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### The Criminalization of Survival

Edward Moore's Experience with Homelessness may be financially similar to a person experiencing homelessness today. Still, the social implications are far different due to the laws formed against people experiencing homelessness, in association with social stigmas formed against their situation. In Josephine Ensigs Skid Road, the life depicted for Edward Moore is similar to that of 14,149 people today (in Seattle), both of whom have no sustainable shelter and insufficient money or support to fit in with societal norms. The critical difference is that Edward Moore never had to face the laws that were formed recently against the homeless, which makes their lives harder than they already are by turning their only way of surviving into a crime.

The main difference separating Edward Moore from the homeless in today's day and age is the treatment they receive from the community around them. As Moore was the first homeless man recorded, the perception of his situation was more concern and curiosity than fear and disgust. People at the time did not know what to think of Edward Moore. It was a new problem for someone not to have shelter. Ensign notes, "Native people living on the Seattle beach near where Moore was originally found not only were tolerant of his odd behavior but also helped him survive" (Ensign 27). This support contrasts with the modern treatment of homeless individuals, who often are treated with hostility and criminalization while being threatened by law enforcement. Eric Tars explains, "Every day in America, people experiencing homelessness are threatened by law enforcement, ticketed, and even arrested for living in public spaces when they have no other alternative" (Tars 6-43). The communal shift from being willing to help people experiencing homelessness to being afraid of them displays the hardships their community now faces daily. Laws created that work against them make every aspect of their survival harder and

scarier by making their only sleeping areas illegal. This, in combination with the already very harsh reality of being homeless, can cause these people to turn to drugs, creating a social stigma among other people, making them think that all homeless people are scary and drug-addicted, which makes them not want to assist them.

Both Edward Moore and Homeless people today were set up with the same system that caused them to be homeless in the first place. The lack of job opportunities and systems put in the way of homeless people is what perpetuates the problem, continuing to make it worse. Moore's situation reflects a broader historical context of laws restricting mobility and socioeconomic opportunities of people experiencing poverty, such as the Elizabethan Poor Laws. Ensign discusses how "The "warned-out" portion of the older law was extended under the Elizabethan Poor Laws. It became known as the Act of Settlement, which banned the poor from moving anywhere outside their parish, even searching for work. This severely limited the geographic and socioeconomic mobility of the poor" (Ensign 16). Similar to modern-day homelessness, people are trapped in a cycle of continuous poverty due to a lack of job opportunities and systematic barriers. The process of making laws against homelessness compounds this issue, making this cycle illegal and putting the people suffering in an awful position where they have no options. These laws, rooted in our long history of extreme measures against people experiencing poverty, show how little progress we have made in addressing the root of the problem.

Edward Moore's experience with homelessness was met with a much different reaction than today's homeless population; Moore was met with curiosity and care, while today's homeless people are met with a landscape fraught with legal and social obstacles. This difference also reflects a broad societal change in which homelessness is not only a financial problem but also a criminalized and stigmatized state of survival. Although the economic challenges faced by Moore and homeless people today are very similar, the additional burden of navigating laws designed to punish those without shelter makes the experience of

homelessness far more oppressive. By understanding these historical and social dislocations, we can better understand the systems in place, allowing this to continue and hopefully address the underlying issues of homelessness rather than simply punishing those who experience it.