

# OPPORTUNITY

L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD  
*Chairman*

EUGENE KINCKLE JONES  
*Executive Secretary*

CHARLES S. JOHNSON  
*Editor*

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Telephone Gramercy 3078

WILLIAM H. BALDWIN  
*Secretary*

LLOYD GARRISON  
*Treasurer*

ERIC WALROND  
*Business Manager*

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## URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRY

The program for the Annual Conference of the National Urban League to be held in New York City, February 2nd to 5th, 1926 will include the following subjects:

"PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SERVICE."

"HOW THEY AFFECT THE NEGRO, and

"A PROGRAM TO MEET THESE NEEDS."

"EXPERIENCE OF NEGROES WITH LABOR UNIONS"

—*Report of a study being made by the League's Department of Research and Investigations—Chas. S. Johnson, Director.*

"TRAINING FOR INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES"—*A symposium under the auspices of the Department of Industrial Relations—T. Arnold Hill, Director.*

"INDUSTRY AND THE NEGRO."

"THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH COMPETE IN THE INDUSTRIAL FIELD."

"HEALTH."

"RACE RELATIONS."

For reservations address:

James H. Hubert, Executive Secretary  
New York Urban League  
202 West 136 Street, New York City.

For information address:

Eugene Kinckle Jones, Executive Secretary  
National Urban League  
127 East 23rd Street, New York City.

## THE NEGRO IN INDUSTRY

The February issue of OPPORTUNITY will be a special Industry Number in which the numerous and perplexing problems of Negroes in their recent contacts with the industrial world and of that broad economic structure on which their status now rests. There will be discussions of the Negro in Steel, Cotton, Mining, Building Trades, Textiles, Meat Packing; newer developments of northward migrations; the point of view of employers of Negroes and of the labor union movements; Negro radicalism; the Negro farmer; immigration; and training for trades.

The issue will be enlarged and along with the special feature articles, there will be stories, poetry, illustrations and abstracts of useful information on the question of industry and labor, and book reviews. This issue will be especially useful for all those concerned with the economic problems of Negroes and of the new questions arising in the economic life of the country.

## Negro Migration in New York State

By EUGENE KINCKLE JONES

THE Negro population in northern United States increased in the ten years between 1910 and 1920 from 1,000,000 to more than 1,500,000. Since the larger part of this half million increase occurred in the few years prior to 1920 and the increase since 1920 has been at about the same rate, it is fair to estimate that there are now close to two million Negroes north of the Mason and Dixon line. The increase was due in the main to the migration of Negroes from the South and to the relatively small West Indian immigration.

The increase in the Negro population of New York State from 1910 to 1920 was 64,292. In 1910 the Negro population was 134,191; in 1920, 198,483. Estimated on the basis of an annual increment of 9,363, the 1925 Negro population of this State can conservatively be estimated at 245,296. This is on the assumption that the annual increase from 1910 to 1915 was the same as between 1900 and 1910, and the 1915 to 1920 annual increment continued through to 1925. Of the State's Negro population of 198,483 in 1920, 31,425 were born in Virginia; 26,428 in the Carolinas (about an equal number from North and from South Carolina); Georgia furnished 8,650; Maryland, 4,272; Florida, 3,657, and the Northern States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, 3,537 and 3,611 each. There were 25,454 from the West Indies outside of the United States' possessions and 1,431 from the Virgin Islands. It is estimated that there was a net increase of about 24,000 foreign born Negroes in the United States between 1920 and 1923. New York City's Negro population in 1920 was 152,467, leaving a total of 46,016 in other sections of the State. The Negro population in New York City at present is in excess of 200,000.

Before discussing in detail the situation in regard to the factors which led to the Negro migration to this State and the social complexion of the Negro population here, it might be well to discuss a little the general Negro question from the standpoint of the Negro in the North, which will have a direct bearing on the situation in this State.

Although the migration from the South has been largely from rural and small town districts, the population in the North is almost entirely centered in urban communities, where death and birth rates are about equal, thereby providing practically no natural increase. The majority of the million Negro new-comers mentioned above came to the North preceding and following the participation of the United States in the World War. The causes of this migration are well known—the industrial labor vacuum caused in the North by the departure of foreign reservists for service in Europe, drafting of many men from the North's industrial centers, the speeding up of industry incident to the war, and the push from the South caused by the

withholding of personal, civic and educational rights from the Negro, and especially the persistent persecution of Negroes by the lawless white element, against which no protection was afforded. Though it is true that in the South the Negro has not been denied industrial opportunity as a skilled or unskilled worker, his wages there have been relatively low and his treatment at the hands of white men in authority, both on the job and in connection with his civic and home affairs, has made him feel constantly restricted and oppressed.

A discussion ten years ago on the Negro in the North would have consisted primarily of a consideration of the housing conditions and the general wage scale of Negroes employed here and there in responsible positions where their work was in the main associated with white people. But a discussion of this subject today would embrace a study of these masses of Negroes who have recently come to the North, the successes or failures with which they have met in seeking social adjustment, the development of larger industrial opportunities individually and as a group and the material progress made thus far in business and professional life. Negro cities, as it were, within the already established cities, may be seen in New York, in Pittsburgh, in Boston, in Chicago, in Cleveland, in Detroit, in Philadelphia and in many other Northern and border communities. Here Negro banks, theatres, hotels, restaurants, stores of all kinds, real estate offices and modern churches with social service facilities are in evidence, and Negro doctors, lawyers, architects, social workers and other professional men and women are kept constantly busy ministering to the needs of their own people.

Of course, Negroes have been migrating to the North in large numbers during the period between the Civil War and the World War. But this migration has only been in answer to the demand, in the main, for personal servants, and such social problems among Negroes as arose in Northern cities were of such gradual growth that, though existent, they did not alter to any great extent the condition of the communities. When the war period set in, however, communities to which Negroes went began to realize that they had a new problem of their own.

The economic urge has probably been the strongest force at work in inducing Negroes to seek new abodes. Records show that even from many counties in Georgia, Alabama and Texas where lynchings have been most numerous, Negroes have left in smaller proportionate numbers than from those counties where no lynchings have occurred, provided the economic conditions were not unfavorable in the former sections. In fact, in several counties where lynchings have been frequent, the whites have left in larger proportionate numbers than have the Negroes.

Therefore, in moving North, the Negroes have sought those communities giving them the most promising industrial and economic outlook. These communities in an overwhelming majority of cases have been those where basic industries thrived. Thus Pittsburgh and Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago, and the satellite towns of Gary, Duquesne, Homestead and Steelton have received large Negro accretions. Between 1910 and 1920 Negro population of Akron increased 749.3%; Detroit, 611.3%; Chicago, 148.2%; Cleveland, 307.8%; Toledo, 203.2%.

New York State has but few cities of the type sought by Negroes in the recent migration. Thus with the exception of New York City and Buffalo few cities in the State have received very great additional Negro citizens. Buffalo's Negro population increased 154.4 per cent between 1910 and 1920 and New York City's 66.3 per cent.

Withal, life among the Negroes in New York City is approaching a normal state. The cosmopolitanism of the city attracts the Negro. The heterogeneity of the population has generated an atmosphere of freedom and democracy. The city's reputation has been broadcasted to every nook and corner of the Southland, and when Negroes decide to move it is natural for those along the Atlantic Seaboard to think of New York and act accordingly.

The present British West Indian immigration of the Negro is now very small due to the recent interpretation of the British quota understanding which links the British West Indian citizen with those of the British Isles in determining the number of West Indians who are eligible to enter our port. The custom has been for those who have come in the past to remain in New York with but few going on to other cities.

Buffalo's increase in Negro population from 1,773 to 4,511 between 1910 and 1920 and to 9,058 by 1923 was due principally to the activities of the Lackawanna Steel Company, which at one time had as many as 1,000 Negro employees. It brought 6,000 Negroes into Buffalo, but its wages were so much lower than those maintained by other industries in that community that it was able to retain less than one thousand of this number, the excess being employed by six other industries which used Negroes in considerable numbers. The brick-yards along the west shore of the Hudson River, centering at Haverstraw, employ Negroes in considerable numbers during the brick-making season and there are several industries in Syracuse and Rochester that use them in some numbers.

The largest majority of the Negro migrants have settled in New York City and the adjacent counties of Westchester and Nassau. One has to seek a variety of occupations to locate the attraction, and it is found that Negroes are employed in numbers in New York in 316 of the 321 occupations listed in the Federal Census for New York City. In each of 175 of these occupations over 50 Negroes are employed. It is interesting to note the prepon-

derance of women over men in the Negro population of New York City, the ratio being 92.6 Negro men to 100 Negro women. This is because of the fact that there have been more jobs available for women than for men—domestic service claiming, as in years past, the largest number of Negro women employees.

In recent years some significant changes have taken place. Last year there were over 3,000 women workers in the garment trades. They are also employed as milliners and as novelty makers. Although there has been an increase in the actual number of colored women employed as domestic servants, the proportion of colored women to the total number of domestic servants has decreased. This is a reflection of the increase in men's wages and improvement in the types of jobs available to Negro men. There has been an actual reduction in the number of married colored women at work. There are over 6,000 Negro longshoremen in New York City. Men are also employed as chauffeurs, porters in mercantile establishments and in railroad terminals and on the subway and elevated lines. There is a great increase in the number of Civil Service employees—Municipal, State and Federal. Negroes are entering business and engaging more largely in the professions. Their physicians, lawyers, clergymen, school teachers, real estate operators and social workers are increasing rapidly as capable persons are acquiring the necessary training.

Mrs. G. E. McDougald, in a study of advancement of former Negro public school pupils cites several interesting typical cases of individual achievement of Negroes. The first and the last positions of the individuals are listed:

<i>First Position</i>	<i>Promoted to</i>
Prescription clerk . . . . .	Assistant manager of store of large drug syndicate
Junior clerk . . . . .	Superintendent of P. O. Station
Laborer . . . . .	Clerk in the U. S. Customs
Watchman . . . . .	Inspector of Immigration
Errand boy . . . . .	Machine operator on furs
Stenographer . . . . .	Editor-in-chief, New York Branch of a Rome publishing house.
Helper . . . . .	Mechanic
Draftsman (electric) . . . . .	Designer in charge
Letterer . . . . .	Combination man—oil picture signs
Waiter . . . . .	Steward
Carpenter . . . . .	Foreman
Baker . . . . .	Foreman
Kitchen boy . . . . .	Steward
Private medical practice.	Clinician, Mt. Sinai Hospital
Medical interne . . . . .	Resident surgeon, Bellevue Hospital
Lawyer . . . . .	Municipal Civil Service Commission

Towards the close of the unemployment period of 1914, when the Seventh Avenue Subway was being

constructed in New York, the National Urban League placed several hundred Negro laborers with subway contractors. In the present new subway construction there are several young Negro engineers employed in this service. As evidence of a growing opportunity for trained young colored men and women in this State, I refer to a few unusual positions held by Negroes: Draughtsmen in the building department of the Board of Education and in the Department of Docks and Bridges; special writer on a large daily newspaper; special writer for women's page of a large monthly periodical; salesman for a very large real estate firm; sub-contractor for building the forms for the concrete being poured for the foundations of the new Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital; civil engineer employed on this job, which is keeping about 125 carpenters and laborers busy; 500 public school teachers; a vice-principal; a principal retired this year; lecturers for the Board of Education; Department of Health nurses; a certified public accountant; instructors in a dental college and in an ophthalmic college. I mention a few of the important positions as they are filled almost entirely by Negroes who have migrated to New York State. And, incidentally, here we might state that three-fourths of the businesses conducted by Negroes in New York City are owned by Southern Negroes and a large part of the remainder by West Indians.

New York City has become the center of intellectual and cultural life among Negroes of America as a result of the migration. The headquarters of the leading Negro organizations working for Negro welfare, whether social or civil, are located in this city, and the most successful, influential and intellectual leaders of the race have been engaged by these organizations to conduct their national activities and propaganda from New York as a center. Thus this community has become the dynamo for generating the social energies propelling the Negro masses towards what they hope will be a better day. There are Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, the race's most fluent and influential writer, a native of Massachusetts, coming to New York from Georgia, where he had been for fourteen years, who is the Editor of the *Crisis*, the organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and James Weldon Johnson, poet, author, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a native of Florida and one of the race's most trusted and serviceable leaders; and William Pickens, one of America's great orators, uncompromising champion of Negro rights, a native of Arkansas; Harry Burleigh, musician, composer, baritone in St. George's Choir, known for his musical works, not as a Negro musician, a native of Erie, Penna.; and Paul Robeson, actor, born in New Jersey; and Charles Gilpin, of "Emperor Jones" fame, native of Richmond, Va.; and Charles S. Johnson, brilliant editor of *OPPORTUNITY—A Journal of Negro Life*, native of Bristol, Va.; and Walter F. White, author and publicist, formerly of Atlanta; and Jessie Fauset, author and assistant to the *Crisis* editor, native of Philadelphia; Chan-

ning H. Tobias, Director of Colored Y. M. C. A. work, native of Augusta, Ga.; Miss Eva Bowles, holding a similar position with the Y. W. C. A., a native of Columbus, Ohio, and many other such individuals who have adopted New York as their home.

It seems to be a general impression among Negroes throughout the country that in this State they have a better chance for advancement, more rights as citizens and better prospects for the future than in other States of the Union. When the saturation point is reached for the moment in the increase of Negro population in New York and there is a dearth of jobs available to those who have migrated to the city, the backwash or surplus Negro population goes into such New Jersey communities as Plainfield, Newark, the Oranges, Jersey City, Montclair, Paterson, and into Westchester County towns such as New Rochelle, Mt. Vernon, White Plains and Yonkers and such Long Island centers as Mineola, Rockville Center, Glen Cove, Hempstead and Freeport.

Of course, with the large increase in the Negro population in this State, especially New York City, there must be attendant problems of housing and health and a decided increase in delinquency, juvenile and adult.

Due to the strategic move on the part of certain colored real estate men some fifteen years ago, the Negroes in New York City are occupying one of the most healthful districts of our large city—that is Harlem, where, north of 125th Street, 100,000 Negroes are now residing. Unfortunately, the houses built before their arrival were not designed to meet the needs and cope with the economic handicaps of the Negroes. Most of the inhabitants have been forced to occupy apartments with rentals beyond their income, and the lodger evil has complicated the social life of the group. In recent years an effort has been made to build houses with two, three and four-room apartments; but with the high cost of building material and labor, the average rental per room has been from \$20 to \$25 and the problem is still present in a little different form. Corona, Jamaica, Flushing, East New York and several other suburban sections in and around New York have furnished some relief by affording small five and six-room homes to thrifty home buyers of average income.

Although there has been very little natural increase in the Negro population, the movement of Negroes into zones of better living and working conditions is resulting in better health conditions. The death rate among Negroes is gradually on the decrease. In fact, the death rate in Northern cities is lower among Negroes today than in Southern cities, despite the advanced age group comprising our Northern Negro population and the alleged difficulties that Negroes are supposed to experience in adjusting themselves to the more rigorous winters of the North. The Negro death rate in New York City was 37.5 per 1,000 in 1890; in 1910 it was 25, and in 1921 was 17.9. The Negro infant mortality in New York City is decidedly on

the decline, following inversely the trend of family income of Negroes.

In 1915, when an investigation was made of infant mortality among the Negroes in New York City, it was discovered that in one section of the city where the largest percentage of mothers worked and where the families had the smallest incomes and the largest percentage of lodgers, and therefore more overcrowding, Negro infant mortality was 314 per 1,000, while for the entire city for the colored people it was 202 per 1,000 and for the whites 96 per 1,000. A campaign of improvement was organized in which social welfare agencies, the Health Department, employment placement bureaus, public schools, and, in fact, all agencies that touch the life of the family were brought into active cooperation to handle effectively this unfortunate situation. The Negro infant mortality for the city was reduced in two years from 202 per 1,000 to 173 per 1,000—a reduction of 29 points. In 1919, the infant mortality among Negroes in that district in New York City where in 1915 the rate was 314 per 1,000 had been reduced to a point lower than the infant mortality of the whites in the same district.

While there is not sufficient data for a scientific prophecy of the industrial future of the Negro group in New York State, we have sufficient information to form an opinion hopeful or otherwise. In a recent survey in Buffalo of 45 industrial plants employing 2,922 Negro workers, 32 were satisfied with their labor and 13 were not. Of the 13, estimates ranged from tolerance to such qualified expressions of satisfaction as "fair" or "greater part are satisfactory," and "in some respects 'yes' and the most part 'no.'" One interesting reply should be noted. A plant that had never employed more than one colored worker stated that because this man was found dishonest, the plant had established a policy of employing no more Negroes. One plant reported that it found them "90% efficient." This indicates a willingness to employ Negroes indefinitely. Furthermore, the variety of work engaged in by Negroes in New York City precluded a likelihood of any wholesale dismissing of Negro workers. Also there are already evidences of a demand for both skilled and unskilled workers in excess of a possible available supply from white immigration and normal increase of native white workers through the existing agencies of developing new workers. Although the growth of the union labor movements threatened Negro artisans, 1920 saw an increase in Negro carpenters from 268 to 737, chauffeurs from 490 to 2,195, workers on clothing from none to 6,000 and workers in textiles from a very few to 2,685; shoemakers from 14 to 581; stationary firemen from 249 to 1,076, and mechanics from very few or none to 467. Incidentally Negro real estate agents increased from 89 to 247. Evidently the Negro migrant is here to stay a while. It is somewhat of a paradox, however, that in those lines where the unions, workingmen's friends, are strongest, the Negro has made the scantiest progress.

Ten years added but eighteen Negro brick-masons, eighty-one painters, sixteen plasterers and forty-two plumbers. But even in this direction the future is not without its encouraging prospects. In New York City an organization composed of white and colored representatives of Trade Unions has recently been formed to help increase the number of Negro members of the Trade Unions.

The most discouraging phase of the Negro migration situation is that of delinquency. A much larger proportion of Negroes are arrested and convicted of crimes and misdemeanors than they comprise of the total population. This is unquestionably due in large measure to the absence of preventive social forces in the lives of adolescent Negro youth. The much smaller juvenile delinquency rate, however, indicates that there is no racial bent toward crime and that with the further development of the agencies of social control, there will be a turn for the better. During the migration period juvenile delinquency among Negro children in New York increased from a point less than the Negro's proportion of the population to a point slightly in excess of their proportion of the population. In 1922 out of 817 cases in the Children's Court of Buffalo only four were colored—two boys and two girls—while the figures for Buffalo showed up well for the colored children, they probably indicate laxity in handling the child problem among the colored people in Buffalo, on the part of the municipal authorities. I should say before leaving this point that the Children's Aid Society in Buffalo has done some very fine work with colored cases coming under its supervision.

Negro church organizations and social service movements are developing more efficiency and better organized programs of service. The personnel employed by these organizations is increasingly of a higher intellectual standard and as a result of their work the standard of living among Negro families seems to be improving. The schools are recording great increases in pupils in the elementary and high school grades also for collegiate and professional studies. The Negro church has developed more rapidly, of course, than any other one institution among the Negro migrants of the State. Practically every group of a hundred or more Negroes in scores of towns throughout the State has its church organizations. In Buffalo fifteen Negro churches are in existence, five having edifices. The total value of the church property there is \$294,200 and the membership of eleven churches was 2,789 in 1923. In Greater New York the seating capacity of Negro churches was 24,000 in 1920. In 1924 it was 21,000 in Harlem alone. The most costly Negro church edifice in Harlem—the Mt. Olivet Baptist—was purchased for \$450,000. The Abyssinian Baptist Church, containing institutional features, was erected at a cost of \$325,000, with only \$25,000 remaining on mortgage. The St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church has over a million dollars of church and apartment house property. The St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church is erecting a new institu-

tional church there at a cost of nearly half a million dollars. There are four Harlem churches with parish houses, four others with institutional features and several contemplating extra social service activities. In Westchester County alone there are thirty-eight established colored churches with between 7,000 and 7,500 seating capacity available to a total Negro population of 11,066. Thirty-two of these churches own or are buying property.

In Nassau and Suffolk Counties there are thirty-three colored churches, twenty-five of which are owned by the colored people and cater to a colored population in twenty towns and villages of between 8,000 and 10,000 persons, 42 per cent of whom migrated to these counties between 1910 and 1920.

All of these factors are tending to produce a group of citizens conscious of their civic and social responsibilities.

The increase in the Negro population in the State due to the migration is adding to the political strength of the group in the State. Several years ago there were a Negro assemblyman and two Negro aldermen at one time representing the Harlem Negroes in legislative bodies. During the last presidential campaign a Negro made a creditable run for Congress from this same district. This increased voting strength is sensibly divided between the various parties and is reflected in increased representation in the appointive positions accorded the race in the city and State. Some more important positions of recent years have been State Commissioner of Agriculture, Municipal Civil Service Commissioner, Collector of Internal Revenue (Federal), Deputy Federal District Attorney, Assistant District Attorney for New York County.

Not only the Negro political representatives of the Negro population, but the white politicians also who have increasing Negro constituencies are in the main making honest efforts to help in the up-building of the Negro's civic life.

If there is any concern at all in connection with Negro migration to this State, rather should it be on the attitude assumed by the white citizens of our various communities towards the newcomers. We are engaged in America in an experiment of national life which at present is an example to the rest of the world. We have made great strides forward in handling most all of the social problems we face. Probably we have made less progress in solving the problem of race contacts than in any other direction. Most people assume an air of indifference towards this question. Others are prejudiced—bitter and unreasonable. But we cannot forever ignore the problem. New York State has probably shown a fairer attitude and more open mind in handling these questions than has any other State of our country and New York City may prove to be the laboratory in which the most satisfactory local experiment will be conducted. Certainly there is no single spot of its size on the globe where so many white people and Negroes reside and where ambition and competition are so strong, and yet where there are so few points of friction.

The opportunity for statesmanship service to humanity is ours. The obligation is ours. We cannot pass on to posterity the responsibility for work which we should assume. The challenge of democracy is before us. The Negro is probably the real test of democracy in America. Shall this democracy endure? The Negro migrant to New York State may yet give the answer.

*(Delivered at the New York State Conference of Charities and Corrections, Hotel Roosevelt, New York City, Friday, Dec. 11, 1925.)*

## The New Year

By J. HARVEY L. BAXTER

WITH gladsome hearts we hail the new born  
year,  
Behold his face with high uplifted hands,  
Infant of age attired in swaddling bands;  
Rejoicing souls the great advent declare,  
While sun, and moon, and stars the glory share.  
He is our king, and now he reigns, commands,  
The vaulted skies, the seas and sundry lands:  
In weal or woe, 'tis joy to greet him here.

Since he has come, O, may we ask anew  
To serve the year with love and majesty,  
Pray and resolve that all we think or do  
Shall come within the scope of charity?  
And should we fail or die ere it is through,  
May it not be for lack of loyalty?