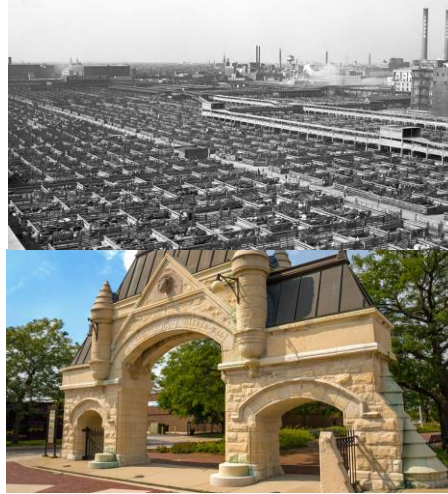
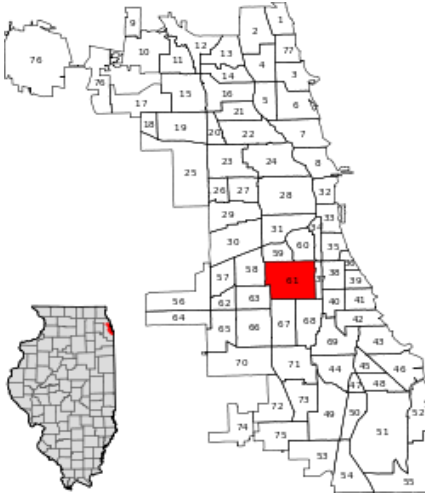




Back of the Yards



Back of the Yards is a neighborhood of immigrants, industry, and social activism. It was characterized by particularly vibrant and cohesive working-class communities over time. However, it was immortalized for its pollution, squalor, and poverty in government reports and University of Chicago sociology studies, .

Back of the Yards is home to one of the nation's oldest community organizations that is still functioning. Founded in 1939 by Saul Alinsky and Joseph Meegan, the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council (BYNC) was said to have "set the pattern for what is known as the Alinsky school of organizing." In such instances, an outside organizer would work with local leaders to create a "democratic organization where people could express their needs and fears, and gain improvements in their conditions via direct action." Rather than being based on individuals, membership on the council was based on local organizations, which let them put the neighborhood's existing social institutions to use.

Population Demographics

- **Total Population: 39,463**
- **Median Age: 31.7**
- **Black: 23.6%**
- **Hispanic or Latinx: 61.8%**
- **Asian: 2.0%**
- **White: 11.7%**

Economic Profile

- **Owner Occupied: 37.16%**
- **Renter Occupied: 62.84%**
- **Median Household Income: \$35,179**

Education Statistics

- **No Highschool: 16.8%**
- **Highschool: 23.0%**
- **Associate's Degree: 5.7%**
- **Bachelor's Degree: 21.8%**
- **Graduate Degree: 14.5%**

THE JUNGLE

In Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle*, he portrays the harsh conditions and exploited lives of immigrants in Back of the Yards and similar cities.

MEAT PACKING

Union Stock Yard and adjacent packing plants was a giant sprawl that was the largest livestock yards and meatpacking center in the country.

SAUL ALINSKY

The BYNC, a coalition of dozens of neighborhood and parish groups, became Saul Alinsky's model for organizing throughout the country.