

The records were entered by the police both chronologically and alphabetically. At the transcription phase sequential record numbers were assigned according to their order in which cases appeared in the police Homicide Books.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the case entries in the police books are neither wholly chronological nor wholly alphabetical. The record numbers are roughly chronological by letter of the alphabet. The earlier numbers refer to earlier cases, and to cases early in the alphabet in that chronological segment. Yet there are clumps of cases, such as those involving “unknown” victims, which all appear under the letter “U”. The entry of a sequential unique record number for each case was critical to track cases. The record number entered at the transcription stage has been the case identifier for all subsequent rounds of research.

The records were kept according to the following system: In a large book all of the victims whose surname began with A would be entered chronologically by day, month and year of death under the letter A. For example, Armstrong, James, Dec. 21, 1870, [followed by additional information on the homicide] and the next entry might be Abbott, Mary, April 30, 1873, followed by Abbott, Henry, [no relation to Abbott, Mary] June 13, 1875, the next chronological entry under the letter A.

This system created a double index: the date of death chronologically in one column and the name of the victim alphabetically in a parallel column. It is a victim-based, chronological system. The name of the victim and even the approximate date of death are sufficient to locate the case with ease. In the coded file it is now possible to identify cases by name of defendant, as well as by other variables. Within each letter classification the entries are not alphabetical but chronological, by date of death of the victim, to the end of the alphabet for that particular book. There are three separate homicide books, with the number of entries increasing sharply after 1918. Each new book started over at the beginning of the alphabet for that period. Each initial entry was followed by a space, allowing for the subsequent recording of information on the disposition of the case and the sentence. Time presumably elapsed between entries of the initial date and

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tification and analysis. The frequencies and other aggregate statistics reported in this Introduction are from the combined file with duplicates removed, as of September 2002.

<sup>11</sup> There were a few instances where names or dates were not in chronological order. Record numbers correspond to the order in which cases were entered in the books. Book I covered the period 1870-1910 and contains cases 1-2847; Book II covered 1911-1924 and contains cases 2848-5624; Book 3A included cases 5625-7480; Book 3B cases 7481-9391; and Book 3C cases 9392-11453.

subsequent developments.

Here are some typical examples, preceded by the added record number:

*[310] 1910, Aug. 18, Burks, James. 34 yrs. old. Shot dead during a quarrel at 325 N. Wood St. by Will Church who escaped. 28 prect. Kenneth Taylor, alias Frank Smith, colored brought back from Holland, Mich., and held on \$1,000 bond [EO1]. Aug. 18, by Judge. William, alias "Ham" Church, colored, arrested and held by coroner's jury Aug 22, 1910. Joliet Pen. Jan 28, 1911, for manslaughter. Judge Kavanagh.*

*[322] 1878, Aug. 12 Connors, James, young hoodlum, died, home, 537 S. Union St., as result of bullet wound received Aug. 10, while attempting to rescue two prisoners under arrest by Off. John McTigue of West Twelfth St. Station.*

*[399] 1900, May 29, Cameron, Frank, notorious swindler, fatally shot, Illinois Central Depot, Harvey, Ill., by Thomas O'Neill, who was arrested. Cameron died in Chicago Hospital May 31. O'Neill was held in bonds of \$20,000, June 11, by Judge Dunne and was acquitted by Jury in C.C. (Judge Smith.) Nov. 28, 1900.*

The system instituted by the police for recording cases was orderly and simple, allowing for cases to be retrieved easily by name of victim and/or date of offense.<sup>12</sup> These entries illustrate the richness of the data set and some typical ambiguities. All three cases include date of offense, name, gender, age of victim, weapon, and place of homicide. Two cases include the name of defendant. Two of the three cases include details and dates for arrest and disposition and the name of the judge. The name of the judge was presumably another tracking variable for the police keeping the log, telling them where they needed to show up to testify.

There are also typical ambiguities in these cases, the kinds of issues which were resolved in the weekly coders' meetings. For example, in case No. 322, is Officer McTigue the shooter? There is no indication of any arrest or disposition for this killing, or if it was by a police officer. Nor is

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<sup>12</sup> The system of recording developed by the police allowed for a large amount of information to be compressed into a few lines: date of offense, age, gender and race of victim and defendant, names of victim and defendant, circumstances of the offense (e.g. "during a quarrel"), sometimes the name of the arresting officer and the name of the sentencing judge, and in many cases several dates related to legal decision making, in addition to the date of crime; for example, the date of arrest, the date of the coroner's verdict, occasionally the amount of and/or date of the grant of bond; the date of the grand jury decision, and the date of sentence and the receiving institution.