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The Negro community in Milwaukee

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The Negro Community in Milwaukee

by

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Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts.

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Introduction

Introduction

The Negro Community in Milwaukee

This study was undertaken to provide a coordinated picture of the social conditions of the Negro community of the City of Milwaukee. Its usefulness, it is hoped, will be in giving background material to any individual or group trying to do work among the Negroes of Milwaukee, and in focusing attention on the problems of Negro life most in need of solution and possible lines of solution.

As in all social problems there is no simple answer to the Negro problem. Neither can any phase of Negro life be dealt with without consideration being given to all other phases. Thus the health of the Negro is dependent, to a large extent, upon the quality of the housing of the Negro, which is dependent, to a large extent, upon the possibility and the kind of employment the Negro can secure, which is dependent, in part, upon the education of the Negro, which is dependent, in part upon the social acceptance of the Negroes in the schools, which stems back to the history of the Negro in America -- all of which shows the complexity of the problem and the difficulties faced by the workers in the field.

The Milwaukee Negro community has several claims to singularity in comparing it to Negro communities of other cities of the United States. First, the Negroes of Milwaukee constitute only a very small percentage of the total population of the city--only 1.6%, in comparison to 4.4% in New York City, 7.6% in Detroit, 11.1% in Philadelphia, 8.6% in Pittsburgh, 11.8% in Kansas City, 3.2% in Boston, and the national average of 202 cities that were studied of 5.8%.

Another unique thing is that Milwaukee seems to have the only Negro community in the United States in which there is little discernible stratification. That is to say, there seem to be no outward signs of an upper class, a middle class, and a lower class of Negroes such as one finds in all other Negro communities and in all white communities. There is a potential class system among the Negroes. It is not constantly operative because, according to William Kelley of the Milwaukee Urban League, the houses in which the Negroes must live (in their segregated section) are uniformly of the poorest quality. The houses cannot be classified as better class houses, middle class houses and poorest class houses. They are all the same--very poor. Thus even the Negro who may earn more money cannot have any external evidence of it in terms of the house in which he lives.

In making this study it was felt desirable to set definite geographic limits to the Negro district. Thus, the limits of the survey district are the limits of the census tracts numbered 20, 21, 29, and 30. In this area are included over 90% of the Negroes of the City of Milwaukee. The rest of the Negro population is contained in the fringe immediately surrounding these tracts and in a very small colony of about 37 Negro units, spread over five blocks, somewhat west of the survey district but in the immediate neighborhood of the West side yards and shops of the Milwaukee Railroad. These four tracts have been used as the limits of the Negro district in several other studies of the Milwaukee Negroes, thus giving this geographic definition further advantage in this study.

Chapter I

History

Chapter I

A. - History of the Negroes in Milwaukee

The Negroes of Milwaukee did not constitute a significant minority group until after 1910. It was during the World War and later during the prosperous years of the later 1920's that the greatest migrations of Negroes to Milwaukee took place.

Table I

Negro Population in Milwaukee and its Growth

	<u>Population¹</u>	<u>Percent Increase Over Previous Period</u>
1910	980	-
1920	2229	127.4
1930	7501	236.5
1940	8821	17.6

¹United States Department of Commerce. - Bureau of Census, Washington, D.C., 1930 and 1940

Prior to the first World War there were very few Negroes in the City of Milwaukee. According to the Census Bureau there were 980 Negroes in Milwaukee in 1910. Estimates have placed the 1915 Negro population as less than 1500. Nearly all of the Negroes then in Milwaukee were employed as personal maids, domestics, chauffeurs, and the like. Practically speaking, all of the Negroes who came to Milwaukee up to this time came for a specific job, and thus, almost all were employed and there was no great unemployment problem.

However, starting in the year 1916 and during the following War years there was a considerable migration of Negroes to Milwaukee. The city's industries were expanding and there was a large demand for a

cheap labor supply. Because of this many factories sent to the South for Negroes and many Negroes in the South, hearing of the "boom" and the "easy money", came to Milwaukee to work. This migration was, almost entirely, a migration of men. The proportion of men to women in the Milwaukee Negro population was greatly overbalanced during these and succeeding years. After the War the Negroes were, of course, among the first to be "laid-off", since they were an unskilled group. In 1919, at the request of interested white and colored persons, the Milwaukee Urban League was founded to deal with the employment of Negroes and other related problems. The Negroes suffered on through the depression of the early 1920's, but they, along with the rest of the population, soon began to prosper in a relative way.

For the rest of the '20's the Negroes got along relatively well. There was little new immigration of Negroes in these years. However, with the start of the 1929-plus depression, the Negro began to suffer very greatly. They were, for the most part, in unskilled jobs in factories, and, therefore, were the first to be "laid-off" when staffs were reduced; furthermore, many of the persons who formerly hired them as household servants were forced to "carry-on" without their services in order to curtail expenses. This meant that they were among the first persons in Milwaukee to feel the depression. They were immediately "shorn" of any means of support; and since they had never earned much to save they had little savings to aid them in this difficulty. Even if they had had considerable savings the depression lasted so long that the savings would not have lasted anyway. Thus they suffered through the "thirties", with the most of the Negro

families receiving direct public relief.

In 1931 the Urban League made a study of the employment applications it had received in the previous year. It found that it had received a total of 2700 applications of which 1800 were from men and 900 were from women. The Urban League felt that this was a true picture of the sex ratio at this time, since, they claim, that the sexes in the Negro community apply for work in about equal proportion to their total population.

During the following years of the depression (the first half of the '30's) there was a great change in the population. Another migration to Milwaukee of a considerable number of Negroes took place. At this time many women came to Milwaukee, either to be with their husbands or to be wives of the men already here. Another reason for the influx of the Negroes--and this of entire families--was due to the "easy" relief laws of Milwaukee. Many whites, as well as Negroes, came to Milwaukee because of the fact; if they could manage an existence for one year they were considered citizens of the State of Wisconsin and were eligible to receive direct relief. In 1936 the law was changed and now three years residence were required to receive public relief. Because of this law immigration for this reason has stopped to a very great extent.

The present population of the Negro district is unknown. The United States Census Bureau gives the Population of the Negro district for 1940 as 8821. This compares to the 1930 census of 7501. These figures are not agreed to at all by the leaders of the Negro community.

They claim that a conservative estimate of the population in 1940 would be 12,000, with the ~~true~~^{true} figure probably as high as 14,000 to 15,000; the conservative figure being 1/3 again as high and the other estimate being 1/2 again as high as the federal census. This great discrepancy in the population figures and estimates is laid to several causes. It is claimed that there is a certain timidity on the part of enumerators in approaching the homes of Negroes. Due to this timidity they get reports, not from the house but from neighbors or nearby storekeepers, which are, for the most part, guesses of the number of people in any dwelling unit. Another reason for the very low census Bureau report may be the fact that many of the units are overcrowded - beyond the limits set by the City Building Inspector; thus the person living in any particular overcrowded unit would not give a complete report on the population, because it might be discovered by the Building Inspector and then some of the parties would be forced to move, and there is no place where they would be accepted as tenants. Still another reason advanced for incomplete Census reports is that there may be some Southern sharecroppers who have fled to the North and who feel that if they would be discovered by their old "masters" they may be taken back to the South to satisfy their "chronic", and probably unjust, debts. These various reasons could conceivably account for a considerable discrepancy in different data.

Each year the Urban League makes an estimate of the number of Negroes in the city. These estimates are considered to be rather accurate-- and considerably more accurate and useful than the Census Bureau Reports. The Milwaukee Urban League estimated that the 1940

Negro population was 12,000. This estimate is based in part upon the number of registered Negro voters in the city, which is just short of 5,000. Considering that the average family size is three persons, most of the social work agencies of the city consider the Urban League estimate of the population as the more accurate and use it in all of their work. The public agencies, while they would like to use the Urban League estimate, in many cases, must, of course, use the Census Bureau data since both of the groups are public agencies.

B. - History of the Survey District

The present Milwaukee Negro district is one of the oldest sections of the city. It is what in the early days of the City of Milwaukee (seventy and more years ago) was the "Gold Coast" of the city. Here lived the wealthy people and here they constructed many large homes. As the city expanded these people moved out to develop more outlying districts. This area, as the city grew came to be occupied by less and less wealthy people. About this time a considerable immigration of Jews to Milwaukee was in process. They took over this area because it was an area of very low rentals. It may be noted that this is a natural sequence in a city. As the city develops and grows the more wealthy people tend to move to the edge of the city leaving the center of the city for the very poor and the immigrants.

After the Jews had been here for some years they began to prosper and they too started to move to other neighborhoods--notably the Northwest side. Then during the time of the first World War the Negroes started their great immigration. Naturally they looked about for the cheapest housing they could find and this was in what had been the Jewish neighborhood. These immigrant Negroes and the Negroes who were already here but were living just south of the district in the present downtown shopping area invaded the district in great force. It wasn't long before their invasion turned into complete succession--in that the district is known by all as the Negro district. Even though it is generally considered

to be the Negro district, almost 50% of the persons there are whites--mainly Jews. Although many of the Jews have moved out of the district they still retain ownership of the houses. Thus while the district is Negro in residents, it is white (Jewish, mainly) in ownership. Now these large homes that formerly made up Milwaukee's "Gold Coast" are occupied by Negro families. Many of them have been turned into rooming houses having many one and two room apartments in which several people are crowded into one room.

It seems as though any further sequence of invasion in the district is impossible. With the virtually complete stoppage of immigration there is no group to enter Milwaukee looking for the lowest cost housing and to, thus, invade the Negro district and force them "up" to better housing. Also there are pressures by both the whites and the Negroes of the city to keep the Negro where he is. Thus it seems as though the Negro will stay where he is at the present time and that the houses in which he lives will have to be improved or replaced with quality housing that is adequate.

Chapter II

The Housing of the Negroes

Chapter II

The Housing of the Negroes

In 1939 the Milwaukee Real Property Survey was made by the Works Progress Administration. This was a study of the entire City of Milwaukee. The following table summarizes the findings for the survey district (tracts 20, 21, 29, and 30).

Table II

Summary of Housing Statistics¹

	<u>Total for Survey District</u>
Number of structures	1,744
Number of residential units	3,698
Population	12,784
Number of units with roomers	514
Percentage	14.5
Percentage of units with 1.51 persons or more per room	3.6
Median year built	1890
Number of units tenant occupied	3,164
Percentage	85.6
Average rent	\$21.50
Percentage of units substandard	77.0
Percentage of units substandard (Owner occupied)	46.9
Percentage of units substandard (Tenant occupied)	80.5
Percentage of units with no private toilet or bath	40.2
Percentage of units in need of minor repairs	34.4
Percentage of units in need of major repairs	41.8
Percentage of units unfit for use	16.8

¹The Milwaukee Real Property Survey - 1939.

The Milwaukee Negro district (the survey district) is unique, in that its living units are almost entirely of one quality--and that quality is very bad. There are no living units which, because of external appearances, one can refer to as the homes of the rich Negroes and, on the other hand, there are no living units that can be referred to as the homes of the poor class of Negro, because of external appearances. The effect of this uniformity has been a social levelling. While there is a variation in income (economic level) and some men do receive more prestige than others, due to education, and so on, any stratification which exists is only potential. This, it is claimed by William Kelley of the Milwaukee Urban League, is mainly due to the uniformity of the housing--which doesn't allow a person to point and say with awe, "That fine house belongs to Lawyer Jones" nor in a superior way to say, "That ramshackle hut is where those awful Browns live."

In the survey district there are 1744 structures of which 455 or 26.1% are combination residential and business structures. In addition there are 339 structures used, exclusively for commercial, industrial, or institutional purposes. Except for a very small portion of the extreme North end of the district, the whole survey district is zoned, either for commercial and light manufacturing or for local business units, according to the zoning code of the City of Milwaukee.

In these 1744 structures are 3698 residential units in which live 12,784 persons Negro and white according to the Real Property Survey.

According to studies made of the total Negro population by the Real Property Survey, 41.8% of the Negro units have less than five rooms, while but 31.5% of the white units have less than five rooms. It was found that only 3.6% of the units were overcrowded; i.e., had more than 1.51 persons per room; 4.3% of the units were found to have extra families of two or more persons. However, if the data for the total Negro population is inaccurate, this data is likely to be equally inaccurate, for the same reasons, (See Chapter I) inaccurate enumeration and fear of discovery of building code violations.

The Real Property Survey found 55.2% of the units of the survey district to be occupied by Negroes, with the population proportion to be about the same. They found 6229 out of 12,784 persons to be Negroes.

The residential units are all extremely old. More than half of the structures are over 50 years old--the median year in which the units of the survey district were built being 1890. Virtually all of the structures were built prior to the first World War. In the past 28 years (since 1914) only 22 or 1.3% of the structures were built.

The survey district is most definitely a tenant area. 85.6% of the units are occupied by tenants. In a further study by the Real Property Survey only 3.2% of all the Negroes in the city owned the homes in which they lived. Thus 95.8% of all the Negroes of the city are tenants. The tenants in the survey district were found to move rather frequently with the median duration of occupancy of tenant occupied units being three and one-half years. The median duration of occupancy of owner occupied units is 15 years, while only 12% of the owner occupied units being occupied less than five years. Since

these figures were taken in 1939, this means that 88% of the owner occupied units were purchased by the owners before the depression of 1929+ and thus, too, before the last migration of Negroes to Milwaukee which occurred during the depression years.

The average rent paid for the units in the survey district is \$21.50. If only the tenant occupied units are considered the average rent is \$20.50. Again, in the further study by the Real Property Survey the average rent paid by all of the Negroes in the city is \$19.00. This compares to the average rent paid over the whole city which is \$30.81. It must be considered that the average for the Negroes is for only the worst housing in the city, while the average for the whole city includes the best of the housing along with the middle class and the worst. Then when it is considered that the difference of these averages is but \$11.81, there is reason to complain of high rents. This, only, very slight difference in rental with the extreme difference in quality seems to show strong discrimination. Certainly it cannot be contended that this rent is proportionate to the quality of living quarters. This discrimination can be applied to the whites in the survey district as well as the Negroes. The owners of the structures in the district seem to be desirous of getting everything they can out of the tenants without putting a cent back into the structures. They have the advantage over the tenants, too, because the Negroes, especially, cannot move out of the district and into another district, and, as a consequence, have to rent what they can get within the area at the price demanded. Most of the homes in the area are owned by former residents of the

area, who moved out into better areas and are now trying to get all they can out of their old houses. The most of the rest of the units are owned by building and loan associations, real estate men and like groups.

In the Survey district 77% of the units are substandard. If these figures are broken down to show rates for tenant occupied and owner occupied units, it is found that 80.5% of the tenant occupied units are substandard, while 46.9% of the owner occupied units are substandard. This shows how the evils of substandard housing seem to go with tenancy and thus fall heavily upon the Negroes. To be classified as substandard a unit must be either physically substandard or occupancy substandard, or both. A unit is called physically substandard if: 1. it is in need of major repairs or is unfit for use; 2. it has no installed heating equipment; 3. it has neither gas nor electric lighting; 4. it has no private toilet or bath. A unit is occupancy substandard if two or more of the following apply: 1. it has 1.51 or more persons per room; 2. it has an extra family of two or more persons; 3. its monthly rental is less than \$40.00.

Through the survey district 40.2% of the dwelling units have no private toilet or bath. Thus it is seen that the plumbing equipment, in general, is very unsatisfactory and because of such inadequate equipment it can be seen how other problems of morality may enter because of this inadequacy.

As to the physical condition of the units, only 7% of the units of the survey district can be said to be in good condition. This means that all the rest of the units are badly enough in need of

repairs that even a conservative consideration classes them as in need of at least minor repairs. Of the total number of units 34.4% of the units are in need of minor repairs; 41.8% of the units are in need of major repairs; and 16.8% of the units are unfit for use. This means that 58.6% of the units are very badly in need of repairs-- to the point of being structurally unsound. In a further study of the total Negro population of the City, the Real Property Survey found that 67.7% of the Negro occupied units were in need of major repairs. By saying a structure is in need of good condition is meant that there are no structural defects nor any repairs such as paint or other similar light repairs. If a unit is classified as in need of minor repairs it is structurally sound but it needs repairs as the replacement of some siding boards or the replacement of a few bricks or needs a coat of paint rather badly. If a unit is classified as in need of major repairs it needs repairs involving the structure of the unit. It means it has a sagging frame, broken foundations, falling plaster, a roof in need of replacement, or some other structural repair. If a unit is classified as unfit for use it is in such poor shape that there is little hope for it in repair work. All that is recommended is razing of the structure. The City Building Inspector will issue permits to repair a unit to any degree up to 50% of the original cost of the unit. The building inspector may start condemnation proceedings only if the condition of the structure endangers life or limb. This means that probably almost all of the units could be repaired if the owner would only put some money into repairing the property. This has

been one of the hardest things to get the owners of structures in the survey district to do.

The Negroes of the Milwaukee Community do not seem to like the idea of colonization in some other area about the limits of the city. They are afraid to split up, because that would break up their political power. When some individual or group within the community suggests that he or they would like to take residences elsewhere it creates quite a furor because, mainly, of the lost political power of that person or group. This applies even in the case of moving from the sixth to the tenth ward or vice-versa. The tenth ward cuts into a portion of the survey district and the objection is that any moving from ward to ward would tend to disturb the political balance of power between the whites and the Negroes--thus such moving is discouraged as much as possible. For this reason it seems that any change in Negro housing will have to take place right in the immediate neighborhood in which the Negro is at present living. The present structures should receive such complete repairs as necessary or feasible and the rest of the structures should be razed and replaced by good sound housing.

It is interesting to note that in 1936 when the City was granted the PWA housing project known as Parklawn, this grant was made on the basis of slum areas in the city which were to be cleared as soon as the project was completed. The slum area in Milwaukee which was to be cleared was entirely within the Negro district of Milwaukee. It was an area of about 10 acres in the northern part of the survey district. Except for the removal of a few units these acres never were cleared.

Chapter III

The Health of the Negroes

Chapter III

The Health of the Negroes

Although the Milwaukee Health Department makes few studies of any group constituting less than five percent of the total city population, at the request of the Milwaukee Urban League it made a study of Negro vital statistics for 1941.

Table III

Negro Vital Statistics--1941¹

	<u>Births</u>	<u>No.</u>
Livebirths		189
Stillbirths		<u>3</u>
Total Births		192
In Hospitals --79%--		151
At Home:		
Physician		41
Midwife		0
Other		0
	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>No.</u>
<u>Place</u>		
Children's Hospital		2
County Emergency Hospital		18
National Soldier's Home		1
St. Anthony's Hospital		2
St. Mary's Hospital		2
County Hospital		49
Muirdale Sanitarium		9
Home		24
Other Places in Wisconsin		<u>1</u>
Total		108

¹The Milwaukee Health Department.

In a special study of the survey district for the five years 1936 to 1940, the Milwaukee Health Department compiled the following data corrected for race and compared to total city rates.

Table IV
Death Rates for Specific Diseases²
(Survey District Compared to City Total)

	Survey District 5 years 1936-40			City Total 2 years 1939-40
	Total	Negro	Others	
Population	9564	6229	3335	587,472
Tuberculosis Deaths	102	89	13	441
Average annual rate per 100,000	213.3	285.8	77.9	37.5
Syphilis Deaths	23	19	4	77
Average annual rate per 100,000	48.1	61.0	24.0	6.5
Enteritis--under age 2	0	0	0	51
Average annual rate per 100,000	.0	.0	.0	4.3
Infant Death-- 1 year	41	27	14	644
Average annual rate per 100,000	85.7	86.7	84.0	54.8
Stillbirths	33	22	11	375
Average annual rate per 100,000	69.0	70.6	65.9	31.9

² The Milwaukee Health Department; the rates are based upon population data arrived at by the Real Property Survey in 1939.

Using the 1940 census data the Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association prepared the following rates for Negro tuberculosis deaths in the year 1940.

Table V

Negro Tuberculosis Deaths in 1940³

	<u>Negro Population</u>	<u>Negro Tuberculosis Deaths</u>	<u>Rate</u>
City of Milwaukee	8821	17	193 per 100,000
County of Milwaukee	9069	17	189 per 100,000

³The Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association; the population data and the rates are based upon the 1940 United States Census.

The present population of the Negro district, according to the 1940 census, is 8821. However, as mentioned above (see Chapter I), the Negro leaders claim that this figure is very incorrect. They claim a population of 12,000 for the year 1940 would be a most conservative estimate. This estimate is felt to be more accurate by all of the social agencies and, as a consequence, it is used by all of them whenever possible. However, the public agencies, since they are official government agencies, must use the government's (Census Bureau) official figures. It will be noted that even in the charts given by governmental agencies, the differences shown are so great that, if the rates had been computed according to the higher (estimated) population, the differences would still remain enormous. In this paper the Milwaukee Urban League estimate of 12,000 will be considered the more accurate population.

The Negro disease rates are not much different than the disease rates of the Whites, with the exception of tuberculosis and syphilis. The Negro population has an extremely disproportionate rate of tuberculosis--285.8 per 100,000 compared to 37.5 per 100,000 for the rest of the population of the survey district. Even though the Negro population of the survey district were considered to be 11,000 persons, this rate would still be 161.8 per 100,000 which remains disproportionately high.

It is also seen that the Negroes have a very disproportionate rate of syphilis--61 per 100,000 population as compared to 6.5 per 100,000 population for the city as a whole. If the population of the survey district considered as 11,000, the syphilis rate for the Negroes would still be out of proportion--34.54 per 100,000. This probably is due, in part, to standards of morality. It must be remembered that low standards of morality, syphilis and illegitimacy are common to all groups of low economic standards. According to members of the Negro community, there has been a noticeable change in the moral tone of the Negroes in the past 10 years or so. They say that 10 years ago illegitimacy was cause for genuine shock to neighbors and did bring a certain amount of ostracism. Now, however, it has become very common and little is thought of it.

Of other diseases the Negro death rate seems more nearly proportionate; and if the higher population figures are used they become almost equally proportionate with the Whites of the city.

It may be noted in the chart that the Negro receives rather good hospital and medical care at least at birth and at death. It will be

noted that 151 births out of 192 births, or about 79% of the births in 1941 took place in hospitals; while all of the remaining births were at least attended by physicians. This is a remarkable record for any group or community. Of the 108 deaths in 1941, all but 24 or about 22% of the persons who died died in hospitals. It is also interesting to note that about 93% of the deaths in hospitals occurred in public hospitals or 71% of the total deaths occurred in public hospitals. Thus it is seen that the Negro is receiving good medical care, at least as he enters and as he leaves the world, but of necessity, most of it is received at public expense.

It would seem, therefore, that the poor health of the Negroes, especially in tuberculosis and infant mortality, is due to something, other than poor medical care at anytime. It seems that we may lay the poor health record to either poor environment or to some innate biologic conflict to be found in all Negroes.

In regard to environments, it is easy to see that the housing of the Negro is so poor that it could be a very important factor in poor health. The living units are not in good condition, they don't have minimum sanitary facilities, and they are substandard. Thus, with such uniformly "terrible" housing, we see where health may be affected. The Negro receives the poorest employment conditions, the most menial job, and the lowest salary, if he get work at all, all of which go to make his health so much more imperiled and which force him to live at a very low plane of living. Then too, one may well consider the recreational facilities offered. (Chapter VI)

In regard to the second of the above mentioned factors, the biologic conflict, the theory advanced by Dr. Louis I. Dublin in his "Health and Wealth" may be considered: Dr. Dublin says that the Negro has always been a rural person and that he probably always had, sufficient satisfied, certain basic needs of diet and sunshine to keep him in comparatively good health. Also, because of the rural type of life he led and the climate (south) in which he lived, the Negro as a group acclimated its body to these conditions. Then when the group moved North, as a group it experienced what Dublin finds every other group making a like movement experiences. They moved out of their type of environment completely. They moved North to a very different climate; they moved to cities from rural areas, and being a poor group, were forced to live in the poor areas which are always about the center of the city and near to the manufacturing, which means in a very unhealthy atmosphere. Thirdly, they had to take work entirely different from that which they were accustomed; they now worked the menial jobs in factories, the more onerous of indoor jobs all over. Consequently, while individuals could have accustomed themselves to the change rather easily, the group as a whole had certain bodily characteristics which could adjust themselves to the new environment, and which require acclimatization, which can take place only over a period of years or, possibly even generations. This theory of Dr. Dublin has a great fascination and it would seem well for all students of the Negro problem to give it much consideration, especially as to realizing the amount of time

probably required to adjust to such a conflicting situation.⁴

⁴ Louis I. Dublin. "Health and Wealth" Ch. XII.

Mental Health. The incidence of mental disease in the survey district is rather high. According to the findings of Jane Svoboda in her "Ecological Survey of Milwaukee Mental Disease Patients in Public Hospitals in Wisconsin" the survey district, except for tract No. 29, is in the top sextile (the upper 25 tracts of the total 153 census tracts in the City of Milwaukee) when the tracts are arranged according to total mental disease rates. The rates per tract are: 246.30 per 100,000-tract 20, 249.76 per 100,000-tract 21, and 188.67 per 100,000-tract 30. The average of the tracts is 228.243 per 100,000 which is considerably above the median for this, the top sextile. Tract 29 has a rate of 128.01 per 100,000 which places it in the fourth sextile. However, even when this rate is averaged with the rates for the other tracts the mean is 203.135, which is still above the median for the top (sixth) sextile.⁵

⁵ Jane L. Svoboda. "An Ecological Survey of Milwaukee Mental Disease Patients in Public Hospitals in Wisconsin."

Tract 29 may show this difference due to a slightly different composition of its population. While it is populated to a large extent by Negroes, there are many whites who have lived in the area for an extremely long time. Many of them lived there before the Negro moved into the neighborhood. Thus, many of these whites are a very stable group of old "stock" which has lived in the one place a long time, has not subjected

itself to the many tensions of frequent moving, and stays where they are not so much of economic necessity or other pressures, but rather because of desire to remain in this one particular place.

Chapter IV

The Religious Life and Opportunities of the Negroes

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The Religious Life and Opportunities of the Negroes

There are about 28 churches in the survey district to which the Negroes are welcomed. There are about eleven or twelve denominations. Only seven of the Churches have regular church buildings, including two Catholic Churches, one Lutheran, one Methodist, and one Baptist.

The rest of the churches meet in store fronts or in dwellings. These store front churches are, in general, religious sects that spring up suddenly and die off rapidly, although a few seem to last for some time. Their religion is mostly of a superstitious type and is quite spiritualistic. They do much fortune telling and play up to the emotional nature of the Negro. They do not seem to be doing much good for the Negroes, probably, partly due to the nature of the religion and to the generally poor education of the ministers.

The other more common types of church groups, in general, do not have adequate facilities. The Catholic Churches, St. Benedict the Moor Mission and St. Francis' Church have fairly good church activity facilities. Few of the other churches have any extra meeting halls, church parlors, Sunday School rooms, or the like. While there are some parish organizations in some of the churches none of them seem to be or claim to be very strong. The organizations generally meet in the church proper and are commonly ladies aid organizations, mutual benefit groups and the like. Except among the Catholics, there is little youth activity of any sort carried on by the churches.

Some of the Churches have Sunday School classes--but the teachers are usually quite poorly trained for their work, which makes for a large limitation on their work.

There are less than 5000, probably just over 4000 Negroes who attend any one of the churches in the district. This is a very small number. Some claim that the reason is that most of the Negroes in Milwaukee came from the rural South, where religious opportunities were limited, so when they come to the city they do not carry any tradition of church-going with them. Others claim that there is so much else to distract the Negro in the city that he is drawn away from religion.

St. Benedict the Moor Mission has the largest following of Negro people, as well as the broadest plan for aid and actual performance of the most work. Besides the parish work they support a grade and high school for about 300 children. They have both boys and girls at their school. About 50% of their enrollment is in the boarding school while the rest are day students. They carry on a complete recreational program for their students--all the sports in season, and so on. They have a good playground which they use as a practice field for all of their sports.

The feeling seems to be that there are too many churches in the Negro district. They do not need near as many and they would probably get along better if many of the churches disbanded.

Also, certain of the Protestant churches feel that the white Protestant churches of the same sect do not do as much as they should for their Negro churches in the community.

Chapter V

The Education of the Negroes

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The Education of the Negroes

Little can be determined exactly about the education of the Negro. The School Board cannot keep any records which would indicate the color of a student. All that can be considered are the remarks of various school principals in the area.

There has been one study made of the education of the Negroes. This was made by the Milwaukee Vocational School in 1939¹. However, this study included only 630 cases so it did have a rather small and possibly selective sample. According to the study, 31.43% of the Negroes stopped school at the end of eighth grade or before as compared to the 14% of the whites who did the same. Only 29.1% of the Negroes finish high school as compared to the 57.02% of the whites who complete high school. This is a difference of about one-half. Then, only 4.9% of the Negroes get to go on to college for any length of time at all, while 12.32% of the whites get to go on to college for at least a short period.

¹ Milwaukee Vocational School. "Milwaukee Youth Report their Status"

According to a study the Urban League made in 1931 of its employment application cards, the average schooling was the fourth grade. However, there has been a great change in the population since then. There is a greater youth population now than there was then. There is very little illiteracy, however. This follows out the Federal report on illiteracy, which states that Wisconsin has the second lowest illiteracy rate with only 4% illiterate. There are nine medical doctors,

five lawyers, five dentists, and many ministers in the Negro district.

In regard to facilities, Negroes receive as good a quality of schooling as the whites. There are three public schools; Fourth Street School, Ninth Street School, and Roosevelt Junior High School, (plus the four-year high schools outside of the district; Lincoln High School, North Division High School, and Boy's Technical High School. Then, too, there is the Milwaukee Vocational School to which any resident of Milwaukee may go); there are two Catholic schools: St. Benedict the Moor (graded school and high school) and St. Francis school; there is one Lutheran School, St. Luke's School. At both the Fourth and the Ninth Street schools there are several Negro teachers. At both of these schools the Negroes comprise about 90% of the population. At Roosevelt Junior High school the Negroes make up about 17%. At St. Benedict's Mission there are only Negroes and at St. Francis' school there is a small part of the population that is Negro.

Some people say that the schools are doing a dis-service in educating the Negro children. To show what they mean they will cite an example similar to the following; which is a type of thing that continually occurs. The schools will teach a Negro girl to be a stenographer but they will not hire her in the school system as a stenographer. This is also applied to various civil service jobs. A Negro may be permitted to take and to pass the examination but he cannot receive a job.

There is also complaint that the vocational guidance given to Negro students is not good. The advisers strongly advise all of the

traditional Negro occupations and discourage any thought at stepping into the unusual. The public school advisers even recommend things like the following: they will suggest to a boy that he take courses in shoe repairing, rather than shoe making, on the grounds that he cannot get a job as a shoemaker anywhere. This is probably very true, and yet how will he ever get out of these traditional menial occupations if he knows nothing else? There is much that probably should be and could be done for the Negroes in Milwaukee in the line of education, but there still is little scientific knowledge about the Negroes' education.

Chapter VI

The Recreational Opportunities for the Negroes

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The Recreational Opportunities for the Negroes

The survey district receives a great deal of recreational leadership; probably as much or more than any other area in the City of Milwaukee. The Department of Municipal Recreation feels that the Negroes receive sufficient leadership in recreation. However, the Negroes feel that there is discrimination in certain activities. The equipment, facilities, and quality of leadership offered for indoor recreation are as good or better in the Negro community than any other area in the city. It is true that fault may be found with the outdoor facilities in the survey district.

There are four agencies in the survey district, public and private, offering recreational service to the Negroes.

In the survey district there are two social centers operated by the Department of Municipal Recreation of the Milwaukee Public Schools. One of these is located near the east-central edge of the survey district in the Fourth Street School building, the other is located in the north-west section of the district in the area known as Lapham Park. This is not really a park, but is rather an area in which there is a large playground and the building in which the Lapham Park social center is contained. Both of these centers are well-equipped--offering as much or more than the other social centers of the city, gymnasias, pool tables, table tennis, quiet game rooms, dancing, sewing lessons, special English lessons, many clubs, and like activities. They provide leaders for all of these activities. Most of the leaders

are white. At the Fourth Street Center only five out of twenty leaders are Negroes, while at the Lapham Park Center there are no Negro leaders. The explanation for this is given that they do not seem to be able to find good responsible Negro leaders.

These centers are open six days a week, with many afternoon activities and a few mother's clubs meeting in the morning and early afternoon, and, of course, a full program every evening. The season runs from September to the end of April, with the best months being in mid-winter. During the summer the recreational work is taken over by the Department of Municipal Athletics, which is a part of the Department of Municipal Recreation. The Fourth Street Center has its activities start after the end of the school day. The Lapham Center is not a school, however, and it carries on its program from noon until evening, when it has a complete schedule.

The Fourth Street Center is almost entirely Negro. Comparatively few whites live near or take advantage of what it offers. On the other hand, the majority of persons at the Lapham Center are white. At only three or four blocks to the west and to the north, the edge of the Negro district is found. Thus in addition to the whites within the district there is a large area of all-white dwellings which centers at Lapham Park.

The treatment of the Negroes at the Lapham Park social center is cause for much complaint by the Negroes. According to a survey made by Miss Bernice Copeland, a Negro, of the YWCA only 2% of the clubs at Lapham Park are open to Negroes. The members of the clubs are al-

lowed to make their own membership restrictions. The Negroes also complain that they have trouble securing basketball dates and in getting into other activities in the gymnasium. The Department of Municipal Recreation justifies this treatment of the Negroes on the grounds that the Fourth Street center is not used to capacity and it can be expanded to accommodate more Negroes if more Negroes would want to use it. Also, the Lapham Park center is an all-city center in which many city-wide activities are centered and take place. This along with the fact of so few using the center are the reasons which the Department of Municipal Recreation give for not hiring Negro leaders at this center. It is suggested, however, that if a Negro leader were hired many more Negroes might make use of the center activities and thus change the character of the center very greatly.

Any group that is not a secret society and makes no charge for profit, may have a room in a social center building for a meeting hall. The meeting is supposed to be open to all persons if it is held in the social center, but these rules are enforced only in a general sort of way.

The Milwaukee Department of Municipal Recreation maintains several playgrounds and a play area at which, in the summer months, it has leaders in constant attendance at all activities. Two of these are called playgrounds and the other a special play area. These do not supply adequate safe place for the number of youths in the district to play.

One of the playgrounds is at Lapham Park. It is a well-equipped

area, it has laid-out baseball diamonds, it is lighted at night, and so on. Across the street from the Lapham playground is the Ninth Street School and a large playground which is operated as a sort of annex to the Lapham playground. It is unlighted but it is quite large and can accomodate quite a few children in a great variety of games. The Ninth Street School ground is used almost exclusively by the Negroes; the Lapham playground is used by both whites and Negroes. These two playground offer quite satisfactory facilities. In addition to neighborhood use, the Lapham playground is used as a practice field for teams competing in the amateur leagues sponsored by the Municipal Athletic Office. Consequently there are many times when part of it is reserved for the use of these teams.

The other playground is at the Fourth Street School. This playground is quite small and is unlighted. It has several games laid out upon it, including a baseball diamond. The quality of the playground as a baseball field or for other sports requiring fairly large open spaces may be shown by one of its very unique features. In order to break up the usual monotonous "nothingness" of most ball fields, there are four large trees (retained when the playground was constructed) rather evenly distributed through the field just between where the outfielders should stand and the base lines. Besides the hazards of the trees, the playground is quite small and cannot accommodate any great number of people.

At Sixth and Vliet streets is another area which the Department of Municipal Recreation euphemistically calls a "special play area."

It is very unusual. At one corner there is a fence which serves as a backstop for baseball. It is this backstop which indicates to the observer that this is the play area. The size of the field is about 47 yards by 63 yards (with the last twenty yards of the 63 yard length being used to park automobiles) or just proper size for any twelve year old boy or older to be able to hit the ball "out of the park" with ease. There is no fence about the area to keep balls from rolling into the street less often and to keep the children from running into the street at almost any spot to chase a ball. This area is directly in back of the Milwaukee commission houses and thus there are trucks constantly moving over the streets surrounding this area. The ground is covered with fine cinders and has a low concrete wall, about eight inches high running most of the length of the field at about two-thirds of the distance from the "batter" to the edge of the left field.

These playgrounds and play areas are not at all satisfactory for the number of children to be accommodated in the area; they are too small, poorly equipped, and the play area is unsafe.

There is an indoor natatorium at Seventh and Highland Avenue, just south of the survey district, which is open and is used by the Negroes. In 1941 an outdoor pool was constructed at Tenth and Reservoir Streets. This was the result of much agitation because the Negro felt that he was not welcome at the other pools about the city. This seems to have been an extravagant project when so much else was needed. It consists of a large pool, fine shower rooms and locker rooms, built at the cost of \$250,000. It seems to have been very foolish spending on a rather

minor situation when this is compared to the housing needs of the community, for example.

There are three private agencies offering recreational leadership and facilities to the people of the survey district. They are the Milwaukee Urban League, the Y. W. C. A., and the Y. M. C. A.

The Urban League offers a large leisure time program for the Negroes of the community. It is, of course, exclusively for Negroes. They offer a large variety of sports in their gymnasium, dramatics, music, clubs of many sorts, sewing, knitting, health clinics, and many other such activities for all ages from young elementary school children to adults. There is a large staff of volunteer workers with the Urban League. Many of these workers are white. This group work carried on by the Urban League is really an incidental part of their major work and purpose, which is employment.

The Young Women's Christian Association maintains a six room cottage in the survey district as a department of the central YWCA in downtown Milwaukee. This organization sponsors 14 clubs for all ages of girls and women and two clubs whose membership is open to both males and females.

They sponsor many sports in season, dramatic groups, music groups, Mother's clubs, and so on. Its clubs and committees meet in the YWCA cottage, while gymnasium activities and dances are taken to the social centers or to the downtown YWCA building. This group has two staff workers and about sixty volunteer workers, practically all of whom are Negroes. This is the one group that is actively working to develop

leaders among the Negroes. They try to get Negroes to lead all of their activities in order to train them to lead Negroes in other endeavors. They are to be praised for this attitude because they are trying, not only to get good leaders for their activities but they also want their activities to serve as training grounds for leadership for other more important fields, as race relations. In this effort they differ from the social centers. The social centers hire only a very few Negroes because they cannot find good responsible Negro leaders, while the YWCA takes as many Negro leaders as possible in order to develop them for other work.

The Young Men's Christian Association has worked among the Negroes for about three years. It works mainly with boys, believing that the natural gang is the best way to start work; i.e., to get boys who always play together and have them form a club for some purpose. It has worked with many groups of boys in the district, but it is badly in need of more leaders. It could develop many more of these clubs among boys who desire to be members of the YMCA if it had more leaders.

There is no Negro Boy Scout troop in the district. Until the middle of 1941 there was a troop but it failed, due to inadequate leadership. There are about thirty-six Negro boys active in various other Boy Scout troops in or near to the district. The reason why no Negro Boy Scout troop presently exists is not laid to money but to lack of adequate leadership.

There are two Girl Scout troops in the district. One is at the

St. Benedict the Moor Mission and the other is at the Urban League. These troops, too, are having serious trouble trying to secure good leaders. The girls take part in the regular Girl Scout program except that no arrangements are made for summer camping.

All of the agencies doing group work among the Negroes, except the Department of Municipal Recreation, have a person or a group of persons in charge of activity within the district. In all cases the handicap with which the agencies are most concerned is inadequate leadership.

One of the things that the Negroes need most is large meeting hall space. Those halls that now exist are, according to Miss Copeland of the YWCA, except for two, behind or above taverns. Of the two large halls that exist, one, according to Dr. P. G. Gilmer of the Negro Welfare committee, is very unsafe. The social centers cannot be used for meeting halls for most purposes because no charges can be made. There is a good meeting hall which is used by many groups at the Urban League. A larger one is desired, however.

The Negro Welfare Committee of the Milwaukee Council of Social Agencies in its March 3, 1942 report¹ (amended March 17, 1942) recommends the following: 1. It urges that the Boy Scout and Girl Scout Movements become more active among the Negroes. Realizing that it is not in the general policy of these groups to go into an area to form troops, the committee recommends a slight change of policy since the Negroes feel that they are not welcome to many of the services of various social agencies. 2. The committee recommends

that a Negro worker be hired at the Lapham Park Social Center. They feel that then the Negroes would make greater use of this center. It also amended this section to a broader recommendation. It recommends a re-orientation of the social center work in the Sixth and Tenth Wards, in which wards most of the Negroes live, to take into consideration the changing character of the community due to the mobility of the population in the last ten years or so.² 3. It points out the need of meeting halls large enough to serve meals to a large group of people. 4. It recommends some form of integration of organizations working within the district.

In addition to these may be added the greatest recreational need of all. Good quality leadership is needed in very great quantity. This need is true not only in the recreational field but in every phase of Negro life.

¹ Report of Negro Welfare Committee of the Milwaukee Council of Social Agencies, March 3, 1942.

² Ibid., as amended March 17, 1942.

Chapter VII

Crime among the Negroes

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Crime among the Negroes

There is considerable amount of crime among the Negroes of Milwaukee; although this is a typical phenomena of any low income class group. In the low income groups the housing is generally poor, the health is generally poor, and there is generally a serious employment problem; this leads to domestic difficulties which leads to delinquency on the part of adults and children. Parental guidance does not seem to be very good. It has been noted that the background of most of the cases of delinquency among the Negroes is broken homes and poor earnings by the parents.

There seems to be a very high rate of truancy among the Negroes and this, of course, leads to high juvenile delinquency rates. Even though there are a considerable number of crimes few individual crimes, excepting sex offenses, are very serious. The crimes are for the most part some form of larceny on a small scale, purse snatching, stealing, hold-ups, burglaries, and so on. The amount stolen seldom is very large but the number of crimes is high. The stealing is mostly of things that are easily convertible to cash. There is little automobile stealing or the like. It is more likely that some iron will be stolen at one junk yard and sold back to the junk yard around the corner; this is a typical type of crime. There are a great number of sex offenses. Almost all girls who are delinquent are sex offenders. In cases of illegitimacy the Negro girl will in practically all cases keep her child, whereas the white girl with an illegitimate child will very often give

her baby to some private or public agency and ask them to raise it. The parents of the unwed girl will, in almost all cases, permit her to stay at home with her baby.

Among the adults, crime is about of the same nature. There are a great many sex offenses but most of the other crime is of rather minor seriousness. There is little violent crime in the district. Frequently someone is stabbed or cut with a knife in an emotional outburst, but there is little murder or planned crime. There are no gangs of any sort in the district, also, there is practically no pre-meditated crime.

There is much gambling in the Negro community. The Negroes run the policy racket in Milwaukee, which is played by Negroes and whites all over the city. In recent years it has been almost impossible to get a conviction on a "policy" charge. The lawyers always seem to be able to find some defect in the arrest process (illegal entry or some such thing) and thus they gain a dismissal of the charge. It is hard to get the district attorney to issue a warrant, and if a warrant is obtained it is hard for the police to get a conviction in the courts.

The crime condition in the Negro community cannot be much improved, it seems, until the economic condition is improved, and then it seems likely that the crime condition will help itself to a considerable extent,--due to the fact that economic necessity no longer forces so many Negroes into crime.

Chapter VIII

The Employment of Negroes

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The Employment of Negroes

The Negro employment situation in Milwaukee has been very bad. During the depression of the '30's most of the Negroes were unemployed. In fact, on January 31, 1941 the unemployment problem was still very bad. The records of the Department of Public Assistance of Milwaukee County show that 7.2% of the total cases receiving relief were Negroes¹. This means that 933 Negro heads of families were receiving assistance. The average number of persons per case for the whole city was 3.2. This means that approximately 3000 Negroes were receiving direct relief. It may be noted that the ratio of Negroes on the relief rolls is far out of proportion to the ratio to the total population. According to the United States Census Bureau data 34% of the Negroes of the city were, thus, still receiving relief on January 31, 1941, while but 2.05% of the whites of the city were receiving direct relief; if the Urban League population estimate is used the proportion of Negroes receiving direct relief is reduced to one-fourth or 25%-- still far above the proportion for the whites. This data was compiled when Milwaukee's industries were greatly increased and were in the process of increasing very greatly. It shows that the Negro was not being employed to the extent that such a business condition seems to warrant.

¹Milwaukee County Department of Public Assistance. "How Will Defense Affect the Relief Load."

It is true that the Negroes are, for the most part, unskilled workers and for this reason are not hired as readily as other whites.

However, it is also true that there has been discrimination by employers against colored workers. It has been charged by some that even most of the traditional Negro jobs are, in Milwaukee, white jobs. It is said that most household workers, personal maids, servants, elevator operators, janitors, charwomen, chauffeurs, and the like are whites, whereas in other cities the majority would be Negroes. The Milwaukee Negroes are satisfied that there are enough Negro policemen and postal clerks and that in certain government service they are fairly hired, but they do complain of discrimination in some government service and very much of it in private industry.

As a result of President Roosevelt's Executive Order of June 25, 1941 against discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin in industrial plants, engaged in Defense work, the Fair Employment Practice Committee was established. This committee has held hearings in various parts of the country. As a result of hearings held in Chicago, Illinois, attended by leading industrialists and Negroes of Milwaukee, five of Milwaukee's large industries who are manufacturing war materials were ordered to cease discrimination and to hire Negroes.¹ This order has had a considerable effect upon the employment situation in Milwaukee, many Negroes having been hired since this order was issued.

¹ Order by Fair Employment Practice Committee - April 13, 1942.

Without passing judgment upon such treatment, it must be remembered that ever since the Negro has been in the industrial labor

market of Milwaukee and other northern cities he has been the marginal laborer; he is the man who is hired to make the last possible margin of profitable production, and he is the man who is the first to be "laid off" when this margin is no longer profitable. Thus the economic value and position of the Negro in industry may be better understood. To this, of course, must be added the discrimination due to race prejudice which seems to exist but is very difficult to prove.

Chapter IX

Conclusions

Chapter IX

Conclusions

In studying the Negro community of Milwaukee there is one difficulty which makes conclusions about many things nearly impossible. This difficulty is inadequate population data. If the difference between the estimated population and the Census Bureau data was not so great, conclusions made according to either of these figures would not be likely to be in such great error. However, with the Census Bureau data being only two-thirds to three-fourths of the estimated total population in making any conclusions it is necessary to qualify which set of population data was used. This tremendous difference operates to the point that in considering some problems of the community, for example, infant mortality, it may on one hand seem to be a serious problem and on the other it appears no more serious than it is in the rest of the city. In using infant mortality data with the Census Bureau data the rate of infant mortality is 87 per 100,000 persons and when using the Urban League estimated population the rate is only about 60 per 100,000 persons -- which compares rather well with the total city population which is about 55 per 100,000 persons. Thus on the one hand infant mortality would seem a serious enough problem to warrant separate treatment and special care among the Negroes, while on the other hand the rate would seem to make separate consideration of the Negroes useless and not worthy of special notice. It is hard to determine which of these population figures has the most value. The Census Bureau has a reasonably proportionate change

from decade to decade and the work of the Real Property survey in 1939 shows a very similar total seeming to verify the Census Bureau data. On the other hand there are about 5,000 registered Negro voters in the city, which if the Census Bureau data is correct means that over half of the Negro population is over 21 years of age. It would seem that if the Census Bureau data is correct there are very many falsely registered voters. Then, too, most of the social agencies use the Urban League estimate believing it to be more correct, the feeling being that the League is so close to the Negro life they can give a more accurate count. It is hard to say if this feeling is justified or not until actual proof of the correct population is found.

It is for this reason of inadequate population data that health statistics and ratios seem, in some cases, to be almost worthless. Tuberculosis is the only disease which can definitely be claimed to be a serious problem peculiar to the Negroes of the survey district. Even with the high estimate of population the tuberculosis death rate is four and one-half times as great as the white rate for the city. Thus it can be shown that the special tuberculosis work among the Negroes is justified statistically; but this is the only disease which can be given with such definite statistics.

The housing of the Negro community is, probably, the worst of the obvious problems, although it is not the most fundamental. It is uniformly bad. There is, practically speaking, no living unit that can be said to be in good condition. The Negroes are given

the worst housing in the city and are made to stay there. The landlords refuse to make necessary repairs and yet the Negroes must pay a rent far out of proportion to the quality of their housing. Due to the fact that there is no group entering Milwaukee to take over the cheap housing (as immigrants do) and thus force the Negroes into better housing, it seems that the Negroes will stay in about the same area in which they are now located. In addition to the lack of external force to make the Negro move out of their present district there is the presence of internal pressure holding him where he is. At several times groups of Negroes have desired to move to some outlying area of the city in order to get better living units. Each time there were, it is true, efforts on the part of the white neighbors-to-be to stop this moving through the holding up of loans, petitions passed about and sent to governmental agencies and to various loan agencies, etc. The reason for this effort of the whites to keep them from moving to the outer edges of the city probably is that they do not want Negroes as neighbors because of race differences but, also, it is probably due to the great jump of economic class. In the same way fault has been found with some government housing projects because they lifted a very low economic group across several economic levels into good quality housing, fault may be found with the plans of various groups of Negroes to move to the outer edges of the city. They, as a group, want to move from their area of lowest economic class to that of an economic class several levels above them. Their neighbors-to-be resent this intrusion of a group

economically so far below them, and the levels over which they pass resent the skipping of their levels and the fact that they must remain where they are. It may well be considered that the Negroes would do better to slowly invade the housing areas of the next lowest economic class forcing them to rise a step and thus making many groups rise in the quality of their housing. However, there were, also, strong factions within the community which brought pressure upon the person desiring to move. They would claim that such a move was endangering the Negro's position, i.e., such a move would upset the balance of political power. Having less voters and less persons to bring pressure to bear upon government for special Negro works was cause for concern among many Negro factions and thus the plan of moving to outlying districts has been dropped in every case. This pressure against upsetting the political balance of power applies, even within the district. The Tenth Ward covers a part of the survey district and there is strong objection by political factions to any move from the Sixth to the Tenth ward or vice-versa. Any new improvements or new housing for the Negroes in Milwaukee will have to take place within the present approximate area in which they live. The Negroes do not want to move to other areas partly because of pressures of whites in the new area and partly because of pressures within their group, and partly (by their own admission) they like the bright lights and the activity of the downtown city in which they live and they do not want to get away from it.

The Negroes are poorly supplied with recreational facilities.

There is one social center in which the Negroes are welcome. At the other social center, in the survey district, the whites dominate; very few Negroes take part in the activities. The playground facilities are very poor for any games that need a fairly large area, such as football or baseball. The only good playground is at Lapham Park and this is an all-city playground and is dominated by whites. They probably could use a few more meeting halls at their churches (there are practically none, now). If they had more meeting halls they would probably stay out of the great number of taverns in the neighborhood, at least during the time of the meetings. However, recreation is not fundamental. The idea through the years has been to supply the unemployed with good leisure time activities so as to keep him out of crime and other trouble. This is a worthy purpose, of course, but would it not be time better spent if the efforts to provide so much leisure time activities were reduced somewhat and this effort was put forth in aiding the Negroes to obtain employment and in trying to overcome discrimination on the part of employers and in trying to better race relations, generally--to overcome race prejudice?

There is great need for good Negro leadership in the community. The YWCA is working along the proper lines, it seems, in trying to get Negroes to lead their clubs and group work and to thereby learn the principles of good leadership which they can apply to other phases of Negro life. There is a real need for a great deal more of this.

The employment problem is a serious one. The federal Fair Employment Practice Committee has found five large Milwaukee industries guilty of discriminating against Negroes. There are, probably many other employers who discriminate--as well as labor unions and fellow workers. While the Negro is being employed, as a result of this order, it is also true, probably, that this is due, mostly, to the war effort. After the factories get back to normal peace-time production again the Negroes will very likely be laid off due to the fact that they are employed as the marginal laborers. In addition to the problems of discrimination and prejudice against race and color it is at this point of being, economically speaking, the marginal laborer that the Negroes' problem is focused. If he had enough work to support himself and family, he would, probably, be just as willing to keep to his own group. The Negroes are not, particularly, asking for social acceptance by the whites; i.e., they want equal economic opportunity and social equality but they do not (at least at present) insist upon entering the social life of the whites. The Negro does show that he wants to stick to his own group. As a possible conclusion it is offered that the problem of the Negro in Milwaukee and other northern cities would probably not now exist if the free immigration to the United States had not been stopped. During the time of the World War the industries needed a large cheap labor supply. Due to the fact that the war was in progress there was no immigration and thus no supply of cheap immigrant labor as had formerly existed when industries had periods of great prosperity and increased demand to the limit of their capacities. Hence the

factories turned to the southern Negroes and imported great numbers of them. They were really immigrants to the Northern cities. Then after the war was over the quota laws, virtually stopping immigration, were passed. Thus, the Negro was kept at his position of marginal laborer because there was no cheap labor supply entering the country to take the marginal laborer's place and force him (the Negro) up a step due to his knowledge and experience in the factory. In the years of free immigration it may be recalled that the latest group of immigrants always took the cheapest housing and the lowest paying and the most menial jobs. Then as they gained experience and as more persons entered the country they moved up the economic scale. It seems, then, that the Negroes' position is that of the last group of immigrants to reach the bottom rung of the economic ladder (the marginal laborer) and after he reached this position there was a cutting off of any further group who might have followed him. Thus there was no group behind him seeking the lowest type of jobs who would force the Negro to take a higher position on the economic scale. This applies, of course, only to northern industry, not in the South where the Negro is essentially a rural person.

It may be wondered if the migrant laborers of the West Coast, in particular, are not the answer to this problem of a cheap labor supply - or, rather, a cheap marginal labor supply.

Appendix

The Milwaukee Urban League

The Milwaukee Urban League was organized in Milwaukee in 1919. The primary concern of the League is the employment of Negroes. However, due to the bad housing conditions and the poor health conditions the League has turned to other problems of the Negro also. It does work in the field of community organization also. Since 1929, when so many Negroes were unemployed, the Urban League has done a considerable amount of work in providing leisure time activities for the community.

The Urban League offers activity in almost every phase of Negro life. Its main work, of course, is its free employment service. It also conducts a varied group work program under leadership of whites and Negroes. It offers gymnasium activities, boxing, basketball, dramatics, music, handicraft, art, health clinics and instructions for mothers, summer camp services, and various similar activities.

It attracts many persons to its activities. In October 1941 there was an attendance of about 800 different persons.

Its biggest problem at present is trying to find a sufficient number of good leaders.

The Urban League is a member of the Milwaukee County Community Fund and Council of Social Agencies and derives its main support from this fund.

Young Women's Christian Association

The Young Women's Christian Association has a department for the Negroes in the city. This department (not a branch) has a six room cottage in the survey district which it uses as office, meeting room for clubs and committees and central point about which YWCA activities in the district revolve.

It sponsors sixteen different clubs for all ages of girls. It sponsors sports in season, dramatic groups, music groups and a complete line of leisure time activities. For any activity such as a dance or gymnasium work it gets the use of the central YWCA building in downtown Milwaukee or one of the social centers. It has 540 active members and an electorate of ninety-three. It claims that it does not duplicate the work of the social centers since its program is far more intensive.

The YWCA tries to get Negro leaders in all of its activities--feeling development of leadership is as much or more important than having an experienced good leader in every one of its activities.

It has a service club which is active in trying to improve race relations and the place of the Negro in society. It carries on some employment service--but this work is left to the Urban League which was established for this purpose.

It has carried on vacation time religion classes, but the churches are now taking over this work.

The YWCA is more than three-fourths self-supporting and the remainder of the budget is met by the Community Fund, of which it is a member agency.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

The St. Vincent de Paul Society has been giving assistance to the Negro since 1913. Sometimes the central office would work among them, sometimes the salvage bureau would supply them with needed articles and sometimes the neighboring parish societies would carry on work within the Negro community. The work of the Society consists in supplying of material articles where needed, giving spiritual aid to families in religion and domestic relations, and in friendly visiting.

For six years, from 1935 to 1941, the central office had a full time worker among the Negroes. He was very successful in carrying out the work of the Society and laid a good foundation for further intensive work. He assisted about 50 to 100 cases per month. Since he has left there has been a committee of men from other Catholic parishes in the city who carry on this work among the Negroes as voluntary work. This committee will aid about 400 to 500 cases per year.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is supported by contributions of its members and by Catholic Charities throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association

The Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association is, at the present time, conducting a Better Health Drive, in connection with the Milwaukee Health Department and with the cooperation of several other local agencies. It has a very intensive program, the objectives of which include a tuberculin test for every child and an x-ray of every adult and of every child who is positive reactor to the test. These x-rays are to be taken by the photo-fluorographic unit which the WATA maintains in its trailer. This trailer is stationed at various points in the survey district on announced dates and the people of the neighborhood are contacted and strongly encouraged to take advantage of the offer. If these 35 mm. pictures show any signs of tuberculosis, the Milwaukee Health Department arranges to take large 14 in. by 17 in. pictures of the individual for a more careful diagnosis. There have been several cases of tuberculosis discovered in this way and arrangements were made to send the individual to Muirdale, the Milwaukee County Tuberculosis Sanitarium.

The findings up to the present time have been well above normal. It is interesting to note that in practically all of the cases thus far diagnosed as tuberculous the individual has been found to have a record of eight or more clearances at the Social Service Exchange. This fact leads the WATA to say that tuberculosis is an index disease-- where it is found are also found other social problems. This does seem to be born out by the findings in the Milwaukee Negro community, in which the tuberculosis rate is several times higher than the white rate for the rest of the City.

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