

CHILD SLAIN, 4 SHOT AS GANGSTERS FIRE ON BEER WAR RIVAL

One of East 107th Street Group
Wounded by Machine Gun
Bullets From Auto Dies.

BABY IN A CARRIAGE STRUCK

Man Lounging in Front of Club
Is Target of Machine Guns
Near a Police Station.

MOTHERS RUSH TO STREET

One Finds Two of Her Boys Injured
—Fifty Detectives Are Out to
Round-Up Assailants.

Five children were wounded, one of them mortally, early last night by gangsters who opened fire with shotguns and machine-guns on a man lounging in front of the Helmar Social Club at 208 East 107th Street. The intended victim escaped injury by lying down, and, as the gangsters' car sped away, got up and disappeared.

The shooting, which occurred less than four blocks from the East 104th Street police station, was ascribed by police to the Harlem-Bronx beer war between the gangs of Joe Rao, an ally, temporarily, of Arthur (Dutch Schultz) Flegenheimer, and Vincent Coll. More than fifty detectives were sent out last night with orders to bring in Rao, Coll and members of their gangs for questioning.

One of the wounded children died early today in Beth David Hospital. He was Michael Vengalli, 5 years old, of 210 East 107th Street. Two of the others are in critical condition. They are Michael's brother, Salvatore, 7 years old, and Michael Bevilacqua, 3 years old, of 207 East 107th Street, both of whom are in Fifth Avenue Hospital. The latter has two gunshot wounds in the back, and the former five in the body. Blood transfusions were performed last night on both of them. Afterward they were reported to be doing better.

The two other victims were Samuel Divino, 5 years old, of 207 East 107th Street, and Florence d'Amello, 14 years old, of 234 East 107th Street. They were treated at Beth David Hospital for wounds in the right leg, and right shoulder, respectively, and sent home.

Children at Play in Street.

The street was filled with children at play when the shooting occurred. Frank Scalesi, a red-haired 14-year-old boy, had set up a lemonade stand in front of the social club and was dispensing his wares at a penny a glass. The Vengalli children were playing with others in front of their home, while the Bevilacqua boy lay asleep in his wicker baby carriage.

No one paid any attention to the man who was lounging outside the door of the social club. The evening was oppressively hot. The windows and doorways of almost every tenement in the block were filled with men' lounging in shirt sleeves.

Soon a big open touring car came through the street. Several men were in it. The man in front of the social club eyed it suspiciously. As it reached a spot opposite where he was standing shotgun and machine gun barrels were poked out of the tonneau. The man in front of the club, suddenly alert to his danger, dropped to the ground.

Instantly there was a sharp crackling like the explosions of a string of fire crackers. Bullets and shotgun slugs splattered against the walls of the clubhouse and adjacent tenements. The pitcher of lemon-

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GANGSTERS' BULLETS FELL FIVE CHILDREN

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ade on Frank Scalesi's stand shattered and fell in a dozen fragments.

Children screamed and scattered in all directions. Mrs. John Vengalli, at work inside her house, heard the firing and rushed out to the street. She found her son Salvatore lying on the sidewalk, covered with blood. He had been literally riddled with shotgun slugs. One struck him in the left side of the neck, another in the left leg, another in the left arm, and two more in the body.

Mrs. Vengalli picked up the wounded boy and started in search of a taxicab. When she found one, she bundled him into it and ordered the driver to hurry to the nearest hospital.

Meanwhile, other mothers, attracted by cries in the street, had rushed out to see what was wrong. The children, who had scattered at the first sound of firing, returned now that the gangster car had disappeared and were screaming for help for their injured playmates.

Mrs. Vengalli apparently did not know that her second child had been shot. After she had left for the hospital a woman neighbor discovered the boy lying near the doorway of his home. She picked him up, called another taxicab and took him to Beth David Hospital.

Infant Wounded Twice.

Other neighbors, peering into the baby carriage in which little Michael Bevilacqua lay, saw that he had been wounded twice. They notified his mother and rushed him to the Fifth Avenue Hospital.

Meanwhile, the disturbance in the street had almost emptied the tenements. Excited parents milled about looking for their children, uncertain as to whether or not harm had befallen them. Others, outraged at news of the shooting, gathered in groups to denounce gangsters and their terrorism.

Patrolmen James Lee and Basil Humantzke attracted by the turmoil in the street, telephoned the station house. All available detectives were rushed to the street.

None of the parents wanted to talk to the police. All seemed afraid to discuss the affair. Not until Italian-speaking detectives arrived were the police able to learn what has occurred.

Then they heard that the automobile of Joe Rao had been seen in the vicinity several hours before the shooting. It was also learned that Rao was frequently seen in the block and was believed to have a residence there.

Martello, the steward of the club, was questioned by the police, as was Frank Scalesi. Martello said he was not in the club at the time and did not know anything about what had occurred.

Scalesi gave the police a somewhat hazy description of the automobile. He said that as soon as the firing began and the bullets shattered his lemonade pitcher and glasses he dropped to the ground and could not get a good look at the occupants of the car.

The record book of the Helmar Social Club found in the club's quarters with entries up to February, 1929, showed that the club had about sixty members paying membership dues of about \$1 a month. Officers of the club were listed as follows: Michael Martello, steward; Vincent H. Auleta, president; Vincent A. Rao, first cousin of Joe Rao, vice president; Charles Rosenberg, secretary; William Shailessie, treasurer; John Maishelo, chairman, and Philip Bescoglio, sergeant-at-arms.

Vincent H. Auleta is a former Assemblyman, and was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Congress from the Twentieth District last November. He opposed Representative Fiorello H. La Guardia. At one of the political rallies, which Auleta held at the Italian-American Democratic Club, 224 East 105th Street, during his campaign, two men were mysteriously shot.

The police have not yet been able to ascertain whether the intended victim of the shooting, the man seen standing outside the club, was Joe Rao's cousin, Vincent, or the gang leader himself.

They are convinced, however, that he was a member of the Rao gang. Rao, they say, though formerly a bitter enemy of the Dutch Schultz group, has patched things up with them recently. At the present time, they say, Joe Rock, an up-State "beer baron" is trying to "muscle in" on the Harlem-Bronx beer monopoly. Since several local breweries have been closed recently and local supply sources are hard hit,

they say, Rock has taken advantage of the situation to rush his cheaper beer here. Coll, they say, is acting as Rock's local representative, selling his products and providing the necessary gangster protection for him; and as a result, Schultz and Rao have made common cause against him.