

Society for Suppression OF Commercialized Vice

INCORPORATED

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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY NOVEMBER 4,
1926**

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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

During the past year our Society has made marked progress. It has been definitely shown that a check can be placed on the encroachments of commercialized vice. Many of the very worst resorts in the city have been closed. Others have been subdued in their open and flagrant violation of law. Assignment houses still exist, street solicitation is not uncommon and cheap hotels remain a menace to decency; but the brazen affront of vice has been curbed, old haunts of the underworld have been closed and owners of real estate are giving some attention to the character of their tenants.

The accomplishments of the past year have been made possible only after thirteen years of steady effort. It will be recalled that in 1913 our Society secured about 50 injunctions against owners of property in the North Side under the common law principle that a house of prostitution is a nuisance. But the Missouri Supreme Court in its wisdom decided that "keeping a bawdy house * * * is not a public nuisance in any sense of the term." This decision annulled our injunctions.

The next endeavor of our Society was to secure a law defining a house of prostitution to be a nuisance. Three legislatures refused such a law, but the fourth legislature to which the bill was presented gave us the legislation we desired.

Under the injunction and abatement act of 1921 Anna Chambers' notorious place at 201-3 West Third street was closed. She appealed to the supreme court to test the constitutionality of the law. After about two years' delay the supreme court affirmed the constitutionality of the law, except in one particular. The court held that the legislature should have fixed a time limit for locking up the premises enjoined.

Our organization sought at the last legislature to have the law amended by inserting four words: "Not exceeding one year," referring to the length of time a place could be locked up. The bill passed the senate but the speaker of the house prevented its coming to a vote in that body and the measure was lost.

Upon the advice of our attorney, Mr. I. N. Watson, the Society undertook to get injunctions

without having the immoral places locked up. As violation of an injunction becomes contempt of court and may be punished by a heavy fine or even imprisonment, it was thought that injunctions would be effective without locking up the premises. Subsequent events have proven that our position was correct.

Upon evidence furnished by our organization and by the police department, Judge Thad B. Landon granted injunctions on the following places:

1214 Oak St., owned by the Geo. Birmingham Estate.

1216 Oak St., owned by the Geo. Birmingham Estate.

1218 Oak St., owned by Jos. C. Wirthman.

1220 Oak St., owned by Jos. C. Wirthman.

Judge Nelson E. Johnson granted injunctions on these properties:

1404 Oak Street, owned by A. F. Ellfeldt.

1406 Oak Street, owned by Jesse C. Hatler.

Securing these injunctions has not only closed six notorious houses of prostitution, but it has had the effect of interesting real estate owners in the character of their tenants. Since the granting of the injunctions our Society has had fine co-operation of real estate owners in cleaning up objectionable places.

For the success of the operation of the injunction and abatement law much credit is due to the judges named, to the prosecuting attorney, Forest Hanna, and to his able assistant, Mr. Hurwitz, to the hearty co-operation of the police department in securing the evidence, and to the faithful service of our present attorney, Mr. Conger Smith.

moral resorts closed during the past year, also number of inmates in each—

No. 1214	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	6
No. 1216	Oak St. ... _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	4
No. 1218	Oak St., 1st floor Apt—	No. of Girl Inmates,	4
No. 1220	Oak St., 1st floor Apt—	No. of Girl Inmates,	4
No. 1223	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,"	4
No. 1324	Oak St., 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,'	2
No. 1326	Oak St., 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 1330	Oak St., 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 1400	Oak St., 2d floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 1404	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	6
No. 1406	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	6
No. 1408	Oak St., 1st floor front —	No. of Girl Inmates,	1
No. 1410	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 1420	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	5
No. 1422	Oak St. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	4
No. 1425	Cherry St _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 405	E. 14th St _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	3
No. 505	E. 14th St., 1st floor apt.,	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 507	E. 14th St., 1st fl. w. apt.	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 507	E. 14th St., 1st fl. e. apt.,	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 717	East 14th St _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 405	Independence av., 2d fl.—	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 709	Locust St., 1st floor. _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 706	Locust St., Basement and 1st floor, 2 places... _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	5
No. 541	Locust St., 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,,	2
No. 539	Locust St., 1st floor.—	No. of Girl Inmates,	1
Total 27			Total Girls 79

Negro Bagnios Closed—All of these were vile, dens where sodomy was practiced daily. These girls catered to white trade only.

No. 244	West 4th St— _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 254	West 4th St., 1st floor... _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	4
No. 517	McGee _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 616	Locust, 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 618-20	Locust, Basement and 1st- floor, 3 places _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	8
No. 628	Locust, Basement _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	3
No. 630	Locust, Basement _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	3
No. 630	Locust, 1st floor _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 502	East 6th St., 1st floor..- _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
No. 629	Holmes St., 1st floor— _____	No. of Girl Inmates,	2
Total 12			Total Girls 30

Immoral Hotels—The following hotels allowed street-walkers to bring men they picked up on the streets, and rented rooms to them for immoral purposes.

Hotel Elmo, 405% E.	11th Et-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	4
Hotel Empress, 1126 Oak	St-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	8
Hotel Harvey, 318 E. 12th	-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	2
Hotel O. K., 427 E. 12th St	-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	2
Hotel Rosemar, 815 McGee	-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	4
Hotel Macek, 217 Admiral	-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	4
Hotel Ruby, 209 W. 11th St	-----	No.	of	Girls	working,	3
Hotel New Star, 215 1/2 Independence	___	No.	of	Girls		
	working,____	2				

Total Hotels, 8 Total Girls working, 29

The Hotel Empress is now vacant. All the others are running but I have seen nothing irregular about for some time.

The following bawdy houses have been quiet and inactive for the past month. Previous to that the girl inmates used to solicit men passing, from the windows, the porches and even the sidewalks in front.

- No. 1620-22 Oak St.
- No. 1525 Locust St.
- No. 1527 Locust St.
- No. 1529 Locust St.
- No. 512 1/2 McGee (Colored).

Respectfully submitted,

From the preceding statements it should not be inferred that commercialized vice in Kansas City has been eliminated. Some of it has been subdued and we appear to have found a way to reduce greatly the volume of vice in Kansas City. It has taken thirteen years' work to secure this effective remedy and its persistent application bids fair to overcome much of the disgrace of commercialized vice in our city.

It is almost inconceivable that Kansas City would return to the old policy of attempting to segregate vice. Vice never was segregated. Vice can no more be segregated than other forms of crime. Official toleration of any evil promotes its growth. The public is gradually getting away from the idea of any form of government co-operation with crime. However, there are yet many superficial observers of the vice situation who maintain that segregation and medical inspection should be adopted. Segregationists usually want vice removed from their neighborhoods but overlook the fact that attempted segregation puts the trouble in other

neighborhoods. While mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison changed His views on segregation and said: "My ideas of the vice question have been wrong. The city cannot afford to go into partnership with any such scheme. There is no such thing as regulation. What we've got to do is to stamp it out."

NAT SPENCER,
Secretary.