrifices and used its power to suppress criticisms of its acts."[349] In 1919 in the final report from Fred Howe some 62,304 immigrants attempted to pass through Ellis Island, a huge drop from the pre-War years.[350]

By 1920 the number of immigrants grew with some 328,269 attempting to pass through Ellis. Of that number some 1,722 were initially barred from entry and deported.[351] With the upswing in immigration and with Americans looking to the poor of Europe as potential "undesirables" congress acted. In 1921Albert Johnson, the chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization and Senator William Dillingham sent a new restrictive bill to the ailing Woodrow Wilson pushing for a quota system based on Dillingham's 1911 report and restricting immigration to 3%.[352] Wilson effectively vetoed the act, and it was up to his successor Warren Harding to pass it without much controversy in spring 1921. By the time the dust settled in the early 1920s many immigrants were viewed as potential anti-American instigators and restrictionists had all the weapons they needed and, more importantly, support from various government officials to debate further restrictions in congress. In the end it was the quota system

[349] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 328.
[350] United States., "Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor", n. Year 1919 Page 303.
[351] United States., n. Year 1920 Pg. 313.
[352] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 332; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects : Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, chap. 1.

which won out capping immigration from places where "undesirables" came from to an all-time low. By 1921 even the idea of the "melting pot" was beginning to receive pushback with Madison Grant, the author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, claiming that the pot was being "allowed to boil without control."[353]

Konrad Bercovici's pieces in the New York Times, where the title of this chapter is derived from, clearly outline a tension which was felt by more than just himself. A tension which manifested in the modern primitivism movement of the period where people, and especially Anglo-Americans, sought to understand the rapid modernization occurring around them by recasting those representations of "savages" and "barbarians" for themselves.[354] Building on the tension and legibility of the "vanishing Indian" discourse Bercovici makes an argument which would resonate with educated Americans, that of people being consumed by "civilization", whose racial fitness was called into question.[355] "The first tribes that were trapped into adopting a sedentary life—the result of which will be for them the same as for the Indians—were compelled to abandon tent for house by several well-intentioned but ill-advising women, who had their gypsy parents arrested for cruelty to their children."[356] In turn Roma, like the Indians [357], needed to become part of the "melting pot" and access citizenship in some people's minds even while Gypsylorists worried for the future of the "Gypsies." Bercovici focuses on New York City in particular and his articles thus give some insight into the situation of the Roma within the City's interwoven relational racial formations. Bercovici was convinced that American Gypsies were

[353] Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage*, 335.
[354] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues : The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*, chaps. 3–4.
[355] See more about this in Trachtenberg's Chapter 5 about the Wanamaker Store and the ideas about the "vanishing race" pushed by Dr. Joseph Dixon with support of the Wanamaker's. Alan. Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha : Staging Indians, Making Americans*.
[356] Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital."
[357] Alan. Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha : Staging Indians, Making Americans*, 226–27. See where Trachtenberg discusses the goals of the Rodman Wanamaker Expedition and the tension with the melting pot theory.

increasingly distinct from European Gypsies. For instance, Bercovici points out that, "The American gypsy has little in common with his European brother. There is not much heroism about him. He is a shrewd and able trader, always on the lookout for the dollar."[358] He continues on about the change in Romani women[359] beguiled by the American trends of fashion and giving up their *dikhlos* (headscarves) and shawls for feather boas. Bercovici, in his 1921 piece, does give a number of Gypsies in America, claiming that some 5,000 families go about the country with many passing through New York City. Bercovici's estimate, while not entirely verifiable, is a large amount of Romani individuals who seem to be "American" enough for Bercovici to claim them as entirely different from their European counterparts.[360] But even with all the changes to "Gypsydom", Bercovici claims that "the gypsy still remains a gypsy" in a form of biological determinism. They cannot escape their racial pasts nor their present situation where they still are seen as outsiders amongst the City dwellers.[361] Bercovici does point out that, "for the last ten or fifteen years, New York has been an invested City. It is still beleaguered by gypsies. At any time of the year, half a hundred tribes are living in its immediate surroundings. And just as New York has given tone to the theatre, the music and the poetry of the rest of this continent, so these gypsies living in the vicinity of New York give the tone to all the tribes in this country."[362]

At the same time that the debates surrounding the eventual Johnson-Reed Act were occurring in Congress, the racial formations of New York were changing. The shift from the influx of Western European immigrants to Southern and Eastern European immigrants brought

[358] Konrad Bercovici, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance."
[359] Here Bercovici actually uses the word "Romni" meaning "Rom woman", which is more commonly spelled "Romanya" in its current iteration. It is clear from Bercovici's other writings that he has a basic understanding of Romanes and spent time with different Roma groups both in his native Europe and in the United States.
[360] Konrad Bercovici, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance."
[361] Konrad Bercovici.
[362] Konrad Bercovici.

along a changing pattern of settlement and neighborhoods. With that shift came a changing relationship between immigrant groups. Southern Italians and Russians (and especially Russian Jews) were now the most prevalent ethnic groups in the City pushing out some non-white New Yorkers into new spaces.[363] Meanwhile, non-white immigrants from colonial spaces were beginning to make New York their home, changing the ethnic makeup of the African American community in New York. Unlike other African American communities in the South, Black New Yorkers were more spatially fluid and changed apartments frequently often taking on renters to pay the bills.[364] That started to change in the early 1920s with the growth of Black Harlem due to the increased pressure from whites and continued rental pressures forcing African Americans out of other portions of the City and into Harlem. The pressures from both racist whites and newly arrived immigrants changed the racial makeup of the City for good but also lent itself to a new ideology of Blackness, where Haitians, Cubans, and African Americans joined together in moments of unity, like the rent strikes of 1917-19.[365] In turn, the ethnic diversity of the Black community in New York became one of its defining characteristics and its ethnic coalitions enabled places like Harlem to thrive culturally even if economic opportunities were far and few between.

But it was not just a change in the Black community it was also a shifting demographic in Manhattan proper with many ethnic enclaves getting pushed further into Brooklyn and Queens due to rental prices.[366] It should be noted that "ethnic enclaves" as they are discussed by many authors is slightly misleading in that most "enclaves" after 1900 were in constant change and

[363] "New York State Census: Digital Collections: New York State Library."
[364] Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*, chaps. 4–5.
[365] Marcy S. Sacks, 170–96; Jared N. Day, *Urban Castles*, chap. 4.
[366] Jared N. Day, *Urban Castles*, chap. 4.

even before the exodus from Manhattan groups like Italians lived in many different areas which were not wholly racially segregated.[367] Brooklyn and especially Queens were growing in population during the 1920s and areas which had formerly been unused began to fill up with industry and homes for the growing population. Additionally, the roads began to be paved, mass transit moved in, and jobs began to flourish for those "desirable" residents.[368] Throughout the City renters still faced an increasingly powerful landlord activism and in turn many residents were caught up in the cycle of moving throughout the City to escape terrible conditions. This added mobility meant that neighborhoods which were once known to be "Italian", "Irish", "Black" and others were in flux with the rent strikes of 1918-1919 adding more mobile City dwellers to the racialized groups of poor.[369] By 1920 areas in Manhattan, including *Kleindeutschland*, became symbols of the past with fewer ethnic enclaves throughout the downtown area. Instead, emerging transportation systems like subways moved people, and whole communities, into Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx at an unprecedented rate.[370]

According to the 1925 New York State Census Report to the Legislature on January 15, 1926, New York City had 5,873,356 residents compared to 5,047,221 in 1915.[371] Of those residents in 1925 about 1,123,200 were classified as "aliens", while in 1915 some 1,204,702 residents were "aliens."[372] It is noted in the report that the restriction of immigration during the war years and proceeding federal legislation had impacted the amount of immigration into the

[367] Roger Daniels, *Coming to America*, 195.
[368] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, chap. 6; Angela M. Blake, *How New York Became American, 1890-1924*, chap. 4.
[369] Jared N. Day, *Urban Castles*, 93–118; Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, 152–54.
[370] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*, 152; Mike Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, *Greater Gotham*.
[371] Florence E.S. Knapp, "State of New York Enumeration of Inhabitants 1925", 7.
[372] Florence E.S. Knapp, 7–8.

City. From fiscal years 1911 to 1914 there was a net increase of 859,543 "aliens" in the City while from 1922 to 1925 there was only a net increase of 285,421 "aliens" in the City.[373] Overall, these numbers show that the influx of new immigrants had slowed to a trickle and although the City was growing it was largely due to internal shifts into and out of the City with the changing technology and opportunities for desirable workers.[374] Zooming in further, the data from the census report shows that on a block level many changes were occurring including the exodus of "aliens" from portions of Manhattan.

It was during this period of change that Jewish New Yorkers also started moving further into Brooklyn and Queens forming close knit communities in parts of Brooklyn which can still be seen today.[375] At the same time Jews had to combat anti-Semitism and deal with the relational racial formations of the area, including aligning themselves (at least in some moments) with the experiences of Black Americans during the period.[376] While the street level interactions are hard to resurrect scholars have managed to show through popular media the strategy of American Jews to support the calls for equality and justice for Black Americans as a means to also call for their own equality in society. This shows that not only were Black Americans and American Jews interacting at least in popular discourse, but they were to some extent recognizing the relational racial formations that were being created both internally and externally. At the same time both groups were not monolithic and American Jews and Blacks splintered at times over their national origins and histories. Scholar Haisa Diner notes in the introduction to her new edition that even though American Jews clearly had relationships and interactions with other

[373] Florence E.S. Knapp, 8.
[374] See more about these changes in Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations under Heaven*; Angela M. Blake, *How New York Became American, 1890-1924*.
[375] See more in Hasia R. Diner, *A New Promised Land*.
[376] See more in Deborah Dash Moore et al., *Jewish New York*, pt. 2.

ethnic groups in the area they chose to spend more time discussing Black Americans in their popular media and discourse, pointing the concerted effort on the part of the group to use their own racial positions to establish what they would see as beneficial arrangements with one another at least in rhetoric.[377]

American Roma found themselves living in changing neighborhoods marked by geography, class, and race. In areas like Greenwich Village and the Bowery further changes to the blocks sparked considerable outcry from older residents as new immigrants moved through the region and set up shop.[378] The Bowery encompassed an area between Chatham Square in the South to Cooper Square in the North. It buttresses Chinatown and Little Italy along with the East Village and is located in what is now called the "Lower East Side."[379] Throughout its storied history the area had been associated with entertainment, deviance, and curiosity. The area was home to areas where homosexual men met in private and also where the infamous P.T. Barnum got his start selling his curiosities for pennies.[380] At the same time, the area was also home to many immigrant communities with the famous Five Points area meeting the Bowery along the southwestern border. The Bowery especially went through changes during the 1920s with many of the former sites where poor and lower-class City dwellers used to find cheap dime entertainment and drink becoming the center for homeless and "hoboes."[381] Where once the Irish and Italians had run saloons and entertainment centers, now the Salvation Army, Bowery Mission, and YMCA reigned supreme. Italians, Irish, and Jewish centers all moved out of the

[377] See more in Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*.
[378] Stephen Paul DeVillo, *The Bowery*, chap. 15; "Pseudo 'Bohemians' Must Quit Village."
[379] Stephen Paul DeVillo, *The Bowery*; George Chauncey, *Gay New York*, chap. 1.
[380] George Chauncey, *Gay New York*, chap. 1.
[381] Stephen Paul DeVillo, *The Bowery*, chap. 15.

district and mobile poor and newly arrived immigrants from the East and South – including Roma –made the now decaying area their home.[382]

The constant restructuring and shifting racial landscape also was mirrored by the infrastructure breaking down around the areas that Roma made their homes. By the time Prohibition became law the area was in a steep decline and many of the buildings were being sold off at a fraction of their retail price.[383] In turn, the Bowery became known as a "skid row" of sorts, pulling in the most desperate and discriminated members of New York City while police and City officials continued to scrutinize the area and plan for its future. But it was not just the old Bowery that was changing it was all parts of the City with ongoing movement away from lower Manhattan to Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Each borough reflected the ongoing changing racial demographics with foreign born New Yorkers making up almost 50% of the overall population in 1920 being reduced to just under 20% by 1930.[384] The immigration regime had done its job and Americanization had in turn pushed citizenship on many others. Nonetheless, the somatic racial makeup of the City, as noted by "Black", "White", "Other Race" in census material, also changed over the course of the 1920s with the "Black"[385] population jumping to almost 5% of the total population by 1930 and over 12% in New York County itself.[386] One group perhaps more than others were definitely not in the plans for the Bowery or

[382] J. C. McMenamin, "Those Who Live on the Bowery.;" HALLIMOND, "The Bowery Mission Appeals for Help to Face a Hard Winter."; Howard, "A Defense of the Bowery."
[383] "Bowery Landmark Sold.;" "Sale on the Bowery."; "Bowery Business Buildings Sold."; "Bowery Building Leased."; "Investor Buys Bowery Corner."
[384] Roger Daniels, *Coming to America*, 404.
[385] I am using the quotations to note that the census information during the period may not entirely be dependable as people had the ability to mark the boxes they desired but also census workers had the prerogative to mark those boxes if they were doing community census surveys or going from neighborhood to neighborhood etc. Thus, each category is open to some interpretation based on the person doing the selections and "Black", "White", and "Other Race" are fairly broad categories.
[386] Social Explorer Dataset (SE), Census 1920, Digitally transcribed by Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Edited, verified by Michael Haines. Compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer., "1920 Census Data"; Social Explorer Dataset (SE), Census 1930, Digitally transcribed by Inter-university Consortium for

the changing City but increasingly Roma made the City and the Bowery their home and established notable and newsworthy communities therein.

3.3 "They will have a bad name as long as they wander."

In 1925 in Harlem "King" Frank Mitchell stated that he wanted to "Americanize my people. They wander too much. They should settle, vote, and send their children to school. They are fine mechanics. When they wander, they are accused of everything. It is all false. But they will have a bad name as long as they wander." [387] Mitchell's "wandering" people were American Roma who had made parts of New York their home sometimes for several generations. But, like many people who were forced to be mobile, some Roma of his "tribe" spent summers on the road making money as they headed up and down the coast and further west. A week prior to the article "King" Frank himself was travelling to defend his right to be called "King." On March 15th, 1925, a New York Times article proclaimed, "Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies: Forces of Old and New World Line Up for Royal Contest."[388] The author of the article tells of the passing of "King" Nicholas John and the scramble for his crown. It seems that by 1925 there were several different communities of Roma in New York with Frank Josef of the "Serbian tribe" vying for his brother's crown, while in Yonkers Ritasra Jurka claimed the title and finally in New York on Lenox Ave Frank Mitchell weighed in. Frank Mitchell, "wise in the ways of the great City, as becomes an Americanized gypsy…" announced that he was the rightful heir at the Palace Casino Theatre in early February.[389] The article goes on to fashion the other contenders to the throne as "Old World" Gypsies who "undoubtedly cling to the ways of the old regime."

Political and Social Research. Edited, verified by Michael Haines. Compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer., "1930 Census Data."

[387] "Gypsy King Puts Ban on Fortune-Telling."

[388] "Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies."

[389] "Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies."

Mitchell, “has acquired the American habit of expediting matters”, and clearly was favored by the newspaper author for the crown.[390]

Mitchell's coronation battle reveals currents shaping the cultural-political status of Roma people as Gypsies. Similar to Konrad Bercovici’s emphasis that life in the United States was changing Roma people the article on Mitchell highlights the changing conditions of the Gypsies stating, “The truth is the gypsy is conforming to the new civilization.” The article continues:

> “It is only within the last few years that the gypsies have come into the cities in large numbers. The Serbian and Rumanian gypsies drift naturally to the sections where the Balkan peoples have taken up their abode; the Hungarian, Russian, Spanish, and English gypsies foregather in the same way. In no country in the world are there as many types of true gypsies as in America.”[391]

The tone of the lengthy article is similar to many others set in the period of societal change with the author stating, “these children of nature have with difficulty adapted themselves to the restrictions of life in brick buildings and to the penalties imposed upon them when become part of the community.” Similar to the way American Indians were described as a sylvan people, “these children of nature” had in fact thrived in urban environments for hundreds of years in Europe and America yet the author plays on the representation to highlight how disconcerting and alienating it must be for the poor “Gypsies.” The Yonkers claim to the throne in Ritasru Jurka is painted as an illiterate fool with his conversation about Mitchell being transcribed as “me no know”, “me no clever, me no read, me no write, me no good for king.”[392] Frank Josef, the other contender has no dialogue in the article and the author ends with ambiguity.

What is clear is that there seems to be, according to the articles, many “Gypsies” in the City by 1925 spread out amongst the different boroughs and within their different national

[390] “Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies.”
[391] “Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies.”
[392] “Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies.”

groups. Similar to the way that some Roma groups in Europe had organized themselves, there were "Gypsy Kings" to govern their people in the United States.[393] In Europe various Romani "Kings" had arisen throughout the centuries with many families retaining the title for several generations. A prime example of this is the Polish Roma "Kings" with the surname Kwiek, who remained spokesman for their groups until the onset of World War II.[394] American Roma "Kings" also seem to act as spokesmen and community leaders for each group, although there were some that didn't have such a position such as the longstanding community in Maspeth. The article is also notable as it alludes to the interactions between authorities and "Gypsies" with truant officers, health inspectors, and police officers being mentioned by name. Again, this signals a noticeable shift in the discourse around "Gypsies" in the City with cops, public officials, and everyday people being able to *identify them even if they had become "Americanized*." In fact, according to a 1927 article one "gypsy" woman stated, "We American gypsies we do not roam about the country […] We do not steal, we respectable. We will send our babies to college when they grow up—not be dummy, like mother—father."[395] There is a tension between the way that "Gypsies" were represented some 10 years prior as "undesirables" and the "American Gypsies" who seem to be changed in disposition and occupation. At the same time though, these "American Gypsies" are represented as "dummies", their language recorded as broken; their eyes still "hot black;" their lives still "reek of bohemia."[396] There is within the discourse of the time a racial formation occurring which is built less on the legal system and more on the social and cultural discursive formations between the streets and the media. This

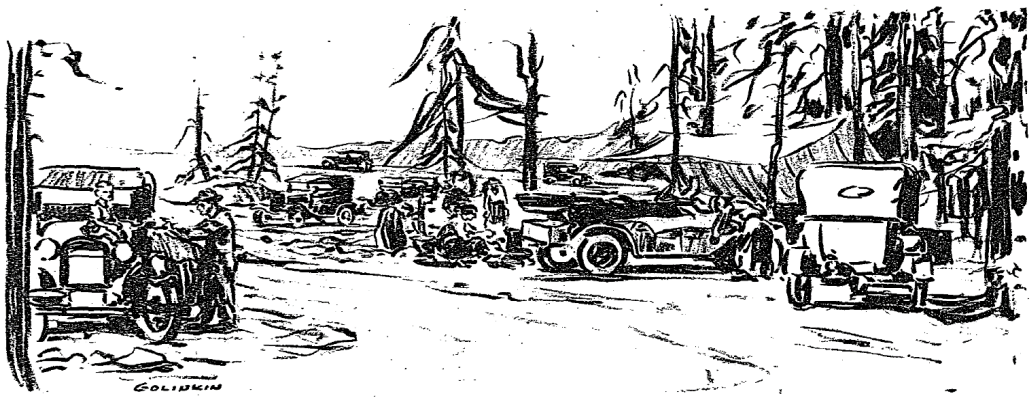
[393] See more about "Kings" in Europe in David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities, 1500-2000*; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Roma Portraits in History*.
[394] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Roma Portraits in History*, chap. 7.
[395] "The Gypsy Tells How to Read Fortunes."
[396] "The Gypsy Tells How to Read Fortunes."

small shift points to the importance of cultural mediums for racializing "Gypsies" in a way which is quite distinct from Europe where legal and social pressures had ghettoized some Roma in the East and enforced mobility measures in the West.[397] This discursive racial formation is acting upon the "Gypsies" without direct input from their communities in many ways. In Europe and in America there was this overlapping cultural discourse about the "gypsies" innate disposition and culture as untrustworthy and "false." Throughout the 1920s "Gypsies" in New York City are noted by newspapers for their misdeeds, including "palmistry", stealing, "swindling", and fraud even while they are noted for their ability to traverse the law, become mobile when necessary, and have a deep knowledge of American systems and language.[398] It seems the "real Gypsies" had finally become domesticated as "Americans" even while they remained racialized as "swarthy", "dark", "children of nature", and "black blooded."[399] No matter how "American" the "Gypsies" had become they still were "Gypsies." In the end there was no room for a hyphenated "Gypsy-American" or Romani-American identity. The legacy of the "undesirable" and perpetual outsider statuses had foreclosed any simple path forward for "Gypsies" to be accepted wholly. Instead, like the Indians, Americans used "Gypsy" representations to further understand and differentiate themselves from the ethnic stockpile that various cultural groups belonged to in the "melting pot" schema. Articulating "Americanness"

[397] David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*. Both sources outline the historical pressure by various states to either forcible settle or push "Gypsies" out of spaces throughout Europe. Instead, in the United States there is little evidence of a concerted effort by the national government to do either action.
[398] Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital"; Eugen Kovacs, "Rumanian Gypsies Learn New Tricks"; H. W. Shoemaker, "Origins of the Pennsylvanian German Gypsies"; Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America"; "Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies"; J. R. Moriarty, "A Gypsy Coppersmith Family"; Konrad Bercovici, *Around the World in New York*; Konrad Bercovici, *Iliana*.
[399] "Vanished Gypsies."; "Gypsy King Puts Ban On Fortune-Telling"; "Three Contend for Crown of Gypsies"; Konrad Bercovici, *Iliana*; "The Gypsy Tells How to Read Fortunes."

required counterpoints like “Gypsies” and “Indians” as they occupied the role of strangers within the land and imagined and backwards “Others” outside of the American polity.

By the time the dust settled amongst the various “Kings” in New York there was no clear outcome on who would reign supreme. Frank Mitchell and the others still claimed the titles of “King” amongst their respective groups and headlines throughout the 1920s continued to highlight the exploits and tragedies of the “Kings.” In 1926 a New York Times article covered the story of another “King” George Vlido who had fallen ill and his community was avoiding bringing him to the hospital fearful of the outcome.[400] Some three days later it was reported that George “Blado” had died amongst his people after going to Bellevue hospital.[401] Also in 1926 “King” Frank Kaslov is covered in an article where he has been remarried and claimed a new “Queen” for the Gypsies. In the article Frank Kaslov takes on the title “King of the Gypsies in



Illustrations 1"A New Race of Hoboes Takes the Road", 1926

America” and the author is sure to highlight Kaslov’s search for a suitable match of “royal blood”, in the end having to go to Europe to find a wife.[402] Kaslov returns with his “royal match” and renews his life in New York alongside his other “Kings” in the various boroughs.

[400] “Won’t Give Up Ailing King.”
[401] “Gypsy King Is Dead.”
[402] “New Gypsy ‘Queen’ Here on Leviathan”; “American Gypsy King Seeks Bride in Europe.”

The 1920s are a period where the various Roma groups in New York begin to form long standing ties to areas and spend considerably less time travelling comparative to a generation earlier. At the same time increased mobility by non-Roma meant that distinguishing "Gypsies" by movement alone was increasingly becoming more difficult. A 1926 article in the New York Times proclaims boldly, "A New Race of Hoboes Takes the Road", citing "Hitch Hikers" and "Auto Gypsies" as members of this new race.[403] The author paints the "Hitch Hiker" as "generally young people, khaki clad, with packs on their back", who "unlike hoboes who have succumbed to the road, these have not lost their sense of direction."[404] The article, highlights the youthful spirit, the vigor, and the innocence of the "Hitch Hikers" seeking alternative paths to adulthood. But "Auto Gypsies" are another breed altogether. "A Pest in Some Towns" starts the section about "Auto Gypsies."[405] "In these [Auto Gypsies] we have an ancient brand of wanderers in a new guise, brought back by a new highway and a new means of travel. From all indications the auto gypsies are on the increase", cries the author. Whereas, the old hoboes could be dispelled by the police, this new race of "Auto Gypsies" camp in family groups and "other methods must be found in handling the auto gypsies that crowd the campground so generously provided by most towns and cities."[406] But what does the author fear from the new breed of "Gypsies" above all else? He states it clearly towards the end, "There is a danger of breeding pauperism as the family wanders here and there eating the bread of charity. If the experience with dependency has taught us nothing more, of this we are sure: Alms rarely cure the beggar."[407] So even with "Gypsies" making the road their home in some parts of the country they

[403] Nels Anderson, "A New Race of Hoboes Takes the Road."
[404] Nels Anderson.
[405] Nels Anderson.
[406] Nels Anderson.
[407] Nels Anderson.

were still met with suspicion and cries of fool play, yet the "khaki" wearing youth were simply finding their way in the world. The era of increased movement meant increased scrutiny in many parts of the country and "Gypsies" continued to feel that scrutiny on the road and in the cities. Throughout the period "auto gypsies" and "Gypsies" in the City were fascinating Americans even while they were seen as drags on the society and "alms" takers. But along with the fears of the "Gypsies" came the seed of an ever-growing fascination with their representations and stereotypes as free from the "tyranny of factory whistles and alarm clocks."[408] In the era of immigration quotas, Jim Crow, and racial violence; acting out the fantasy of the "Gypsies" grew at a feverish rate. Americans of all types soon played with the representations of "Gypsies" as a means to escape the confines of their societal trappings and increasingly chaotic technologically advancing world. Similar in some ways to the performance of Blackface and the act of "Playing Indian" advanced by fraternal societies and outdoor clubs, "Playing Gypsy" became an accepted action which played well with audiences primed to act out their racial fantasies.[409] "Gypsies", while being run out of town in some places, were increasingly being welcomed into the homes of *everyday Americans* as a domestic stranger, a fascinating plaything, and a sexual object of foreign desires. "Gypsy Madness" had begun anew, and everyday people were soon getting in on the trend that had begun with the social elite a decade before.

[408] Nels Anderson.
[409] See Eric Lott, *Love & Theft*; Michael Paul. Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise : Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*; Philip Joseph. Deloria, *Playing Indian* for excellent discussions of this type of play. Deloria's work is especially useful when thinking through the act of "Playing Gypsy" as both "Gypsies" and "Indians" shared common stereotypes and representations which were legible and easily accessible for most Americans.

3.4 Gypsy Madness



Photographs 5: "Gypsy Family" circa 1920

By the late 1920s and early 1930s "Gypsies" were everywhere in the City. From stage, film, photographs, clothing, peep shows, and scholarship; the day of the "Gypsy" had arrived, and Americans were happy to consume this ongoing trend. "Crowds now packing big theatre to capacity at every performance. All Broadway wildly enthusiastic while critics call picture best ever seen and better even than 'Passion", proclaims Variety from 1921 in bold half page ad. "Gypsy Blood" came to New York City as a 1921 reworking of "Carmen" for a new audience in the City of American lights.[410] "Gypsy Blood" recounts the tale of the well-known Carmen seducing men, turning them against one another, finally succumbing to her lover's jealous knife thrust, "dying as she lived, the she-wolf enraged but unafraid."[411] "Gypsy Blood" drew in both elites and commoners desiring to see a film filled with passion, seduction, death, and "Gypsies." No longer was "Carmen" relegated to the opera houses of Europe, now it could be seen by all who could afford the ticket price. By changing the title to "Gypsy Blood" the film company had subtly signaled the innate biological nature of "Gypsyness", it was born out of blood and was inevitable, fitting neatly within the

[410] "Pictures", May 13, 1921.
[411] "Pictures;" "RAINBOW 'Gypsy Blood.'"

public discourse of race in New York.[412] "Carmen" could not help herself from acting upon her basal "Gypsy" nature, she was meant to deceive, lie, cheat, and sexually exploit men—she was after all, a "Gypsy." "Gypsy Bloods" Carmen portrays a sexual "she-wolf" who (and mind you without words as it was a silent film) captivates the audience with her enthusiastic performance utilizing her sexuality as a tool to mold men to her will.[413] The Variety article notes the performances as captivating and "Carmen" actress Pola Negri's especially of keeping the viewer's under a "major spell." In the end, the film was mildly successful, at least according to the papers, and "Gypsies" were once again seen on screen. But what of this "Passion" the article speaks of? Of course, the "Passion" that the review refers to was also known by its full title "Gypsy Passion" starring the same actress and director. Unlike "Blood", "Passion" seems to have not lived up to its good name with mixed reviews and a mild reception in the City.[414] Nonetheless, several pictures with "Gypsy" characters at the forefront ensured that Americans would not soon forget about the strangers in their cities and travelling their roads.

[412] For further discussion of relational racial formations and racial discourse see chapter 1 and 2. For further discussion about woman and consumer culture which directly affected the ways in which women were represented and circulated see Nan Enstad's *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*
[413] "Pictures", May 13, 1921.
[414] "Pictures", March 31, 1922.

Celebrities played with the "Gypsy" representations apart from theater and film also. Amelia Earhart, one of the most famous aviators of the era, is cited in 1928 as imagining herself "gypsying" around the country after her first transatlantic flight.[415] "Gypsy autos", "Gypsy motorcycle riders", "Gypsies of the air"; were but some of the celebrity usages of "Gypsies" during the 1920s.[416] In one case, "Gypsies" are quoted as "all but disappeared. But he has left his name behind for descriptive use", as new aviators "typified the better qualities of the 'wandering people."[417] Americans were infatuated with "Gypsies" and having celebrities to push the discourse and imagery of the "Gypsy" ensured it lived on past its original racialized context. Meanwhile, fashion icons and trends during the 1920s also utilized the mystique of the "Gypsy" selling "Gypsy girdles", "Gypsy hats", and "Gypsy Jaquettes."[418] By 1929 there was even "Gypsy" cigarette dispensers made by Kindel & Graham which featured a dark faced "Gypsy" woman who dispensed cigarettes out her mouth. In music, "Gypsies" lived on both in Hungarian music inspired by actual Roma and in name such as the "Gypsy Sweetheart Trio" of 1927 wearing belled and colored dresses to play the part.[419] Also in 1927 the once famous Hungarian Roma musician Rigo



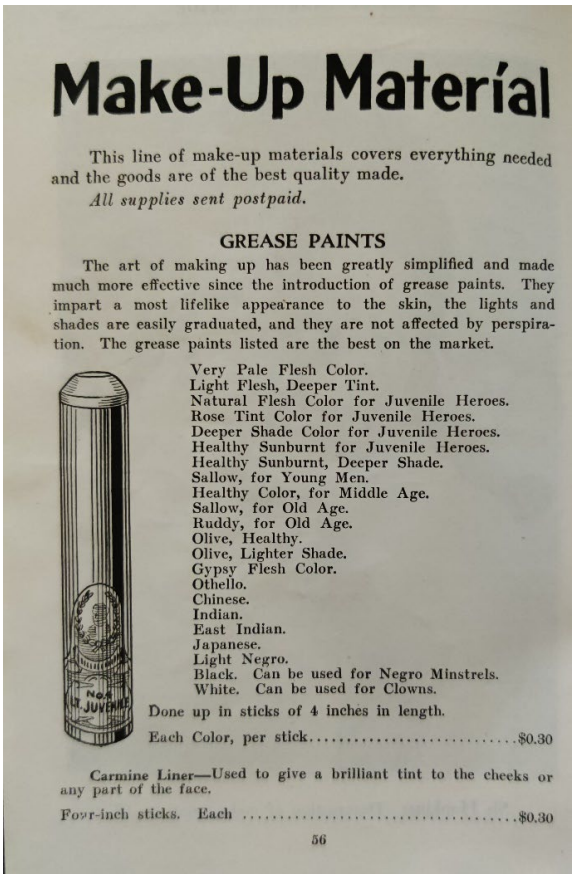
Illustrations 2: "Of Gypsy Inspiration", 1923

[415] Special to The New York Times, "Miss Earhart Shies at Air Meet's Peril."
[416] "Motorcyclists Plan Gypsy Tour"; "200 Motorcyclists Take 'Gypsy' Tour"; "Modern Gypsies Ply Their Trade Up Above the Clouds."
[417] "Modern Gypsies Ply Their Trade Up Above the Clouds."
[418] "Of Gypsy Inspiration"; "Novelties of the Season."
[419] "The Gypsy Sweethearts Trio."

Jancsi died in a New York hospital rekindling the interest in his affair with Clara Ward, former Princess of Chimay.[420] In the 1927 article about Rigo, the author notes:

> "the idea of a gypsy fiddler as a sort of gloried Pied Piper of Hamelin is so overworked for generations by assemblers of custom-made operettas. Many a final curtain could not fall without one scene in which a male actor with face stained with walnut juice and wearing false whiskers scraped on a violin while a group of ladies […] pretended with indifferent success to be hypnotized. Nevertheless, Jancsi played this part in real life. He had perfect natural makeup."[421]

The article points to the trend which may be legible to scholars of race, that of performing "Black face" but in this case it seems people were performing "Gypsy face."[422] Unlike the "Black Face" phenomena which had started in New York some one hundred years earlier, "Gypsy Face" was not directly a form of anti-Blackness. Instead, "Gypsy Face" represented a culmination of "undesirability" and Orientalist fantasies born out in Europe and shifted in the United States. At the same time, "Gypsy Face" was necessary to further demonstrate the "Un-Americanness" of the "Gypsies" as they were dark fantastical creatures that didn't belong to any nation state proper. By 1926 "Gypsy Face" had



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Healthy Sunburnt, Deeper Shade.
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Sallow, for Old Age.
Ruddy, for Old Age.
Olive, Healthy.
Olive, Lighter Shade.
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Carmine Liner—Used to give a brilliant tint to the cheeks or any part of the face.

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56

Illustrations 3: "Make-Up Material", 1926

[420] Violinist and Loves.", "Confessions of Rigo, the Gypsy Hero Of Princess Chimay's Amazing Romance"; S.T. Williamson, "The Hypnotic Gypsy."
[421] S.T. Williamson, "The Hypnotic Gypsy."
[422] Eric Lott, *Love & Theft*.

become a legible cultural form which even had its own place within "Denison's Make-up Guide for Amateur and Professionals."[423]

The make-up guide is particularly interesting as it not only advertises itself as the premier distributor of make-up products for minstrel shows but had products and suggestions for all kinds of shows featuring ethnic "types."[424] The guide goes as far as to say, "most plays revolve about certain national types, and if we can collate these prototypes and show how to 'make up' for any of them, we shall have taken the final step in the science of impersonation."[425] In essence the guide enabled the user to "Play" the "types" faithfully while remaining legible and consumable by the public. A mere ten pages into the guide and it lists "Gypsy", stating:

> "This make-up has gypsy grease paint for a ground color. The cheeks and lips should be tinged with deep red. Eyebrows and hair should be black. The outer edge of a gypsy's eyes have an upward slant. This effect is secured by the black lines near the lashes being slightly turned up at the ends. The dress can be copied from familiar pictures. It varies according to tribes. The *Indian girl* wig on page 72 can be used nicely. Also large earrings and bracelets may be added."[426]

And directly below "Gypsy" type is the "Indian Girl", which merely says ",This [the Gypsy] make-up applies to the Indian girl type also, without the earrings but with the proper Indian garb."[427] With those instructions any amateur or professional actor of the period could "Play Gypsy" and with a simple change of accessories, could "Play Indian." Once more, the guide even sold the "gypsy grease paint" for the character making it a one stop shop for the performer to truly take the "final steps in the science of impersonation." Unlike other "types" who borrow from others the "Gypsy" had its own grease paint simply described as "Gypsy flesh color",

[423] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, *Denison's Make-Up Guide*.
[424] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris.
[425] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, 6.
[426] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, 10.
[427] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, 10.

thereby cementing "Gypsy face" alongside more familiar "Black face" instances on New York's stages and film houses.[428] Importantly, the "Gypsy" grease paint was only one of a few ethnic grease "flesh" colors available and was utilized enough to have its own special color and usage. Unlike some of the other "types" cast in productions, "Gypsies" also had unique enough dress that they could be "copied from familiar pictures" and were differentiated by "tribes."[429]

But it was not just play actors and makeup artists who utilized the material and information from the guide. It also appealed to the young and middle classed as "Gypsy face" found its way into photographs and postcards from the era. A prime example of "Gypsy face" being utilized by children is the artifact below[430], where the young girls have blackened their faces (perhaps even using the grease paints advertised in Denison's), put on hoop earrings, jewelry, and head scarfs. Reinforced by Play, "Gypsy Face" performances reiterated the distinct somatic and racial differences that "Gypsies" had while downplaying their connection to the United States proper. Of course, Jancsi, the actual Hungarian Roma from the 1927 article, "had perfect natural makeup" implying his racial difference and innate inability to move beyond his role as a



Photographs 6: "Three Girls in Gypsy Garb", circa 1920

[428] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, 56.
[429] Ward MacDonald and Eben H. Norris, 10.
[430] *Three Girls in Gypsy Garb*.

"Gypsy" musician. To an American audience and readership this seems to have been legible and arguably was still in the public discourse some 30 years after he first made headlines by "stealing" away a princess as a lowly "Gypsy" musician.[431] Throughout the 1920s in New York City "Gypsies" remained in the spotlight as Americans played and performed in "Gypsy face", acting out their fascinating otherness, stranger status, racial difference, and deviance.

The photograph of young girls in "Gypsy" face also points to the trend of performing blackface, a phenomenon which is now familiar to scholars of race. Eric Lott's reading of blackface in *Love and Theft* takes aim at the practice and shows that far from simply denigrating and racializing African Americans in a form of antebellum longing, blackface served to scaffold an emerging form of white working-class consciousness inspired by the tumultuous period prior to the Civil War.[432] For Lott, blackface minstrel shows expose the often contradictory behavior and yearnings of white Americans where they imagine what black culture is (the "love" portion), and concurrently mock black folks in racist representations and performance in in order to save face (the "theft" portion). But in this case it seems people were performing "Gypsy face," an overlooked trend in theatre and performance but one recognizable to period audiences. Contrary to blackface, "Gypsy Face" represented a culmination of "undesirability" and Orientalist fantasies born out in Europe and shifted in the United States where it reflected both the public's fascination with "primitive" things and disgust for those foreign born who could not (and would not) be permitted to "Americanize".[433] At the same time, "Gypsy Face" was necessary to further

[431] Violinist and Loves.", "Confessions of Rigo, the Gypsy Hero Of Princess Chimay's Amazing Romance"; Press, "Fiddle of Gypsy Rigo Is Silenced"; Cable to the Chicago Tribune, "Clara Ward Again Elopes"; "Clara Sending Love to Rigo"; "Rigo Goes to Fiddling"; "Princess Chimay Quits Her Gypsy."
[432] Eric Lott, *Love & Theft*, pt. 1.
[433]For more about Orientalism see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*.

demonstrate the "Un-Americanness" of the "Gypsies" as they were dark fantastical creatures that didn't belong to any nation state proper.

In many ways the American "Gypsy Madness" of the 1920s followed a similar trajectory as what scholar Petrine Archer-Straw calls "Negrophilia" happening across the Atlantic in Paris during the same period.[434] Whereby White Parisians in Archer-Straws work challenged the status quo by engaging with what they saw as black culture and art, white Americans rarely engaged with actual Roma and instead turned to the stereotypes that circulated about them. For Parisians, black culture and art signaled a visual and discursive form of primitivism and deviance but also lent itself towards redefining racial relationships between blacks and whites, with many African Americans choosing to emigrate to Paris after World War I to avoid Jim Crow. "Gypsy Madness" did little to redefine the actual material relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma Americans but instead redirected the attention of many white Americans to an imagined "Gypsy" who was absent from their urban spaces and thus "safe" to play with.

[434] See more about this trend in Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia*.

The 1920's also marked a period where "Gypsies" were showing up more and more in newspapers across the country both referring to Roma themselves and the various "Gypsies" that people performed. With the strong anti-immigrant sentiment, it may seem paradoxical that



Photographs 7: "Little Gypsy", 1920

"Gypsies" were everywhere but as this chapter showed the "Gypsies" being shown and discussed were increasingly becoming domesticated "Gypsies", Americanized versions of their European counterparts. Furthermore, from New York, as the predominant cultural center of the period, "Gypsy" fashion and "Gypsy" representations moved outwards across the country and was legible for a whole class of people aspiring to fit into the fashion and glamour of the City. "Little Gypsy Charms Evanston" cries a half page article in the Chicago Daily Tribune. "Little Gypsy", a woman with a scarf, dress, chains, and tambourine poses for the photograph in 1920.[435] She, according to the paper, was to benefit a charity event playing the "Gypsy" for children made legible through the ongoing trend of cultural representations stemming from New York. At the same time, the "Gypsy" was Americanized through its association with New York and its cultural presence on Broadway, theater, film, and fashion at a time when consumer culture was king. Increasingly, even in reports of actual "Gypsies" there is a tension between "old" and "new' ways with the automobile and networks working to move

[435] "Little Gypsy Charms Evanston."

some groups into more permanent patterns of settlement, thereby shoring off some of the more noticeable vestiges of "Gypsy" life.[436]

It's within this strange period that the Gypsy Lore Society, which had been dormant for almost a decade in the UK, was reinvigorated with increased readership in the United States with the GLS hoping to "stimulate investigation of the language and folklore of the gypsy immigrants who had poured into North America from all parts of Europe" as a main goal.[437] Emanating from New York this "Gypsy Madness" swept the nation and intrigued a new generation of women and men playing across class and racial lines. But it was not isolated to small gatherings or individuals playing "Gypsy" in plays or films it also involved sometimes thousands of attendees and dozens of "Gypsies." For instance, in 1922 a charity event was held to benefit a "Child's Welfare and Recreation center" in Chicago with over 2,000 people attending and watching fifty "little Gypsies, stunningly attired in bright, flashy colors."[438] By the later 1920s "Gypsy

[436] "Gypsy Prince's Van's an Auto."
[437] "Gypsy Lore Society Reorganized."
[438] "2,000 Attend Gypsy Dance."

Madness" had invaded national organizations like the Camp Fire Girls of America where they went on "Gypsy Hikes" wearing scarves and carrying their lunches in handkerchiefs.[439]



Photographs 8: "Camp Fire Girls on Gypsy Hike", 1926

At the same time, American "Gypsies" were constantly showing up in the news around the City and around the country. By 1922 reports of "Gypsies" in New York usually involved major events such as the death of a "Gypsy King", criminal charges, or marriages. Frequently, the newspaper accounts focus on the wealth or ill-gotten wealth of the various "Gypsies" they report on. In a 1922 article, one of the only instances I have found were the "Gypsy" is "Gypped", Joseph Miller, a "Gypsy" of New York brought his landlord to court for evicting him from his store after four days.[440] Miller is able to provide proof that he paid a month's rent, and the landlord is released on bond supposed to return the money to Miller. In the article there are few details about Mitchell's "Gypsyness" just that his wife has "occult powers" and that he would use her to predict when he would actually get his money back.[441] In 1923 a New York

[439] "Camp Fire Girls on Gypsy Hike;" "Atlanta Girls Ready for Gypsy Hike."
[440] "Gypsy Wants Money Back."
[441] "Gypsy Wants Money Back."

Times article titled "Quaint Gypsy Rites for Brooklyn King" includes in the subtext the cost of the mausoleum that the "King" would reside in ($4,000).[442] Within the first two paragraphs the author notes that King Lizo had "amassed $125,000 by copper smithing and giving carnivals", noting that the body of the King was in a lavish coffin and had many followers accompanying it down the road in a procession. "Gypsies" hired an Italian band and a police force escort for the procession through Brownsville before transporting the body to Chicago for burial.[443]

A four-part series of articles in the Atlanta Constitution from 1923 portrays a "Gypsy" band as still being mysterious and having "startling practices…even though they have been in this country for 200 years."[444] Here the limits of the "Gypsies" domestication can be seen. For even though they were by all accounts Americans having several generations of kin within the country, they were still mysterious undesirables in many ways. Further complicating the authors story is the fact that she claims most "Gypsies" in America are "*didikai*—meaning half-breed", but all "adhere to the ideas and the secret religion, the domestic customs and superstitious beliefs (as Gorgios call them) which mark the real gypsy."[445] The author further states that there are few "real gypsies" left in the world but there are many "*didikai*", and "these are all the more picturesque for the infusion of other bloods." [446] Here, again we get a preoccupation with blood which tracks well with the arguments being made for racial purity and consanguine related concerns relating to immigrants and the "American character." Again, these claims by the author would be in align with the social construction of race and relational racial formations throughout the country; where the mixing of bodies was considered taboo and desirability was gauged by

[442] "Quaint Gypsy Rites for Brooklyn King."
[443] "Quaint Gypsy Rites for Brooklyn King."
[444] Louise Rice, "Hidden Ways of the Gypsies."
[445] Louise Rice.
[446] Louise Rice.

one's strict adherence to a racial identity which was legible to others. It was the liminal state of the "Gypsies" that was perhaps most concerning, as they clearly were "American" but not quite "American" enough to escape their undesirable status as a "stranger within our gates—infinitely stranger than any Oriental of the geographies."[447] While "desirable Gypsies" were those non-Roma who played with the common, *Americanized*, stereotypes of the "Gypsies"; Roma themselves continued to be discussed in racialized terms which highlighted their strangeness and "undesirability." The author of the series doubles down on her description of the "American Gypsies", ending her piece with, "It is the old Egyptian madness, still pulsing in the blood of these mysterious members of that most mysterious race, dead, as to history, but alive today in the midst of the most prosaic of the ages."[448] In the end, Ellis Island's obsession with creating and maintaining desirable Americans through its immigration processes and practices failed to create "desirable Gypsies", instead it was cultural mediums and especially photography and visual representations which made "Gypsies" domestically safe and desirable and spurred the Gypsy Madness of the 1920s. Importantly, practices of performing in "Gypsy face" and "Playing Gypsies" scaffolded the ongoing discussion about "Gypsy origins", "Gypsy blood", and the immutable "Gypsy" type which fundamentally challenged ideas of American normativity, respectability, and racial thinking.

3.5 Gypsy Blood and the Academic "Gypsies" in the 1920s

Along with the "Gypsy Madness" craze of the 1920s came more and more scholarship about "Gypsies" in America. Irving Brown, a former professor and Gypsy Lore Society (GLS) member, spent a substantial portion of the 1920s travelling to Eastern cities tracking down the

[447] Louise Rice.
[448] Louise Rice.

"Gypsies" and making ethnographic notes of their lives. His work culminated in several popular press books about American "Gypsies" including "Gypsy Fires in America" in 1924, and "Romany Road" in 1932.[449] Brown's work is interesting as it captures some of the language and experiences of the "Gypsies" he meets with some accuracy and he tends to paint the Roma in a neutral or sympathetic light. Brown also tells his narratives tied to places, something which can be hard to discern in the often-romanticized writings of people discussing "Gypsies." In 1924 his article "Gypsy Folk" from Forum describes his encounter with a Coopersmith family (*Kalderash*) on Mott Street in New York City, "where Little Naples blends with Little Canton or Shanghai."[450] In his tale he is welcomed into the house of the family after proving his bona fides with his Romanes language skills and his understanding of their customs. Upon his entry he is treated as a guest and eats a meal with the family describing the setting and their routines. The women keeping house and the men spending the days going about the neighborhoods mending pots and pans and doing odd jobs. After the meal he speaks with a young Roma woman who offers to tell his fortune while questioning Brown's lack of a wife.[451] Brown then is offered said woman as a wife for "four hundred" dollars by the father who claims she "can tell fortunes and *čorel misto,* she steal well…." Brown leaves off his narrative at that point and ends his article by stating:

> "I have frequently been asked if the Gypsy race is not dying out; and I have heard both Gypsies and Gaje claim that it is. But in spite of decay and changes here and there, it is my belief that the race as a whole is not on the decline. They are perhaps the one primitive people who contract with civilization has failed to exterminate…. Perhaps after

[449] David J. Nemeth, "Irving Brown;" Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America"; Irving Brown, "Gypsy Folk."
[450] Irving Brown, "Gypsy Folk."
[451] Irving Brown. This trend involving women and eligibility to marry, and form partnerships is prevalent throughout the GLS literature often with a complicated and problematic undertone of sexual dominance, racism, and fetishization of Romani women. Some of these issues are discussed in chapter 2 but more information about this disturbing issue can be found within Jud Nirenberg, *Gypsy Sexuality: Romani and Outsider Perspectives on Intimacy*; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*

> out lightening-like civilization has burned itself out, the Gypsy caravans will wind their way past crumbling skeletons of towering buildings."[452]

Brown's work is illustrative in two ways. One, he notes fairly good ethnographic details about American Roma in the City itself, mentioning their spatial arrangement and interactions with others (living in areas which border Italian "spaces" and Asian "spaces"). Secondly, he often compares the ways of the "Gypsies" to the non-Gypsies, indexing the fear of technological and cultural decline of non-Gypsies through their break-neck speed of advancement. This comparison is useful in contextualizing the scholarship of the period of "Gypsy" Madness as often the works by people in the 1920s seek out the "Gypsies" not only to highlight differences between them and their counterparts but also to seemingly find some comfort in their simplicity and mundaneness as much as their exoticness. It is their clashing cultures that makes the scholars concerned, the changes amongst "Gypsies" beckons a change amongst non-Gypsies; changes which are uncertain and chaotic. The "melting pot" had been boiled over through the efforts of many different forces in the City. Americanization efforts, mass education reforms, progressive housing legislation, and increased industrialization had proved that even the most resilient hold outs of various groups were soon to be counted amongst the wage laborers of the City. But not the "Gypsy" even with the changes and "decay" they continued onwards in their strangeness. Their strangeness was the scholars comfort in the end, as it proved that some things were still solid, and some people were innately and biologically different, some "civilization could not exterminate."

The constant reference to "Gypsy" blood and biological metaphors deserves some attention here. While the blood and race discussion was indeed occurring in Europe[453], I argue

[452] Irving Brown, "Gypsy Folk."
[453] Uli Linke, *Blood and Nation*; discusses the long history with blood metaphors and fascination with blood which dominates European societies up until the 20th century and beyond culminating in the rise of the National Socialist

that it had a different resonance in the United States as blood hierarchies and issues of miscegenation were at the forefront of the publics concerns with immigration, mobility, and labor.[454] By the 1920s references to "Gypsy" blood in academic journals like the Gypsy Lore Society averaged over a dozen per issue. Blood concerns not only tied to the issue of purity and the concerns of the "dying" out of "real Gypsies" but also in its connection to language, somatic differences, and even mobility. "Black" blood, "hot" blood, "half-blood" all indexed a racial formation which created intergroup hierarchies based upon outsiders understandings of consanguinity. To be sure Romani groups themselves had different ideas of kinship and held to formal and informal relations with other groups from different families, but it seemed that most of the time it was the non-Roma were the most concerned about blood purity and mapping kinship. Thus, "pure" blooded "Gypsies" or those that had "Black blood" received more attention in said journals and publications and even in popular press these "real Gypsies" were sought after as representatives of their kind. From the infamous issues of blood related to African Americans (the so called 'one drop rule") and their ability to hold land, exercise rights, and form lasting bonds to places to the American Indians and the introduction of blood quantum regimes; blood and race were interwoven into the politics of the 1920s and 1930s at all levels.[455] "Gypsy"

Party in Germany and the mass extermination of "undesirables" such as Jews and "Gypsies." Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*, chap. 2. also has an excellent discussion of how race operated through discourse and performance in Russia which interrogates the ideas of "blackness", "black blood", "hot blood" in relation to Roma authenticity and identity even without an "official" acceptance of "race" as a concept. In the United States these categories were also used but with a different valence due to the racial formations and the propensity of race to be indexed quite often in relation to other categories apart from "blackness", with immigration, the closing of the "west", and Americanization complicating the situation on the ground.

[454] Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy*; Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*; Jeffrey Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism : Americanization Education and European Immigrants*. All have excellent discussions of the aforementioned issues during the 1920s. See Pascoe and Shah for sexuality and gender concerns along with ideas about racial fitness and kinship and see Mirel for Americanization efforts throughout the country and the ideology of plurality and the limits of cultural relativism.

[455] David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues : The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*. Are but a few works which deal directly with the legal, cultural, and political discussions around whiteness, race, and racial categories during the period.

blood was no different. David Roediger notes that even European on European racism made its way across the Atlantic singling out "Gypsies" as one of these people equivalent to, as one historian wrote, "white Negroes and simianized men."[456] Even W.E.B. Dubois in his travels across Eastern Europe noted that many people thought him a "Gypsy" due to his skin, himself recognizing their shared history of slavery, and even noting that a Slovak word for "Gypsy" was used as an antiblack slur in the United States during the period.[457] But it was not simply a transference of racial ideologies and representations that followed from Europe as during the 1920s the United States was coping directly with who could be deemed white and access citizenship in a manner which was quite distinct from European nations. After the Thind and Ozawa cases were decided in 1922-1923 it became even harder to have any "Oriental" type be considered American. Thus the "Gypsies" in the category of "semicivilized and semi-oriental" even after Americanization were still suspect citizens.[458]

The American chapter of the Gypsy Lore Society further pushed for prolonged discussions of American "Gypsy" blood and difference in the 1920s. Scholars meticulously detailed the kinship trees and charts of various groups (often derived from Borrows) noting the places where said blood was not pure and where said "Gypsy" might be a "didikai."[459] Disturbingly, the discussion of "Gypsy blood" also trickled down into everyday discussions and harassment. In 1925 a New York Times special report from New Jersey tells the tale of a woman who after being taunted for an extended period commits suicide and infanticide.[460] The woman,

[456] David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 115.
[457] David R. Roediger, 115.
[458] David R. Roediger, 116; See also Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*; Mariia Nikolaeva Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* for further discussion about the construction of Eastern Europe in the minds of Europeans and the representations of Eastern European peoples as savage, dark, "Oriental", and inferior.
[459] Didikai/ Didhikai etc. roughly translates to "half-blood" or "half-breed" according to the GLS scholars.
[460] Times, "Taunt of 'Gypsy's Daughter' Drives Woman To Kill Herself and Her 3 Children by Gas."

Julia Sindor, was a mill worker who began to be harassed by a co-worker who claimed she was a "Gypsy's daughter" and hence not desirable or wanted, "the daughter of a vagabond or a woman who was trifling."[461] Mrs. Sindor endured the taunts at work and over time in the streets after work where all could hear of her supposed "Gypsy blood." Finally, on February 12th after enduring the taunts for some time and having confided in her friend, Mrs. Sindor turned on all the gas in her home and sent her three children aged 8,7, and 5 to bed.[462] Mr. Sindor after finishing his shift came home to find his family dead, his wife unable to bear the idea that she had "Gypsy blood" and was a "Gypsy's daughter."[463] But blood discussion indexed more than just consanguinity. "Gypsy" blood also tied to mobility with "real" Gypsies being the ones who had, what we might call the "travel itch", and whose "dark" or "black" blood showed through in their somatic appearance on the road.[464] "Gypsies" had to move it seems and this was seen throughout the representations across the world.[465] But it was "real Gypsies" in America who were the mobile ones. Even the Americanized "Gypsy" who settled was not quite "real", instead it was the mobile "Gypsy" who fascinated scholars searching the countryside for those camps where real Romanes was still spoken. But it was beyond the countryside that many "Gypsies" were increasingly being sought out, instead some "real Gypsies" managed to eke out their living in the urban centers where scholars like Brown and Bercovici interacted with and wrote about them.

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[461] Times.
[462] Times.
[463] Times.
[464] Konrad Bercovici, "Even Gypsies Lose Romance"; Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*
[465] The idea of nomadic "Gypsies" is an old one which can be found across Europe. Indeed, some Roma were very mobile but often it was a survival method as many European states and empires before them had made being a "Gypsy" illegal and even committed ethnic cleansing campaigns and mass genocide to exterminate the "wandering race."

In the same year as Brown's piece, Konrad Bercovici (another GLS scholar) published a piece in the Baltimore Sun about "Gypsies" in New York.[466] Bercovici, also notes the "Gypsies" spatial arrangement in the City showing the overlapping relational racial arrangements in 1924. "Fourth street, between avenue A and the East River; Third street, Second street, First street, the heart of the Balkan quarters in New York, was full of them [Gypsies]", Bercovici states.[467] The "Gypsy" clan, identified as "Rumanian Gypsies" had filled in all available spaces in the area and lived amongst the other people in the neighborhood taking up former storefronts, butcher shops, and grocers.[468] There in the storefronts along the Balkan quarters the Romani women earned money by fortune telling and palmistry while the men did odd jobs and mended pots and pans along the avenue. It is significant that the Balkan quarters is where the "Gypsies" managed to settle in as it shows that the distinction between Eastern and Western Europeans in the minds of Americans continued to tie people from the perceived "East" together even when many of the Roma were likely from across Europe.[469] Bercovici asks "Lupu" the "Gypsy Chief" why they had not returned to the road to make money as they had in the past moving from place to place. In response, "Lupu" states that the women are able to make enough money in the City that there is no reason to move on and that if he was "to listen to them, we should be living in the City here all the time."[470] It is by 1924 that the scholars note that some "Gypsies" have indeed made part of

[466] "Gypsy Women Like New York."
[467] "Gypsy Women Like New York."
[468] "Gypsy Women Like New York."
[469] Unfortunately, reliable statistics for the actual number of Roma entering the United States from places across Eastern and Western Europe is limited during the period. But, in terms of the overall number of "Gypsies" in Europe in the 1920s, scholar David Crowe estimates that there were about 568,351 Roma in Eastern Europe and Russia with a little less than that amount in Western Europe according to David Fraser. In total the estimates range from 500,000 to 1.5 million during the pre-World War II period. See more in David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 16,44,87-89,127,175,213; Angus M. Fraser, *The Gypsies*, chaps. 7–8.
[470] "Gypsy Women Like New York."

the City there own and are spending less time on the road. A point which is further pushed by some "Gypsies" themselves.

In 1927 a Washington Post article entitled, "Gypsy Meeting Called to End Nomadic Life: Plan City in New York" points to New York as a prime location for "Gypsies."[471] The article outlines the ambitious plan hatched by "Prince Steve Frank", leader of the "largest gypsy tribe in New York."[472] Frank's plan, according to the article, is to hold a multinational "Gypsy" meeting at Massport, Long Island to discuss the future of gypsydom. Frank send out invitations to leader from across the United States and Canada along with "France, Egypt, Roumania, Poland, and Spain." Frank said he would "propose that the gypsies establish a City of their own at Massport where gypsies have large real estate holdings. He will urge that all gypsies become American citizens and cease their roving life…."[473] At the time Frank and "King Mitchell" (likely the same "King" mentioned earlier) claim there are 500,000 "gypsies in this country." While Frank and Mitchell's estimates of American "Gypsies" may have been exaggerated even the most cautious estimates put the total population closer to 100,000 with some 50,000 residing in the area in and around New York City in the 1920s.[474] In comparison, Romanian officials undertook the first national census of Romanians in 1930 and had some 262,501 "Gypsies" in the country with the majority in Transylvania.[475]The official Soviet "Gypsy" census of 1926 shows some 61,299 "Gypsies" in Soviet lands, although Konrad Bercovici argued that it was closer to 150,000 to

[471] "Gypsy Meeting Called to End Nomadic Life:"
[472] "Gypsy Meeting Called to End Nomadic Life:"
[473] "Gypsy Meeting Called to End Nomadic Life:"
[474] See more estimates of "Gypsy" population in Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital"; Irving Brown, *Gypsy Fires in America; a Narrative of Life among the Romanies of the United States and Canada.*; Irving Brown, "Gypsy Folk"; H. W. Shoemaker, "Origins of the Pennsylvanian German Gypsies"; Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America"; J. R. Moriarty, "A Gypsy Coppersmith Family"; Konrad Bercovici, *The Story of the Gypsies.*; Victor Weybright, "Reality Overtakes the Gypsy."
[475] David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 127.

200,000.[476] By the time Frank and Mitchell were holding their conference in New York, American Roma were already a sizeable population compared to some of their European counterparts, something which would not go unnoticed by Romani leaders in the 1930s.

The 1927 Washington Post article also mentions the importance of becoming sedentary and even of establishing a City for "Gypsies" in New York itself, noting the fact that by that point some Roma people were property holders and Frank himself was a college graduate.[477] Clearly, there were some changes that were occurring amongst some Romani groups including, at least on paper, the desire to claim parts of New York as their own. This is in many ways completely contradictory to the idea that "real Gypsies" were nomadic and were not tied to any land. Having authority like the "King" had while also being educated, living in one area, and establishing connections to other transnational groups all pointed to a people who were not in face "wandering" or "primitive" but were in fact highly adaptable. Nonetheless the newspaper account does not mention any of those facts, instead it remarks about the strangeness of such a proposed event, after all they might be a race but a fledgling polity? That seemed an impossibility. What was to become of the meeting and the plan for the "Gypsy" City is unknown as newspaper accounts do not record any further developments.

By 1929, scholars dedicated a whole part of the Gypsy Lore Society Journal to "American Gypsies" with articles by Irving Brown, J.R. Moriarty, and H.W. Shoemaker (the first state folklorist in the United States). [478] Irving Brown's piece, "Gypsies in America" is an authoritative account of the "numbers and varieties" of "gypsies", further claiming that

[476] David Crowe, 175–76.
[477] "Gypsy Meeting Called to End Nomadic Life:"
[478] Gypsy Lore Society., *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, vol. 8.

America, and particularly the United States is "an ideal ground to study the race as a whole."[479] But why the United States? Brown has a four-part answer to the question that most GLS readers probably asked being that many were European and occupied with the European "Gypsies." Brown says it's because, "of the numerous varieties"; "the large number of Nomads, whose mode of life most closely resembles that of their East Indian ancestors"; "because this special group is the most picturesque, at least of all the Romanies I have encounters, both in the Occident and in the Orient"; "because social conditions in the United States favour Gypsy life."[480] Brown then goes on to outline the conditions of "Gypsies" in America noting their numbers between 50,000-100,000 further stating, "the number of Gypsies in the United States is increasing yearly. Their cunning enables them to outwit the immigration officers…attracted to our shores by enthusiastic reports from friends and relatives in America."[481] Brown spends the rest of his article noting the diverse types of "Gypsies" in America from the Romanichels to the "Nomads", claiming that even the Romanichels while intermarrying non-Roma have enough "who carry on the traditions of the race to keep it from disappearing in the American melting pot."[482]

J.R. Moriarty's "A Gypsy Coppersmith Family" recounts the history of a Romani family travelling through Canada and the United States.[483]The article starts with the extended family moving from St. Johns to Montreal seeking work. Moriarty goes on to highlight the tools of their trade including "a fairly large crane for hoisting; a large gasoline or oil torch for burning grease off the copper boilers they repaired; a heavy iron driven into the ground for an anvil; soldering

[479] Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America."
[480] Irving Brown.
[481] Irving Brown.
[482] Irving Brown, 149.
[483] J. R. Moriarty, "A Gypsy Coppersmith Family."

irons; large files, pincers, etc.."[484]The family repaired copper items for everyday people, hospitals, and refineries as they moved about the area. Moriarty notes that the family worked from early morning to late in the evening taking little breaks except for Sundays. The women of the camp told fortunes or went about "*dukering"* in the City at a special booth afraid to do it elsewhere lest the police find them.[485] Moriarty spends time with the family throughout the days that they are in town and even takes a few of the younger girls to the zoo, where they inevitably end up telling fortunes for some passersby. He notes the clothing of the family as "the usual costume …with long, braided hair, coins, and necklaces", but when they went to the City to the "Pictures" (movies) they put on their best clothes and the men wore "good business suits."[486] Interestingly, Moriarty shows the family an issue of the Journal[487] with pictures of other "coppersmiths" eventually giving it to father who spent hours poring over the material. Moriarty ends his article like any good "Gypsy" philologist recounting the words and phrases that the family used compared to his experiences with others.[488]

Meanwhile, Shoemaker's account highlights the "origins of the Pennsylvanian German Gypsies", noting their immigration and settlement patterns on the East coast.[489] Particularly intriguing for Shoemaker is the long history of the "Gypsies" in question within the United States with the "aboriginal Gypsies" arriving in the eighteenth century.[490] Shoemaker refers to the group he is discussing as "She-kener" and notes their particular connections to Irish and

[484] J. R. Moriarty, 177.
[485] J. R. Moriarty, 177.
[486] J. R. Moriarty, 178.
[487] Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society
[488] A large amount of literature throughout the 19th and 20th century related to Roma concerned itself with the languages of the "Gypsies" and many of the GLS members and lay people considered themselves "Gypsy philologists" of the highest caliber.
[489] H. W. Shoemaker, "Origins of the Pennsylvanian German Gypsies."
[490] H. W. Shoemaker, 182.

English "Gypsies" who intermix by the time he is exploring the groups histories. Little information aside from some rudimentary kinship connections and mentions of language are included within Shoemakers short piece but he nonetheless establishes a case for "aboriginal Gypsies" long before the coppersmiths or "Gypsies" that fascinate the other authors.[491] Shoemaker ends his piece with, "half noticed, little understood, they work their way down the current of humanity, unchanging, unrelenting, yet able to master every change in the lives and hearts of the despised 'gentile' race they prey upon with such unvarying cleverness."[492] Shoemaker, Moriarty, and even Brown play with the representations of "Gypsies" at the same time that they try to follow an anthropological and philological formula for studying the populations. In the end, they are able to convey some interesting historical data about the spatial arrangements of the groups, their daily practices and routines, and some bits of language along with their romanticism. Yet throughout their pieces and indeed many pieces from the 1920s few "Gypsies" speak in their own voices and tell their own tales. Instead, it is the non-Roma who still paint the life-worlds of the American "Gypsies."

3.6 When all Americans became "Gypsies"

By the end of the 1920s "Gypsies" were still trendy with New Yorkers playing with their representations and imagery. Yet, at the same time across the world nationalist governments were beginning to crack down on "deviants" in their borders. In 1928, *The Sun* ran a piece entitled "Taming the Gypsy" detailing the recent legislation introduced in Hungary to forcibly settle the Hungarian Roma. In it the author decries, "All over the world governments seem bent on turning the populations of their countries into thick uniform masses of safe and stolid

[491] H. W. Shoemaker, "Origins of the Pennsylvanian German Gypsies."
[492] H. W. Shoemaker, 183.

citizens."[493] The author details the portions of the Hungarian bill including the expulsion of "foreign Gypsies", and the ethnic assimilation efforts including restricting movement, enforcing Hungarian language, and outlawing their dress. The author clearly feels as though the "Gypsies" are being mistreated and even ends the piece with:

> "Perhaps, though, the Government just wants to do the gypsies some good. So, it will rob them of their pleasure, compel them to do its bidding, bind them to another life utterly strange and abhorrent. Well, that's the modern formula. You never can be sure you are doing your brother some 'good' until you deny him his happiness."[494]

Obviously, the author is concerned about more than the "Gypsies", they are speaking to the larger concerns around change occurring on a massive scale across the globe with new states rising out of former empires and new politics stoking national tensions.

It is within the tension of the late 1920s that the American stock market crashed and within a few short years the perhaps unnerving but also hopeful changes of the 1920s gave way to the despair of the 1930s and the Great Depression which affected all New Yorkers in one way or another. Increasingly, the people affected by the massive recession were also facing housing



Photographs 9: "Hooverville, Red Hook, Brooklyn", circa 1931

[493] "Taming the Gypsy."
[494] "Taming the Gypsy."

pressures and the appearance of "Hoovervilles"[495] could be seen across the City. By 1931 the Census Bureau's special unemployment report stated that over 532,482 New Yorkers were unemployed with many of them also without housing.[496] In areas around Brooklyn, Queens, and lower Manhattan unemployed people relied on relief from philanthropic agencies and relief societies that were stretched to the max.[497] Harlem was especially hit hard and areas where the "Gypsies" had been seen in previous years were continuing to decline throughout the first few years of the 1930s. Whereas other parts of the City were attracting aid, Harlem was often last to receive jobless benefits or unemployment assistance of any type.[498] Unlike the "Gypsies" in the area however, Black Harlemites organized and fought for their equal relief, calling out discriminatory practices throughout the 1930s.[499] Throughout Harlem and the rest of the City New Yorkers across racial lines had the unfortunate circumstance of having to become "Gypsies" in that they lost houses, shelter, and social standing. In the end "Playing Gypsy" also took on an unintended role as a marker of unemployment, poverty, and strife.

Yet, even amongst the hardship of the 1930s some New Yorkers still found comfort in the simplicity of "Playing Gypsy" harkening back to more prosperous times of the 1920s. In 1930 a photo was printed in the *Boston Globe* featuring two "Romany Gypsies" ice skating at the Ice Pageant held in Madison Square Gardens in New York City.[500] The pair of women have billowing shirts, skirts, and hair scarves beaming large smiles as they are in the midst of their

[495] "Hoovervilles" Red Hook, Brooklyn, ca. 1931. Municipal Archives Collection. NYC Municipal Archives.
[496] Special to The New York Times, "Lamont Estimates Jobless at 6,050,000 on January Census."
[497] "Relief Jobs to End for 8,000 This Week"; "More Children Put in Welfare Homes"; "Home Relief Asked for Needy Children"; Arthur Krock, "This Week in America; Prosperity Elusive: Fails to Turn Corner"; "Unemployment Aid in City Reviewed"; Harold Phelps Stokes, "The Financial Problems That New York City Faces."
[498] Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?*; "To Study Negro Idleness"; "Relief for Jobless Sets City Record"; "Harlem Drive Asks $100,000 for Relief"; "Protest on Harlem Relief"; "Job Segregation Charged."
[499] Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?*, chaps. 2–3.
[500] "Two 'Romany Gypsies' in Big Ice Pageant at New York."

routine. So even though the crash(es) had occurred sometime earlier still people were "Playing Gypsy" in massive public events. Also, in 1930 there is a "Gypsy Fete" on Long Island drawing in the well to do and social elites to dress as "Spanish, gypsy and pirate costumes."[501] Included within the festivities at the "Lido Country Club" was special entertainment by "Princess Erzsi, dancer and singer from Budapest; Prince Czardafurstin, Lolita Coriada and Cariza, a gypsy fortune teller."[502]

Finally, perhaps the most well attended "Gypsy" event of 1930 occurred in Harlem. "Gypsy Carnival Draws Hundreds of Harlemites" proclaims the Philadelphia Tribune article from January 30th, 1930.[503] The carnival was sponsored by the Women's Auxiliary of New York Urban League and was a success according to the article. "There were all types of Gypsies, dark and fair, tall and short, mysterious and flirtatious, all fitting admirably into the mood and setting of the moment", claims the author.[504] The most beautiful of all the Gypsies according to the author were "the members of the Girl Friends Club, decked out in gay costumes, clinging, and colorful. Willowy and graceful, they wove a spell over the entranced guests as they glided on through the various dance numbers."[505] The ticket sales were meant to bolster the Urban Leagues coffers and the carnival seemed to be do just that with "the general admission ….unusually large." [506] Significantly, this carnival stands out amongst the previous iterations of "Playing Gypsy" explored in the 1920s. That is, it was sponsored, preformed, and raised money for Black organizations and civil rights causes. In fact, eminent Black scholar Charles S. Johnson attended the event along with other Black intellectuals and cultural figures. In Harlem, "Playing Gypsy"

[501] "Gypsy Fete at Lido Beach."
[502] "Gypsy Fete at Lido Beach."
[503] Ferol Reeves, "Gypsy Carnival Draws of Harlemites."
[504] Ferol Reeves.
[505] Ferol Reeves.
[506] Ferol Reeves.

took on another significance which complicated the white centric practices of the 1920s. Black people could also perform as "Gypsies" without breaking the mold because "Gypsies" could be legible as racially *Black*. Indeed, "Playing Gypsy" transcended racial lines in a manner that "Playing Indian" and performing "Black face" perhaps could not because "Gypsies" were still less "American" and less "real" as a racial category as others, even as they made their way through the City.[507]

Roma *were* actually present in the area around Harlem and in Harlem itself according to newspapers from the late 1920s and could have actually seen the "Gypsy" carnival. It's unknown whether any Roma actually attended the event but its significant as it shows the changing conditions in which non-Roma could "Play Gypsy" even while actual "Gypsies" were present in the space and in fact may have interacted with them on a daily basis.[508] This is also important to note as often "Gypsies" were and even still are represented as not belonging to places, but in fact Roma made places in New York their own.[509] Roma were also no longer completely unknown strangers as they resided in places across New York and could be spotted by "Gypsyologists" and lay people alike. In many ways this contradicts the conventional understanding of Romani life in the United States with people often stating that Roma were "hidden" or went unnoticed in the masses.[510] In fact, actual Roma people and people "Playing Gypsy" bumped into one another and negotiated spaces across New York City throughout the

[507] For more on the long history of American's understanding of "Gypsies" and discussions of "real" and authentic "Gypsies" see Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*; Ian Hancock, *We Are the Romani People: Ame Sam e Rromane Dzene*; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, chap. 13.
[508] In Russia people "Playing Gypsy", called "*tsyganshchina*", also encountered one another and actual Romani Russians on a regular basis. For more see Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*, chap. 4.
[509] For more information about how this imagined "place lessness" was represented in Russia for Romani people see Alaina Lemon, chap. Introduction; 3;7.
[510] See Anne H. Sutherland, *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*. One example of this trend is to paint Roma as being unknown, hidden, secretive, etc. which, while somewhat true compared to more well-documented peoples, does little to highlight the issue of historical silence and gaps in the archival material which were created not by Roma themselves but by people who did not deem them worthy of documentation in their own right.

period.[511] Along with negotiating spaces, "Gypsies" also had to negotiate new forms of representation such as those created by the Harlemites and others. Thus, the era of almost exclusively white "Gypsies" was drawing to a close as across New York's racial lines people played "Gypsy" and sought to forget their precarious economic and social conditions. The relational racial formations not only changed with the advent of new cultural mediums and trends but also with the massive changes in demographics which were brought on by the immigration reforms and the migrations of people of color from the South and other parts of the country.

By the beginning of the 1930s the United States and New York City was in the grip of the Great Depression with massive amounts of unemployed and homeless people trying to make their way in the City. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President in 1933 defeating Hoover in a landslide, he brought with him unprecedented public works and recovery programs in the form of the New Deal. In New York City he found an ally in the newly elected Fiorello La Guardia, who was willing to work beyond his party lines and support the New Deal in exchange for massive amounts of aid being channeled into the City.[512] The 1930s also brought "Gypsies" into the spotlight with Roma themselves making news and some celebrities still capitalizing on the "Playing Gypsy" trend. Importantly, the Roma in parts of New York began to use the camera that had once been almost exclusively the tool of the non-Roma to their advantage, offering a window into their lives as American "Gypsies"—capturing the visual evidence of their place in New York City.

[511] See more about "Gypsy" performance and questions of "authenticity" in Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*, chap. 4; Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt, *The Role of the Romanies*, pt. III; IV; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman : Representations in Literature and Visual Culture*; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, chap. 14.
[512] See more in Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York*.

Chapter 4 " New York a Gypsy Capital": Gypsy Photographs and Romani Lives during the New Deal

"Reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic have no appeal for gypsy children of school age. They would rather learn to peddle needles or to tell fortunes. That is why truant officers assigned to duty in New York City's gypsy settlements are having their troubles this season", reads a news article from 1936.[513] By the middle of the 1930s the "Gypsy" population of New York City was one of the largest in the country with estimates ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 compared to a national estimate of about 100,000 to 200,000.[514] The settlement which troubled the truancy officers in 1936 was near Maspeth, Queens and was a long standing "Gypsy" community for several decades prior to the 1930s. The difference was that by the 1930s more and more "Gypsies" were spending more time within the area and were growing in population. The hopeful irony of the 1920s assimilation politics had given way to more punitive measures on the behalf of the City with officers making continual rounds throughout known "Gypsy" settlements to ensure children attended school. All across Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan "Gypsy" and non-"Gypsy" children were prodded into school as parents navigated the precarious economic ups and downs of the Great Depression. This focus on later Americanization, New Deal welfare programs, along with the criminalization of "Gypsies"; defined the 1930's and 1940's for American Roma in New York City.

[513] "Gypsies Trouble Truant Officers:"
[514] See more in Victor Weybright, "Reality Overtakes the Gypsy"; Konrad Bercovici, "New York a Gypsy Capital"; Eugen Kovacs, "Rumanian Gypsies Learn New Tricks"; Gypsy Lore Society., *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*; Irving Brown, "The Gypsies in America"; Steve Kaslov Lolya, "The Ways of My People"; "Gypsies Trouble Truant Officers:"

"Gypsy School Days" is the title which accompanies the photograph from the April 8th, 1940 Newsweek magazine. In the short snippet of a story the author states that "Steve Kaslov, king of Russian gypsies in the United States, is a royal revolutionary."[515] The "royal revolutionary" Steve "Lolya" Kaslov was a constant fixture of New York's "Gypsy" life in the 1930s and 1940s. Kaslov was a leader amongst his Roma kin who were often called "Russian Gypsies" due to their supposed origins within the former Russian empire, but many could trace their family to Romania and Eastern Europe part of the larger Vlax language group of Roma. Either way, "Russian Gypsy" likely sat better with the public then calling them by other national origins or groups and certainly was more pleasing than "descendants of slaves" as many of them were.[516]



Photographs 10: "King Kaslov (center) and his fellow gypsies studying English", 1940

[515] "Gypsy School Days."

[516] This is perhaps a stretch to conclude that "Russian Gypsies" sounded better to the American public. But I believe with the long-standing tradition of Russian "Gypsy" music being a readily available and a somewhat acceptable form of cultural authenticity in Russia, it is possible the same ideas transferred into the United States with the migration of people from Russian lands. For more about this history of Russian "Gypsy" music and its connections to "authenticity" from the 19th century onwards see David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, chap. 5; Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*, chap. 4.

Kaslov, who first made headlines in the 1930s, had been advocating for education for his kin for several years in response to the negative representations that "Gypsies" had garnered throughout New York City.[517] Kaslov was acutely aware of the status of "Gypsies" as novelties at best and pests and criminals at worst. Perhaps due to Kaslov's familarity with Americanization efforts in the 1920s or because of the New Deal focus on education, he saw education as key to the potential for "Gypsies" to change their status in future generations. But it was not only the future generation of children that Kaslov wanted educated, but also the adult men, hence the above photograph features Kaslov himself (sitting in the middle) along with several Romani men looking at books. The photograph shows not the typical "Gypsy" representation that Americans might be familiar with but men with slicked back hair, suits, and an air of cleanliness around them. In effect and by design, the photograph acts as evidence of real Americanized "Gypsies." Kaslov, who remained central to the story of New York's "Gypsies" throughout the 1930s and 1940s, was a master promoter and advocated often and vocally for his kin and for "Gypsies" everywhere. In doing so, Kaslov, by his own account, wanted to create an ideal "Gypsy colony" whereby the "Gypsy Capital" could be also a "Gypsy" home. In the face of economioic upheaval and unceratinty Kaslov's dream seems far fetched but in fact it had some legs to stand on with advocates and Gypsyologists from near and far interested in what the large booming man had to say. Throughout the period New York "Gypsies" and Kaslov continued to make the news in new ways, both as agents of change and as "swarthy" nomads who were represented as criminals just as Kaslov himself was also cast as during World War II.

[517] It is quite possible that Kaslov was aware of the organizing that was going on in Europe around Romani education and civil rights and thus was influenced by the approaches taken by other Romani communities. Further information about this possible international connection will need to be explored further. See more about this period in Europe in Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Roma Portraits in History*.

This chapter tells the story of people like Steve Kaslov, who represented their kin and negotiated with New York authorities during the years leading up to World War II. But, this chapter is not only about Kaslov and the Red Dress "Gypsies" that he promotes. It's also about the changing priorities of New Yorkers in power from containment of foreigners to assimilation and eventually what Jeffery Mirel calls "patriotic pluralism", whereby foreign born Americans could maintian some measure of their ethnic culture while performing their civic and educational duties as "Americans."[518] But there were limits to the "patriotic pluralism" as some who were subjected to racial projects also had to fight the upward battle to prove their human worth alongside their "American" status. New York's "Gypsies" found themselves within those competeing and overlapping projects during the 1930s. As "Gypsies" were largely on the fringes of these later efforts to assimilate and "Americanize" foreign born they became a unique case study for policy makers, educators, police officers, and lay people alike. But, like any story involving a group or groups of people who were racialized and represented largely as and by "others" it will be important to theorize the Romani experience in New York within the broader social and cultural shifts of the immediate pre-war years. The shifts that the Great Depression brought to New Yorkers not only involved labor and housing, but also cultural and racial ones represented in various mediums including film, photography, and radio. In this chapter in particular photographs of "American Gypsies" became a source of information, ideology, and meaning for New York's non-"Gypsies" and "Gypsies" alike. "Gypsy photographs" of particular individuals and groups interrupt the normative framing of photographs of ethnic Americans in many ways, as "Gypsies" occupied a unique and often hidden role within those formations. As previous chapters have shown, largely the photographic landscape was dominated by images of

[518] See more in Jeffrey Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism : Americanization Education and European Immigrants*.

"Playing Gypsy" and less of "Gypsies" being themselves. In the 1930s and 1940s that shifted ever so slightly with the work of several outsiders attempting to humanize and politicize the "Gypsies" of New York. Changing photographic practices and processes thus also signal changes in social worlds which encompass them and the decade of the 1930's was no different.

At the same time New York and New Yorkers were changing in part through the successful campaigns of restrictionists and through the shifting racial discourse around immigrants and others with the decreased immigration during the period. New ideas about social welfare, philanthropy, and federal control also influenced the spaces and places around New York City just as economic disaster struck the Big Apple. With tightened budgets and increased economic uncertainty once powerful private and philanthropic organizations gave way to federal and state partnerships dictating priorities and aid for New Yorkers. People, more mobile than ever, continued to search for economic and social opportunities across the City and in turn crossed racial and cultural lines by doing so. In doing so people's movements discredited in some small way the representation of "ethnic enclaves" which had governed social and discoursive policy for many years. "Gypsies" were no different in this regard. Far from sticking to the well trodden "Gypsy" areas many Roma worked and lived alongside others from different racial positions across the City as they looked for work and opportunities. Harlem and Queens became locations which featured "Gypsies" alongside other people of color throughout the period further eroding the mythology of complete racial seperation so coveted by racial restrictionists and policy makers alike. In the 1930s the Great Depression also changed the ability for non-"Gypsy" New Yorkers to "Play Gypsy" in the same carefree manner as economic and social strife made some celebratory events unteneable. Nonetheless, some instances of "Playing Gypsy" still occurred but were paired with representations of American "Gypsies" like

Kaslov and company, complicating the ways New Yorkers envisioned the "Gypsy Capital" and themselves in the tumultous times of the 1930s.

4.1 Gypsy Daze and "Disorderly" People

The 1930s was a time of immense social upheaval and economic precarity for many New Yorkers. Gypsies in New York City also experienced these changes and pressures and perhaps more so as "undesirables" and as "disorderly people." The changing technology and innovative marketing had made some metal repairs work[519] unsustainable, and many Roma sought other ways to survive including trading in automobile parts, scrap metal, and related goods. In other locations outside of New York City some Roma groups, such as the Hungarian Roma, sometimes called *Balshade,* in Detroit managed to earn a living through their musical talents in clubs and music venues.[520] At the same time, there was less cause and time for "play" for many peoples facing socio-economic pressures as "Playing Gypsy" seemed to occur less or was less reported on during the period. It's during this time where what I am calling a "Gypsy" daze occurs, where no longer are there as many stories of the fantastical and free spirited "Gypsies" and no longer do people play "Gypsy" as a means of escape. In effect, the 1930s was a time where "Gypsies" were less visible as ethno-racial representations for play and fantasy and more as drags on already hurting society. As a result of the Depression the people of New York had to reimagine themselves in the new decade as tenacious and hardened members of a polity which increasingly looked to Washington and their elected officials for relief.

Within the first few years of the decade the City had massive amounts of unemployed and underemployed people from across racial lines. By 1932 more than a third of the industry

[519] Cooper and tin while still common had become less economically viable to repair and were replaced with new items such as aluminum in the mid-1930s or utilized until beyond the ability to repair due to the financial crunch.
[520] H.H, "Hungarian Gypsies Play."; Martha Aladjem Bloomfield, *Romanies in Michigan*.

had shuttered, with over a quarter of the population of some 6.9 million out of work.[521] Between 1932 and 1934 the situation worsened with the embattled Walker administration forced to take "bankers deals" to try to avoid defaulting on the $1.9 billion dollar debt that had accrued (more than all 48 states combined).[522] Walker abdicated his position soon after and was replaced by two more mayors in the following two years, all of whom had to cut City budgets, lay off workers, and generally sour the once strong relationship between Democrats and New Yorkers. In turn, Republicans saw a chance to take back the City and a surprising candidate in the form of Fiorello La Guardia was able to win the mayoral race on January 1st, 1934. La Guardia would have to balance the budgets, keep debt collectors at bay, and respond to the massive amounts of unemployment and racial tension which plague the City within his first few years of office.[523] The La Guardia era also ushered in a new form of politics which relied less on Tammany Hall and more on federal and state partnerships. It also meant La Guardia was on the hook to solve the unemployment problem for his various ethnic constituents who had won him support.

While many American Roma had largely been self-employed and relied on informal saving measures, other groups were not so insulated against the loss of income and support. Harlem, a stronghold for both "Gypsies" and African Americans was especially hit hard with the Depression with many African American opportunities drying up in response to job cuts. Even before the Depression work was hard to come by for many people of color living in Harlem as Jim Crow's voracious grip had guided many policies both written and unwritten across the City. Segregation and discriminatory policies in fact worsened as the job market shrunk with even emergency relief organizations being boycotted by Harlemites claiming unfair aid distribution

[521] George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*, 163.
[522] George J. Lankevich, 163.
[523] Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York*; George J. Lankevich, *American Metropolis*, 164.

and hiring.[524] Organizations which had formerly acted as community centered social policy purveyors suddenly became underfunded and overextended as Harlemites braved the storm of the world beyond 1929. Along with deteriorating job prospects came increased health concerns and poverty. By 1932 reports from the Gibson Committee and New York Urban League showed that some 40,000 Black family's needs were not being met by current measures of aid and relief agencies were stretched to the limit.[525] Overcrowding and increased mobility on the part of parents to seek work outside of the area meant that many relief workers saw Harlem as a place of increased juvenile delinquency and child mortality as tuberculosis and other diseases continued to dramatically affect the area.[526] "Gypsies" were not immune to these representations either as truant officers specifically sought out "Gypsy" children in areas like Harlem and children relief agencies noted the rise in children being taken from homes to boarding houses and institutions for the poor, with some "Gypsies" perhaps being included in their counts.[527] More than ever before poverty and moral degradation became tied to racial representations of people of color across New York as joblessness began to rise and pluralism and multiculturalism became tested on a large scale. Harlem and other areas with high concentrations of racialized people became fodder for politicians and lay people alike pushing for jobs while maintaining a strict segregationist and paternalist stances for fear of racial upheaval and violence. More than ever "play" of all sorts seemed a thing of the past as people struggled across class and racial lines.

The lacuna of "Playing Gypsy" during the Great Depression was augmented by the reports of Gypsies committing crimes across the country and news of Gypsies worldwide making

[524] "Job Segregation Charged."
[525] Arthur C. Holden, "Help Needed for Negroes"; Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?*
[526] "New York's Negro Children Suffering from Overcrowding"; Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?*
[527] "Home Relief Asked for Needy Children"; "More Children Put in Welfare Homes"; "Gypsies Trouble Truant Officers:"

news. Here the daze of "Playing Gypsy" was replaced by accounts of "Gypsies" again as social pests and criminals who degraded the chances of honest hard working New Yorkers. The "Gypsyologists" also continued to work throughout the 1930s noting changes amongst groups and continuing to debate issues of language and tradition amongst themselves, still hoping to find "true Gypsies" or the real "Romani Rai" of Borrowian[528] makings. Across the pond in Europe the situation for Gypsylorists included documenting the various groups who began to problematically (for the Gypsylorists) "mix" with others and create what was termed "half-breeds" while maintaining an orientalist stance on Romani history and experiences.[529] Increased coverage of "Gypsies" in New York was perhaps due to the increased numbers of homeless people and transient folks in the City and "Gypsies" were within the larger purview of the authorities at the time, or because "Gypsies" continued to operate outside of normative "American" lifeways. Either way, "Gypsies" and their exploits made news across the country often in the reports of criminal acts or in fantastical stories about the various "Gypsy" Kings who purported to speak for all "Gypsies." Often though, the reports simply noted their appearance in the City as a novelty and amusement, rarely talking about the communities as if they were already longstanding communities of New Yorkers.

A 1930 Baltimore Sun article notes that "Gypsies move into town [New York City] with the cold weather", where they "make camp in vacant stores in Avenues A and B, renting stores at cheap rates, hanging up their bright blankets over the door, parking their ramshackle old touring cars in the street."[530] The article continues with "there are about a hundred of them in town

[528] George Borrows was an English author and self-acclaimed "Gypsyologist" who inspired generations of scholars studying Roma.
[529] Ken Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism"; See issues from 1930s-1940s of Gypsy Lore Society., *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.
[530] "Where Gypsies Go For Winter Season."

now—vivid spots of color even in the kaleidoscopic East Side. There are some in Astoria and occasionally in Harlem, both those districts being traditional camp sites."[531] The news report notes that the occupations of "gypsies" were changing during the period from "horse stealing and performing bears" to "fortune telling" and "young boys and girls dance gypsy dances in Second Avenue restaurants."[532] Interestingly, the article notes that there was enough familiarity with the "Gypsies" that Joseph Moskowitz, the Romanian American Jewish owner of the Moskowitz "Rumanian Restaurant" and renowned musician is "always glad to see them in his place…stops the orchestra…gets out his cymbalom and himself plays for the dancing."[533] Thus, "Gypsies" were known throughout the area, they were identified by New Yorkers seemingly by their occupations, housing choices, and "vivid spots of color." They were interacting with Romanians, Jews, and African Americans in the spaces that they resided and clearly engaged in some commerce and reciprocal relationships with those people in an era of precarity. Yet, they were also still undesirable and duplicitous at times as they "can never give up on the open sky, any more than they can give up the 'hokkano baro,' the 'great trick", never could they live as full Americans in middle class settings.[534]

Complicating the public's relationship with "Gypsies" was the constant reports of American fortune tellers victimizing their customers.[535] In September 1930, an article from the New York Times is representative of the reports which paint "Gypsy" fortune tellers as scam artists and frauds. "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900", the Times headline reads. The victim in this case was Matteo Castorino of 335 East 112th Street in Harlem.[536] The story dictated by the Times

[531] "Where Gypsies Go For Winter Season."
[532] "Where Gypsies Go For Winter Season."
[533] "Where Gypsies Go For Winter Season."
[534] "Where Gypsies Go For Winter Season."
[535] For more about the ways in which Black women were targeted by the authorities during the same period for related occupations see LaShawn Harris, *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners*.
[536] "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900."

states that Castorino went to a store front at 2185 Third Avenue in East Harlem and "two gypsy women" informed him he was a "very sick man" and that he would need to raise all the money he could get to have the women preform a spell to cure him.[537] Castorino withdrew some $5,900 from the bank and returned to the store front where the women presented him with a shirt with his money supposedly sewn inside. Castorino was instructed to wait 6 hours while wearing the shirt before he could open it up and retrieve his money. Alas, the $5,900 "had vanished. So had the women—the store was empty."[538] Sometime later Castorino saw the "alleged fortune tellers in a store at 2495 Second Avenue and had them arrested."[539] The women, "Ghous Adams" and "Katherine Williams" denied the charge but were held (without evidence) on a $5,000 bail each until a hearing could be held on the following Monday.[540] The fate of Adams and Williams is not further reported on in the newspaper so it is unknown if they managed to gather the hefty bail or not. This report from 1930 is illustrative of the ways in which "Gypsies" were painted regarding their occupations. In this instance, like many others, "Gypsy" women are the target of the police and the supposed victims. It's not to say that perhaps the man was in fact "duped" into handing over his money to the women in question, but the man also doesn't present any evidence, at least according to the Times article. More often than not, the trend with the reports follows the same pattern, a man usually is "duped" by women, the man tracks down the women, and the authorities are involved often without hard evidence of wrongdoing. In the end the "Gypsy" women are tried, and some spend time in jail or are forced to pay their way out. Heavily implied within the reports of these types is the gender ideologies of the period of which the

[537] "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900."
[538] "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900."
[539] "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900."
[540] "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900."

"Gypsy" women don't fit the norm of the day.[541] Hence, the "Gypsy" women are the ones "duping" the men and making the money for the family whilst other non-"Gypsy" people normatively would have the situation reversed with the women being docile and naïve and the man headstrong and the head of the household.

Another report from 1930 tells of a man losing his life savings of $3,800 when he allowed a young "20-year-old gypsy fortune teller" named "Jenny Frank" to put some of his money into a bag and then have him sleep on it overnight where to his amazement he found it doubled. The man, Max Rosenthal, returned to the fortune teller and continued to double his money every time he took the bag home and slept on it. Alas, once he put in his whole life savings all he got was ten dollars.[542] Max then went back to the shop to find it deserted and went about looking for the "gypsy" five months until he identified her in a "gypsy settlement" and "turned her over to the police."[543] Jenny denied the charges and was held without bail. Again, the same pattern emerges where a man is "duped" by a woman and then goes out trying to find said women often for an extended period of time. In this case there is the added element of age and sexuality in the report with "young" and "young woman" being used several times both indicative of the duplicity of "young" people and the element of sexuality from the heavily circulated representation of over-sexualized "Gypsy" women. "Gypsies" it seemed were back on the public's mind as money dwindled and prejudices which at times were replaced by fantasy boiled over into reports of "Gypsies" behaving badly.

[541] For more about the discussions around "Gypsy" gender norms in the United States see Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*; Anne H. Sutherland, *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*; Carol Silverman, "Everyday Drama"; Ian Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, chap. 14.
[542] "Money Doubled in Fortune Teller's 'Magic Bag' Till Man Put in His Life Savings of $3,800."
[543] "Money Doubled in Fortune Teller's 'Magic Bag' Till Man Put in His Life Savings of $3,800."

The ethno-racial romanticism from the 1920s which had similar roots with mostly white people "Playing Indian" was no longer as tenable by 1930 and instead a security apparatus was being refined to replace it both in the United States and abroad. The limited reports of "Gypsies" which are available largely focus on the negative "nature" of "Gypsies" highlighting their racial, cultural, and social deficiencies both in the United States and abroad as global news become more readily available. Across a portion of Eastern Europe "Gypsies" were targeted by authorities for education, forcible settlement, and even child separation.[544] In 1931 a special correspondence from the New York Times highlights the Czechoslovak governments efforts to "stop the roving of its gypsy population and has passed regulations compelling all gypsies to register in districts in which they are living."[545] Similarly in "West Bohemia" children were taken from their parents and placed with non-"Gypsy" families in an effort to reform the "Gypsies." In Hungary, a similar measure was being enforced including opening a "gypsy school" where the principle tasks were to teach children "to wash themselves and not use bad language."[546] By 1934 Hungary also reportedly was planning on branding "gypsies born in the Farczali district" with tattoos showing their name and date and place of birth in an effort to "prevent gypsies from wandering and changing their names when accused of horse-stealing or other misdeeds."[547] Disciplining and reforming "Gypsies" it seemed was a worldwide phenomenon which also made its way to New York City in the hands of the New York Police Department.

[544] In the USSR and several other nations there were literacy and cultural campaigns which sought to elevate the Roma in public with mixed success. See more in Alaina Lemon, *Between Two Fires*, chap. 4; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Roma Portraits in History*.
[545] Special Correspondence, "Czechs Would Curb Gypsies."
[546] Special Correspondence, "Hungary Establishes School for Gypsies To Teach Pupils to Wash and Not to Swear."
[547] "Hungary to Tattoo Gypsies."

4.2 Discipline and Reform in the City

As previous chapters have shown, New York City had many different institutions which served to discipline and reform newly arrived immigrants as they entered the country including Ellis Island officials, aid organizations, and socio-cultural mediums such as film and play. In the City itself the institution which was tasked with being the main disciplinarian for people was the illustrious New York City Police Department. The New York Police Department (NYPD) had consolidated from many different jurisdictions pre-centralization into a modern force utilizing innovative technologies and establishing some of the first law enforcement standard practices mirrored across the country. With that modernization though came a proclivity for excessive use of force. Scholar Marilynn Johnson shows that far from being a progression from random violence to more professional and less violent, the NYPD has continued to utilize different forms of violence as a means of controlling the multiethnic population.[548] By the time future president Teddy Roosevelt was charged with reforming the department at the end of the 19th century NYPD members had a reputation for both their political allegiance to Tammany Hall and their excessive "clubbing" of citizens. Even reform minded Roosevelt couldn't completely break the political machine behind the Police and although he managed to insist on more controlled use of clubbing of "respectable" citizens he still failed to break from a pattern of 19th century reformers which relied on a moral imperative and individual accountability.[549]Instead it was the events of the early 20th century which formed the backbone of police reform centered on police brutality and systematic changes.

[548] See more in Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*.
[549] Marilynn S. Johnson, 55–56.

In the era of massive immigration in the early years of the 20th century the number of arrests by the NYPD exploded from 132,805 in 1900 to a peak in 1908 of 244,822 an increase of about 84%.[550] The population of the City also grew during the decade from 3,437,202 in 1900 to 4,766,683 in 1910 for an increase of about 38%.[551] So even with increased population growth the number of arrests outpaced the previous decades by a wide margin. During the same period, the rationale for arrests also shifted to more oblique categories like "suspicious persons", "disorderly persons", and "vagrancy." Similarly, the "nativity" of people arrested in the City also shifted with the influx of new immigrants and the targeting of immigrants by police for their racial status.[552] Between 1900 and 1905 there was an annual increase in the number of Southern and Eastern European "natives" being arrested averaging about 20% year over year.[553] For "natives" of countries with large Roma populations the increase was even more dramatic between 1902-1905 with an average 25% increase for Russians, 33% for Hungarians, and 54% for "Roumanians."[554] Since Roma or "Gypsies" were not counted in their own category an exact number of arrests of Roma is largely impossible but it seems likely that since most oral accounts and newspaper headlines of "Gypsies" align with the same period many Roma may have been arrested by the NYPD during the period. After 1905 the "nativity" of the people arrested no longer was counted in the annual reports of the NYPD and thus the racial makeup of the arrested is harder to discern. However, the race riots of the early 1900s cemented the racial policing of

[550] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1903 1900, 599–607; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1904, 44–53; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1909 1905, 48–54; 317–26; 499–504; 526.
[551] "Planning-Population-Historical Population Information - DCP."
[552] For more see Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*, chaps. 2, 4, 5, 6.
[553] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1903 1900, 599-607 ; 42-47 ; 195-202 ; 290-296 ; 395-400 ; 44–53.
[554] Police Department City of New York, 195–202; 290–96; 395–400; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1904, 44–53; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1909 1905, 48–54.

the population for years to come with African Americans, Southern and Eastern Europeans, and people of color all bearing the brunt of the brutality.[555]

The period between 1905 and 1915 was marked by progressive reforms which largely focused on professionalization and increased public interest in police matters. Yet, the reforms rarely managed to succeed in creating a more just and equitable police force with many ethnic communities still feeling the brunt of police scrutiny.[556] Arrests largely plateaued after 1908 until the end of World War One when immigration and internal migration increased the population of the City at a slightly slower pace than the previous decades. Importantly, it was also within the later 1910s that the NYPD experimented with having women police officers often assigned to minor roles and tasked with domestic matters and low-level crimes.[557] Additionally, the period up to the end of World War I was also marked by an effort to "Americanize" the various ethnic groups within the City with the police taking part in parades, cultural events, and Americanization drives. In 1916 the NYPD annual report states:

> "This community [referring to foreign born New Yorkers] has been characterized as a 'melting pot' for the world, and as such the melting process has grave possibilities for the children. They may become dissatisfied with the manner and ethics of the old country before they fully acquired those of the new country. Again, the half-Americanized child has many spiritual conflicts, and many not so spiritual with his foreign minded parents. The weakening of his respect for his parents and their rules of conduct often leads to a disrespect for all authority whatsoever. In this way many a law-abiding parent has been shamed by the waywardness of his children here."[558]

To combat this threat of "half-Americanized" children in New York City the NYPD developed a juvenile delinquent system which mirrored some of the offenses of adults but was often spearheaded by the new Policewomen in the department. This new use of women as

[555]For more see Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*, chap. 2.
[556] Marilynn S. Johnson, 111–13.
[557] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1919, 153–58.
[558] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1916 1913, 383.

disciplinarians outside of the home and in the streets also signaled a need for new and more expansive categories of crime in keeping with the modernizing City.

In 1916 as the war waged in Europe the NYPD created a new expansive system of categorizing offenses.[559] Whole new subcategories under headings like "Offenses against chastity" and "fraud, swindles, and breaches of trust" aligned with the social concerns over the effect of a dirty and multiethnic metropolis bursting at the seams.[560] In the first year of this new system 6,132 people were charged with offenses under the "fraud, swindles, and breaches of trust" and amongst these new offenses was a holdover from an earlier period, that of the "fortune teller."[561] As early as 1914 the NYPD had created a special squad with explicit instructions to "close up places of business of persons who professed to have occult power, tell fortunes, and work supernatural cures."[562] In 1914 alone 176 individuals were arrested as "fortune tellers" the majority of them women, one of the only categories of offenses where women outnumbered the number of men arrested. Some 145 individual were arrested as "fortune tellers" in 1915 and $6,100 in bonds were collected, the equivalent to some $150,000 or more in modern dollars.[563] But priorities seem to have shifted after 1916 with the NYPD spending more resources on home defense, traffic control, and most importantly creating a "Neutrality Squad" charged with discovering "secret alien activities" in New York.[564]

During the years of the United States involvement in World War I the NYPD arrests plateaued and the number of "fortune tellers", "disorderly people", and those charged with

[559] 1915 also marked a turning point in the actual collection of crime statistics with the newly formed "Bureau of Statistics" taking over the individual precinct and headquarter reports, ideally standardizing and compiling information to ensure accuracy. See Police Department City of New York, 224.
[560] Police Department City of New York, 433–71.
[561] Police Department City of New York, 433.
[562] Police Department City of New York, 207.
[563] Police Department City of New York, 207.
[564] Police Department City of New York, 345.

"mendicancy" all plummeted.[565] Even with the unrest caused by the end of the war and the increased scrutiny of "radicals" on the federal level, the NYPD focused more on wartime demobilization and combating new forms of automobile crime. With the passage of the 18th amendment and Volstead Act in 1919 the NYPD also began to form anti-gangster units and police those places which violated the new law after the passage of the short lived Mullan-Gage Law of 1921.[566] Even after the repeal of the Mullan-Gage Law in 1923 the major priorities of the NYPD continued to be in the suppression of vice and "gangsters" often at the expense of public perception. Enforcement of various anti-vice laws and regulations also lead to the NYPD utilizing strong arm methods and brutal tactics which paved the way for the so-called "third degree" and allowed police to "take their gloves off" in dealing with criminals.[567] With the newly empowered and violent police measures of the Prohibition era also came the new targets of the NYPD, this time explicitly targeting "Gypsies."

4.3 Policing Roma in the City

By 1930 "Gypsies" were being targeted by police in New York when they were found out to be fortune telling as it violated "section 899 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Section 912 of the Penal Code" listing disorderly peoples "pretending to tell fortunes for profit, or where lost or stolen goods may be found."[568] The penalty that one newspaper article reports for violation was "$250 fine, or no more than six months imprisonment or both."[569] The author

[565] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1918; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1919.
[566] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1921, 19–23; See also Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*, chap. 4. Essentially the Mullan-Gage Law in New York State meant that local police were also tasked with enforcing the federal ban on distributing alcohol, something which was impossible with the number of police and the various means of violating the law.
[567] Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*, 121.
[568] Rebecca Hourwich, "Forecasters of the Future Who Flourish in New York."
[569] Rebecca Hourwich.

of the news article from 1931 entitled, "Forecasters of the Future who Flourish in New York", makes it clear that section 899 of the penal code did not have widespread effect but instead "the only fortune-telling interpreted to be contrary to law is palmistry and phrenology, practically a monopoly in the hands of the gypsies."[570] The author, Rebecca Hourwich, clearly alludes to the "Gypsies" as the main purveyors of fortune telling but also highlights the lesser crimes of number runners who were largely African American in places like Harlem. In effect, the New York penal code section 899 subsection 3 explicitly targeted "Gypsies" and those that made their living as fortune tellers while also targeting the lesser crimes of other racialized people. Whereas subsections 1-2 qualify "disorderly" people as those who abandon their children and sections 4-8 target gamblers and "keepers of bawdy houses", *only* subsection 3 insinuates that the "disorderly person" doesn't have to do any action or commit any crimes involving money. Instead, one has to merely "pretend to tell fortunes" to be deemed a "disorderly person."[571] Sections 900 through 913 further outline the penal code's constituent parts which empower the court to exact punishment from fining to imprisonment and hard labor for up to 6 months.[572] Sections 901 and 902 in particular illustrate the difference in punishment and procedure for those charged with being "disorderly." Section 901 states that most people charged under all the other subsections could get off with a year of "good behavior" or in the case of the absent parents a year of paying a fixed amount to the court, county, or society for the prevention of the cruelty towards children. But people charged under subsection 3 which was "practically a monopoly in the hands of the 'gypsies" had its own punishment of the aforementioned "$250 dollars" and/ or

[570] Rebecca Hourwich.
[571] New York, *Penal Law and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the State of New York*, 381.
[572] New York, 382–87.

imprisonment and hard labor.[573] In the end it was better to abandon your children or gamble for profit then it was to be a "Gypsy" in New York City during the Great Depression.

Another story from 1930 clearly shows the extent of the police force's attempts to stop the "Gypsies" from "pretending to tell fortunes" and from being "disorderly persons." "Jails Aged Gypsy Palmist" cries the headline from the New York Times on August 31st, 1930[574] The "aged Gypsy palmist" in question was Maria Yuran, who was reportedly 97 years old. Patrolman Patrick Bray was conducting his rounds when he stopped at a small store at 1614 First Avenue and was charged $1 to have his palm read.[575] Upon hearing his fortune, "he was soon to become a widower…but was not to worry….a lovely heiress, blond and very jealous, waited to marry him", Bray took the "gypsy to the station and went home to his wife."[576] Whereas Patrolman Bray could have brought the women to the court for merely "pretending to tell fortunes", the article hints at the allure of the practice itself, where even the seemingly upright Bray was seduced by the magic of the elderly "Gypsy." It's unclear if the Maria Yuran was prosecuted or actually spent time in jail for the $1 violation but its notable that she was targeted overall and made it into the papers during the period. Incredibly, the elderly woman who had charged a dollar to a passerby could be on the line for jail time and $250 dollars under law. It didn't matter that Maria Yuran was an elderly woman trying to survive in the Depression it only mattered that she was interpellated as a "Gypsy" by the law and evidently told a fortune which the patrolman didn't like.

"Lowest in the scale of the fortune tellers are the gypsies…the police appear to be most active in their raids on them", continues another line from the 1931 Rebecca Hourwich article

[573] New York, 383.
[574] "Jails Aged Gypsy Palmist."
[575] "Jails Aged Gypsy Palmist."
[576] "Jails Aged Gypsy Palmist."

[577]. "Gypsies" in the City who told fortunes were no longer seen as strange or exotic but criminals for merely being "Gypsies." But who were these "Gypsies" targeting? According to the 1931 report it was "Porto Rican and Spanish districts, and every foreign district in the City", yet many reports also highlight that respectable middle class white Euro-Americans were also scammed.[578] Which is perhaps why the reports made it into the newspapers at all as middle class folks were the bedrock of the New Deal world being created and needed to be aware of said "disorderly" and untrustworthy people who may try to scam them and in turn harm the racial and social order. Throughout the early 1930s "Gypsies" continued to slowly trickle into American discourses through newspapers, films, and from parlors and police stations across the City. Law enforcement reports especially took up much of the slack with "Gypsy" news. By 1934 even the most established "Gypsy" communities were under attack with the long-standing Maspeth, Queens community having fifteen of its members hauled before the Ridgewood court.[579] Tensions between the non-"Gypsies" and "Gypsies" had always been strained at best but often it was individuals who were targeted for scams. This time however, the 15 "Gypsies" were accused of "violating Board of Health rules against leaving garbage cans uncovered and violating building department regulations by constructing rude shacks without permits."[580]

Never mind that said "shacks" had been there for over a decade and they certainly were not the only informal housing around the City with Hoovervilles still present in Queens and Brooklyn. Jacob Friedland, the president of the "Maspeth Civic and Improvement Association" summed up the reasoning behind the arrest of the "Gypsies" best:

[577] Rebecca Hourwich, "Forecasters of the Future Who Flourish in New York."
[578] Rebecca Hourwich; "Accuses Gypsy in Theft"; "Says Gypsies Stole $5,900"; Special to The New York Times, "Held in Brooklyn Swindle"; "Gypsy Arrested in Fraud."
[579] "15 Gypsies in Court."
[580] "15 Gypsies in Court."

> "The gypsies must go. They are a menace to the health and peace of the community. They live in squalor and distribute the condition throughout the community. Police have been called to the camp recently to quell disturbances. Other residents are afraid to pass the camp at night for fear of being assaulted."[581]

Not only does Friedland blame the "Gypsies" for their impoverished conditions but claims that they spread said condition amongst others! This language is reminiscent of the nativist discourse some 20 years earlier in relation to immigrants on Ellis Island. In discourse while other groups had moved away from such blatant racism in some ways, "Gypsies" still remained the eternal outsider, a foreigner amongst the "desirable" immigrants. Police had to intervene within the camp in order to "quell disturbances" perhaps, but also to target "Gypsies" as "disorderly persons" which could directly benefit their local units with the bail money and fines. The Maspeth Romani community had become too much for Queens residents to bear by the time the crunch of the Great Depression further exacerbated relationships between groups. Two years later in 1936 things came to a head.

[581] "15 Gypsies in Court."

On February 17th, 1936, an early raid by police occurred as the 27 women went to the train platform to catch a ride into the City. Captain William J. Raftis of the Pickpocket Squad arranged the arrest on suspicion of a scam from 1934 where some $1,600 went missing from a Mrs. De Santos in the Bronx.[582] The fifty complaints mentioned in the newspaper actually had occurred over the course of several months across the City from tenement houses in Brooklyn, the Upper East Side, Harlem, and the Bronx.[583] So why were the Maspeth "Gypsies" targeted? It seems as if they were convenient and well known "Gypsies" which could be identified. The Maspeth community, according to newspapers, dressed modernly and spoke good English, perhaps this is what made them such unique targets for the pickpocket squad as they could be mistaken for ethnic "Americans" instead of "Gypsies."



27 WOMEN GYPSIES SEIZED IN ROUND-UP

50 Complaints of Thievery by Fortune Tellers Lead to Police Action.

'SWITCH GAME' TOOK $1,600

Indignant Members of Shack Colony in Queens Taken as They Set Out in Morning.

Illustrations 4: "27 Women Gypsies Seized in Round-Up", 1936

Nonetheless, the 27 women were photographed and fingerprinted in police headquarters and were arraigned on charges of "suspicion of larceny."[584] Two days later the 27 women were still in Police custody and 2 women were held without bail as one had been "convicted of grand larceny and the other had forfeited a $2,500 bail bond in Manhattan."[585] The remaining 25

[582] "27 Women Gypsies Seized in Round-Up."
[583] "27 Women Gypsies Seized in Round-Up."
[584] "27 Women Gypsies Seized in Round-Up."
[585] "27 Women Gypsies Seized in Round-Up."

women were held on $1,000 and $5,000 bail awaiting a hearing that would occur on the 20th of February.[586] On the 21st the ordeal would end with all 27 cleared of "suspicion" of the original theft from 1934 but 7 of the women were immediately rearrested on "other charges" and were set to be arraigned in felony court in Manhattan.[587] The fate of the 7 women was not reported in the Times. Needless to say the novelty of the situation seemed to have worn off after most of the women were proven innocent. Yet, the NYPD tactics continued throughout the 1930s with fortune telling businesses undergoing continued scrutiny and Pickpocket Squads making rounds in areas where "Gypsies" were known to be.

Between 1931 and 1939 more than 1,734 individuals were arrested as "fortune tellers" with more than 70% of them women.[588] Importantly, the NYPD annual reports do not include any details about the day-to-day operations of those tasked with dealing with "Gypsies" and it is quite possible with the NYPD's continued targeting of "Gypsies" officers may have resorted to the strong-arm tactics reported by other groups including intimidation, graft, and unlawful searches and seizures. Increasingly the appeal of the "Gypsy" as a predominate American performative type began to erode and was replaced with the negative imagery of the "Gypsy" as a pest, a drag on society, and as a thief. But it was also in the 1930s that several "Gypsy" Kings made the news once again advocating for their "subjects" as ideal and trustworthy Americans.

[586] "2 Gypsies Held Without Bail."
[587] "Twenty Gypsy Women Freed."
[588] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1932, 136–74; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1934 1933, 78–116; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1935, 96–135; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1936, 102–39; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1938, 112–48; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1939, 118–52.

4.4 Red Dress Gypsy Association and Charismatic Kaslov

While previous "Gypsy Kings" made the news throughout the early 20th century it was Steve "Lolya" Kaslov who was arguably the most vocal and effective in making his media presence known and advocating for his group most often. Kaslov was likely born in Russian lands in 1888, although it was also claimed that he was born in Georgia "beside a green land" in 1915.[589] At some point between the early 1900s the Kaslov family immigrated to the United States (1901 according to an elder brother in 1910).[590] Kaslov and his extended family made news several times between 1901 and the 1930s with his older brother being named "King" until the middle of the 1920s.[591] Steve's brother Frank Kaslov made the papers in 1926 when he went to Europe in search of a bride. At that time Frank was "King" whose "kingdom extends all the way from California to Egypt and includes some five hundred families."[592] Around 1919 the Kaslovs settled in New York City and New Jersey in tenement housing near Brownsville and throughout the City. During the period prior to settlement in New York Steve became more involved with the family businesses of copper smithing and, according to his firsthand account in the late 1930s, was recognized as having the qualities of a "King."[593] Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, before New York City became the Kaslov's base of operations and home, the family travelled seasonally with the men working as mobile copper repairmen and smiths and the women telling fortunes. It was throughout this time that the Kaslov's established their connections to other Roma and consolidated some of their power as a well-established and respected family amongst various American Roma groups.[594] It was reported that around the

[589] See Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story."
[590] Sheila Salo, 38.
[591] Sheila Salo, 39.
[592] "American Gypsy King Seeks Bride in Europe."
[593] Steve Kaslov Lolya, "The Ways of My People", 29; Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story."
[594] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story"; Steve Kaslov Lolya, "The Ways of My People", 30.

start of World War I some members of the Kaslov family and extended groups avoided the draft by extending their travelling into Mexico, something which would later become an issue.[595]

By 1927 the Kaslov's had been in New York City and around the area for over a decade and while Frank was noted as the "King" in 1926 Steve began to refer to himself as "King" and newsprint soon followed suit. According to Carlos De Wendler-Funaro, a scholar interested in "Gypsies" and close follower of Steve Kaslov's life in NYC, Steve desired to write a book of his exploits as early as 1927 documenting the history of his group in the United States.[596] According to researcher Shelia Salo, Kaslov filed papers for a non-profit named the "Red Dress Gypsies Association" in Passaic County, New Jersey in 1927 also.[597] According to the coverage of the first meeting of the Association in 1928 the Red Dress Gypsy Association was created to:

> "procure and maintain a stable habitation for the members of the Red Dress Gypsies Association and for that purpose to acquire the necessary land and erect and maintain sufficient and proper buildings for residence, business and other purposes of accommodation to encourage and enforce, in co-operation with the Laws of the State, the education of the children of the members of the Red Dress Gypsies Association; to procure congenial and healthful employment for the members of said The Red Dress Gypsies Association to take proper means and measures to discourage and prevent the too early marriage of the youthful members of the said Association; to promote wholesome and artistic entertainment and amusement for the members of the said Association as well as for the public at large, and in general to improve by all lawful means, the physical, material, moral and educational condition and present status of the members of the Red Dress Gypsies Association."[598]

The account further suggests that Kaslov wanted to "change Gypsies into real Americans" and in doing so purchase land, educate his kin, and do away with those practices deemed "un-American" such as bridal doweries.[599] Salo doesn't give many more details about the organization in her piece but Kaslov would use the title frequently in the middle of the 1930s

[595] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story"; "That Gypsy Custom Has Disadvantage."
[596] Various, "Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection", n. Series 1 Box 1 Folder 7.
[597] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story", 39.
[598] Sheila Salo, 40–41.
[599] Sheila Salo, 41.

when he had become more affluent perhaps to signal his legitimate status as a recognized group under law. Either way, Kaslov had clearly managed to negotiate with authorities including the county offices for non-profit incorporation by the early years of his reign, signaling a willingness and desire to work with authorities and navigate the system at times. Anthropologist Rena Gropper who wrote "Gypsies in the City" in 1975 about her ethnographic experiences with New York City "Gypsies" in the 1940s and early 1950s notes that "Kaslov was a shrewd and experienced Kalderăs chief, who had consolidated his power through wily manipulation of non-Gypsy authorities. He had many Gypsy families under his protection, mostly Kalderăs."[600] Steve continued to grow in popularity and prestige along with his extended family who resided in the City proper throughout the late 1920s. His "shrewdness" and "wily manipulation" of authorities became a strategy for greater awareness and support from non-Gypsies over time. While I would not necessarily agree with Gropper's characterization of Kaslov as "wily" and "manipulating" I think Kaslov embodied a new view on relationships with diverse groups and embraced the idea that more contact could mean more understanding and at the very least more support from authorities instead of scrutiny.[601] Kaslov, especially was keen to ensure his kin and mostly himself had a voice in the City taking to the various avenues of media when possible to air his concerns or advocate for his kin. Unlike many other "Kings" Kaslov was careful to paint his kin as modern and thoroughly American seeking their fortune honestly while playing to the public's ideas about "Gypsies" as performers and craftsmen. Kaslov embraced these ideas early on, perhaps learning from his families time in the spotlight over his lifetime or recognizing the role

[600] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 24. Kalderăs or Kalderash is the ethnonym used by a large group of Eastern Roma who reside mostly in Romania and the Balkans.
[601] Gropper's work also, perhaps inadvertently, served to push the representation that "Gypsies" were so different and exceptional from White Americans. Gropper highlights gender ideologies which were undergoing massive changes without properly contextualizing the situation on the ground, thereby also pushing a static representation of Romani culture which did not wholly exist. More work will be needed to fully tease apart the effects of findings by Gropper and other 1960s and 1970s ethnographers on Roma and non-Roma.

and power of media and visuality in American life; either way, Steve began to utilize those tools and in earnest by the early 1930s.

By 1930 Steve Kaslov was the recognized "King" of his group and had consolidated his power by working as a go-between for various families and groups. Kaslov ensured his kin had space within the City proper and worked to smooth relationships within the group and with officials often acting as a representative for his kin in matters which involved law enforcement or landlord issues. In turn, Kaslov also gained the unwanted attention of rival "Kings" who vied for the better opportunities in the area and desired choice locations. In 1932 things came to a head with Kaslov and rival Tene Bimbo.[602] Bimbo, who had been rivals with Kaslov for several years claimed that Kaslov had orchestrated an assault and theft on January 18th, 1932 at 138 Park Row. Kaslov, according to Bimbo, had entered the house struck Rose McGinnis, Bimbo's daughter in law, then stole $1,000 worth of jewelry and gold pieces.[603] On May 6th Judge Corrigan sentenced Kaslov to Sing Prison for fifteen to twenty-one years for his part in the altercation.[604] That may have been the end of the story of Steve Kaslov with his chances of becoming more widely known and making his people "American" dashed by a feud between rival families. But Kaslov's fortunes changed some six months later when an appellate court found holes in Bimbo's story and instead reversed directions freeing Kaslov and looking further into Bimbo's story.[605] Kaslov, who had declared the whole situation was a "frame up" alleged that he had known the Bimbos for over twenty-five years and had been in rivalry with them for some time. The judge stated:

> *"*If the jury has been aware of the criminal activities and records of the Bimbo family, a verdict of guilty would probably not have been rendered. These records show their malodorous careers of crime, embracing among others extortion, assault and particularly the repeated misuse of the agencies of the criminal courts by making false accusations

[602] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 18–24; "Gypsy 'King' Sentenced."
[603] "Gypsy 'King' Sentenced."
[604] "Gypsy 'King' Sentenced"; "Kaslov, Gypsy Chief, Sentenced for Robbery."
[605] "Gypsy 'King' Freed in Foe's 'Frame-Up."

> against individual who had incurred their enmity and whose arrests they sought and obtained."[606]

With that Kaslov was freed and returned to his "kingdom" of New York City. At that point, the Kaslov's like many "Gypsy" families and groups had been squeezed by the economic situation of the City and had little ability to travel elsewhere for work. Yet, Steve and his group continued to operate throughout the Depression plying their smith work while the women told fortunes to any who had extra cash and a hope for a better future. One opportunity which presented itself when FDR laid out his New Deal was jobs which essentially created temporary work for underemployed New Yorkers working on large infrastructure projects. Soon those that were working such positions were known as men on "relief" and many communities lived by the sums that they could gather through such opportunities. "Gypsy" men, who often did not work for others, took on jobs like this in order to contribute to the family coffers when smithing was not possible. Meanwhile, "Gypsy" women evaded the law whenever possible as New York began to crack down on fortune tellers and those that claimed they could tell the future and continued to tell fortunes. At the same time, "Gypsies" in the City continued to create communities in places like Harlem, Queens, and Manhattan delineating territories based on each group's national origin and/ or their allegiance to a certain "King."

[606] "Gypsy 'King' Freed in Foe's 'Frame-Up."

Steve Kaslov, by most accounts, was a likable character amongst Romani "Kings", serving as a judge, loan officer, and adviser for his extended family and associated families.[607] After his trouble with Bimbo, Kaslov went back to Manhattan and continued his role as "King" settling disputes and giving advice to young men and women looking to make money during the Depression. By the middle of the 1930s Kaslov and his Red Dress Gypsy Association were continuing to operate mostly out of the spotlight. Yet, New Yorkers were still aware of the "Gypsies" in their midst as outlined by a series of pieces from the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1935.[608] In them the author outlines the current conditions of the "Gypsies" of "Hollywood" or Maspeth. In Maspeth there was only one "king" known as President Roosevelt and men were working steady jobs on relief. The author's preconceived notions of "Gypsies" were clearly challenged by his interactions with the group, noting the fact that women were marrying outside of the group and that "in another two or three generations perhaps, gypsies would be as fabulous as speakeasies."[609] The author clearly also did not believe the warnings issued by the police as they stated, "on the whole, we are convinced that the police were wrong. Maybe one or two


IN THE CRYSTAL BALL

by O.R. PILAT

Gypsies Tell Your Fortune? No, Indeed! They Say at Gypsy Town in Maspeth—But the Police— Ah! They're Just as Vigilant as Ever

"HOLLYWOOD!" shouted the conductor of the Borden Ave. trolley.

What a strange place for a real estate development with a fairy name like that, close to the Mt. Zion Cemetery in the Maspeth section of Queens!

"Hey, you!" continued the conductor. "Wanted Gypsy Town, did you? Here it is. Folks just call it Hollywood. It's so different."

Fifth Article

Illustrations 5: "In the Crystal Ball", 1935

[607] See more in Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*; "Gypsy School Days"; Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story."
[608] O.R. Pilat, "In the Crystal Ball."
[609] O.R. Pilat.

backsliders exist in Gypsy Town, but, on the whole, they seem on the level."[610] All in all it seems that certain areas were continuing to be known as "Gypsy" areas where "Hollywood" was coded as "Gypsy Town", and Maspeth as a more than just a "Gypsy camp." People knew that "Gypsies" existed in the City and even sought them out finding that their fantastical nature was overplayed, and their representations often didn't mirror reality. People like Steve Kaslov continued to try and change those representations and found his best outlet in media attention that he garnered from his correspondence with none other than President Roosevelt.

By 1937 Kaslov had been "King" for almost a decade and during his tenure the fortunes of his people had changed significantly but not always for the better. Relief work provided some jobs but Kaslov dreamed of a more sustainable future beyond the Depression for American "Gypsies." Far from being a "King" who thwarted authorities and remained silent amongst the various ethnic communities in New York City, Kaslov dreamed of a time when his kin would be recognized and respected as Americans who contributed to the mosaic of multiculturalism. In 1937 Steve Kaslov decided to act and wrote a letter to non-other than the President of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[611] In said letter Kaslov outlined the difficulties that his people faced in the City and especially the loss of work and opportunities with the ongoing Depression. He noted that other groups had been given the opportunity to become citizens targeted by earlier Americanization efforts and had been active in advocacy work prior to the Depression but "Gypsies" had been left out of those efforts. Kaslov importantly not only endorses the idea of educating his kin but doing so in a manner which was consistent with the Americanization efforts of the later 1920s based on a civic education plan and Boasian cultural pluralism. Eleanor Roosevelt herself seemed intrigued by Kaslov's story and inquired about what could be done

[610] O.R. Pilat.
[611] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story", 39.

with Harry Hopkins the administrator of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA had become a major federal partnership project by 1937 which outlined relief work and helped fund projects through federal and state funds. Hopkins suggested a solution for the "Gypsies" in the form of Read Lewis, the director of the Foreign Language Information Service. [612]

The Foreign Language Information Service (FLIS) had its roots in World War I as the United States Committee on Public Information Division of Work with the Foreign Born, which became an independent body in 1921 as the Foreign Language Information Service. FLIS was designed to instruct immigrants in American civic education in their own languages utilizing public schools, community centers, and philanthropic organizations to distribute its material.[613] Modelled as "constructive assimilation" FLIS had been a major force in Americanization efforts during the 1920s and continued to be utilized throughout the Depression as mostly an educational bank of sorts. Lewis, perhaps sensing the difference between the needs of the "Gypsies" and "immigrants" helped organize a Committee on Gypsy Problems through the Welfare Council of New York City.[614]In conjunction with the Committee Lewis also assisted Kaslov in forming relationships with partners who might be able to assist him in his mission. Several of those of those individuals on the Committee became advocates for Kaslov and kin including Victor Weybright and Carlos de Wendler Funaro. In 1938 Kaslov took to the airwaves with the help of Victor Weybright, a publisher, avid "Gypsyiologist", and member of the New York Committee, making a radio address and concert for NBC.[615]In his address Kaslov outlined some of the struggles that the "Gypsies" had with the changing times, along with his hope for a

[612] Sheila Salo, 39.
[613] Foreign Language Information Service, "The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service ; a Summary and Survey."
[614] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story", 39.
[615] Sheila Salo, 38.

better future in America. Likewise, several of his kin performed some accompanying music which highlighted their "Gypsy" style and was one of the only public concerts performed by the Red Dress Organization. By 1939 another committee in New York City was tasked with raising funds from philanthropists and people in interested in "Gypsies" to help create a coppersmith workshop for the "Gypsies."[616] By June 26th, 1939 part of Kaslov's vision came true and the "Romany" Coppersmith workshop opened with all "Gypsy" men as partners in the business and Kaslov as the manager.[617]

Kaslov, in many ways, was an ideal "Gypsy" for the public to consume in the press. He was large, loud, and by most accounts charismatic in his leadership and his affect. His persistence and use of relief funds enabled many of his kin to have work during a period of inactivity for many. He also outlined with his Red Dress Association, a program which would make "Gypsies" closer to the idealized "American" as law abiding, literate, and competent workers with stable housing and normative families. Yet, at the same time Kaslov was full of contradictions and miscalculations. For instance, his Romany coppersmith shop closed after just a year due to a lack of business and even Eleanor Roosevelt's commissioned brooch was, according to Read Lewis, not aesthetically pleasing and unsuccessful.[618] The workshop being a failure meant that once again the "Gypsies" had to find ways to adapt to the circumstances of the Depression vying for a new rendition of Kaslov's planned "colony." In 1940 with the assistance of the WPA an adult education class was started whereby Kaslov's "Gypsies" were to learn the finer points of English and grammar.[619] According to Kaslov the reason for the schooling was

[616] Sheila Salo, 39. At some point between 1937-1939 Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, a "Gypsyologist" and photographer became involved with the project and his photographs are important artifacts and evidence of the short-lived enterprise in the City.
[617] Sheila Salo, 39.
[618] Sheila Salo, 40.
[619] "Gypsy School Days."

simple, "The City gives $100,000 in relief to Russian gypsies in a year. But we don't want relief, we want jobs. I teach smithing to young gypsies, but people buy aluminum."[620] It's unclear how long the classes continued or to what degree they had an effect on Kaslov's group but the visual evidence of the men taking part in classroom work points to Kaslov's underlying motivation to frame the "Gypsies" in a new light for New Yorkers. Increasingly Kaslov seemed to take on the role of cultural ambassador for "Gypsies" in the New York region and found that by working with allies he could continue to push for more positive representations of American "Gypsies" while also benefiting the community he was charged with protecting. One of the ways that this visually came to fruition was with the works of Alexander Alland Sr. and Carlos de Wendler-Funaro in conjunction with Kaslov in the late 1930s and 1940s.

4.5 "Gypsy" Photographs and Romani Lives

People had clearly been interested in the workings of American "Gypsy" groups for many years and the visual reproductions of their lives had garnered attention from both scholars and lay New Yorkers alike for decades. As scholar David MacDougall states:

> "Meaning guides our seeing. Meaning allows us to categorize objects. Meaning is what imbues the image of a person with all we know about them. It is what makes them familiar, bringing them to life each time we see them. But meaning, when we force it on things, can also blind us, causing us to see only what we expect to see or distracting us from seeing very much at all."[621]

The same can be said for the new "Gypsy" images created by photographers working with "Gypsies" subjects in the late 1930s. Their meanings were guided *both* by stereotypes from the oversaturated market of "Gypsy" images and the pluralist ideology of people like Kaslov attempting to frame his kin as "Americans" first and foremost and as ideal "Gypsies"

[620] "Gypsy School Days."
[621] David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image*, 1.

contributing to the recovery of New York. Photographs from the period of "Gypsies" became evidence of complicated lives of "mysterious" people in New York, perhaps none more so then Steve Kaslov and his group. At the same time they reflect the photographer's view of "Gypsies" as fundamentally different and exotic whereby the subjects are on the path to being "American" but are not quite there. These competing claims and meanings embedded within the "Gypsy" photographs and lives of the Roma not only complicate the "Gypsy" stereotypes but show the ongoing racial project which drove people like Kaslov to paint himself and others as racially "almost white" while maintaining a sense of Romani pride which followed the successes of relational racial projects for other ethnic hyphenated Americans. At the same time, my readings of these photographs are incomplete and are my own. What I can read from the photographs though, is the discursive and historical structures which influenced their creation and circulation. Following scholar Laura Wexler I also seek to "add to the power/ knowledge that such images made available, rather than objectify their subjects in ways that might further invite further reification."[622] In that vein it will be important to look reflexively at the photographs and the photographers making the images. In this manner I have chosen to explore two photographers who made "Gypsy" photographs some of the highlights of their careers and both of whom utilized the photographs for their own socio-political stances and commentary.

By the time, the Kaslovs and the Red Dress Gypsy Association had made the news in the 1930s camera equipment and availability of photographic processing and reproduction had exploded across the City. Now, people with modest means could get a camera with decent exposure and accuracy for a fairly competitive price. One of those people who became a noted photographer by the 1930s was an immigrant himself who specialized in a sort of Tocquevillian

[622] Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence*, 58.

representation of American culture.[623] That man, Alexander Alland Sr., came to the United States from Constantinople in 1923 leaving his portrait studio behind. Born in Crimea in 1902, Alland was interested in photography from an early age and made his own camera by the time he was a teenager, working for a local photography studio.[624] Upon arriving in the United States Alland sought out support from his other Russian emigrees and spent several years seeking work and eventually marrying a Russian Jewish woman named Alexandra Mamlet in 1930. During the Depression Alland moved to the Mohegan Colony, a radical artist community in New York's Westchester County, where he once again set about making photographs.[625] Upon his return to the City in 1936 Alland began to sell enough artwork to live on eventually becoming known throughout the City as a respected photographer. By the end of 1936 Alland was charged with supervising the Photo-Mural Section of the Federal Art Project, installing murals in the Newark Public Library and Riker's Island Penitentiary in 1937.[626] By 1939 Alland had contributed to several exhibits and helped advise the 1939 World Fair photo-mural exhibit and was asked to teach photography and photo-mural techniques at the American Artists School.[627] With the World's Fair experience under his belt Alland became more interested in the ethnic communities living in New York and set out to photograph some of them. Life Magazine footed the bill in 1940 after Alland proved himself with his photographs of the Virgin Islanders and Alland found himself in Harlem and the Lower East Side in 1940.[628] There in the Lower East Side Alland

[623] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Alland, much like Tocqueville some one hundred years earlier, saw American democracy as a foundational aspect of American culture whereby the "melting pot" could be sustained through active civic engagement which he documented with his subjects fitting normative lifestyles and visually capturing the values embedded in midcentury American discourse such as family, tradition, participation, individualism and hard work.
[624] "Alexander Alland, Sr., Photoprints · SOVA"; "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."
[625] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."
[626] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."
[627] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."
[628] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."

found the perfect subjects to discover and reveal their community visually, the Russian "Gypsies", whose leader was none other than Steve Kaslov.



Photographs 11: "Steve Kaslov, king of gypsies", 1941

Alland's photographs of the "Gypsies" of the Lower East Side culminated in an exhibit in 1941 entitled "The Children of the Romany" displayed at the Museum of the City of New York.[629] Alland's photos showed the Ruska (Russian) "Gypsies" in their Bowery workshop (before its shuttered) and in their homes during feasts and celebrations (slavas). His photographs also capture moments where female fortune tellers are interacting with their clients and are taken in a manner which seemingly portrays less of the msytique and fantasy of those moments and highlights the domesticy and intimacy of those exhanges. Steve Kaslov himself makes it into several of Alland's photographs along with the unnamed W.P.A education classes which occurred during Alland's visit to the community in 1940.[630] Interestingly, many of Alland's photographs of the "Gypsies" show an intimacy with his subjects, whereby the "Gypsies" are portrayed in a sympathetic and humane light, highlighting their relationships while downplaying their stereotypical "Gypsiness" which others had played up in newspapers and other visual representations. Instead, Alland used the "Gypsies" to show the diversity of New York while

[629] Alexander Alland Sr, "Alexander Alland, Sr. Photoprints 1932-1943", n. Box 1.
[630] See more in Alexander Alland Sr, n. Box 1-3.

highlighting their commonality to others across the ethnic mosiac of the Lower East Side pairing the "Gypsies" with other communities as new Americans. Similarly, Alland's photographs of African American Jews in Harlem shows the same care and consideration when highlighting the largely unknown community. It was no concidence that Alland chose his subjects of "Gypsies" and "Black Jews", for Alland wanted to select the populations which others had ignored and even vilified. Alland, perhaps driven by his own experience as a foreign born American, played with the ideology of cultural pluralism and civic nationalism in his photographs of these populations. Alland continued this trend throughout his career and published a book called "American Counterpoint" in 1943 which featured his photographs of ethnic Americans again highlighting their ability to be "American" whilst also being culturally diverse. By that time Alland had been serving as photoeditor of the magazine Common Ground, which featured issues of immigration, acculturation, social justice, and equality duirng War Time.[631] In keeping with some of the anthropological texts of the period and echoing sentiments expounded upon by his predecessor and fellow immigrant Jacob Riis, Alland states that his misson was to "show clearly and distinctly the differences and similarity among Americans of many national and racial backgrounds: differences in physical appearance, customs, and cultural backgrounds: similarity in the desire for happiness, prosperitym and liberty that we all hold as an American ideal."[632] In the end Alland's short stint in the "Gypsy" colony attempted to show Americans the realities of

[631] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110."
[632] "Guide to the Alexander Alland Photograph Collection 1885-1905, 1940 PR 110"; Alexander Alland, *American Counterpoint*, 147.

the Roma by brinigng them into their domestic and private spaces while highlighting the attempts by Kaslov to show their Americanness and willingness to acculturate to some degree.



Photographs 13: "Fortune Telling", 1941

Alland's work is important as it captured the Roma community at a point when they were undergoing great changes in their economic and social mobility and representation even while across the ocean in Europe they were being paraded into death camps and hunted down as subhumans. In America it seemed the "Gypsy" could be free to exist within the suddenly compassionate state as a counterpoint to the growing facist threats overseas. Yet at the same time Alland's photographs don't depict individuals as such but as types cast in the same manner as Riis. The "Gypsies" are shown visually and sometimes with more care but are still intentional framed and focused making Alland's intended political and social commentary perhaps without



Photographs 12:"Group of Gypsy youth at WPA school learning to read and write", 1941

their own input. Alland's works served to enforce the ideal vision of American New Deal life with "Gypsies" working hard, projecting domesticisty, and as evidence of Americanization at its finest. As Susan Sontag observed, "the production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by change in images."[633] In this case the changes in images are that they actually include Romani people instead of people "Playing Gypsy", highlighting a new form of multi-culturalism born out of the Great Depression and circulated in images while at the same time not completely allowing for Romani subjectivity to be evidenced. The political and social stakes for Alland overshadowed the potential for "Gypsies" to actually control the production and circulation of the meanings in their corpereal images. Which in turn meant that Alland's photographs hint at Romani subjectivity but are lost within the larger framing and considerations of Americanization and New Deal racial placation.



Photographs 14: "Mineola Fair", 1932

Unlike Alland's short visit with the "Children of the Romany", Carlos de Wendler-Funaro's engagement with the "Gypsies" lasted for years. Wendler- Funaro was an avid "Gypsyologist" who had ties with the American Chapter of the Gypsy Lore Society and was an academic who utilized photography to gain access to his subjects. Carlos de Wendler-Funaro (or

[633] Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 178.

Carl de Wendler-Funaro as he often wrote) was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1898.[634] Wendler-Funaro's fascination with "Gypsies" appeared from an early age and he often sought them out in fairgrounds, storefronts, and across the City. After earning a degree in entomology from Cornell in 1923, it seems Wendler-Funaro continued his amateur study of "Gypsies" in the City, continuing to seek them out at events and fairs.[635] Throughout the period he began to collect specimens of the language and used photography to document the communities he encountered. Wendler-Funaro began to be recognized by some "Gypsies" as the person that would stop and talk to them often taking pictures of encampments alongside the road. But it wasn't until the later 1930s that Wendler-Funaro really became involved with "Gypsies" full time. By 1938 when the Committee on Gypsy Problems was established by the Welfare Council through the insistence of Steve Kaslov, Wendler-Funaro became involved as a go between and documentarian of Kaslov's life.[636] During that time Wendler-Funaro was also pursuing a PhD at Columbia focusing on "Gypsies" in literature which he eventually finished in 1958. Wendler-Funaro also was in conversation with Irving Brown in the 1920s detailing his "Gypsy" findings and discussing matters of "Gypsy" culture.[637]

Wendler-Funaro took hundreds of photographs of "Gypsies" that he would encounter, often developing them and showing them to his subjects, in some cases likely the only photographs of themselves that those people had seen.[638] He also engaged in advocacy work with Kaslov during his tenure working with the Committee on Gypsy Problems, sending letters inquiring about the situation of the "Gypsies" including the infamous settlement at Maspeth.[639]

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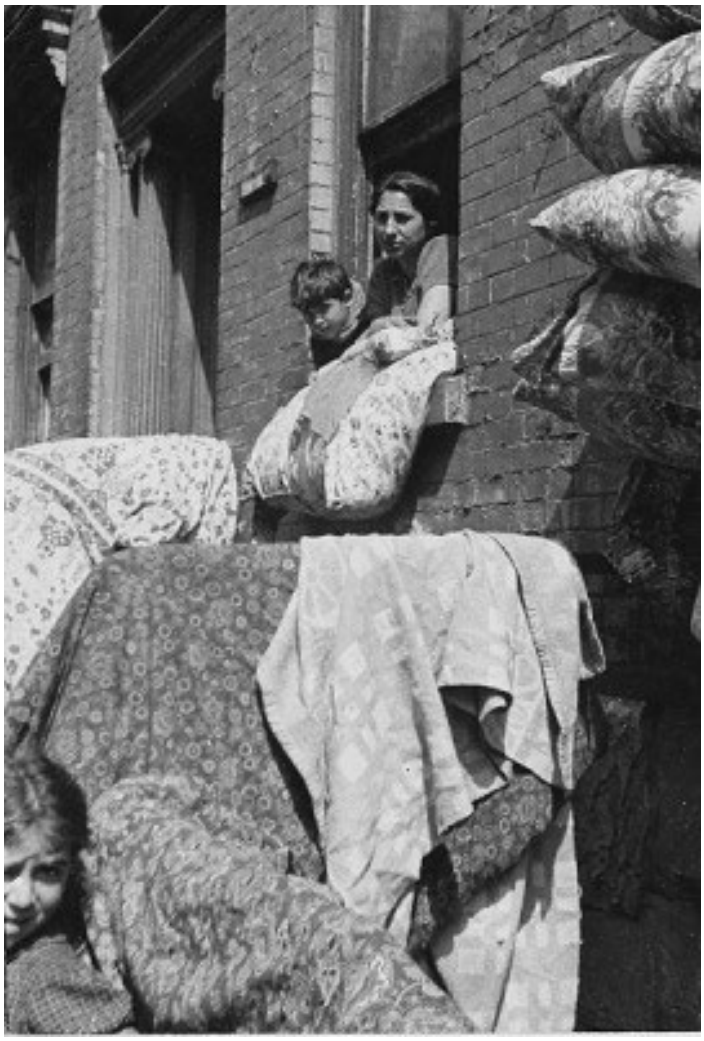
[634] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, "Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection."
[635] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro.
[636] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro.
[637] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 2.
[638] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 4, Folder 5. The photograph to the right shows "Gypsy" men looking through Wendler-Funaro's scrapbook of images at a fair as a "Gypsy" woman looks on.
[639] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 2.

In his correspondences with people like Irving Brown, Read Lewis, and Richard Wells, Wendler-Funaro mentions his photographic studies and the potential for "Gypsies" situation to improve with more aid. Wendler-Funaro often accompanied Steve Kaslov around the City serving as a scribe in some ways for the "King" as he looked after his subjects. In fact, Wendler-Funaro took such a keen interest in Kaslov's charismatic story that he began to assist him in writing his autobiography and collecting material for an unpublished manuscript.[640] Over time his association with Kaslov worked in his favor and he was able to capture images of intimate moments with "Gypsies" in the City. Some of these images he would use in publications, but many he collected for personal use or planned publications that never came to fruition. Importantly, Wendler-Funaro's photos show a negotiation with his subjects as they posed and helped plan the shots often showing an aspect of their jobs or family life. In effect, these candid shots served as a counterpoint to the helicopter style photographs that had proceeded Wendler-Funaro's undertaking. Instead, Wendler-Funaro through his engagement and relationship with Steve



Photographs 15: "Airing Bedding", circa 1938

[640] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 1, Folders 7; 9; 12.

Kaslov is able to take shots which are ethnographic in nature with notations which point out individuals and their connections and relationships to one another. In many ways, Wendler-Funaro's photographs are showing a significant but subtle shift in the visual dynamics of the act of photographing "Gypsies." For brief moments, even while the "Gypsies" were being harassed by authorities and their images were being used to push a narrative of criminalization and undesirability, some images were showing the mundaneness of everyday American Roma life.[641] Some of Wendler-Funaro's photographs act as evidence of American Roma in New York City and as visual re-presentations of "Gypsy" lives as strangely familiar in many ways.

One image in particular shows a moment of levity and relatable happiness and pleasure from the simple experience of getting ice cream and chatting with other young people, something which many New Yorkers and Americans across the country could relate too. Yet, this image was not shared nor circulated in the same manner as those published in magazines or utilized by Alland for his exhibits showing the "American Gypsies" hard at work proving their ability to

[641] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 5, Folder 8.

contribute to the economic situation of New York. Instead the image, which was not digitized nor made readily available to non-historians, remained within Wendler-Funaro's collection underutilized and unknown. The main figure in the photograph seems to be the Romani woman holding a milkshake or similar dessert as she looks off to the right of the frame smiling almost in mid-sentence or laugh. The young man meanwhile operates the counter of the soda fountain or ice cream parlor window with a smile forming on his face seemingly also in conversation. The young woman's hair scarf, clothing, and even skin tone may mark her as a "Gypsy" to astute outsiders but there are few visual stereotypes accompanying the photo which explicitly signal "Gypsy." She lacks children in the photo, a husband, or an escort (at least within the frame) and she could potentially pass as one of the other multitudes of ethnic Americans occupying New York's neighborhood's at that period. Instead, the Wendler-Funaro collection



Photographs 16: "Gypsies as Consumers", circa 1938

simply states "Gypsies as consumers" as a title taken some time in the 1930s.[642] The photograph breaks the normative nature of "Gypsy photographs" which stemmed from early "Playing Gypsy" images by other Americans some two decades earlier. Instead of the normal equation involving gaudy colors, jewelry, musical instruments, or sexualized women, the "Gypsies" in the photograph are candid, relaxed in posture, and seemingly in lively conversation. In turn, without the caption some people might not recognize this scene as a "Gypsy photograph" but as a scene in some borough of New York, and perhaps that's what doomed it to the underutilized section of the archives—it breaks the norm of the "Gypsy photograph."

And it is not the only photograph from Wendler-Funaro which challenges the representations of the "Gypsies." In fact, many of the archive's contents hold intimate and tender photographs of Roma, yet they are seemingly not as important as the ones that Wendler-Funaro had published and documented with citations. Instead, most are simply titled with what is occurring in the frame without much more context or individual attention. Wendler-Funaro continued to take photographs of different "Gypsies" throughout the 1930s and 1940s, utilizing his position as an academic and trusted associate of the Kaslov's to take photographs of feasts and even memorials for the dead.[643] Maspeth and areas in the Lower East Side became some of the most photographed areas with "Gypsy" subjects in his collection. Other photographs in Wendler-Funaro's collection show examples of other "Gypsy" groups throughout the United States and abroad but many of those were not tagged with much information nor were they seemingly part of the slides that Wendler-Funaro made to host lectures on "Gypsies." Wendler-Funaro's 1937 article and two articles by Victor Weybright feature his photographs but otherwise many of the photos remained in his personal collection for years without being shown

[642] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 5, Folder 21.
[643] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, "Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection."

to public audiences.[644] Unlike Alland, Wendler-Funaro utilized his photographs for his own uses and photography became a utilitarian tool in which to gain access. An article from 1950 in the Newark Sunday News is illustrative of Wendler-Funaro's method of documentation.[645] In the article the author claims that Wendler-Funaro is "one of the few experts on gypsy lore in the country and, he believes, the only American who can speak the gypsy language."[646] The article further states, "there are no people in the world more hostile to outsiders than gypsies, according to Dr. de Funaro."[647] As the article frames it Wendler-Funaro had to dedicate considerable time and energy to "Sub as a Gypsy", as someone who had to crack the code and gain access through his language skills. Interestingly, by 1950 Wendler-Funaro seems to have taken a less compassionate stance on the "Gypsies" claiming, "almost all gypsies are so illiterate they can't even write their own names", and "they would never accept me if they knew that I did such a foolish thing as work for a living."[648] Wendler-Funaro's duplicity is further shown in his method of contacting "Gypsies" coming upon their homes claiming a different name and telling them he is a "wanderer who goes from town to town, begging and stealing what money he needs."[649] At the same time, the article is careful to note that Wendler-Funaro defends "Gypsies" and calls them a "pure Aryan race." In the end even Wendler-Funaro's "Gypsy photographs" are utilized as tools of racialization with his touring circuit pamphlet claiming, "the material offered introduces these primitive people", with "insight into their quaint ways and beliefs", and "contain records of a primitive Asiatic folk right in our backyard in twentieth century America."[650] Wendler-Funaro thereby follows the script of the Gypsylorists framing "Gypsies"

[644] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro.
[645] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.
[646] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.
[647] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.
[648] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.
[649] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.
[650] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, n. Box 2, Folder 1.

as perpetual outsiders, primitive, and mysterious—out of place in modern New York City. To that end Wendler-Funaro and Alland both end up framing their photographs in the same modality as those of the "types" that Sherman created on Ellis. Both photographers and collections re-visualize the idea of strangeness for the public while subsuming the mundane for their own uses. For all of Wendler-Funaro's potential to break that mold his works still end up being used to represent the "primitive" nature of the "Gypsies" while emphasizing their foreign "Aryan" nature. All the more surprising as he worked with one of the most outspoken advocates of "Gypsy" progressivism and reform, Steve Kaslov, whom could hardly be called "primitive" or "quaint." Thus Wendler-Funaro's "Gypsy" photographs, like Alland's, are artifacts which require further interpretation and context to fully understand the scenes. Yet both of their collections remained powerful forces which influenced New Yorkers behavior towards "Gypsies" as evidenced through news reports, police interactions, and photographic exhibits. The curated photographs of both men are easily consumable and show visible markers of difference for a lay audience,



Photographs 17: "Untitled", circa 1938

showing people in temporal discontinuity attempting to fit within society—as "Gypsies" out of place and time. Photographs like the one that starts this chapter breaks that framing however as they show people who seem to "fit" better, wearing the "right" clothes, doing the "right" things, and displaying the "right" values of education, hard work, and individualism. But those photographs are far and few between in the period of the 1930s and 1940s, instead those that are more familiar are left in personal archives like Wendler-Funaro's to be seen years after the event without context.

4.6 The end of "Gypsydom"?

Even while Wendler-Funaro continued to photograph the "Gypsies" highlighting their differences Kaslov was framing "Gypsies" as ideal Americans who had yet to embrace all aspects of American life. Kaslov hoped that with education, relief work, and recognition of their status as ethnic Americans "Gypsies" would thrive in the City which so many had seen full of promise and life. Kaslov's continued relationship and exchanges with outsiders and advocacy work was not too last, however. By the end of 1940, the Bowery workshop seemed to be a lost cause (although Kaslov continued to use its stationary for several years) and "Gypsies" continued to be targeted by police throughout the City mostly related to fortune telling.[651]Kaslov intervened when needed to advocate for members of the group who were targeted but often the easiest intervention was to simply pay the fine levied by the court or pay the bond and go back to their settlements. By the onset of the World War the situation for the ""Gypsies" of New York seemed to be less important and the letters that Kaslov had exchanged with officials dropped off. His last exchange with Eleanor Roosevelt occurred in October 1941 when Kaslov invites her to a

[651] Carlos de Wendler-Funaro, "Carlos de Wendler-Funaro Gypsy Research Collection."

performance at New York Town Hall where his group was supposed to play as the "All Russian Gypsy Chorus", Roosevelt declined the invitation.[652]

Kaslov's dream of creating a Red Dress Gypsy "colony" seemed to take a backseat to the new world of war that the United States was entering into. Of particular concern was the potential for the military draft of "Gypsy" men from New York. A celebratory New York Times article from October 1940 highlights the various people who signed up for service should there be a military draft and was sure to highlight that "the wealthy and men in rags, from all faiths and all colors listed for draft."[653] Amongst those who signed up in patriotic fashion, the article notes that one "Mike Mitchell, 35 years old, a gypsy" signs up. Mitchell, who is married and has seven children, "cannot read or write. He did not know his birthplace. 'But I am an American' he told the registrar proudly. 'I am too glad to fight."[654] Interestingly, the next person mentioned in the next (and last) person in the article is "Ichiro Ito, a young Japanese dental technician", perhaps signaling the fact that both "Gypsies" and Japanese were surprising additions to the draft ranks and highlighting the "foreignness" of the "Gypsy" who didn't know his birthplace and couldn't read or write.[655] Even with some representation in the media by Kaslov and his supporters, Alland and Wendler-Funaro, "Gypsies" still remained an outside people within New York society. By 1941 Alland's "Children of the Romany" exhibit was being held at the Museum of the City of New York showing some 50 photographs of "Gypsies" and their customs, highlighting their living quarters "in dilapidated cold-water tenements of the lower East Side, among draperies that formerly adorned their tents and wagons. Often they gather to sing and

[652] Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story", 40.
[653] "City Youth Stages a Motley Parade."
[654] "City Youth Stages a Motley Parade."
[655] "City Youth Stages a Motley Parade."

dance."[656] Even the name of the article "A Camera Study of Life in a Gypsy *Camp*[657]" suggests the transience of "Gypsies" in the City even though Kaslov and groups had been in the City for several decades and many had made the City their permanent home.[658] The Museum of Modern Art also picked up some of Alland's photos as part of their "Images of Freedom" exhibit that ran from October 29, 1941 to February 1st, 1942.[659]

While the end of 1941 was a turning point for America's involvement with the World War, 1942 was more significant in the life of New York's "Gypsies" and especially for Kaslov. By 1942 Steve Kaslov's letters to the Roosevelts had ceased and his Red Dress Gypsy Association seemed to be doomed to obscurity without further assistance and support from outsiders and publicity from his advocates. Further complicating the issue was the military draft which had begun in earnest after the Pearl Harbor attacks. The national lottery system was compounded by local draft boards ensuring local residents of the appropriate age had signed up with the new Selective Services. For "Gypsy" men this signaled an end to their individual business dreams and powerful sense of individuality formed around an ability to traverse paper systems and registrars to protect cultural anonymity. Steve Kaslov, as the "Gypsy King" thus had to intercede if issues arose within the ranks of his kin and group and in 1942 that meant intervening in the drafting of "Gypsy" men. In spring 1942 things came to a head with the dispute over "Gypsy" marriages by the Draft board. 24-year-old Samuel Lola Dimitro was conscripted into the Army even with the "noisy demonstration of fifty protesting gypsies" on March 3rd.[660] The draft director of New York City, Colonel Arthur V. McDermott, "ruled that

[656] "A Camera Study of Life in a Gypsy Camp."
[657] My emphasis
[658] "A Camera Study of Life in a Gypsy Camp."
[659] *Image of Freedom | MoMA*.
[660] "That Gypsy Custom Has Disadvantage."

gypsy-law marriages of questionable validity" and Dimitro could not claim dependency because of "his tribal custom to have the women support the men."[661] In effect, "Gypsies" due to their "tribal custom" had no grounds to fight conscription on the basis of their family's needs unlike other peoples. Bobby Dimitro, the wife of Samuel was said to be "howling and screaming until after Dimitro's train had pulled out of Pennsylvania station that she not only would need his support for herself, but also for the baby she expects soon."[662] The article ends by mentioning the history of "3,000 gypsies" in New York City who avoided the draft in 1918 by travelling to Mexico for the duration of the war, seemingly to point out the punitive justification for "Gypsy" drafts this time around.

Kaslov, who was unable to help Samuel Dimitro, went about finding a way to assist others in the community. But one month later Kaslov would be caught by authorities and punished for his part in helping his people out of the draft. An April 22nd article in the New York Times sums up the situation as "Gypsy King Goes to Jail: Accused of False Statement to Save 'Subject' from Draft."[663] Kaslov, who stated that two of his kin were married and thus were entitled to deferment as head of family, was found to have "told tall stories", whereby the subjects were in fact brother and sister.[664] "Half a dozen swarthy women in colorful costumes attended King Steve as he went before Federal Judge", where his bail was set to $5,000 under the advice of the attorney to prevent "intimation of witnesses."[665] The system had set the "King" versus his subjects and ensured the possibility of Kaslov losing control. The next day, even after Kaslov demanded a hearing, he remained in jail unable to raise the $5,000 bond.[666] By April 30th

[661] "That Gypsy Custom Has Disadvantage."
[662] "That Gypsy Custom Has Disadvantage."
[663] "Gypsy King Goes to Jail."
[664] "Gypsy King Goes to Jail."
[665] "Gypsy King Goes to Jail."
[666] "Gypsy King Stays in Jail."

Kaslov was left with no choice but to plead guilty to the Federal charge of violating the Selective Service Act and sentencing would occur some weeks later.[667] On June 2nd, 1942 Kaslov's fate was sealed with the Times caption "King of Gypsies' Is Sent to Prison."[668] The article starts by provocatively claiming "Steve Kaslov, Gypsy king whose traditional duty is the finding of solutions for his people's disputes and problems, will have to hold court in jail, if at all, for the coming year and a day."[669] In the end, even with Kaslov's connections and admirers, he was painted as a false and imperfect leader, guilty of trying to shield "a young member of the tribe" from the honorific duty of going to war. For non-"Gypsy" Americans the abnormal "Gypsies" who held to "tribal customs" which flipped normative gender roles was too much and Kaslov and company were to pay for it. Judge Henry W. Goddard having heard that "red bandanna Russian gypsies made many false statements to Selective Service officials" stated: "Yes, and I understand that he and many members of his tribe are on City relief, and yet they do not want to serve the country which maintains them."[670] With that judgement Kaslov was sent to prison and the hopes for a "Gypsy colony" were smashed. In the end, no matter how much Kaslov pushed for "Americanization" the "Gypsies" were still framed as un-American foreigners who dodged their duties. Education, progressive reforms, and even advocacy had failed to recreate the "Gypsy" in American popular culture and press, instead they were relegated back to their status as "undesirables." "Playing Gypsy" had soured and the war put an end to practice for a while as New Yorkers saw what "Gypsies" had become. When Kaslov was released in 1943 his power was diminished and others soon moved in to fill the power vacuum often without the bold vision

[667] "Gypsy 'King' Is Guilty."
[668] "King of the Gypsies' Is Sent To Prison."
[669] "King of the Gypsies' Is Sent To Prison."
[670] "King of the Gypsies' Is Sent To Prison."

that Kaslov had dreamed of. In 1949 Steve Kaslov died in Philadelphia after suffering from cancer for some time.[671]

Across the Atlantic "Gypsydom" was also under attack. By the outbreak of the war "Gypsies" had already been targeted for increased security measures across Europe with places like Hungary and Czechoslovakia branding, tattooing, and separating "Gypsies" by force. By 1940 the Roma and Sinti populations across Europe were also targeted by Hitler's war machine as inferior peoples and by the middle of the war were given their own "Final Solution."[672] Americans who had begun to see the reports of Nazi atrocities against Jews also began to see small snippets of the crackdown on "Gypsies" across the continent. On March 28, 1942, an Associated Press broadcast published in the New York Times, stated, " Gypsies throughout the Reich were placed on the same basis as Jews under an order today applying the Jewish restrictions to all persons having any gypsy blood."[673] By May another article reported that in Bulgaria "Gypsies" would be segregated and prohibited to marry Bulgarian nationals. Additionally, "the decree is also expected to assign definite residences to all Gypsies living in the country."[674] Throughout Europe within occupied or Nazi allied countries "Gypsies" were targeted in an analogous manner to that of Jews for ethnic cleansing and extermination. In June another New York Times article stated that the Hungarian Government "urged to sterilize males of 250,000 nomads."[675] The Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture stated that "Nomads […] are a danger to public health because of the spread of contagious diseases….it is even asserted they are responsible for epidemics among farm cattle."[676] The Hungarian Government, which was under

[671] "Gypsy Leader Succumbs."
[672] David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*.
[673] "Nazis Class Gypsies With Jews."
[674] Telephone to the New York Times, "Bulgaria to Segregate Gypsies."
[675] Telephone to the New York Times, "Gypsies Arouse Hungary."
[676] Telephone to the New York Times.

the influence of Nazi Germany by 1938, was urged by the report to "subject all male gypsies to sterilization as an immediate protection to the lower classes of the population and to prevent intermarriage with Hungarians. The gypsy population of Hungary is estimated at 250,000."[677] With those chilling words the article ends and the American readers are left to wonder what becomes of said "Gypsies"? Some 3 years later some of the atrocities of the Nazi regime and allied puppet governments begin to come to light and suddenly the European population of "Gypsies" had decreased drastically as extermination was the end game in many places. The hope for a recognized and sovereign "Gypsy" colony in New York died alongside their brethren in Europe. In Europe, "Gypsy" organizing prior to the onset of War had begun to mobilize "Gypsies" across national boundaries and culminated in a 1933 meeting in Romania where a flag was adopted and plans for transnational associations were formed.[678] War scattered and disrupted many Roma families and groups and organizing on a larger scale took a back seat to basic survival needs and finding loved ones scattered by the Nazis and their allies. "Gypsies" in both the United States and across Europe seemed to be relegated to their former status and positions as undesirables often moved along by authorities or shunted from mainstream socio-political life and rebuilding after 1945. With Kaslov out of power and the advocates of his vision largely moving on to other projects it seems that American "Gypsies" were once again those mysterious people who resided in the City but were not part of the City's population. Whereas war scattered the hope for Romani organizing, American Roma were unable to stay relevant once their advocates and leaders dispersed. By the end of the decade the 1930s and Kaslov's

[677] Telephone to the New York Times.
[678] For more about Romani organizing during this period consult David Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*; Ian Hancock, *We Are the Romani People: Ame Sam e Rromane Dzene*; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism"; Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Roma Portraits in History*.

dream seemed a lifetime ago for many, as “Gypsies” continued to be targeted by police and lay people alike. In the end, “Gypsydom” was doomed not wholly by its internal inconsistencies and missteps but by the lack of continuous support *and* the continuing racial profiling by authorities afraid of the

consequences of “disorderly” people set upon the unsuspecting American public.

Chapter 5 : The Gypsy in Us All: "Gypsies" and Roma in the 1950s and 1960s

In 1970, Avon Products, Inc. cashed in on the American public's familiarity with "Gypsies" to sell their new line of makeup products. Ranging from "Gypsy Eyes: Wide-eyed and wonderful" to "Gypsy Lips: earthy and inviting", Avon was offering a new beauty regime through an old image—and for only $1.29 boot.[679] Over the course of a 6-page spread Avon leveraged American's enduring fascination with "Gypsies" as exotic people worthy of emulation while also hinting at their racial character as "tawny, earthy, inviting, and wonderful." Thanks to Avon, American consumers could now wear a mask of "Gypsyness" without having to endure the history of marginalization which American Roma had contested for the better part of a century. Yet the advertisement begs another question: How did this shift happen over the course of 50 years from the heyday of "Gypsy madness" when actual Roma



Photographs 18: "Gypsy Eyes", 1970

[679] *Avon. New York, NY, 1936-1975. - Popular Culture.*

themselves were sought out as fascinating deviants in urban spaces to representations of "Gypsies" completely evacuated of actual Romani people?

Part of this shift occurred due to the effects of the Second World War on American consumerism, racial relations, and actual Romani communities in New York and beyond.

The post-1945 world was indeed a different place. European powers, once lauded as the pinnacle of civilization, now lay in ruins and over thirty million people were displaced by the events of the Second World War.[680] Among those displaced were the surviving European Roma, whose numbers had been decimated by the Nazi's "Solution to the Gypsy Problem."[681] For American Roma this meant that valuable kinship networks and cultural ties were severed by the loss of family members and the redrawing of European boundaries. New York City's Roma were also impacted by the loss of strong unified leadership, with the ouster of Kaslov and the loss of Roosevelt's influence. Compounding this lack of socio-political strength amongst American Roma was also the lack of public information about the suffering of Roma under Nazi rule, and even at the various trials that occurred over the following decades little to no mention of Roma persecution and genocide were included. Yet even while Romani networks, communities, and individuals were impacted by the world after Nazi destruction, "Gypsies" lived increasingly separated from the actual Roma communities who once inspired some of their representations.

"The Gypsy Capital" once cited by Konrad Bercovici in the 1920s now seemed less vibrant even as the effects of "Gypsy Madness" became engrained within popular culture with

[680] Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*, 187.
[681] See Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, chaps. 10–11; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn : A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*, chap. 5.

children and adults alike partaking in the mystique of the "Gypsy." During the war years a successful entertainer by the name of Rose Louise Hovick, or by her stage name of Gypsy Rose Lee, became the most cited "Gypsy" in newspapers and popular culture.[682] Noted for her successful pairing of burlesque performance and media savvy stunts, Lee partially inspired the new popular wave of "Gypsy Madness" in New York City. Popular throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s Lee drew on the public's previous associations with Gypsies and deviance to challenge the status quo while also upending the gender norms of the post war boom.[683] But Lee was *not* Roma nor was she particularly vocal about her knowledge of Romani history or presence in New York City. Instead, Lee amongst other performers and popular culture trends, minimized the actual impact of Roma within New York City while appropriating their mystique. In the end American Roma became something of an anomaly with their traces little studied and understood even as the "Gypsy" afterlife continued as widely circulated representations of freedom, foreignness, and deviance.

In this chapter, I follow the aftermath of the dissolution of unified American Romani communities in New York City under "Gypsy Kings" like Steve Kaslov. Importantly, while some were diminished or passed away, these "Gypsy Kings" did live on in legend and in the minds of the Romani communities who continued to make New York their home. Yet without a unifying figure to perform the function of knitting together the smaller family groups, communities remained disunited with only episodic appearances in media and news. All the while, "Gypsy" figure—so lauded and utilized in play and performance—remained a marketable representation throughout the post war years. It is within the decades of the 1950s and 1960s that

[682] See more about Gypsy Rose Lee in Karen Abbott, *American Rose*.
[683] Historical newspapers through a ProQuest database search show 19,079 results with the name Gypsy Rose Lee from 1945 to 1962.

"Gypsies" cemented themselves as distinctly modern American representations utilized increasingly in popular culture, fashion, and the innovative marketing industry of products from alcohol to perfume. It was the changing geopolitics, urban renewal, and increased policing of the 1950s and 1960s which saw the end to the public's fascination with actual Romani lives and instead "Gypsies" remained the afterlife of New York City's era of immigration, Americanization, and emergent racial projects.

5.1 The Last "Gypsy Kings"

Largely borne out a European past, the title of "Gypsy King" was revitalized by American Roma in the early twentieth century and was used most effectively by those claiming to be "King" in New York City. As previous chapters have shown, "Gypsy Kings" functioned as important liaisons between groups, mediating issues and acting as spokesperson whenever needed. But as New York City's changing neighborhoods and urban politics shaped opportunities for American Roma, so too did the loss of unified and strong leadership in the form of people like Steve Kaslov. Kaslov, however, was not the only "King" who sought to organize his family and kin around their ethnic politics. Others like "King Gio", Tinja Bimbo, "King Mitchell", and others also sought to preserve their own slice of the "Gypsy capital" for their kin. Their stories evidence the limits of the power of these "Kings" in the world after 1945.

Between 1946 and 1950 American anthropologist Rena Gropper, a student of Ruth Benedict and Alfred Kroeber, conducted fieldwork amongst New York City's Romani groups. In 1975 her work was published as "Gypsies in the City: Culture Patterns and Survival", which documents the changes amongst American Romani groups throughout New York City during the

period after World War Two.[684] Gropper embedded herself within the *Bimbulesti vitsa* "Bimbo's Band" of Roma who originated in Russian lands but had made their way to the United States in the early 1910s.[685] Like many Romani groups, the structure of the "bands" or family groups is loosely based on biological kinship ties, although these organizations also include other non-biologically related Roma who nevertheless become kin over time. Tinja or Tene Bimbo was the central figure of her examination. For Gropper and her audience of anthropologists Bimbo's rise to power and subsequent interactions with other Romani groups provided the data for her manuscript. For historians it offers a glimpse into the chaotic period of Romani politics of the period.

After travelling to the United States, including a fantastical journey through South America and Mexico, Bimbo made his way to Chicago along with his family and extended kin group.[686] There Bimbo managed to consolidate his power and extend his influence over much of the Midwest with alliances made between various families living in the area. However, after the Great Depression hit, Bimbo and his group sought out other places where they could earn money and remain "contented."[687] Bimbo however had already run into trouble by 1931 with an arrest in New York City for suspected murder charges in Chicago.[688] In the incident reported in the New York Times, Bimbo, called "Tine" by the Times, had been caught by Detectives Tom Fitzgerald and Ed Kirwin at 1042 Flushing Avenue, Brooklyn where Bimbo's kin resided. Contrary to Gropper's account of the Bimbos moving to New York City in 1935 it seems that some members of the group including Tinja or "Tine" had already resided in the City at least part

[684] See more in Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*.
[685] Rena C. Gropper, 21–22.
[686] Rena C. Gropper, 24; Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*", 1053.
[687] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 24.
[688] "Gypsy King's Cousin Held in a Murder."

time by 1931.[689] Described as "three swarthy men and an equally swarthy woman who carried a 2-year-old child in her arms", the Bimbos, "Tine" and "his son, Steve Bimbo" were booked as fugitives from Chicago.[690] "Tine" Bimbo's wife "Mrs. Mary Bimbo" was booked on a charge of "obtaining money under false pretenses." The two detectives described "Tine" as the "King of Gypsies" but the article states, "records indicate that he is merely the cousin of King Mitchell, ruler of Romany."[691]

No further news about "Tine" Bimbo's "murder charges" were posted in the New York Times, however, and by 1933 the Bimbo's had returned to New York City. The Bimbo's reappeared, this time in dispute with the charismatic leader of Manhattan Roma Steve Kaslov. According to Gropper, Kaslov was a "shrewd and experienced Kalderaš chief", and by the mid-1930s was the undisputed leader amongst the groups. The Bimbo's, without a strong leader as Tinja was in trouble with the law, begrudgingly allied with Kaslov. Further troubles brewed once World War Two began and the gas rationing and draft began to take a toll on American Romani economic and social cohesion and limited migration. In 1942, "King" Steve Kaslov was jailed for assisting young American Romani men in avoiding the draft and in turn his leadership and influence was shattered.[692] Several years later Kaslov would move out of the City and his territory would be up for grabs. Into that void stepped Steve Bimbo, Tinja's son.

Steve Bimbo's leadership throughout the 1940s was marked by the influence of his father Tinja and his connection to his wife's powerful family, who were constantly appeased by

[689] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 24–25; "Gypsy King's Cousin Held in a Murder."
[690] "Gypsy King's Cousin Held in a Murder."
[691] "Gypsy King's Cousin Held in a Murder."
[692] See more in Chapter 3 and in Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 25; Sheila Salo, "Lolya's Story"; "Gypsy King Goes to Jail"; "King of the Gypsies' Is Sent To Prison"; "That Gypsy Custom Has Disadvantages."

Bimbo.[693] By the end of World War Two, Steve Bimbo managed to retain power, largely as a proxy to the older Tinja and others vying for power. According to Gropper's accounts, Steve Bimbo's power plays in 1948 would be among his last. With Kaslov now in Washington D.C. and his followers dispersed or subordinate to Bimbo only Brooklyn's "King Gio" remained as a power balance to Steve Bimbo's claim over New York City. "King Gio" remained quiet during the internal disputes between Bimbo and his kin and seemed to play the waiting game for his own chance to wrestle control of Manhattan from the Bimbos. In 1948 Bimbo, like many of his followers, had placed bets with non-Roma Brooklyn bookmakers who refused to pay the winnings.[694] Instead of resolving the manner internally Bimbo made the decision to take his case to the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office. In turn, the bookmakers threatened Bimbo's group and they were forced to flee the City to avoid unpleasantries. By 1951 "King" Steve Bimbo's rule was broken as he was arrested and, according to Gropper, his leadership was called into question because he "could not even control his own wife, a mere woman" from getting him in trouble with the law.[695]

With the Bimbos out of power and Kaslov dead, "King Gio" in Brooklyn decided to make his move in Manhattan by supporting a young man named Balano in his bid for Bimbo's spot. At the same time another American Rom called Toma or T'ulo came to New York from California allying himself secretly with Gio.[696] Both Balano and Toma sought to consolidate power and claim the older Kaslov territory for themselves but Toma, already an experienced leader, positioned himself well by gaining the favor of older Rom including elderly Tinja

[693] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 25–26.
[694] Rena C. Gropper, 26.
[695] Rena C. Gropper, 26; See also news about Mrs. Bimbo's accusations against her children in lawsuits such as "Gypsy's Missing $1,010 Has Court in Uproar."
[696] Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*", 1054.

Bimbo.[697] Toma came to be regarded as a reputable and fair man who presided over many *kris* or Romani court issues, aided in part through his alliances with other American Romani groups.[698] Toma also revitalized the now disgraced and dispersed Bimbos by strengthening his kinship ties to Tinja as his wife's godfather. In effect, Toma was able to muster support through alliances and deals with Romani groups that Balano had not wooed and consolidated his power throughout the City with "King Gio's" blessing. But Balano, who Gropper states likened himself to a "young Steve Kaslov", would not cede territory or claims to "King" lightly and ingratiated himself to non-Roma authorities and the powerful media like Kaslov had done some 20 years earlier.[699] The consolidation of power in the years after Kaslov's death meant that many groups fielded what they considered to be potential leaders. These various American Romani groups met during moments of conflict or celebrations vying for the choice alliances and connections in order to better situate themselves amongst their kin. Although Gropper and the media largely focus on the most powerful and outspoken leaders it is important to note that many other leaders amongst their communities also sought out the opportunity to cement their kinship connections to one another all the while appeasing the authorities and staving off punitive measures threatened by the NYPD.

In 1955 things came to a head within New York City's American Romani communities. Toma, "King Gio", and another influential man were fined as traffic ticket scofflaws after failing to pay their tickets and those of their kin.[700] Unpaid tickets were a constant problem for many of New York City's population and often American Roma, due to their range of activities

[697] See more about this rivalry in Rena C. Gropper, 1054; Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 27.
[698] See more in Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*."
[699] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 26.
[700] Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*", 1054.

throughout the area, would receive many such violations. Toma and the others, instead of being jailed, managed to cut a deal with the judge and convince him that they would have the fines paid and the fines of all their kin paid. For it was not only Tomas who had garnered attention for his fines but a whole group of American Rom in 1955. "Gypsy is Tagged as Scofflaw King" cries a New York Times report from November 4th, 1955.[701] The article continues with an account of one George Lee, "operator of the Wishing Star Tea Room at 145 West Seventy-second Street" and his cousin "Big George' Adams of 239 West Seventy-second Street, leader of the Adams gypsy tribe."[702] Lee and Adams, who may have been aliases for Toma and Gio, were also granted a postponement if they could use their "persuasiveness as 'gypsy leaders' to bring their 'kinsmen' into court" to pay their own fines.[703] In the end Lee, Adams, and "Big Joe" Uwanawich brought in the payments required and were free to go about their business.[704] Whether these men reported in the newspaper were indeed Toma, Gio, and "Big Joe" or not is unclear, but their case is similar enough to the events which transpired for Toma and his supporters that the case shows how some of the last "Gypsy Kings" managed to work with authorities when necessary while appeasing their kin. As it was a strategy for many Roma to utilize different names for interactions with non-Roma and within their group it is quite likely that the names given to the authorities were ones that they utilized when dealing with non-Roma.[705]Either way, Balano's hopes for Toma's exodus were dashed when he and the others

[701] "Gypsy Is Tagged as Scofflaw King."
[702] See more in "Gypsy Is Tagged as Scofflaw King."
[703] "Gypsy Is Tagged as Scofflaw King"; "Gypsy Scofflaws Help Court"; Jack Roth, "Scofflaws to Get 6- Week Amnesty"; "Gypsy Scofflaw Pays City $2,950."
[704] "Gypsy Scofflaw Pays City $2,950"; "Gypsy Scofflaws Help Court."
[705] For more information about "Gypsy" names and the strategies employed by Roma see Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*; Anne Sutherland, "Gypsy Identity, Names and Social Security Numbers."

paid their fines and were free to go about their business with the added prestige for having acted on behalf of the group in a "kingly" manner.

By 1962 the feud between Toma and Balano had been simmering for a decade and, according to Gropper, led to increased scrutiny by the New York City authorities.[706] Also in 1962 Balano's sister, going by the name "Mrs. Volga Adams", was arrested on charges of stealing $118,273 from a customer who had come to her shop for an elaborate "gypsy ritual" to release a curse from the victim's savings.[707] Balano's position was tarnished by his sister's public trial and scrutiny by authorities. "King Gio" of Brooklyn, who had sought to retain power and expand into Manhattan for years, died shortly after the event. By late 1962 Toma and Balano's feud was ended when Toma lost his support from the other communities. Toma returned to California shortly afterwards and his supporters dispersed throughout the City and went down south.[708] Gropper defined the period after Toma left and the last of the would be "Kings" lost power as a "pre-Depression" situation where many families vied for territory and no group could claim complete dominance.[709] Where Manhattan was once the prime location for American Romani business and community, now increasingly Queens was changing from a "minor outpost of Gypsydom" to a place of many different American Romani communities and businesses. In the end, the "Gypsy Kings" who had enthralled the public and advocated for their families in public became a thing of the past. But it was not just the infighting and feuds between the American Roma during the post war years that changed relations. The end of the reign of the "kings" was also an effect of the decades long harassment by the New York City Police

[706] Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*", 1054–55.
[707] See more details in Jack Roth, "$118,273 Swindle Is Laid to Gypsy"; Jack Roth, "Magician Is Due at Gypsy's Trial"; Jack Roth, "Theft of $118,273 Denied by Gypsy."
[708] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 28.
[709] Rena C. Gropper, "Urban Nomads-the Gypsies of New York City*", 1055.

Department. When policing was combined with urban renewal work under City Controller Robert Moses, New York's Roma communities were literally and figuratively pushed to the edge of urban life. The stage was set for the public to fully separate the "Gypsy" from the Roma in their midst.

5.2 Policing and Urban Renewal (AKA the Robert Moses years)

As previous chapters have shown, American Roma were explicitly targeted by the New York City Police Department based on their somatic, economic, and cultural differences.[710] Over time the NYPD—largely through the efforts of other racialized minority organizing—was forced to be less explicit with their targeting of people of color and other minorities. However, as scholar Marilyn Johnson has shown in her work *Street Justice*, the NYPD far from becoming less brutal and more socially progressive continued to disproportionately target minorities even after public outcry.[711] While explicit racial links to criminal activities become more covert and less publicized, the American Roma still felt the pressure of being scrutinized for often minor offenses. Some of those offenses were often associated with the businesses that many American Roma operated in the City, including "Tea Rooms" and fortune telling parlors.

By and large, like in the 1920s, many of the women who were arrested for telling fortunes were targeted by the Women's Bureau of the New York City Police Department. In 1955 a feel-good article in the New York Times entitled "New York's Finest (Female Div.): The lady cop leads a varied and sometimes exciting life but finds her pistol a nuisance on an evening out" tells of a typical encounter with "Gypsies" and police.[712] Marjorie McCarron, described as a "trimly built young woman with hazel eyes", was a policewoman with the NYPD who spent

[710] See chapters 2 & 3
[711] Marilynn S. Johnson, *Street Justice*, chap. 5,6,7.
[712] Will Chasan, "New York's Finest (Female Div.)."

much of her time dealing with female offenses[713], child support issues, and policing the City's parlors for the "Gypsies" who fleeced their customers. According to the author: "The main function of policewomen are to safeguard women and children, to serve as 'plants' for the purpose of gathering information that can't be obtained by plainclothesmen, and to search and guard women prisoners and material witnesses." [714] Yet, "Gypsy fortune-tellers bulk large in Miss McCarron's arrest record", as it is against the law to "predict the future, and the police department uses this law to keep a tight rein on gypsy seers, many of whom have long police records for spicing fortune-telling with swindling."[715] In 1955 the article states that "New York City is suffering an epidemic of such crimes", and McCarron stated that arresting a Gypsy can be "a very shivery business. Even though you know its bunk, it isn't pleasant to hear someone calling down curses on you."[716]

The policing of Roma fortune tellers escalated in the early 1930s. The task force assigned to this work was the Women's Bureau of the NYPD. 1931 saw a massive spike in arrests of fortune tellers—some 255 were arrested compared to 106 in 1929—which earned the Women's Bureau a reputation as moral crusaders.[717] At the same time, the women's bureau of the NYPD in 1931 was significantly smaller than the 249 policewomen it fielded in 1955. Yet, throughout the 1930s fortune tellers were still arrested in large numbers meaning far more raids on parlors occurred or complaints against the fortune tellers were made (many of which were marked

[713] Although not entirely clear what this category includes it seems to point to the "Offenses against Chastity" language of the 1920s-1930s which would include prostitution, keeping a disorderly home, abandoning children, and abandoning a spouse.
[714] Will Chasan, "New York's Finest (Female Div.)."
[715] Will Chasan.
[716] Will Chasan.
[717] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1929, 289–334; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1932, 136–74.

"unfounded" and were dropped).[718] Without the Depression era WPA programs paraded by Kaslov, which sought to rectify the educational disadvantages that some Roma communities faced, the stick replaced the carrot by the middle of the 1930s and into the 1960s.

From 1935 to 1940, some 841 people were arrested by the NYPD for fortune telling.[719] Of those 841 people, 737 of them were women. Between 1940 and 1945, there were 587 arrests of people for fortune telling, 521 of those arrested were female fortune tellers.[720] In 1943 the NYPD annual reports reclassified the "fortune telling" crime under "Group (O)- Misc. Misdemeanors", making it more difficult to decipher the arrest data for those charged with "pretending to tell the future."[721] Nonetheless, the NYPD continued to utilize the Women's Bureau in going undercover as decoy customers for largely American Romani fortune telling parlors and tea rooms. Between 1945 and 1951 (the last year where annual reporting is available), the number of fortune telling arrests dropped to 469 which resulted in 418 female fortune tellers arrested.[722] Yet by 1955, according to the New York Times piece on McCarron, the City was experiencing an "epidemic" of fortune telling crimes. Without adequate data, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many of the ensuing arrests were actually American Roma or

[718] See more in Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1932; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1934 1933; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1935; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1936; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1938; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1939.
[719] See more in Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1935; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1936; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1938; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1939; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1940.
[720] See more in Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1940; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1941; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1942; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1944; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1946 1945.
[721] Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1944, 98–142.
[722] See more in Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1946 1945; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1947; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1948; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1949; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1950; Police Department City of New York, "Annual Report", 1951.

even if the number of arrests were higher than previous records. Nevertheless the policing presence in Romani lives was very real.

In 1959 then Mayor Wagner made an appeal to the legislature on February 16th, requesting approval of a bill which would "authorize the police to maintain a photograph and fingerprint file of all fortune tellers."[723] By February 28th the bill was again brought to the attention of the legislature where it would eventually be brought to the full assembly in early 1960. [724] While little information about the bill's effect can be discerned in the available records the fact that the senate discussed the bill requiring fortune tellers to be fingerprinted is indicative of pressure that fortune tellers, many of whom were American Roma, were under as they entered the new decade. Photographs which had initially been utilized as an immigration tool in the first decades of the twentieth century now became a prominent and visual means to police citizens who were still deemed "undesirable" even after years of residence in the City.

On the same day that the bill was brought to the senate the New York Times ran another piece about the Women's Bureau and policewoman detective Laurette Valente.[725] In the story, Valente (much like McCarron some five years earlier) tells of her efforts to combat the "narcotics peddler, the abortionist, the pimp, [and] the fortune teller."[726] Valente, assigned to the Special Frauds Squad, spent years acting as a decoy for narcotics deals, and, like many of the women on the force, "patrol[ed] school areas and theatres where degenerates prey on women and children and investigate[d] fortune tellers and voodoo artists." [727] Accompanying the piece about

[723] Special to The New York Times, "City Asks Fingerprints In Soothsayers' Future."
[724] Special to The New York Times, "City Bill Clouds Future For the Fortune Tellers;" "The Proceedings In Albany."
[725] Wayne Philips, "Detective Story, Female Dept."
[726] Wayne Philips.
[727] Wayne Philips.

Valente the NYT included the picture below showing a caricature of the "fortune teller" and the policewoman undercover.[728] The "fortune teller" representation built upon years of the public's fascination with "Gypsies" now became less somatically racialized, but still reproduced traces of the inherent differences built into the representations from the era of "Gypsy Madness." The "fortune teller's" hair, nose, and attire all function as a visual signifier of a "Gypsy" whose differences were built into their body, occupation, and attire. Almost 50 years of "Gypsy" representations in New York had successfully cast "fortune tellers" as the ideal type of "Gypsy", abstracted from the racial projects of the early immigration era and "whitewashed" into a deviant criminal amongst other "degenerates" that hounded the NYPD. "Gypsy Madness" now became "Fortune Teller Madness."



Illustrations 6: "Fortune Teller', 1960

On March 7th, 1960, the bill that Mayor Wagner and the NYPD police commissioner had advocated for was passed by the senate: to facilitate a police crackdown, fortune tellers would now be fingerprinted.[729] The effect of the bill is not easily quantifiable as the records for arrests and fingerprinting are either restricted or difficult to find within the changing system of reporting for the NYPD.[730] But, the importance of the bill to the city's mayor and police leaders shows that even long after the majority of large

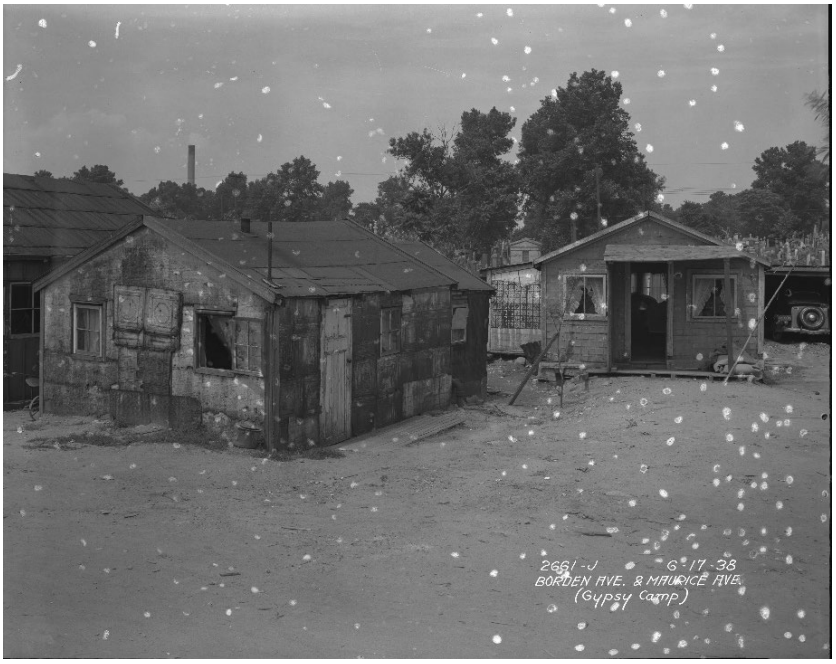
[728] Wayne Philips.
[729] "The Proceedings In Albany."
[730] The records . Specific numbers of arrests for "fortune tellers" between 1951 and 1960 are an area which needs to be further explored.

organized groups of American Roma were more evident and visible throughout the City, the NYPD was still anxious about their presence. Where the American Roma lived, worked, and travelled in the City became a contentious matter an issue which escalated during the urban "renewal" work that defined much of New York's post war years. Perhaps no other figure best represents this effort than Robert Moses.

From his rise in the early 1920s under Governor Al Smith to his downfall in the late 1960s, Robert Moses, the infamous "Power Broker" of New York City carefully managed the restructuring of New York City's urban landscape through department appointments, alliances, and control of funds.[731] Moses, often painted as a villain by scholars, had an oversized role in the reorganization of the City's government and infrastructure during his 40-year tenure in power. Part of Moses's goals involved clearing out areas of older housing and "slums" to make way for a reimagined clean City with highways and high-rise apartment complexes. At the New York Public Library Archives and Manuscript Division, Robert Moses's papers reflect his unorthodox methods of consolidating major projects in the City under the various roles he served without clear separation or oversight [732] But within the collection there are papers related to his time as the chair of the Committee for Slum Clearance from 1954 to 1959. By no means was this the only time period that Moses and other officials worked to clear "blighted" areas of the City, often at the expense of racialized populations, but within the plans of the 1950s there are several

[731] For more in depth information about Robert Moses see Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker*; Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach*; Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*.
[732] Robert Moses, "Robert Moses Papers."

key areas which are highlighted for clearance.[733] In that time, his projects impacted the areas specifically where American Roma worked and lived.



Photographs 19: "Borden Ave & Maurice Ave (Gypsy Camp)", 1938

Since the early 1900s, various places throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens had come to be associated with the city's "Gypsies." Most infamous of these locations was the area around Maspeth, Queens where a "Gypsy camp" had been in existence since at least the early 1910s.[734] By the time the Depression struck the City, many of the Maspeth residents were forced to travel further afield to sell their goods or services



Photographs 20: "Borden Ave & Maurice Ave (Gypsy Camp)", 1938

[733] "Robert Moses Papers", series. 11.
[734] For more information see Chapter 2 and 3

throughout the city. This increased mobility garnered more attention from residents and authorities alike. As chapter three shows, this attention eventually led to conflict with the nearby residents and a crackdown by the NYPD.[735] Little physical evidence of the actual "Gypsy camp" is available to ascertain the living conditions of the American Roma who called that place home. However, in 1938 and 1939 several faded and damaged images of the area were captured by a photographer employed by the Queens Borough President. While the purpose of their creation is unknown, the



Photographs 21: "Gypsy Camp, Maspeth", 1938



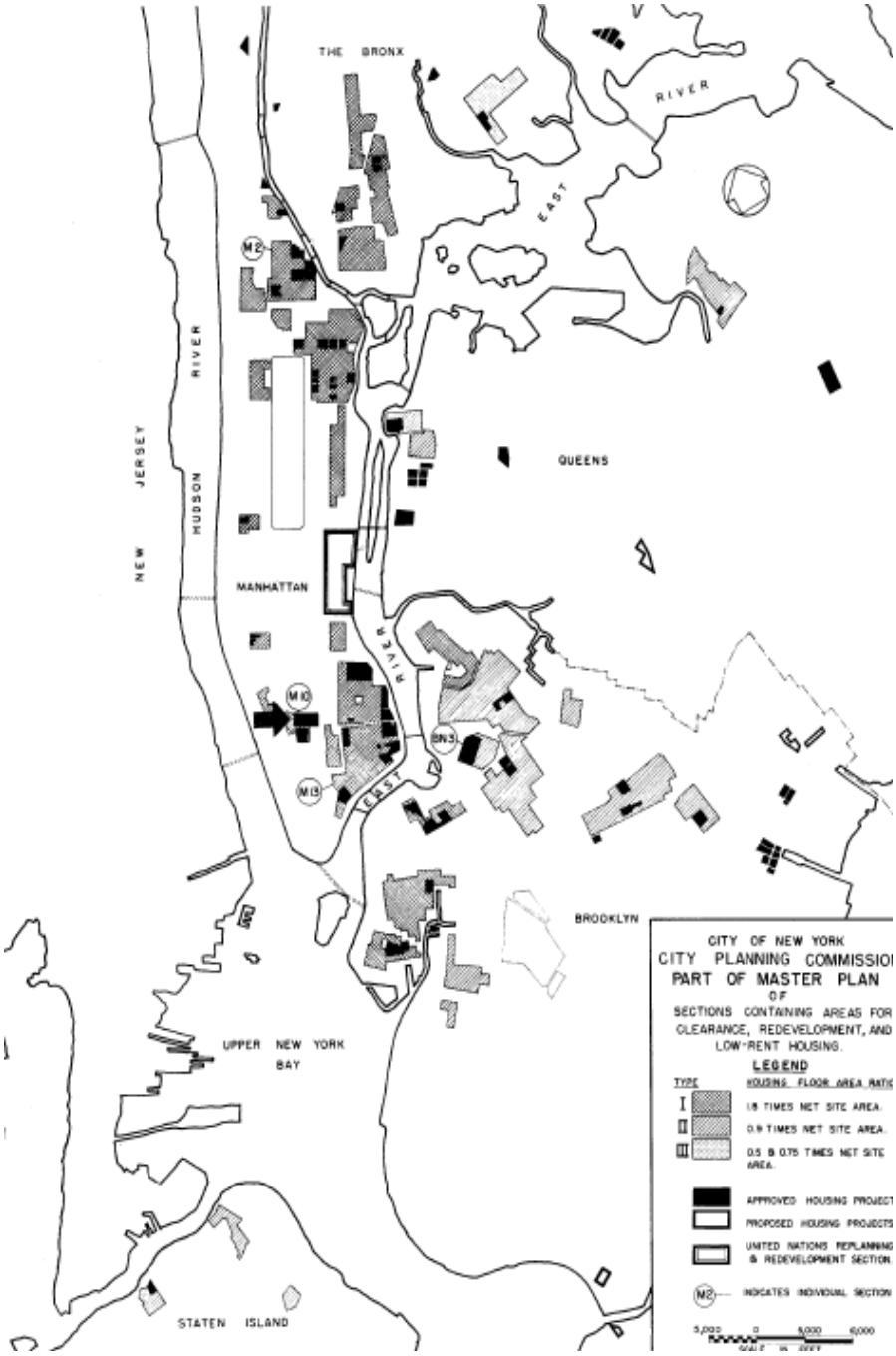
Photographs 22: "Borden Ave & Maurice Ave (Gypsy Camp)", 1938

[735] See Chapter 3

images depict the area's "Gypsy Camp."[736] Whatever the intention of the photographer, elements of this image would have challenged the expectations of many potential municipal viewers. In the images, the "camp" is visualized as small community of worn-down dwellings similar to many Depression era homes with evidence of vehicles and even some children present.[737] The photographs serve as a counter image to the characterization of the area as a wayward "camp" of "Gypsies" invoking images of tents, campfires, and constant mobility. Instead, the area was a well-established community of American Roma who worked, lived, and thrived in the area. Of course, other areas of high "Gypsy" concentrations could be found throughout the City, situated amongst other ethnic communities in the City. However, unlike those other more diffuse and ethnically integrated areas, the Maspeth community was largely made up of American Roma who did not align themselves with any particular "King" and seemed content to live in the area as long-term residents. Even with small incidents arising from time to time, mostly involving parking violations and fortune telling fraud, the Maspeth Romani were a well-established and tolerated community members when Robert Moses began his campaign to remake the area.

[736] Borough President Queens, *Gypsy Camp-Maspeth*; Borough President Queens, *Borden Avenue and Maurice Avenue (Gypsy Camp)*.
[737] While there is little information about the purpose of the photographs it is notable that in August of the same year the owner of the land was served a notice that the land and buildings were unfit for human habitation. See more in "Gypsy Eviction Put Off."

Moses, who had thrived in the Depression era utilizing WPA funds to create new leisure spaces throughout the City, gained more influence after LaGuardia retired. By the early 1950s Moses had complete control over the Parks Commission, Planning Commission, and Power Authority as either the commissioner of each department or as de facto leader. Through his influence and lack of government oversight, Moses managed to push through projects that secured areas for development which were often already occupied like Maspeth.



Illustrations 7: "Part of Master Plan of Sections Containing Areas for Clearance, Redevelopment, and Low-Rent Housing", 1951

Although specific "slum" clearance may not have occurred in that area, the construction of major highways and thoroughfares impacted the community to such an extent that by 1960 little mention of the "Gypsy Camp" at Maspeth could be found in newspapers or planning documents.

But other "Gypsy" areas were directly in the crosshairs of Moses's plans for lower Manhattan and Harlem. Moses's commission presented their plans for the "Slum Clearance" between 1951 and 1958.[738] In each plan for the specified area, the committee recommended a relocation of residents through federal and private partnerships with developers, essentially pushing the onus of the effort onto non-municipal agencies and organizations. In turn, the developers over time sought to rehouse the residents in apartments far from their current neighborhoods and often in poor conditions as evidenced by the complaints received and letters sent to developers by Moses throughout the years. Areas of particular interest for the committee were lower Manhattan, Harlem, and parts of Williamsburg. In the map below[739] the overall plan of the commission is outlined in shaded boxes corresponding to the funding source and the approval status. Several of the outlined areas overlap with the areas where American Roma resided, including the lower east side and Harlem. Paired with the highway construction under the federal highway project and the funds for transit connections to and from the outlying Boroughs, Moses' urban renewal vision spelled the end of several of the American Romani communities long-standing homes.

The language of the Harlem redevelopment plan in northern Manhattan is especially striking as it acknowledges the racial component of the redevelopment plan explicitly. The report from 1951 states:

> "The general population trend throughout Manhattan started downward in 1910. The census returns show a moderate drop from 1910 to 1920 and a sharper drop from 1920 to 1930 as people moved to other boroughs. In this twenty-year period Manhattan lost roughly 20% of its population, but from 1930 to 1940 it rose 1.2%. At the Harlem site, the rose was about 3% in that period, and in the next ten years the population rose 22.5%

[738] Robert Moses, "Robert Moses Papers", n. Boxes 116-117; 134.
[739] The New York City Committee on Slum Clearance Plans, "Harlem Slum Clearance Plan Under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949", 3.

> {….}. The 1940 racial distribution was .9% native whites, .6% foreign-born whites, and 98.5% non-white."[740]

The overwhelming number of non-whites in the area to be redeveloped was hardly a point of emphasis in the report. Yet such statistics are important evidence of the extent to which Moses' urban renewal largely impacted those communities of color throughout the City more often than "native whites." Rationales for such development efforts included public safety lines like: "In all other directions [in the Harlem site] stretch gloomy and overcrowded buildings so poorly lighted they are unsafe after dark."[741] Lines like that not only hint at the uncomfortable living situation for Harlem residents themselves but implicitly imply the color of the residents using coded language which discursively links "gloomy" and "unsafe after dark" to discourses about Black New Yorkers and Romani New Yorkers. Paired with the coded language found in the early reports are the issues with finding places to "relocate" the populations that lived in the areas.

By the middle to late 1950s, Moses and others managed to formulate a plan to bring in private developers to share the cost of relocation for sites. This public and private partnership meant that the municipal government of New York City was able to push off the expense of moving people to the private developers who in turn were given favorable contracts for the new buildings. This allowed public-private partners to increase the property values of the area, which consequently forced lower income residents out. While thousands of people were relocated under this new scheme, many others were pushed out over time due to price increases, building regulations, and new business requirements. American Roma were among these displaced New Yorkers.

[740] The New York City Committee on Slum Clearance Plans, 6.
[741] The New York City Committee on Slum Clearance Plans, 8.

Writing in the 1960s Rena Gropper states that one of the ways in which the NYPD and City authorities were able to push out American Roma from their neighborhoods was specifically through a new city ordinance which required their businesses to have licenses and to post visible signage in English around the premises.[742] Romani business owners were often illiterate—moreover they had learned not to advertise their whereabouts after years of persecution. The NYPD used the English requirement to target "Gypsies" without explicitly referencing their race. Paired with traffic fines, negative interactions with police and neighbors, and burdensome building and housing codes, many American Roma eventually dispersed to less hostile locations across the City and country. Those that stayed often moved alongside others pushed out by urban redevelopment and many made their way to other parts of the country where kin resided. For many American Roma, urban renewal meant renewed migration from the places they called home.

It is evident that the urban renewal works championed by Robert Moses and the crackdown by the NYPD were major factors in the restructuring of American Roma communities in New York City in the second half of the twentieth century. With the loss of strong "Gypsy Kings" in the late 1950s and early 1960s, New York's Roma communities had lost important advocates for their communities. In turn, they were forced to adjust and restructure their long-standing relationships with non-"Gypsies." Urban renewal ended the material Roma presence in many parts of the city and cleared the way for a new wave of imagined "Gypsies" to arrive in their place. This move essentially cemented the "Gypsy" as a racial other in discourse but distanced from the material racial projects which affected American Roma in the City for almost 70 years.

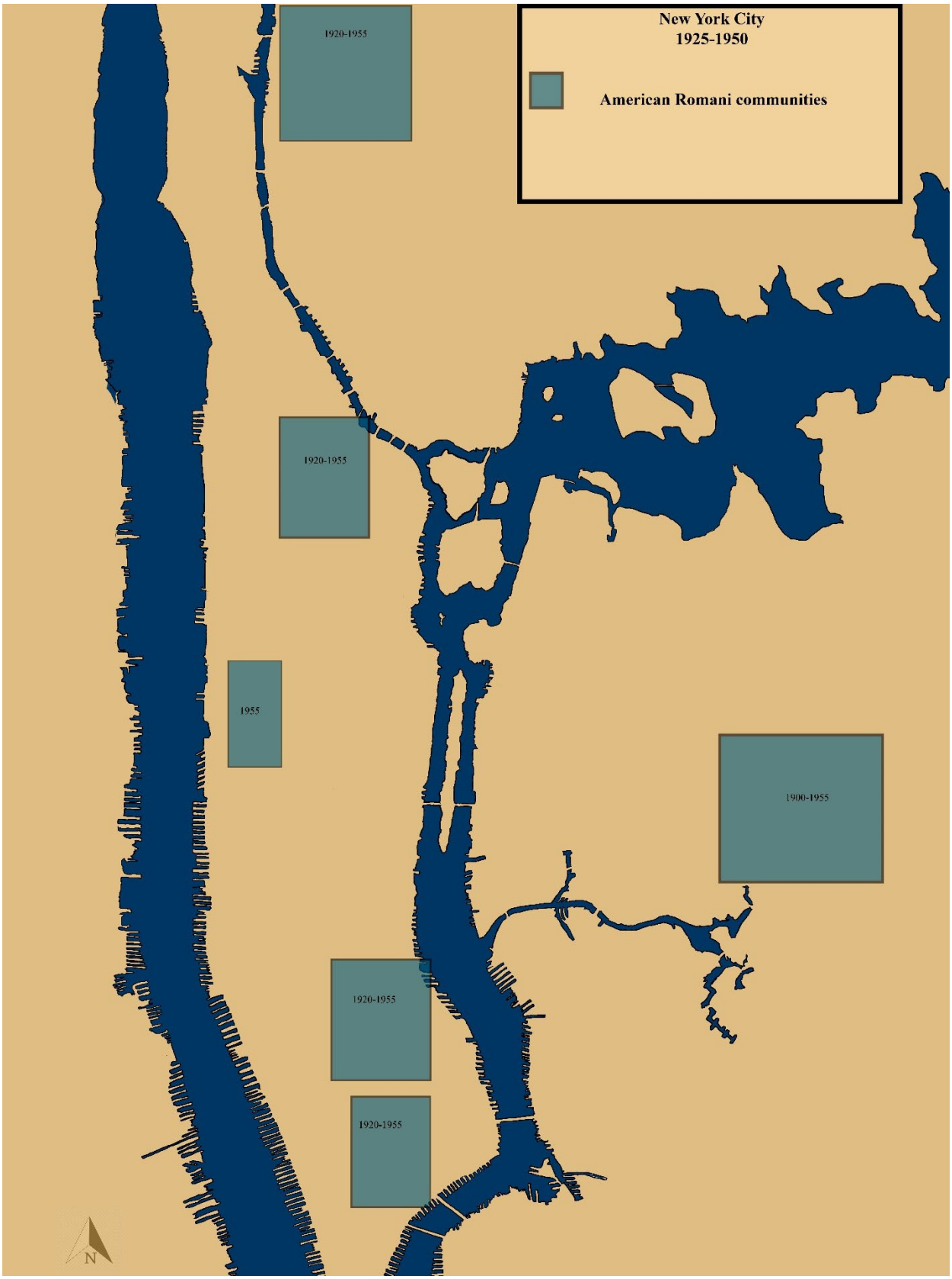
[742] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 20.

Such patterns are discerned for maps of the city from this era. In the map below, the communities of American Roma are shown in their living locations from the early 1900s to the 1950s, when the urban renewal and changing leadership amongst groups eventually reconfigured the areas into non-Roma areas. This basic map is one of the first of its kind to not only show the places where American Roma had long standing residences, but also where they interacted with others in the several block radius considered their "territory." Created using locations noted in newspapers, articles, ethnographic notes, and books, this map significantly shows the long standing places where relational racial projects occurred and where, in time, non-Roma would come to see these spaces as "Gypsy places."[743] When Moses's master plan for "Slum Clearance" is placed alongside the map of Romani communities it is evident that the areas not only were in prime "blighted" locations but also were in places which were envisioned as new income generating accommodations for developers and the municipal government alike. While much more information needs to be explored regarding this convergence, it is important to note that after 1960 in the highlighted areas there are few accounts of "Gypsies" being present in these places.

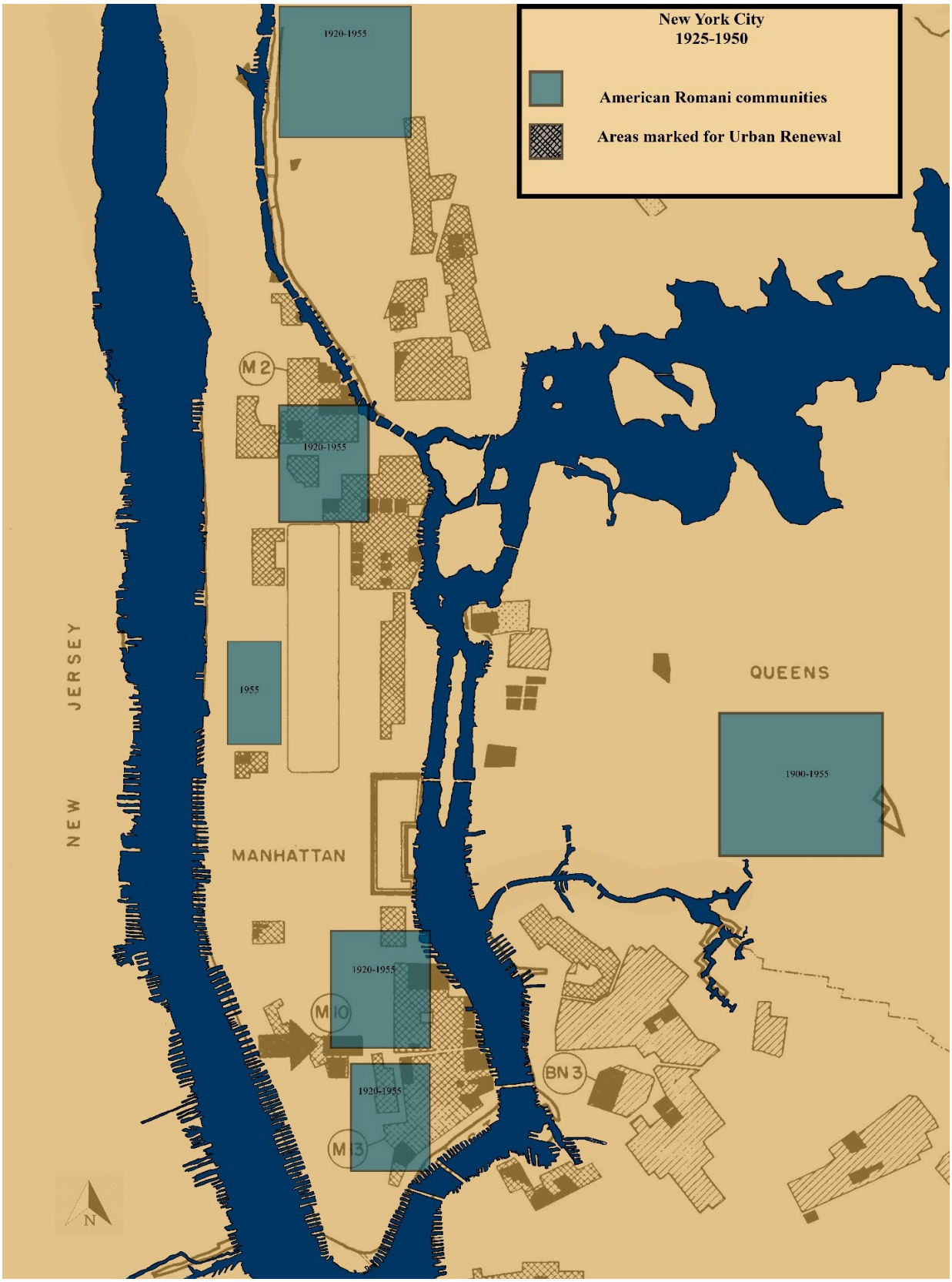
What is clear is that renewal work under Moses, paired with the loss of leaders amongst the Roma communities, Roma groups were less able to organize and advocate for their homes than other people of color who had strong advocates and long-standing organizations. Whereas scholars have largely focused on other non-white residents of New York and their relationship to urban renewal, the clear overlap between those areas targeted and the Romani dwellings in such

[743] The map was created by the author utilizing a historic map circa 1925 available through NYPL and hundreds of newspaper accounts from 1890-1960 along with accounts by "Gypsyologists" and American Roma themselves based on discussions with current communities in Queens. Further information and more detailed mapping will be undertaken at a future date when more information is available. For a complete list of sources utilized in the map creation please see Appendix A under "Mapping work."

maps is a scholarly invitation to explore American Roma experiences alongside the experiences of other people of color. Urban renewal works under Robert Moses are then an opportunity for an examination of histories of relational racial formations and need to be explored further.



Map 4: "Areas of American Romani Habitation", circa 1900-1955



Map 5: "Areas of American Romani Habitation & Overlay of Master Plan 1951", circa 1900-1955

After the relative failure of Robert Moses's World Fair plans for Corona Park in the mid-1960s, he was pushed out of many of the roles that he had held for some 40 years.[744] In turn his massive construction projects—which were once rubber stamped by the various mayors –became newly controversial in a City which was beginning to enter an economic slide by 1970.[745] Moses' legacy in terms of his "Slum Clearance" work was also put into jeopardy by the activists in places like Washington Square and Greenwich Village which had garnered a fair bit of attention as a cultural icon of the City with the "Beats" calling it home.[746] Moses' work to reconstruct the City had managed to upend the already precarious situation of American Roma calling those places home, and his legacy of renewal was matched by his record of destruction. For all the material disruption in Romani lives caused by the NYPD crackdowns and Moses' various projects, one of the most consequential features of this era for America Roma was a new iteration of "Gypsy Madness." In addition to policewomen or urban planners, it would be a new generation of Americans who sustained romantic representations of "Gypsies" which would shape the long-term visibility of Roma in an everchanging world marked by the Cold War and economic austerity after the optimism of the 1950s.

[744] Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker*, chap. 45.
[745] Robert A. Caro, chap. 48.
[746] See more about Moses and his tenuous relationship with urban activists in Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach*; Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City*; Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses*, chaps. 3–4.

5.3 "Gypsies" in Us All: Counterculture and Absence

Bohemianism, which had originally been created in the Parisian arcades of the 19th century, found a foothold in lower Manhattan in the early part of the 20th century in places like Greenwich Village. Bohemianism was premised on the idea that personal self-expression and a longing for simple living could lead to a better society. These, largely White, Bohemians of the Village flourished during the pre-World War II years and captured the imagination of poets, artists, and outsiders alike. This community gained notoriety across the city when they were tied to labor activism and socialism in the 1910s. Many of the Village residents were targeted by police as unruly and potentially communist agitators.[747] Over time the Bohemian scene in the Village lost steam and many of the early leaders went elsewhere when housing and rental prices began to increase.[748] In Harlem some of the Bohemian ideas managed to thrive, especially the artistic expressions of the period, which reflected ideas of creativity, self-expression, and freedom.[749]

After World War II many of the new Bohemians became Beatniks or "Beats" which championed a more nihilistic view of anti-modern primitivism of the early nineteenth century, whereby they acknowledged the new threat of utter destruction brought on by the onset of the Cold War, but chose to live in the visceral present seeking spiritual enlightenment through explorations of Eastern religious traditions and mysticism.[750] The Beats also championed personal, sexual, and spiritual experimentation aided by drugs like marijuana and opium and the

[747] During the 1919 Red Scare Bohemians in the Village were especially targeted for their radical ideas. Examples of this can be found in newspaper articles from the period like: "Unearth New Clue to Bomb Circular"; Special to The New York Times, "Cleveland Presses Radical Roundup."
[748] See example of reporting on Bohemians in "Pseudo 'Bohemians' Must Quit Village."
[749] See more about the influence of Bohemianism and counterculture in Harlem in Allon Schoener, *Harlem on My Mind*; Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem*; Shannon King, *Whose Harlem Is This, Anyway?*
[750] Gina Misiroglu, *American Countercultures*, 64–65.

allure of the "open road."[751] Noted authors like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg embodied the free-spirited lifestyles of the Beats and influenced a generation of people living in the area of lower Manhattan to question the status quo and consumerism of the 1950s.[752] Out of the Beat movement came a valorization of representations similar to the "Gypsy" of old, ever mobile and living in precarity, one with nature. Inspired by the Beats musicians and artists also turned to more optimistic views of society with the folk revival playing up the strength of the working class and striving for social justice through non-violent means. As urban American Roma certainly did not fit within the imagined lifestyles of the "Gypsy" that Beats and Bohemians desired this counter cultural appropriation left actual American Roma in New York out in the cold. By the time of the middle 1960s Beats and old school Bohemians were surpassed in prominence by the emergent "hippies" from California's Bay Area.

Hippies actively created a counter-culture which rejected materialism and borrowed from Native American, Eastern, and "Gypsy" cultures to spread their message. Again, drug use aided in the reflexive self-expression of the Hippies who made their way throughout the City in colorful garb and promoted peace. At the same time, American Roma once targeted for their attire and cultural traditions now seemed out of place within the imagined "Gypsy" representation which eschewed conflict, politics, and patriarchy. Instead, without the strong vocal support of the American Romani groups of the 1930s and 1940s, hippies cashed in on "Gypsy" culture without the added racialization which Roma had endured from their time in the United States. Popular ideas about mysticism, fate, and fortune telling exploded within the hippie communities and spilled over into the streets with more businesses championing the occult

[751] See more about the influence of the Beats in James Campbell, *This Is the Beat Generation*.
[752] See more about the "alienation" that many younger people felt during the 1950s in Damon Bach, *The American Counterculture*, 4.

throughout the City. No longer were New Yorkers needing to interact with the deviant and often duplicitous "Gypsies" on their home turf—now they could experience the same exciting subversiveness going to shops run by middle class escapees peddling all kinds of enlightenment for pennies on the dollar. The absence of American Roma in their former locations meant that the new businesses were able to thrive, coopting the allure of "Gypsies" and sanitizing the racialization out of the "Gypsy" representation for more than just hippies, but homemakers and blue-collar workers alike seeking solace from the politics and banter of war hawks.

As American Roma were leaving the City or dispersing into other areas, the consumer culture of the period cashed in on representations left in their wake. Products like "Gypsy" teacups, "Gypsy" rings, "Gypsy" costumes, and "Gypsy Witch" fortune telling cards all could be found not only in New York but throughout the country in the 1950s and 1960s.[753] Marketing firms and corporate advertisers were



Photographs 23: "The Gypsy Teacup", 1959

[753] See examples like "Continental Distributing Co."; "Wholesale Only Catalog, 1952"; "Seven-Up Print Advertisements, 1943-1977"; "The 1953 Becken Book"; "Gordon's General Wholesale, 1957"; "It's Always in Fashion to Shop at Sears! Spring and Summer, 1957."

tasked with selling products also joined in, utilizing the "Gypsy" representation to sell everything from jewelry to Seven-Up.[754] A prime example of this ongoing trend of marketing "Gypsies" is the 1959 product sold by Bradley Import Co. The "Gypsy Teacup" is a small saucer and teacup set designed for the home practitioner to read tea leaves. The pamphlet that accompanies the set states: "Tea-leaf reading has been very popular for centuries in many countries. You will find references to tea-leaf reading in many historical novels and in biographies of famous people. An art such as this would not have endured for so many years if there were not some foundation for it {….} the following method is one used for hundreds of years by Gypsies."[755] The instructions then go on to explain how anyone can develop their intuition and if they do "the more proficient you will become as a tea-leaf reader." Included in the front of the pamphlet is an image of a woman in necklaces, hoop earrings, and a headscarf. These visual signifiers communicate the authenticity of the product via the "Gypsy" representation of Romani people.

Even as counterculture individuals and groups advocated for less consumptive habits, many still bought into the allure of "Gypsy" products donning colorful garb and becoming new age "vagrants" and "Gypsies."[756] Cafes and tea parlors were well known location for counterculture icons to be found in Greenwich Village and they themselves might have tried their hand at reading tea-leaves out of their own "Gypsy Teacup." Such purchases were an extension of "Gypsy Madness" and "Playing Gypsy" which could paper over the contradictions of consumerism. Meanwhile, the visible physical and social absence of Romani people also allowed the NYPD to focus more of their resources on the emerging drug scene throughout the City with more money being pumped into the narcotics squads and anti-protest gear. As the

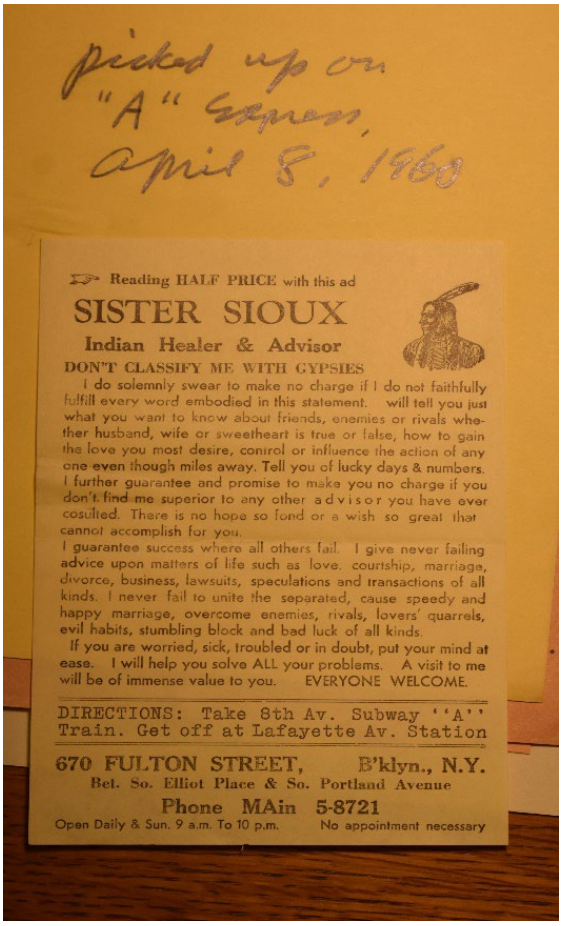
[754] See "Seven-Up Print Advertisements, 1943-1977."
[755] Bradley Import Co., *The Gypsy Teacup*. Author's personal collection.
[756] See more about the emerging culture of mobility and anti-consumption which led to new ideas about "vagrancy" and law in Risa Lauren Goluboff, *Vagrant Nation*.

1960s dawned the reinvigorated Civil Rights movements also garnered more attention by police as departments hurried to ensure they had enough staff and equipment to ensure peace was kept.[757] By the middle of the 1960s with increased pressure from Civil Rights groups and the emergent social justice movements, "Gypsies" no longer garnered as much attention and the successful marketing of products and services meant many more people had access to the "Gypsy" without seeking them out in urban spaces. By the end of the decade, "Gypsies" in New York City would be less conspicuous members of the populace and little notice of their whereabouts or actions garnered much public attention aside from those "Gypsies" in cultural products.

[757] See Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. for more about the buildup of the police forces and changing priorities of departments nationally as the social movements of the 1960s inspired wide spread concern amongst those in power.

5.4 Romani Traces and the Gypsy Afterlife in New York City

As the 1950s came to an end and the Cold War intesified, so too did the public's desire for comfort and security amidst the geopolitical posturing which dominanted politics and social life. During this time of anxiety urbanites still were placated by the ever-present fortune telling and occult shops found throughout the City.[758] These businesses, once the "monopoly of the Gypsies", were owned and operated by individuals who went out of their way to associate their products but separate themselves from the "Gypsies" of yesteryear.[759] Joseph Mitchell, a *New Yorker* reporter and author of "Up in the Old Hotel" which includes tales of his encounters with American Roma, saved numerous leaflets and advertisements of fortune tellers from the 1940s to the 1970s encompassing the period of American Romani community reorganization and increased mobility. Mitchell's collection documents the traces left behind by the American Roma and visualizes the "Gypsy" afterlife in the City.



Photographs 24: "Sister Sioux", 1960

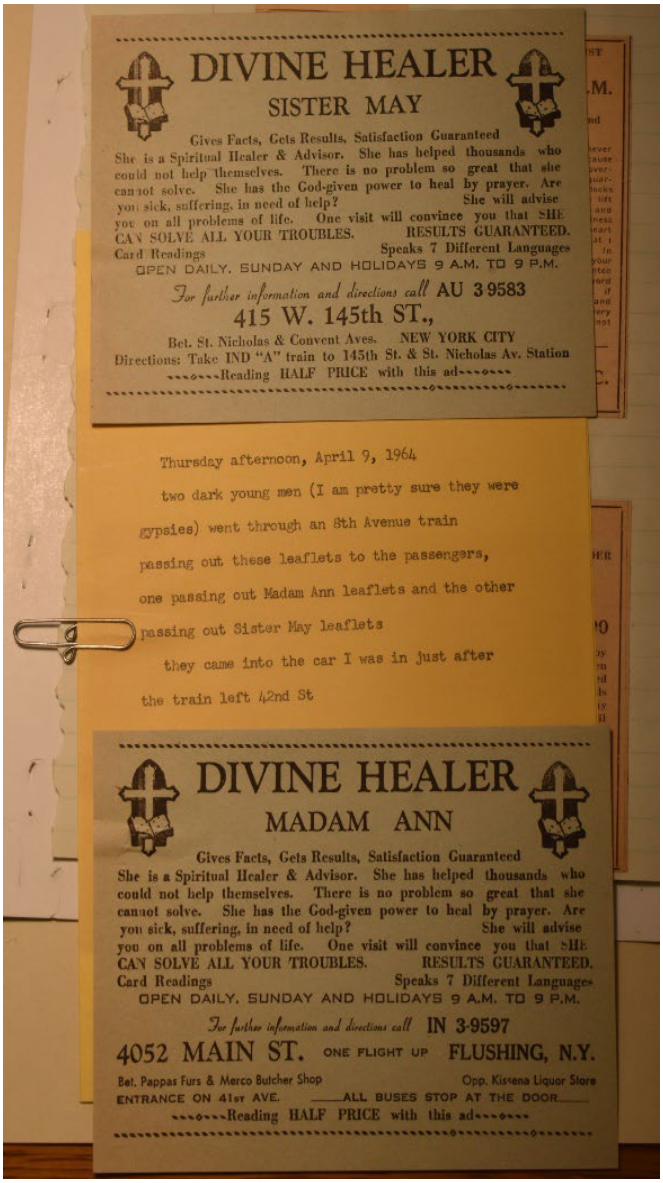
[758] A more complete accounting of the number of fortune telling parlors, and occult shops will need to be completed at a later date. My hypothesis on this matter is derived from the increased attention that those locations garnered from the NYPD which culminated in a push by Mayor Wagner in 1960 to have all fortune tellers fingerprinted and photographed.

[759] "Monopoly" referred to a 1931 article which states that "Gypsies" (in this context actual Romani people) were the ones who owned and operated all of the shops in NYC. See Rebecca Hourwich, "Forecasters of the Future Who Flourish in New York."

Within Mitchell's collection of ephemera there are clues to the public's perception of "Gypsies" in the years after World War II. For instance, in several leaflets and cards found in various parts of the City owners of fortune telling parlors specifically state, "Don't class us with the Gypsies", implying a less than stellar reputation for New York's Romani fortune tellers.[760] Paired with the fact that many American Roma were targeted by the NYPD it seems clear that both the authorities and other business owners found it easier to stay away from the "Gypsies" who had once been given high praise of people like FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt some 20 years earlier. But it was not just the changing attitudes of the public on the presence of the American Roma in the City displayed in Mitchell's collection, it was also the changing representations utilized by fortune tellers to sell their services. Often this meant formerly disliked minorities were now featured prominently as means to sell their business services, utilizing stereotypes which drew on the public fascination with the "primitive" past and the deviant others in their midst. In fact, many of the different pieces of ephemera use representations of American "Indians" and even Orientalize the business of fortune telling more explicitly drawing on the lure of the "far east" in an effort to separate themselves from the allure of American "Gypsies." In effect, the fully "Americanized" and largely absent "Indians" of the American West became useful representations to differentiate themselves from those drawing upon the years of "Gypsy" presence in the City proper. To that end, few of the leaflets collected by Mitchell hint at their business owners' ethnicity and certainly none of them highlight The American Romani communities long-standing history in the places they called home.

[760] "Joseph Mitchell Papers", n. Box 51 Folders 1 & 2.

However, Mitchell attempted to seek out the leaflets and ephemera which had connections to the "Gypsies" as he had engaged with several American Roma in the 1940s and had developed neighborly relations with the community. But few of the ephemera can be directly connected to those people he once called friends. Throughout his nearly 30 years of collecting the material, only a few bills have an explicit attachment to some "Gypsies. Small handwritten scribbles and notes in his collection show where the leaflet was found and if the individual may have been a "Gypsy" based upon the people handing them out. On Thursday April 9th, 1964, a typewritten note accompanying two bills for "Divine Healers" states:


DIVINE HEALER
SISTER MAY
Gives Facts, Gets Results, Satisfaction Guaranteed
She is a Spiritual Healer & Advisor. She has helped thousands who could not help themselves. There is no problem so great that she cannot solve. She has the God-given power to heal by prayer. Are you sick, suffering, in need of help? She will advise you on all problems of life. One visit will convince you that SHE CAN SOLVE ALL YOUR TROUBLES. RESULTS GUARANTEED.
Card Readings Speaks 7 Different Languages
OPEN DAILY, SUNDAY AND HOLIDAYS 9 A.M. TO 9 P.M.
For further information and directions call AU 3-9583
415 W. 145th ST.,
Bet. St. Nicholas & Convent Aves. NEW YORK CITY
Directions: Take IND "A" train to 145th St. & St. Nicholas Av. Station
Reading HALF PRICE with this ad

Thursday afternoon, April 9, 1964
two dark young men (I am pretty sure they were gypsies) went through an 8th Avenue train passing out these leaflets to the passengers, one passing out Madam Ann leaflets and the other passing out Sister May leaflets
they came into the car I was in just after the train left 42nd St

DIVINE HEALER
MADAM ANN
Gives Facts, Gets Results, Satisfaction Guaranteed
She is a Spiritual Healer & Advisor. She has helped thousands who could not help themselves. There is no problem so great that she cannot solve. She has the God-given power to heal by prayer. Are you sick, suffering, in need of help? She will advise you on all problems of life. One visit will convince you that SHE CAN SOLVE ALL YOUR TROUBLES. RESULTS GUARANTEED.
Card Readings Speaks 7 Different Languages
OPEN DAILY, SUNDAY AND HOLIDAYS 9 A.M. TO 9 P.M.
For further information and directions call IN 3-9597
4052 MAIN ST. ONE FLIGHT UP FLUSHING, N.Y.
Bet. Pappas Furs & Merco Butcher Shop Opp. Kissena Liquor Store
ENTRANCE ON 41ST AVE. ALL BUSES STOP AT THE DOOR
Reading HALF PRICE with this ad

Photographs 25: "Divine Healers", 1964

"two dark young men (I am pretty sure they were gypsies) went through an 8th Avenue train passing out these leaflets to the passengers, one passing out Madame Ann Leaflets and the other passing out Sister May leaflets, they came into the car I was in just after the train left 42nd St."[761] Sister May's business was located right in north Harlem close to the areas where American

[761] "Joseph Mitchell Papers", n. Box 51.

Roma were known to have lived, and Madame Ann's business was located in Queens also close to the Maspeth area where significant American Romani communities had lived. While their location and the inference by Mitchell that the men handing out the leaflets were "gypsies" does not definitively prove that the businesses were Romani owned, it is significant that by the 1960s there still seemed to be people conducting readings in the neighborhoods where American Roma once were in the majority.

Most of the rest of Mitchell's collection spanning largely from the 1960s and early 1970s have little reference to the American Roma that Mitchell was attempting to find in his travels around the City. Rena Gropper's classification of the period after Toma and the last "Gypsy Kings" left or died as being a "plateau period" seems to be corroborated by the lack of newspaper accounts, court cases, or Mitchell's largely unsuccessful attempts to find "Gypsies" amongst New York City's fortune tellers.[762] By the middle of the 1960s, the NYPD had their hands full with civil discontent and protest by ethnic minorities and disenfranchised youth in the counterculture movement. The day of the real "Gypsy" seems to have been at an end.

Yet, the "Gypsy" representation lived on in the afterlife of American popular culture far beyond the tumultuous 1960s and up to the present day. The absence of Romani people caused in part by the successful urban renewal, policing pressure, and the lack of connected leadership meant that the "Gypsy" could not represented Romani lives or struggles. Instead, the "Gypsy" came to be equated with the various fortune tellers, counterculture members, and consumer goods that most American Roma couldn't afford to purchase. The visible absence of American Roma in the City amongst their communities within relational racial formations also meant that former neighborly relationships and alliances were untenable and further pushed the Romani

[762] Rena C. Gropper, *Gypsies in the City : Culture Patterns and Survival*, 21.

community to the margins of the city. Their absence also led to scholars and lay people alike to categorize them as the "hidden" Americans and ensured that the "Gypsy" was the lingering afterlife of the once strong Romani communities. In spite of it all, American Roma who made New York City their home continued to press on without "Gypsy Kings", seeking a meaningful life amongst the hustle and bustle of the City of dreams reworking the "Gypsy" in their favor or avoiding it at all costs.

New York City will always be a "Gypsy Capital", not merely due to the high concentration of American Roma in the City throughout time, but also because New York City was the place where other Americans first played "Gypsy" and imagined a less chaotic life than that of their urban existence. In the end, American Roma left their mark on the landscape of the City even though some faded away like the "renewed" urban blocks they once called home, and the leaflets that were ground into dust beneath the feet of urbanites, their communities and their identities as distinctly American *and* Roma continued to shape their networks, interactions, and representations far beyond the streets of Gotham.

Conclusion

As I sat with Mike in his kitchen in Queens, New York he pondered the table in front of him. A stack of cards sat there, as both his son and I were engaged in playing a card game with him. The rules of this particular game seemed to shift depending on the person's turn. In this case it was his son's turn. He triumphantly brandished a two of clubs and stated, "take two!" Mike grumbled and grabbed two cards from the haphazard stack before calling his son a little shit. I laughed and grabbed a card before throwing down a jack of hearts which triggered another rule I didn't quite understand. But this was clearly legible to Mike's son prompting him to lay down his cards to win the game. It was April 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic had reached a fever pitch in New York City. Hunkering down with the family I had been spending time with over the past few months seemed the best option as flights and travel to and from New York was at best difficult.

We spent time mostly indoors punctuated with daily soccer games outside and trips to the family home some 15 minutes away. Living there were Mike's mother, father, and sisters along with their husbands and children. A warm coffee greeted me when I arrived there along with a flurry of activity involving playing with the children, greeting the men, and listening to their conversations about the pandemic, family matters, and the Gypsy news of the week. Mike's extended family, numbering close to a hundred people, lived nearby but due to the pandemic hadn't visited as often. Even with the pandemic Mike's sisters went out for groceries often and tried to get things done on their ongoing house improvements. It seemed there was never a moment when the family home stood silent.

Several years later as I write this, the children have grown and many more have joined the family. Now with the pandemic measures less restrictive many of the extended family are back to their respective jobs—often working with and for each other. Many of the women are back to spending more time dotting on their children, tending their homes, and scolding the men for their sometimes-rambunctious behavior. Mike and his wife and children still live in close proximity to the family and are often, if not daily, at the family home. Some time ago Mike told me that the neighbors, who were not Roma, had recently taken issue with this renewed activity. The neighbors, Mike explained, had been trying to get his family in trouble with the city for minor things like street parking and construction work being done on the house. When I asked why believed this was happening, he simply said in a matter of fact and slightly exacerbated tone, "because we are Gypsies bro." Some 65 years after many of the communities of American Roma in New York last dominated the city's newspaper headlines and even without the constant harassment by the police (although there were still interactions) the representations of "Gypsies" as a pest and racial other still made its way into the language of the neighborhood filled with many different ethnic groups. The "Gypsy" cannot be escaped from even in the multi-cultural haven of Queens.

Yet, much has changed in the 65 years since the last of the "Gypsy Kings." Queens has become a bustling metropolis of families from around the world with neighborhoods filled with people interacting on a daily basis across shared space. Although there are some families who still call it home, Manhattan no longer has a substantial American Romani population. Brooklyn, now as pricey as the "City" aka Manhattan, is home to more Roma but the largest population seems to be centered throughout Queens. However, most of the American Roma I met in Queens

had extensive knowledge of the surrounding areas having travelled seemingly everywhere throughout the United States at one point or another. That experience led to many of the families spending time working long days and nights in other areas in order to provide for themselves and their kin. Perhaps more now than ever before the Roma in the City were cosmopolitan beings. Even so, the City is *their home* with long standing connections and networks throughout the area.

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In the October 1909 edition of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* a thorough article by William MacLeod tells the story of a "New World Gypsy Camp."[763] In it, MacLeod an amateur "Gypsyologist", tracks a report of a Gypsy band in Boston. Some of the group were American born while others were more recent migrants from south-eastern Europe.[764] MacLeod intercepted the group on a Saturday morning trying to determine if they were "real Romané or not."[765] MacLeod was approached by two young women where "the prettier of the two, a finely-featured, gazelle-like creature of eighteen or thereabouts, insisted on telling my fortune."[766] After MacLeod clarified that she was a "Gypsy" and the woman counted to ten in Romanes "better than any of my [McLeod's] American-Gypsy friends could do", he proceeded to let her tell his fortune.[767] After a few more fantastical interactions with the leader, an elderly woman, several young men, and a few more women (one whom he called a little "Carmen"), MacLeod was convinced that these were indeed true Gypsies.

Upon leaving the encampment MacLeod ran into a "young matron" with four children who offered to sell one to MacLeod.[768] He also learned that her husband had gone to New York

[763] William MacLeod, "A New World Gypsy Camp."
[764] William MacLeod, 81.
[765] William MacLeod, 82.
[766] William MacLeod, 82.
[767] William MacLeod, 82.
[768] The stealing and selling of children was a common discursive formation that originated in Europe but by 1909 had made its way into the minds of "Gypsyologists." The reader should note that Roma are very family orientated

to bring fifty "newly arrived Russian Gypsies, who were still there in quarantine" back to the camp.[769] MacLeod departed a short time later and stated, "the band left Boston a few days after I saw them, were ordered out of every City and town they came to, until finally at Providence they took the boat for New York, where I lost track of their movements."[770] New York, it seems had worked its magic and allowed the Roma to leave the voyeuristic "Gypsyologist" in the dust.

MacLeod's article demonstrates how New York had become more than just a stopover point for Roma; it became a home, a place of sanctuary. Whether on boats or over land, Romani people were drawn by its chaos and its opportunity in much the same way many a wayward traveler still finds New York. In the course of making their lives in the city, Roma people made as strong a community as they had long done elsewhere. However, Roma people did not make this journey unconstrained; they were often burdened by representations of them and their families forged by Americans long before they stepped foot in the city. MacLeod's story illustrates the frequent representations which were circulating about Roma during their immigration years and beyond. It illustrates the connection between "Gypsies", mysticism, primitivism, and sexuality as the women are characterized as "Carmen's" and "gazelle-like creatures." Finally, the story shows the public's long-standing fascination with those unlike themselves and hence in many ways those who were "Un-American" with the only real "Romane" being the ones who had accents, spoke Romanes, and told fortunes. For the next fifty some years those same issues about nation, race, and belonging were being hashed out on the streets and offices as well as on the page and in the photographs as New Yorkers tried to imagine

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and little to no evidence exists for cases of child theft or selling of children. Most unsettling for many people in the 20th century and even today is the wide range of somatic differences amongst groups where racial signifiers are harder to discern based purely on skin color.

[769] William MacLeod, "A New World Gypsy Camp", 87.

[770] William MacLeod, 88.

a world with American "Gypsies." In many ways, those same issues linger on but are more visibly attached to the representations of "Gypsies" rather than American Roma which make their way into our homes via streaming services, Halloween costumes, or on vodka bottles.

Throughout the period covered in this work there have been multiple threads which wove a story about Romani identity, American-ness, and race. These meanings were made and re-made in the struggle between Roma people and those who would represent them, a conflict which played out in the foreground of wider concerns about race and fitness in twentieth century America. Individuals and groups acted under the authority of New York City and State to discipline and police those people who were not "desirable", sometimes finding their way into a more desirable status or, in the case of the Roma, into less visible roles in the massive urban spaces. Swirling around it all was an unspoken *truth,* in the Hall sense, which set American Roma apart from other racialized groups. The discourse about Romani racial difference and "Gypsy" incompatibility with American values succeeded in pushing Roma out of the American imaginary while sanitizing the image of the "Gypsy" as a consumable representation. Once thriving neighborhoods which included Roma were now shattered and the relational projects which could have yield more productive alliances were broken and forgotten by history. The immigration regimes started on Ellis with the discourses, policies, and practices of officials had moved into the City and changed with the times, yet the question of racial "fitness" and "desirability" still shadowed the "Gypsy" representation and Roma alike. For New Yorkers, Roma were too different, too "strange" to be productive members of the polity. In that sense the "Gypsy" representations which had plagued the discursive formations of the City for generations had won out over the efforts of American Roma to assert their belonging. Through the machinations of the immigration regimes, urban renewal, policing, and the loss of charismatic

and connected leaders, American Romani lives were overshadowed by the appeal of the American "Gypsy." Yet, people like Mike and his family actively re-interpretated those representations in their everyday lives, seeking a radical way of being "Gypsy" in the 21st century. Their lives, their presences, and their historical traces all converged into their own sense of home and self-worth which was far more nuanced and real than the imagined "Gypsy" banished from the shores of New York ever was.

The goal of this work is simple: to show both the "Gypsy" and the American Roma shared a social field where both have lives of their own makings and both have histories and stories which move beyond themselves. One lives on in the discursive formations which created them and cemented into a popular imaginary which likens them to a primitive past; the other live as families finding meaning and truth within their shared history, humor, happiness, and kindness to others. Social boundaries which governed how the Roma interacted with the world still exist but many are more porous and complicated than the controlling image of the "Gypsy" figure would suggest. Furthermore, radical representations of the "Gypsy" are being made by young Romani throughout the world as they strive for a more equitable telling of their own stories. The productive interplay between those ideas are yielding examples of people living as proud American Roma and as authors of their own "Gypsy" representations. The years spent by outsiders trying to tell their stories are finally being thwarted by their very presence in the places they call home. Not "vanished" or "hidden" this new Romani subjectivity is engaged with their community, their neighbors, and their world as they seek a meaningful life in the United States.

Yet challenges still remain. Romani lives and bodies are still policed and scrutinized by those in authority from the Southern border to the streets of Queens. While Romani immigration concerns have largely been shunted aside with more scrutiny being fixated onto those bodies of

Latinx folks, Middle Eastern folks, and other non-white "economic refugees"; Roma are still scrutinized when they are caught as potential "false" refugees or asylum seekers. Proving social discrimination and systemic racism is now the burden that solely falls on the migrant themselves. Yet they remain. Advocates like Mike and many other American Roma do their best to show the experiences of Roma and harsh treatment they receive without casting themselves or their families as complete victims. They utilize their networks, skills, and knowledge to circumvent those forces which are arrayed against them—whether it be social discrimination, undocumented status, or economic marginalization. Romani people around the world and in the United States continue to represent themselves as productive members of society contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of the entirety of the community. They find ways to make the world work for them as much as possible, and in doing so demonstrate their tenacity and strength as a people. Americans have long imagined they came to the U.S. like Gypsies in the night and perhaps would be gone the next day; but Roma people's persistence in the face of challenges ensured that their part in American history. This work has been one step in reinforcing their place, history, and their *home* in Gotham and beyond.

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Appendix A: Mapping Work

The maps created by the author on pages 236 and 237 utilized data from newspapers, ethnographic conversations, and NYPD records to pinpoint the areas where American Roma resided between 1900-1955. In no way were these the only places where American Roma lived during that period, but they are the locations they listed as residences for authorities and/or made claims to within their larger community. The maps themselves were made using a 1925 map of New York City (cited in text and in the bibliography) overlayed with the locations of the Roma in Map 4 and the 1951 Slum Clearance Committee map in Map 5 . Further data will be added to the maps when it becomes available.

Appendix B: Ellis Island Foundation Data

Page Number	First Name	Surname	AGE	GENDER	Marital	Nationality	SHIP_NAME	DATE_ARRIVE
138	Stevan	Marcovich	32y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Maria	Marcovich	34y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Pablo	Marcovich	18y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Katharina	Marcovich	13y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Miguet	Marcovich	5y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Milano	Marcovich	2y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Pepa	Marcovich	1y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Estevan	Marcovich	33y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Maria	Marcovich	30y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Elena	Marcovich	7y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Katharina	Marcovich	3y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Milano	Marcovich	2y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Duchan	Marcovich	25y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Jubitza	Marcovich	22y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Vasilia	Marcovich	54y	F	W	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Draga	Marcovich	5y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Ana	Marcovich	1y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Maria	Jovanovich	36y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Peder	Jovanovich	15y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Gio.	Jovanovich	8y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Ru...ia	Jovanovich	4y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Jovan	Jovanovich	3y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Mara	Jovanovich	2y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Jorge	Gaich	25y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
138	Joza	Gaich	18y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Tennyson	1903-11-20
94	Nicolai	Grantcha	27y	M	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Taiascova	Grantcha	25y	F	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Natalia	Grantcha	2y	F	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Dorea	Grantcha	9m	F	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Michael	Mitchell	30y	M	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Parascova	Mitchell	35y	F	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02

94	Kiliner	Mitchell	17y	F	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Alexander	Mitchell	11y	M	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Marie	Mitchell	8y	F	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Inia	Mitchell	6y	F	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Lorna	Mitchell	4y	F	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Hewbet	Mitchell	6m	M	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
94	Victoria	Mitchell	2y	F	NULL	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Georg	Radn	52y	M	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Perseda	Radn	50y	F	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Risi	Radn	3y	M	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Gregory	Radn	30y	M	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Marie Elizabeth	Radn	25y	F	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Anna	Radn	9m	F	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Ranko	Radan	30y	M	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Paroscavia	Radn	30y	F	M	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Michall	Radn	5y	M	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Nodoko	Radn	4y	M	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Serenti	Radn	2y	F	S	Austria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
86	Tlija	Stepanawitz	20y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
95	Jotoza	Stepanowitz	35y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Surka	Mitchell	45y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Mani	Mitchell	51y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Pauline	Mitchell	19y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Ivan	Mitchell	18y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Volja	Mitchell	19y	F	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Tom	Mitchell	10y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Serofian	Mitchel	5y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Michall	Mitchell	3y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Ivan	Mitchell	1y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Stefan	Mitchell	3y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Rista	Radn	40y	M	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Lambilla	Radn	30y	F	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Stefan	Radn	...y	M	S	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Vera	Radn	9y	F	NULL	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Varvaia	Radn	1y	F	NULL	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Nikola	Radn	2y	M	NULL	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
96	Durbonn Natalia	Radn	5y	F	NULL	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Ronko	Risto	25y	M	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02

100	Tawska	Risto	23y	F	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Anna	Risto	5y	F	S	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Lena	Risto	11m	F	S	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Illia	Georgeo	31y	M	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Radezhda	Georgio	29y	F	M	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
100	Michols	Georgio	9y	F	S	Russia, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
86	Anna	Stepanawitz	10y	F	S	Syria, Gypsy	Carpathia	1904-09-02
33	Nesho	Marinko	24y	M	M	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Angela	Marinki	22y	F	M	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Georgio	Marinko	3y	M	S	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Azorka	Marinko	2y	F	S	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Thomas	Marinko	7m	M	S	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Thomas	Marinko	22y	M	S	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
33	Mara	Marinko	17y	F	S	Montenegro, Gypsy	New York	1907-06-02
118	Peter	Markowicz	30y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	President Lincoln	1909-07-08
118	Wilewa	Markowicz	22y	F	M	Serbia, Gypsy	President Lincoln	1909-07-08
118	Alesander	Markowicz	2y	M	S	Serbia, Gypsy	President Lincoln	1909-07-08
118	...an	Markowicz	29y	M	M	Serbia, Gypsy	President Lincoln	1909-07-08
188	Andrew	Samko	27y	M	M	, Gypsy	Volturno	1912-01-05
86	Michal	Macalu...h	17y	M	S	Austria, Gypsy	President Grant	1912-02-15
41	Margaret	Damos	26y	F	M	Greece, Gypsy	Caronia	1920-10-16