

Area Weddings

McCullers-Hedrick

Diana Patricia McCullers and Mark Andre Hedrick were married Saturday, September 12, 1992, in a 4:00 p.m. ceremony at First Wauhtown Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

The Rev. Dennis Bishop officiated.

The bride was given in marriage by Kevin L. Thompson, her cousin.

Serving as maid of honor was Sharron McCullers, sister of the bride, of Winston-Salem. Matron of honor was Mrs. Anthony Greely.

Bridesmaids were Lashawn Pearson, Shay Hedrick, and DeAndria Hairston, all of Winston-Salem. Best man was Tyrone Anthony, of Winston-Salem.

Ushers were Anthony Greely, Dewayne Howie, Lamont Thompson, all of Winston-Salem.

The bride is a graduate of John-



Mrs. Diana Patricia Hedrick

son C. Smith University and works for Wachovia.

The groom is a graduate of North Forsyth High School and is a commercial truck driver.

The couple will live in Winston-Salem.

Writing workshops

Registration is now open for the following classes for adults and children, offered by the Writers' Workshop. All classes meet at the Sawtooth Building. Financial assistance is available to low-income students, made possible by the Winston-Salem Arts Council. To register please call 1-800-627-0142; or write to: Workshops, PO Box 696, Asheville, NC 28802.

Children's Creative Journal Writing, Sept. 19 Saturday, 10-4. The personal value of writing a journal will be explored, as students are guided in making their own journal entries. Beth Brittain, instructor, holds a teaching certificate and a BA degree in English from ASU. Free

Investigative Journalism for Teens, Sept. 19, Saturday, 10-4.

Teens will learn the elements of feature writing: finding story ideas, developing writing style and editing skills, and interviewing. Instructor Miles Tager is a free-lance writer for numerous publications including *The Raleigh News and Observer*. Free

Writing Proposals for Magazine Articles, Sept. 19, Saturday, 10-4. This workshop will focus on the process of marketing the proposal. Participants should bring an article idea or a draft of a proposal. Writing, revising, and a reviewing session will also take place. Rick Mashburn, instructor, has had many years' editorial experience, and has had his works published in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Travel and Leisure*. \$45 members; \$60 non-members.

Black workers still face color barriers

By SHARON COHEN
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — When steelworker Sheldon Gray began looking for a job after his mill closed this spring, he worried that the sluggish economy and low wages wouldn't be his only obstacles. He saw another hurdle — bigotry.

A 20-year mill veteran, Gray believes blacks have a tougher time finding jobs, regardless of their record, experience or skills.

"If there's one job open and you have two people," he says, "they'd still rather take the white person because maybe he doesn't scare them as bad."

In blue-collar America, where manufacturing has declined and unemployment has risen, black workers have, by most measures, fared the worst. They have trouble getting hired, trouble overcoming stereotypes and trouble maintaining their fragile foothold in the middle class.

"Corporate America doesn't believe in the black male," said Dan Lacey, editor of *Workplace Trends*, an Ohio-based newsletter. "The black male is left out of the middle class, then we point the finger at him, and say, 'Why doesn't he do something with himself?' It's the old 'blaming the victim.'"

"Most of us are hard workers," declares Gray, who helped mold 30-ton beams in the scorching pits at the now-defunct USX Corp.'s South Works. "We have families to feed. We have homes to take care of."

After a four-month search, Gray, 45, landed a post office job in late August. He'll probably earn less than half his \$50,000-a-year mill wages, but hopes to move up.

"Sometimes," he says, "you have to gamble on something that's worthwhile."

As for salary, Gray didn't expect to match his steelworker's pay. "Those days when you can make that type of money are pretty much over," he notes.

That's true for all blue-collar workers, but blacks suffer more than whites, according to government statistics. Consider:

- Black unemployment in the second quarter of 1992 was 14.5 percent, compared with 6.5 percent for whites.

- The median earnings of black men were 72.5 percent of that of white men at the end of 1991. Black women's median earnings were 86.3 percent that of white women.

- Nationwide, the 1989 median household income was \$31,435 for whites and \$19,758 for blacks. A middle-class family, according to Lacey, needs an annual income of about \$32,000.

Blacks' biggest problems appear to be in the industrial heartland.

Six of the eight states in which the disparity in household incomes between blacks and whites grew fastest in the 1980s were in the Midwest, according to a 1990 Census Bureau report. And Michigan's black male unemployment rate of 22.1 percent ranked first in the nation in 1990.

It was the promise of work in the auto plants of Detroit, steel mills of Chicago and factories

throughout the Midwest that first lured blacks from the South after World War II.

"It helped black men get reasonably well-paying jobs, better than ones available in the rural South," said William Frey, demographer at the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center. "It helped them raise families and preserve stable city communities."

"This was a stepping-stone into the urban lifestyle and, though it was a segregated one," he said, "it got them closer to a middle-class income."

Two decades ago, Sheldon Gray came from Kansas to follow his two brothers in the mills after serving in Vietnam and attending college for a year.

It was an era of opportunity, when high school dropouts could earn enough money in a factory to buy a house, take a vacation, send a child to college.

"You can't do that anymore," said William Haskins, programs director for the National Urban League in New York. "We have a whole category of people who are unemployable. We have people in their 30s who've never had a job."

Compounding this problem is the shrinking military, a traditional route for black upward mobility.

Those who moved into the middle class, either in uniform or on an assembly line, now risk sliding down — with little chance of climbing back up.

"For many blacks in the last 40 years, it was the first time their family participated in the American dream," Lacey said. "Now they face being left out . . . They've been in the wrong place at the wrong time in history and that's happening again."

Gregory Smith knows all too well. An 18-year veteran of the South Works, he scours the want ads with scant hope of finding anything to replace his \$21.60 an hour in wages and benefits.

It has been discouraging: \$7.50-an-hour jobs, few interviews and one steel firm that talked of starting him at the bottom of the pay ladder despite more than a decade as a millwright.

Smith and his former co-workers are doing better than others: They receive benefits and could be called to fill vacancies at USX's Gary, Ind., plant.

But Smith also notes that his benefits last only a year. His wife's railroad management job, he said, is "the only thing that's saving us."

He is frustrated and fearful that

stereotypes are standing in his way.

"They always say a black man runs off and leaves his wife," he said. "I've raised two sons. I've been here since the day they were born. There are good black men out there. They shouldn't throw a blanket over all black men."

Edward Brown, a former co-worker, also feels stigmatized.

The attitude, he said, is "You're all on drugs, you're not going to come to work, you're not dependable."

He contends former white colleagues have found \$14-an-hour jobs and, though he'd take a pay cut, "I can't see myself working for \$7, \$8 an hour."

"It wouldn't be worth it after I pay a baby sitter," said the father of two. "If my wife wasn't working, I wouldn't be able to live."

"Most places that are hiring blacks are doing it because the government is making them do it," Brown said. "It's not because they want to do it."

Not everyone agrees that bigotry is the obstacle.

"A lot of black men say, 'I can't get a job because I'm black,'" said Marion Smith, a former South Works electrician. "I'm not saying it's not out there . . . (But) I think it's an excuse that's overblown . . . It's not a black or white thing. It's the economy, period."

Still, researchers say workplace racism does exist.

A 1992 study of public and private sector employers in Los Angeles and Detroit found that about 20 percent stereotyped black men as lazy and violent, said Chris Tilly, assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

Those findings echoed a 1991 Cook County study that found "employers view inner-city workers, especially black men, as unstable, uncooperative, dishonest and uneducated." Black women were considered more reliable, but employers expressed concern that they brought family problems to the workplace.

When asked if there are racial differences in work ethics, more than a third of the employers rated blacks last.

"It's up to black men to prove that they're different and those negative stereotypes don't apply to them," said Joleen Kirschenman, co-author and research director for the Center for the Study of Urban Inequality at the University of Chicago.

In other instances, simple geography makes jobs off-limits to

blacks.

Increasingly, businesses are moving to suburban or rural areas and, though corporations argue these are economic decisions, "it seems odd . . . you find consistent locating in areas that are just beyond the access of black employees," said Donald Deskins, a University of Michigan sociology professor. "I still think race is a variable in these considerations."

Still, the future isn't all negative. More blacks are attending college, becoming self-employed and finding state and local government jobs.

And Kirschenman's study also found that employers do hire blacks a good work history helps — though they may be scrutinized more closely.

But workers say they still face great odds.

"Ten to one, the white person is hired before the black person," said Mac Daniel Adams, a South Works employee. "People tend to gravitate toward their own."

Sheldon Gray isn't deterred.

"When I was growing up, I had to be three times as good as my counterpart, who was white," he said. "At U.S. Steel, I had to prove myself to be five times better. Even though they say we're equal, we're not. It hurts, you can't let it stop you, I don't like the color barrier, but I'm not going to give up trying to make a living."

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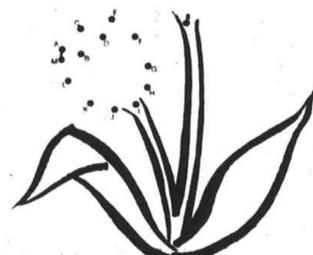
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