

# NEGRO LIFE AND CULTURE

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Many white people have a way of saying, "Oh, I know the Negro. You can't tell me anything about Negroes. I've known them all my life." Well, I wonder just how much the average white person really does know about Negroes. How many of us actually know more than one or two Negroes? How many of us have ever visited a Negro church other than as mere spectators? How many have ever read a novel or a poem written by a Negro? How many are acquainted with even one educated colored person? And if we were asked to name five Negroes, other than prize fighters and jazz orchestra leaders, who have achieved distinction in American life, I doubt if many of us could do it. No, I am afraid that what the average person means when he says that he knows the Negro is that he knows a little bit about his cook or hired man or farm tenant, that he knows a few "Negro stories," and that he has a lot of threadbare notions about the racial characteristics of the Negro. I believe that our ideas about colored Americans and our relations with them would be more intelligent if we were better informed, and so in this brief talk I want to give you a bird's eye view of the achievements and problems of the Negro American.

First of all, a few words about the trends in Negro population. I find that many people have exceedingly hazy ideas on such simple questions as how many Negroes there are in the United States and whether they are increasing or decreasing. Some people seem to think that

Negroes are dying out and others think that they are soon going to swamp the white population. Well, both ideas are absurd. When the first federal census was taken in the year 1790 there were about three-quarters of a million Negroes. One person in every five was colored. At the time of the emancipation there were nearly 5,000,000 and today there are 13,000,000, but today only one person in eleven is a Negro. So the Negro population is not dying out, neither is it swamping the white population. It looks as if both populations will stabilize in the next few decades at a ratio of about one Negro to ten whites.

There are two very important movements which have affected the distribution of the Negro population. One of these is the movement of Negroes from the South into the North and West. In the years just following the first World War this movement reached the proportions that it was referred to as the Great Migration. In the past twenty years the number of Negroes living in the North and West has almost tripled. One-half of all the Negroes living in these sections were born in the South. Three and a quarter million of our 13,000,000 colored people are now living in the North or the West.

The other movement is the movement to cities. Thirty years ago, three-fourths of the Negroes were living in rural sections, today they are about fifty-fifty urban and rural. The increase of Negro population in some of our cities is really amazing, and it is chiefly due, not the natural increase of births over deaths, but to migration from rural areas. Thirty years ago there was not a city in the whole nation with as many as 100,000 Negroes. Ten years ago there were seven such cities, and today there are eleven—possibly twelve. These cities are: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, New Orleans, Detroit, Birmingham, Memphis, St. Louis, Atlanta and possibly Cleveland, Ohio. The largest of all Negro population concentrations is found in New York City where there are nearly 400,000 colored inhabitants, while Chicago and Philadelphia have about even with 250,000 each. And so we see that the Negro has literally been "going to town" in a big way.

Next let us look at some of the indications of economic progress on the part of Negroes. The Negro Year Book, published at Tuskegee Institute has estimated that since emancipation the Negroes have accumulated more than 2 1/2 billion dollars of wealth. There are about 70,000 Negro business establishments of all sorts, of

which 25,000 are retail stores doing an annual business of over \$100,000,000. There are 23 Negro banks having combined resources of more than \$15,000,000, and there are 44 insurance companies with insurance in force to the total of nearly one-half billion dollars. The total purchasing power of Negroes is estimated at two billion dollars a year. Negroes own and publish 200 newspapers and numerous periodicals of all sorts.

The story of educational progress would take much more time than I can devote to it today. Let me summarize it in this way. Illiteracy has decreased from 95 percent at the time of emancipation to 10 percent today. There are more than 100 colleges devoted exclusively to the education of Negroes. College attendance has increased tremendously in the past two decades, and the number of college graduates in the past five years alone is over 10,000. About 2,000 Negroes have received the degree of M. A., and over 200 have earned the Ph. D. degree. Three hundred have been elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and 100 are listed in "Who's Who in America. Certainly no well-informed person would be so stupid as to cling to the old notion that the Negro can't take an education.

It would take a large volume to record the achievements of Negroes in various fields. Suffice it to say that their achievements are no longer confined to music and pugilism, but extend into many fields, such as poetry, fiction, drama, painting, sculpture, mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, metallurgy, aeronautics, architecture, law, medicine, biology, sociology, and religion.

Yes, the Negro has made remarkable progress—in fact, the most remarkable progress that any group of people has ever made under similar conditions. But this is only one side of the picture. The other side shows blood, sweat, and tears; it shows poverty, degradation, frustration, and the everlasting struggle against the handicaps of racial status. Let us look at this side of the picture for a few moments.

First, economic handicaps. In spite of a great deal of economic progress, the masses of Negroes are but a step removed from poverty and starvation. The great depression has shown this fact very clearly. Two-thirds of all Negro wage earners are found in "no back-breaking and low-paid occupations, farming and domestic service. Eighty percent of all Negro farm operators are tenants, and the ratio of farm ownership is actually lower today than it was thirty years ago. Social customs, race prejudice, and even the labor unions have operated to keep the Negro out of the skilled trades and white-collar jobs and even to displace Negroes from some of their traditional occupations, such as janitor and hotel work.

Second, political and civic disabilities. It would probably not be exaggerating to say that in literacy, educational attainment

## Lunceford and Manager Discuss Tour



Jimmie Lunceford and his manager are shown here in an informal pose as they discussed Lunceford's latest tour through southern territory. Lunceford is former Fisk University student.

and in character, the average Negro today is as well qualified to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship as were the masses of white men when they were first granted free suffrage. Yet there are many places in the South today where qualified Negroes—even though they be doctors, lawyers, or teachers—are not allowed to register and vote freely for candidates for public office. Negroes as jurors are still relatively rare—and in not more than twenty southern cities are Negro policemen used to assist in law enforcement among their own people. On the various policy-making boards and councils which affect their lives as citizens, Negroes are almost entirely lacking in representation.

Third, inequalities in the administration of justice. We white people operate the machinery of justice, and we do a pretty good job of it, but I think that sometimes we operate it in such a way as actually to promote crime. For one thing, our police too frequently consider it their prerogative to arrest Negroes wholesale on the slightest suspicion, to curse them and to intimidate them into making confessions. In the courtroom we have a way of dealing much too leniently with a Negro who harms another Negro, thus encouraging a disrespect for law and a feeling that lie is cheap if it happens to be a Negro's life. On the other hand, when a Negro harms a white person, we punish with more-than-average severity, and thus cause Negroes to feel that the law is unjust. Furthermore,

Fourth, educational inequalities. Great progress has been made in providing public schools for Negroes, and we have a right to be proud of it, particularly here in North Carolina. But there still exist some inequalities which should give us a bad conscience. In the South as a whole, we spend about \$45 a year for every white child enrolled and about \$12.00 a year for every Negro child enrolled—a differential of nearly 4 to 1 in favor of the white child. In buildings, equipment, teaching facilities, and bus transportation the Negro public schools lag far behind the white schools. Thousands of Negro youth have no high school facilities whatever, and provisions for graduate and professional training which are given as a matter of course to white students are almost entirely lacking for Negro students.

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get along with us white people. There are too many white people who consider it their God-given privilege to insult, intimidate, or injure people of a different color. There are white people who take insult too easily and who are always "right" in any difference of opinion with a Negro. Let's not forget that every Negro, from childhood through old age, has to adapt himself to expect the worst. No matter how cultured, how refined, how desiring of respect, he may be, he is never entirely free from the fear of personal insult and bodily harm.

These, then, are some of the darker phases of the picture. I think that we white people might well pause and ask ourselves whether we have made an honest effort to apply our Christianity and our democracy to the Negro. I regret to report that I know many Negroes who long since stopped believing that the white man is the Negro's best friend. One of the most disheartening things I have seen lately among Negro young people is their increasing feeling of futility and despair.

After all, what does the Negro want from America? I am convinced that what he wants is something simple and perfectly reasonable. He does not want alms, he does not want to dominate anybody, he does not want any more social equality than any person wishes to give him. What he does want is opportunity—an opportunity which is not based on race or color. His attitude is: "Give me an opportunity to make a decent living, to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and I will take care of myself."

In these critical times when our paramount aim is the defense of our democracy and our American way of life, we must be a united people. Our 13,000,000 colored citizens are in many respects the most loyal and dyed-in-the-wool Americans in our whole nation. We have always had their loyalty and we must continue to have it, but the only way to keep it is to deserve it.

England's safety ours, says La Guardia at air base dedication.

Medical society holds women "available as Army doctors."

Jones tells Associated Press defense is "better than good."

Elsie the cow dies after Hollywood and World's Fair career.

Ten Southern States protest court review of "Jim Crow" law.

Feeding cuts the death rate of bleeding ulcers, doctors are told.

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## JELLY MAKERS QUIZ COLUMN

By BETTY BARCLAY

- Q. Is there a cure for weeping jelly? Mrs. A. B. M.
- A. How serious is the weeping, Mrs. M.? The separation of a small amount of syrup is normal, and will not harm jellies or jams unless yeast and mold start growing on the seepage. Remove such contaminated glasses from the shelf immediately. To prevent excessive weeping, leave a half-inch space at the top when filling glasses. Paraffin, cover tightly and store in a cool, dry place that is free from dust and mildew.
- Q. Why do air pockets form under the paraffin on my jellies and jams? Eleanor M.
- A. Air pockets under the paraffin are usually due to the thickness of the paraffin. If the coating is too heavy, it will not be elastic enough to keep the shape of the jelly as it cools, in which case the paraffin and jelly surface may separate and form a pocket. The paraffin coating should be only about 1/4 inch thick.
- Q. What is pectin? Mrs. D. E. L.
- A. Pectin is the natural "stiffener" in fruits. A certain proportion of pectin, acid, and sugar is necessary to jelly a jelly, and to jam a jam.
- Q. Why didn't my strawberry jelly set? I used the "cup for cup" rule—one cup of juice to each cup of sugar. It was just like syrup no matter how long I boiled it. My neighbor's strawberry jelly always sets and has a lovely flavor. Mrs. M. A. M.
- A. Your question is closely related to Mrs. D. E. L.'s. Strawberries have so little pectin of their own that they won't jelly by themselves, and this natural stiffener must be added to your fruit and sugar. Trustworthy commercial pectin comes in both bottled and powdered form, with special recipes for each fruit. These directions require only a half-minute boil for strawberry jelly, Mrs. D.
- Q. What size measuring cup should be used in jelly making? Anne McC.
- A. For best results, a standard half-pint measuring cup should be used in jelly making. And always be sure to measure exactly.
- Q. I have two raspberry bushes in my yard, good ripe fruit but not very tasty. I want to make jam, and always use short-boat recipe. How can I improve the raspberry flavor? Miss B. B.
- A. An excellent question, Miss B., for we all like to use up our own garden products. Whenever jam or jelly fruit lacks tartness, add the juice of 2 medium lemons (1/2 cup) with the sugar.

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## CAMEL THE CIGARETTE OF COSTLIER TOBACCOS

## Mayor LaGuardia To Throw First Ball As Colored Stars Open Baseball Season

New York, (TYP) — The Hon. Fiorella H. LaGuardia, New York's popular Mayor, having already warmed up on two Major League inaugurals, promised to be in his greatest form when he throws out the First Ball of the Negro National League Opening at the Yankee Stadium, Sunday, May 11. The Mayor, long an admirer of the League and its plays, had to cancel several of nation wide engagements to allow his participation in the Opening Day ceremonies. Numerous City, State, and Federal dignitaries, besides stage, screen, radio and celebrities, have indicated their intention of attending the League's Ninth Inaugural. Also among the honored guests that day will be Harlem's own Regiment, the 369th Coast Artillery and though the great distance to be travelled prevents the entire regiment from attending in a body, Col. Chauncey Hooper is sending down a representative delegation from their Camp at Oswego, New York to take part in the festivities.

Huge tanks, plane superiority beat back the British in Greece.

Colonel Gerald Browder, U.S. observer, killed with R. A. F. Army is "over the hump", according to General Marshall at inquiry.

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