

up” a homemade tractor “from an old truck and odd machinery” during the Depression years (p. 115). Williamson was more enthusiastic about electric power than he was about automobiles and tractors. His barns and house were wired for electricity from a Delco battery system by 1924. He thought it made financial sense on his dairy farm.

Each farmer faced different circumstances, had different skills and preferences, and experienced varied outcomes. This slim volume offers

real insight on how farming evolved through the mid-twentieth century and how farmers made it work. Willie Williamson sums up it up this way, “Timing is so important. So is hard work and common sense. You have to have all three to make a go of things. A little luck helps too” (p. 70).

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The Neighborhood Outfit: Organized Crime in Chicago Heights

By Louis Corsino

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014. Pp. 176. Notes, index. Clothbound, \$85.00; paperbound, \$25.00.)

Organized crime’s historic foothold in the city of Chicago, Illinois, is well-documented in both popular culture and scholarly literature. What is less well-known is that an organized crime crew operated in the suburb of Chicago Heights from the 1900s to the 1950s, playing a vital role in the Italian community there and holding strong links to the larger Chicago “Outfit.” This lesser-known crew—the Chicago Heights “boys”—is unveiled in *The Neighborhood Outfit*, written by sociologist and Chicago Heights native, Louis Corsino. The book is a brief, well-organized case study of organized crime in this small suburban city from the early 1900s to the post-World War II period.

Corsino sets out to show how organized crime in Chicago Heights was a product of the relationship between structural opportunities (or the lack of them) and the local Italian community. He argues that cultural or group characteristics and structural inequalities encouraged Chicago Heights Italians to pursue a number of nontraditional occupations—including organized crime—in order to obtain economic success. More important, he stresses that neither group characteristics nor structural inequalities explain the emergence of organized crime in Chicago Heights. Instead, both factors must “be joined by relevant social capital processes such as networks of social trust, community support or acquiesce,

and access to clandestine information" (p. 15).

Through his use of personal interviews, government documents, census data, and secondary sources, the author does an exceptional job of laying out his main arguments. The preface gives the reader insight into Corsino's curiosity about Italians and organized crime, and explains how his personal and familial experiences augmented his analysis of organized crime in Chicago Heights. The introduction delves deeper into the Chicago Heights Italian neighborhood and Corsino's personal relationships with family and community members there. The first two chapters provide a historical overview of Chicago Heights, organized crime in the city, and the city's Italian population. Subsequent chapters discuss collective mobilization strategies, such as mutual-aid societies and ethnic entrepreneurship, and the Chicago Heights boys and their social capital resources. The book concludes with a general discussion of how ethnicity, organized crime, and social capital are interrelated.

This book is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature—much of what we know about organized crime's past and present has been written or

told by journalists, policymakers, law enforcers, and filmmakers, not sociologists. Corsino brings a valuable theoretical perspective which allows him to explain the links between ethnicity and organized crime without giving sway to any "enduring stereotypical criminal motive that lay embedded in an Italian personality, culture, or legacy" (p. xi). In fact, as Corsino notes in his conclusion, his theoretical framework can be used as a point of comparison for explaining the emergence of contemporary African American and Mexican American street gangs who control drug markets in Chicago Heights today.

In conclusion, this book will appeal to readers with a general interest in the history of organized crime in America or readers with a more specific interest in the history of organized crime in the Midwest. The book can also be used as a supplementary text in suitable history, sociology, or criminology classes.

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