Community Area #69
Greater Grand Crossing

Population: 38,644
Number of Structures: 7,314
Avg. Date of Construction: 1915

Source: 1990 Census, Harris File, CHRS

(Dots show approximate, rather than specific, locations of significant structures.)
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Community Area # 69

Greater Grand Crossing

This community area, composed of several smaller neighborhoods, was originally wetland, of little interest to any except railroads seeking right-of-ways into Chicago from the south and west. The community area’s name derives from its close historical ties as the site of an important railroad crossing. In 1853, a train accident occurred when trains belonging to the Illinois Central and Michigan Southern railroads collided near the present-day intersection of 75th and South Chicago, resulting in 18 deaths and 40 injuries. Both railroads claimed a right-of-way, and public officials thereafter required all trains to stop at the junction in the future.

Paul Cornell, the developer of Hyde Park, saw the junction as a real estate opportunity and began buying land there in 1855. By 1871, he had increased his holdings to 960 acres, which he subdivided as the town of Cornell. The tiny community was soon renamed Grand Crossing when another Cornell was found downstate. Cornell donated land for industrial development, attracting the Chicago Tack Company to 75th Street and Woodlawn Avenue in 1876.

By 1880, there also was a watch company, a furniture factory, and several other industrial concerns in Grand Crossing, which stretched from 75th to 79th, between Cottage Grove and the Illinois Central tracks. An Italianate-style house at 7745 S. Greenwood and the double houses at 7640 and 7650 S. Greenwood date from this first settlement.
Other development in Greater Grand Crossing included several small settlements, plus a cemetery. North of Cornell's subdivision was Brookline, located between 71st and 75th, from Cottage Grove to St. Lawrence. A Gothic Revival-style home was built here at 7133 S. Langley in the 1870s. In 1886, the community of Park Manor was laid out east of State, between Marquette Road and 72nd. Oakwood Cemetery, planned in 1853 and served by the Illinois Central railroad from 1866, has graves and mausoleums dating from the 1860s. East of Oakwood Cemetery, from 69th to 71st, east to the Illinois Central tracks, was Brookdale, consisting of frame houses, built for railroad workers and lining unpaved streets.

In 1889, all of these communities were annexed to Chicago. Queen Anne-style houses from the 1880s remain at 7716 S. Eggleston, 7150 S. Princeton, and 7128 and 7140 S. Yale.

In 1912, the dangerous railroad crossing that had defined Greater Grand Crossing's early years was permanently elevated, a sign that the community was becoming a densely populated urban neighborhood. Between 1900 and 1920, the community area was built up with a large number of brick houses and two-flats, plus small apartment buildings. Many were simple structures, such as the two-flat at 7244 S. Prairie (1914), the residence of Al Capone during the 1920s. Larger houses, such as 7236 S. Princeton (1904), 7138 S. Yale (1908), and 7150 S. Yale (1901), were built for upper-middle-class residents. Guenzel & Drummond used a daringly modern Prairie design for the Lorimer Memorial Baptist Church at 7257 S. St. Lawrence in 1914.

Development slowed in Greater Grand Crossing in the 1920's, although a number of residential, commercial and religious structures were built during the period, including the Birck-Fellinger Company building at 200 E. Marquette Rd. The Great Depression virtually halted new development in the 1930s.

The focus of the Chicago Historic Resources Survey was on buildings erected prior to 1940. Buildings and developments erected after that date generally are not included in the inventory.
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Greater Grand Crossing

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<th>Address</th>
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<th>Building Style</th>
<th>Survey LM IS Code</th>
<th>Building PIN Type</th>
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Al Capone Two-flat
7244 S. Prairie Av.

Confederate Soldiers Mound,
Oakswoods Cemetery
6701 S. Cottage Grove Av.

Fuller Monument,
Oakswoods Cemetery
6701 S. Cottage Grove Av.

Survey information for this community area was accurate at the time it was first surveyed in July 1988.
For an explanation of column headings, see page III-1.