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The Negro Miner in West Virginia

James Tamplin Laing
The Ohio State University

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THE NEGRO MINER IN WEST VIRGINIA

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School, of The Ohio State University

By

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Approved by:

Gene C. North

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND METHOD

I. SCOPE AND PURPOSE.-

A large number of the studies of the American Negro which have appeared in recent years have been devoted to a discussion of his place on the economic front. One cannot contemplate this fact without realizing that authorities have looked upon the economic as one of the most fruitful approaches to the study of race relations. The logic of such a position becomes immediately apparent. It is impossible to think of the American Negro apart from the economic system. He had his origin and his being within it. He was brought to America not so much as a man, or because of the humanitarian efforts of his captors who, even at that early time, had the idea of "the white man's burden." He was brought as a sort of human, or near-human cog, which, upon arrival in America, was fitted into the American economic machinery.

In America the status of the Negro became fixed. The white master, although the master-slave relation was foreign to the mores of northern Europe, soon became accommodated to the system.¹ The slaves themselves perhaps had not so far to go as did their masters in becoming habituated to the economic system. Slavery was the basis of a great

¹ Reuter, E. B., The American Race Problem, Crowell, 1927, pp. 101-103.

deal of African agriculture and industry. Thus, we have the acceptance of status by both groups and this status became a part of the growing American mores. Due to the completeness of the accommodation of both races we did not have a race prejudice in early America in the sense that we have it today. It was only when a new status was created by a crisis that we have the development of the modern phenomenon.

What actually happened, of course, with the freeing of the Negro was that there was suddenly created a new status for which neither whites nor Negroes were prepared. Culturally defined behavior patterns, which control the activity and thoughts of men, have very little respect for proclamations of emancipation or constitutional amendments. Thus, we have a new situation in which the behavior patterns of the old system persist as a culture lag. In such a situation we have antagonisms and prejudices growing up which did not exist in the old order in the same degree. More and more we are coming to see that what we have been thinking of as race or color prejudice is more nearly a class or caste prejudice.³ For the person caught up and conditioned in the prevailing culture type in America, however, whiteness and blackness are symbols which call forth antagonistic atti-

² Ibid., pp. 103-104.

³ Miller, Herbert A., Race and Class Parallelism, Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CXXXX, No. 229, November 1928, pp. 1-5. See also Park, R. E., Bases of Race Prejudice, Annals, Vol. CXXXX, No. 229, November 1928, pp. 11-20.

tudes as a sort of conditioned reflex.⁴ Such class or caste attitudes have their basis in the economic system where the Negro occupied a definite, low position.

It was consideration of such facts as these that led the writer to make an earlier study⁵ of the available literature of Negro economic conditions of all types from 1880 to 1929. It was found that there were three fairly well-defined trends in the attitudes of the writers of this literature, which corresponded somewhat to three different periods between these years. Of course, it should be clearly stated that all of the trends were present in all three periods, but that they were much more dominant in one than in the others.

In the first period, which was roughly from 1880 to 1900, there was much skepticism and a general attitude of uncertainty as to the economic worth of the Negro. Proposals for wholesale colonization or deportation were somewhat common and seriously considered by some. Such attitudes are easily understood when one considers the condition of the Negroes at that time. In the eighties the Negro, for the most part, was more or less controlled by the hangover of the slave economy. Many had migrated and had become vagrants. The unfortunate group, marked off inescapably by definite physical characteristics, became

4 North, C. C., Social Problems and Social Planning, McGraw-Hill, 1932, pp. 259-280.

5 The Trends and Analysis of the Literature of American Negro Economic Conditions, 1880-1929, unpublished M. A. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1929.

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the target for many superficial observations. Such characteristics as lack of dependability, laziness, and vagrancy were accounted for on the basis of race. These attitudes, of course, were expressed by white writers. The Negro writers replied that the Negro was either of more economic worth than the white writers gave him credit for or that his incompetency was due to his lack of opportunity.

The second tendency was one of exhortation on the part of both Negro and white writers. The dominant emphasis was on "what ought to be." Moralizing and rationalization were common. Reasons given for exhortation were upon ethical, religious, and moral grounds or any combination of the three. Some of the Negro writers reflected the same conservative, somewhat childish attitude of dependence on the whites to lead the way which had its origin in the slave system.⁸ The whites, more or less in a spirit of noblesse oblige, discuss what ought to be done for or with the Negroes.

Although these two tendencies have been present in all three of these periods they have been conspicuously infrequent within the last ten or fifteen years. The dominant trend of late has been a reliance upon facts and upon fact finding. The volume devoted to the Negro by the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in November, 1938, is a good example. The papers at racial

⁸ See Browne, Hugh M., The Training of the Negro in the North, Annals, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 589, for a good illustration of this tendency.

and bi-racial conferences contain little exhortation and much statistical material. The attitude seems to be: "Let us first have the facts -- then proceed to the question of what ought to be done about them."

The present study is an attempt to fill in some measure this demand for factual material. It is not to minimize the importance of the problem of social economy here involved to say that we shall deal almost exclusively with a description of the Negro's life and place in the mining industry. The chaos in certain aspects of our economic life is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the coal industry. That chaos will not be superseded with order except through some wise and deliberate social planning is almost axiomatic. The need for a discussion of this aspect is most urgent. However, there is a cleavage at this point in the division of labor. The very breadth of scope of the present study will not admit of further inclusion.

As has been pointed out, much literature has been published dealing with the Negro worker in various fields. Comparatively little, however, of this literature has been concerned with the Negro miner. The first writing in this field was an article by G. T. Surface, of Yale University, published in 1909.⁷ Professor Surface is not definite as to just where he made his studies, but his title indicates that they were in the "Central Appalachian Field." It is

⁷ Surface, G. T., The Negro Mine Laborer: Central Appalachian Coal Field, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 33, March 1909, pp. 338-352.

probable, however, that West Virginia mines were visited by him. Professor Surface, coming from the Yale scientific school, was primarily interested in the efficiency of the Negro, and it is this subject which his article discusses. With the establishment of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics by the State of West Virginia in 1921, data concerning the Negro miner began to come out in the reports published every two years. The Bureau investigated the Negro's part in the strike of 1925 in northern West Virginia. This report occupies about 22 pages of the report. The 1927-28 report gives a three-page survey of the occupations of the Negro in the mining industry covering about 6,721 miners. The 1929-30 report has not yet been published.

The first detailed study of the Negro miner was by Gerald E. Allen, who wrote his master's thesis on the Negro Coal Miner in the Pittsburgh District at the University of Pittsburgh in 1927. Mr. Allen's study was primarily economic, dealing mostly with the Negro during the strike in the Pittsburgh area, although he devoted a few of the 70 pages to such matters as education, housing problems, vice, the need for self-help, what the coal operator can do, etc. However, these subjects were dealt with necessarily in a very cursory manner, sometimes little more than a paragraph or a few sentences being devoted to each. In his thesis⁸ Mr. Allen says: "Probably West Virginia presents the most

⁸ Allen, G. E., The Negro Coal Miner in the Pittsburgh District, p. 9. (Unpublished Master's thesis)

interesting field of study of the Negro coal miner in the bituminous industry."

In 1930 two books, one by Charles S. Johnson⁹ and the other by Lorenzo Greene and Carter G. Woodson,¹⁰ appeared. These books, however, from their general nature could devote only a very limited space to the Negro miner. Dr. Johnson gives only a brief statement as to the location of Negro miners and little else.¹¹ Greene and Woodson give a slightly longer treatment, about six pages,¹² in their work. Their work is essentially a survey of the Negro in various economic fields, especially of the gains made in each industry in recent years. Some valuable material is included in these pages, but the writer feels that certain statements made in regard to the progress of the Negro in the mining industry of West Virginia are somewhat over-sanguine and misleading.¹³

The most valuable work on the Negro miner has been done by Abram L. Harris. Dr. Harris, Professor of Economics at Howard University, was formerly professor of economics at West Virginia State College. It was he who investigated the Negro in the northern West Virginia strike in 1925 for the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics. His findings were published in the report of the Bureau for 1925-1926.¹⁴

Professor Harris published in 1926 a short article in

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- 9 The Negro in American Civilization, Holt, 1930.
 10 The Negro Wage Earner, Associated Publishers, 1930.
 11 Pp. 48-50.
 12 Pp. 259-264.
 13 See pp. 263-264.
 14 Pp. 23-39.

Opportunity.¹⁵ His chief work, and the best work yet to appear, was in the volume in which he collaborated with Sterling Spero,¹⁶ published in 1931. Professor Harris devotes two chapters to the Negro miner, one on the Negro in the Coal Mines¹⁷ and the other on the Negro and the United Mine Workers.¹⁸ While it is possible to point out one or two minor errors, of no consequence, Professor Harris has done a splendid piece of work in both chapters. The discussion, however, as in the case of Allen's and Surface's studies, is mostly economic. Dr. Harris gives the bulk of his space to a discussion of the Negro in times of labor trouble and strike. So adequately, however, have these subjects been covered that no chapters on these subjects are included in the present study.

Although very little has actually been written concerning the Negro miner either in West Virginia or in the United States, his position in the mining industry of West Virginia is rather striking. In 1930 there were 107,833 persons employed in the mining industry of West Virginia of whom 23,523 were Negroes,¹⁹ which number is much larger than that of any other state. The estimated number in other states employing Negro miners in considerable numbers in 1931 was Alabama, 17,000; Kentucky, nearly

¹⁵ February number.

¹⁶ The Black Worker, Columbia University Press, 1931.

¹⁷ Pp. 208-245.

¹⁸ Pp. 352-382.

¹⁹ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1930.

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10,000; Virginia and Tennessee, 3,500,²⁰ and it is probable that this estimate is quite a liberal one. Although the Negroes form only 6.6 per cent of the population of the State they constitute 21.8 per cent of the industry. Approximately three-fourths of all Negro males of sixteen years of age and over were making their living in the mining industry as early as 1922.²¹ Coupled with this disproportionate percentage in the industry is the interesting factor of equal payment for Negroes and whites in the same jobs throughout the industry. This combination, somewhat unique, presents some interesting questions as to its effects, both upon the Negroes and the other groups engaged in the industry and upon the industry itself.

The purposes, then, of the present study are, in general, two-fold: First, to discuss the origin, development, and present status of the Negro in the mining industry. Second, to describe in a manner somewhat similar to The Lynds' study of "Middletown," certain aspects of the culture pattern of the mining fields, particularly with reference to the Negro and his part in it. The chapters will roughly follow in the order suggested by these purposes. The first will attempt to give those facts concerning the Negro mining population which are basic to an understanding of such matters as inter- and intra-group relations, social differentiation, etc., which follow.

²⁰ Rochester, A., Labor and Coal, International, 1931, pp. 86-87.

²¹ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-1922, p. 13.

II. METHOD.-

One of the first problems which had to be met was the decision as to just what should constitute the sample for the field work. In order not to pick the sample upon a mere a priori basis or upon the grounds of convenience it was thought best to go into the history of mining in West Virginia as well as the history of the Negro miner first. This history was not to be found in one spot but was obtained from many different sources. The resources of the State Library of West Virginia at Charleston were first exploited. All available state, county, or section histories were read. West Virginia has required an annual report from the chief mine inspector since the year 1883, all of which reports were read. Other original data in the form of files of old newspapers and census reports were searched. Other material was gained by correspondence with state and national officials, as well as old settlers in more than one section of West Virginia. Personal interviews were had with many more.

The result of this investigation was that the writer decided that the study would largely be restricted to the southern counties, where the bulk of the Negro mining population is and has been since the beginning of the coal industry in the state. ²² While there is mining carried on commercially in thirty-five of the fifty-five counties of West Virginia, the counties of McDowell, Raleigh, Fayette,

²² See chapters II, III, and IV for a more full discussion.

Logan, and Kanawha had in 1931 a Negro mining population of 16,050 or 76.6 per cent of all the Negro miners in the state. Further, we find that these and the other southern counties contain 85.4 per cent of all the Negro miners in the state. No county outside the southern division of the state had a Negro mining population of 1,000 or more. The five counties mentioned above had 6,092, 3,632, 3,060, 2,212, and 1,054 respectively. No other counties had as many as one thousand Negro miners, although Mercer County, another southern county, had 965. The field work was accordingly restricted to the southern field. (see map)

Miners' schedules were taken in McDowell, Mercer, Raleigh, Fayette, Logan, and Kanawha counties. These counties represent four fairly well-defined mining fields, which differ in age, working conditions, and various other respects. The New River-Kanawha Field is served for the most part by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and is located largely on the Kanawha River and its tributaries. This field includes Kanawha and Fayette counties. The Logan Field is also served by a branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, but is widely separated from the New River-Kanawha Field. Raleigh County is located in two fields, the New River and the Winding Gulf, but is largely in the latter. It is served by the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Virginian railroads. The Pocahontas Field includes McDowell and Mercer counties and is served by the Norfolk and Western and the Virginian railroads. (see map for location)

These miners' schedules represented miners in 38 different mining towns. In taking the schedules, however, two different policies were followed. One was to study an entire town and interview every available miner. Since most of these operations did not have more than 100 to 200 Negro miners, and most of them fewer, this policy was quite practicable. The other was to take schedules of a portion of the miners and then to talk with leaders, teachers, preachers, etc., about the population of that particular town. Six hundred of these miner's schedules were taken.

Two schedules were used: the miner's schedule already mentioned and an employer's schedule. This latter schedule was mostly an attitude schedule. Most of the employers were interviewed personally and certain of the questions were designed to suggest the material wanted rather than to ask for it directly. In this way, many employer attitudes were learned although not recorded on the schedule. Forty-four employer's schedules were taken expressing opinions of these employers of more than 12,000 native whites, more than 9,000 Negroes, and more than 5,000 foreigners. The schedules contain, thus, employer opinion and certain aspects of employer policy concerning approximately 43 per cent of the Negro miners of the state.

To get a more objective point of view in regard to the efficiency of the Negro considerable time was spent in the study of pay-rolls of three different companies in three different fields. Since the Negro and other groups are paid

at the same wage rates, it was assumed that the pay-rolls would indicate something of the relative earning power, regularity of work, etc., since the miner works more or less as he pleases, quitting when he feels he has worked long enough. That is, if he decides to "lay off" for a few days he may do so. This pay-roll study was one of the most difficult parts of the study, as employers do not arrange them for purposes of research. No separation according to race, nationality, or occupation was made except the broad classification between "company work" and "mining." "Company jobs" are those for which a daily, weekly, or monthly wage is paid. "Mining" refers to coal loading, coal cutting, etc., which is paid for by tonnage. The writer simply had to spend time in the offices waiting for an idle moment of clerks or bookkeepers, who were most helpful in this work.

The taking of schedules and pay-roll studies were only a part of the study, however. Wherever possible, the writer stayed in the mining towns, which fact gave him opportunity to talk with the miners of both races during their leisure hours as well as observe their activities of various sorts. Where this was not possible, headquarters were made at the nearest town, within a few minutes drive of the mines. Interviews were held with preachers, teachers, leaders, many employers whose schedules were not taken, doctors, secretaries and other officers of the various operator's associations, and other persons from whom any information could be obtained in regard to the situation in the mining fields.

Where personal interview has not been possible, correspondence over a period of two years has been carried on with various individuals. Cooperation was also obtained from several Negro public school and college officials through whom it was possible to get student papers written upon subjects suggested by the writer. It would be impossible to enumerate individually all the sources of information. While schedules were obtained from miners in 38 different mining towns it is safe to say that the number of places visited would number considerably more than a hundred. Several thousand miles were covered by automobile while other places were visited where it was possible to go only by railroad or on foot.

In methodological terms, several approaches were utilized in this study. The historical method was employed, especially in getting material for the first few chapters. The statistical method was used to a certain extent throughout. Certain important trends in the life of the Negro miner could be shown in quantitative terms only. In the attempt to describe the Negro culture in the mining fields a modification of the so-called ethnographical method was used. In attacking a problem as broad as has been the writer's in the present study, however, no "method" is sufficient unto itself. In approaching each specific part of the study the writer has used those methods within the realm of his ability that he deemed would best produce the facts in that area.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF MINING AND OF THE NEGRO MINER IN WEST VIRGINIA

I. HISTORY OF MINING

1. Early History

Just when coal was first discovered in those counties of old Virginia which, after their separation from the mother state in 1862, came to be known as West Virginia¹ is a matter that will probably never be definitely known. Oddly enough, no student or scholar has as yet seen fit to write any exhaustive treatise on the history of coal mining in West Virginia. Consequently, what data there are must be gathered chiefly from brief and scattered sources. Although there were quite a number of early county histories written, the authors, without exception, seem to be much more interested in Indian battles than in the economic and industrial phases of history. This fact is not so surprising when one remembers that there was no mining on any considerable scale² before the Civil War.

The first mention of coal in West Virginia of which we have any record was made by John Peter Lalley who

¹ This name was not adopted, however, without a good bit of a struggle. The name, Kanawha, was proposed but was rejected. One delegate said that several of his constituents thought it too hard a name to spell. Another delegate wanted Virginia in the name because it reminded him of the Virgin Mary. (Callahan, J. M., Semi-Centennial History of W. Va., Charleston, 1913, p. 145.)

² Ibid., p. 352.

found "a great plenty of coals" on a river which he named, in 1742, Coal River. The stream, which now flows through a developed coal field, still bears the name he gave it.³ Christopher Gist, in what is now Wood County, saw "a little branch that was full of coal" in March, 1751.⁴ George Washington mentions in his notes taken on his trip to the Ohio River that he saw a "cole hill on fire." From other records this coal was supposed to be located in what is now known as the village of West Columbia.⁵

These meager references are about the limit of what was known about West Virginia coal prior to the nineteenth century. Such a situation, however, is not so strange when one remembers that the Trans-Allegheny frontier was pushed westward only with the greatest difficulty and that only toward the latter part of the century were many permanent settlements made.⁶ At the beginning of the nineteenth century about the only people using West Virginia

3 Lawall, C. E., Given, I. A., & Kennedy, H. G., Mining Methods in W. Va., W. Va. Univ. Engineering Experiment Sta. Research Bulletin, No. 4, Morgantown, 1929, p. 3. Also Laidley, W. S., History of Charleston and Kanawha County, Richmond-Arnold, Chicago, 1911, p. 315.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Callahan, op. cit., pp. 14-47. It should be noted, however, that coal was known on branches of the Monongahela in the northern part of what is now West Virginia before 1800. In the eastern counties, moreover, coal seams had long been opened on both sides of the James River for several miles fifteen or twenty miles above Richmond. These pits were owned by different persons and were worked to an extent equal to the demand. By 1789 coal was exported to Philadelphia in considerable quantities. (Bishop, J. Leander, History of Manufactures in the U. S., Edward Young & Co., Phila., 1868, Vol. I, p. 805, Vol. II, p. 35).

coals were the cross-roads blacksmiths or some pioneer whose⁷ cabin happened to be situated near an outcrop. However, after 1800 we have increasing numbers of definite discoveries of the various coal veins in different parts of the state. In 1800, Philip Null found the Pittsburgh seam on the Pocatalico River in Putnam County, within thirty miles of the present capital of the state.⁸ A French physician and botanist, F. A. Michaux, saw a five to six foot stratum of coal between Wheeling and West Liberty in Ohio County on July 18, 1802, which he mentions in his "Travels to the Westward of the Allegheny Mountains."⁹ It was not, however, until 1810 that the people of Wheeling began to use coal in their dwellings which was obtained from the first mine discovered near that city.¹⁰ Conrad Cotts, an experienced miner, came to Wheeling from Pittsburgh at that time for the purpose of making coal available to the residents of the northern metropolis of Virginia.¹¹ Cotts presumably got his experience in the coal mines of Pennsylvania.

It was not domestic consumption, however, that gave the greatest impetus to the early development of the

7 Ibid., p. 352.

8 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 3.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 4. Although, as has been pointed out, (supra, p.) coal had been used for a considerable period in the eastern counties of Virginia, and even exported to Philadelphia, we have little reason to believe that, prior to 1800, much of this coal was used for industrial purposes; for, as Victor Clark has indicated, "In the Eighteenth Century the only great resource of the Atlantic slope that was not applied to industry was coal." (History of Manufactures, 1790-1860, Carnegie, 1916, p. 86)

11 Ibid.

coal industry. The two most important factors in the early days were the beginnings of the salt industry and of steam navigation on the Ohio, Kanawha, and Monongahela rivers.

The first salt furnace on the Great Kanawha River in Kanawha County was built in 1797 near the present site of Charleston.¹² Ten years later the method of manufacture was improved by the Ruffner brothers and soon the "Kanawha Salines" became widely known. The manufacture of salt developed rapidly.¹³ In 1814, 600,000 bushels were produced.¹⁴ It was in connection with the salt industry that the coal industry of the Great Kanawha Valley was started. John P. Turner, a New Yorker, discovered coal there and opened a mine in 1817 for the purpose of supplying the Kanawha Salines.¹⁵ The salt industry provided work for many people in the furnaces themselves. Others built keel boats and distributed the manufactured products along the Ohio River and its tributaries.¹⁶ Evidently salt was not the only commodity taken down the rivers, for a Cincinnati mer-

12 Callahan, op. cit., p. 51.

13 Joseph Ruffner came to the Kanawha Valley in 1794 and was making salt by 1807. (American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 29, January 1836, p. 117)

14 Callahan, op. cit., p. 51.

15 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 4; Laidley, op. cit., p. 315. Col. David Ruffner first used coal in 1819. He makes it clear that coal was not used until the available supplies of wood were exhausted. After Col. Ruffner used coal his example was promptly followed by others. (American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 29, January 1836, p. 119)

16 Callahan, op. cit., p. 51. Cincinnati in 1826 imported 46,000 barrels of salt from the Conemaugh works in Pennsylvania and from "those upon the Kenhawa (Kanawha), in Virginia." (Drake, B., and Mansfield, E. D., Cincinnati in 1826, Morgan, Dodge, and Fisher, Cincinnati, 1827, pp. 76-77)

chant estimated that in 1818 116,000 bushels of coal were used that year between the mouth of the Kanawha and the Falls of the Ohio.¹⁷

The West Virginia, or, rather, Virginia, salt industry continued to grow with rapid strides until the Kanawha Valley became what was perhaps the chief salt producing area in the country. Professor William Barton Rogers, of the University of Virginia, was sent by the state to survey the land over the Alleghenies. He visited all the mines in what is now West Virginia between 1836 and 1840.¹⁸ He stated in his report in 1840, his second, that there were ninety furnaces along the Kanawha River which made annually a million bushels of salt and consumed five million bushels or two hundred thousand tons of coal. Nine hundred and ninety-five miners and workmen were employed and \$1,301,855 was invested in the industry.¹⁹ This growth continued until about 1853. From then until 1857 the salt industry of the Kanawha Valley was impoverished by the development of the Ohio River Salt Company as well as by certain developments

- 17 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 4. At the close of the War of 1812 the City of Cincinnati had glass works, four cotton mills, a woolen factory, white lead works, flour and lumber mills, furniture shops, and a barrel factory using patent machinery. Several of these establishments were operated by steam and "though at first not necessarily using coal, soon came to depend upon that fuel, which was cheaply brought down the river." (Clark, op. cit., p. 348)
- 18 Laidley, op. cit., p. 315.
- 19 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 4.

in Mason County, Virginia, and Meigs County, Ohio.²⁰ The number of furnaces on the Kanawha declined rapidly after that time. However, the demand for coal did not suffer as great a decline due to the mining of cannel coal and the production of cannel coal oil which will be dealt with later.²¹

The other early impetus given to the coal industry was the development of river travel and the consequent use of coal by the boats on the rivers. The importance of river travel was early recognized by the law-makers of Virginia. Ferries began to appear as early as 1776, were firmly established by 1785, and, by 1803, were found over the Ohio and the Little Kanawha at Parkersburg, at the mouth of Fishing Creek and Guyandotte River (which now flows through Huntington), as well as over the Great Kanawha at the mouth of Coal

²⁰ Callahan, op. cit., p. 83. Charles Cist, in a book published in 1859, indicates the change of market when he says: "Until within a short period, the Kanawha salines were our principal sources of supply, but the best quality and largest quantity are now derived from our own State -- salt being extensively made in and adjacent to Pomeroy, Meigs county." (Cincinnati in 1859, Cincinnati, 1859, p. 362.) The production of salt, however, varied a great deal from year to year. The two peak years in the industry were 1846 and 1850 when 3,244,786 and 3,142,100 bushels were produced respectively. The production from 1853 to 1857 was as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of bushels</u>
1853	2,429,910
1854	2,333,863
1855	1,483,548
1856	1,264,049
1857	1,236,749

The production thereafter never reached 2,000,000 bushels and had declined to 967,465 bushels in 1875. (Laidley, op. cit., pp. 138-139)

²¹ Ibid., p. 87.

River. ²² It was not merely the establishment of ferries, however, that made travel faster and more easy at this time. As early as 1785, when the Potomac was cleared of rocks at Harper's Ferry, the state took action to provide for river transportation. ²³ The Legislature passed the first act providing for the extension of navigation of the Monongahela ²⁴ and West Fork rivers in 1793. Such a project was to make it possible to travel in canoes or flat boats.

✓ The invention of the steamboat was of the greatest importance for the coal industry. In 1784, James Rumsey, who was employed by the Potomac Company (which included George Washington among its members) to improve the navigation of the Potomac, was successful in a private steamboat experiment at Shepherdstown. In 1786, however, at the same place he was able to propel his boat by steam against the ²⁵ current at the rate of about four miles per hour. This experiment thus antedated the similar one of Robert Fulton on the Hudson over twenty years. In 1809, Nicholas Roosevelt came to Ohio as an agent of Robert Fulton and Chancellor Livingston of New, to investigate the question of possible navigation on the western rivers. Finding the Ohio River open and also some coal deposits, he stored some coal aboard and burned it in the "New Orleans," the first boat ²⁶ west of the Allegheny Mountains, trial trips being held

22 Ibid., p. 53.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 60.

26 Drake & Mansfield, op. cit., p. 73; Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 4.

27

in 1811-12.

The effects of Mr. Roosevelt's experiment were not long in bearing fruit, for, in 1819, the steamer Robert Thompson came up the Kanawha River as far as Red House Shoals.²⁸

This particular boat was not able to run the current at this point, but the next year the "Andrew Donnally," a steamer built for Donnally and Noyes, salt makers, made the first successful run to Charleston and thus inaugurated an era of steam navigation between

27 Callahan, op. cit., p. 53. It should not be assumed, however, that steamboats universally began to use coal immediately. Doubtless some of the boats on the upper Ohio did so but those on the Mississippi and lower Ohio, as well as those on the Kanawha, certainly did not do so very soon. An English traveler from New Orleans to Cincinnati on the Steamer George Washington says: "...wood being the only fuel made use of, they (river steamers) are consequently not incommoded by the effects of the dense smoke so annoying in some of our steam vessels." (Bullock, W., Sketch of a Journey Through the Western States of North America from New Orleans, by the Mississippi, Ohio, City of Cincinnati, and Falls of Niagara, to New York, in 1827. London, 1827, p. xii.) By 1841, however, the use of coal by steamboats was extensive enough to induce a Cincinnati coal dealer to advertize "Steamboats supplied on the shortest notice." (Advertisment in the appendix of Cist, Charles, Cincinnati in 1841, published by the author, Cincinnati, 1841)

28 Hale, John P., History of the Great Kanawha Valley, 1891, Vol. I, p. 199.

29

Charleston and points of the Ohio. Stimulated by the inability of the "Robert Thompson" to ascend the shoals at Red House the state directed the James River and Kanawha Company to improve the navigation of the river so that a channel of three feet of water could be had at all times during the year from the mouth of the river at Point Pleasant (two miles above Gallipolis, Ohio) and Kanawha Falls, a distance of about a hundred miles. Packets soon began to run from Charleston to Gallipolis once a week, later three times a week, and, finally, in 1845, daily. This service continued until the Civil War.

This development of the river service not only provided a demand for coal on its own behalf, but provided also a means of shipment to meet the demands of other places and other industries. In 1819, David Bradshaw opened a mine on the Ohio side of the river across from Mason City, in Mason County. He mined 1,200 bushels of coal that year.

29 Ibid. Some idea of the growth of the river steam travel and shipping is obtained from the increasing number of boats on the Ohio since 1811. The following table will show the number built each successive year:

1811	1	1820	10
1814	1	1821	5
1815	2	1822	13
1816	3	1823	15
1817	7	1824	16
1818	25	1825	27
1819	34	1826	56

Total 215

(Drake & Mansfield, op. cit., p. 73) Of these, only 125 remained in service by 1826. Ninety had ceased to operate -- 28 sunk on snags; 6 burned; 1 stove by ice; 1 sunk by another boat; and the remainder were worn out. (Ibid., pp. 73-4)

30 Ibid., p. 54.

31 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5.

In 1832, Samuel Pomeroy, the founder of Pomeroy, put a thousand bushels of coal from the mine mentioned above on board a New Orleans boat to be shipped from there to Boston. However, the boat sank in the Ohio and this long-distance enterprise was never renewed. George Birthistle began shipping down the Ohio from a mine between Clifton and West Columbia in Mason County the same year.³²

By 1840, mining operations were open in eight of the Virginia counties which later became part of West Virginia, according to the census of that year.³³ Although no differentiation is made between coal mining and other forms, it is to be assumed that most of those engaged in mining were coal miners. According to the census, Kanawha County had a hundred and sixty persons engaged in mining; Mason County had five; Monongalia County had one hundred

32 Ibid. Some of this coal doubtless was used in the fast developing iron industry growing up in Lawrence County, Ohio, and Greenup County, Kentucky on both sides of the Ohio River about this time. Four or five of the iron furnaces in Greenup County used coal in 1837. (Clark, op. cit., p. 332.) Wheeling mines were also supplying the manufacturing plants as well as domestic trade in 1836. (American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 29, January 1836, p. 80.) The manufacturing industry was, no doubt, the chief source of demand for fuel along the lower Ohio rather than domestic consumption, as coal had not yet come into its own. Drake and Mansfield say of Cincinnati in 1826: "Wood is the chief article of fuel; which is boated down the Ohio and Licking rivers, or brought in wagons from the adjacent country. Coal, from the mines above, is brought to the city in considerable quantities, but is not yet extensively used, except in the manufacturing establishments." (Op. cit., p. 32) In 1826 Cincinnati used 200,000 bushels of coal for which it paid \$20,000.

33 Census of 1840, Vol. I, pp. 213-214. (No census prior to this date gives any data on coal mining in Virginia.)

and twenty-eight; Ohio County (including Wheeling) had eighty-five; Brooke County (adjoining Ohio) had twelve; Hardy County had three; Jefferson County had forty-two; and Marshall County had four.³⁴ In another volume of the census reports of 1840, however, some seemingly contradictory figures are given. The figures on coal mining in the western section of Virginia are as follows:³⁵

34 U. S. Census, 1840, Vol. I, (enumeration) pp. 213-14. Although Kanawha is by far the greatest producer of coal in 1840 it is very likely that its products were consumed mostly by the salt furnaces in the state and less of its tonnage shipped to points outside the state than was the case of Ohio County. A coal dealer in Cincinnati advertized in 1841: "Keeps constantly on hand Youghiogany, Brownsville, and Wheeling coal of the best quality." (Cist, op. cit.)

35 Compiled from the Census Compendium, pp. 154-177. It is interesting to note here that, although coal mining in the eastern counties of Virginia had been conducted for a long period, the western counties produced over three times as much tonnage as the eastern counties in 1840. This is especially interesting inasmuch as the eastern "sea coal" was distributed along the eastern coast from Baltimore to Boston and was, for many years, the chief source of home consumption (Clark, op. cit., p. 331). As early as 1820 the annual output was supposed to have approached 50,000 tons. The peak of production in the eastern counties, however, was reached early. The Chesterfield district reached its maximum productivity about 1833 (Bishop, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 275). The western counties (later W. Va. counties), however, were increasing their production year by year. The superiority of the western coal counties is indicated by the fact that the eastern counties (Chesterfield, Goochland, Henrico, and Powhatan) with almost five times as much capital invested, and with 185 more men employed, produced less than one third as much coal in 1840. (Census Compendium)

TABLE 1. AMOUNT OF COAL PRODUCTION, NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED, AND CAPITAL INVESTED IN WESTERN VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES, 1840

County	No. of Bushels Produced	No. Men Employed	Capital Invested
Brooke	194,574	33	\$ 3,900
Harrison	200,940		
Kanawha	6,325,000	209	206,105
Logan	2,000		
Monongalia	167,200	73	
Ohio	1,178,000	85	17,500
Preston	3,150	4	1,150
Tyler	2,500	1	
Total	8,073,364	405	\$228,655

If we add to these the number of men employed in other types of mining as given in the census compendium of 1840 we may see the extent of the disparity. The figures for the men employed in certain other industries, but classified under mining, are contained in Table 3.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED IN MINING OTHER THAN COAL MINING, BY INDUSTRY AND COUNTY IN VIRGINIA, 1840

County	Iron	Salt	Granite, Marble, etc.
Berkeley	2		
Braxton		8	
Hardy	30		
Jefferson	80		
Kanawha		421	
Monongalia	65		
Morgan			12
Ohio	115		64
Total	292	429	76

36 Pp. 166-167.

37 Ibid., pp. 166-167.

Thus, we see that in the volume on enumeration the census gives the figure of all persons engaged in mining in Kanawha County as only 165 and in the compendium the figure on coal mining alone is 209. If to this figure is added the 421 persons engaged in the salt industry, which is considered under the head of mining by the census, the total persons in all kinds of mining in Kanawha County in 1840 was not 165, as recorded in the first volume, but 430. There is apparently no explanation for this seeming error in the census tables as it is to be assumed that both volumes were compiled from the same schedules.

Not only does there appear a disparity between the census figures themselves, but there is also considerable difference between them and the figures given by Professor Rogers in his report of 1840, quoted before.³⁸ His figures on the combined salt and coal industries in Kanawha County were a total of 995 workmen, against a bare 430 by the census. The question would logically arise as to whether the figures of Professor Rogers or the census are the more reliable. Although the writer was unable to read Professor Rogers' report in the original and, of course, does not know his method of collecting his figures, he prefers to accept them in preference to the census figures unless the census technique of 1840 was much more effective than that of 1920 in the mining fields. Concerning the taking of census data in the mining fields, the Bureau of Negro Labor

³⁸ Supra, p.

and Statistics has the following to say:

We are basing all of the figures relating to population upon the U. S. Census reports, because they are official, but we know them to be glaringly inaccurate as regards Negroes in coal mining camps. For example: on six coal mining operations in McDowell County a representative of the McDowell Times, a Negro newspaper, checked the Negro population behind the census enumerator in 1920 and found 148 Negro men who were not enumerated. This is accounted for by reason of the fact that a large number of Negroes working in and about the mines "batch" in shanties, that is, in mining parlance, one or more men live in company-owned houses and do their own cooking. When they leave the house to work, it is locked and no one is there until they return from work. The census enumerator passed while they were at work and did not return. It is estimated by the McDowell Times, based upon its investigation in McDowell County alone, that approximately 2,000 Negroes were not enumerated, and this condition prevailed throughout the coal mining sections of the State.

There is little reason to believe that the census reports of 1840 were taken with more care than was the one of 1920. Suffice it to say that, whether one accepts the figures of the census or those of Professor Rogers, it is clear that by 1840 some degree of development had taken place in the coal industry, especially in regard to domestic consumption either by the steamboats, by the salt industry, and, to some extent, by industry outside the state.

In 1841 there occurred the discovery of a product that was later destined practically to eliminate coal from

39 State of West Virginia, Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 12. Kathleen Bruce says: "The returns of the census of 1840 cannot be accepted as exact, but they at least reveal the general economic trend." (Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era, Century, 1931, p. 83)

domestic use in certain parts of the Kanawha valley. William Tompkins "struck" natural gas near Malden and used it for boiling salt. He was the first person in America to utilize natural gas for manufacturing purposes.⁴⁰ However, there is no evidence that his discovery had any marked effect on the consumption of coal at that time. In 1843 Sutton Matthews discovered the first cannel coal known in the Kanawha valley, perhaps the first in America, on Falling Rock creek, a tributary of the Elk River near Charleston.⁴¹ This discovery was to have far more immediate effect on the industry of the Kanawha Valley than was the discovery of natural gas. The mining of cannel coal rose in a very few years to take the place of salt mining, which was soon to be a "vanishing industry."⁴² The reports of the Kanawha coal deposits by Professor Rogers attracted much foreign capital, which began to flow into the cannel coal industry in the later forties. In addition, another tributary of the Kanawha in Kanawha County, Coal River, was made navigable. Work began about 1847-48 by W. M. Payton and his residence engineer, Mr. McCloud, on a system of locks and dams which were to be used until the Civil War began.⁴³

Development continued in other parts of the state as well as Kanawha between 1840 and 1850. In 1843 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was completed to Piedmont, in

40 Hale, John P., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 167.

41 Ibid., p. 167.

42 Callahan, op. cit., p. 87.

43 Capehart, Stephen P., Coalsmouth, W. Va. Historical Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1905, p. 48.

Mineral County. Shipments at once began to be made to Baltimore and Philadelphia, which fact stimulated greatly the mining operations in the eastern Panhandle.⁴⁴ Four years later the first mines were opened at West Columbia in Mason County on the Ohio River.⁴⁵ Small shipments by river from Mason County were started in 1847.⁴⁶

Although the census of 1850 showed only a total of 1,044 persons engaged in coal mining, of which only 348 were miners,⁴⁷ the decade which followed that census was one of rather rapid development in the coal industry. In 1852 Mason City was planned by coal operators and in 1853 and 1854 Ohio River operations were opened at Clifton and Hartford City respectively, all in Mason County.⁴⁸ Corporations were formed as early as 1854 for the development of the western Virginia coal fields and by 1860 twenty-five

44 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5.

45 Ibid.

46 Callahan, op. cit., p. 352.

47 Census of 1850, p. 272. Again it is questionable whether the census figures are entirely reliable. Bruce says: that in 1841 "nearly a thousand men were at work in the Richmond coal fields...." (Op. cit., p. 95.) Certainly if there were nearly a thousand men in the Richmond field alone it would stand to reason that there were more than 1,044 in the entire state, which would include all of the western counties.

48 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5. Callahan, op. cit., p. 83.

of these companies had organized.⁴⁸ Several of these companies had organized between 1849 and 1856 for the purpose of developing the cannel coal resources on the Kanawha, Elk, and Coal Rivers.⁴⁹ Hale points out that the first shipments of coal on a commercial scale commenced in 1855 and 1856.⁵⁰ In 1857 the Kanawha Cannel Coal Mining and Manufacturing Company erected a factory in Charleston for the purpose of making cannel coal oil.⁵¹ Some years later another of these factories was built about thirty miles farther up the Kanawha Valley at Cannelton.⁵² In 1858,

48 Ibid., p. 5. The Point Pleasant (Mason County) Independent Republican (Issue of October 4, 1855) gives an account of a coal convention held at Charleston on Sept. 15, 1855. The following companies were represented, the names in some instances identifying the location of their developments: The Paint Creek Co., Great Western Mining and Mfg. Co., Forks of Coal Co., Mt. Carbon Coal Co., Wyoming Coal Co., Mithcomah Cannel Coal Co., Old Dominion Coal Co., Kanawha Coal Co., Coal River and Kanawha Mining and Mfg. Co., Cannel Coal Co. of Coal River, Coal River Navigation Co., Pioneer Coal Co., Virginia Cannel Coal Co. of Peytona, Coal River, Iron Hills Coal Co., Kanawha Salt Co.

49 Callahan, op. cit., p. 87

50 Hale, J. P., op. cit., p. 137. As has been pointed out above (note 34, p. 27), it is likely that Kanawha coal was not so well known outside the state as was the Ohio (Wheeling) and Pennsylvania coals. Dr. Drake in his "Narrative and Statistical View of Cincinnati in 1815" points out that coal was brought from Pittsburgh by that date (quoted in Bullock, op. cit., appendix). In 1841 Brownsville and Youghiogany coals, both Pennsylvania coals, were advertized with Wheeling coal. (loc. cit., p. 8) Even in the year 1858 the Pennsylvania coals continued to constitute an important part of the coal on the Cincinnati markets, there being sixty-eight coal yards there in that year. (Cist, C., Cincinnati in 1859, published by the author, Cincinnati, 1859, p. 335.)

51 Callahan, J. M., op. cit., p. 87.

52 Interview with the writer's mother, whose father was superintendent at this operation shortly after the Civil War.

the Corwin Cannel Coal Company erected another factory at Mill Creek, seven miles up the Elk River from Charleston.⁵³ Callahan points out the fact that the various companies advertized for all classes of laborers in 1859 and that they were in a prosperous condition by 1860.⁵⁴ It is an interesting question here as to whether this labor policy was in any way influenced by public sentiment at this time. On October 10, 1859, the editor of the Kanawha Valley Star, published at Charleston, wrote somewhat at length editorially expressing grave concern as to what the prevailing policy (at that time) of having outside capital develop the industry and then renting them Negro slaves to be used in these factories meant for the future prosperity of the valley.⁵⁵

In any event, the number of cannal coal oil factories increased. The census of 1860 shows that they appeared not only in Kanawha County but in every coal field of the state, with the possible exception of the eastern Panhandle and on the Ohio River.⁵⁶ Kanawha County had four coal oil establishments which employed a hundred and twenty-one hands;⁵⁷ Fayette County, although it had no coal operations, had one for the manufacture of coal oil, employing 40 hands, just over the line from Kanawha County;⁵⁸ Marion

53 Callahan, J. M., op. cit., p. 87.

54 Ibid.

55 Kanawha Valley Star, Charleston, October 10, 1859, p. 2.

56 Census of 1860, Volume on Manufactures, pp. 607-628.

57 Ibid., p. 619.

58 Ibid., p. 607.

County, in the extreme northern part of the state, had one
59
factory which employed ten hands.

The census of 1860 showed that there had been some gain in the number of miners over the figures of 1850, although the growth is not as striking as might have been suspected when one considers how many new enterprises were begun in the decade from 1850 to 1860. The total number of miners in Virginia is shown to be 1,112. This figure indicates a gain of sixty-eight. However, the number of operations in the different counties in western Virginia does not indicate that they have all the miners by any means. It should be pointed out here, I think, that there is very little uniformity in the uses of certain terms in the different censuses. That fact may account for some of the apparent failures to show all the data. One census may refer to "Miners" while another may refer to "Persons in Mining." One of these may be a more limited term than the other. I know of no way of determining just what the terms include. However, Table 3 shows something of the distribution of mining hands in the counties of western Virginia.

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF BITUMINOUS COAL OPERATIONS
AND NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED IN
WESTERN VIRGINIA BY COUNTY, 1860

County	Number of Operations	Number of Hands
Brooke	1	50
Kanawha	3	43
Marion	1	20
Mason	2	280
Ohio	3	51
Putnam	1	2
Total .	11	446

Here, again, we must conclude either that the historian is inaccurate or the census incomplete. If we compare the list of counties in which there were coal operations in 1840⁶⁰ with the list above (Table 3) we will notice that some of the counties named as having mining operations in 1840 do not have them in 1860. Does this fact mean that those counties ceased their developments? I think not.⁶¹ As was pointed out above, the completion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1843 opened up the eastern Panhandle field.⁶² Yet no Eastern Panhandle county is included in the list for 1860. Preston County, which had an investment of over a thousand dollars in 1840 is also not included. Since these counties are now among those important in the coal industry, I do not consider it likely that operations were discontinued after once starting, especially when we

⁶⁰ Supra, (Table 1), p. 28.

⁶¹ Supra, p.

⁶² Supra, p.

have historical evidence to the contrary. Further than those seeming omissions already mentioned, Hale points out that in the years 1855-1858 there were large shipments of coal from Cannelton and from Elk River. In addition, he says that shipments of splint coal from Field's Creek, in Kanawha County, Paint Creek, in Kanawha County, and Armstrong Creek, in Fayette County, were begun.⁶³ Coalburgh Mines were opened also in 1859.⁶⁴ Fayette County is not listed as a coal-producing county in the census of 1860. These and other evidences seem to indicate that perhaps the historical writers are to be trusted here rather than the census reports.

The era of prosperity and rapid development was retarded or postponed by the war. In spite of this fact the production of coal increased somewhat every year of the war. For instance, the production of coal in 1863 was 444,648 short tons; 454,888 in 1864; and 487,397 in 1865.⁶⁵ At the close of the war, however, there was a pronounced awakening of interest in the development of the resources of West Virginia. A pamphlet published in 1865 tells of this opportunity for outside capital. It mentions the valuable mines in Mason County and announces that "Mr. Alfred Edwards of New York has recently commenced to

⁶³ Hale, J. P., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 193.

⁶⁴ First Annual Report of the Inspector of Mines, State of W. Va., 1883, p. 20.

⁶⁵ White, I. C., special article in Callahan, op. cit., p. 390.

develop coal property on Cabin Creek" in Kanawha County.

At the same time the "Winefred Coal Company, on Field's Creek, nearby, are now over two hundred yards into the main hill."⁶⁷

In 1865 the Averill Coal Company began operations at the mouth of the Pocatalico River at its confluence with the Kanawha,⁶⁸

while not far away the mine of the Marmet, Smith Coal and Mining Company was opened the same year in Putnam County.⁶⁹

The following year the Peytona Cannel Coal Company prepared to open its operation on Coal River in Boone County.⁷⁰

In 1869 operations also began in Wayne County up the Big Sandy Valley, the first openings in that valley.⁷¹

Two mines were open and operating in Monongalia County by 1870.⁷²

As a result of this renewed development the production of coal steadily increased every year of the decade to 1870 with one exception. The production from 1865 to 1870 was as follows:⁷³

1865	.....	487,837	short tons
1866	.....	512,088	" "
1867	.....	589,360	" "
1868	.....	609,227	" "
1869	.....	603,148	" "
1870	.....	608,878	" "

66 "The Oil-Dorado of West Virginia," American News Co., New York, 1865, p. 2.

67 Ibid.

68 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5.

69 W. Va. State Department of Mines, Report of 1895, p. 28.

70 Callahan, J. M., op. cit., p. 352.

71 Ibid.

72 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5.

73 White, I. C., The Mineral Resources of W. Va., Special article in Callahan, op. cit., p. 390.

The tonnage produced in 1870 was distributed over the coun-
ties mentioned in Table 4.⁷⁴

TABLE 4. NUMBER OF BITUMINOUS COAL OPERATIONS
WITH NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED IN WEST
VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES, 1870

County	Number of Operations	Number Men Employed
Boone	1	90
Brooke	1	48
Hancock	2	4
Harrison	4	205
Kanawha	11	305
Marion	1	83
Mineral	2	188
Monongalia	2	3
Ohio	2	29
Preston	2	143
Ritchie	5	38
Taylor	2	4
Total	35	1140

Even a cursory glance at the table above will indicate something of the rapid development both in the number of operations and in the number of men employed. The gain in number of operations is shown by the fact that there were three and one half times the number in 1870 as in 1860,⁷⁵ while there were almost three times the number of men employed. Such figures should indicate that the significant development in the coal industry in West Virginia occurred after the Civil War, although plans for

74 Census of 1870, Vol. III. The census gives 41, not 35, establishments but the total seems to be as given above. In Vol. I the statement is made that there are 1525 in mining, of which 830 were natives of the U.S.
75 Compare Table 3, p. 36.

that development began in the latter part of the decade of 1850 to 1860.⁷⁶ Such a statement is not meant to minimize the place of Virginia in coal production in the United States, nor the place of the western counties in coal production in Virginia. Virginia had long held second place (Pennsylvania being first) in the production of bituminous coal.⁷⁷ Further, as has already been pointed out, the western counties had as early as 1840 greatly outstripped the eastern counties in production.⁷⁸ The important thing for our study, however, is that before the Civil War and immediately after it the coal industry had undergone relatively little development and that relatively few men were employed in mining in West Virginia.

It may thus become apparent why the writer has chosen to discuss the history and development from the beginnings of mining in the western counties of Virginia up to the Civil War under the caption of Early History and Development. The Civil War would appear to be the dividing line between the conditions of small production and small numbers engaged in mining and the conditions of rapid development with greatly increased numbers. We shall now pass on, in more general terms, to the period from 1870 to the present.

⁷⁶ Supra, pp.

⁷⁷ Clark, V. S., op. cit., p. 331.

⁷⁸ See note, p.

2. Development Since the Civil War

It is not the province of this chapter to go into the history of mining in the period from the Civil War to the present in any degree of detail. The sources of information are much more available and much more complete records have been kept, as well as being in the memory of many people still living. All that will be attempted is a brief statement of the extent and nature of the developments that have taken place, with especial emphasis on those phases which affect the Negro miner in our later discussions.

In Table 4 (p. 39) the coal producing counties of the state in 1870 are listed. The twelve counties mentioned would seem to indicate a wide range of the coal industry at that time. However, when we analyze the counties as to their location we shall see that they are greatly limited by the means of transportation. They are, without exception, located on some river where navigation is possible or on some main-line railroad. For instance, Ohio, Brooke, and Hancock counties are all located on the Ohio River. Harrison, Marion, Preston, Ritchie, and Taylor are served by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the northern field. Kanawha County was served by the Kanawha river and by a few branch lines which brought the coal to the river for shipment. Boone County was located on Coal River. The transportation factor came to be one of the chief items in the development of the coal industry.

MAP 3. DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1865.

RAND McNALLY
LETTER SIZE OUTLINE MAP
WEST VIRGINIA

SCALE
0 5 10 20 Miles
Copyright by Rand McNally & Company, Chicago
MADE IN U. S. A.

Concerning the production of coal by the western
 79
 counties in 1840 Clark says:

"Soft coal was mined in the West, but could not
 be conveyed to the seaboard."

This lack of connection between the counties east and west
 of the mountains was a barrier to communication and trade
 which certain persons had long labored to obliterate. The
 building of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, which was
 finally to become the connecting link between Virginia and
 West Virginia, was a consummation which came only after the
 failure of other companies over a period of years. The
 Louisa Central Railroad was incorporated in 1838 for the
 purpose of building a road to the west. This company was
 succeeded by the Virginia Central which built its road as
 far west as Covington, Virginia. An extension of this road,
 which was to connect Chesapeake Bay with the Ohio River,
 called the Covington and Ohio abandoned its project in 1861.
 80
 The Chesapeake and Ohio was the successor to this road.

The story of the building of this road, which was
 accomplished not without some local opposition, is one of
 the most interesting in West Virginia annals. Its mention
 here is justified only because of two very important facts:
 81
 The road was built largely by Negro labor and its comple-
 tion opened up one of the most important of the West
 Virginia coal fields -- the New River Field. The road was
 finally finished on January 29, 1873 and the special train

79 Clark, V. S., op. cit., p. 331.

80 Callahan, op. cit., p. 191.

81 Ibid., p. 192.

of the president of the road proceeded from Richmond down New River, along the Kanawha, through Teays Valley, to the Ohio River at Huntington. Thus, the Kanawha field was provided with an outlet other than by river and a basis was laid for the opening of a new and richer coal field along New River, which is the name by which the Great Kanawha is known from Gauley Bridge, West Virginia, to its source in North Carolina.⁸² It should not be inferred that this development took place with electric rapidity, however. The first engines had to be fired with cordwood, rather than coal, and for several years the tonnage was very light.⁸³

Development continued to go on, however, in all fields in the decade between 1870 and 1880. Pioneer Mine was opened on the Kanawha above Charleston in 1873 and Coal Valley mine at the present town of Montgomery in 1874.⁸⁴ In 1873, John Nuttall, an Englishman, came from Pennsylvania and began operations in Sewell Mountain on New River in Fayette County.⁸⁵ The first shipment of coal, however, over the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was made at Quinimont,⁸⁶ farther east, in 1873, where the first iron furnace and

82 Coal operators with whom the writer has talked would insist that he is in error in this statement. They insist that it was the coal development that laid the basis for the railroad rather than vice versa.

83 Callahan, op. cit., p. 192.

84 West Virginia Dept. of Mines, First Annual Report, 1883, p. 16.

85 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 5.

86 Interview with the writer's uncle, John Laing, who came to the New River Field in 1883.

first coke works on New River were established the same
year.⁸⁷ Five years later, in 1878, William Wyant estab-
lished the first coke works on Kanawha River.⁸⁸ For a
number of years the coke industry was quite important, but
is now almost forgotten in the coal fields of West Virginia.

Although the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad provided
an outlet by rail for Kanawha coal, the mines which had been
shipping by river continued to do so. In 1875 nine mines on
the Kanawha River produced 301,000 tons of coal, of which
101,000 were burned in the salt furnaces along the river.
The other 200,000 were shipped down the river to market,
according to one source.⁸⁹ The estimate of the Department

of Mines for all river shipments for that year was only
161,932.⁹⁰ At that time practically all the coal shipped
by river was shipped on either the Kanawha or the Ohio
rivers. Difficulty because of the delay in the completion
of dams on the Monongahela limited shipments there.⁹¹

Railroad building continued throughout the state, the mile-
age increasing from three hundred and eighty-seven miles
in 1870 to six hundred and ninety-one miles in 1880.⁹²

The general development throughout the state is reflected
in the increased number of operations as well as the number
employed in 1880, which are shown in Table 5:⁹³

- 87 Hale, J. P., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 167.
88 Ibid.
89 Lawall & others, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
90 State of W. Va., Report of Chief Mine Inspector, 1837,
p. 45.
91 Callahan, op. cit., see note, p.
92 Census of 1880, p. 56.
93 Census of 1890, Vol. XV, pp. 670-71.

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF BITUMINOUS COAL OPERATIONS
AND NUMBER EMPLOYED IN WEST VIRGINIA
BY COUNTIES, 1880

County	Number of Operations	Number Men Employed
Barbour	1	3
Boone	1	100
Brooke	10	74
Doddridge	1	2
Fayette	13	354
Grant	2	4
Hancock	7	37
Harrison	9	241
Kanawha	15	1,347
Lewis	3	4
Marion	16	148
Marshall	6	122
Mason	4	279
Mineral	3	99
Monongalia	7	24
Ohio	14	366
Pleasant	1	7
Preston	4	250
Putnam	1	300
Randolph	2	7
Ritchie	1	4
Taylor	4	204
Wetzel	2	4
Wood	2	17
Total	129	4,497

It will be seen readily that the decade from 1870 to 1880 was one of great development, the number of operations increasing almost four times and the number of men employed increasing over three times the number in 1870. While there were only twelve counties in which there were operations in 1870 there were twenty-four in 1880. It will be noticed also that, while Kanawha County continues to lead in number of men employed, Fayette County is second, although its development was only made possible by the

opening of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1873.

Although, as Harris has pointed out,⁹⁴ the northern West Virginia field developed much later than the southern, the number of northern counties appear with greater frequency in the list of counties in Table 5 (Barbour, Brooke, Doddridge, Grant, Hancock, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Marshall, Mineral, Monongalia, Ohio, Preston, Randolph, Ritchie, Taylor, Wetzel, and Wood being northern counties). Likewise, the figures on tonnage produced indicate the rapid development of the decade. The production of the entire state from 1870 to 1880 was as follows:⁹⁵

1870	.....	608,878	short tons
1871	.....	818,830	" "
1872	.....	700,000	" "
1873	.....	1,000,000	" "
1874	.....	1,120,000	" "
1875	.....	1,120,000	" "
1876	.....	896,000	" "
1877	.....	1,120,000	" "
1878	.....	1,120,000	" "
1879	.....	1,400,000	" "
1880	.....	1,829,844	" "

Railroads continued to open up, not merely whole fields due to main line construction, but branch lines began to extend up the various creeks where coal beds were located. A standard gauge Railway was built during the years 1881-82 up Cabin Creek, a tributary of the Kanawha,⁹⁶ for a distance of nine miles opening up what has since become one of the chief fields of Kanawha County. Like-

94 Opportunity, February 1926.

95 Compiled from Annual Reports of the State Mine Inspector.

96 First Annual Report of the State Mine Inspector, 1883, p. 20.

wise in 1881-82 a three feet gauge road was built up Paint Creek, also a tributary of the Kanawha River in Kanawha County.⁹⁷ This seems to be the first extensive railroad building up Paint Creek although a Richmond paper mentions a locomotive which was sold by the Tredegar Iron Works, of Richmond, to the "Paint Creek Company of Kanawha, Virginia"⁹⁸ as early as 1855. In 1883-84 the Winifrede branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio was built from Winifrede,⁹⁹ on the Kanawha River, for several miles up Field's Creek.¹⁰⁰ The narrow-gauge road built somewhat earlier from the main line of the Chesapeake and Ohio to Ansted in Fayette County, was changed to broad gauge in 1889.

The road construction mentioned above was all branch line connection. The chief event, however, so far as the development of the coal industry is concerned in the decade between 1880 and 1890, was the building of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, thereby opening up the Pocahontas coal field in McDowell and Mercer counties in the extreme southern part of the state. Perhaps to Major Jed Hotchkiss, of Staunton, Virginia, more than any other man, is due the credit for the development of the immense Pocahontas coal field. He explored and helped develop this forest area which fact led to the building of the railroad from Virginia, through this territory, toward the west.

97 Ibid., p. 23.

98 Quoted in Bruce, op. cit., p. 286.

99 Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 7.

100 Callahan, op. cit., p. 196.

The New River division terminating at Pocahontas, Virginia, just across the state line, was constructed in 1881-82, and large shipments of coal were made in 1883.¹⁰¹ Next came¹⁰² the building of the Flat Top extension in 1884 to Elkhorn. The Elkhorn tunnel was completed in 1886 and the road extended gradually westward until in 1892 it reached across¹⁰³ the Ohio River at Kenova. The coal lands of Mercer, McDowell, Mingo, and Wayne counties were thus made available for extensive development. The opening of this field, directly adjacent to old Virginia, was greatly important so far as the Negro miner is concerned, as will later be shown.

While the building of the Norfolk and Western was by far the most important event in the decade from 1880 to 1890 the coal industry was somewhat affected also by the building of the Ohio Central (now the New York Central) from the Ohio River at Gallipolis up the Kanawha valley to¹⁰⁴ Charleston in 1884, while the Ohio River road was completed from Wheeling to Huntington in 1888.¹⁰⁵ However, no new large fields were opened during this period except that occasioned by the building of the Norfolk and Western Railway.

By 1890 both the New River field, mainly in Fayette County, and the Pocahontas Field, which included

¹⁰¹ Hale, J. P., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 168.

¹⁰² Callahan, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Hale, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 168.

¹⁰⁵ Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 8.

Mercer and McDowell counties, opening in 1884 and 1888-89 respectively,¹⁰⁶ had developed rapidly. The following table, made from the only available sources of information,¹⁰⁷ will indicate something of the growth up to 1891, in the counties that were later to become important in the coal industry:

TABLE 6. NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED IN BITUMINOUS COAL MINING BY COUNTIES, 1883-1891

County	Year			
	1883	1888	1889	1891
Fayette	1,460	2,953	2,675	3,656
Kanawha	1,853	2,370	2,088	2,710
Marion	173	478	431	1,329
McDowell			742	1,497
Mercer		1,136	1,396	2,104
Monongalia			125	60
Others	1,857	2,037	1,747	1,722
W. Va.	5,343	8,974	9,204	14,078

The growth of coal mining had been so rapid during the period following 1870 and the outlook for continued growth so great that the office of Inspector of Mines was created by the West Virginia Legislature in 1883.¹⁰⁸ An indication of the increase in the number of mines since that time may be gained from the fact that in 1883 the one inspector was supposed to visit all the mines in West Virginia and make a thorough inspection of each. The first

¹⁰⁶ Report of the State Inspector of Mines, 1888, p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Reports of the State Inspector of Mines for 1883, 1888, 1889, and 1891. The reports for other years were destroyed in the Capitol fire in 1921.

¹⁰⁸ Report of the State Inspector of Mines, 1883, p. 1.

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report tells of his proposed route:

I determined upon the following route as the one I should follow in my tour of inspection, viz.: to begin at Raymond City, the most westerly mine on the Great Kanawha river, and work thence eastwardly to Quinimont on New River, in Fayette County, thence to Piedmont in Mineral County, and from there westwardly along the B & O Railroad and the Parkersburg branch of the same until I should have visited all the mines on that portion of said railroad thence northwardly, from Grafton, along the main stem of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to Wheeling, and up the Ohio river to all the mines in the "Panhandle;" thence down the Ohio to the mines in Mason County.

Today there are twenty-six district mine inspectors, three inspectors-at-large, as well as five safety directors doing the work which one man was supposed to do in 1883.¹¹⁰ The quotation above is included to emphasize again the relatively late development of coal mining on a large scale in West Virginia. There were one hundred and two operations in 1883¹¹¹ while in 1930 there were seven hundred and seventy-nine.¹¹²

The next field to be opened, which later came to have significance for our study, was Logan County. Although 116, 50, and 86 men were reported to be working in Logan County in the mines in 1894, 1895, and 1896 respectively,¹¹³ there is no more mention made of Logan County in the mine reports until 1904. Evidently the mines mentioned at the

109 Ibid., p. 4.

110 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1930, pp. 3-4.

111 Report of Inspector of Mines, 1883.

112 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1930, pp. 18-51.

113 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Reports, 1894, 1895, 1896.

earlier dates were merely local enterprises. In 1904,¹¹⁴ however, 131 men were reported as working in the mines. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad extended its line to Logan¹¹⁵ in 1904. This field, while late in starting its development, has come to occupy second place to the Pocahontas Field only, and in 1927 it took first place in production for that year.¹¹⁶ This development took place in less than thirty years, for in 1903, although two mines were being opened before the completion of the railroad, no coal was shipped that year.¹¹⁷

We shall pass over the minor developments in already established fields and go on to the developments which led to the opening of the mines in Raleigh County, particularly in that section later known as the Winding Gulf Field. The first mine in Raleigh County, now one of the chief counties in the production of coal, was established at Royal, located on the New River and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, in 1890.¹¹⁸ The building of the Virginian Railway, however, opened up a much wider field in this county from which are obtained some of the finest coals in the state. The Virginian grew out of a plan to provide an outlet to tidewater for operations not adequately served by existing railroads. The culmination of this

¹¹⁴ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1904, p. 34.

¹¹⁵ Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 8.

¹¹⁶ State of W. Va., Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1930, pp. 88-89.

¹¹⁷ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1903, p. 112.

¹¹⁸ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1904, p. 114.

plan came with the merging of the Deepwater Railroad in Fayette County with the Tidewater Railroad of Virginia.¹¹⁹

In 1909 the road provided connections between Deepwater on the Kanawha River through Fayette, Raleigh, Wyoming, and Mercer counties into Virginia.¹²⁰

With the opening of the area made possible by the building of the Virginian Railway the last of the great fields in West Virginia was made available. Later developments have been merely extensions of the great undertakings already started. A further discussion of these developments at this point the writer does not deem essential to the present study. Sufficient of the historical background of developments in the counties studied has been given to serve as a perspective in the later chapters. This much is indispensable to a study of this kind; more than this, superfluous.

II. HISTORY OF THE NEGRO MINER IN WEST VIRGINIA

As we have seen, the sources of information on the history of mining in West Virginia are both scattered and meager and not only are such sources concerning the history of the Negro miner extremely meager but so scattered, apparently, that no one has attempted to put them together. As was the case of the mining of coal, the first information concerning the Negro as a miner relates not to

¹¹⁹ Callahan, op. cit., p. 221.

¹²⁰ Lawall & others, op. cit., p. 8.

West Virginia, but to the counties of Old Virginia. Since mining started there at an early date, as we have seen, and since Negro slaves were much more numerous there than in the western counties, it is perhaps the logical place to look for their early use as miners. The earliest mention, which the writer has been able to find, of the Negro as a miner was made by a French traveler in the colonies. He described the Virginia mines at Dover as employing five hundred Negroes, in workings already one hundred and twenty feet deep.¹²¹ Dover is located on the north bank of the James River in Goochland County about twenty miles from Richmond. This mine, in addition to the Midlothian mine, opened in 1835, and the Clover Hill mine, opened in 1839, were later depended upon greatly by the Confederacy from 1861 to 1865.¹²² These mines, with certain other smaller mines in Chesterfield and Amelia counties, such as the Maidenhead mine, opened in 1821; Gowrie; Wills, Brown, and Company, 1818; Trabue's Old Pits; Creek Company of Colliers, 1837; and the Moody and Johnson mine, came to be known as the Richmond coal fields.¹²³ In 1841 nearly a thousand men, mainly Negro slaves, with only a few white men from Virginia and Great Britain, were at work in the Richmond coal fields.¹²⁴ The slaves in these early mines could be utilized with little special training.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Clark, V. S., op. cit., p. 331.

¹²² Bruce, op. cit., Appendix I, map and p. 452.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 95

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 108.

Debow's Review reports that proposals had been made to use slave labor more generally in the quarrying and working of granite, as well as in the mining of coal. Virginia also proposed to use Negroes on public works. Perhaps no state had made wider use than did Virginia of her slaves. Their use in the iron furnaces and factories of Virginia, says Professor Bruce, clearly demonstrates that "The economic historians have been curiously in error in their dogmatic statements that the negro slave could not be profitably used as a factory hand." It is quite possible, however, that the western counties of Virginia may have used slaves less profitably, if we may believe one of the factions in the convention called to create the new constitution for the state of West Virginia, which said:

"Make West Virginia free and she will invite immigrants. Her coal and her iron can be mined only by free labor. Negro slavery is wasteful everywhere, but less profitable in West Virginia than in any part of the southern states."

East Virginia, however, did not seem to suffer from this unprofitable use of Negroes in the mines. That delightful narrator and traveler, who is one of the joys of the historian, says of the Virginia mines:

126 Debow's Review, Vol. IX, July-Dec. 1850, p. 435.

127 Wesley, Charles H., Negro Labor in the United States, Vanguard, 1927, p. 7.

128 Op. cit., p. 231.

129 Callahan, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

130 Olmstead, Frederick Law, A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, Mason & Bros., N. Y., 1856, pp. 47-48.

"Yesterday I visited a coal-pit: the majority of the mining laborers are slaves, and uncommonly athletic and fine-looking negroes; but a considerable number of white hands are also employed, and they occupy all the responsible posts. The slaves are, some of them, owned by the Mining Company; but the most are hired of their owners at from \$120 to \$200 a year, the company boarding and clothing them. (I have the impression that I heard it was customary to give them a certain allowance of money and let them find their own board).

The coal from these beds is of special value for gas manufacture and is shipped, for that purpose, to all the large towns on the Atlantic seaboard, even beyond Boston. It is delivered to shipping at Richmond at 15¢ a bushel: about 30 bushels go to a ton."

About the time Mr. Olmstead published his book there were running in the Richmond Daily Dispatch during December and January of certain years advertizements for Negro miners. It would seem, then, that in the ante-bellum period in eastern Virginia that Negro slaves were used quite generally if not almost exclusively.

Just when Negroes were first used in the counties of West Virginia as miners is not known. We do know, however, that mining began in Ohio County about 1810, in Kanawha in 1817, in Mason County in 1832, in Brooke Harrison, Logan, Monogalia, Preston and Tyler by 1840, in Mineral County in the decade between 1840 and 1850, and in Marion and Putnam counties by 1860. The follow-

131 Bruce, op. cit., p. 246.

132 Supra, p.

133 Supra, p.

134 Supra, p.

135 Supra, p.

136 Supra, p.

137 Supra, p.

ing table will give some idea also of the number of Negroes in each county of importance for our study in the ante- and post-bellum periods:¹³⁸

TABLE 7. NUMBER OF NEGROES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES
IN WEST VIRGINIA FROM 1790 TO 1870

County	Year								
	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870
Fayette			246	401	617	589	397	329	123
Kanawha		238	398	1102	1793	2657	3352	2365	2238
Logan									36
Mason			249	623	758	854	698	423	534
McDowell									
Mercer						106	204	391	394
Raleigh							36	76	16

Although, as has been said, it is not possible to say just when slaves began to work in the mines in the western counties, it has been possible to verify the fact that Negro slaves worked in the coal industry both in Mason and Kanawha counties before the Civil War. Slaves owned by R. C. M. Lovell worked in the mines in Mason County before this time. Mr. Lovell followed the prevailing custom mentioned by Olmstead¹³⁹ and rented his Negroes to the mining companies. The slaves lived in slave quarters and their wages were collected by their master. There were very few Negroes in the mines of Mason County, according to one informant,¹⁴⁰ and they worked in the mines with free labor. These Negroes, who worked at Mason, Virginia, went to the

¹³⁸ Census of 1870, Compendium, pp. 100-103.

¹³⁹ Supra, p.

¹⁴⁰ Mr. F. M. Mumaw.

State of Ohio after the Civil War and did not remain in
 141
 mining after emancipation.

Mason County is located on the Ohio River, and, hence, was just across the river from free territory. As a result, rather extreme measures were taken at one place to keep the slaves from escaping while working in the mines. A sort of stockade was built in which the Negroes were put
 142
 after working in the mines in the daytime. This old structure, which stood for a number of years after the Civil War, was popularly known as the "nigger pen." This practice would indicate that slaves must have been used considerably, although the informant above insists that the numbers were never large.

It was the good fortune of the writer, quite by chance, to encounter one of these old slaves while interviewing the miners in Kanawha County. This old man was still hale and hearty at the age of ninety. His father, a slave in Mason County, although they had been originally brought from east Virginia by their owner, Mr. John Lewis, was one of those leaving for Ohio after the war. His son, however, tired of Ohio and returned to Point Pleasant. He then worked on a steamboat, worked at the salt furnaces, and finally came to the mining fields of Kanawha County.

141 All the data above were secured by correspondence with Mr. F. M. Mumaw, of Mason, W. Va., age 88 on October 29, 1931.

142 Interview with Mr. Clifford C. Myers, W. Va. State Historian, in charge of Department of Archives and History, Charleston, W. Va.

He has been mining since 1877, being then thirty-five years of age, having worked at many different places. He has, however, been on Cabin Creek for over thirty years. At present he has been put off, due to the age limit held by the company, without a pension. He lives with his two sons who are both miners. He substantiated the fact that Negro slaves were used in mining.

Illustration 1.

The oldest Negro miner interviewed,
an ex-slave, age 90.

The use of Negro slaves in the mines of Kanawha County was much more widespread than in Mason County. It will be remembered that coal was first used in the Kanawha Valley in conjunction with the manufacture of salt, replacing wood for that purpose. This coal was mined largely by Negro slaves.¹⁴³ Because of the lack of knowledge of ventilation, the openings were not driven into the hills very far. The coal was pushed out in small cars by the slaves. Not only were the slaves used in the mines themselves, but were also employed in the cannal coal oil factories which became somewhat prevalent in the fifties.¹⁴⁴ The owners of the slaves leased them to the owners of the factories, who were usually citizens of free states.¹⁴⁵ Kanawha County had over three thousand slaves in 1850,¹⁴³ and it is quite likely that a goodly number of them were used in the mines and the factories.

After the Civil War something of the unrest and movement among the Negroes in certain other states were reflected in West Virginia. There was a decided tendency

¹⁴³ Correspondence with Mr. C. C. Dickinson of the Kanawha Salt Works, Malden, W. Va., Mr. Dickinson's father, Mr. J. Q. Dickinson, was one of the pioneers in the salt business in this vicinity.

¹⁴⁴ Kanawha Valley Star, October 10, 1859, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Supra, Table 7. A list of Charleston citizens in 1836 gives "Dock & Gabe, colored, coal haulers," (Hale, John P., Trans-Allegheny Pioneers, Cincinnati, 1886, p. 324) Just what is meant by the term, coal haulers, is indefinite. It may mean haulers of coal in the mines or it may mean draying the coal to the homes of the citizens.

for the newly-emancipated freedmen, "the New-Isshy,"¹⁴⁷ to
 move out from where they were located if only for a time.¹⁴⁸
 Such a tendency was the logical behavior pattern such a
 group might be expected to follow for both psychological
 and sociological reasons.¹⁴⁹ Being reared in a cultural
 milieu in which the greatest value was put upon freedom, in
 which his only sharing was through a religious sublimation,
 the Negro reacted to the new situation in such a way as to
 realize a new experience which he had long anticipated and
 at the same time to announce his freedom in a conspicuous
 and overt manner. This movement roughly took two forms:
 a movement from plantation to town and city,¹⁵⁰ and a move-
 ment from the state of residence prior to emancipation to
 other states, in which latter movement whites as well as
 Negroes participated.¹⁵¹ The movement did not always re-
 sult in permanent loss of the Negroes, as there was a
 tendency for many of them to filter back into the communi-
 ties they had left. The following table gives some indi-
 cation of this movement in certain West Virginia counties:

¹⁴⁷ Dodge, David, Free Negroes of North Carolina, Atlantic Monthly, vol. 47, Jan. 1886, p. 28. This term was used by the freed slaves to differentiate themselves from those free before Emancipation by amendment. The free Negroes were known as "old issue" and the freed as "new issue."

¹⁴⁸ See Taylor, A. A., The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction, Associated Publishers, 1924, passim, also his Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, Associated Publishers, 1926.

¹⁴⁹ See Miller, Herbert A., Races, Nations, and Classes, Lippincott, 1924, pp. 32-34.

¹⁵⁰ Taylor, A. A., The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, p. 85.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

TABLE 8. NUMBER OF NEGROES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES
IN WEST VIRGINIA FROM 1860 TO 1880

County	Year		
	1860	1870	1880
Fayette	281	118	1122
Kanawha	2365	2238	2870
Logan	149	162	109
McDowell			3
Mason	423	534	859
Mercer	391	394	366
Raleigh	76	16	71

It will be noticed that in Fayette, Kanawha and Raleigh counties there was a decrease in the number of Negroes between 1860 and 1870, with a corresponding increase between 1870 and 1880. Mason County, on the other hand, shows an increase in all three periods. Mason County is located on the Ohio River and may have proved a stopping point for many in their westward trek toward greater economic advantage,¹⁵³ since it offered both work on the farms and in the mines, not to mention the boat yards in the county. In Mercer County 29 out of the 391 Negroes¹⁵⁴ were free in 1860. Since Mercer County is adjacent to the western counties of Virginia it is probable that some of the gain in 1870 and 1880 was due to migration of Negro farmers from Virginia. The tendency of Virginia Negroes to come to West Virginia started early and has continued to the present time.¹⁵⁵ Neither Mercer nor Logan were

¹⁵³ Census of 1880, Vol. I, p. 414.

¹⁵³ Wesley, C. H., *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹⁵⁴ Census of 1860, Vol. I, pp. 516-517.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter III.

coal counties during this period and, hence, probably attracted Negro farmers to some extent, although Logan County had lost some of its Negroes by 1880.

West Virginia, due to the post-bellum unrest among Negroes, was more of a gainer than a loser in Negro population. In 1870, before the great development in the coal fields, there were 17,980 Negroes.¹⁵⁶ Jefferson, Berkeley, Hampshire, and Hardy counties in the Eastern Panhandle, Greenbrier and Monroe counties on the Virginia border, and Kanawha county each contained more than one thousand Negroes -- two-thirds of the Negro population of the state.¹⁵⁷ Since Kanawha was the only one of these counties that mines extensively, the rest being agricultural for the most part, it can be readily seen that the bulk of the Negro population was in other occupations than mining at this date.

In the decade after 1870, however, it will be remembered that much development in the coal industry and much railroad building took place. West Virginia and Ohio by 1872 provided a demand for railroad laborers to whom were paid wages of \$1.50 or \$1.75 a day.¹⁵⁸ A correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial wrote:¹⁵⁹

I am informed by the contractors that the negroes make the most faithful hands they can get.

¹⁵⁶ State of W. Va., Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 12.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Taylor, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Taylor, Ibid., p. 97.

This is the period, it will be remembered, of the building of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. This road had about five thousand Negro laborers in 1871.¹⁶⁰ In fact, one could say with a great deal of accuracy that this important road was largely built by Negro laborers from Virginia.¹⁶¹ The important contribution that the Negro laboring group made in this work can only be realized when the difficulty of the task is known. As Callahan says:¹⁶² "The full story of the work done would tell of hardships and dangers bravely borne, and of the faith and patience of skill and intelligence." The country was one of the wildest and hilliest in southern and eastern West Virginia. The materials for construction were brought in wagons over country roads or floated down the Greenbrier river in bateaux.

After the work of construction was completed many of the Negroes remained either to work on the railroad or to work in the newly opened coal mines of the New River district.¹⁶³ Up to the year 1885 ninety per cent of the miners in the New River Field were Negroes.¹⁶⁴ Thereafter, the competition of the Southern European began to be felt somewhat. In 1880, there were only 25 foreigners out of a total of 4,497 in the industry.¹⁶⁵ In 1890, this number

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁶¹ Callahan, op. cit., p. 192; Taylor, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Mr. John Laing.

¹⁶⁵ Suffern, Arthur E., Conciliation and Arbitration in the Coal Industry of America, Houghton Mifflin, 1915, p. 36.

had increased to 1,375,¹⁶⁶ while the number of Negroes was
¹⁶⁷ 3,016. However, the foreign element was brought in only
when the native white and Negro population became inadequate.
Thus, the policy in West Virginia was not displacement of
Negro and native white labor by foreign labor but merely
¹⁶⁸ supplementation of their labor. Scarcity of Negro labor
caused a resort to labor agencies in the southern states.
Mining companies writing to one agency in Richmond made it
¹⁶⁹ a condition that no whites should be sent to them.
Across the border in Virginia the policy was one of dis-
¹⁷⁰ placement.

Several years after the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, the Norfolk and Western was built, from about 1881 to 1892. The Negroes took fully as large a part in the building of that railroad as they did in the building of the Chesapeake and Ohio.¹⁷¹ Many of these remained, not only to work in the coal fields, but to work
¹⁷² as permanent employees on the railroad itself. At that time, before the advent of the Brotherhood of Engineers and Firemen, some of the better positions were open to the Negro. Although the numbers were never very large, there were some firemen. There was only one of these early firemen left in

¹⁶⁶ Census of 1890, Vol. II.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Harris, Abram L., The Black Worker, Columbia University Press, 1931, p. 214.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

¹⁷⁰ U. S. Immigration Commission, Abstract.

¹⁷¹ Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1936.

¹⁷² Ibid.

1928, running on the Northfork division.¹⁷³ Negro brakemen existed in greater numbers and several were still running in 1928. However, as a rule, when these old workers drop out their places are given to white men eligible to the "Brotherhoods."

As was shown in Table 8, there were only 3 Negroes in McDowell County in 1880.¹⁷⁴ By 1890 this number had increased to 1,591.¹⁷⁵ Since McDowell County opened up about 1888, it can be seen with what rapidity and in what numbers the Negroes came. These numbers were in part brought in from the south in "transportation cars." These were simply Negroes whose transportation had been paid from the south by certain companies. They paid back, in work for the companies, the money that had been advanced to them. Most of these were either single men or married men who came without their families. They later, in many cases, sent for their families and often induced their friends to come also. Since there were only 734 miners in McDowell County in 1890,¹⁷⁶ it can be seen that the Negroes doubtless constituted the bulk of them. They have continued to play an important role in McDowell County, and today there are far more Negro miners in McDowell County than any other in the state.

Mercer County started its development several years before McDowell County and, for a time, led any other

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 6.
¹⁷⁴ Supra, p.
¹⁷⁵ Census of 1890, Vol. II, p. 435.
¹⁷⁶ Census of 1890, Vol. II, p. 418.

county in the Pocahontas Field in the number of Negroes employed. In 1890 there were nine mines open which employed 1,121 men.¹⁷⁷ The Negro population increased from 366 in 1880 to 2,022 in 1890.¹⁷⁸ This county likewise exhibits an enormous growth of Negro population synchronous with the opening of the railroads and mines in that county. The fact that the Negroes were in the majority in this county gave rise to some problems which will be discussed in a later chapter.¹⁷⁹

The number of Negroes in Kanawha County likewise continued to grow. By 1890 it had a population of 3,402 Negroes, although Fayette County had 3,054.¹⁸⁰ Within the next ten years Fayette County was to surpass Kanawha County in the number of Negroes and has held the edge ever since. One of the most distinguished of American Negroes spent his boyhood days in Kanawha County. The stepfather of Booker T. Washington, running away from his Virginia master and following the Federal Soldiers, wandered into West Virginia.¹⁸¹ He secured employment in the salt furnaces at Malden, West Virginia, about six miles above Charleston on the Kanawha River.¹⁸² As soon as freedom was declared he sent for his

177 Ibid., pp. 417-418.

178 Ibid., p. 435.

179 The writer's maternal grandfather, William Tamplin, was manager of the Goodwill Mine, beginning about 1888 and much of this later material was obtained from his mother.

180 Census of 1890, Vol. II, p. 438.

181 Washington, Booker, T., Up From Slavery, A. L. Burt, 1900, p. 24.

182 Washington, Booker T., Story of My Life and Work, W. H. Ferguson & Co., Cincinnati, 1901, p. 20.

wife and her children, who made the trip overland in a wagon, there being no railroad connection as yet with old Virginia.¹⁸³ Booker T. Washington, himself, as soon as he was large enough, worked in the salt furnace and taught himself to read by watching the marking on the salt barrels.¹⁸⁴ Later he was put to work in the coal mine that supplied this salt furnace.¹⁸⁵ This event was not to Washington's liking and he refers to it as "the unpleasant coal mine experience."¹⁸⁶ Concerning it, he says:¹⁸⁷

After I had worked in the salt furnace for some time, work was secured for me in a coal-mine which was operated mainly for the purpose of securing fuel for the salt-furnace. Work in the coal-mine I always dreaded. One reason for this was that any one who worked in a coal-mine was always unclean, at least while at work, and it was a very hard job to get one's skin clean after the day's work was over. Then it was fully a mile from the opening of the coal-mine to the face of the coal, and all, of course, was in the blackest darkness. I do not believe that one ever experiences anywhere else such darkness as he does in a coal-mine. The mine was divided into a large number of different "rooms" or departments, and, as I never was able to learn the location of all these rooms, I many times found myself lost in the mine. To add to the horror of being lost, sometimes my light would go out, and then, if I did not happen to have a match, I would wander about in the darkness until by chance I found some one to give me a light. The work was not only hard, but it was dangerous. There was always the danger of being blown to pieces by a premature explosion of powder, or of being crushed by falling slate. Accidents from one or the other of these causes were frequently occurring, and this kept me in constant fear. Many

183 Washington, Up From Slavery, pp. 24-25.

184 Washington, Story of My Life and Work, pp. 23-24.

185 Ibid., p. 26.

186 Ibid.

187 Washington, Up From Slavery, pp. 38-39.

children of the tenderest years were compelled then, as is now true I fear, (188) in most coal-mining districts, to spend a large part of their lives in these coal-mines, with little opportunity to get an education; and, what is worse, I have often noted that, as a rule, young boys who begin life in a coal-mine are often physically and mentally dwarfed. They soon lose ambition to do anything else than to continue as a coal-miner.

It was from Malden that Washington left for Hampton and
189
later returned for a period of teaching.

When the Winding Gulf Field in Raleigh and Wyoming counties was opened up through the building of the Virginian Railroad in 1909 the Negro again played the part of pioneer. When operators in other fields were prospecting in the Winding Gulf coal area they took along their
190
trusted Negroes. Many of these Negroes who helped to open up the mines in this newest field are still working at these same places. Raleigh County coal mines are located partly in the New River Field and partly in the Winding Gulf Field. Consequently, it had some Negroes before the latter field was developed. In 1908 Raleigh County had 383 Negroes, 948 native whites, and 943 foreign
191
born. In 1909 the number of Negroes had increased to

188 Child labor laws in West Virginia now prohibit underground work under 18.

189 Washington, Up From Slavery, p. 87.

190 The writer knew one Negro who was brought from the New River Field by one employer and taken to the Kanawha Field where he worked for about ten years, and was finally taken to the Winding Gulf Field where he died. His widow is still cared for by this company.

191 Figures compiled from Dept. of Mines, Annual Reports, for these years.

455 and the native whites to 1,062.¹⁹² In 1910 the number of Negroes had jumped to 715 and the number of the native whites to 1,672. Thus, in this two year period the native whites increased 176 per cent and the Negroes increased 186 per cent. The growth of Negro population in Raleigh County has been steady until today it is the second county¹⁹³ in the number of Negro miners.

As was the case in dealing with the history of mining in West Virginia, our purpose here has not been to write exhaustively on the history of the Negro in mining. A great many historical points will be brought out in later chapters, as, in each case, the attempt will be made to trace the discussion to the past as well as the present. In any instance involving interpretation this practice, to the writer, seems wisest as a matter of method. The purpose in this chapter has been, then to present somewhat briefly the part of the Negro in the opening of the various fields involved in this study as well as to trace his history in mining as far back as any record of his part in it exists, which was found, in this case, to be in old Virginia. While there had always existed some habitual and psychic

¹⁹² W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1910, p. 105. It is impossible here to give the figures for the foreign born, and, indeed, the figures for the Negroes and native whites are no doubt inaccurate. The practice of giving national and racial groups began with the report of 1907 and many mines gave incomplete material. The number of men of unknown nationalities in Raleigh County in 1909 was 798, and for 1910, 344.

¹⁹³ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1930, p. 122.

as well as spatial isolation,¹⁹⁴ between the eastern counties and the Transmontain,¹⁹⁵ the mobility of culture traits and the frequency of contacts between the east and west would indicate that mining practices and labor policies in the east were very likely familiar to the western counties and, since the eastern counties held priority in experience in mining, were probably not without their effects. With this objective in mind we may very briefly summarize some of the chief points of the Negro's history in West Virginia mining.

There is abundant evidence of the use of Negro miners on a large scale in the eastern coal counties of Virginia in the eighteenth century. This use increased before the Civil War until upwards of one thousand Negroes were employed in the Richmond coal field by 1841. In West Virginia counties, however, the numbers of all races in mining were not large until a considerable period after the Civil War. The numbers of Negroes involved in mining under the slave regime are indefinite. It is known, however, that they were used in Mason County in the mines and in the coal oil factories of Kanawha County. Since Negroes were in greater numbers in Kanawha County at that time than any other county in the state it is probable that they were used in the mines in this county as well.

194 See Lumley, F. E., Principles of Sociology, McGraw-Hill, 1928, pp. 118-123.

195 See Ambler, Charles H., Sectionalism in Virginia, Chicago, 1910, *passim*.

Following the emancipation of the slaves there was some movement from the mining counties to other places, which fact is evidenced by the Census of 1870. However, with the building of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and the consequent opening of the New River coal field the Negro population here increased rapidly. These newcomers, mostly from Virginia, remained as employees of the railroad and the new mines, in considerable numbers. The increase from 1871 on is indicated in the Census of 1880.

The great part which the Negroes played in the building of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was re-enacted in the building of the Norfolk and Western Railroad from 1881-1892. These workers likewise remained in the state in great numbers. The Negroes also played a large part in the building of the Virginian Railway and in the opening of the Winding Gulf Field in Raleigh and Wyoming counties. Many operators, active in existing coal fields, took with them trusted and tried Negroes who helped them in the opening of other mines in the new field.

The history of the Negro miner then begins before the Civil War, in certain counties, chiefly Mason and Kanawha. In addition, he has been continuously employed in Fayette County since 1873, in Mercer since 1883, in McDowell since 1887, in Raleigh since 1890 (although not in great numbers until the opening of the Virginian Railway in 1909), in Logan since 1904, and in Wyoming since 1909. The use of the Negro in mining has led to the rapid

increase of Negro population in the State: ¹⁹⁶ 17,980 in
 1870; 25,886 in 1880; 32,690 in 1890; 43,499 in 1900;
 64,173 in 1910; 66,345 in 1920; ¹⁹⁷ and 114,893 in 1930. ¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Woodson, Carter G., A Century of Negro Migration,
 Associated Publishers, 1918, p. 146.

¹⁹⁷ Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Annual Report,
 1925-26, p. 143.

¹⁹⁸ Census of 1930, Population Bulletin, West Virginia,
 Composition and Characteristics of the Population,
 issued April 25, 1931, p. 5.

CHAPTER III

THE NEGRO MINING POPULATION

I. THE NEGRO IN THE MINING POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

The Negro has never played a conspicuous part in the anthracite coal mining industry.¹ In 1920 there were 147,453 persons employed in the anthracite industry. Of these, 69,645 or 47.2 per cent were native whites; 77,765² or 52.8 per cent were foreigners; and only 46 Negroes. The explanation of this minute representation in this industry lies in the location, economic features, and traditions of the industry itself.³ The mining of anthracite coal is restricted to a much smaller area than bituminous coal, being, for the most part, found in Pennsylvania. It is much more urbanized than is the case with bituminous coal.⁴ The mining of anthracite, moreover, requires more skill than does the mining of bituminous, hence, the unskilled worker from the southern states. The market for labor, in dull times, in the anthracite industry is in these urbanized centers where skilled workers are more available than in the more or less isolated bituminous coal mining community. The present writer would add that another factor in the situation is that many southern

1 Figures are not yet available for 1930.

2 Report of the United States Coal Commission, 1925, Pt. 2, p. 548.

3 Harris, The Black Worker, p. 207.

4 Report of the United States Coal Commission, Pt. 3, pp. 1413-1414.

Negroes, already having experience in the mining of bituminous coal in Alabama, naturally apply for positions in that industry rather than try to break the deadlines of a new industry.

In bituminous coal mining, on the other hand, Negroes in 1920 constituted 8.1 per cent of the entire working force of the industry. There were 525,152 persons engaged in the industry of whom 310,719 or 59.3 per cent were native whites; 171,990 or 32.7 per cent were foreigners; and 42,443 or 8.1 per cent were Negroes. The distribution of these workers is shown in Table 9:

TABLE 9. RACIAL AND NATIONAL COMPOSITION OF BITUMINOUS COAL OPERATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES BY STATES: 1920

State	Native white		Colored		Foreign	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Pennsylvania	68,843	43.2	2,288	1.4	88,381	55.4
West Virginia	55,491	60.1	18,376	19.9	18,490	20.0
Illinois	47,836	59.3	1,927	2.4	30,851	38.3
Ohio	32,322	67.6	902	1.9	14,606	30.5
Indiana	19,947	81.1	384	1.6	4,252	17.3
Alabama	5,667	43.7	6,843	52.7	469	3.6
Other states	80,613	75.2	11,723	10.9	14,941	13.9
Total	310,719	100.0	42,443	100.0	171,990	100.0

It will be seen that the Negro has a substantial percentage of the mining population in only two states, Alabama and West Virginia. Alabama is the only state in which he is

5 U. S. Coal Commission Report, Pt. 3, p. 1422.

6 Ibid.

in actual majority. However, in numbers, the West Virginia Negro population is more than twice as large as that of Alabama.

II. THE NEGRO IN THE MINING POPULATION OF WEST VIRGINIA.-

1. The Present Mining Population

The 1920 figures are the latest available showing the comparative racial distribution in the coal mining states of America. However, much later figures are to be had for the state of West Virginia. Since 1920 the Negro population has increased from 18,376 to 21,514 in 1931.⁷ The following table will show the racial and national distribution of operatives in the mines of West Virginia in that year:⁸

⁷ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Report, 1931, p. 121.

⁸ Compiled from Ibid., pp. 118-121.

TABLE 10. RACIAL AND NATIONAL COMPOSITION OF COAL MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES: 1931

County	Native whites		Negroes		Foreigners		Totals	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Barbour	1,309	72.2	117	6.4	388	21.4	1,814	100.0
Boone	1,877	74.7	289	11.5	347	13.8	2,513	100.0
Braxton	114	98.3			2	1.7	116	100.0
Brooke	327	25.8	240	19.0	697	55.2	1,263	100.0
Clay	521	85.8	39	6.5	47	7.7	607	100.0
Fayette	7,553	63.1	3,060	25.6	1,355	11.3	11,968	100.0
Gilmer	27	100.0					27	100.0
Grant	132	93.5	3	2.2	6	4.3	141	100.0
Greenbrier	1,348	78.5	221	12.9	147	8.6	1,716	100.0
Hancock	30	69.8			13	30.2	43	100.0
Harrison	2,183	64.9	167	5.0	1,011	30.1	3,361	100.0
Kanawha	4,626	76.6	1,054	17.5	355	5.9	6,035	100.0
Lewis	17	100.0					17	100.0
Lincoln	100	36.2	15	12.9	1	.9	116	100.0
Logan	6,443	59.7	2,212	20.5	2,139	19.8	10,794	100.0
Marion	2,417	50.5	393	18.7	1,468	30.8	4,778	100.0
Marshall	620	50.0	106	8.6	513	41.4	1,239	100.0
Mason	34	100.0					34	100.0
McDowell	9,027	51.2	6,092	34.6	2,503	14.2	17,622	100.0
Mercer	2,273	65.6	965	27.8	238	6.8	3,476	100.0
Mineral	468	97.5			12	2.5	480	100.0
Mingo	2,766	74.8	610	16.5	322	8.7	3,698	100.0
Monongalia	2,257	50.3	591	13.2	1,636	36.5	4,484	100.0
Nicholas	122	96.1			5	3.9	127	100.0
Ohio	319	19.4	439	26.7	388	53.9	1,646	100.0
Preston	1,490	32.9	23	1.3	283	15.8	1,796	100.0
Putnam	456	79.3	116	20.2	3	.5	575	100.0
Raleigh	6,848	56.8	3,632	30.1	1,567	13.1	12,047	100.0
Randolph	478	87.7	3	.6	64	11.7	545	100.0
Taylor	782	84.9	20	2.1	119	13.0	921	100.0
Tucker	564	88.6	17	1.9	302	9.5	883	100.0
Upshur	263	94.9	1	.4	13	4.7	277	100.0
Wayne	181	100.0					181	100.0
Webster	769	99.9			1	.1	770	100.0
Wyoming	1,053	58.7	589	32.9	151	8.4	1,793	100.0
W. Va.	59,844	61.1	21,514	21.9	16,595	17.0	97,953	100.0

There are fifty-six counties in West Virginia. Thirty-five of these counties produce coal on a commercial basis. Negro miners are found in twenty-six of these counties. With one exception, there is no county in West Virginia where as many as 500 miners are engaged in the industry in which some Negroes are not found. The one exception is Webster, in which are employed 770 miners, all native whites except one. Needless to say, none of the major producing coal counties are without Negroes in some proportion. Of the nine counties in which no Negroes are employed only five had as many as one hundred men employed. The total of all men employed in these nine counties was only 1,845 or 1.88 per cent of the mining population of the state. Their combined production of coal for 1931 was only 513,545 tons⁹ or .5 per cent of the entire production for the state. It is interesting to note that one of these counties which now has no Negroes in the mining population, Mason County, was one of the counties which employed Negro slaves before the Civil War. At present, however, this county has only eight mines with a total of 84 men employed. These are all native whites.

On the other hand, those counties which led in the production of coal in 1931 were also those which led in the number of Negroes. McDowell, which has led the state in tonnage every year since 1903, except in 1927,¹⁰

⁹ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Report of 1931, p. 84.
¹⁰ Ibid., p. 87. Logan County led in 1927.

MAP 5. DISTRIBUTION OF
NEGRO MINERS IN
WEST VIRGINIA: 1931

1 dot equals 100 Negroes.
 π = Less than 100.
 π^2 = No Negroes.

RAND McNALLY
 LETTER SIZE OUTLINE MAP
WEST VIRGINIA

SCALE
 0 10 20 30 Miles
 Copyright by Rand McNally & Company, Chicago
 MADE IN U. S. A.

has the largest Negro population of any county, with 3,093 Negro miners employed. Raleigh, the second county in number of Negroes, with 3,632 Negroes employed, has been third in the production of coal since 1932. Fayette, with 3,060 Negro miners employed, is the third in Negro population and fourth in the production of coal. Logan, with 2,312 Negroes, was second in the production of coal. Kanawha, fifth in the number of Negroes, was seventh in production. These counties, as well as the less important counties, from the standpoint of Negroes employed, are ranked in production and Negro population in the following table:¹¹

¹¹ Compiled from Dept. of Mines Report, 1931

TABLE 11. RANK OF CERTAIN WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES
IN NUMBER OF NEGROES EMPLOYED AND
PRODUCTION OF COAL; 1931

County	Rank	
	Production	Number of Negroes
McDowell	1	1
Logan	2	4
Raleigh	3	2
Fayette	4	3
Marion	5	7
Monongalia	6	9
Kanawha	7	5
Mingo	8	8
Harrison	9	15
Mercer	10	6
Boone	11	12
Wyoming	12	10
Greenbrier	13	14
Ohio	14	11
Brooke	15	13
Barbour	16	16
Taylor	17	21
Marshall	18	18
Preston	19	20
Tucker	20	22
Webster	21	None
Clay	22	19
Randolph	23	24
Putnam	24	17
Mineral	25	None
Upshur	26	25
Nicholas	27	None
Wayne	28	"
Braxton	29	"
Grant	30	24
Mason	31	None
Lincoln	32	23
Hancock	33	None
Gilmer	34	"
Lewis	35	"

If one were to draw a line through the centers (see map) of Pleasants, Ritchie, Gilmer, Braxton, Webster, and Pocahontas counties, the state may be, so far as the Negro is concerned, divided conveniently into a northern and a southern division. Gilmer, Braxton, and Webster are mining counties, but employ no Negro miners, hence, they are unimportant for our study. Any county south and west of the line may be considered in the southern field and any county north and east of the line may be considered as belonging to the northern field.

The Negro population of West Virginia is largely concentrated in the southern counties. McDowell, Raleigh, Fayette, Logan, Kanawha, and Mercer, the first six counties in point of Negro mining population are all in the southern area. Marion County, the seventh in point of Negro mining population is in the northern section, as are Monongalia, Ohio, Brooke, and Harrison, ranking ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, and fifteenth respectively. The counties in the southern section including, in addition to the six already mentioned, Wyoming, Mingo, Putnam, Boone, Clay, and Greenbrier contain 18,894 Negro miners or 87.8 per cent of the Negro mining population of the state. The counties in which the schedules of Negro miners were taken were the first five in population: McDowell, Raleigh, Fayette, Logan, and Kanawha. These five counties have a Negro mining population of 16,050 or 74.6 per cent of all the Negro miners in the state or 85.4 per cent of the Negro

miners in the southern section.

Not only is the Negro population larger in the southern counties, but it occupies also a larger place in the mining industry in the southern counties. In no northern county do the Negroes constitute as much as 30 per cent of the mining population. In three of the southern counties, McDowell, Raleigh, and Wyoming, the Negroes constitute more than 30 per cent of the total number of miners, with 34.6, 30.1, and 32.9 per cent respectively. Ohio County, in the northern field, while it has only 439 Negroes, 23.7 per cent of its mining population belong to that group. In the southern section, however, there are four counties in which the Negroes constitute between 20 and 30 per cent of the mining population. In three of the northern counties the Negroes are between 10 and 20 per cent of the mining population, while in the southern counties there are five in this class. In the northern field, in nine counties the Negroes constitute less than 10 per cent and in seven others there are no Negroes. In the southern counties, however, Negroes constitute more than 10 per cent in every county where there are Negroes employed at all. Two counties in the southern section do not employ Negroes. Enough has been said to demonstrate clearly that the southern counties, which constituted the field for the present study, are the important counties in the state so far as the Negro is concerned.

The native whites constitute an actual majority

in every county, both in the northern and southern sections, except in the two northern Panhandle counties of Brooke and Ohio. Here the native whites constitute only 35.3 and 19.4 per cent respectively. The explanation of this small number of native whites is partly in the fact that these counties are contiguous with Pennsylvania, in which state the foreign-born constitute a majority. In both counties the foreign-born mining population is more than fifty per cent of the entire mining population. The Negroes in Ohio County outnumber the native whites but the Negroes form a smaller part in Brooke County. Another factor which is partly responsible for the small number of native whites in these counties is the tendency of the native whites to leave a field after a strike. After the strike of 1902, many of the native whites of the "better class" went to the Middle

¹³ West. Between the years of 1920 and 1922 the Negro population in both counties almost doubled during and after the labor troubles about 1921. ¹³ There was another decided

increase between the years of 1925 and 1927, after the ¹⁴ strike of 1925. With these exceptions, the native whites are everywhere in a majority, being in some counties, as we noted, the only racial or national group. It should be said, however, that these counties are negligible in importance as mining counties. The percentage of native whites

¹² U. S. Immigration Commission, Report (on Bituminous Coal Mining), 1911, Vol. 7, p. 152.

¹³ Bureau of Negro Welfare & Statistics, Report, 1925-26, p. 22.

¹⁴ Bureau of Negro Welfare & Statistics, Report, 1927-28, p. 16.

in the mining industry of the state is 61.1.

The percentage of the foreign-born in the various counties throughout the state fluctuates more than that of the Negro. The percentage range is from zero in Wayne, Mason, Lewis, and Gilmer ¹⁵ to 55.2 per cent in Brooke County. As has already been mentioned, the foreign-born are the majority group in the mining population of both Ohio and Brooke counties in the northern Panhandle. Marshall County, also a Panhandle county, comes next with 41.4 per cent foreign-born. Four other northern counties, Hancock, Harrison, Marion, and Monongalia, have between 30 and 40 per cent foreign-born. Barbour County is the only county to have between 20 and 30 per cent of this group. Logan County has the largest percentage of foreign-born of any of the southern counties, with 19.8 per cent. McDowell, the county with the largest number of Negroes as well as the largest percentage, has 14.2 per cent foreign-born. Raleigh, Fayette, and Boone, southern counties, have 13.0, 11.3, and 13.8 per cent respectively. Preston, the only other county having between 10 and 20 per cent foreign-born with 15.8, is a northern county. All other counties have less than 10 per cent foreign-born. It will be clearly seen that, just as the Negro was more important than any other minority group in the southern counties, the foreign-born holds a larger place in the northern counties than does the Negro. There is not a single county in the

¹⁵ These counties also had no Negroes employed.

northern section in which the percentage of the foreign-born is not larger than that of the Negro. On the other hand, with one exception, there is no county in the southern section in which the percentage of Negroes is not larger than that of the foreign-born. The exception is Clay County, which has 39 Negroes and 47 foreign-born, or 6.5 and 7.7 per cent respectively. The percentage of the foreign-born in the entire state is smaller than that of the Negroes, being 17.0 as compared to their 31.9 per cent.

2. Time Distribution of the Mining Population

As has already been mentioned, the Negroes and the native whites were the groups relied upon by the early operators in opening up and developing the various fields, not only in West Virginia but throughout the South.¹⁶ The foreigner, especially the South-European, was introduced into West Virginia coal fields in large numbers much later than in the neighboring states of Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1870 out of a total mining population of 1,525 there were only four natives of South Europe employed.¹⁷ By 1880 this number had grown very little, as there were only 25 non-English speaking workers out of a total of 4,497.¹⁸ In 1890 there were 6,314 native whites, 2,016 Negroes, and 1,375 foreigners employed in the mines of the state.¹⁹

¹⁶ See Reports of the U. S. Immigration Commission, 1911, Vol. 7, p. 136.

¹⁷ Suffern, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Reports of the U. S. Immigration Commission, 1911, Vol. 7, p. 136.

However, only 211 of these were from countries other than those of northern Europe. One thousand and two of this group were of English-speaking nationalities, and 161 were Germans.

The rapid expansion of the industry following 1890 is the chief factor making for the increase of the element in the mining fields ordinarily thought of as "foreign." It should be pointed out that the South Europeans were brought in only after the native supply of labor had proven inadequate.²⁰ Between 1890 and 1908 the production of coal had increased almost six-fold in West Virginia,²¹ with an output of 5,643,946 tons in 1890 and 40,040,311 tons in 1907.²² In these years, occurred the remarkable developments, not only in the old fields of the state, but also in the important Norfolk and Western (Pocahontas) and Logan fields.

In the opening of the Pocahontas Field all the natives possible were used.²³ The Negroes of Virginia were depended upon from the very first,²⁴ but the supply soon became inadequate. According to the Report of the United States Coal Commission, "The Negroes proved to be good employees, but, like the native white people, were inclined to be irregular workers. It was hard to get enough men of these two races to keep up with the expansion in the

20 Ibid., p. 220.

21 Ibid., p. 135.

22 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Reports of 1890 and 1907.

23 Reports of the U. S. Coal Commission, Vol. 7, p. 156.

24 Ibid., p. 145.

industry."²⁵ As a result of this fact, in 1884 or 1885 a few Magyars were induced to come to the section from Pennsylvania, with the idea of starting the flow of immigration to the Pocahontas Field. A few Slovaks followed, but the numbers of both were small in the early years.²⁶ Since 1898, when better railroad connections were completed to the Middle West, immigrant labor has been common.

The results of the use of immigrant labor after 1890 is shown by the statistics on mining and quarrying in West Virginia in 1899. There were in that year 12,038 native whites of native parents, 1,181 native whites of foreign parents, 4,620 Negroes and 2,968 foreign-born employed.²⁷ There were more foreigners from the southern European countries than formerly among these, but still not a large percentage. The tendency, however, to supplement native white and Negro labor by bringing in large numbers of southern and eastern European immigrants was fully under way in the years from 1900 to 1907.²⁸

As early as 1894 a few families of foreigners from southern and eastern Europe were introduced at Glen Jean in Fayette County. By 1897 in both Kanawha and Fayette counties small numbers of these immigrants were to be found.²⁹ However, these were confined to a very few mines. During the strike of 1902 many of these foreigners, as well

²⁵ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 136.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 137.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 151.

as native whites, were brought in from the North.³⁰ Many Negroes participated in this strike, for they made up about 50 per cent of the workers of the largest mines in the southern counties. After the strike their numbers were somewhat depleted.³¹ Many of the whites left the field also after this strike, and their places were filled by a steady influx of foreigners and Negroes from Virginia and North Carolina.³² The foreigner, however, supplanted the former population proportion of the Negroes to a considerable degree for a number of years, as a reference to the following table will indicate.

³³
TABLE 12. RACIAL AND NATIONAL COMPOSITION OF MINERS
IN THE NEW RIVER - KANAWHA FIELD: 1908

Group	Fayette		Raleigh		Kanawha		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Native white	5,852	47.2	1,425	55.0	5,985	73.5	13,262	57.4
Negro	3,493	28.2	465	18.0	900	11.0	4,858	21.0
Foreign-born	3,030	24.6	681	27.0	1,256	15.5	4,967	21.6
Total	12,375	100.0	2,571	100.0	8,141	100.0	23,087	100.0

We may summarize our discussion of the introduction of the foreign-born, then, by saying that it was due to two main causes, the rapid expansion of the industry and the lack of native labor. According to the Immigration

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Johnson, The Negro in American Civilization, pp. 48-49.

³² Reports of the U. S. Immigration Commission, Vol. 7, p. 153.

³³ Ibid., p. 156.

Commission the lack of sufficient native labor is due to a lack of efficiency and an unwillingness to work in the mines at all times during the year in the case of the native white, their insufficient numbers due to irregular work habits in the case of the Negro, and the necessity for a large labor supply in times of labor troubles and strikes.³⁴ The introduction of mining machinery in the early nineties also tended to displace the Negro, since he was skilled in pick mining, while many foreigners were skilled in the use of this machinery.³⁵

The northern counties of West Virginia have always employed, as we have pointed out, more of the foreign-born than Negroes, unlike the southern counties,³⁶ and mere proximity to an ample supply is perhaps the best explanation, as Pennsylvania and Ohio have always used the foreign-born in large numbers. The so-called Elk Garden District, including the counties of Tucker, Mineral, and Grant counties, and the Fairmont District, including Barbour, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor counties, had a large number of these southern Europeans in 1911. The American whites constituted 52.5 per cent of the mining population and the Negroes 3.4 per cent. The other 44.1 per cent were foreign-born and were distributed nationally as follows: Italians 18.6 per cent; Magyars 6.5 per cent; Polish 5.5 per cent; Slovaks 5.5 per cent;

³⁴ Ibid., p. 220.

³⁵ Johnson, op. cit., p. 49.

³⁶ Harrie, A. L., Opportunity, February 1926, p. 47.

Croatian 3.0 per cent; English and Germans 2.0 per cent; and the additional 3.0 per cent were made up of other south eastern European nationalities.³⁷ This flow of immigration into the West Virginia fields has been continuous. In the period between 1910 and 1915 there was some falling off in the stream of immigration to Ohio, a greater decrease in both Indiana and Illinois, a slight increase in Pennsylvania; but West Virginia showed a very marked increase, getting more than her proportionate share even in the period between 1915 and 1920, when the stream of immigration almost came to a stop.³⁸ Since the strike of 1925 the Negroes have been somewhat more abundant in this northern field, but the foreigner still remains in greater numbers. The following table will show the relative percentages of the native whites, Negroes, and foreigners in the state from 1907 to 1931.³⁹

-
- 37 Reports of the U. S. Immigration Commission, Vol. 7, p. 147.
- 38 Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, 1935, Pt. 3, p. 1418.
- 39 Compiled from the W. Va. Dept. Annual Reports, 1907-1931. Unfortunately, the Dept. of Mines secured no data on racial or national composition of miners before 1907.

TABLE 13. RACIAL AND NATIONAL COMPOSITION OF WEST VIRGINIA MINERS:
1907-1931

Year	Native whites		Negroes		Foreign-born		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1907	20,409	36.3	9,908	17.6	(see note 40)		56,209	100.0
1908	23,979	39.6	11,270	18.6			60,484	100.0
1909	24,696	39.7	10,550	16.9			62,189	100.0
1910	28,301	41.5	12,087	17.7			68,135	100.0
1911	30,094	42.6	11,950	16.9			70,644	100.0
1912	31,696	45.5	13,403	19.2	24,512	35.3	69,611	100.0
1913	32,612	45.4	14,506	20.6	23,203	34.0	70,321	100.0
1914	36,101	46.3	13,357	17.1	28,583	36.6	78,041	100.0
1915	37,918	46.6	11,835	14.5	33,392	38.9	81,328	100.0
1916	41,048	51.3	15,060	18.8	23,950	29.9	80,058	100.0
1917	49,237	55.3	18,128	20.4	21,300	24.3	88,665	100.0
1918	51,468	55.8	17,829	19.3	22,835	24.9	92,132	100.0
1919	51,404	56.2	16,481	17.9	23,681	25.9	91,566	100.0
1920	56,913	58.5	18,391	18.8	22,122	22.7	97,426	100.0
1921	64,373	55.2	20,781	17.8	31,572	27.0	116,727	100.0
1922	58,274	54.3	21,388	19.7	28,047	26.0	107,709	100.0
1923	70,460	58.2	22,421	18.4	28,399	23.4	121,280	100.0
1924	65,583	56.6	22,796	19.6	27,585	23.8	115,964	100.0
1925	66,799	59.8	23,990	21.5	20,919	18.7	111,708	100.0
1926	73,601	61.0	24,798	20.6	22,239	18.4	120,638	100.0
1927	72,141	60.3	25,335	21.2	22,142	18.5	119,618	100.0
1928	68,236	60.6	23,987	21.2	20,528	18.2	112,751	100.0
1929	65,325	60.8	23,941	22.3	18,127	16.9	107,393	100.0
1930	66,022	61.2	23,523	21.8	18,287	17.0	107,832	100.0
1931	59,844	61.2	21,514	21.9	16,595	16.9	97,953	100.0

40 Due to the initiation of reports on nationalities in 1907 the returns for that year and those following were very incomplete until 1912. The number of miners of unknown nationalities for those years were: 12,115 in 1907, 8,707 in 1908, 10,861 in 1909, 7,545 in 1910, and 6,305 in 1911.

Considering the state as a whole, then, we may say, in summary, that the Negroes and native whites constituted the bulk of the mining population until after the beginning of the great expansion of the industry in 1892. In 1890, the distribution was as follows: Native whites 64.8 per cent, Negroes 20.8 per cent; and the foreign-born 14.4 per cent.⁴¹ By 1899, in the mines and quarries of the state the distribution was: Native whites 63.5 per cent,⁴² Negroes 22.2 per cent, and the foreign-born 14.3 per cent. However, after the strike of 1902 the native whites and Negroes were both supplanted by foreigners so that by 1907 the percentage of native whites had fallen to 36.3 per cent and that of the Negroes to 17.6. From that time on, however, there has been a steady growth in the percentage of native whites until in 1931 the native whites were more than sixty per cent of the mining population. The number of foreign-born, however, exceeded the number of Negroes every year from 1907 until 1925, the year of the great strike in northern West Virginia. Since 1925 the Negroes have outnumbered the foreign-born every year. The Negro mining population in the various counties from 1907 to 1931 may be seen in Tables 14 and 15. It is unfortunate for our study that annual figures are not available prior to 1907. The Department of Mines made no attempt to secure such data before that date.

⁴¹ Census of 1890, Vol. II.

⁴² U. S. Immigration Reports, 1911, Vol. 7, p. 136.

TABLE 14. NUMBER OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES: 1907 - 1919

County	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919
Barbour	76	74	68	2	67	89	84	84	67	64	65	97	105
Boone			4	13	23	63	46	68	114	151	95	157	205
Breaston	1	2	2	4	7	9	3	9	7	8	49	72	55
Brooke	16	8	38	29	12	27	41	81	55	51	49	47	132
Clay						8	28	29	13	74	50	54	47
Fayette	2,781	3,092	2,949	3,209	3,959	3,091	3,554	2,836	2,610	3,014	3,234	3,097	2,955
Gilmer							9	3	11	3	6		8
Grant			13			25			1				
Greenbrier			2										
Harrison	151	146	132	84	70	127	101	104	133	89	300	528	448
Kanawha	693	654	626	777	864	875	850	895	690	934	890	1,009	844
Lewis													
Lincoln		7			3			5	3	30	46	21	37
Logan	23	167	201	253	120	213	374	484	480	675	1,395	1,535	1,605
Marion	202	128	117	96	125	143	162	223	193	194	573	580	430
Marshall	3	10	3	1	38	55	64	9	5	7	12	15	20
Mason	4	7	8	3		8					1		
McDowell	4,300	5,237	4,419	5,275	5,274	5,394	5,732	5,040	4,350	6,429	6,914	6,411	5,897
Mercer	1,022	874	927	1,155	934	1,214	1,247	1,264	1,176	1,222	1,185	1,167	975
Mineral	24	17	16	22	17	25	18	15	22	13	13	7	5
Mingo	123	211	243	224	228	491	565	362	281	289	487	485	490
Monongalia	11	10	5	50	1	36	4	4		4	19	61	89
Nicholas			2	12		10	5						2
Ohio	18	12	6	21	37	55	28	37	26	24	57	89	62
Preston	41	18	13	17	36	137	15	33	33	30	43		46
Putnam	10	101	210	51	60	193	144	149	145	104	96	79	64
Raleigh	304	383	455	715	856	997	1,291	1,422	1,255	1,319	1,923	1,734	1,799
Randolph		6		1	1	30	4	2	5	5	21	15	18
Summers													
Taylor	11	13	14	6	11	24	37	30	20	18	23	46	18
Tucker	75	84	74	66	88	70	83	59	59	94	40	88	70
Upshur	12	5	3		1	2		2	1		2	1	4
Wayne		4		1	1	2			1	1	1	1	1
Wyoming							5	18	75	274	449	443	408
Totals	9,908	11,720	10,550	12,087	11,950	13,403	14,506	13,357	11,835	15,060	18,128	17,829	16,431

TABLE 15. NUMBER OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES: 1920 - 1931

County	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931
Barbour	146	144	12	161	166	97	98	131	165	137	92	117
Boone	302	298	358	426	460	431	394	393	305	316	223	289
Braxton	34	33	30	42	24	35	22	31	14	22		
Brooke	128	252	244	385	320	263	261	347	334	319	365	240
Clay	74	67	109	106	76	93	79	113	80	78	66	39
Fayette	3,096	3,260	2,552	3,204	2,987	3,138	3,062	3,177	3,326	3,316	3,436	3,060
Gilmer	8	8	10	16	7	5	4	8	15	1		
Grant		5			2	3	2	2	4	11		3
Greenbrier			130	111	189	208	197	216	173	177	233	221
Harrison	506	771	616	835	757	434	459	442	422	281	178	167
Kanawha	836	1,190	1,030	1,482	1,373	1,360	1,348	1,391	982	971	1,000	1,054
Lewis	2	2	1									
Lincoln	17	38	24	46	59	32	62	55	24	16	36	15
Logan	1,752	2,068	3,022	2,415	2,912	2,764	2,760	2,894	2,512	2,372	2,406	2,212
Marion	693	691	592	703	642	1,243	1,642	1,606	1,722	1,675	1,420	893
Marshall	21	37	76	62	82	144	127	123	136	131	127	106
Mason												
McDowell	6,305	6,440	6,499	5,998	6,437	6,736	6,937	6,594	6,536	6,861	6,695	6,092
Mercer	829	1,008	1,011	978	877	919	915	973	1,063	1,022	992	965
Mineral	3	2			1	3						
Mingo	513	518	655	832	727	867	805	850	745	744	730	610
Monongalia	135	269	348	375	543	703	1,140	965	731	832	721	591
Nicholas	4	6	3									
Ohio	43	93	184	142	221	175	422	427	519	489	439	439
Preston	38	38	38	50	25	11	5	14	22	19	29	23
Putnam	56	44	46	49	39	87	52	45	41	33	37	116
Raleigh	2,156	2,608	2,771	2,994	2,896	3,166	3,107	3,449	3,458	3,451	3,613	3,692
Randolph	10	22	38	37	22	14	18	15	12	21		3
Summers			4				1					
Taylor	44	47	35	68	22	12	22	42	17	11	29	20
Tucker	60	75	44	46	57	39	28	31	34	34	17	17
Upshur	5	9	31	24	13	17	26	15	7	6	3	1
Wayne	1	1					1					
Wyoming	574	736	875	895	797	901	802	976	588	595	630	589
Totals	18,391	20,781	21,388	22,421	22,796	23,390	24,798	25,535	23,987	23,941	23,523	21,515

3. Age Distribution

It is probably true that the Negro mining population is somewhat older than the white group. Mining is by no means an easy occupation and he who remains in the more menial jobs must have unusual stamina or else be forced to remain in it by circumstances other, than his own wishes. The fact that the Negro occupies positions which he does not care for or for which he no more "racially adapted" than any other group is a commonplace.⁴³ Wherever the Negro turns he is constantly hedged in by cultural "deadlines" that make his passing from one occupation to another more to his taste very difficult. This factor is undoubtedly operative in keeping many a Negro in the coal fields. In fact, his dissatisfaction with conditions, and his inability to leave them, is a cultural fact of a great deal of importance, as will appear in some of the discussions in the later chapters of this study. Many of these miners did not come to West Virginia with the idea of staying, but were attracted by the comparatively high wages and a certain freedom. They intended to accumulate a certain amount of wealth, which feat many of them were led to believe would be quite easy in West Virginia, and then to return to their homes in the south or east. However, many of them found that it was much harder to dig gold, in the form of coal, from the hills of West Virginia than the

⁴³ Cf. Feldman, Herman, Racial Factors in American Industry, Harpers, 1931, pp. 34ff.

stories of prosperity had indicated. Having taken on the added burden of a family, many of them remained although never satisfied. This dissatisfaction has been inculcated in their sons, who tend to avoid the mines. The newcomers from the south are sometimes well along in years before leaving the south.

The ages of the Negro miners studied were somewhat older than those found by the United States Coal Commission who had access to the facilities of the schedules of the 1920 census. The actual disparity between the

44
TABLE 16. COMPARISON OF THE AGES OF ALL MINERS IN
WEST VIRGINIA IN 1920 WITH THOSE OF 600
NEGRO MINERS IN 1932

Ages	All Miners		Negro Miners	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Under 16 years	379	.4	(see note 45)	
16 and 17 years	4,227	4.5	1	.2
18 and 19 years	5,890	6.3	10	1.7
20 and under 25 years	15,968	17.3	64	10.7
25 and under 35 years	28,206	30.6	156	26.0
35 and under 45 years	21,239	23.0	185	30.8
45 and under 55 years	11,345	12.3	105	17.5
55 and under 65 years	3,750	4.1	51	8.5
65 years and over	1,111	1.2	9	1.5
Ages unknown	242	.3	19	3.1
Totals	92,357	100.0	600	100.0

census figures and those representing the real ages of the Negro miners would probably be greater than that shown in

- 44 Figures for all miners taken from Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, 1925, Pt. 3, p. 1420.
- 45 W. Va. law now forbids employment under 17. Boys of 17 may work under the tutelage of their fathers.

Table 16. There was a tendency for the older Negro Miners to misrepresent their ages. The West Virginia Compensation law gets its support from the mining companies and the rate of each company is determined by its accident rate of the previous year. This fact leads the companies to discriminate in favor of younger employees in hiring men. Consequently, it was not unusual to find Negro miners giving their ages as 35 when ^{or 60} 55/would have been much nearer the truth. The ages expressed in the table are the ages as given by the miners. Up to a certain age, however, the answers were apparently truthful. It will be noticed that the modal age for all the miners in 1920 was from 25 to 35 years. The modal age for the Negro miners, however, was from 35 to 45 years. Probably the larger percentage employed in the 18 and 19 year age group is due to the difference between the extreme prosperity of 1920 and the depressed conditions in 1932. In 1920, the era when miners "wore silk shirts" and drove expensive automobiles, many of the boys of those ages went into the mines. In 1932, many of the miners' sons of these ages were idle, even those who customarily worked in the mines.

4. Marital Status

The only figures with which any comparison in the matter of the marital status of Negro miners in 1932 can be made are the figures of the United States Coal Commission taken from the 1920 census schedules. Two years could

hardly be picked in which the difficulties of comparison would be greater. The year 1920 was, as has been already pointed out, a year of great prosperity in which certain coal companies paid 100 per cent dividends, some even more. The year 1932, on the contrary, is one of greatest depression, the mining population dropping from approximately 120,000 in 1927 to less than 95,000⁴⁶ in 1932. Consequently, there is a deal of difference in the marital status of such a population as that of 1920 and that of 1932.

TABLE 17.⁴⁷ MARITAL STATUS OF ALL NATIVE WHITE, NEGRO, AND FOREIGN-BORN MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA IN 1920

Marital Status	Native whites		Negroes		Foreign-born		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Single	18,718	33.7	6,709	36.4	7,175	38.8	32,602	35.3
Married, wife present	33,068	59.6	9,576	52.1	7,801	42.2	50,445	54.6
Married, wife not present	1,727	3.1	1,222	6.7	2,914	15.8	5,863	6.3
Widowed and divorced	1,919	3.5	840	4.6	499	2.7	3,258	3.6
Marital status unknown	59	.1	29	.2	101	.5	189	.2
Total	55,491	100.0	18,376	100.0	18,490	100.0	92,357	100.0

Not only is there a difference of economic conditions in the mining fields, but the methods of compilation were different in the case of the present study. The census data records the fact of whether a wife was present in the home or not, but does not attempt to say whether the parties

⁴⁶ Address of R. M. Lambie, Chief of the Department of Mines of the State of West Virginia before Kanawha Valley Mining Institute, Cannelton, W. Va., Jan. 13, 1933.

⁴⁷ Compiled from Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. 3, p. 1506.

were separated or not. The present study, on the other hand, emphasized the question as to whether the parents were living apart because of marital difficulties or merely because of economic reasons. In the study of the Negro miner this distinction is important. A number of the miners, as has been mentioned, maintain homes for their families in the cities, on the farm, or in a neighboring town. Thus, the figures are hardly comparable, but are given for what they are worth.

TABLE 18. MARITAL STATUS OF 600 NEGRO MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA, 1932

Marital Status	Number	Per cent
Single	105	17.5
Married	456	76.0
Separated	4	.7
Widowed and divorced	35	5.8
Total	600	100.0

The first difference between the two tables is that the present study reveals a smaller percentage of single men in the industry. In fact, the average for the state in 1920 was more than twice that of the study. Such a fact, however, is not surprising in view of the rapid decline in mining population since 1927, concomitant with the depression. Two facts may be introduced to explain this difference. When times become dull and work is irregular the unattached miner is the first to leave. Many of

the single men left the mines for other occupations. More important, probably, is the fact that the companies tend to keep their married men, from whom they get rent as well as a larger trade in the company store. If men have to be discharged on account of a necessary cut in labor force, the single men are let out first. Another reason is the fact that benevolent employers are more prone to cut off the single men in order to cause the least amount of suffering on the part of the families of breadwinners. As has been pointed out before, in 1920 many of the children of miners also worked in the mines. Today these boys of working age are not employed by the mines. These facts would largely account for the disparity in the figures. The very small number of "separated" miners probably has a very direct relationship to the present economic conditions also. The "separated" also is unattached, except in the cases of the father continuing as the family head and maintaining the home for the children, and is apt to be one of the first to leave the mines under pressure of poor work or discharge. Another factor, which will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, is the rather loose marital ties that exist among certain groups and which makes questionable the truth of many of the answers given. The older age of the Negro miners, however, coupled with their living habits would indicate that the large majority of the Negro miners at the present time are living as married men.

CHAPTER IV.
MIGRATORY CHARACTER OF THE
NEGRO MINING POPULATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

I. INCREASE OF THE MIGRATORY ELEMENT IN THE NEGRO POPULATION.-

The movement of Negroes from other states into West Virginia started early. As has been pointed out above,¹ there was a decided movement westward immediately following the Civil War. The building of railroads from 1870 to 1893 brought thousands of Negroes to the New Dominion from other states. The concomitant opening of the mining fields provided work for others. As a result, the character of the Negro population grew less and less native. Before the great mining activity following 1870, the Negro population was predominantly agricultural. This population, while partly migratory in character, was, from the nature of its economic function, less likely to be non-native than a population created by a sudden demand for labor. The following table will illustrate the trend since 1890:²

TABLE 19. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF WEST VIRGINIA NEGROES BORN IN AND OUTSIDE WEST VIRGINIA, 1890-1910

Number	1890		1900		1910	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Born in state	18,189	55.6	21,420	49.3	27,160	42.8
Born outside state	14,497	44.4	22,055	50.7	36,931	57.6
Total	32,686	100.0	43,475	100.0	64,091	100.0

¹ Supra, pp.
² Census 1910.

It will be seen, thus, that the percentage of those born in the state decreased from 55.3 per cent in 1890 to 42.8 per cent in 1910. Recent reports of the 1930 census show that the native-born Negroes constituted only 40.8 per cent in that year.³ At the same time there occurred a most phenomenal increase of Negro population. In the decade between 1870 and 1880 there was an increase of 44 per cent; from 1880 to 1890 an increase of 22 per cent; from 1890 to 1900 an increase of 33 per cent; from 1900 to 1910 an increase of 48 per cent;⁴ and from 1910 to 1920 an increase of 35 per cent.⁵ This trend has continued in the last decade although the percentage of gain is slightly lower than in the previous decade. The total Negro population in 1930 was 114,893, while in 1920 it was only 85,345.⁶ The percentage of increase was, thus, 33 per cent, almost as great as from 1910 to 1920, which was 35 per cent. This disproportionate growth of the Negro population has increased the percentage of the entire population for the Negro group from 5.3 per cent in 1910 to 6.6 per cent in 1930.⁷ The importance of these figures for our study is due to the fact that more than 75 per cent of the Negro male wage earning population is in mining. The trend from

3 Fifteenth Census, 1930, Reprint of Chapter 4, Vol. II, Reports on Population, pp. 33, 35.

4 State of W. Va., Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 13.

5 Fifteenth Census, 1930, Population Bulletin, W. Va. Composition & Characteristics of the Population, p. 5.

6 Ibid.

7 Bureau of Negro Welfare & Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 13.

the agricultural to the mining population is shown by the fact that the total Negro rural farm population was only 3,815 in 1930, while in 1920 it was 4,021 -- a loss of 206.⁸ At the same time the rural non-farm population has increased from 59,840 in 1920 to 79,854 in 1930 -- a gain of 20,014.⁹ The rural non-farm population is, of course, largely the mining population.

The figures given above pertain to the Negro population of West Virginia as a whole. They show a decided trend toward a migratory and away from a native population. In fact, "Only occasionally in the great Negro population over twenty-five years of age do we see a native."¹⁰ However, we have seen that Negroes have been employed in the mining fields for a great many years. In Fayette and Kanawha counties they have been used continuously for at least sixty years, in Mercer county for at least fifty years, in McDowell for forty-five, in Logan for twenty-nine, and in Raleigh for over twenty throughout the county and in some parts for over forty years.¹¹ One might logically suppose that, although the state as a whole might be less native than it was, in these counties, at least, there would be a likelihood of finding a larger native population. Such, however, is not the case for two chief reasons which will be dealt with in the pages to follow.

⁸ Population Bulletin, op. cit., p. 5.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bureau of Negro Welfare & Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 12.

¹¹ Supra, p.

II. THE PRESENT MINING POPULATION.-

Although, as was pointed out above, one might expect to find a larger percentage of natives in the older mining fields, the taking of schedules in thirty-eight different mining communities and the visiting of many more revealed no striking difference between them. In fact, it revealed no discernible difference in regard to the nativity of the population unless it was that there was possibly a somewhat larger percentage of Virginia Negroes in the counties adjacent to Virginia. Even there the difference was not considerable. As a matter of fact, the trend toward a smaller percentage of native Negroes has persisted. The native population was only 33,347 or 39.6 per cent of the total Negro population in 1920.¹² The figures for 1930 are not yet available, but it is likely that they will also reflect the trend. The place of birth of the Negroes from whom schedules were obtained is shown in Table 20.

¹² Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1923-24, p. 10.

TABLE 20. PLACE OF BIRTH OF 600 NEGRO MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA, 1932

State	Number	Per cent
West Virginia	84	14.0
Virginia	287	47.8
North Carolina	71	11.8
Alabama	67	11.2
Tennessee	27	4.5
Georgia	20	3.3
South Carolina	15	2.5
5 other southern states (a)	16	2.7
6 northern states (b)	13	2.2
Total	600	100.0

(a) Kentucky 7, Louisiana 4, Mississippi 3, Oklahoma and Florida, 1 each.

(b) Pennsylvania 7, Ohio 2, Rhode Island, D. C., Indiana and New York, 1 each.

The most striking thing shown by the table above is the fact that only 84 or 14 per cent of the six hundred miners interviewed were native West Virginians. Two hundred and eighty seven or 47.8 per cent of them were born in Virginia -- almost three and one half times the number born in West Virginia. Both North Carolina- and Alabama-born miners were almost as frequently met as West Virginians -- with 71 and 67 each respectively. There are four principal reasons for this small percentage of natives among the West Virginia Negro miners: A. West Virginia has been more or less of a stopping place for the Negro on his way either to the west or to the north. B. The children of Negro

miners are not following the occupation of their fathers in large enough numbers to fill in the gap left by them when they become old or go into other fields of endeavor.

C. The West Virginia natives have tended to leave the mining fields in favor of the cities. D. The West Virginia natives are apt to be younger men, and, hence, may have been missed in taking the schedules to a greater extent than the married men.

(A) The trend of movement through West Virginia to the west and north has continued over a period of years. Many of these migrants come to West Virginia where, in the past, work has usually been plentiful. As compared with the poor economic position of many of the tenant farmers, share-croppers, and farm laborers who come to West Virginia from the south, the West Virginia miner has had more money in his pocket. This feeling of security in their own economic sufficiency has urged many of them to try their fortunes in the northern or western states.¹³ That is, they may stay in the mines for a few years and then move. The children born to these miners who look upon the mines as more of a "camp" than as a place for permanent residence are taken with the parents and, hence, do not remain to swell the tide of the native-born Negro.

¹³ Discussing the movement of Virginia Negroes, Leap says: "The first stop outside of the state was usually West Virginia; from there they either went home or went toward Pittsburgh." Leap, William L., The Red Hill Community, unpublished M. S. Thesis, University of Virginia, 1930, p. 33.

While the number of Negroes, born in West Virginia, who leave the state is not large as compared with the number of those born in other states who come to West Virginia, yet there is a constant movement of these Negroes to other places. In 1920 there were 11,770 Negroes born in West Virginia who were seeking their fortunes in other states, while those born elsewhere living in West Virginia numbered 52,223.¹⁴ The largest number of West Virginians who have left the state have gone to the neighboring state of Ohio where 3,158 lived in 1920.¹⁵ Pennsylvania claims the next highest number of 2,807. Virginia comes next with 1,291. The figures for these two states are not hard to understand after a careful study of the situation is made. Pennsylvania is both a mining and a manufacturing state. The Pittsburgh district, thus, offered two attractions to the West Virginian, an opportunity to work in the city and, failing in that, neighboring mines on which he could fall back in an emergency.¹⁶ The West Virginia Negro has responded. After the abrogation of the Jacksonville Agreement of 1917 by the operators in the Pittsburg district and the coming of an open-shop policy, many Negro miners from West Virginia left the state for that field.¹⁷ The large number of West Virginia

14 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1923-24, p. 10.

15 Ibid.; cf. Mark, M. L., Negroes in Columbus, 1923, p. 33 ff.

16 See Epstein, Abraham, The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh, Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1918; also Clark, Howard L., The Migrant in Pittsburgh, Opportunity, October 1923.

17 Allen, Gerald E., The Negro Coal Miner in the Pittsburgh District, unpublished Master's thesis, Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1927, p. 21.

natives who have returned to Virginia are largely the children of Virginians who have spent a number of years in the mining fields of West Virginia, during which time children have been born, and then later returned to Virginia, many of them to their farms.

No other state besides Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia had over one thousand West Virginia Negroes in their population in 1920, and only Maryland and the District of Columbia had over five hundred.¹⁸ With one exception only, states commonly known as northern or western states have received more Negroes from West Virginia than West Virginia has received from them. The one exception is Vermont. Only 2 West Virginians live in that state, while 71 of its natives now reside in West Virginia.¹⁹ This constant movement, however, is one of the contributing factors to the relatively small number of West Virginia natives in the Negro mining population.

(B) There is much evidence that the children of miners are not following their parents in the occupation of mining. Many writers on the migration of Negroes have emphasized the economic "pull" of the northern states in stimulating the constant stream of Negroes to leave their native soil. To a group used to living on the lowest economic level, there is no doubt of the efficacy of such a factor. However, the desire for better education for their

¹⁸ Bureau of Negro Welfare & Statistics, Report, 1923-24, p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

children and greater privileges for both their children and themselves has also been a most potent force.²⁰ These children, having caught something of their parents desire for more desirable conditions, have tended to seek their fortunes in other occupations than coal mining. Some, of course, have followed in the footsteps of their parents, even working at the same operation, as their parents did, but never in great enough numbers to fill the gap left by their parents. The writer found it very difficult to get complete information on the occupations of working children unless they were living at home, in which case they were apt to be miners. In some cases, the Negro miner had lost track of his children, who had gone to other states and could give no information. Suspicion, on the part of some, of the writer's real objective in gathering the information led them to be very cautious about telling the location of sons or daughters who were not in the home. However, it was possible to trace the occupations of 328 working children of the 503 miners who had been married, which various occupations are shown in Table 21.

20 See U. S. Dept. of Labor, Division of Negro Economics, Negro Migration in 1916-17, pp. 58-63.

TABLE 21. OCCUPATIONS OF 326 WORKING AGE CHILDREN
OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA BY SEX,
1932

Occupation	Number	
	Males	Females
1. Miner	94	
2. Housewife		62
3. Farm worker	7	
4. Hotel worker	6	
5. Teacher		5
6. Taxi or truck driver	3	
7. Railroad worker	2	
8. All others	10 (a)	3 (b)
9. College student	4	7
10. Unemployed -- living at home	21	34
11. Living away from home -- occupation not specified	31	37
Total	178	148

(a) Baker, restaurant cook, delivery boy, druggist, foundry worker, garage worker, janitor, machinist, mail carrier, laborer on public works, one each.

(b) Beauty culturist, domestic cook, and janitress, one each.

As has been pointed out, the table above is very incomplete. Conclusions, if any, should be drawn from it only upon an understanding of its limitations, and with its incompleteness fully in mind. It probably shows a relatively greater number in mining than is actually the case. Mining sons, unless married, usually live with their parents and, hence, are almost always mentioned in the interview. Other sons, more remote, are sometimes not mentioned for the reasons before given. In addition, in order not to underestimate the number of mining children, the writer has listed as a miner any boy of mining legal age reported as working if he lives at home. It is quite possible that some of these boys were not working in the mines, but in some nearby town. Also, in the cases of those living away from home for whom no occupation was specified (item 25, Table 21), it is quite likely that the majority of these were in occupations other than mining. The rather large number of unemployed children staying at home (item 24) is probably a "depression" phenomenon. The writer talked with many a boy who had finished high school but could neither get a job nor go to college. The depression has likewise brought a number of children back into the mining fields who were engaged in other work before. This is not only true of the Negro, but is also true of the sons of the foreign miners.

Thus, at the time the schedules were taken there was probably a percentage of sons of miners

21 Interview with Mr. W. J. German, Pocahontas, Va.

back in the mines much above normal. The table shows a total of 94 or 52.22 per cent of all male children as engaged in mining. Thirty-four or 18.63 per cent were engaged in occupations definitely other than mining. Thirty or 16.63 per cent were working away from home, but it was not possible to ascertain definitely what their occupations were. It is likely that many in this group were also working in occupations other than mining. Both the abnormal business situation and the uncertainty of part of the data make this schedule hardly representative of the real situation.

A much better index of the extent to which children tend to follow the occupation of their fathers in the mining field is obtained from the occupations of the fathers of the present miners, since every field is at least one generation old. The miners had little objection to answering the question as to the occupation of their fathers, the father in many cases being dead. Table 22 will reveal the relatively small number whose fathers were miners.

TABLE 22. OCCUPATIONS OF THE FATHERS OF 600 NEGRO MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA: 1932

Occupation	Number	Percentage distribution
Farming total	340	56.7
Farmer	285	
Farm laborer (22)	52	
Farm manager	1	
Farmer-preacher	1	
Cattle raiser	1	
Coal mining total	160	27.9
Miner	154	
Miner-preacher	2	
Miner-business man	1	
Coke worker	1	
Stable man	1	
Stable boss	1	
Railroad worker	22	3.8
Other mine or quarry workers	3	.5
Factory worker	8	1.4
Brick mason, plasterer, or plumber	5	.9
Blacksmith	4	.7
Barber	4	.7
Preacher	4	.7
Storekeeper	3	.5
Employee in public works	3	.5
Hostler	2	.3
Teamster	2	.3
Shoemaker	2	.3
All other	11 (a)	2.2
Unknown	27	
Total	600	100.0

(a) Contractor, cook, freight handler, hotel worker, janitor, lodge worker, manufacturer, navy yard worker, overseer, slave, teacher, 1 each.

22 Farm laborer refers to Negroes working for other Negroes or whites. Farmer refers to one who, either through renting or owning, runs his own farm.

The writer, becoming interested in the relatively small number of miners whose fathers were also miners, made it a point to discuss the fact with operators in the mining fields. This condition had existed for a number of years. One superintendent in McDowell County, in discussing the matter with me said: "The companies have been paying for education for many years. I thought I would keep track and see what happened. I did so -- and for ten years we have not gotten a miner from a miner's family." Other employers in different counties expressed variations of this statement. One employer in the Pocahontas coal field just over the border in Virginia, however, expressed his preference for Negro labor over foreign labor because of the fact that the Negro had less objection to his children's working in the mines than the foreign worker. As we walked together over his plant he said: "The foreigner loads more coal than the Negro does -- but in all round desirability he does not measure up to the Negro. For instance, the foreigner will try his best not to have his children become coal loaders. The Negro does not care about that. Sometimes we get four or five good loaders from one family." In this connection, however, it should be pointed out that this mine was in Virginia and this same employer told me that the Negro working in Virginia, even though just over the line from West Virginia was so different from the West Virginia Negro that he had a different labor policy for his mines in the two states. Talks with Negro teachers,

preachers, and leaders support the fact that the children tend to leave the mines. Another tendency of the children is to work for a time in the mines and then go into other lines of work, some of them attaining distinction in their chosen fields. 34 Booker T. Washington and Carter G. Woodson are well-known examples.

The fact that the native West Virginia miners are younger than those born outside the state would seem to be an evidence of the operation of this tendency of the West Virginia miner to work a while in the mines and then go to the cities or outside the state. In the following table the difference in age between these two groups is strikingly illustrated.

TABLE 23. COMPARISON OF AGES OF NEGRO MINERS BORN IN WEST VIRGINIA WITH NATIVES OF OTHER STATES: 1932

Age	West Virginia Natives		Others	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
17 years		.0	1	.2
18 and 19	5	6.1	5	1.0
20 under 25	28	34.1	36	7.2
25 under 30	18	22.0	55	11.0
30 under 35	12	14.6	71	14.2
35 under 40	10	12.2	96	19.2
40 under 45	4	4.9	75	15.0
45 under 50	2	2.4	57	11.4
50 under 55	3	3.7	43	8.6
Over 55		.0	60	12.0
Not given	2		17	
Total	84	100.0	516	100.0

24 See Woodson, C. G., The Negro in Our History, Fourth revised edition, 1927, Associated Publishers, p. xxiii, in the Introduction by Kelly Miller.

There was one miner born outside the state aged 17. There were no West Virginia native miners that young. In the 18 and 19 year group, however, almost 6 per cent of the West Virginia group were found, while those born outside the state had less than 1 per cent in that class. Exactly one third of the West Virginia natives were between the ages of 20 and 24 inclusive, while less than 7 per cent of those born outside of the state fell in that class. With the exception of the one seventeen-year-old boy the natives had a larger percentage in every age group up to and including that between 30 and under 35. In every age group above that those born outside the state had considerably more. The oldest native miner was 54 so that there were none in the age group of 55 and over. The non-natives, however, had more than 11 per cent of their group in that class. More specifically there were 32 non-natives or 6.301 per cent in the age group between 55 and 59, 19 or 3.683 per cent between 60 and 64, 4 or .775 per cent between 65 and 69, 4 or .775 per cent between 70 and 75, and 1 or .193 per cent over 75. The disparity of age between the natives and non-natives is perhaps more easily grasped when graphically illustrated, as in Fig. 1.

Percentage Distribution of Negro Miners Born in West Virginia and Natives of

Other States by Age: 1932

AGE

17

18 and 19

20 to 24

25 to 29

30 to 34

35 to 39

40 to 44

45 to 49

50 to 54

55 and over

40

30

20

10

0

0

10

20

30

40

Per cent of West Virginia Natives

Per cent of Others

Another factor that tends to send many children into other occupations is, as we have indicated, the objection of the parents themselves to their children's becoming miners. It is perhaps a folk judgment of wide diffusion in America that children should, whenever possible, escape the hard experiences of the parents and that the way of escape lies in the acquisition of "a good education."²⁵ The Negro, being subject to our culture type, has incorporated this trait into his own behavior patterns to a considerable extent. The importance of these cultural factors in providing a frame of reference for the child's own judgments cannot be overestimated.²³ A student in West Virginia State College,

25 Bode, Boyd L., Modern Educational Theories, Macmillan, 1937, passim.; Young, D., American Minority Peoples, p. 419.

26 Mowrer, E. R., The Family, University of Chicago Press, 1932, pp. 54ff.

the largest Negro college in the state, tells in a theme assignment of the opposition of his parents to his entering the mines:

27 "When I had reached the age of seventeen, when boys are permitted to enter the mines to work under the tutelage of their fathers, I was determined to do so. My parents objected to this plan, however, and it was more than a year later before I was permitted to enter the mines. Nevertheless, after my persistent requests, for I was determined to become acquainted with (the) mining situation, I was granted my wish." Another student, in a theme on "The Chief Disadvantages of the Negro in Mining" says: "One of the most outstanding disadvantages for the Negro in the mining industry is his small chance for advancement. When he begins work as a miner, there is a previously established limitation to the height to which he will rise. He is allowed to work at numerous jobs within a certain range, but beyond that range he does not advance."

The quotations above are taken from themes written by college students. More or less the same attitude appeared in themes written by Negro high school students also. Says one of these, in a theme on "Why I Am Not Going To Become a Miner," "In the beginning a miner is thought of as being just a common laborer. He is never classified in society very high, for he is looked upon as an inferior."

27 These themes, which were given at the suggestion of the writer, were assigned as regular work and the students did not know that any other than class-room use was to be made of them.

Only one of these high school themes was on "Why I Hope To Become a Miner," and his reasons are almost purely economic: "Since the time my parents came to the mining fields to make it their home, my chief protest was against becoming a miner, but as I have grown and reached the age of sixteen I find that my dislike for the mines are decreasing and my devotion for the mines is increasing, this is due to my desire for an education and also times are so hard, I find that I must have work to get clothing, books, and other minor necessary requirements for the Senior year. Considering education there are yet other facilities that encourage me to become a miner, I must do something to help my father who is growing weaker and weaker as a result of laboring or in other words 'mining,' and I find that my only chance is to resort to the coal mines." These attitudes, which are widely held by the young Negroes, have been a powerful "push" in forcing them to seek other work. This is particularly true of the children who go on to finish high school and go to college. Many of the children of miners who themselves become miners stop school in the early grades. The many disadvantages of the mining fields, such as lack of intellectual stimulus, the ineligibility to many of the better positions in the industry, as contrasted with the advantages of other occupations have caused many of the children to go to other states or to the cities of West Virginia, particularly to the latter.

(C) The writer has observed for a number of years the tendency for the Negro Miner, particularly the more energetic and the better educated, to stay in the mines for a period of years and then, after saving money, to come either to one of the larger cities of the state or to one of the numerous little towns, many of which have their Negro section. The Negro urban population of the state in 1930 was 31,224 while the rural was 83,639.²⁸ Charleston in 1930 had a Negro population of 3,734; Huntington had 4,330; and Wheeling had 2,193.²⁹ The figures for other cities, of less than 50,000 are not yet available but they will add other thousands to these. The number of Negroes in little towns of 1,000 to 2,500 also reaches a total of more than 3,700.³⁰ Census figures for 1930 reveal that native-born Negroes constituted 63.1 per cent of the Negro population of Charleston.³¹

The non-native has come here for the express purpose of working in the mines. He knows little about the state and the opportunities and advantages of the cities. Further, as a rule his economic status in the mining fields has been much higher than in the south, and he is seeking economic betterment more than a city home. The West Virginia natives, however, are likely to know more of the opportunities of the state and are more likely to seek them.

28 Population Bulletin, 15th Census, issued April 25, 1931, p. 5.

29 Ibid., p. 47.

30 Ibid., p. 46.

31 Reprint of Chapter 4, Vol. II, Reports on Population, p. 73. Figures on other cities are not available as they are given only for cities of more than 5,000 Negro population.

It is not at all unusual to find an older native miner living in the mining town and keeping his family in the city. There is a cultural differentiation between these non-natives, particularly of the far South, and the West Virginians that is quite an important factor in explaining some of the phenomena discussed in later chapters.

(D) The last reason assigned for the small percentage of natives was that, due to the younger age of the West Virginians, they were more apt to be out when the interview call was made. Too much emphasis should not be placed upon this reason, for it would account, at the most, for but a small percentage of the difference between the proportion of the native and the non-native. The depressed economic conditions, which took from many a Negro automobile owner his partly-paid-for car, kept many a young man in the mining town, amusing himself by visiting with his neighbors, who would in other times have been in the near-by small towns seeking other amusements. Consequently, both natives and non-natives were more available for interviews than would have been the case in more prosperous times. Hence, while it is quite possible that natives were missed in larger proportion than the non-natives the proportions as represented in Table probably represent the approximate situation. Interviews with many employers and members of both races have substantiated this view.

The main source of non-native Negro population in the mining fields is Virginia. This population movement

between adjacent states is, in the opinion of the writer, one of the most interesting and significant parts of the entire study. Certainly many of the points to be discussed upon the basis of these preliminary chapters must be viewed in the light of this movement. This movement, which we have seen dates back to the Reconstruction days in Virginia when Negro labor was needed in Ohio, Indiana, and West Virginia,³² persists to the present time. In 1920 there were 33,347 Negro natives in West Virginia. At the same time there were 29,315 Negroes living in West Virginia who were born in Virginia -- only 4,032 less than the natives.³³

The state with the next highest number of natives in West Virginia was North Carolina, which had only 6,512. This fact would indicate that the Negro movement into West Virginia is largely a Virginia-West Virginia movement.

Proximity, of course, is a big factor in the situation. The New River coal field is easily accessible to the western counties of Virginia by means of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, the Pocahontas Field by means of the Norfolk and Western, and the Winding Gulf Field by the Virginian. It is safe to say that it is not much more than a day's ride from any part of Virginia to any of these coal fields. It is not proximity alone, however, that explains this widespread migration. By a system of economic dovetailing, the Virginia migrant has attempted in many cases

33 Supra, p.

33 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1923-24, p. 10.

to keep one foot in West Virginia and the other one firmly anchored in his home county in Virginia. It will be remembered that the fathers of most of the miners in West Virginia were farmers. This fact is particularly true of the Virginia-born miners, since agriculture is the chief occupation of most of the western counties from which most of the Negroes come. Many of them come from Montgomery, Roanoke, and adjacent counties. Concerning these Negro small farmers around Christiansburg (Montgomery County) Park says that he knows of no community where farmers are "more independent and prosperous, or where the two races get on better together."³⁴ He was able to trace the relationship between these Negroes, who were more or less of a peasant class, and the Negroes who remained on the plantations after the war. These peasants do not desert the farm easily. Their culture is a peasant culture and they tend to cling to the life of the peasant even though, for temporary periods they may go to other places to make money. Many of these farmers would use coal mining as a sort of "money crop." A Negro preacher in the Pocahontas Field, in this connection, said:

It used to be the common thing for men of my people to own farms in Virginia or North Carolina. They would go home and get the crop started and perhaps, having a son who could carry it on, the father would go back to the mining fields and work. On this account many of their children were born in Virginia or North Carolina when their fathers

34 Park, Robert E., Negro Home Life and Standards of Living, The Negro's Progress in Fifty Years, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, 1913, pp. 147-153.

were really in West Virginia. Finally the son would not be content to stay on the farm but would insist on going to the mining fields with the father. So, the whole family would come at last.

While there were doubtless many who gave up the farms and came to live permanently in the mining fields there were probably more who looked upon Virginia as "home" and mining simply as the means to allow them to maintain their farms. It is significant that most of the farms mentioned in the interviews were located in Virginia. One superintendent said, of a certain miner: "He'll be leaving for his farm in the spring. Then in the fall when he gets out of money he'll be wanting me to take him back again."

While these home-going miners sometimes offered a problem for the operator by quitting when he needed their services they were often the means of bringing other miners to him. One old Negro miner at Keystone, who had worked for forty years in the mines, told the following story with his unmistakable Virginia pronunciation:

I used to go back to Virginia and would be broke. I would write to the superintendent and tell him that I was ready to come back to work and that I had seven or eight good men who wanted to come back with me. I would ask him to send me fifty or seventy-five dollars for train fare. I would always get it.

One time I asked the man at the post office to write a letter for me asking for seventy-five dollars. The man sat down and writ it -- but he said, "They ain't no use o' you writin' fo' that --- you'll never see that money." A few days after that he tol' me there was a letter fo' me. I opened it up and there was the money. He say: "What kinda craft (graft) you got on them men out

there in West Virginia?" I say, "I ain't got no craft at all -- I just been honest wid 'em."

Most of the Virginians who come to the mines in West Virginia are, as has been said, from the more western counties, especially those adjacent to the Pocahontas field. However, Negroes from all over Virginia may be found in the mining fields. Leap, in a study of Negro neighborhoods in the vicinity of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, found that, of 33 men who went outside the community to work, 11 went to West Virginia.³⁵ Albemarle County is in the central part of the state. Further east, in the Tidewater and Piedmont areas, Geo found very little migration to West Virginia.³⁶ In spite of this negligible amount of migration from the counties in Geo's study, a Negro bell boy in Farmville, Prince Edward County, in "Southside Virginia" told the writer that until he was a good-sized lad he did not know there were any places outside of Farmville except West Virginia and Sparrow's point.³⁷ The bulk of the Negroes in the eastern counties of Virginia tend to go either to the cities of the northern states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland or to other large Virginia cities.³⁸

The next state having the largest number of

- 35 Leap, William L., The Red Hill Community, unpublished master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1930, p. 32.
36 Geo, Wilson, & Corson, J. J., Rural Depopulation in Certain Tidewater and Piedmont Areas of Virginia, Univ. of Va., Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, p. 38.
37 Sparrow's Point is a small steel town near Baltimore.
38 Geo & Corson, op. cit., pp. 34ff.

natives was North Carolina. This migration is, like the movement from Virginia, of long standing. Somewhat the same situation has existed that Professor Denune found in certain Columbus neighborhoods when he says: "Since 1800 a constant stream of migrants has come in from the Carolinas and Virginia and in smaller numbers from Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky." ³⁹ This stream to West Virginia may be older than the one to Columbus, since it was the early policy of coal companies in the New River Field to send labor agents into North Carolina and bring ⁴⁰ back numbers of Negroes from that state. From a study of case histories of some of the North Carolina Negroes it became apparent to the writer that the migration from North Carolina took two directions, one south and the other north. It is quite common to find a North Carolina miner who has not come directly to West Virginia from his own state, but from Alabama. The two industries that attract him there are the coal industry and the iron factories and mines around Birmingham and Bessemer. Once there he does as many Alabamans do and comes to the mining fields of West Virginia. Others come directly to West Virginia while still others come to Virginia and from there to West Virginia. Most of those who come directly from North Carolina are tobacco cultivators. Practically all who come from Alabama have

³⁹ Mark, M. L., op. cit., p. 18.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Sam Dixon and Mr. J. M. Smiley. Mr. Dixon is one of the pioneers in mining in W. Va. See also Woodson, C. G., A Century of Negro Migration, p. 148.

had mining experience before they enter the coal mines in West Virginia.

Epstein found in a study that included 567 mi-
grants that 177 of them had come from Alabama.⁴¹ This
number was over twice as many as the next state, Georgia,
which had 83 natives among these Negroes. Epstein accounted
for this "altogether disproportionate influx from Alabama"
on the basis of the similarity of industries between the
Pittsburgh district and that around Birmingham.⁴² Labor
agents made a special effort to get those laborers who were
most familiar with the iron and steel business. One might
say, with good reason, the same thing in regard to the
similarity of industries between West Virginia and Alabama.
As has already been pointed out, Alabama has coal mines as
well as steel mills and the West Virginia labor agents have
directed their attention to this field.⁴³ Alabama, however,
claims only 37 or 11.16 per cent of the miners interviewed
in this study. However, since the native share is only
14.3 per cent, it will be seen that the Alabama miners
constitute an important part of the population.

Tennessee ranks next in numbers, having 4.50 per
cent of the miners interviewed. Tennessee also has coal
mines and many of the miners there have come either direct-
ly to West Virginia or have gone from Tennessee to Kentucky
and thence to West Virginia. Georgia natives constituted

41 Epstein, op. cit., p. 35.

42 Ibid., p. 34.

43 Negro Migration in 1913-17, Dept. of Labor Bulletin,
p. 63.

3.33 per cent of the total, South Carolina 2.50 per cent, and Pennsylvania and Kentucky 1.16 per cent each. All other states had less than one per cent.

III. THE STREAM OF MIGRATION

The stream of Negro migration is not a new one. It started before the Civil War and has been going on ever since. The tempo and the volume of this movement has responded to unusual economic forces which have been far from constant in their attraction. Perhaps the greatest stimulus which this movement has had was the simultaneous coming of restricted immigration from abroad and America's entrance into the World War. These events, particularly the latter,⁴⁴ brought an unprecedented exodus from the south. That West Virginia was the place of destination for many of these wartime migrants we have a good bit of evidence.

The unusual increase of the migrant Negro miners probably started about 1918. In 1913 there had been a depression which was reflected in the temporary slowing up of the movement.⁴⁵ From April 1 to October 12, 1916, however, there were sold to outbound Negroes from Birmingham, Alabama, 4,793 whole tickets and 158 half tickets, according to a government study.⁴⁶ The points of destination were Jenkins, Fleming, McRoberts, McClure, White Oak Junction, and Beaver

44 Woodson, A Century of Negro Migration, pp. 167ff.

45 Allen, op. cit., p. 10.

46 U. S. Dept. of Labor, Division of Negro Economics, Negro Migration in 1916-17, Report on Exodus of Negroes from Alabama and North Carolina, by Shavely, T. R., pp. 53-54.

Creek, Ky.,..... Clarksburg, Fairmont, Searbro, McDonald, Quinlon, Thurmond, and Woodbay, W. Va; Akron and Cincinnati, Ohio; and Kane, Pennsylvania. All the places above named in West Virginia are either cities in the heart of a mining field or actual coal mining operations. From November 1, 1916 to May 1, 1917 there were 2,619 whole and half tickets bought from Birmingham to Ocean Mine and Schlagel, West

Virginia.⁴⁷ Schlagel (properly Slagle) is a mine in Logan County. From North Carolina after the spring of 1916 there was a steady exodus going principally to points in Virginia,⁴⁸ West Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York.

During the World War many more miners came from Alabama to fill in the gaps left by many who went into the service.⁴⁹

After the World War coal development began in Greenbrier County in 1921-22.⁵⁰ The opening of this field made for somewhat of an increase of Negro population, no Negroes being recorded as working in that county in 1920,⁵¹ and 208 by 1925. About the same time of the opening of the new Greenbrier fields another event intrenched the Negro more firmly in one or more coal counties. This was the famous "armed march" of 1921. The situation was briefly as follows: The main strength of the United Mine Workers before 1921 was in the counties of Fayette, Kanawha, and

47 Ibid., p. 55.

48 Ibid.

49 Harris, A. L., Opportunity, February, 1936, p. 47.

50 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-26, p. 20.

51 Ibid.

part of Raleigh. Logan County and McDowell County, however, had remained non-union. Whenever a strike was called by the United Mine Workers in the Fayette and Kanawha fields the non-union counties would simply work overtime and increase their output, thereby breaking the strike. The miners finally decided that they would have to organize Logan County or the days of organized labor were at an end. Accordingly, about 8,000 or more miners gathered in Kanawha County for the march on Logan. One source of information estimated that there were about two thousand Negroes in the

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crowd. The director of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, however, in his annual report to the governor stated that he had been active in persuading Negroes not to participate in the march and that less than 200 Negroes

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actually took part. At the same time many Negroes volunteered to defend Logan County against the armed marauders.

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These were augmented by others who were taken over the mountains from McDowell County "to fight the red necks."

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The vacancies left in Kanawha County by the armed march and the effect on the operators of Raleigh County causing them

52 Harris, A. L., The Black Worker, pp. 336-337. A splendid extended treatment of this whole phase of the Negro's role in unionism is contained in this volume.

53 Nation, Sept. 15, 1931, p. 288.

54 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1931-32, p. 54. An interview with a proprietress of a boarding house in the march area indicated to the writer that there were a considerable number of Negroes in the march.

55 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1935-36, p. 20.

56 Interview with an old Negro miner at Keystone who had opposed the Negro's participation in the defense of Logan County on the grounds that it was an operator's plot.

to employ more Negroes tended to increase the Negro mining
 population in these districts. ⁵⁷

Labor troubles in the northern counties of Ohio,
 Brooke, Hancock, Monongalia, Marion, and Harrison in 1932
 brought another wave of migration. Of this, Johnson says: ⁵⁸

During the coal strike in West Virginia in
 1922 the numbers already there were supplemented
 by hundreds from Virginia, North Carolina, and
 Alabama, many of these entering the mines for
 the first time. They have been arrayed on both
 sides of the long and bitter controversy between
 operators and miners in the northern and southern
 portions of the state.

This wave of newcomers caused the Bureau of Negro Welfare
 and Statistics to express some anxiety concerning their
 character in the report of 1923-24. Of the numbers the
 report says: ⁵⁹

It is worthy of note that while heretofore
 the greatest increase in Negro population has
 been in McDowell, Raleigh, Kanawha and Logan
 counties in the southern section of the State,
 during the past two years Brooke, Ohio, Monon-
 galia, and Hancock counties in the northern sec-
 tion have received a large number of migrants
 from the South. It is estimated that about
 four thousand new comers have settled in these
 four counties and have been absorbed into the
 older population with very little friction.....
Practically all of the newly arrived
 Negroes in the counties of Brooke, Ohio, han-
 cock, and Monongalia are employed in and about
 the coal mines and steel mills (of Wheeling).

Many of these Negroes were alleged by the miner's union to

⁵⁷ Ibid.
⁵⁸ Johnson, Charles S., The Negro In American Civilization,
 Henry Holt & Co., 1930, p. 49.
⁵⁹ Report of 1923-24, pp. 8-9.

be strike breakers. One union official in northern West Virginia said: ³⁰ "If the present strike is lost it will be chiefly due to the importation of Negro strike breakers whom the employers will kick out as soon as they have forced us to submit." Whether this be true or not, the numbers of Negroes in the six northern counties of Marion, Harrison, Monongalia, Ohio, Brooke, and Marshall showed a Negro mining population of 3,030 in 1922 and 3,503 in ³¹ 1923, which is a fact pertinent to the purposes of the present chapter.

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate that the flow of Negroes into the West Virginia mining fields has not been of a smooth, even nature. There have been, just as in the other states north of the Mason-Dixon line, periods of decided concentration and rapid movement. The curve of the coming of the Negroes should show not a straight line but one with its peaks and valleys. The flow of Negroes has been sensitive to every turn of the market. Says the Director of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics in his 1925-26 report: ³² "The number of Negro miners employed by years is a clear index to the 'good' and 'bad' years in the industry in this State for the period covered." We may now turn to a brief discussion of the effects of such a vacillating population movement.

³⁰ Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-26, p. 30.
³¹ Compiled from 1922 and 1923 Reports of the Department of Mines.
³² P. 20.

It is one thing to point out the oscillatory character of the migration stream. It is quite another thing to say that an enumeration taken several years after these undulations would reflect them. The following table shows the number of Negroes coming from other states in each year since 1877. This table covers only 445 non-native miners out of a total of 516. In 71 cases the miner was not sure of the date, hence the schedules were thrown out in the compilation of this table.

TABLE 24. DATE OF COMING TO WEST VIRGINIA
OF 445 NON-NATIVE MINERS: 1932

Year	Number	Year	Number
1877	1	1909	15
1880	1	1910	26
1882	1	1911	8
1883	1	1912	22
1886	3	1913	11
1887	1	1914	21
1888	2	1915	20
1889	1	1916	19
1892	1	1917	17
1893	1	1918	13
1894	1	1919	10
1895	3	1920	26
1896	2	1921	8
1897	1	1922	22
1898	5	1923	3
1899	3	1924	15
1900	10	1925	20
1901	8	1926	11
1902	14	1927	10
1903	12	1928	10
1904	9	1929	16
1905	7	1930	9
1907	13	1931	7
1908	5	1932	2
Total			445

The writer is fully awake to the danger of generalizing on the basis of any table which reflects data as incomplete and covering as small a number of miners as this one does. However, certain conclusions from the table seem to lie both within the bounds of plausible and logical deduction and, at the same time, a reasonable caution.

If any conclusion may be drawn from our table it would be that apparently the Negroes who come in the waves of migration do not tend to make their residence permanent. It is quite probable that these migrants coming in times of great movement contain in their numbers a great many "floaters" who remain a short time and then move on. Practically every writer on Negro migration stresses the movement to the West Virginia coal fields from 1913 on. Our table shows that in 1932 there remain 88 who came between the years of 1910 and 1914 while only 79 came between 1915 and 1919 inclusive. Further, judging simply by the number who remain in 1932, the number of those coming between the years 1915 and 1919 became fewer each year, which we have every reason to believe was not according to fact. In fact, the number of those who came from 1910 to 1932 considered by five year periods, shows a steady decline. The following table will illustrate the fact:

TABLE 25. YEAR COMING TO WEST VIRGINIA
BY FIVE YEAR PERIODS FROM
1910 TO 1930

Period	Number
1910-1914	88
1915-1919	79
1920-1924	74
1925-1929	67
Total	308

Throughout most of this period the number of Negroes employed in the state has shown a gradual increase. Yearly decreases were shown in 1911, 1914, 1915, 1918, 1919, 1928, 1929, and 1930 but the total Negro miner population increased from 12,087 in 1910 to 23,623 in 1930. The peak⁶³ year for Negro miners was 1927, when 25,335 were employed. Some positive correlation is shown between the total number of Negroes employed in the state each year and the number remaining who came in that year. However, the correlation is negative in 1908, 1909, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1921, 1923, 1926, 1927, and 1929.⁶⁴ What probably happened was that the group of Negroes who left their southern homes during the excitement of rapid and hurried movement contained more of the adventurous type who were looking for a sort of "lark," at a time when going north was the thing to do, and, hence, had a tendency to wander or return home.⁶⁵

The part played by labor agents in stimulating many Negroes to leave the south is not to be ignored.

⁶³ West Virginia Dept. of Mines, Annual Reports, 1910-1930.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Lewis, E. E., Mobility of the Negro, Columbia University Press, 1931, pp. 98-99.

In Birmingham paid agents distributed the following bill:

"Let's go back north where there are no labor troubles, no strikes, no lockouts; Large coal, good wages, fair treatment. Two weeks pay; Good houses; We ship you and your household goods; All colored ministers can go free; Will advance you money if necessary; Scores of men have written us thanking us for sending them; Go now while you have the chance."

While it is doubtless true that the migrant going into the mining fields enjoyed better conditions than many who went to some of the northern cities, many of them found less perfect conditions than they were led to expect. This fact, with the consequent depressed condition of the coal industry may have resulted in many of these more unadjusted miners leaving, for the south or other points north. The older population was the more adjusted and remained.

IV. THE CAUSES OF MIGRATION

Snively,⁶⁸ Scott,⁶⁹ and Kennedy⁷⁰ have summarized somewhat similarly the general causes of Negro migration. Snively divides his causes into economic and social categories. Under economic he lists the changes in farming, particularly the coming of the boll weevil as the chief economic cause. Under the social causes he lists the

66 Negro Migration in 1913-17, U. S. Dept. of Labor Bulletin, p. 85.

67 See Epstein, op. cit., pp. 7-17.

68 In Negro Migration in 1913-17.

69 Scott, Emmett J., Negro Migration During the War, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1920.

70 Kennedy, Louise V., The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, Columbia University Press, 1930.

desire for better schools, desire for justice in the courts, and a desire for an increase of privileges in public conveyances. Scott, in a much longer study, discusses first the economic causes, chief of which are the boll weevil and the labor depression in the south in 1914 and 1915.⁷¹

The opportunity to earn a better living in the North where wages were "double and treble" those received in the South⁷² he lists as perhaps the most potent factor. He then proceeds to a discussion of factors less primarily economic.⁷³ He mentions court treatment,⁷⁴ fear of lynching,⁷⁵ lack of good educational facilities,⁷⁶ and the tendency for white people to become hostile toward children while at the same time exhibiting friendliness toward their parents.⁷⁷

The factors named above are mostly the "push" which were inherent in the conditions in the south. Scott goes on to discuss certain other factors which might be termed the "pull" in a chapter on the stimulation of the movement.⁷⁷ Here he lists such factors as discussion of the north as a place for Negroes, letters from friends who had gone north, the suggestions of subtle speakers, the Chicago Defender, poems about the migration, labor agents, and the social contagion of the rapid movement toward the north.

71	Pp. 13-18.
72	P. 17.
73	Pp. 19-20.
74	P. 22.
75	Pp. 18-19.
76	Pp. 24-25.
77	Pp. 26-37.

Kennedy, in a book which appeared ten years after
 the study by Scott and his assistants,⁷⁸ gives what is
 essentially a summary of that study, apparently without
 giving conspicuous credit to it.⁷⁹ She has, however, given
 categories to the causes stressed by Scott as well as making
 a distinction between the causes constituting a "push" and
 those constituting a "pull." She divides the causes into
 four categories: economic, social, socio-psychological,
 and miscellaneous. Under economic causes she discussed the
 increase of opportunity in the north, which was brought
 about by the cutting down of immigration and the simulta-
 neous increase of output; the bad conditions on the farms
 in the south, brought about by the system of share tenancy;
 and the coming of the boll-weevil. Under social causes,
 which she considers quite secondary to the economic causes,
 she discusses political discrimination in the south; the
 insecurity of life and limb; legal discrimination in the
 matter of undue arrests and prosecutions; the lack of
 educational facilities; and the disadvantages of segrega-
 tion in matters of residence, public conveyances and public
 gatherings. Under socio-psychological she discusses the
 "pulling" effects of conversations with friends in the north;
 the activities of labor agents; the press, particularly the
 campaign of The Chicago Defender, which Scott stressed; the

78 Kennedy, Louise V., The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward,
 Columbia University Press, 1930, Chapter II.

79 Scott's study is listed in the bibliography but in
 this chapter it is referred to infrequently if at all.

return of successful migrants for visits; and the contagion which resulted from great numbers going to the north. It is somewhat difficult to see why Dr. Kennedy used her last category of miscellaneous causes under which she discusses the fact that some go simply to be with their families, and the tendency of professional men, store keepers, etc., to follow their clientele. She adds in conclusion that there is nothing particularly "racial" in the migration of the Negroes; that they are simply following a law of nature common to all men to better their conditions when opportunity permits. We see, then, that Kennedy adds something in the way of form, but very little in content, to the other studies. Such may have been the purpose of Dr. Kennedy, as her main contribution was in her dealing with the effects of migration on the migrants rather than the process of their becoming migrants.

Professor Young ridicules the "academic" explanations of the migration during the last fifteen years based upon the fear of lynching and race prejudice in the south.⁸⁰ He gives as evidence of the error of such theories the fact that if there had been any change in race relations in the South it was in the direction of amelioration rather than otherwise. Further, he points out that lynching in the south was on the decrease. It would seem to the writer that Professor Young is perhaps partly in error himself

⁸⁰ Young, Donald, American Minority Peoples, Harpers, 1932, pp. 47-48.

here. After beginning his book with a splendid chapter on racial prejudices and racial attitudes he apparently seems to forget momentarily that people react not so much to objective reality as to stereotyped conceptions of what reality is, and that these stereotypes are culturally produced and may be culturally changed, a point which he has gone to some pains to emphasize.⁸¹ He is quite sound in emphasizing the fact that these considerations are not the only ones to be taken into account. However, a consideration of the social psychology of agitation and the intensive campaign of The Chicago Defender to stimulate migration, as well as the letters written by northern friends, might mean that many Negroes saw themselves in a different light and in a different frame of reference than ever before. These new attitudes might be ever so mistaken and not based upon unbiased observation, but that fact does not mean that they are any the less potent. Professor Young would have been much more convincing could he have demonstrated, not only that objective conditions had changed, that the Negro's stereotype of the southern situation, or his attitude toward his own role in regard to it, had changed.

We see, then, that there are two categories of factors to be taken into consideration in discussing the causes of migration -- those in the home situation which tended to "push" the Negro out and those in other places tending to "pull" him in that direction. Further, these

causes are to be sought not merely in external economic and social conditions but in human attitudes and stereotypes toward these conditions. With this general treatment of the causes of Negro migration we may turn to a consideration of the reasons which Negro miners give for their coming to West Virginia. While it is quite true that many reasons are merely rationalizations, it is believed that they do reveal many motives for coming that are quite real. The frankness of some of the answers were, at times, quite striking. Statistical treatment of these reasons is difficult and its value doubtful, hence, it is not attempted. Quantitative measurement, however, has been kept in mind and the number of times a particular reason was given was tallied on a rough data sheet. The attempt was then made to classify these reasons. In doing so, some such categories as those used by Kennedy were kept in mind, although no attempt was made at strict adherence.

The chief reasons assigned by the miners as constituting the "push" were, of course, economic. As Kennedy makes clear there are always two conditions necessary for any migratory move -- dissatisfaction with the present location and the promise of improvement in the new. As Donald Young so well says: "The job is always a means to an end, and the end is always happiness." No one realizes that fact more than the present writer who, after a study of the

82 Op. cit., p. 41.

83 Op. cit., p. 48.

literature of Negro economic conditions from 1880 to 1939,
 84 was impelled to say: "Leading authorities on the American race problem suggest that the proper approach to the understanding of the problem is an economic one. The logic of such a position becomes immediately apparent. It is impossible to think of the American Negro apart from the economic system. He had his origin and his being within it."

Since many of the migrants were agricultural workers before entering mining, we find many of them giving as their reasons for leaving the south the condition of the farm. The boll-weevil was the cause of the failure of the cotton crops of some. The tobacco bugs, coupled with the low price paid for tobacco, was given by several from North Carolina. At least eight simply said that a particularly bad crop was the immediate cause of their coming. On the contrary, others whose crops had failed came in order to save their farms and go back to them. This last is a phase of the "money-crop" aspect of mining referred to

85 before. Low wages on the southern farms was given by others.

Some of the miners were not explicit about their conditions in the south, but no less than 43 said they came "to better my condition." A similar reason given by four others who came "to get a better job." Five more

84. The Trends and Analysis of the Literature of American Negro Economic Conditions, 1880-1939, unpublished M. A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1939, p. 1.

85. *Supra*, p.

were "out off," while three others came because of "dull work." One came "to make my own start in life." Others who were more articulate, but also less frank, "came for economic reasons." Another came "because I was tired of the ten-hour day in Virginia factories." An Alabama ore miner from Bessemer came because the wages paid in the coal mines in West Virginia were better than in the ore mines of Alabama. An Alabama coal miner claimed that the slack work in the mines there sent him to West Virginia. Two of the few Pennsylvania Negroes in the sample came because the mines closed down in Pennsylvania and one because he "was dissatisfied with Pittsburgh."

Some of the miners gave reasons that, while they were partly economic, gave evidence of other motivating factors. The following will exemplify certain of the more typical reasons: "I came here to help my parents save their home." "I came because, after father died, I had to help support the family." "I could not support my family properly on my tobacco farm." "I worked here with my brothers to save my mother's farm in Tennessee." "I came to get my father out of debt -- and I did it." While these reasons are probably economic for the most part, yet there was a doubt as to whether these men would have come had there not been other special reasons, sentimental and otherwise.

The more articulate members of the Negro group spoke more of what Scott and Kennedy refer to as "social" reasons for coming. The ordinary miner gave more emphasis

to the purely economic motive or to some more or less personal reason. A Negro minister in the Pocahontas Field ⁸⁶ gave the following reasons for the migration:

When I was a boy I had to walk eight miles each way every day in order to go to school. I would start out before my parents were up in the morning and in the winter often I would get home after they were in bed. My mother would leave supper prepared and my breakfast also. I would get my lessons and go to bed and leave before they were up. People do not learn to have affection for places where such conditions exist. As a result many have little schooling and have left the home state for West Virginia.

My people have come because they were denied the franchise; because they were denied opportunities for education; because the labor market was such that they wanted to come where the competition was less keen. They wanted an opportunity for their children that they never had.

Of similar opinion was the Director of the Bureau of Negro ⁸⁷ Welfare and Statistics in 1926. He says:

"Not only do a large number of Negroes migrate to West Virginia because of the constant demand for labor at better wages than are paid in any of the States to the south of us and because they enjoy more liberty, more protection in the courts and better educational facilities, but for economic reasons many white people constantly migrate to this great State, thereby keeping the percentage of increase of Negroes in the total population at a very narrow margin."

To say, however, that the more articulate group gives the so-called social reasons more frequently than the more

⁸⁶ The writer spent almost an entire afternoon with this preacher, who held a responsible position in the Methodist Church, and is indebted to him for many valuable suggestions.

⁸⁷ Report of 1925-26, p. 7.

numerous group is not to say that the latter do not also give such reasons. The desire for better schools for their children is one that is frequently given. Others who are less specific have simply given a blanket indictment of the conditions they left by referring to "bad social and labor conditions."

Crises of various kinds which interfere with the accustomed tenor of life have been potent causes in bringing Negroes to West Virginia. "My wife died, and I became dissatisfied" was a very common reason. Its very repetition by Negroes in many parts of the state would indicate that the Negroes at least associate the breaking up of family ties, sometimes with a certain amount of personal disorganization, with their leaving their old homes. Another answer, "My parents died -- and I just drifted," is to be placed in the same category. The Negro is not unique in this, of course. Conversations with white miners have solicited the same answers. One miner came "because my father was a 'fugitive from justice.'" Another came "because I shot a man and was afraid of being jailed."

These latter reasons perhaps need especial emphasis, particularly in regard to those Negroes who came in the early days. In the early days many of the Negroes in certain fields had criminal records and came to West Virginia to escape. The head of the most prominent detective agency in the mining fields, whose experience runs over

many years said, in this regard:

"I would say that at least fifty per cent of the Negroes in here at that time (the early days of Mercer and McDowell counties) had criminal records, that is, including the desperadoes and those accused of some minor offense."

There is reason to believe that the statement above is no exaggeration, for the first report of the Bureau of Negro

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Welfare and Statistics says:

Along with them (worthy Negroes and whites) came many fugitives from justice of both races to escape punishment for crimes committed in their native states and crooks and criminals of all degrees.

That there are still Negroes who come for the same purpose

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is evidenced by another quotation from a later report:

A great majority of these migrants came to West Virginia because of the larger opportunities offered for work at good wages, better educational advantages for their children, and more liberty. With this large number of hard working people who came to better their condition, there also came some parasites -- loafers, gamblers, and bootleggers who came to prey upon the newly arrived workers. This class operates through the coal fields of Brooke and Hancock counties and in the Wheeling industrial district. They have been responsible for most of the lawlessness reported among Negroes of that section and when they are sought by the officers of the law in West Virginia they go in hiding in the nearby cities and towns of Ohio and Pennsylvania.

- 88 Interview with Mr. T. L. Felts of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, Bluefield, W. Va.
 89 Report of 1931-32, p. 13.
 90 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report of 1933-34, p. 9.

There is no doubt that in the old days many criminals of both races used the mines as hide-outs. The location of the mines in remote hollows and creek valleys and the lack of facilities of communication made them ideal for this purpose. However, with the building of paved roads to all parts of the mining fields with improved means of transportation and communication, the isolation so prized by the criminal has largely disappeared. That Negroes still come because they get in trouble at home, however, cannot be doubted. Miners of this type are apt to be very cautious and suspicious. Friendly Negroes in some of the camps told the writer that his presence caused a great deal of discussion, not to say apprehension, among some of the Negroes and that he was thought to be everything from a prohibition agent to a Federal investigator. The schedule used in the interviews with the miners covered their history from their state of origin to their present job. In the middle of one interview a miner from Alabama stopped and said, "This would be a good way to track up somebody who had done something wrong, wouldn't it?" It was necessary to give him some evidence that such was not my mission before continuing the interview.

Another factor which played an important part in the case of young migrants was the tendency of young men to seek adventure. No less than twenty have such answers as "I wanted to 'scout around a bit;'" "I wanted to see the world;" "I came here just 'venturing out;'" "I just

wandered here." This "venturing out" is quite common in certain sections. Several of the miners ran away from home as children. To run away from Virginia to West Virginia was quite common among Virginia boys in certain localities. They would come either in groups or individually. Negroes from the far south often got together with groups of their boy friends and came to the mining fields. Some of these boys "just got tired of the farm."

The decision of relatives to go to the mining fields is a factor that brings many more Negroes than just those making the decision. Forty-nine of the 516 miners coming from other states were brought by relatives when they were children. Others were sent for by relatives when they became firmly established. Others, being left behind, came later to live with relatives already in West Virginia. It is not unusual to find a man, his wife, and their sons and their families all living in the same mining town. Not infrequently some of their old neighbors in the south will be found there also. This tendency may be compared to the situation sometimes found in the cities when a lawyer would sometimes have about the same clientele in Chicago as he did in Mississippi or Georgia. Others visited relatives in West Virginia and decided to stay themselves.

Hardly less potent as a "pull" toward West Virginia were friends of Negroes already in the mining fields. Friends returning from the mines for a visit to their old

homes and neighbors were living evidence of the prosperity to be found there. In a sense their return was more or less of a triumphal entry -- and they made the most of it. Over-loaded with clothes and money, they left little doubt in the minds of their old neighbors that better things must be in store for the Negro who went north. Twenty-six miners gave returning friends or relatives as the direct cause of their leaving the south. More still wrote back glowing pictures of their life in West Virginia and forty-two more came as a result.

Forty-five miners gave as their reason for coming the "high wages" which they heard about in one way or another. Twenty-five came on "transportation." This term, as has before been explained, refers to the policy of the companies, in times of labor shortage, of paying the train fare of miners from the south to the mines after which the migrant works out his indebtedness. This device has been used particularly often during times of strike. Twenty-one were attracted by the "boom in the coal fields." Two more were brought by their employers when they came to West Virginia themselves. Another came when he was called to "pastor a church" by a superintendent who knew him in Kentucky. Two others came because they were assured of better positions than the ones they had. These are typical of the economic reasons constituting the "pull" to West Virginia. There is perhaps one other type, however, that is typical of its number, although it is much less

frequently found. This is the case of the migrant who goes north, hears there of the mines in West Virginia and comes there from the north rather than the south. More than one followed this route to the mines.

In general, therefore, it would seem that we would say of the Negro miner, as Lewis does concerning general industrial workers,⁹² that the effective demand for labor has been the most potent factor in bringing him to the mining fields. However, such a statement is not to ignore the implications and ramifications involved. It is quite true that Negroes have followed industry to the north just as they followed agriculture to the southwest.⁹³ However, we must ever keep in mind that the mere going is only half the problem. There are those other factors to be considered which conditioned the Negro to respond to these demands for labor. Again, once the movement is started, other causes arise in conjunction with the movement that are not basically economic in their nature. To see the Negro miner in his migratory aspects as a mere economic puppet is to see only partially, but to ignore the great effect which economic forces have had in "pulling" him is also to see only in part.

92 Lewis, E. E., op. cit., p. 130.
 93 Young, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

V. TYPES OF MIGRATION

1. Primary and secondary aspects of migration to West Virginia

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Ross and Truxal have pointed out the distinction between primary and secondary migration. They criticize quite justly the usual inference of writers on population movements that an increase, in one state, of natives from another state is due to direct migration from the native state and that the increase in this native state of migrants from other states is an adequate measure of internal migration. They show that these increases may be due to both primary and secondary migration. In other words, if an increase in West Virginia of Virginia-born Negroes occurs that fact does not necessarily mean that there has been so much movement of people between Virginia and West Virginia. It may mean that the movement has been between Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It is easily seen that the point is well taken.

The effort has been made in the present study to approach the subject of migration typologically as well as to isolate certain of the causes of the movement and to show its sources. Consequently, we shall discuss first the types with reference to their directness and later with reference to their direction.

94 Ross, Frank A., and Truxal, Andrew G., Primary and Secondary Aspects of Interstate Migrations, American Journal of Sociology (hereafter A. J. S.), Vol. xxxvii, November 1931, pp. 435-444.

That a part of this migration to West Virginia is of secondary rather than primary character is well illustrated by a comparison of the places of birth of those miners born outside of West Virginia with the state of residence of the same miners before coming to West Virginia. Such a comparison is shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26. COMPARISON OF PLACE OF BIRTH OF
516 NON-NATIVE NEGRO MINERS WITH
STATE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE COMING
TO WEST VIRGINIA

State	Number claiming state as:	
	Place of birth	Last residence
Alabama	67	53
District of Col.	1	3
Florida	1	1
Georgia	20	12
Illinois		1
Indiana	1	1
Kentucky	7	20
Louisiana	4	2
Maryland		1
Michigan		1
Mississippi	3	3
Missouri		1
New York	1	1
North Carolina	71	65
Ohio	2	10
Oklahoma	1	
Pennsylvania	7	22
Rhode Island	1	
South Carolina	15	10
Tennessee	27	19
Virginia	287	289
Total	516	516

There are two general tendencies revealed. The first is for the northern focal points of the migratory movement to appear as the last residence of the migrants in greater numbers than as their native states. On the other hand, the southern points of origin of the movement appear as the last place of residence less frequently than as native states. There are two notable exceptions in the case of the southern states. Virginia was the native state of 347 of the 616 migrants, while 289 gave Virginia as the state of last residence. Kentucky, the other exception, claimed only 7 as natives, but was the last residence of 20. The explanation of these exceptions lies in their location and industrial character. In the case of Virginia there are two chief factors accounting for the greater number of Negroes claiming it as a place of last residence than as a native state. There is a decided intermigration between Virginia and North Carolina with the balance greatly in

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favor of Virginia. On the other hand, Virginia, because of her own coal mines and factories attracts many southerners on her own behalf. Some of these later come to West Virginia. It is true, of course, that there is also a tendency for Virginians to go to other states before coming to West Virginia, but these cases are not so numerous as those of migrants from other states coming to West Virginia by the way of Virginia. Kentucky is also a coal state and many of the miners from the south come first to

Kentucky and later to West Virginia.

Most of the migration, however, into West Virginia is probably of the primary or direct type. One hundred and sixty-six or 77.2 per cent of 215 miners coming from southern states other than Virginia came directly from their native state. Only 49 or 22.8 per cent came to other states before coming to West Virginia. As might be expected, the proportion of Virginia Negroes coming to West Virginia directly is even greater. Two hundred and sixty-six of the two hundred and eighty-seven or 82.3 per cent of the Virginia natives came directly to West Virginia. Only 7.4 per cent came to West Virginia from other states. Considering all migrating miners from all states, we find that 443 or 85.4 per cent came to the state directly from their state of birth, and only 70 or 13.3 per cent came from states other than their native state.

3. Directional Types

As has been pointed out above, most of the migration of Negroes into the mining fields of West Virginia is of the primary, direct type. While 77.2 per cent of those coming from the southern states came directly, all but one of the natives of northern states came directly to West Virginia. The number of northern natives coming to the mining fields, however, was only fourteen or 3.7 per cent of the total. This north to south movement is not very extensive, coming largely from states like Pennsylvania,

Ohio, and Indiana, which also have coal operations. These migrants are usually miners who have come to West Virginia in order to secure the advantages of higher wages or a more prosperous market.

Within the secondary migration group there are several well-defined directional types. One very noticeable tendency is to be found particularly among the natives of such states as North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The movement of these miners is a two-direction type -- first south and later northward to West Virginia. The southern magnet which draws many natives of these states southward is the coal and iron mining center of Birmingham, Alabama. Negroes in the mines of Alabama constitute more than 50 per cent of the entire population of the industry, ⁹⁶ although their numbers are less than one third those in West Virginia. Seven of the 215 southerners, exclusive of Virginians, or 3.2 per cent, came to West Virginia by way of Alabama.

Mr. A. is a good example of those migrants who went south to work in the Birmingham district and later came north to the West Virginia Fields. At the age of twenty-one Mr. A. left the farm near Telford, Georgia, becoming tired of poor crops and poor pay, desiring to travel and see a bit of the world. He went to Montgomery, Alabama, where he secured a job in a brick yard. He worked here for seven years, but decided then to leave the brick

⁹⁶ Allen, G. E., op. cit., p. 8.

yard to work in the coal mines at Birmingham. He remained here, however, as a coal loader for two years only. He heard of the better pay in the mines of the Kentucky fields and left there to go to Jenkins, where he worked for two years as a machine man. He left Jenkins for another Kentucky mine where he worked as coal loader for seventeen months. He heard, however, of the good wages paid in West Virginia and, still desiring to travel, he moved to Whipple in Fayette County, West Virginia, where he has worked continuously for the last eight years.

Another direction, followed more frequently by natives of all the southern states south of Virginia, is a one-direction northward and eastward movement with one or more stops, the last one in Virginia from which state the migrant would come to West Virginia. Seventeen or 7.9 per cent of the migrants from the states south of Virginia have come in this way. Virginia, with its ports at Norfolk, Newport News, and Richmond, its factories, and its own coal mines has attracted many from the agricultural states to the south. Sometimes intermediate stops in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina are also made, particularly by the type of migrant who is "just venturing out." This type is quite apt to move short distances at a time, so that he often "just wanders" into West Virginia.

Mr. B. was a South Carolinian who followed the direction outlined above. He worked on his cousin's farm until he was seventeen. He then worked as an automobile

mechanic in South Carolina for six years. Slack work, however, led him to go to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he obtained work in the Reynolds Tobacco Factory. He worked here for thirteen months and then went to Newton, North Carolina, where he spent seven months in highway grade work. From Newton he went to Salisbury where he found work with the South East Express Company, railroad work. He liked it better in Salisbury than in Newton, staying here for two years. He moved next to Hillsboro where he worked for the city "grading sewers." He spent only six months at this job, however, going back to highway work for another six months' period. Mr. B. thought he would try indoor work, so he left North Carolina and went to Danville, Virginia, getting a job in a hotel as second cook. He lived in Danville for two years and moved to Clifton Forge, a railway town. He did construction work in this vicinity for five months. Becoming dissatisfied with this job he decided to try coal mining, travelers telling him of the money to be made in West Virginia. He went directly to Morris Fork in the Coal River field of West Virginia. Here he worked as a coal loader, brakeman, motorman, and machine helper for two years. Evidently B. made money, for he next went into the restaurant business in Charleston. He failed in six months and went to his present position as coal loader in Kanawha County where he has worked for five years.

The type of movement represented by the case of Mr. B. might be called "the Virginia way" of coming to

West Virginia. Another "way" that is also used by numbers of southerners might be termed the "Kentucky way" or the "Tennessee-Kentucky way." A good many natives of Alabama, Mississippi, and the Carolinas take a more westerly route, making their first stop or stops in Tennessee or Kentucky or in both. Eight or 3.7 per cent of those coming from the states south of Virginia, took this direction. Tennessee miners quite often go to Kentucky and later to West Virginia.

The case of C is somewhat typical of this route of entrance into West Virginia from the south. C was born in Alabama, where he worked in the coal mines near Birmingham. Labor agents in 1932 were seeking for men to go to Kentucky. C was married, so he and his family came to the state of Kentucky on "transportation." He worked there, however, only long enough to pay his debt to the company. When another "transportation" opportunity presented itself he took it, this time to West Virginia. He came to Carlyle in Fayette County where he worked as a coal loader for two years. From there he went to Red Star in the same county for twenty months and then returned to Carlyle for a similar period. He next went to Logan County, but stayed there only fourteen months. He returned to Fayette County at a mine called Whipple where he has been for the past four years.

Another type of two-way migration is a direct movement from one of the southern states to a northern state such as Pennsylvania, Illinois, or Ohio and then a

return from there to the West Virginia fields. This backwash of the movement to the northern urban centers comes not infrequently to the mining fields. Fifteen or 3.9 per cent of those from states south of Virginia came directly to the north first and then to West Virginia. According to ⁹⁷ a reliable source, this group contains a number of those who have been in trouble in the northern cities and return to hide for a time. It is quite likely, however, that many of them are simply those Negroes who have been unable to make a satisfactory economic adjustment in northern urban life.

D, representing the type of migrant who comes to West Virginia on a sort of rebound from the north, was a sawmill worker in Louisiana, his native state. When opportunity presented itself, however, he went to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he became a cook in a hotel. He stayed in Mississippi only seven months when he, like many others from Mississippi, went to Chicago. He remained in Chicago only a short time and went east to Lackawanna, New York, where he worked for eight months in the steel mills. He changed his job, however, to a more temporary one at Vineyard, New York, where he picked grapes for two months. From Vineyard he returned west to Cleveland where he worked on the railroad for ten months. He became dissatisfied, however, with the north and the jobs he had held and came

⁹⁷ Interview with Mr. T. L. Felts, of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Bureau, Bluefield, W. Va.

to the Wheeling, West Virginia, coal field. He worked here as a coal loader for eight months, only; left, and came to Charleston. He stayed here longer than any of his other places, spending his time in street work and in hotel work for two years. Work became slack in Charleston in 1930 and he went back to the mines at Coalburg, a town on the Kanawha River about eighteen miles east of Charleston. He stayed there for a year and a half when he changed his location to a mine on Cabin Creek in the same county. He has been a coal loader here for eight months.

Another type of migration which was much more frequent twenty or twenty-five years ago than it is now ⁹⁸ was a movement from the southern states in a northwest direction, particularly to the states of Kansas and Missouri, and then east to West Virginia. Only two or .93 per cent were of this type. One of these E, was born in Virginia. E went directly west from his farm in Virginia to Kansas, where he loaded coal for two months. He left Kansas and went to Kansas City, Missouri, where he cooked, worked as a packer, and loaded coal for a year. Visitors told him of the work and money in West Virginia, so he returned directly from Kansas City to Mercer County in West Virginia where he worked in the mines and as a coke yard worker for five years. Leaving Mercer he went to Fayette County where he loaded coal for another five year period. He went from Fayette

98 See Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, Senate Document 747, 1911, 2 vols., passim.

County to Columbus, Ohio, where he worked in the steel mills for three years. Leaving Columbus, he went to Pennsylvania for a year of work at a coke yard. From here he went to Oklahoma where he was a coke yard boss for five years. He went north again from Oklahoma to Lincoln, Illinois, where he lived a year and did house cleaning. He returned to West Virginia and to McDowell County, and has been a coal loader at Gary in that county for twenty-five years.

Virginia Negroes form such a large part of the Negro population in the mining fields that it was thought best to consider their migration separately from the rest. As has been pointed out, 92.6 per cent of the Virginia natives came directly into West Virginia. The other 7.4 per cent of them form a secondary migration group which came to West Virginia in two general directions, one dominant, the other of minor importance. The main secondary movement into West Virginia is to the states north of Virginia and then into West Virginia. A typical movement of this type is to Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and the mining fields of West Virginia. Sometimes the movement is entirely cyclical, ending in a return to Virginia. Sometimes, also, the movement is reversed and the miner comes to West Virginia first and then returns to Virginia by the way of Pittsburgh and other northern cities.⁹⁹ Obviously none of this type appeared in our sample.

⁹⁹ See Leap, op. cit., p. 33.

F was a Virginia farmer who was "not making anything" on his farm. He left Virginia and went directly to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he worked in a foundry for eighteen months. F next came to Galesburg, Illinois, as the severe winters of Minneapolis were too hard on his wife. He worked here in a foundry also for eighteen months. Relatives wrote to them here and told them about the mines in West Virginia. They were glad to return to the Norfolk and Western field, next to Virginia, where F and his wife lived over five years at Gary and other mines in that field. F left the southern part of the state, however, going to Wheeling where he was a machine man for five years. From Wheeling he returned to Raleigh County where he has worked at Stotesbury for more than three years.

The other type of movement from Virginia is first to Kentucky and then back to West Virginia. Only three Virginians of those interviewed took this westward course before coming to West Virginia. The extreme western counties of Virginia are quite near to one of the rich coal fields of Kentucky, which fact accounts for this movement.

We may summarize our findings concerning the migration movement into West Virginia into ten general directional types: 1. A direct movement to West Virginia from the states south of Virginia. 2. A movement from certain southern states north of Alabama to that state and thence northward to West Virginia. 3. A movement north from the southern states with one or more stops, the last

of which was in Virginia from which state the migrant came to West Virginia. 4. A movement from the southern states with one or more stops, the last being in Kentucky from which state the migrant came to West Virginia. 5. A movement from the states south of Virginia directly to the north and thence back to West Virginia. 6. A direct movement from the northern states to West Virginia. 7. A movement from the southern states to the west, to such states as Kansas or Missouri, and thence to West Virginia. 8. A direct movement of Virginia migrants to West Virginia. 9. A movement from Virginia to the northern states and thence to West Virginia. 10. A movement from Virginia to Kentucky and thence to West Virginia.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEGRO FAMILY

I. THE WIVES OF NEGRO MINERS.-

American Negroes as a whole constitute a much-married group. A bachelor or a spinster is rarely seen and widows and widowers remarry more frequently than do members of the majority group.¹ In 1930 seventy-six and seven tenths per cent of Negro females 15 years of age and over in the United States were either married, widowed, or divorced while only 71.6 per cent of native white females were so reported. The proportion of Negro males in these classifications is also larger than for native whites, the percentages being 67.8 and 63.2 respectively.² As has been pointed out before, 76.0 per cent of the Negroes interviewed by the writer were married, while 8.5 per cent more were either separated, widowed, or divorced. The wife of the Negro miner has always been for her "ole man" pretty largely the sine qua non of mining town existence, and no study of the Negro in the coal industry would be complete without some mention of her.

The wives of Negro miners are, like their husbands, largely a migrated group. Many of the miners were married

¹ Dowd, Jerome, The Negro in American Life, Century, 1926, p. 97.

² Bureau of Census, Population Bulletin, U. S. Summary, Population Characteristics, 1931, p. 19.

before coming to West Virginia and brought their wives with them; the unmarried because of propinquity choose their wives largely from the daughters, widows, or relatives of the other Negro miners. The states from which the wives of 489 Negro miners came are shown in Table 53. A comparison

TABLE 53. PLACE OF BIRTH OF THE WIVES OF 489^a
NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA: 1932
(Data from miners' schedules)

State	Number	Per cent
Virginia	230	47.0
West Virginia	75	15.3
North Carolina	61	12.5
Alabama	55	11.2
Georgia	17	3.5
Tennessee	17	3.5
South Carolina	12	2.5
Kentucky	7	1.4
Pennsylvania	6	1.2
Other states ^b	9	1.9
Total	489	100.0

a Six of the 495 married men were uncertain concerning the birthplace of their wives.

b Louisiana, Mississippi, and Ohio -- 2 each; Florida, D. C., and New York -- 1 each.

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of this table with Table 20 will reveal that the proportion from each state is approximately the same as for the Negro miners. There is a distinct tendency for Negro miners from different states to become "clannish" and to associate largely with Negroes from their own home states and marry within these groups. Like their husbands Virginia-born wives were more than three times as numerous as native West

3 P. 108.

4 See Chapter XIII for a discussion of this fact.

Virginians, and North Carolinians and Alabamans were encountered almost as frequently as the native women.

Odum has pointed out the fact that many Negro⁵ wives support their husbands in idleness. This condition is not found in the coal towns where a man must work for the company in order to occupy a house and the employment opportunities for women are definitely limited.⁶ West Virginia, however, in 1920 had a larger proportion of its miners' wives gainfully employed than any other of the coal producing states.⁷ A larger proportion of the wives of Negro miners in the United States were employed than were⁸ either the wives of native whites or foreigners. No separate figures for Negroes were available for West Virginia. The proportion of the wives of both racial groups employed in West Virginia, however, was 21.3 per cent.⁹ Later, in 1922, 866 family schedules taken by the Women's Bureau in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Illinois indicated that 17.1 per cent of the wives of these families were gainfully employed.¹⁰ Almost four fifths, or 79.7 per cent, of these took in boarders or lodgers. Another 16.8 per cent were employed in laundering or cleaning by the day. Of the remaining four wives, two were engaged in sewing or

5 Odum, op. cit., p. 156.

6 In W. Va. a higher percentage of Negro men and a lower percentage of Negro women are employed than in any other state. (See Johnson, C. S., op. cit., p. 391).

7 U. S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau Bulletin, No. 45, p. 39.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 38.

10 Ibid.

crocheting, one in telephone operating, and one in farm work.

The proportion of gainfully employed wives found in the present study was nearer to that of the Census figures of 1930. Ninety-three, or 20.4 per cent, of the 456 wives living with their husbands were engaged in some kind of lucrative activity. It is likely that this figure would be somewhat larger if some of the women at whose homes relatives were staying were to be included as keeping boarders. The miners or their wives insisted, however, that such persons were "not boarders." The following table will show the type of employment of the wives as reported:

TABLE 54. EMPLOYMENT OF 93 WIVES OF NEGRO MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA, 1932
(Data from miners' schedules)

Type of employment	Number	Per cent
Boarding and lodging	40	43.0
Domestic and janitor service	32	34.4
Teaching	13	14.0
Others ^a	8	8.6
Total	93	100.0

a 5 seamstresses, 1 dairy operator, 1 manager of own store, 1 mid-wife.

As in the Women's Bureau study mentioned before more of these wives were employed in keeping boarders and lodgers than in any other occupation. Negro "club-houses" are less frequently found than white "club-houses," hence the single miners not living with relatives must stay at the homes of other Negro miners. Since the houses are small and each dwelling can accommodate only one or two of

them a number of the wives of Negro miners have the opportunity of boarding and rooming these men. Forty-three per cent of the earning wives engage in this work. Domestic service consists for the most part of cooking, laundering, cleaning, and nursing for mine officials and their families. Negro "help" is much more frequently employed than white. Janitor service is restricted to cleaning company offices, stores and school buildings. More than a third of the workers, or 34.4 per cent, were engaged in work of this classification. The relatively large proportion of teachers is explained by the fact that Negro women teaching in the mining fields often marry Negro miners. The Negro teacher is much more likely to find some man she considers eligible for courtship and marriage among the Negro miners than is the white teacher among the white miners, for in mining as in other occupations Negroes fitted by education and training for other work, are to be found doing hard labor. Other occupations are sporadic and of negligible importance; a few of the Negro women earn money by sewing.

The relatively small number of gainfully employed wives of Negro miners does not indicate that only the employed women desire to earn, but rather that work opportunity, as mentioned before, is limited. Throughout the counties studied Negro women complained of the scarcity of work. A number of them stated that people for whom they used to work regularly were now doing their own work during the dull times. In many families the discouragement of the

wife was added to that of her husband because of the frustration of habitual behavior patterns.

The wives of the Negro miners, although in most cases not gainfully employed, are by no means idle. House-keeping duties in the ordinary mining town are made exceedingly arduous by conditions which will be discussed a little later. According to the writer's observations, the Negro wives play the role of housekeeper relatively well. This judgment was confirmed by the doctors who visit the houses of all racial groups. Ministering to the animal comfort of their husbands, however, is not the only important role played by the wives of many of the Negro miners, for wives provide a type of response of the utmost importance to many of the miners who have come to West Virginia from other states. It will be recalled that many of the Negroes, particularly those from Virginia who make up such a large proportion of the Negro mining population, did not come to West Virginia with the intention of staying. They were to return in good time richly rewarded for their self-inflicted exile from the old home, and they have therefore never looked upon West Virginia as their home, but rather as a stopping place devoid of sentiment. It is to be endured but not loved. Idealizations are focused upon the old home "back East" or elsewhere; hence there has grown up what one preacher in the mining fields has aptly called a "camp psychology." An adequate conception of this attitude is essential to an understanding of Negro family life in the

mining fields. Many of the wives, coming from the same early homes as their husbands, understand the men's disillusionment and many tensions are avoided by this mutual understanding. Each provides for the other a response in their mutual longings. "Hard trials" in the mining fields are made more endurable by the sharing of memories and hopes.

The family, however, is, as Burgess has pointed out, a unity of interacting personalities.¹¹ A relationship satisfying between husband and wife who attempt to substitute a community of early images for present disillusionment may have a very different effect upon their children. These children, who know only the mining fields, have heard only dissatisfaction expressed for the one home of their experience and hence lack idealizations and sentiments associated with home which are part of the normal heritage of children. Since no emotional ties hold the young Negroes they are leaving the mining fields, many of them at quite an early age, with consequent breaking up of family solidarity.

II. NUMBER OF CHILDREN.-

The American Negro group has long enjoyed the reputation of being exceedingly prolific. Indeed, this belief has some factual basis. The average number of

¹¹ Burgess, Ernest W., The Family and the Person, Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. 22, Dec. 1927, pp. 133-143.

children per Negro mother in the birth registration area in 1920 was 3.6 while that of native and foreign-born white mothers was 3.0 and 4.0 respectively.¹² In more recent years the Negro women have maintained their birth rate at a level more nearly that of 1918-1921 than either native white or foreign born white women, although there have been large declines in specific birth rates for all three groups, particularly in the case of the foreign-born.¹³ In 1929 the birth rate of the Negro group in the registration area of the United States was 21.3 while that of the white group was only 18.6.¹⁴ The Negro women in the counties studied, however, had a lower birth rate than the white mothers in this year.¹⁵ The birth rates for Fayette, Logan, McDowell, and Raleigh counties, in which the great bulk of the population of both racial groups is engaged in mining, are shown in Table 55.¹⁶

¹² Young, D., op. cit., pp. 362, 365.

¹³ Thompson, Warren S. and Whelpton, P. K., in Recent Social Trends, McGraw-Hill, 1933, Vol. I, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴ Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics for Birth Registration Area of U. S., (no date) p. 46.

¹⁵ See Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics for Birth Registration Area of U. S., 1929, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, pp. 127-128.

¹⁶ Separate figures for white and colored were not available for Kanawha County

TABLE 55. BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN SELECTED COUNTIES OF WEST VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA, NORTH CAROLINA, AND ALABAMA BY RACE: 1929
(Compiled from Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics for Birth Registration Area of U. S., 1929)

State and county	Rate per 1,000 population			
	Births		Deaths	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
West Virginia:				
Fayette	28.1	24.5	10.1	13.6
Logan	33.3	23.1	10.2	11.3
McDowell	33.4	21.5	10.5	14.6
Raleigh	32.3	26.7	9.3	14.7
Virginia:				
Albemarle	30.9	32.7	20.5	25.4
Bedford	19.8	21.4	10.3	15.1
Franklin	23.0	19.3	7.8	11.7
Henry	29.0	30.7	11.0	17.2
Montgomery	23.4	18.8	10.9	25.9
Pittsylvania	23.9	28.1	7.3	12.4
Roanoke	21.9	19.9	9.4	14.6
North Carolina:				
Caswell	23.8	30.8	7.3	12.4
Rockingham	26.2	22.3	8.0	12.8
Alabama:				
Jefferson	24.9	23.5	9.1	16.2

Some difference is apparent between the birth rates of Negroes in the four West Virginia counties and in those counties in Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama from which many Negroes come (Table 54). In some of these counties, however, the Negro birth rate was higher than that of the whites, while in the West Virginia counties it was lower without exception. The white birth rate in most of the West Virginia counties was considerably higher than that in the counties of the other states, however, which fact may be partially explained by the larger percentage of foreigners in the mining fields. The birthrate of Negroes was lower than that for whites throughout West Virginia and Alabama, while it was higher in North Carolina and

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Virginia. The average of the birth rates of Negroes in the West Virginia counties mentioned, however, was 3.7 points higher than the birth rate of Negroes in the complete registration area of the United States.

The reason for the comparatively lower birth rate of the Negro group is apparently not the absence of large families but the large proportion of couples having no children at all. Of the 495 married Negro miners 22.2 per cent were childless. The figures are shown in Table 56.

TABLE 56. NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN IN FAMILIES OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA BY NATIVE STATE OF MINER: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Number of children born	Number of fathers from each state of birth							Percentage Total distribution
	W. Va.	Va.	N. C.	Ala.	Other states		Total	
					Southern	Northern		
None	12	52	10	14	17	4	110	22.2
One	11	37	7	10	17	1	83	16.8
Two	9	21	10	8	8	2	58	11.7
Three	12	25	10	5	7	1	60	12.1
Four		36	8	7	4		55	11.1
Five	1	13	7	4	7		32	6.5
Six	2	12	3	1	6		24	4.8
Seven	1	16	2	3	1		23	4.6
Eight	1	11	1		5		18	3.6
Nine		8	4				12	2.4
Ten		3	2				5	1.0
Eleven		4					4	.8
Twelve		4		1			5	1.0
Thirteen								
Fourteen		1					1	.2
Fifteen								
Sixteen		3				1	4	.8
Seventeen		1					1	.2
Total	49	247	64	54	72	9	495	100.0

This proportion of childless families is apparently much greater than for either native whites or foreign-born.

According to the study of the Federal Women's Bureau before referred to, the proportions of native white, foreign-born, and Negro families in the mining fields of the United States having no children were respectively 12.0, 7.4, and 33.3 per cent.¹⁸ Three explanations have usually been given to the high proportion of childless marriages in migrated Negro families. The first is that migration itself is a factor in reducing the birth rate and that sterility results from passing from an agricultural to an industrial economy with consequent rise in standard of living.¹⁹ Another reason frequently given is that sterility comes from the prevalence of venereal disease among the Negro groups.²⁰ Others see the answer to the question in terms of the increasing practice of contraceptive methods and abortion.²¹ There is probably some validity to all of these reasons in specific situations. The writer, however, since no great decrease is apparent in the birth rates of Negroes in the mining fields below the rates in the states from which they

18 U. S. Dept. of Labor Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, No. 45, op. cit., p. 43.

19 Thompson and Whelpton, op. cit., p. 43; Woofter, T. J., Status of Racial and Ethnic Groups, in Recent Social Trends, Vol. 1, pp. 531-532.

20 Dublin, W. I., Health of the Negro, Annals, Vol. CXXX, Nov. 1928, pp. 79-80; Johnson, C. S., op. cit., pp. 164-169; Odum, op. cit., pp. 171-172; Reuter, E. B., op. cit., p. 181; Thompson and Whelpton, op. cit., p. 43; Woofter, op. cit., p. 584; Young, D., op. cit., pp. 333, 326.

21 Thompson and Whelpton, op. cit., p. 43.

came, is inclined after interviews with doctors in the mining field, to place the emphasis upon venereal disease and the practice of birth control and abortion.

Stillbirths and "misses"²² were frequently mentioned by Negro miners or their wives in telling of their "children not living."²³ Stillbirth rates as reported in the Birth Registration Area are shown in Table 57. No comparison of the West Virginia counties with those in other states on the basis of these figures, however, owing to the lack of uniformity in definition and methods of reporting²⁴ stillbirths in the different states, may be made.

22 Term used by the Negro miners and their wives to mean miscarriage.
 23 See miners' schedule, p. 2.
 24 The Bureau of the Census says in this connection, "The interpretation of the statistics relating to stillbirths must be made with extreme caution, because the completeness of registration is not known and the term 'stillbirth' is not used in the same sense in various states." (Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics, 1923, p. 22). See also Gagnon, E., What Is a Still-birth? Canadian Public Health Journal, Vol. XXII, Jan. 1931, pp. 16-27; Mark. M. L., Ten Years of Birth Statistics in Ohio, 1915-1924, Ohio Dept. of Health, 1924, pp. 57ff.

TABLE 57. INFANT MORTALITY AND STILLBIRTH RATES IN SELECTED COUNTIES OF WEST VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA, NORTH CAROLINA, AND ALABAMA BY RACE: 1929
(Compiled from Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics for Birth Registration Area of U. S., 1929)

State and county	Infant mortality		Stillbirths	
	Rate per 1,000 births		Rate per 100 live births	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
West Virginia:				
Fayette	84.0	92.5	3.8	6.8
Logan	79.1	69.6	3.2	7.6
McDowell	91.7	100.2	3.6	7.1
Raleigh	78.8	83.3	3.8	6.9
Virginia:				
Albemarle	69.2	53.1	4.6	7.7
Bedford	61.5	66.2	2.1	3.3
Franklin	40.1	67.6	3.4	12.2
Henry	84.5	108.9	3.2	3.6
Montgomery	58.5	162.2	2.2	2.7
Pittsylvania	43.8	54.3	2.6	4.9
Roanoke	67.9	140.6	2.4	4.7
North Carolina:				
Caswell	59.3	43.7	3.7	3.1
Rockingham	52.6	86.3	2.1	5.9
Alabama:				
Jefferson	63.3	114.1	3.1	7.8

Reuter estimated that from 10 to 15 per cent of all Negro babies were eliminated before the close of their first year of life.²⁵ More recently Woofter put the figure at 15 per cent.²⁶ The age of death of 275 children of the miners interviewed is shown in Table 58.

²⁵ Reuter, op. cit., p. 175.

²⁶ Woofter, op. cit., p. 584.

TABLE 58. AGE AT DEATH OF 275 CHILDREN OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Age at death	Number of children deceased
Less than 1 year	142
1 year	21
2 years	18
3 years	10
4 years	11
5 to 9 years	29
10 to 14 years	13
15 to 19 years	15
20 years and over	16
Total	275

One hundred and forty-two, or 9.1 per cent, of the 1565 children reported by the 495 married Negroes died in their first year of life, which fact indicates an infant mortality rate below the minimum estimate of Reuter and the higher figure of Woofter. Of these 142 children, 72 died before the age of one month. Two hundred and two, or 73.5 per cent of all children reported as not living, died before the age of 5 years, while 29 more, or 84.0 per cent, died before reaching the age of 10 years. The average number of births in each married Negro miner's family studied was 3.2, but because of the relatively high mortality rate, especially in the early years, the average number of living children in each family was 2.6.

III. HOUSING.-

The terms under which Negro miners live in company houses and the amount of rent paid have already been discussed. How satisfactory are these houses for living purposes? In order to answer this question some attention must be given to the types of houses in which Negro miners live, the conveniences furnished, and the extent to which overcrowding exists. The best source of information concerning these matters is probably the studies of the United States Coal Commission. Field agents found, by studies made in 1922-23, that West Virginia miners' homes were better lighted than those of any other state, 80.9 per cent of the 30,994 dwellings in 403 towns being lighted with either electricity or gas.²⁷ In 1932 only one town visited by the writer was without electricity. In this instance the mine was practically inoperative because of the dull summer and the electricity had been shut off as a money-saving measure. The wives of Negro miners usually have electric facilities for ironing, washing, and sweeping, as well as the operation of radios for those who desire to work with musical accompaniment.

Sanitary facilities are, however, far from satisfactory. In 28.3 per cent of the West Virginia communities studied by the Coal Commission no company or public water system was provided, the miners depending upon dug wells or

²⁷ Reports of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. III, p. 1473.

²⁸
 springs for their supply. Only 11.2 per cent of the homes surveyed by the Coal Commission had running water in the houses,²⁹ and while no separate figures were given in the Commission's report of the proportion of Negro and white houses included in this small percentage, the proportion of Negro dwellings with running water could not have been large and was probably slight. The writer found running water in Negro homes in a very few of the best mining communities, but ordinarily hydrants are located in more or less convenient distances from the houses from which all water used must be carried home by the miner, his wife, or their children, and must be heated on the kitchen stove for any purpose requiring hot water. This necessity greatly increases the amount of work which the wives of Negro miners must do.

The proportion of the dwellings of both white and Negro miners equipped with bathtubs or showers is negligible. The Coal Commission found only 2.5 per cent of the dwellings in the West Virginia towns it studied with either of these conveniences.³⁰ In 1932 the writer found one town with Negro houses containing baths. In this McDowell County town which had just been built, 250 of its 300 houses had bath rooms. Since coal mining is an extremely dirty job the presence of bath rooms might reasonably be considered one

28 In one community visited the wells became dry in the summer and water (of doubtful purity) had to be obtained from the river.

29 Reports of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. III, p. 1473.

30 Ibid.

of the necessities of an adequate standard of living.³¹

It is true that in some of the communities a bath house is provided where the Negro and white miners may change their dirty clothing and bathe before going to their homes. The facilities offered by bath houses, however, are in some places more apparent than real, for since most of the men come out of the mine at the same time, they are likely to be somewhat overcrowded and overheated.³² The writer found bath houses in a minority of the towns visited and where they were provided not all of the Negro miners used them. The miner as a rule bathes in the kitchen where the bath water is heated, and after the bath he pours the water out on the yard, for the kitchens usually lack drain pipes. Since most of the houses are small, his privacy during the bath is usually insufficient.³³

Inside flush toilets are almost as rare as bathtubs. Only 3.1 per cent of the West Virginia dwellings surveyed by the Coal Commission had them.³⁴ Only in the McDowell County town already mentioned did the writer find Negro homes equipped with flush toilets. In all but a few of the best company towns the outside privy, except in the homes of officials, is universal. In some towns these

31 Cf. U. S. Dept. of Labor, Children's Bureau, Publication No. 117, p. 12.

32 Rochester, *op. cit.*, p. 91; U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin, No. 45, pp. 17-18.

33 The effects of this lack of privacy upon boys and girls of adolescent age is stressed in U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin, No. 45, pp. 13-14.

34 Report of U. S. Coal Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 1473.

privies are well constructed over adequate pits which are periodically cleaned. In others they are of the dry, open-back, surface type to which flies, chickens, and hogs have easy access. Odors from these privies are sometimes offensive, especially in Negro sections where the companies clean them less often than in other parts of the towns. Negro miners frequently keep hogs and other domestic animals as they did on the farms from which many of them came, which adds to the variety of smells sometimes apparent. Owing to

The Negro miners and their hogs sometimes have adjoining bedrooms.

the limited space in the mining towns the Negroes frequently risk their health by continuing these rural ways of living. Pollution of springs and wells has often occurred from the filth of both privies and animals.

35

Most of the houses of Negro miners are built of wood. In quality they range from the loosely-built,

35 See McGill, N. P., op. cit., pp. 14-15.

A

B

C

TYPES OF NEGRO HOMES

- (A) Board and batten house, Fayette County, the poorest type.
 (B) Negro house (slightly better than A), McDowell County.
 (C) Negro house on "stilts," a frequent type, Fayette County.

B

C

- (A) Negro miners' homes near tipple, an undesirable location due to coal dust, Kanawha County.
- (B) Brick houses made from bricks obtained from coke ovens no longer used, McDowell County.
- (C) Negro homes, Raleigh County, in good location.

(A) Double houses in poor repair, McDowell County.
(B) Types of houses and locations, Wyoming County.
(C) Better type of large houses, Logan County.

A

B

C

- (A) Houses of better type, Fayette County.
(B) Large single family houses in good repair, Raleigh County.
(C) Houses in newly-built town with bath tubs and inside flush toilets, McDowell County.

unpainted, board and batten type with leaking roof affording scant protection from winter drafts to well-built houses upon good foundations which would make a creditable showing in an urban district. The Coal Commission found that 63.0 per cent of the 35,724 West Virginia dwellings were furnished on the outside with either weatherboard or clapboard while 29.4 per cent were of board and batten construction. On the inside, according to the Coal Commission, 63.4 per cent of the houses were finished in wood sheathing, 30.5 per cent were plastered, and the remaining 6.1 per cent were finished with composition board or other materials. The desirability of a house was further found to be influenced greatly by its location, its state of repair, and its

Good houses in a hilly location

age. A poor house in a good location is sometimes preferred to a good house in a less desirable location. A poor house

36 Percentages compiled from table in Report of U. S. Coal Commission, op. cit., p. 1471.

with a coat of new paint may appear superior to a better built house less recently painted but more weather resistant. New houses are usually not only of better construction but they lack the cumulation of dirt of many years and many families; hence in some places they rent for more than the old houses.³⁷

It is difficult to generalize about the quality of the structures in which Negro miners live. One such generalization, however, seems safe: where segregation is the policy of the company the Negroes are likely to be found in the less favorable locations and in the less desirable houses.

The houses in the mining fields, usually monotonously alike in color and design, vary in size from two to eight rooms in most towns. In these houses the Negro households, consisting, among the Negroes of the present study, of from 1 to 16 persons, live. Five hundred of the 600 Negro miners interviewed maintained separate households; the other 100 either lived with other miners, their own families, or at the "club house." A glance at Table 53 will reveal the fact that 352 or 50.4 per cent of the miners were living in four-room houses while 132 or 26.4 per cent more were living in houses of three rooms. One household of 13 persons was found to be living in 3 rooms while, on the other hand, 1 household of 2 persons had 8 rooms.

More than twenty years ago in his classic standard of living study Chapin considered any household overcrowded

³⁷ Cf. McGill, op. cit., p. 11.

TABLE 59. NUMBER OF PERSONS IN THE HOUSEHOLDS OF 500 NEGRO MINERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA BY NUMBER OF ROOMS OCCUPIED: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Persons per household	Number of dwellings with each specified number of rooms									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	14	
1	1	6	8	2						17
2		13	19	46	6	5		1		90
3		6	39	47	5	2		2		101
4		2	16	39	2	5		4		68
5		1	16	33	6		1	3		60
6		1	13	40	6	8		1		69
7			8	17	2	1	1	1	1	31
8			4	16	5	5				30
9			3	5	1		1			10
10			2	3		2		1		8
11			2	3			1	1		7
12			1	1	1	1		1		5
13			1			2				3
16						1				1
Total	1	29	132	252	34	32	4	15	1	500

where the number of rooms is less than one to every one and
a half persons.³⁸

More recently Meeker upon the basis of
careful studies said, "The standard health and decency

budget must provide at the very least as many rooms per

person as the average family were found to occupy.³⁹

A housing standard of one room per person, exclusive of bath,

has therefore been adopted as the minimum requirement con-

sistent with health and decency."⁴⁰ Edith Elmer Wood

38 Chapin, R. C., The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City, Russell Sage Foundation, 1909, p. 80.

39 Meeker, Royal, Minimum Quantity Budget Necessary to Maintain a Worker's Family of Five in Health and Decency, in Eliot, T. D. (ed.), American Standards of Living, Ginn, 1931, p. 515.

40 Dr. Meeker refers here to the studies of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1918-1919 in 20 cities in which the majority of workingmen of average income lived in houses which furnished approximately one room per person.

reiterates this point of view when she says, "The number of persons in the family divided by the number of rooms which the family occupy gives the coefficient of room density. Any density over one is found to exert an unfavorable influence on health, increasing with the density. Anything over two is grossly bad."⁴¹

M. L. Mark, in a study of Negro neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio, considers any household with a ratio greater than one person to a room⁴² overcrowded. The small size of the rooms usually found in the houses of mining towns and the conditions of life in the mining fields certainly allow no more lenient ratio in persons per room as a criterion for overcrowding. The number of Negro miners whose families are living under overcrowded conditions according to this standard is shown in Table 60.

41 Wood, E. E., Recent Trends in American Housing, Macmillan, 1931, p. 27; see also Causal Factors in Infant Mortality, U. S. Children's Bureau, Pub. 143, 1925, pp. 125-130 which shows the effects of these ratios upon children.

42 Mark, M. L., op. cit., p. 51.

TABLE 60. NUMBER OF OVERCROWDED HOUSEHOLDS, BY NUMBER OF ROOMS PER DWELLING
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Rooms per dwelling	Number of households averaging each number of persons per room					Total
	1 or less	More than 1, less than 2	2 and less than 3	3 and less than 4	4 or more	
1	1					1
2	19	6	3	1		29
3	66	32	25	7	2	132
4	134	90	27	1		252
5	19	14	1			34
6	20	8	4			32
7	2	2				4
8	12	3				15
14	1					1
Total						
Number	274	155	60	9	2	500
Per cent	54.8	31.0	12.0	1.8	.4	100.0

Two hundred and twenty-six, or 45.2 per cent of the Negro households are living in distinctly overcrowded conditions, that is to say in households where the number of persons exceeds the number of rooms. A total of 71 or 15.2 per cent are living in households in which the congestion is extreme, or where there are 2 persons or more per room.

Although a slight minority of Negro households are according to our standard overcrowded, a very considerable majority of the persons in these homes live under overcrowded conditions. The number of such persons is obtained by multiplying the number of households in Table 60 by the number of persons in each and classifying the products into overcrowded and uncrowded categories on the criterion of persons in excess of rooms. The results of this computation are shown in Table 61.

Wife of a Negro miner and her 9 children
living in three rooms

A Negro miner and his boys

TABLE 61. NUMBER OF PERSONS LIVING IN EACH SPECIFIED NUMBER OF ROOMS, AND PER CENT OF PERSONS OVERCROWDED

Size of dwelling	Total number of persons	Persons in overcrowded dwellings		Average number of persons per room
		Number	Per cent	
1 room	1			1.0
2 rooms	69	37	50.4	1.3
3 rooms	567	404	71.3	1.4
4 rooms	1,163	772	66.4	1.2
5 rooms	176	101	63.1	1.0
6 rooms	205	121	59.0	1.1
7 rooms	32	20	52.5	1.1
8 rooms	85	33	38.8	.7
14 rooms	7			
Total	2,305	1,488	64.6	1.2

While only 45.2 per cent of the Negro households were overcrowded, 1,488 or 64.6 per cent of the 2,305 people lived in overcrowded homes. The reason for much of the congestion in the dwellings of 3 and 4 rooms is that Negroes with large households are common whereas houses of more than four rooms are in many mining towns very limited and the Negro miner as well as the white must take often not what he wants but what is available.

A number of the operators who were interviewed stated that the Negroes were very hard on company houses and did not keep them in good condition. A very real reason for this situation is that the location and type of dwelling which the Negro miners must often accept are more likely to discourage them and their wives than stimulate them to "fix up." A large company in Fayette County, the towns of which are probably as consistently attractive as any seen by the writer, attempts to encourage miners of

both races to beautify their homes by an annual yard and garden contest. Prizes of \$15.00, \$10.00, and \$5.00 are offered for the first, second, and third best gardens in each of the 13 mining towns of the company and prizes of \$10.00 and \$5.00 were offered for the two best kept yards in each town. The 1932 contest was still in progress when the writer visited the towns of the company. In the 1931 contest, in which 985 white and 431 Negro households competed, the Negroes made a relatively poor⁴³ showing. The scores made by the two groups were as follows:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Negroes</u>		<u>Whites</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
0	37	8.3	32	3.2
10-24	97	22.5	124	12.6
25-49	218	50.1	344	34.9
50-74	85	19.7	337	34.2
75-89	5	1.2	106	10.8
90	1	.2	43	4.3
Total	431	100.0	985	100.0

^a On the basis of a possible 100.

The writer interviewed one of the judges of this contest, a Presbyterian minister in one of the independent towns in Fayette County, to ascertain the reason for the lower grades of the Negroes. His reply was that the Negroes did not have an even chance with the whites because of the fact that the grading was upon the appearance of the yard and gardens and not upon effort expended. The manager of mines who was also interviewed by the writer said that he was aware of the

⁴³ Data secured from Report of Judges of Yard and Garden Contest 1931 through courtesy of this company which allowed free use of company files.

disadvantages of the Negroes in the contest but was averse to offering prizes to whites and Negroes separately because of the psychological effect upon the Negroes. He feels that to allow the Negroes to compete only with Negroes would make for lower standards.⁴⁴ The following communications from the judges to two Negro miners will indicate the disadvantages of location:⁴⁵

It is very hard to make a yard here where you live. We are glad to see you have white-washed the outcropping rocks, put out roses and other flowers and have your premises pretty clean. We want to commend you very highly for your interest, and hope next year you can do even better. Yard-45% Garden-15%

It is a great pity when the heavy rains spoiled what work people have done in their yards. We see you have made some effort. You have some vines on your porch and a few flowers in your yard, and we want to commend you for trying this year and hope that success will be yours next time. Yard-30% Garden-20%

The interest of this company, however, is more than over-balanced by the many that apparently have little interest in encouraging their employees to better the physical surroundings of their homes. As a rule it is due both to company indifference and to apathy of the tenants that the physical condition of the homes of many Negro miners leaves much to be desired.

44 The policy of the manager is hardly consistently followed by the company, however, as each town has separate first-aid teams, which do not compete.
45 From Report of Judges, 1931 Yard and Garden Contest, p. 9.

IV. THE NEGRO FAMILY AND MAJORITY STANDARDS.-

Students of the American Negroes are pretty well agreed that, considered as a group, they have assimilated white family and sex mores much more slowly than most other traits of the majority culture pattern. Not only have white writers such as Odum, Reuter, and Young⁴⁶ called attention to this fact but Negro students such as Du Bois and Frazier⁴⁷ have added their assent. The reasons given for this condition by many different authors, however, have been at variance. Some of them, with Odum, have stressed the fact that "The tendencies of the present-day Negro, his restlessness, his vagrancy and loafing, his love of excitement and sensuality, his bumptiousness, the child and savage elements in his nature, still reflect forcibly the prevalent traits of the Negro in Africa."⁴⁸ Other writers have denied any connection between African ways and the sex standards of the American Negroes and have stressed the influence of slavery,⁴⁹ the disorganizing effects of emancipation,⁵⁰ the absence of family traditions⁵¹ and other factors of Negro social history in accounting for the lag in Negro sex mores. The present writer is inclined to favor the cultural explana-

46 Odum, op. cit., Ch. IV; Reuter, op. cit., pp. 220-221; Young, D., op. cit., p. 344.

47 Du Bois, W. E. B., The Negro American Family, Atlanta University Studies, 1908, p. 37; Frazier, E. F., The Negro Family in Chicago, pp. 7-8.

48 Odum, op. cit., p. 186.

49 See Reuter, op. cit., pp. 200-204; Frazier, op. cit., pp. 28-29; Young, D., op. cit., p. 347.

50 Reuter, op. cit., pp. 204-206; Frazier, op. cit., Ch. III.

51 Frazier, op. cit., pp. 223-244.

tions of the latter in describing the extent of the Negro group's assimilation of white family and sex standards in the mining fields.

The heritage of the Negro family in the mining fields has been for the most part promiscuity and sex license. The Negro family system under slavery, in spite of a fair amount of stability on most plantations,⁵² was designed to keep the slaves reasonably contented and to provide the owner with more slaves.⁵³ The Negroes, in this process, became individualistic and have tended so to remain.⁵³ When these Negroes answered the call for laborers in the West Virginia fields, they were subject no more even to the feeble controls of the individualistic primary groups in their home communities, and in the absence of new controls they tended to throw off all restraints.⁵⁴ A Negro churchman, commenting on the background of the present-day Negroes in the mining fields, said: "In the early days men drifted in just for the sake of making a few dollars. They did not often come with the idea of permanent residence. Many took up with women and maintained them as their common-law wives. This sort of thing did not make for permanent homes but the opposite. A problem was created that the church has had to deal with ever since." A Negro teacher in an historical article concerning the Negroes of McDowell County says of

52 Frazier, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

53 Young, D., op. cit., p. 373.

54 Cf. Park and Miller, op. cit., p. 61.

56

the early days:

It is not necessary to designate any place as being overwhelmingly bad or lacking in morals. There seems to have been several places with their "red lights." And common law wives were in evidence almost everywhere.

The demoralization present in these early days was aggravated by the fact that the railroad and coal companies actually encouraged immorality either by a policy of indifference to lax conditions or, it is alleged, by bringing in women as a means of keeping a supply of labor. In this connection the Director of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics says:

56

Wages were high for those days, money was plentiful, the country was almost inaccessible, railroad contractors wanted men to work and did not care a fig about the kind or character of men. To hold the men as long as possible, in many cases they brought in gangs of lewd women and settled them in the camps. The same conditions existed in the camps of many new coal developments and the enforcement of law was extremely lax because the contractors and operators did not want the men to run away.

Family and sex mores, like all others, come down to us from the past. As Sumner says, "Each individual is born into them as he is born into the atmosphere, and he does not reflect on them, or criticise them any more than a baby analyzes the atmosphere before he begins to breath it."

57

55 Garrison, Mrs. M. T., in Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

56 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 13.

57 Sumner, Folkways, p. 76.

We are formed by the mores before we are capable of reasoning about them or evaluating them in the light of other standards. It is not surprising that, with such a background of laxity in sex mores, many Negroes in the mining fields throughout the years have taken some of the mores of the whites as Herskovits says, "with a grain of salt,"⁵⁸

The fact that they have violated these standards with little compunction has led a recent writer to refer to the "blithe amorality of the negro miners."⁵⁹

For a number of the Negro miners marriage has not been a prerequisite to more or less permanent cohabitation. Unmarried persons live together with little protest from either the Negro mining group or from their employers.

Among the Negroes the feeling of outrage by the presence of such conditions is keenly felt only by the upper classes and they react as a rule by drawing class lines more tightly, for many of them look upon any ameliorative device as hopeless.⁶⁰

Some of the permanent unions result from the miners' taking up with "common law wives." Many of these miners, "caught" with children on their hands, remained in the mining fields and made the best of the situation, with the consequent results of the growth of family tensions and disgruntled attitudes which probably have something to do with children leaving home at an early age.⁶¹ Some of these

58 Herskovits, op. cit., p. 54.

59 Ross, Malcolm, Machine Age in the Hills, Macmillan, 1933, p. 78.

60 Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 382.

61 Cf. Odum, op. cit., p. 162.

unmarried couples have lived together for years and are apparently contented and happy. The writer remembers distinctly certain of these households. The women, as a rule, are good housekeepers and are apparently conducting themselves much the same as they would have done had their union been accompanied by a legal marriage. Sometimes these "common law wives" are older than their "husbands." The writer remembers mistaking one of them for the miner's mother only to be later told by company officials that she was his "woman." These miners and their "wives" apparently suffer little social stigma because of their unmarried status. They visit and are visited by most of the Negro group much the same as if they were married. These women are not shamefaced, as if from a conviction of wrong doing. Said one to the writer in answer to a question about the Negro miner in the household: "I'm not really his wife, they just call me his wife because I live with him." The lack of any appearance of compunction or apology in this answer indicates clearly the presence of more than one set of mores within the mining group. The Negro miners who live with women to whom they are not married are more frequently than not from the southern states, a fact which must be taken into consideration in understanding an important basis of social differentiation to be discussed later.

Within the last 20 years a marked decrease in the number of unmarried couples living together as man and wife

has occurred. Young has pointed out that an important reason for the insistence on formal marriage is the necessity for the legal determination of property rights.⁶³ The property of most Negroes has been as a rule inconsequential. The passage of the Workmen's Compensation Law in 1913,⁶⁴ however, provided the property incentive which led to this decrease in the number of "common-law" husbands and wives, for if a widow is to receive any compensation for the death of her husband she must, according to the law, produce a marriage certificate.⁶⁵ Recognizing this new property interest many of these "common-law" couples have married. Said a McDowell County superintendent: "Even some of my old-timers here who had big families went down to Welch after the law was passed, got their licenses, and were married."

E. Franklin Frazier, who has conducted extensive researches on the Negro family in the United States, gives home ownership as one of the possible indexes to the stability of the Negro family.⁶⁶ Very few Negroes in the mining fields, as we have already seen, may own the homes in which they live even though they may desire to do so. The conclusion that this condition is partly responsible for family instability seems inescapable. The Director of

⁶³ Young, D., op. cit., p. 368.

⁶⁴ State of W. Va., Annual Report of the State Compensation Commissioner, 1923, p. 5.

⁶⁵ For explanation of many details of the administration of the Workmen's Compensation Law the writer is indebted to Mr. Hoyt H. Thornton of the W. Va. State Compensation Department.

⁶⁶ Frazier, E. F., The Negro Family, Annals, Vol. CXXX, Nov. 1928, p. 43.

the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics probably had some such idea in mind when he said:⁶⁷ "The greatest handicap to Negroes in the coal fields is their inability to purchase homes near their work (except in a few places)."

Frazier found that one of the great differences between Negroes in the areas of Chicago in which family disorganization was most apparent and those in which a more stable family life was characteristic was the matter of family tradition.⁶⁸ The importance of member roles in families in the process of shaping personality of children and in determining the type of adult roles they are likely to play when they assume the responsibilities of family life has been demonstrated.⁶⁹ The air of temporariness, casualness, and uncertainty, apparent in the attitude of many Negro miners toward their mining town homes is not likely to provide a basis of stability for family life.

Desertion and non-support, two other common indexes to family stability, are extremely difficult to measure because women who have been deserted or unsupported must leave the mining fields to find work, and hence are not encountered by the investigator. The "widows"⁷⁰ usually present in numbers in the Negro community are conspicuously absent in the mining towns.

67 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1924-25, p. 8.

68 Frazier, E. F., The Negro Family in Chicago, pp. 223-224.

69 See Burgess, op. cit.; also Lumpkin, Katharine D., The Family: A Study of Member Roles, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1933, *passim*.

70 See Reuter, op. cit., pp. 206-207.

Juvenile delinquency in the mining counties as measured by commitments to the state industrial schools for colored boys and girls, is not large. The trend follows that of adult delinquency; the cities contribute a larger proportion than the mining counties. For instance, of the 98 boys in the West Virginia Industrial School For Colored Boys, only 30 have parents who are miners,⁷¹ and of these, according to the superintendent of this school, nine-tenths are from broken homes. Fewer girls are committed for delinquency than boys; the West Virginia State Industrial Home For Colored Girls had only 42 in 1929-30.⁷² No figures on the number of girls whose fathers were miners were available for this institution. The 42 girls were from 12 different counties. Kanawha County, with a large urban population, and Raleigh County, with a large mining population, had the largest number, with 9 each. McDowell County, although it has the largest Negro population of any county in the state and this Negro population is almost exclusively made up of miners,⁷³ had only three girls in the institution.

In writing somewhat categorically of the Negro family in the mining fields the writer has not meant to infer, of course, that all Negroes have standards of their own or are backward in assimilating white mores. Negro families in the upper stratum in the mining fields conform

71 Correspondence with Mr. S. S. Gordon, Supt. of W. Va. Industrial School For Colored Boys, Lakin, W. Va.

72 W. Va. State Industrial Home For Colored Girls, Annual Report, 1929-30, p. 1.

73 Ibid.

to majority standards as well as the members of the white families of corresponding class.⁷⁴ These Negroes admit

frankly the differing standards of many of the other Negroes and are doing what they can to bring them into line.⁷⁵

Certain of the ministers are deeply conscious of the disparity between their own standards and those of many of their race-brothers. A district superintendent of the Methodist Church said, in his annual report to his conference:⁷⁶

The need of the manifold ministry of our church is obvious in that section of our District which embraces Mercer, McDowell, Mingo, Logan, Raleigh and Wyoming counties of the State of West Virginia. In these counties the Negro population numbers about fifty-four thousand, whose moral, social and spiritual future depends very largely upon effective ministry of the church. The most outstanding need in these communities, second only to their soul's salvation, is a better and more christian home life.

Race-conscious leaders, preachers, teachers, and other interested persons are working to hasten the process of assimilation through which the masses adopt "higher" standards. They have not been without some measure of success, especially with the younger generation. We may agree with a Negro teacher when she says:⁷⁷ "That the

74 Cf. Reuter, op. cit., p. 231.

75 Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 383.

76 Rev. Mr. T. J. Howard, District Supt. of Bluefield District, East Tennessee Conference of the M. E. Church, Official Journal of the 53rd Annual Session, Sept. 8, 1933, p. 29.

77 Garrison, Mrs. M. T., Welch Daily News, Sept. 31, 1936, p. 2, Historical section.

Negroes of McDowell County, in the past thirty years have made moral progress is not to be denied. Still there is much land to be possessed." What she says is applicable to conditions in other counties. The Negro family has moved and will continue to move slowly in the direction of majority standards, for, as the teacher adds, "it will take more than 60 years to overcome 250 years of wrong instruction and practice."

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CHAPTER V

THE FUNCTION PERFORMED BY THE NEGRO MINER

I. DESCRIPTION OF OCCUPATIONS.-

Generally speaking, the occupations of the mining operation may be divided into four different categories,¹ the executive, supervisory, inside and outside labor. At the top are the administrative or executive positions. These are likely to be superintendent, assistant superintendent, and manager. Of these the manager's position is the highest and frequently his jurisdiction extends over more than one mine. He is usually a heavy stockholder in the mines which he manages, also. The manager may or may not live at any one of the mines. There are some managers who do not visit the operations more than once a month. The official more directly in charge of the mining operation is the superintendent. He stays at the mining town and is on hand from 6:30, when the giant siren sounds the call to work, until operations are suspended late in the afternoon. He is the one directly in charge of both the inside and outside working conditions in the mining towns. He thus makes at least one trip through the mines a day. In large operations, there is sometimes the office of assistant superintendent. The assistant superintendent as a rule

¹ See McGill, Nettie P., The Welfare of Children in Bituminous Coal Mining Communities in West Virginia, Children's Bureau, Publication, No. 117, U. S. Dept. of Labor, 1923, p. 4, for a somewhat different classification.

concentrates his activities either on the inside or outside of the mines, depending upon the policy of the particular company. These men constitute the top stratum of prestige and privilege in the mining fields.

The next group below the executive positions are the foremen and bosses of various kinds who have some supervision over other men, but who have a definite "employee" attitude toward those above them. To this group the higher-ups constitute "the company," and their attitude is immediately of the type which makes them a sort of intermediate group, with many of the complexes that go to make up the labor mind, and yet not quite one of them. They are quite likely to refer to "the company" as something quite apart from them and yet not say "we" in regard to the men over whom they have supervision.

These foremen and bosses are of a good many varieties, depending upon the particular mine. The mine foreman is perhaps the one with most authority below the assistant superintendent or the superintendent. He has direct charge of a group of miners as they work "on the inside" in the mining of coal. He reports directly to the superintendent or higher officials. According to the United States Department of Mines his qualifications should include physical strength, good health, more than average ability, and ability in handling men. He should know mine gases,

mining methods, mine ventilation, and the use of explosives. He sometimes has directly under him an assistant mine boss, shift boss, or pit boss depending upon the nomenclature of the locality. This assistant mine boss or foreman has charge of a specific part of the mine. For instance, he may have charge of men working in a certain number of "rooms" in the mine. A "room" is a section of the mine cut off from the main "entry" or tunnel into the mountain in which the actual mining of coal is carried on. These rooms vary in size depending upon the condition of the "roof" of the mines. It may be anywhere from ten to fifty feet wide and two hundred and fifty to four hundred feet long.³ If the "roof" is "bad" the room must either be made narrower than otherwise would be the case or a great deal of "timbering," propping of the roof with heavy pieces of wood, must be done. The miners work in these rooms and this room supervision often falls to a section boss, or some other subordinate of the mine boss.

Other bosses have supervision and authority over perhaps fewer men than does the mine foreman. The driver boss is found in the mines which still use mules or horses principally for haulage of the coal from the "rooms" to the main line or side track built up to the entrance of the room. The driver boss has charge of the men who are driving

2 U. S. Bureau of Mines and U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Description of Occupations, Mines and Mining, 1918, p. 20.

3 Shurlock, A. T., The Coal Industry, Little, Brown, 1924, pp. 70-72.

4

mules or horses (or ponies). In small mines he may also have charge of the stables, but in the larger mines this position is held by a stable boss. The tippie boss is in charge of all men working at the tippie. The tippie is a type of coal elevator in which the coal is sorted into various sizes by means of screens and loaded into railroad cars. The tippie boss supervises the weighing (where they do not have a weigh-boss), dumping, screening and loading of the coal. The tippie is often one of the most expensive parts of mining equipment, some of them costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Another boss, in some operations, is the foreman of the slate dump. Some mines have much slate to be cleaned away and it is usually dumped over a hillside, often with a most unsightly result. The foreman has charge of the men engaged in dumping the slate. A dispatcher of trips holds also a position of some authority over the motormen.

Perhaps special attention should be given to the so-called fire boss. This position, while it is less of a "boss" position so far as handling men is concerned, is one of the most important in the mine. It is the duty of the fire boss to examine with a safety lamp the underground workings to see if gas is present. Some of the mines in West Virginia give out millions of feet of gas a year. This fact makes mining more hazardous in these mines. The fire boss also must see that the ventilation system is

properly functioning. In addition, he must examine the timbering, look for dangerous roofs, and do anything else which would make for greater safety in the mines.⁵ His work, as a rule, is done before the miners enter the mine. He must have passed an examination before a mining board before he can hold this position.

Under these bosses are the mining operatives of various kinds. We may divide these roughly into two categories, the inside workers and the outside workers. Those who work "on the inside" are those who work underground. The outside workers are those who do work in handling the coal after it comes to the outside, or any other position necessary to the maintenance of the operation. We may proceed to the inside positions first.

One of the positions requiring a degree of skill is that of machine man, or coal cutter. The function of these workers is to "undercut" the coal so that it may be blasted down easily and loaded into the cars. This undercutting is done by electric machines which require two men to the machine. Several inches of the coal at the bottom of the seam is hollowed out for a depth of several feet. The purpose of the cutting is to cause the coal to fall down when it is drilled near the top of the seam and blasted with an explosive. The machine men have a very dirty job, as the cutting machine throws out a fine dust which is called "buck dust." Although a strenuous job the

Illustration 2. Machine Men at Work, Raleigh County

position of machine man is one of the most lucrative. The machine men work at night while the other operatives are out of the mine. Their job is to undercut enough coal to keep the loaders busy the following day.⁶

The blasting and loading of the coal is the function of the most numerous operatives in the mining fields, the coal loaders. When the loader comes in his room in the morning he finds his "place" has been undercut by the machine men. His first operation is to take a very long shovel (see illustration) and take out the "buck dust" from under the seam. He then drills a hole near the top of the seam with a long drill. He then puts in a very slow powder, called "permissible explosive,"⁷ to avoid breaking the coal

⁶ See Rochester, Op. Cit., pp. 108-109, for a more extended description of this process.

⁷ Shurlock, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

Illustration 3. A Negro Coal Loader and His Tools,
Raleigh County.

any more than necessary. The coal being undercut, drops down in lumps at the firing of the powder. The loader then shovels his coal into the mine cars. In the non-union fields of West Virginia the loader is also expected to do any propping of the roof necessary to his own safety. In some places he also pushes his car to the entrance of his room, where the gathering motor will pick up his "loads" and take them to the main line.

The small cars in which the coal is loaded are hauled in most mines in West Virginia by means of electric motors. These have practically eliminated the use of animals for this purpose, although in the early days mules were used. There are two jobs in connection with the motor, motorman and brakeman. The motorman, as the term suggests, handles the controls of the motor. The brakeman, like the brakeman on the railroad, has to do a great deal of coupling the cars and seeing that the "trip" is in running order. This occupation is one of the most hazardous in the mines. The largest number of deaths in the mines is not due to explosions, in spite of the newspaper copy they provide, but to fall of roof or coal. The fatality rate from this cause is from 2.30 to 2.83 per thousand employed underground.⁸ Haulage accidents are the next important cause of mine fatalities, amounting to about 17.0 per cent of the total.⁹ These trips on which the motorman and brakeman must ride must travel at high rates of speed, and, as

⁸ Ibid., p. 90.

⁹ Ibid.

Shurlock says, "...it can be accepted as axiomatic that a certain number of violent wrecks are an inevitable accompaniment of the year's run at any mine."¹⁰ Consequently we find many fatalities among the motormen and especially among the brakemen.

One of the causes of these wrecks is the condition of the track in the mines. It is very difficult, especially in mines where drainage is inadequate, to maintain these tracks in good order. It is not easy to detect danger spots in the darkened conditions within the mine. As the coal is

Illustration 4. A "trip" on its way to the tippie going at high speed, Wyoming County.

"robbed" it is necessary to go farther into the mine. This fact means the continual building of track. The operative who does this is known as a track man. This position also calls for a degree of skill and knowledge not required of the ordinary coal loader.

Those already mentioned are the occupations in which the largest number of Negroes are engaged. However, there are certain others of which brief mention should be made. It is still the practice to use horses and mules (ponies to a limited extent) for haulage purposes. For instance, some mines prefer to use animals to haul the cars from the rooms to the main line track instead of "gathering motors." Consequently there are a number of drivers required. The trapper opens and shuts gates in certain places in the mines for the motor to come through. This position is usually occupied by boys just starting in the mines and by old miners who have grown too feeble for the more strenuous jobs. The timber man cuts and sets timbers in and about the mine shaft, tunnel, slope, drift or other places where there is danger of a falling roof.¹¹ The brattice man is a combination carpenter and ventilation worker. He usually works under the direction of the fire boss, constructing brattices of wood, canvas, stone, brick, or cement for conducting the air current through the proper channels to the working "face." A brattice is usually of

¹¹ See U. S. Dept. of Labor, op. cit., pp. 34-35 for a fuller description.

wood and is a sort of partition in the mine tunnel with a sliding window through which the air passes or, when not needed, may be closed. The fire boss himself frequently acts as brattice man. The brattice man is also known locally as a "braddisher" in some places.

There is one other occupation of the underground worker which is a sort of quasi-labor job. This is the job of "boss miner" or contractor. He takes a contract from the mining company to produce coal at a certain price per ton. He may employ other miners and assistants to do the actual mining work. Sometimes a man and his sons will take a contract. In this case the men are considered partners and share alike in the proceeds of the transaction.

Illustration 5. A driver and his mules,
Fayette County

Many of the workers of the coal industry do not go in the mines at all. Outside labor is needed in large

numbers for the loading of the coal into the railroad cars and in maintaining the equipment. The most numerous of these workers on the outside are known as tipple men. The operations which a tipple man may do are many. He may push cars, dump cars, pick slate and objectionable coal from the railroad cars as they are loaded, or do other tasks incident to the loading of the coal. Other work is almost self-explanatory from the familiar titles of blacksmith, car

Illustration 6. Negro "bone picker," a tipple man's position, Kanawha County.

repairman, stone mason, power-house worker, machinist, engineer, truck driver, or "outside labor." These latter positions are commonly known as "company jobs" and are paid

monthly, weekly, or daily wages rather than on a tonnage basis.

Illustration 7. A tipple, Raleigh County.

Illustration 8. A mechanical car-dumper, Raleigh County.

II. THE NEGRO IN THE MINING OCCUPATIONS.-

At the present time apparently no Negroes are to be found employed in administrative or executive positions in the mining industry of West Virginia. Careful check was made at every operation not only to determine from both whites and Negroes the presence of a Negro in such a position at that mine but if anyone of either group knew of a Negro in such a position at any place in West Virginia. Not only is this true today, but it was largely true in the past. Evidence of one exception was found, however, in the first report of the Inspector of Mines. In 1883, "About three miles above Charleston and on the north side of the Kanawha River, is now being operated by William Morris (colored) the Black Hawk Mine. There are only four or five miners employed."¹³ Evidently the life of this mine was an ephemeral one, for no record of its existence was to be found in the report for 1884.

The highest office attained by a Negro in connection with the mining industry at the present time is that of a former mine foreman in Raleigh County. He holds the office of safety director with the West Virginia State Department of Mines. The present holder of the office is the second Negro ever to hold it. The first to hold the office was a graduate of West Virginia State College and a former fire-boss in McDowell County. The present safety

¹³ State of W. Va., Annual Report of the Inspector of Mines, 1883, p. 16.

director is not a college man, but a practical miner who was able to work himself up to the position of mine foreman by hard study and passing the state examinations for efficiency in certain branches. His particular role in the department of mines is the instruction of Negro miners in safety rules and first-aid measures. It is the belief of the Chief Mine Inspector that white men cannot teach Negroes

TABLE 27. OCCUPATIONS OF 2,411 NEGROES IN THE MINING INDUSTRY OF WEST VIRGINIA; 1932
(Compiled from employers' schedules)

Position	Number	Per cent
Bosses:	11	.5
Assistant Mine Foreman	2	.1
Stable boss	5	.2
Foreman, slate dump	1	(a)
Boss driver	1	(a)
Job boss, Negro rock gang	1	(a)
Dispatcher	1	(a)
Inside Labor:	2,322	96.3
Coal loaders	1,825	75.7
Machine man	56	2.3
Trackman	132	5.5
Motorman	117	4.9
Brakeman	164	6.8
Driver	15	.6
Contractor	8	.3
Trapper	3	.1
Brattice man	1	(a)
Timber man	1	(a)
Outside Labor:	78	3.2
Tipple man	38	1.6
Outside labor	8	.3
Machinist	8	.3
Blacksmith	2	.1
Engineer	2	.1
Car repairman	1	(a)
Power house work	17	.7
Stone mason	1	(a)
Truck driver	1	(a)
Totals	2,411	100.0

(a) Less than .1 per cent.

14

as well as one of their own group. When the writer interviewed this safety director he was teaching at one of the state colleges during the summer session. The theory of his doing so was that he should teach safety education to the teachers in the summer session, they would impart the information to the children, and the miners would get it from the children.¹⁵

So far as is known, he is the only Negro safety director in the world.

There are a few Negro bosses of one kind or another among the more than 9,000 Negroes concerning whom data were obtained. The number, however, is almost negligible. The writer was able to find only eleven cases of Negroes in positions which, even by the most liberal stretch of the term, could be called positions of authority (see Table 27). Interviews with their employers indicated that they were in authority over men of their own group almost exclusively. The one exception was the dispatcher in Logan County who had authority over white motormen. The highest position of those listed in Table 27 is perhaps that of assistant mine foreman, one of whom was over a Negro section of a mine in Fayette County and the other in Logan County. It will be seen that stable boss is the most frequently held position of authority occupied by Negroes. Whether or not some of the other positions listed should

14 Interview with Robert M. Lambie, Chief of the Department of Mines, State of W. Va.

15 Interview with Mr. John Patterson, Safety Director, Dept. of Mines, at Bluefield State Teachers College, Bluefield, W. Va.

16
TABLE 28. OCCUPATIONS OF 6,483 NEGROES IN THE
MINING INDUSTRY OF WEST VIRGINIA: 1922

Position	Number	Per cent
Miners (loaders)	2,876	44.36
Outside and inside company men	3,376	52.07
Motormen	182	2.82
Skilled mechanics	36	.56
Foremen and other bosses	7	.10
Officers and welfare workers	6	.09
Totals	6,483	100.00

be considered as positions of authority is open to question. However, it is significant that these were mentioned by employers when asked what positions of authority a Negro held in his mine. For that reason the writer prefers to list them as such. The Negro seems to have the best chance

17
TABLE 29. OCCUPATIONS OF 7,621 NEGROES IN THE
MINING INDUSTRY OF WEST VIRGINIA: 1927

Position	Number	Per cent
Day laborers	2,233	29.30
Coal loaders	4,674	61.33
Drivers	125	1.64
Brakemen	34	.45
Trappers	10	.13
Motormen	321	4.21
Machine operators	215	2.82
Carpenters	8	.11
Fire boss	1	.01
Totals	7,621	100.00

- 16 Compiled from Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report for 1921-22, p. 58.
17 Compiled from Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report for 1927-28, p. 16.

of promotion to boss positions where he is employed in the largest proportion. Since the field work was done in those counties having the largest Negro mining population our figures should show a somewhat larger proportion of Negroes in positions of authority than for the state as a whole.

There is some evidence that in some fields there have always been Negroes in positions of authority. However, it would seem that these positions were more sporadic than usual. A Negro writer, commenting on the Negro's part in the development of McDowell County names a few Negro foremen. She says:

Several of the leading operations, during these first years, employed Negro foremen. Among them the Crozer Company who employed John Henry Taylor in 1888 and he remained there for more than 12 years. The Houston Company at Elkhorn whose first yard boss was E. Howard Harper who served from 1888 to 1897. Hon. C. C. Free, now Justice of the Peace of Adkin district, and James Moorman, yet living at Houston, have also served in the same capacity. With the Lynchburg Company at Kyle was James Dickerson. As foremen, these men were honest, capable, efficient and served well. However, in late years many or all of these places were filled by native white men or foreigners.

It should be pointed out here that Mrs. Garrison, due to space limitations, perhaps, names only foremen. That there were other Negroes occupying lesser positions in the period she discusses, there is ample evidence.

Of the fifty-seven employers of more than 9,000 Negroes, only ten had Negroes in positions which they

18 Garrison, Mrs. M. T., Welch (W. Va.) Daily News, Sept. 21, 1936, Historical section, p. 1.

considered positions of authority. Eight more had no Negroes in positions of authority at the present time but had employed one each in such a position in the past. Those enumerated by these employers were two mine foremen, one assistant mine foreman, two slate foremen, one fire boss, one shift boss over colored men, and one driving boss. The other thirty-nine employers replied that they had no Negroes in authority at the time of the interview nor in the past. These figures seem to be supported by surveys conducted by the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics in 1922 and 1927. (see Tables 28 and 29). Out of 6,483 Negroes employed in 1922 only seven foremen and other bosses were listed. The greater number shown by the present study is probably due to the fact that the sample here is more than 9,000. In 1927, only one fire boss was listed out of 7,621 employed.

In this connection, little basis was found, therefore, for the optimistic statement of Greene and Woodson that "In West Virginia, where the largest number of Negro coal miners toil, a survey of Negro workers in 1925 reported Negroes as holding positions which require skill and training. Negro foremen, bosses and inspectors, were becoming common, and few occupations were closed to the race. Negroes were also filling all positions from tripper to manager and as such were considered an important asset to the coal industry."¹⁹ These authors give as their authority for the statement above a summary of the 1923-24 Report of the

¹⁹ The Negro Wage Earner, pp. 263-264.

Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics which was found in the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' Monthly Labor Review,²⁰ and the report above. The statement in the summary was as follows: "Negro foremen, bosses, and inspectors are becoming more common, and few occupations are closed to the race."²¹ By the omission of the one word, "more," Greene and Woodson give a meaning not contained in the summary which they cite. To say that Negro bosses are becoming "more common" is a mere relative statement, not necessarily connoting large numbers. To say, however, merely that Negro foremen "were becoming common" is certainly to indicate that such positions were held by Negroes more frequently than seems to be in consonance with the facts. The passage of the Bureau report which is cited as the further basis for their statement was as follows: "The thousands of Negro miners and laborers, hundreds of skilled workmen and scores filling positions of responsibility in the coal industry are daily demonstrating their fitness for any position in the coal industry from trapper to manager, and the operators are realizing more and more that the negro is a valuable asset in the production of coal."²² While it can readily be seen how the authors mentioned may have understood this statement to mean that Negroes were actually filling these positions, it is probable that it was merely an expression of opinion concerning potential abilities by

20 Vol. 31, August 1925.

21 Ibid., p. 11.

22 Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report for 1923-24, p. 37.

the Director of the Bureau rather than a statement of fact
 23
 concerning positions held by the Negro.

As a further check on the replies of employers to the question of Negroes in positions of authority the miners interviewed were also asked what the highest position they had heard of a Negro occupying in the mining fields was. Only one gave a position higher than mine foreman and this exception was that of an assistant superintendent in Illinois. It is interesting to note that the largest number of Negroes gave the position of machine man in answer to this question. One even gave "loader" as his answer.

It is true that the Negro is occupying positions which require skill and training. Dr. Carpenter is somewhat in error, I think, when he classifies coal mining as an unskilled industry.
 24
 The line between unskilled and skilled work is, of course, somewhat hard to draw. There are, however, certain jobs in coal mining performed by Negroes which require a great deal of skill, much more, in fact, than some which Dr. Carpenter classifies as "pushing up" or "vacuum" occupations. For instance, a Negro fire boss must have much more technical knowledge than a filling station man, which occupation Dr. Carpenter considers in
 25
 his skilled group. The positions of machine operator,

motorman, machinist, brattice man, drum runner, fire boss,

23 It is impossible to verify just what the Director meant by this passage as he took his own life a few months prior to this writing.

24 Carpenter, Niles, in Johnson, op. cit., p. 385.

25 Ibid., p. 386.

and other occupations in the mining industry require sufficient skill to be classified in the skilled group.

The greatest number of Negro employees are to be found in underground occupations, or in "inside labor." Of the 2,410 Negroes concerning which detailed employment information was obtained 96.34 per cent were employed in these occupations. Of these the most numerous occupation was, of course, that of coal loader. Coal loaders constituted 75.73 per cent of all the Negroes in this group. It will be noticed that the surveys by the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics show a constantly increasing proportion of Negro coal loaders since 1923. In that year the survey shows that only 44.38 per cent were loaders,²⁶ while in 1927 a similar survey showed 61.33 per cent in that position.²⁷ Our own sample, taken just ten years after the first shows that Negroes are becoming coal loaders in a steadily increasing proportion. The gain in the percentage in this occupation was 16.97 per cent from 1923 to 1927 and 14.40 per cent from 1927 to 1932.

The term "coal loader" has supplanted another term much older in the industry. The man who loaded the coal was, before the era of machine mining, known as a "coal digger." Instead of having the coal undercut by a machine the miner had to "dig coal" by lying down and undercutting the coal as far as he could reach with his pick. The Negroes were very competent in this type of mining and

²⁶ See Table 28.

²⁷ See Table 29.

the coming of the machine caused some displacement of them.²⁸
 The first mining machine was said to have been used in Ohio²⁹
 in 1877³⁰ and to have come into general use about 1880.
 West Virginia has shown more than average progress in
 machine mining³¹ but the machines do not seem to have been
 in very general use until the years just prior to 1900. In³²
 1897 only 16 out of 315 mines were using machines. These³³
 mines employed 653 of the 31,423 miners in the state and
 mined 5.13 per cent of the coal produced in that year.³⁴
 By 1904, however, 348 mines using 988 machines produced³⁵
 30.80 per cent of the coal of the state. In 1931 there
 were only 8,248 pick miners in the state while there were
 45,551 machine miners or coal loaders. Only 12,320,434
 tons of coal were produced by pick mining, while 88,877,986
 tons were produced by machine mining.³⁶ Only one employer
 was interviewed who mined coal exclusively by pick mining.
 It is significant that this employer had more Negro pick
 miners than his native whites and foreign miners combined.
 As a rule, however, pick mining is done only in those parts
 of a mine where it is not profitable to mine with machines,
 due to location.

The coming of the machine, however, has allowed

- 28 Johnson, op. cit., p. 49.
 29 Rochester, op. cit., p. 108.
 30 Shurick, op. cit., p. 127.
 31 Rochester, op. cit., p. 108.
 32 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1897.
 33 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1903, p. 3.
 34 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1904, p. 2.
 35 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1931,
 pp. 109-110.

the mines to assimilate men unskilled in mining much more easily than in the days of pick mining but with increasing danger to themselves. Says the Chief of the Department of Mines in 1904:³⁶

The changing conditions at the mines within the past decade have materially revolutionized the character of labor employed. This condition has been brought about by reason of the introduction of machinery to supplant the work formerly done by manual labor and animals.

The time was when miners had to serve an apprenticeship before being permitted to assume the responsibilities of a miner, but these conditions do not now exist, and inexperienced men are employed who load after machines and who know practically nothing about the dangers within a mine and as a consequence they are unable to exercise the care essential to their own safety. This is an acknowledged status of labor and any safeguard that may decrease the list of fatalities will have to be made to operate through those having immediate supervision of the employee.

Thus, the Negro farmers from Virginia and the south were easily placed in the coal industry, but were also subjected to considerable danger due to their lack of experience.

The next most numerous positions held by Negroes are those connected with haulage. Our sample revealed 164 brakemen and 117 motormen, 6.80 and 4.85 per cent respectively. There seems to be an apparent increase in the numbers of Negroes in these positions in the last ten years. In the 1922 survey only 3.82 per cent of the Negroes were employed as motormen.³⁷ In 1927 this percentage had

³⁶ W. Va. Dept. of Mines, Annual Report, 1904, pp. 1-2.

³⁷ See Table 28.

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increased to 4.21. No figures on the percentage of brakemen are given in the 1922 survey but the 1927 figures show a very small percentage, .45 per cent, of brakemen.³⁹ Thus, the Negro seems to have held his own in the position of motorman in the last ten years and made very rapid gains in the position of brakeman. In both these positions the Negro seems to be firmly established, especially in the latter.

No comparative figures are available on the Negro as a track man. That this position, however, is held by a considerable number of Negroes is evidenced by the fact that 182 or 2.82 per cent of the sample were engaged in this occupation. The present study showed substantially the same percentage of Negroes employed as machine men as the Bureau survey of 1927. No figures were given in the 1922 survey. The 1927 survey showed 2.82 per cent holding this position while our study showed 2.32 or a decrease of one half per cent. The smaller percentage of drivers shown by our sample is probably due to the increased mechanization of the mines. The 1927 survey showed 1.64 per cent employed as drivers, while the present study found only .62 per cent. No comparative figures are to be found on the number of Negro trappers, brattice men, timber men, and contractors as these positions are grouped under more general headings.

The positions "on the outside" are of minor importance so far as the Negro is concerned. Although no comparative figures can be obtained from the Bureau's surveys,

38 See Table 29.

39 See Table 29.

which are much less detailed than our own, it is safe to say that the Negro has never been employed in the outside positions to the extent to which he has been inside. Only seventy-eight Negroes in the sample, or 3.24 per cent were engaged in these positions. Thirty-eight tippie men, mostly car dumpers and "bone pickers" (day men engaged in throwing out objectionable pieces of coal from the loaded railroad cars), were found. These were the only Negroes in any outside position accounting for as many as one per cent of the Negro mining group, tippie men constituting 1.58 per cent. Table 27 shows perhaps a disproportionately large number engaged in power house work. Most of these Negroes were located at one large operation in McDowell County. A comparatively small number of companies maintain their own power houses at the present time. Most of them have abandoned their power houses since the introduction of fairly cheap electricity by the power companies. Although the outside positions are not numerically important a number of them are more lucrative than some of the inside positions. Machinists, blacksmiths, engineers, and stone masons are paid comparatively high salaries.

In summary, it may be said that the Negro in the mining industry in West Virginia, as is the case in many other industries, is engaged in largest numbers in those positions requiring the greatest amount of physical endurance and the least of skill. However, he has broken the deadlines set up by the introduction of machinery and is

found holding positions which require both skill and training in every field in which he is employed in large numbers. He is also to be found, to a very small extent, in positions of some authority, although no instance was found of a Negro's occupying a position higher than mine foreman at the present time, unless one were to include the one mine foreman who has been given a position with the State Department of Mines.

III. JOB DISTRIBUTION AMONG NATIVE WHITES, FOREIGNERS, AND NEGROES.-

Are there any stereotyped occupations which have been stamped as "Negro jobs" by the mining culture?⁴⁰ This question may be answered categorically in the negative. Members of all racial and national groups will be found in every occupation in the mining fields below the rank of superintendent. While there are no jobs which may be termed "foreign jobs" or "Negro jobs," there is some difference in the distribution of certain positions among the various racial and national groups in the industry. This difference may be due to the preference of the particular group, or it may be due to lack of opportunity because of the operation of traditional factors. The effect of the competition of the foreign born has brought about a type of specialization on the part of the native white workers.⁴¹ For instance something of the same situation which the

⁴⁰ Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 131.

⁴¹ Cf. Lumley, F. E., op. cit., p. 130.

United States Immigration Commission found over twenty years ago persists today. In this regard the Commission⁴² reported:

This tendency is best illustrated by the distribution of employees according to race in the bituminous coal industry. In this industry all the so-called "company" occupations, which are paid on the basis of a daily, weekly, or monthly rate, are occupied by native Americans or older immigrants and their children, while the southern Europeans are confined to pick mining and to the unskilled and common labor.

While such a deadline may have existed at the time of the Commission's report it certainly has been broken both by the Negro and the foreign-born. It is quite true that the foreign-born are found less frequently than either native whites or Negroes in the so-called "company work" jobs. However, this fact is not due so much to the firm retrenchment of the native whites in such jobs as to the preference of the foreign-born worker himself. Company jobs, as has been indicated, have a strictly time wage. That fact means that long hours and exceptionally hard work will not increase the remuneration of these jobs beyond the maximum as set by the working time of the mine. On the other hand, the coal loader is paid either by the ton of coal loaded or by the car. The foreigner may, by working long hours, earn⁴³ very high wages as a coal loader. Consequently, 87.68 per cent of the foreign-born in the twenty operations from

42 U. S. Immigration Commission, Abstract of Report on Immigrants in Manufacturing and Mining, 1911, p. 238.

43 See Chapter VI.

which data were gathered were coal loaders. This percentage is higher than for either Negroes or native whites. The foreigners, many of whom have relatives whom they want to bring over to America or who need the support of the miner

TABLE 30. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF EACH RACIAL AND NATIONAL GROUP IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS IN TWENTY OPERATIONS IN FIVE WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES: 1932

Occupation	Native whites		Foreign-born		Negroes		Totals	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Coal loaders	1,329	52.77	626	87.68	1,410	76.84	3,415	66.16
Machine men	172	6.58	18	2.52	36	1.96	226	4.38
Motormen	199	7.62	16	2.24	85	4.63	300	5.81
Brakemen	169	6.47	7	.98	128	6.98	304	5.89
Track men	177	6.77	36	5.04	109	5.94	322	6.24
Tipple men	293	11.21	6	.84	24	1.31	323	6.25
Other occupations	224	8.58	5	.70	43	2.34	272	5.27
Totals	2,613	100.00	714	100.00	1,835	100.00	5,162	100.00

are especially anxious to make high wages. When times are dull he is likely to be the first to leave the mining fields. He is, therefore, little interested in the company jobs. There are a few (see Table 30) in the most remunerative positions of machine man, motorman, and track man, but the number in other positions are negligible.

The tendency of the native whites to go into the company jobs is at once noticeable in their relatively small number of coal loaders -- only 52.77 per cent. With the exception of the position of brakeman, in which a larger number of Negroes are to be found in the southern counties,

44 Interviews with many employers.

there is a higher percentage of native whites in all the company jobs. Since the native whites are also in the majority in numbers most of these positions are likely to be held by them. However, the general distribution, as shown in Table 30, may be quite different from the distribution in different mines. The position of tipple man is almost exclusively held by native whites. This position is less dangerous than certain of the other jobs and is also considered as lighter work. The much larger percentage of native whites in the unclassified occupations indicates their further preemption of the company jobs.

The job distribution of the Negroes resembles that of the foreign-born more than that of the native whites. With the exception of the position of machine man, which is paid on a tonnage basis in some mines, there is a larger proportion of this group in the company jobs than of the foreign-born. A larger percentage of the Negro group is employed as coal loaders than of the native whites, but not such a large proportion as the foreign-born, for the reasons given. In the particular mines studied they held a larger number of the positions as brakemen in proportion to their numbers than did the native whites. There are a few Negro tipple men, some of them being old miners who must be given an easier job than coal loading after having served the companies for a number of years. The larger percentage of Negroes than foreigners in the unclassified group indicates their wider distribution in the jobs of the industry. Many

Negroes do not relish the competition of the foreign-born and have been glad to enter some of the company jobs to escape it. However, the great majority, like the foreigner, remain coal loaders, which position has other advantages, enjoyed by the Negro, to be discussed later. The trends of the racial distribution of positions is shown rather clearly by the fact that the native whites show a smaller percentage in the job of coal loader and a larger percentage in the company jobs than the average of all workers in these jobs. The Negro, on the other hand, shows a higher percentage of his group engaged in coal loading than the average of all workers in this position and a percentage lower than the average of all workers in all company positions, except in the case of brakemen. Here the average of all groups is 5.83 per cent, and 6.98 per cent of the Negroes were employed as brakemen.

We have said very little thus far about the relative numbers of native whites, Negroes, and foreigners in the different occupations. The reason for this fact is that the average of different mines would tell little of the actual situation in the field. If there were any unanimity of company policy in this regard such figures would be meaningful, but such is not the case. Adjacent mines may tell a much different story as to the racial distribution of jobs. A great deal depends upon the attitude of the particular operator towards any one of the three

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groups engaged in mining. Some mines are known as "Negro
mines"⁴³ and their operators as "Negro men." Other mines
are known as "white mines."⁴⁷ The characterization comes,
as a rule, from the fact of whether Negroes are in a major-
ity or constitute a very small minority of the employees at
the particular mine. No mine was found in which the foreign-
born were the most numerous group, although some were found
in which their numbers exceeded those of the Negroes.⁴⁸ All
mines studied employed some native whites and only one opera-
tor was encountered who employed no Negroes, while one em-
ployed no foreigners.⁴⁹

Little correlation between the numbers of Negroes
and their presence in certain positions is evident. For in-
stance, Mine A and Mine C are located not a dozen miles from
each other. In both the Negroes are the largest single
group. In one the Negroes have 10 of the 13 positions as
machine men, but in the other they hold only 4 of the 14
machine men positions. In the second mine, however, was
the Negro mine foreman who, as was stated elsewhere, has
now a better position with the State Department of Mines.
Any exposition of general trends seems impossible. One
generalization, however, may be made: that the Negroes seem
to hold the better jobs in those operations where they form
the large percentage of the mining group. It is, in fact,

45 See Chapter VI for an extended treatment of these attitudes.

43 See Mine A, Table 31, for an example.

47 See Mine B, Table 31.

48 See Mine E, Table 31.

49 See Mine D, Table 31.

TABLE 31. DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS BY RACE AND NATIONALITY
IN FIVE WEST VIRGINIA MINES: 1932

Position and mine	Native whites	Foreign- born	Negroes	Total
Mine A, Raleigh County:				
Coal loaders	30	21	88	139
Machine men	2		10	12
Track men	18	1	9	28
Motormen	6		8	14
Brakemen	3		11	14
Tipple men	13	1	2	16
Totals	72	23	128	223
Mine B, Kanawha County:				
Coal loaders	145	15	20	180
Machine men	12			12
Track men	8			8
Motormen	2			2
Brakemen	2			2
Tipple men	22			22
Drivers	17		1	21
Totals	208	15	21	247
Mine C, Raleigh County:				
Coal loaders	160	40	200	400
Machine men	10		4	14
Track men	48	4	48	100
Motormen	24	2	24	50
Brakemen	24		24	48
Tipple men	20		10	30
Others	7	1	8	16
Totals	293	47	318	658
Mine D, Kanawha County:				
Coal loaders	135		22	157
Machine men	8		2	10
Track men	10		2	12
Motormen	8			8
Brakemen	8			8
Tipple men	7			7
Totals	176		26	202
Mine E, Logan County:				
Coal loaders	107	96	54	257
Machine men	17		1	18
Inside day men	90	5	13	108
Outside day men	59			59
Totals	273	101	68	442

very difficult for employers who employ only a few Negroes to keep them. Such employers, if they have Negroes at all,⁵⁰ are likely to have a high Negro labor turnover.

So far much has been said of employer attitude in determining the jobs which Negroes hold in any particular mine. There is another factor, although employer attitude has had much to do with its creation, which operates upon employer policy. Most of the mining towns of West Virginia⁵¹ are company-owned. In other words, the only people who live in them are engaged in the mining of coal for a specific company. These mining towns, more or less isolated from one another, became culture areas in miniature. That is, habits grew up in one town which might be quite different from those of other similar towns. These ways have every characteristic of a folkway. While the employer was instrumental in initiating many of them the laboring group also had their share in this process. As time passed the effects of these⁵² ways and policies constituted a cumulative force which reacts upon worker and employer alike. This cultural aggregate becomes stereotyped and changes at a much slower tempo than company management. It is not uncommon for the ownership and control of a mining community to change hands frequently. However, the new management finds that the folkways of this particular mine do not bend readily in the

50 Interview with Mr. U. G. Thomas, Supt. of Midvale Colliery Company, who operates such a mine.

51 See Chapter VIII dealing with some of the effects of this fact.

52 Cf. Ogburn, W. F., Social Change, 1922, passim.

direction of change. Employers have told the writer of the difficulties they have had in introducing Negro labor into certain positions which have never been occupied by Negroes in that particular mine. The absence of Negroes in certain positions in certain places, then, is not to be explained wholly in terms of company policy or employer attitude toward them but in terms of this cultural factor. Large companies, with more than one mine, sometimes employ Negroes at certain jobs in one mine and none at another because of this factor. Thus, the mining field does not represent an area in which the employment of Negroes always coincides with employer attitude. Company policy, in this regard, frequently accommodates itself to the prevailing community ways.

IV. NEGRO ATTITUDE AS A FACTOR IN JOB DISTRIBUTION.-

Up to this point we have been discussing those external factors which operate to force the Negro into certain positions and away from others. He is found, as is the case with all other groups, most frequently as a coal loader. This fact, of course, is true primarily because there are more of these positions to be filled. A further factor in regard to the Negroes is that coal loading perhaps requires the least skill of any position and as much hard work, to which most of them are habituated. There are, however, certain other factors which influence the Negro to choose the position of coal loader in preference to some of

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the others.

In the first place, many of the Negroes did not come to the mining fields with the idea of remaining permanently. As has perhaps been indicated before, their notion was not to rise in the mining industry as best they could. They wanted to make money as rapidly as possible and then return "back East." They are, then, primarily interested in making money quickly and coal loading is more lucrative than certain other positions. One employer in McDowell County writes as follows concerning this tendency of the Negro to choose coal loading in preference to company work: "You will notice that I haven't as many colored day laborers as white, and this is due to the fact that the Negroes do not seek day labor like the native whites. They can make more money loading coal than they can working by the day."

As has been shown before, many of the Negroes in the mining industry came from agricultural pursuits. Farmers generally, for in this trait Negroes are not exceptional, are individualistic. It is also the opinion of the writer that the common dislike of the Negro for close white supervision in matters of work is perhaps a culture trait having its origin in the slave system. Be that as it may, the objection to working under close watching is a very real thing with many Negroes. The position of coal loader offers less supervision than any other position in the mines.

53 The material here is based upon interviews with many Negro miners.

54 Cf. Rochester, op. cit., p. 105.

The territory over which mining operations extend in any mine is likely to be considerable. Mine foremen cannot and do not visit the rooms in which the men work frequently. Some mines require that the placing of the explosive to "shoot" the coal be inspected before discharging it, but even this safety measure is not present in all mines. The loader provides his own tools and light, buys his own explosive, and controls the tempo of his work to suit himself. He is paid by the number of tons he sends to the tibble and the operator as a rule cares little about the amount. The only question the operator may raise concerns whether he "cleans out" his "place" so that the coal cutters may get to the "face" and undercut his coal after he leaves. If he leaves his coal unloaded it is impossible for the machine men to get their machines to the face to prepare the coal for shooting. However, if the miner decides to work a while and then to alternate his work periods with periods of rest no comment is forthcoming from the operator.

Not only may the coal loader set his own speed for doing his work, but he may stop before quitting time and "come out" early.⁵⁵ One employer told of meeting one of his Negro miners coming out of the mine at two o'clock in the afternoon. The employer spoke to him, asking him why he did not stay in the mines longer and make more money.⁵⁶ The following conversation passed between them:

⁵⁵ Cf. Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁵⁶ Told as nearly as possible in the exact language of this Raleigh County operator who told it to the writer.

"Sam, what are you doing coming out at two o'clock? Why don't you stay in there and make you some money?"

"I got enough time in there to pay fo' ma house rent, ain't I, Mr. M.?"

"Yes, Sam, I guess you have."

"I got enough scrip comin' so I can get all I want to eat, ain't I, Mr. M.?"

"Yes, Sam, you have that."

"I got all my payments made on my car, ain't I, Mr. M.?"

"Yes, Sam, they haven't taken it away from you, so I suppose you must have."

"Well, then, Mr. M., what I be doin' wid all dat money?"

While there is no intention here to give the inference that the conversation is typical of all Negroes, nor that any "racial" trait is revealed by it, there are a good many who do not see the necessity in ordinary times to work beyond that time necessary for the satisfaction of their immediate
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wants.

Another feature of coal loading is attractive to the group just mentioned because of the fact that the loader may "lay off" or cease working for a day, a few days, or a week if he cares to do so. Employers do not classify the Negro as the most regular worker in the mines. A Negro woman whom the writer has known for many years told him of the struggle she had to get her husband to leave the mining

57 Of, Banks, E. M., The Economics of Land Tenure in Georgia, Columbia University Press, 1905, pp. 74-75.

fields because of this feature of coal loading. He hesitated to move to the city where regular work would be demanded of him in order to keep his position. Negro miners are quite frank in discussing the attractiveness of this peculiarity of coal loading.

These characteristics of the job of coal loading allow the following of previously established habits perhaps more nearly than any of the other positions in mining. The tempo of the Negro farmer is set almost always in part by his own wishes, especially the Virginia farmer.⁵⁸ Katherine Coman has pointed out the situation in regard to the strenuousness of white supervision in the south⁵⁹ to which the Negro has reacted. The same tendency to "lay off" and go to work is found on the farm as well as at the mine.⁶⁰ The other positions in the mine would not allow these privileges to the extent that coal loading does. Motormen and brakemen must run regularly or they lose their crew rights. Machine men must do likewise. The positions of brattice man, timber man, tipple man, etc., are all subject to much more strict supervision than that of coal loading. This cultural factor has led Negroes to say, "There are higher jobs than loading in the mines, but loading is about the best job of them all."

- 58 See Russell, J. S., Rural Economic Progress of the Negro in Virginia, Journal of Negro History, Vol. XI, October 1926; also Park, R. E., Negro Home Life and Standards of Living, Annals, Vol. 49, 1913, pp. 147-163.
- 59 Coman, K., The Negro as a Peasant Farmer, Publications of the Amer. Stat. Assoc., Vol. 9, June 1904, p. 45.
- 60 Brooks, R. P., Agrarian Revolution in Georgia, 1914, p. 96.

It should be pointed out, however, that some of the steadyest workers in the mines are Negroes. The factor mentioned simply accounts for the preference of a part of the Negro group in choosing, voluntarily, loading instead of other positions.

Another factor which Negroes frequently give as a reason for their preference for mining in general and inside positions in particular is the relatively small fluctuations in temperature within the mine in summer and winter. The mine is always cool in summer and warm in winter. While the tippie man may be sweltering in the heat that sometimes prevails in the mining fields of West Virginia the coal loader is working in a cool place. When he is ready to come out at four o'clock the worst heat of the day is likely to be over and his work is over for the day. All that remains is for him to take his bath and devote himself to keeping cool. In winter he is subjected to the cold only in going to and returning from his work.

The attitude of many Negroes toward the competition of the foreigner has been mentioned. The Negro is likely to look upon the foreigner as his competitor with keener interest than he does the native white. He is accommodated to the superior position of native whites but resents the inroads of other minority groups into the

⁶¹ mines. One employer writes: "Negroes, as a rule, do

⁶¹ See chapter on Race Relations for a further discussion of this fact.

not work steadily but if they feel the foreigner will profit by their idleness they will make it a point to be at their work every day. . . ." Some of the Negroes have avoided this competition by going into some of the jobs in which foreigners are seldom found.

CHAPTER VI

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE NEGRO MINER

We have seen in the preceding chapters that the Negroes have for a long time constituted an important part of the workers in the mining industry of West Virginia. In 1931 the Negroes constituted 21.9 per cent of the workers of the industry, which was the largest percentage since 1907 when the Department of Mines began to take any account of racial and nationality statistics. This growing proportion, coupled with the long period in which Negroes have been associated with the mining industry in West Virginia, seems to indicate that the place of the Negro is well established. How may we account for the seeming success of the Negro? Is it due to his unusual efficiency in the various positions of the industry? Or, are there other less ostensible reasons for the Negro's presence in such large numbers in the most important mining fields of the state? It is the purpose of the present chapter to give some kind of an answer to these questions.

In order to arrive at these answers three approaches were used. The first was a study of the attitudes of the employers of more than 9,000 Negro miners toward the Negro in the various mining operations.¹ These opinions, of course, may not represent objective judgment alone. They do, however, reveal something of the stereotypes of the employers of

¹ See employer's schedule in Appendix.

Negroes which are more important in determining the place of the Negro in the coal industry than objective truth. It makes little difference what the truth concerning minority traits is so long as the only entrance to the better positions is carefully guarded by members of the majority group.² Where certain allegations of a particular tendency were so frequent as to indicate a present characteristic, investigation was made to determine whether or not these imputations were based upon fact.

A more objective approach, by way of a check on the attitudes of the employers, was the study of pay rolls. Such an approach is by no means an infallible method in indicating efficiency. It can, however, show something of regularity of work and earning power. With very few exceptions the principal jobs of coal mining pay the same wage to all employees regardless of color or nationality, a condition which does not exist in all industry.³ Where exceptions were made to this rule they were as often in favor of the Negro as of the other groups. Although there are unknown variables which cannot be taken into account in such a study, such as particular difficulties in place of work, breakdown of machinery, sickness of the employee, and the like, it is assumed that the average semi-monthly wages will roughly show something as to the amount of work done by Negroes as compared with that of other groups.

² Cf. Young, op. cit., p. 111.

³ See Feldman, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

The three groups compared in these pay-roll studies were the native whites, Negroes and foreign-born. It may seem that, to classify the foreign-born under one head and to treat them as a lump, is to be undiscriminating. By so doing, however, I do not mean to indicate that the foreign-born are not the representatives of many and diverse cultures. In fact, as I shall later show in greater detail, the Negroes in the mines of West Virginia are not a homogeneous group. However, when considered collectively, the foreigners do represent a group which is not of the majority group. They must make cultural adjustments to the dominant group, as for example, in terms of language, or alteration of folkways. Together they represent an "out-group." The Negro represents another of these out-groups and has adjustments to make which the ordinary native white does not have to make. Thus these three groups when considered in this way represent three different types of acculturation, each unique in its own way. In the stereotypes of the mining field they constitute three very definite groups, so that the mention of any one of them to a member of one of the others brings forth attitudes built upon these stereotypes.

As a further check upon both attitudes and the story told by the pay-rolls, as many as possible of the Negro preachers, teachers, leaders and others were interviewed. They showed varying degrees of discrimination and objectivity, but, on the whole, they constituted one of the most valuable sources of information of the whole study.

They not only provided valuable criticism of leads already followed by the writer, but suggested new ones.

In presenting the material of this chapter something of the order already suggested in the discussion of the approaches will be followed. Employer attitude will be discussed first, followed by the presentation of the facts of the pay-roll study, and lastly by consideration of the other factors in what Professor Harris has aptly called "the productive efficiency" of the Negro miner,⁴ a term connoting the general satisfaction of the employer with the Negro rather than mere skill and fineness of work.

I. EMPLOYER OPINION AND COMPARATIVE EARNINGS OF THE NEGRO MINER.-

1. Previous Studies of the Efficiency of the Negro Miner.-

Although the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics has given some study to the question of the industrial efficiency of the Negro, it has been chiefly concerned with the Negro in industrial plants. In the 1921-1922,⁵ 1925-1926,⁶ and 1927-1928⁷ reports are to be found the answers to questionnaires sent to industrial plants throughout the state. Only one report, however, deals with answers to questions concerning the efficiency of the Negro miner. In the 1921-22 report the statement is made that 111 coal com-

⁴ Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 221.

⁵ P. 58.

⁶ Quoted in Johnson, op. cit., p. 70.

⁷ Pp. 17-19.

pany officials reporting 256 operations which employ 6,483 Negroes, or more than one third of the entire number in the state, say that Negroes compare "favorably" in efficiency, regularity, and loyalty with workers of other races employed.⁸ Just what the basis was for the statement is not clear. No tabulation of answers was made nor was any distinction made between the comparative efficiency in the different jobs of the industry. The purpose of the present study was to provide comparative data on the different positions occupied by the Negroes in the coal mines.

3. The Negro in Positions of Authority.-

As has been pointed out before, Negroes are seldom found in places of authority in the mining fields. The fact that they have been used as foremen and in other positions so infrequently, however, may not mean that they are unfitted for the positions, but that their "productive efficiency" is lower than that of the foreign-born and native whites. It must be borne in mind that the average coal operator is interested less in social reform than in production of coal. He is interested in a smoothly-working organization with a minimum of complaints of all kinds. He is likely to adopt that employment system which seems to him to be conducive to the greatest efficiency in coal production considered from all angles. It must be said, however, that not all operators condemn the Negro as unfitted

for positions of authority without trial. Three of the forty-four employers whose schedules were taken are satisfied with the Negro in positions of authority. Two of these three, however, specify that they like Negroes only in authority over colored men. Questioned concerning the efficiency of the Negro in authority the answers of these two were:

A Negro is a very good boss among his own color. Sometimes it works among the whites but very seldom.

I would use a Negro in a position of authority in any job of all Negroes.

Both of these employers, who were located in widely separated coal fields, the former in Fayette County and the latter in the Pocahontas Field, had Negroes employed as bosses at the time they were interviewed. The third employer did not generalize concerning the Negro in authority, but simply said he had had good ones and poor ones. He had one Negro fire boss, a graduate of the West Virginia State College, who he said was "very efficient."

The attitude of white workers is without doubt one important element in limiting the Negro's attainment of the higher positions in the industry. ⁹ Says one operator in the New River Field:

I have seen but very few Negroes whom I felt inclined to give positions of responsibility to and if I felt so inclined to place them in a

⁹ It must be borne in mind that attitudes differ somewhat from mine to mine as before indicated.

position of authority this act would be resented by other employees. This same reason prevents the Negro from getting a job on motor runs, plans runs, fire bosses and other positions of this nature. The management cannot afford to incur the displeasure of all other employees by appointing a Negro to responsible positions.

The hesitancy of the operator to risk incurring the displeasure of his other workmen is apparent as one interviews the operators in all fields. Perhaps the historic struggle to keep the southern fields on a non-union basis is partly responsible for this attitude, although it is doubtful, as has been pointed out before, whether the average operator is ever troubled very much over the question of whether or not to elevate the Negro to higher positions. Such acts are infrequent enough to be classed among those things which are "just not done." Cases are very rare in which a Negro must be given such a position in order to keep him, because of the fact that no other jobs better than the one he has are open to him in other mines. The Negro finds in mining as in other occupations that he reaches a deadline which he may not cross, except in rare instances. The following quotations of employers will indicate this fact:

Whites will not obey Negroes. In fact, they resent his "bossing."

The Negro in these positions is out of his element. He would be domineering and native whites would resent his authority.

Whites resent a Negro over them. I have had superior Negroes who could fill some of the better positions, but I did not use them in such.

Whites do not like it. A white will brake for a Negro on a motor, but he wants no Negro foreman.

Too far South.

Whites will not stand for it.

Due to social prejudice we cannot use colored men here in the capacity of boss over any native whites.

These employers give the impression that they would use Negroes in positions of authority if it were not for the opposition of their men.

Other employers, however, either because they deem it to be poor policy on the part of the company, or by reason of their own attitudes toward Negroes, will not use them in places of authority. Examples of the former type are indicated by the following answers to the question of why they did not use Negroes in places of authority:

We think in our company that no Negro politicians are desirable. We find them easier to handle under white men.

We don't use Negroes because with our mixed organization white leadership tends toward greater harmony.

The other type of employer may like the Negro "in his place" but does not consider him in his place in the higher positions. The following quotations will indicate this employer attitude:

I would not work under a Negro -- and I will not ask other white men to do so.

What ruined the Negro in the New River Field was the northern operators who came down and called him Mister.

Never! This has been tried many times but has always been a failure. Negroes are followers, not leaders.

This attitude is somewhat typical of most of the operators in West Virginia. Such an attitude is not antagonistic to a preference for Negro labor or to an actual affection for individual Negroes. The author, of the first quotation to the effect that he would not expect his white men to work under a Negro also said, "If I had my way we wouldn't have anyone but Negroes on the place." Both he and the author of the following quotation were known over a large section of the state as "Negro men."¹⁰

Perhaps the most frequent reason assigned by employers for the failure of Negro foremen was the antagonistic attitude of the Negroes themselves. One employer writes as follows in this regard:

I do not mean to say that a negro did not have enough sense to be a mine foreman. In my past fifteen years, I have had some excellent negro miners; well trained, understood mining, and had a thorough knowledge of mine rules and safety and first aid measures, but when placed in a position of authority, they fell down, due to the fact, I believe, as I stated in questionnaire, he will not be diplomatic with his own race. He tries to drive the men instead of leading them, and it is an experienced fact with me that I have yet to see a negro employee that likes to work under a negro employer. At this particular point,

10 Interview with Prof. Thos. C. Posey, of W. Va. State College, who did some of the field work for Dr. A. L. Harris in preparation of "The Black Worker."

we are right close to the Virginia and Kentucky state line, and of course, you know just about how a white employee here would feel towards a negro mine foreman.

Other quotations of employers relative to this matter follow:

I use Negroes in places of authority only in an emergency. The biggest trouble is with the Negroes themselves.

I have an assistant mine foreman, but he is not very successful. The Negroes do not like him.

In an English theme a student at West Virginia State College wrote:

If a Negro is given a good position much more is required of him than would be required of a white man in the same position. A situation of this sort was present in one of the mines operated in the district in which I lived. A Negro was given a position as track foreman over a group of workers. He worked his subordinates so hard that most men dreaded working under him. Nevertheless, he was compelled to work them unusually hard in order to retain his position.

Another employer at a mine which employed a Negro foreman over a period of years said the envy of the other Negroes was one of the factors limiting his success.

Such reasons were so common that an effort was made to verify these alleged reasons for the limited success of Negro foremen. Interviews with members of the Negro group tended to confirm the employers' interpretations of the situation. Negroes were frank to admit that they would much rather work under a white rather than a Negro foreman. One Negro, occupying a boss position himself, told of the

case of a Negro mine foreman who lost his job because of the Negroes. The Negroes, according to this report, expected him to favor Negroes more than any other group while in his position of mine foreman. When he would not do so the Negroes would run to the superintendent with complaints. These complaints were so frequent that the superintendent finally said he was tired of being bothered all the time and gave the position to a white foreman.

The Negro foreman in the mining fields, then, is in a very difficult situation. His position is most conspicuous and his every fault is likely to be magnified in the minds of both the miners, white and black, and the employers who have been familiar with all the old stereotypes of Negro inefficiency and lack of leadership so common in American culture. In other words, he must wear the new mantle of authority with even more grace than a white man more accustomed to wearing it. He is also faced with an almost complete reversal of traditional mores in that he has whites under him as well as Negroes. In other words, the Negro foreman must show much more ability than a white man in the same position in order to be considered as successful. He has the opposition of white workers, the suspicion of his employers, and the antagonism of his own group to face. In such a situation it is not surprising if some Negroes have been failures.

11 Cf. Feldman, op. cit., p. 38.

The gradual disappearance of the larger number of Negroes in high positions reported in the early days of McDowell County¹² would indicate that the companies have preferred native white or foreign-born bosses. The transition from Negroes to whites in places of authority in the mines of this county has been made by waiting until the Negroes retired and appointing whites as successors.¹³ There is some evidence that, in addition to the factors already mentioned, some of these men were not as dependable as they might have been in their positions. A prominent Negro educator in the mining fields of this county says that the disappearance of Negro foremen was partly their own fault: "If there was work at the mines and also a show that they wanted to see, some of them would go to the show rather than to work. That is part of the story." It is quite likely that in preferring pleasure to duty these Negroes were following early culture traits to which they were habituated. In the farming regions of Virginia and further south, from which most of the miners of West Virginia come, it is expected that everybody will go to a show when it comes to town. Thus while this trait, to the extent to which it was present among Negro foremen, is by no means an indication of racial lack of dependability but merely of the operation of cultural factors, it is not industrial efficiency, which is also culturally defined.

12 Harris, Opportunity, February 1936, p. 47; Welch Daily News, Sept. 31, 1936.

13 Interview with Mrs. M. T. Garrison, prominent state and county political leader, Gary, W. Va.

3. The Negro Coal Loader.-

In order to ascertain quantitatively the reaction of employers concerning the efficiency of the Negro miners in the various occupations, answers were secured from employers of more than 9,000 Negroes, 12,000 native whites,¹⁴ and 5,000 foreign-born to the following question:

As compared with the quality of work done by foreigners, is work done by Negroes in the following occupations (coal loader, machine man, track man, motorman, brakeman, tippie man, etc.) 1. much superior 2. considerably superior 3. slightly superior 4. about the same 5. slightly inferior 6. considerably inferior 7. much inferior?

A similar question was used to compare the quality of work of the Negroes and the native whites. The employers answering the questions were located in every county in which any investigation was made.¹⁵ Although the employers held all positions from mine foreman to general manager, most of the questionnaires were filled out by superintendents. The superintendent was considered the person best fitted to answer the questions because he is in direct contact with the workers and yet is sufficiently removed from the workers to have somewhat of an objective viewpoint. Since the general managers have usually occupied the position of superintendent some time in their lives they are fitted to answer the questions even though their present contact with labor is not so close as that of the superintendents. The

¹⁴ See employer's schedule in Appendix.

¹⁵ See map, p.

answers to these questions concerning the efficiency of the Negro coal loaders are summarized in the following table:

TABLE 32. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO COAL LOADERS AS COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro coal loaders with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	1	1
Considerably superior	2	4	6
Slightly superior	3	6	9
About the same	4	25	7
Slightly inferior	5	4	13
Considerably inferior	6	4	3
Much inferior	7		2
Totals		44	41
Weighted average		3.89	4.02

The questionnaires from which this table is derived carry seven gradations of opinion, namely equality and three similar gradations each of superiority and inferiority. If the number of opinions in each gradation is multiplied by the assigned weight for that opinion and the sum of the whole is divided by the total number of employers expressing these opinions we find the quotients 3.89 and 4.02, the arithmetic mean in each case. That is, if all employers had given their answers in terms of approximate equality the quotient would have been 4.00; or, if they had all considered the Negro as slightly inferior the quotient would have been 5.00. Since, however, differing opinions are expressed, intermediate gradations are expressed in terms of fractions. Any superiority of the Negro would be

indicated by a quotient less than 4.00. Any inferiority, likewise, would be shown by any quotient less than 4.00. His efficiency, as gauged by the average opinion of the operators interviewed, may be indicated by the numerical ratio above or below 4.00. In other words, these employers on the average consider the Negro just a bit superior to the native white, although the superiority is so slight as to mean approximate equality. As compared to the foreign loader, on the other hand, the average opinion of these employers was that the Negro coal loader was just a shade inferior. The difference in the number of opinions expressed is due to the fact that some employers did not use foreign coal loaders, and, hence, would not express an opinion regarding them.

We may now turn to the results of the study of company pay-rolls to see if there is any correlation between the opinions expressed above and the average earnings of each group in the position of coal loader. The pay rolls of three different companies were studied, each in a different county. Mine Number One was in Kanawha County, Mine Number Two was in Raleigh County, and Mine Number Three was in Wyoming County. After conferences with superintendents, general managers, auditors, bookkeepers, and pay roll clerks the decision was made to study the months of January, July and October. This selection was made because, although there is surprisingly little variation from month to month in "normal" times, these months represent the working

tendencies of these groups in three distinct types of weather conditions. The year 1929 was chosen after similar conferences because it represented the latest year in which market conditions permitted "regular" work. A similar study of pay rolls for 1932 would have indicated little concerning the work habits of the three groups, since most of the mines were working not more than once or twice a week, some even less frequently. The variation in the number of men in each group at each semi-monthly period¹ will indicate something of the turnover in the industry.

TABLE 33. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO, NATIVE WHITE, AND FOREIGN COAL LOADERS IN THREE WEST VIRGINIA MINES FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER, 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites		Foreign-born	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
Number One:						
January 15	48	\$57.27	54	\$63.47		
January 31	45	67.36	50	82.93		
July 15	57	47.09	48	57.25		
July 31	53	73.82	46	78.63		
October 15	58	56.92	46	68.37		
October 31	59	64.03	49	66.91		
Average -- Mine Number One	52.33	62.58	48.83	69.15		
Number Two:						
January 15	80	55.42	26	57.79	26	93.96
January 31	84	57.46	27	65.21	22	86.55
July 15	84	55.25	29	51.49	25	78.39
July 31	86	59.45	28	64.15	25	67.83
October 15	89	60.14	27	58.82	23	76.99
October 31	84	57.46	23	68.69	22	86.55
Average -- Mine Number Two	85.00	58.03	26.67	60.75	24.00	78.01
Number Three:						
January 15	41	53.81	33	63.09	5	43.72
January 31	41	70.84	43	74.55	10	47.95
July 15	32	61.57	47	65.50	9	79.67
July 31	30	74.53	59	68.79	9	90.13
October 15	34	63.35	67	62.20	11	79.65
October 31	29	63.71	60	68.18	11	89.20
Average -- Mine Number Three	34.50	64.34	51.50	66.97	9.17	73.10
Average -- the three mines		60.68		66.63		76.66

There is some correspondence between the employer rating of the Negro loader and his average earnings when he is compared with the foreign loader which does not exist when he is compared with the native white. That is, the average earnings of the foreign loader, who was rated higher than both Negro and native white, are greater than those of either group. The average earnings of the Negro loader are, however, smaller than those of the native white although his rating is higher.

The average earnings of the foreigner in all mines is \$10.03 more than those of the native white every pay day and \$15.98 more than those of the Negro coal loader. As a "champion coal loader"¹⁶ the foreign loader seems to be in a class by himself. The native white, on the other hand, in these mines did not excel the Negro as much as the foreign loader excelled the native white. The difference between the average earnings of the native white and Negro coal loader was only \$5.95.

It is evident that the employers rate their coal loaders by criteria other than mere amount of coal loaded. One reason for rating the Negro above the native white is that he is likely to complain about his conditions of work less than the native white. Conditions under which the men have to work in the mines are sometimes far from pleasant. In the New River Field, part of which is a "low coal" area,

¹⁶ Term used to designate phenomenal coal loaders, See The New River Company Employees' Magazine, Vol. 2, May 1925, p. 21.

a man may have to work stooping over all day. One employer said: "In this low coal I would rather have a Negro than any other loader." Another considered the Negro as being "better able to stand" such conditions. Says another, "The Negro is the best human machine in the world. If you take a full blood Negro who is the son of a clean black woman who has been covered with another good clean man -- there is no white man who can equal him as a worker of brawn."

This general lack of complaint on the part of Negro loaders, as well as other Negro operatives, leads some employers to prefer them to the foreigner in spite of the enormous amount of coal loaded by them. One employer said of the Negroes in this connection: "The best loaders at M..... are foreigners. However, if they do not get the best places in the mine they will not work. They must have two rooms. If you had the mine filled with such men there would be dissension all the time. That is one thing about the colored man -- he will work anywhere you put him."

Another trait of the Negro loaders pleasing to the employer is his tendency to obey orders. The foreign workers sometimes will, according to employers, give their language handicap as an excuse for misunderstanding orders if they do not choose to obey them. The Negroes, accustomed to obeying orders, are likely to follow directions better than any other group. Writes one employer:

The foreigner is greedy - will not protect himself by proper timbering in the mine and if the seam contains impurities - as they usually do - will load dirty coal regardless of how much you talk to him about it. He will, however, turn out more work and work longer hours than the negro in order to increase his earnings. On the other hand the negro, whilst he will usually obey your instructions, will not work as regularly and you must have an excess of 20% or 25% of negro labor in order to get the same amount of production. Native labor is about midway between the other two classes of labor and somewhat harder to handle. To boil it down I try to have about 55% negro and 45 white native labor and do not employ foreigners unless in cases of a shortage of labor supply.

It will be noted that this employer mentions the fact that the Negroes load cleaner coal. This item is exceedingly important in the present competitive coal market. The presence of non-combustible material in a shipment of coal may cost the particular mine from which it was received further orders from that customer. Coal may be had so cheaply and in such good qualities at the present time that, instead of asking the price of coal, customers have actually told the operators what they would pay them for it. In such a situation the miner who loads clean coal is a valuable asset to the company, even though he does not load as much as other workers. This tractibility of the Negro miner in following orders, a trait culturally developed in him, is one of chief reasons he is preferred by many operators. One operator in the Kanawha Field says: "The best points of the colored coal loader are that he will keep in a good humor and work in wet places and in entries where the air is bad with less complaint than the white man."

The fact that a company may have to employ a larger labor force if Negroes constitute most of it is not looked upon as objectionable by most companies. Mining developments began in many remote locations in which the companies literally had to build the towns to accommodate their men. The "company store" was a necessity, and at the same time a profitable institution. With a larger working force the sales of the company store as well as rents from company houses are larger. Within the last five years more than one company has been able to continue in operation because the company stores received back a large part of the wages paid to their men. The Negro miner, although his earnings are not so high as the native white's, has been one of the best customers of the company store.¹⁷

In some fields of West Virginia the Negro coal loader is paid by the ton of coal loaded. Each car bearing his "check" is weighed at the tippie before it is dumped into the loading booms. At other places, particularly in those fields where the miners' union has never had a foothold, the miner is paid by the car. An average car is supposed to hold two tons, but in some places the miner is forced to load them "grave yard high" so that sometimes, in the language of one bookkeeper, "damn near three tons" are loaded.¹⁸ Because of this practice, one of the operators

17 Interviews with store managers of several companies. Cf. Frazier, E. F., La Bourgeoisie Noire, Modern Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 1, Nov. 1928-Feb. 1929, p. 82. See also U. S. Immigration Reports, 1911, Vol. 7, p. 203.

18 Cf. Harris, op. cit., p. 376.

interviewed said, with a smile, that he was getting his coal loaded at a ridiculously low price. The Negro miner appears to be willing to load his car as full as any other loader when asked to do so. An operator, in giving his opinion of the Negro loader, writes:

It has been my experience for the past fifteen years, that the negro is by far the best coal loader. I mean to say by that, that a negro will keep his place in the mines in good condition, will load you cleaner coal, a fuller car, and will also shoot your coal as you want it shot. In other words, he will live up to your rules better than the native white or foreigner.

The discussion of the Negro coal loader has been somewhat extended because some of the reasons for the productive efficiency of the Negro coal loader we have considered here apply equally to the Negro in other occupations. The characteristics of docility, cheerfulness, obedience, and uncomplaining accommodation to the will of the employer are confined to no one occupation, but are valued by the employer in any job in which whites or foreigners are likely to exhibit traits quite the opposite of those mentioned. We shall assume these factors in our discussions of the Negro in these other positions. Where Negroes are found to a considerable extent in certain positions in which their earnings indicate less regular work, it is probable that these other considerations determine the choice of workers.

In summary, then, we may say that in the opinion of the employers the Negro coal loaders are rated somewhat

above the native whites and somewhat below the foreigners. In average earnings, however, the Negroes rank below both of the other groups. Lower earnings, however, do not necessarily signify that Negro efficiency is lower. The fact that the Negro will work where he is told without complaint is probably enough to insure his getting those places which others will not accept. In the assignment of "places" in the mine the foreman is likely to give the "pet pension drawers"¹⁹ to other than Negro loaders. A comment of a former superintendent from Alabama, now selling insurance to the miners, is of interest here. After saying that the only way to handle "niggers" was to kill a few, which he claimed he had done, he remarked concerning my study of the pay rolls: "But that won't show the efficiency of the Negro because he doesn't get a fair show. The Negro is not apt to get a fair show in the matter of places to work. He cannot load as large an amount of coal under such conditions." He says that always some clique controls the mine due to a favored position with the mine boss. He says further, "The Negro is not apt to be in such a position, but does not complain. He simply takes what he is given." It seems fair to conclude that the Negro coal loader is at least approximately equal to the native white loader in efficiency, and, from the employer's point of view somewhat superior. Judged

¹⁹ Term used in a report of a Negro high school senior on "General Mining Conditions as They Affect the Negro in the Kanawha Region" to mean those places in which little labor is needed to get the coal.

merely on the basis of loading average both Negroes and native whites are considerably below the foreign loaders. The explanation of this situation probably lies in the fact that each group has carried into the mining industry work habits learned in three different cultural set-ups.

4. The Negro Machine Man.-

Employer opinion of the Negro machine man is quite the reverse of that of the Negro coal loader. The general opinion of the employers seems to be that the Negro is superior to the foreign worker in this position but inferior to the native white. It is interesting to note, however, that the modal answer given in comparison to both native whites and foreign-born was equality. The weighted averages were 4.77 and 3.66 respectively. In other words, the average opinion of the Negro machine man in comparison with the native white was that he ranked between equality and slightly inferior. The average opinion of the Negro machine man as compared with the foreigner, on the other hand, placed him between equality and slight inferiority. The relatively small number of opinions expressed concerning the Negro in comparison with the foreigner was due to the fact that so few foreigners hold the position as machine men, and employers without experience with them as machine men hesitated to express an opinion. Consequently, six employers expressed no opinion here.

TABLE 34. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO MACHINE MEN AS
COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro machine men with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	0	1
Considerably superior	2	1	7
Slightly superior	3	4	10
About the same	4	16	11
Slightly inferior	5	9	5
Considerably inferior	6	9	3
Much inferior	7	4	1
Totals		43	38
Weighted average		4.77	3.66

Because the number of foreign-born machine men was small no comparison with the average earnings of foreign machine men were obtained. None of the three mines whose pay rolls were studied employed any foreigner in this capacity. A rather close correspondence between the opinions of the employers and the average earnings of the two groups is apparent from a comparison of Tables 34 and 35.

TABLE 35. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO
AND NATIVE WHITE MACHINE MEN IN THREE
WEST VIRGINIA MINES FOR JANUARY, JULY,
AND OCTOBER, 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
Number One:				
January 15	2	\$91.00	2	\$96.25
January 31	2	96.25	2	115.93
July 15	2	73.50	3	74.38
July 31	2	103.25	2	126.38
October 15	2	92.75	4	88.26
October 31	2	72.56	4	76.44
Average -- Mine Number One	2.00	88.22	2.83	92.07
Number Two:				
January 15	11	106.19	6	97.24
January 31	11	119.52	7	91.99
July 15	10	90.79	7	88.55
July 31	10	106.41	7	102.82
October 15	6	106.41	9	111.98
October 31	11	119.52	7	91.99
Average -- Mine Number Two	9.17	106.60	7.33	101.06
Number Three:				
January 15	3	83.40	7	101.57
January 31	3	153.13	7	146.34
July 15	4	109.73	9	136.76
July 31	4	152.10	9	148.46
October 15	5	152.78	7	118.09
October 31	5	127.52	6	134.00
Average -- Mine Number Three	4.00	131.60	7.00	132.92
Average -- the three mines		110.77		112.57

The difference in weekly wage is somewhat less than in the case of coal loaders. In fact, the difference of \$1.80 between the average earnings of the Negro and that of the native white every pay day means that the weekly wage of the Negro is only 90 cents less than that of the native whites. It is significant that in Mine Number Two, the only mine in which Negro machine men were in the majority, they exceeded the whites in average earnings by \$5.54, whereas in the other two mines the native whites exceeded the Negroes by \$3.85 and \$1.32 respectively. A possible explanation of this fact is that in the mines in which the Negroes are in the minority they may be assigned the more difficult places to cut. Be that as it may, if some places in the mines are better than others Negroes would probably have a larger share of the better places where they hold the majority of the positions.

In positions requiring the use of machinery the Negro workers have probably suffered much from the stereotypes of white employers. Grave doubt has always accompanied the Negro workers in all non-agricultural pursuits from Emancipation to the present time. For many years the opinion was prevalent in the South that the Negroes could never be worked in a factory because the machinery would put them to sleep.²⁰ A frequent reply to the writer's questions concerning the Negro machine man was, "You know, the

²⁰ See Dowd, Jerome, Colored Men As Cotton Manufacturers, Gunton's, Vol. 23, Sept. 1902, p. 254.

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Negro is not much good with machinery." At times the tone of the employer seemed to imply: "Everybody knows the Negro is no good with machinery. A coal cutting machine is a machine -- hence, of course, he is no good." Donald Young is probably right in saying that employers as a class will hire anyone whose labor they believe will result in the greatest profit for the firm.³¹ The stereotypes of the employers are, however, important factors in determining what they will believe the most profitable for the firm, and Dr. Young apparently does not consider this important point.

The Negro machine men seem to have broken down to some extent these unfavorable preconceptions regarding their efficiency. Some employers believe that the Negro is inferior in the use of machinery, not because of any inherent inability, but rather by reason of the lack of opportunity. One such employer writes: "You will notice that we do not have any Negro machine men. This is due to the fact, I believe, as I stated before, that they are not good mechanics, and as I further said before, I believe it is our fault. There is no doubt in my mind, that they would make good mechanics if they had the chance. Some years ago when I operated a mine on New River, two of the best machine men I ever saw were negroes."

Some employers, who possess decidedly unfavorable stereotypes of the Negro in mechanical jobs, state that

31 Young, op. cit., p. 125.

they have been surprised at the efficiency the Negroes exhibit. One of the operators, well known as the head of one of the largest operations in the state as well as for his proficient use of profanity, although he firmly believes in the inferiority of the Negro race, remarked: "When we put in machinery here these mountaineers knew nothing of it. I had to teach both whites and blacks what they knew about it. I'm damned if the Nigger didn't learn more quickly than the whites. Now, the Nigger has a practical brain. He doesn't give a damn as to why a thing happens -- all he wants to know is that it happens. I remember one day that a motor wouldn't go at all. The Nigger motorman drove a wedge into an opening in the motor and it went. That is all he wanted to know -- he didn't know why at all."

Not only are employers influenced by the stereotypes of Negro inferiority in certain ways, but the willingness of white fellow workers to work with them is also. While the writer was boarding at the "club house" in Raleigh County where unattached white miners stayed he spent more than one evening with a white machine man. The question was raised as to whether he would rather have a Negro or a white helper. Although his helper was actually a Negro he said he would prefer the white man. The writer then asked whether the Negro was a good worker. He answered: "Yes, he will do his work and half of mine if I want him to." He said further that he never "gets familiar" and "keeps in his place."

However, he thought whites were steadier and that the Negroes could not be depended upon in an emergency. He claimed the Negro would run away if anything happened. He told his Negro helper, "If I get a piece of slate on me don't you run out -- but stay and get me out." The Negro promised he would.

In spite of the handicaps already mentioned, however, the Negro seems to have made some progress in breaking the deadlines into one of the most lucrative occupations in the coal industry. It is not uncommon for a good machine man to make more than the mine foreman or some of the white collar men in the company offices. A glance at Table 35 will reveal the high earnings in this position. Although Negro machine men are not yet exceedingly common, they have demonstrated their ability to fill this position and with increased mechanization may share with the native whites the new mechanical jobs.

5. The Negro Track Man.-

Negro track men seemingly have not impressed their employers with their efficiency. Although the percentage of the Negro group engaged in track work is almost as large as that of the native whites and larger than that of the foreign-born, the employers interviewed on the average considered the Negroes inferior to both. The average opinion of the efficiency of the Negro track men in comparison with the native whites, was that they were slightly inferior,

as indicated in Table 36.

TABLE 36. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO TRACK MEN AS
COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro track men with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	0	1
Considerably superior	2	1	2
Slightly superior	3	0	7
About the same	4	11	10
Slightly inferior	5	19	19
Considerably inferior	6	9	1
Much inferior	7	2	1
Totals		42	41
Weighted average		4.98	4.24

More than a fourth of the employers interviewed considered the Negro equal to the native whites and only one employer considered the Negro superior. The modal opinion was that the Negro was slightly inferior, while nine more considered him considerably inferior and two classified him as much inferior. While the comparison with the foreign-born was more favorable to the Negro than the comparison with the native white, the average opinion of efficiency in this case was 4.24 or somewhat below equality. The modal opinion here was also that of slight inferiority and ten employers considered the Negro and foreign track man about the same. Only two employers considered the Negro as more than slightly inferior to the foreign track man.

22

Although figures for the earnings of track men

22 At Mine Number Three, motormen, brakemen, and track men were paid at the same rate. Separate figures were not obtained.

were available for only two of the three mines, the earnings of the Negroes in both cases were higher than those of the native white track men, as shown in Table 37.

TABLE 37. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO AND NATIVE WHITE TRACK MEN IN TWO WEST VIRGINIA MINES FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER: 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
Number One:				
January 15	4	\$63.28	5	\$51.82
January 31	5	69.41	5	73.34
July 15	3	54.87	6	40.02
July 31	1	73.16	5	67.26
October 15	2	61.17	7	70.45
October 31	2	72.54	7	71.24
Average -- Mine Number One	2.83	65.02	5.83	62.69
Number Two:				
January 15	7	55.10	13	49.88
January 31	7	62.85	15	56.14
July 15	4	56.54	17	50.20
July 31	5	59.08	15	56.13
October 15	6	61.82	11	58.74*
October 31	7	62.85	15	56.14
Average -- Mine Number Two	5.33	58.85	13.17	54.63
Average -- the two mines		60.97		57.10

* Earnings for one foreign track man for this half month \$59.72.

With the single exception of one foreign worker shifted into the position of track man from other work for one half month, no foreign workers were used in these two mines as track men during the months studied. The explanation of the prefer-

ence of the employers probably lies in the fact that the Negro track men are likely to do most of the rough work of track laying. The employers think of the Negro in this role rather than in the more skilled positions. Another factor, however, in explaining the higher earnings of the Negro track men is that they prefer loading coal to track work unless they can make high wages at the less desirable jobs. Mine Number One, in Kanawha County, had one Negro track man who was so efficient that they paid him more than any other track man, Negro or white; they had to do so to keep him in that position. Although the general attitude of employers is unfavorable to Negroes as track men, they apparently are getting their share of earnings in that position.

6. The Negro Motorman.-

"My own personal observation of the colored man in the mines has been that he works best and most efficiently at some job where he can ride. He thus made an excellent motorman or mule driver. There are also many efficient Negro Coal miners," says Frank H. Kneeland, Associate Editor of Coal Age.²³ That the opinion of the West Virginia employers interviewed was somewhat less favorable to Negro motormen than to Negro coal loaders may be seen by a study of Tables 38 and 39.

²³ Allen, op. cit., p. 62.

TABLE 38. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO MOTORMEN AS
COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro motormen with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	0	4
Considerably superior	2	1	5
Slightly superior	3	4	14
About the same	4	16	8
Slightly inferior	5	13	6
Considerably inferior	6	7	2
Much inferior	7	1	0
Totals		42	39
Weighted average		4.57	3.33

In the position of motorman as in certain other company positions no foreigners were employed in the two mines studied. Separate figures for motormen were not obtainable at the third mine. The opinion of the efficiency of the Negro motormen, indicated by the weighted average 4.57, was between equality and slight inferiority as compared with the native white. On the other hand, the Negro motormen were considered somewhat superior to the foreign-born workers in this position. Although the modal opinion of the Negro in comparison to the native white was equality, only six employers considered the Negro superior to the native white and twenty-one of them considered him inferior, the average thus falling slightly below equality. On the other hand, the modal opinion of the Negro motorman as compared to the foreign motorman was slightly in favor of the Negro. Twenty-three employers believed the Negro motorman superior to the foreigner and only eight considered him inferior. The

weighted average, or arithmetic mean, was 3.33, indicating a judgment somewhat above equality.

The fact that the modal opinion of the Negro motorman, as compared to the native white motorman, was equality should indicate that the Negro motorman occupies a fairly firm position in this particular position. Negro haulage employees are known among employers as being quick workmen, but a number of employers expressed an unfavorable opinion of Negro motormen because they consider the Negroes hard on machinery. Some employees have said that Negroes seem to take particular pride in driving motors, but that they drive them conspicuously fast and recklessly.

Although Negro motormen are frequently found operating main line motors, they are more often found on what are known as "gathering" motors. A gathering motor is smaller than the main line motor and its particular function is to "gather" the cars from the rooms and take them to the main line. Wages seem as a rule to be paid at the same rate for both positions. The average earnings, however, of the Negro motormen in the mines studied were considerably lower than those of the native white motormen, the difference being \$5.39 each half month, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 39. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO AND NATIVE WHITE MOTORMEN IN TWO WEST VIRGINIA MINES FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER, 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
Number One:				
January 15	7	\$65.40	7	\$64.59
January 31	7	69.43	5	83.64
July 15	7	54.00	5	68.40
July 31	9	62.73	5	76.88
October 15	6	58.90	7	71.91
October 31	6	57.94	7	68.95
Average -- Mine Number One	7.00	61.60	6.00	71.72
Number Two:				
January 15	12	55.36	13	65.96
January 31	12	62.21	14	65.00
July 15	12	50.76	18	57.28
July 31	11	54.56	17	58.70
October 15	10	58.70	16	63.63
October 31	12	62.21	14	65.00
Average -- Mine Number Two	11.33	57.55	15.67	61.72
Average -- the two mines		59.10		64.49

7. The Negro Brakeman.-

With one exception no position that the Negro occupies in the mining industry brought forth more enthusiasm concerning his efficiency than that of brakeman. The one exception was that of driver, which position is quite unimportant at the present time. According to a McDowell County employer, "Negroes make good fast motormen, but are terribly hard on machinery. They make excellent brakemen;

fearless and very alert." Another employer writes that Negro brakemen are "best of all." The characterization, "fearless," is not without its meaning here, for the position of brakeman is one that calls not only for quickness, but for self-control in various dangerous situations. The opinion of the employer here is at direct variance with the stereotype of the white machine man formerly mentioned concerning the timidity and lack of courage of the Negro in a crisis.²⁴ The fact that this most dangerous occupation of brakeman has a larger proportion of the Negroes in the mines studied than of either of the other groups should indicate that the opinion of the employers probably has a firmer factual basis than that expressed by the white machine man. This is the only position in which the sample studied revealed a larger proportion of the Negro group engaged than native white, with the single exception of coal loader. This would seem to be another of those cases in which popular stereotypes of "Negro traits" do not conform with the actual facts. The superiority of the Negro brakeman as compared with both native white and foreigner is, in the estimation of the employers, greater than in any other position, as indicated by the respective weighted averages of 3.62 and 2.88 shown in Table 40.

24 Supra, p.

TABLE 40. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO BRAKEMEN AS
COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro brakemen with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	2	8
Considerably superior	2	5	10
Slightly superior	3	8	12
About the same	4	17	5
Slightly inferior	5	7	6
Considerably inferior	6	2	1
Much inferior	7	1	0
Totals		42	42
Weighted average		3.62	2.86

The modal opinion of the Negro in comparison with the native white was that of equality, although for every two employers who considered Negro brakemen inferior to white there were three who considered them superior. Two employers ranked the Negroes much superior while only one gave them a similar rank of inferiority. The modal opinion of the Negro in comparison to the foreign brakeman was that he was slightly superior. Eight employers gave the Negroes the highest rank in comparison with the foreign born, while none gave them the lowest rank.

Little difference exists in the average earnings of the three groups in the two mines at which separate figures for brakemen were secured, as Table 41 shows.

TABLE 41. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO, NATIVE WHITE,
AND FOREIGN BRAKEMEN IN TWO WEST VIRGINIA MINES
FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER, 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites		Foreign-born	
	Number	Average Earnings	Number	Average Earnings	Number	Average Earnings
Number One;						
January 15	6	\$52.05	5	\$62.54		\$
January 31	6	57.23	5	60.74		
July 15	9	46.94	5	48.38		
July 31	9	61.09	5	71.88		
October 15	7	54.05	9	58.03		
October 31	5	46.62	9	60.94		
Average -- Mine Number One	7.00	53.32	6.33	60.22		
Number Two;						
January 15	27	48.68	18	50.02	1	32.80
January 31	27	49.64	23	51.69	2	57.40
July 15	27	43.47	21	43.95	1	32.80
July 31	26	47.06	17	58.70	1	32.80
October 15	27	47.92	19	44.92	1	45.10
October 31	22	53.95	16	51.49	2	57.40
Average -- Mine Number Two	26.17	47.92	19.17	48.23	1.33	46.64
Average -- the two mines		49.06		51.21		46.64

There was a difference of \$4.57 between the earnings of the one or two foreigners, the lowest in this occupation, and the native whites, the highest. The difference between the Negroes and the native whites was only \$2.15. Although earnings of the foreigners in Mine Number Two were lower than those of the other groups, the earnings in Mine Number Three of foreign brakemen, motormen, and track men were higher than in both other groups, as shown in Table 42

TABLE 42. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO,
NATIVE WHITE, AND FOREIGN BRAKEMEN,
MOTORMEN, AND TRACKMEN IN MINE NUMBER THREE
FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER, 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Date	Negroes		Native whites		Foreign-born	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
January 15	18	\$49.42	39	\$40.17		\$
January 31	19	60.90	36	56.89	1	66.10
July 15	16	48.47	49	52.38	1	57.91
July 31	16	53.05	40	62.59	2	58.81
October 15	14	57.54	43	59.38	2	58.21
October 31	13	60.35	41	60.29	2	55.58
Average	15.50	53.64	38.33	56.24	1.60	58.65

It is probable that these figures indicate little as to the respective efficiency of the three groups.

8. Other Positions.-

a. The Negro Tipple Man.-

Negroes are not found in tipple work to the extent that they are found in certain other positions. As a result, they are not known for any particular skill in this position. As a matter of fact, most of the tipple positions require little skill. Few of the positions are very lucrative, and the Negro does not seem to seek them. Some of the tipple workers interviewed were old men, too feeble for efficient coal loading.

The modal opinion expressed, as shown in Table 43,

TABLE 43. EMPLOYER OPINION OF NEGRO TIPPLE MEN AS
COMPARED WITH NATIVE WHITES AND FOREIGN-BORN

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Opinions	Assigned Weight	Number of employers comparing Negro tipple men with	
		Native whites	Foreign-born
Much superior	1	0	0
Considerably superior	2	1	6
Slightly superior	3	5	9
About the same	4	18	15
Slightly inferior	5	7	3
Considerably inferior	6	3	1
Much inferior	7	3	0
Totals		37	34
Weighted average		4.41	3.53

indicated Negro equality in comparison with both native whites and foreign-born. However, the weighted averages were 4.41 and 3.53 respectively, indicating that the mean opinion of the employers interviewed was that the Negro in this position was somewhat inferior or, rather, somewhat less than equal to the native white and somewhat more than equal to the foreigner. It is probable that the employers had in mind steadiness of work and the tendency to remain in this position once starting in it. The foreigner is hardly content with the smaller wages in this position and is likely to leave it, if, indeed, he ever starts in it, and a similar statement may be made of the Negro, except in the case of the old workers.

No separate figures were obtained for the tipple workers. They are considered "outside labor" and are usually classified with these workers. A reference to Table 44 will reveal the fact that the earnings in these positions

were considerably less than in certain of the other positions.

TABLE 44. AVERAGE SEMI-MONTHLY EARNINGS OF NEGRO, NATIVE WHITE, AND FOREIGN OUTSIDE LABOR IN TWO WEST VIRGINIA MINES FOR JANUARY, JULY, AND OCTOBER: 1929

(Data secured from pay rolls)

Mine and date	Negroes		Native whites		Foreign-born	
	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings	Number	Average earnings
Number One:						
January 15	8	\$52.67	6	\$45.50		\$
January 31	8	54.99	5	62.03		
July 15	5	44.25	7	43.99		
July 31	4	59.74	5	67.10		
October 15	5	49.99	9	52.32		
October 31	5	47.16	6	45.94		
Average -- Mine						
Number One	5.83	51.64	6.33	51.92		
Number Two:						
January 15	2	47.43	3	40.63		
January 31	2	53.48	6	28.34		
July 15	2	42.96	9	42.51	1	45.64
July 31	2	44.52	9	46.96		
October 15	3	44.77	10	43.10	1	43.40
October 31	2	53.48	6	29.67	1	51.46
Average -- Mine						
Number Two	2.17	47.54	7.17	39.68	1	47.99
Average -- the two mines		50.52		45.52		47.99

Otherwise they have little significance.

b. The Negro Driver.-

Because of their decreasing number and importance in the coal industry, no schedule study was made of the Negro driver. It was the unanimous opinion of all employers expressing an opinion of the Negro driver that he was superior to both native whites and foreigners in this position.

It may be that the explanation of this enthusiasm for the Negro is in part found in cultural reasons aside from mere superiority. That is, the connection between the Negro and a mule, usually without the "forty acres," is a close one in the stereotypes of many whites. At the same time, it is probably true that many of these Negroes from rural Virginia and points further south made the intimate acquaintance of this animal before coming to the mining fields of West Virginia. Employers attest the kind treatment of the mules by Negro drivers. Said one Fayette County operator: "A Negro makes the best driver in the mines. We have had to discharge men for mistreating mules -- but never a Negro. We had one Negro driver who used to put a bundle of hay down for the mule to lay his head on between trips. The mule would lie down and rest his head on the hay. When he heard the motor coming he would get up promptly without any word from the driver." As a result of this reputation for efficiency as a driver many Negroes have been promoted to the position of stable boss, particularly before the mechanization of the mines took place so completely.

c. Miscellaneous jobs.-

We have not discussed the efficiency of the Negro in ^{the} all/positions which he holds in the mining fields. Some of the jobs, like that of trapper, require so little skill as to make any such discussion not very meaningful. Other positions are not numerous enough to merit separate discus-

sion, as for example, the position of drum runner mentioned in the employer's schedule. Comparatively few of the mines studied use drums, a device for controlling the progress of the coal cars down steep inclines, for they are not necessary at many places. Sporadic positions such as drainage man, pumper, car greaser, car repairman, do not seem worthy of treatment since the operatives employed are few.

II. THE MOBILITY OF THE NEGRO MINER.-

A criticism of the Negro miner in the Pittsburgh District in Pennsylvania is his lack of dependability. One of the employers in this district complained that "The Negroes are too much of a 'floating' element." ²⁵ No such complaint was forthcoming from the employers interviewed concerning the Negro miners in West Virginia. Probably the most frequent trait mentioned by employers in describing the Negro miner was his loyalty. This trait, which means much to employers in an industry of somewhat seasonal character, was given by many employers as their reason for preferring Negro labor. An employer in McDowell County writes as follows: "If I had a mine located where negro labor was plentiful, I would like to have practically all negro employees. I say this because I do not have, nor have I ever had any trouble handling negro labor. They are loyal, and will stick to you as long as you treat them right."

This trait of "loyalty" perhaps need some inter-

pretation. What does the employer of the Negro coal miner mean by loyalty? One thing that loyalty means to these employers is endurance of the lean months inevitable in the year's production. The Negro, perhaps partly through "loyalty" and partly because he does not know where to turn to better himself, tends to remain through these times of slim wages or no wages, and increasing debt to the company. Loyalty means also the acceptance of the situation with that ostensible lightness of heart and cheerfulness which have been taken as evidence of happiness and content by many of the majority group.²⁶ Loyalty means further the possession of an attitude of indifference toward labor organization. All these things mean conventional "loyalty."

Regardless of the reasons for it, we have ample evidence that the Negro miners interviewed in this study were far from a mere "floating" group, although the mining industry, owing to its seasonal character and the constant rumors of higher wages in other fields, has always had a problem of "turnover."²⁷ There is some evidence, also,²⁸ that the same economic factor of limited opportunity which has held Negroes in many positions with which they were dissatisfied, operates to make the Negroes at least no more mobile than other population groups. The Children's Bureau

26 Cf. Moton, R. R., What the Negro Thinks, Doubleday, Doran, 1929, pp. 216-217.

27 See Devine, Edward T., Coal, American Review Service Press, Bloomington, Ill., 1935, p. 223, for comparative data on turnover in the various fields.

28 Cf. Allen, op. cit., p. 47.

published in 1923 a study in Raleigh County of some of the same operations covered by the present study. ²⁹ Table 45 shows the length of residence of each of the 639 native white, Negro, and foreign families studied by the Bureau.

TABLE 45. LENGTH OF RESIDENCE OF FAMILY IN PRESENT MINING COMMUNITY IN RALEIGH COUNTY, BY COLOR AND NATIONALITY OF CHIEF BREAD WINNER: 1923

(Compiled from McGill, *op. cit.*, p. 5)

Length of Residence	Negroes		Native whites		Foreign-born		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Under 1 year	62	38.3	132	34.5	26	28.0	220	34.4
1 year and under 3	35	21.6	92	24.0	29	31.2	156	24.4
3 years and under 5	25	15.4	58	15.1	13	14.0	96	15.0
5 years and under 10	21	13.0	70	18.3	22	23.5	113	17.7
10 years and under 15	14	8.6	20	5.2	2	2.2	36	5.6
15 years and over	5	3.1	10	2.6			15	2.3
Not reported			1	1.3	1	1.1		
Total	162	100.0	383	100.0	93	100.0	639	100.0

The Negroes have the largest percentage of families residing in the present community less than a year. However, the percentage of Negroes whose residence was longer than ten years was larger than both native whites and foreign-born.

This tendency of the Negro to "stick" is well illustrated in the present study. In order to make it as nearly comparable as possible we have used the same time groups as did Miss McGill, although we have found it necessary to include other groupings as well as those used in her study, as indicated in Table 46.

TABLE 46. NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING AT THEIR PRESENT LOCATION OF 589 NEGRO MINERS IN FIVE COUNTIES OF WEST VIRGINIA: 1932

(Data secured from miners' schedules)

Time at present location	Number reporting	Per cent
Under 1 year	33	5.6
1 year and under 3	85	14.4
3 years and under 5	102	17.3
5 years and under 10	152	25.8
10 years and under 15	78	13.2
15 years and under 20	68	11.5
20 years and under 25	43	7.3
25 years and under 30	20	3.4
30 years and over	8	1.4
Totals	589	100.0

The fact that she was working in a county in which most of the operations were less than fifteen years old was probably responsible for her use of fifteen years and over as her last time group. The fact that our study included older fields made necessary the additional time groupings for accurate presentation. Our table reveals the fact that 23.8 per cent of the 589 Negro miners from whom it was possible to get this information had been working at their present location 15 years or longer; 36.8 per cent for at least 10 years; 62.6 per cent for at least five years; and 79.9 per cent for at least three years. It should be understood that this table includes both those workers who had been working only a short time and also those who had recently come to their present position, perhaps having spent many years at their previous job.

In Table 47 we have pictured somewhat more completely the mobility of the Negro from mine to mine.

TABLE 47. NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD BY 547 NEGRO MINERS IN CERTAIN
WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES BY NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING
(Data secured from miners' schedules)

Number Years Working	Number of Negro miners who have held each specified number of positions															Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Less than 1	5	1	2													8
1 and less than 2	10		1													11
2 and less than 3	14		1													15
3 and less than 4	15	4	6													25
4 and less than 5	13	6	1		1											21
5 and less than 6	13	5	2	2	1	2										25
6 and less than 7	17	5	2	3	1											28
7 and less than 8	8	16	8	1	1											34
8 and less than 9	7	4	7	2		1										21
9 and less than 10	6	10	1	1												18
10 and less than 11	8	7	5	1	2					1						24
11 and less than 12	6	4	2	1			2			1						16
12 and less than 13	6	2	4	5	2	1				1						21
13 and less than 14	3	3	10	2	1	1				1						21
14 and less than 15	7	4	2	1		1				1						16
15 and less than 16	11	6	1	3		1	1									23
16 and less than 17	7	4	5	2	1	1	1									21
17 and less than 18	3	5	2	2		2	2									16
18 and less than 19	4	6	6													17
19 and less than 20	3	1	2	1						1						8
20 and less than 21	12	2	5	4			1									24
21 and less than 22		5	4	2		1	2			1		1				16
22 and less than 23	7	6	2	2		1				1						19
23 and less than 24	2	1	2	3			1			1						10
24 and less than 25		3	4			1		2								10
25 and less than 26	2	3		1		1	1				1					9
26 and less than 27	1			2					1							4
27 and less than 28	1	2	2	1	2			1								9
28 and less than 29	1			1	1	1										4
29 and less than 30	2	2	2	1												7
30 and less than 31	4		2	3						1						10
31 and less than 32			3	2			1				1					7
32 and less than 33			1		2					1						4
33 and less than 34	1		2													3
34 and less than 35				1	2	1										4
35 and less than 36			2				1									3
36 and less than 37							1									1
38 and less than 39				2												2
39 and less than 40					1	1										2
40 and less than 41						1										1
42 and less than 43												1				1
43 and less than 44		1														1
44 and less than 45			1		1											2
45 and less than 46							1									1
46 and less than 47							1									1
47 and less than 48		1														1
48 and less than 49															1	1
49 and less than 50				1												1
Totals	199	119	102	52	19	18	16	3	9	5	1	2	0	0	1	547

It is interesting to note that, in spite of the fact that the Negroes interviewed included men who had worked only a few months to one who had worked forty-nine years, more of them had had only one position than any other number of positions. Of the 547 miners from whom it was possible to get complete information, 199 or 36.38 per cent had held only one position. One hundred and nineteen more, or 34.75 per cent had held only two. In other words, almost three fifths of these miners had held fewer than three positions, although 19.01 per cent of them had been working in the mining industry for more than 20 years, 40.22 per cent for 15 years or more, 57.95 per cent for 10 years or more, and 80.80 per cent for 5 years or more. Such figures should give clear indication that the Negro mining population is not simply a group of floaters. Of course, that is not to say that the mining industry does not have its Negro floaters, as does any other industry. One Negro miner interviewed had worked during his thirty-one years in mining in many places in Tennessee, West Virginia, Ohio, Colorado, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Virginia, Washington, Oklahoma, and Michigan. Such a miner, however, is by no means the rule, but decidedly an exception.

III. REGULARITY OF THE NEGRO MINER.-

As has been already mentioned, one criticism of the Negro miner is that he works somewhat less steadily

than the native white or foreign-born. One of the times which the Negro is supposed never to work is the day following pay day. There was a pretty general agreement throughout the mining fields with the statement of one of the bookkeepers in Raleigh County who said: "You couldn't get a Nigger to work the day after pay day for love nor money." The probable origin of this custom probably goes back to the days when mining communities were practically isolated. It can be readily understood that these migrants, many of whom had money in abundance to spend for the first time in their lives, were anxious to spend some of it. ³⁰ Furthermore, as has been pointed out also, some of them could not see the necessity for working further, with a pocket full of money. The drabness of the mining town existence in those days when the chief excitement and principal event of the day was the coming of "the train," was another factor in this periodical suspension of work activities. The era of paved roads and automobile transportation has broken over this isolation in all but a few places. The attitudes, however, for which there was probably some basis, have persisted. An old Negro woman who lived in the New River Field until about 1903 spoke to the writer concerning this trait, and the fact that she could not get her own husband to work following pay day.

The general manager of one of the largest companies in McDowell County said his company had made a study

³⁰ Cf. Allen, op. cit., p. 49.

of the question of "laying off" and found that the Negro did not do so any more often than workers of any other group.

TABLE 43. PERCENTAGE OF NEGROES, NATIVE WHITES, AND FOREIGNERS IDLE AFTER PAY DAY IN THREE WEST VIRGINIA MINES, 1929

Mine	Per cent of each group idle		
	Negroes	Native whites	Foreigners
Number One	20.2	17.4	
Number Two	21.3	23.4	
Number Three	13.7	18.8	7.0
Average -- All mines	18.2	19.8	2.5

Because of the difference of opinion between the employers concerning the regularity of work of the Negroes a careful check was made at the three mines where access to the pay rolls of the company was possible. In only one of the three mines was there a larger percentage of Negroes idle after pay day over a period including six pay days. The general average of these three mines for six pay days showed that only 18.2 per cent of the Negroes and 19.8 per cent of the native whites were idle. The foreigners had only 2.5 per cent of their group idle on the average. If these mines may be said to be somewhat typical the practice of idleness after pay day seems to be a custom observed by a number of both groups, but not limited to the Negroes. The judgment of the writer, after a study of both the pay rolls and the opinions of the employers, is that there is probably little difference in this respect. When foreigners are absent

from their work it is usually because of their numerous holidays. One employer said he preferred to keep about the same number of Negroes and foreigners employed so that the Negroes could work when the foreigners were taking their holidays and the foreigners could work when the Negroes were attending funerals. The widespread dispersion of this judgment among employers in different fields would indicate that there is reason to believe that these observances were usual causes of idleness by these two groups.

IV. AMBITION OF THE NEGRO MINER.-

Employers do not, on the average, consider the Negro mining group as being very ambitious. Says one employer in Kanawha County: "The worst trait of the colored men is their irregularity in reporting for work. As you know, their race is not particularly ambitious." This observation is no doubt an example of categorizing the Negroes in terms of a stereotype, as has been pointed out before. Another employer in McDowell County observed: "The Negro is not making the progress in mining that he should. Since I have been on this job I don't remember of any of them working for their mining certificates." These criticisms are largely typical of most of those made by the employers interviewed.

A careful check-up was made on the opinions of the employers by interviews with Negro teachers, leaders, ministers, and others familiar with the Negro miner. These

were of a similar opinion to that of the employers. Says one Negro minister in McDowell County: "No -- the Negro miner is not very ambitious. He is interested mostly in getting something on his back and in his stomach. When I first came here there were Negro miners making \$500 a month cutting coal. Today these miners are without money. They spent it on automobiles, clothes, and wildcat stock adventures. One Negro miner owned a Lincoln, a Hudson, and another car -- and now is without funds. Another man and his wife together were making almost \$1000 a month." It would seem that "conspicuous consumption" is the order of the day in prosperous times. This Negro minister added: "The Negro miner is not content with driving a Chevrolet or a Ford -- he must have Auburns, Studebakers, Hudsons, etc." The observations of the writer, in the fields before 1932, would substantiate this statement as evidenced by the kinds of cars driven by Negroes.

Although many of the employers take the majority group attitude that this seeming lack of ambition and improvidence are simply indications of inherent race traits, such are not at all necessary to an explanation of the situation. One of the most important factors in shaping the life of the Negroes in the mining fields, as has been mentioned before, is the fact that probably most of them did not come to the mining fields with the idea of making them their permanent home. This factor has colored every phase of Negro life, both corporate and individual. He has

not been interested in trying to advance in the industry as he would if he intended to stay.

Another factor doubtless is the fact that the Negro looks upon himself as being in a blind-alley occupation. No matter how hard he may try to fit himself for a better position he knows that the chances of his rising are very slim. One Negro college student, writing on the disadvantages of the Negro in mining says: "One of the most outstanding disadvantages for the Negro in the mining industry is his small chance for advancement. When he begins work as a miner, there is a previously established limitation to the height to which he will rise. He is allowed to work at numerous jobs within a certain range, but beyond that range he does not advance..... When boys leave mining sections to attend higher technical schools, they cannot look forward to putting their training into practice during vacation periods. They must return to ordinary tasks and leave their technical activities off until they return to school."³¹

The effect of this situation, which the Negro feels on most any economic front, not merely in mining, may be to stir some Negroes of great energy to struggle the harder and achieve,³² but it is entirely likely that many others become discouraged and accommodate themselves to

31 Student theme assigned at West Virginia State College.
32 See Miller, R. A., op. cit., pp. 35-38; also Washington B. T., The Negro in Business, Gunton's, Vol. 20, March 1901, pp. 213-214.

their present status.

Closely related to the factor just discussed is the further fact that the Negro feels that he is being discriminated against in job and place distribution. Another Negro college student writes in a theme assignment of his experiences in the mines as follows: "The Negro miner is confronted with many obstacles. Before I learned of these conditions I frequently listened with unusual interest to discussions between my father and other miners concerning them. In these discussions they contrasted the conditions the Negro was compelled to work under with those under which the opposite race worked. I was unable to obtain a clear understanding of their conversation because I was not familiar with the terms they used. On the other hand, I thought it was only a feeling of prejudice, that is ever present in the hearts of most men of opposite races. I learned later, however, that my thoughts were not well founded..... I had not worked very long in the mines before I learned of what handicapped conditions the Negro miner has to work under. The foremen, who are of course white men, are partial to the laborers of their race; the best positions are given to white men and foreigners." It is quite likely that because of this attitude many Negroes do not take advantage of even those opportunities offered them, and tend to deserve somewhat their reputation for lack of ambition.

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- 33 See Bulkley, W. L., Industrial Condition of the Negro in New York City, Annals, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1906, pp. 590-596.
- 34 Cf. Feldman, op. cit., p. 76.

Although the general impression of the Negro group as a whole in the minds both of white employers and competent Negroes in close touch with the situation, is that it is somewhat lacking in ambition, there were some employers who pointed out individual and even group cases of thrift and enterprise. Says one employer in Kanawha County: "I would rather have a Negro any day than a white. You have no trouble with him; he is not always complaining, and is a good worker. You will find him with a garden when most of the whites let their yards grow up in weeds. He keeps his place, on the average, better than the whites."

Negroes were found working in the mines under unusual physical handicaps. One of the best coal loaders

An Efficient Coal Loader -- Wyoming County

of a town in Wyoming County had both legs cut off above the knees. He walked by means of pads on the stumps of his legs, assisting himself with a short cane. Office men at this particular operation tell a story of this Negro miner which is somewhat revelatory of a type of humor. There was a white beggar in the mining town soliciting help because of the loss of a leg. This Negro with both legs gone stopped in front of the beggar, took out his pocketbook, dropped in a dollar bill, and said: "I wuks fo' my money, brothah." Other Negroes were encountered who were working although handicapped by the loss of a leg or an arm.

V. CASES OF OUTSTANDING EFFICIENCY.-

There were, of course, Negro miners who stood out from the mass by development of skill in certain occupations. At one mine in Kanawha County there was a Negro drum-runner to whom the company gave a great deal of extra time because he was a valuable man and the company wanted to keep him. At another mine in Raleigh County a Negro track man was paid a higher wage than any other track man of either racial group because of his efficiency in his work. At another mine in the Pocahontas Field the day the superintendent was interviewed a Negro motorman and his brakeman had broken all records for gathering coal in a single day. They were rewarded by extra pay for this feat.

A general manager of a very large mining corporation with several mines in McDowell County spoke as follows

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concerning a Negro machine man: "We try to standardize our work as much as possible. One day one of the groups of coal cutters at a certain mine decided that five places were all that any one man could cut in a day. I went to one of my Negro cutters and told him that I wanted him to go down to that place and we would give him all the places he wanted and \$100 besides. That night this Negro cut 25 places. We standardized at seven." Another operator in Fayette County told of a Negro cutter who made eighteen dollars a day for six days a week all the time he worked for the company. At one mine in Raleigh County, a Negro blacksmith was paid much more than any other blacksmith of either race. These are only a few of the cases which undoubtedly exist and which have aided the Negro in establishing himself as firmly as he has in the mining industry.

VI. COMPANY POLICY.-

Company policy in employing large numbers of Negroes, however, is not determined solely by the factors we have discussed, efficiency, earning power, etc. There are other reasons why the companies desire not merely a white or a Negro group of workers, but a group composed of both elements. All employers interviewed were asked which of the following employment policies they preferred and their reasons for so desiring it: 1. All Negroes. 2. Many Negroes and few whites. 3. About equal numbers of whites and Negroes. 4. Many whites and few Negroes. 5. All whites.

TABLE 49. EMPLOYMENT POLICY PREFERENCE OF 42 OPERATORS
OF WEST VIRGINIA COAL MINES: 1932

(Data secured from employers' schedules)

Policy	Number	Per cent
1. All Negroes		
2. Many Negroes and few whites	4	9.5
3. About equal numbers of whites and Negroes	33	78.6
4. Many whites and few Negroes	4	9.5
5. All whites	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0

More than three fourths preferred about equal numbers of whites and Negroes. Most of these stipulated that by equal numbers they meant an equal proportion of native whites, foreigners, and Negroes. Some of the reasons given for this preference are highly revelatory of the employment situation.

I would prefer to have employed at a mining operation a number of negroes, a number of foreigners, and a number of native whites. We find that we get the best results where one class is looked upon by the others and try to get advantage of the other class in the way of good places and responsible positions which pay more money.

The negro is more docile, easier to get along with and can be better handled than the foreign born who came to our shores a fully developed man. The Negro will listen to and follow the advice of the white employer or fellow worker (more) than the foreign born. Usually you can select one of their numbers who are of higher intellect than the others, give him a little preference and thru him get all the information needed for proper action in controlling the other negroes -- whilst the foreigner will listen to you - as a rule - and report to his fellow foreigners and decide among themselves what to do that will most promote their own interests.

Split 3 ways they will never agree on course of action in strike.

Better labor control and better average of daily work.

Division in case of labor trouble.

Morale better. The whites lead and that makes rivalry.

The Negro knows he is harder to handle if they have a majority.

Easier to handle. If you have all Negroes there is too much incentive to be clannish. Negroes stick together.

I prefer a mixture of Negroes and native whites -- more easily handled.

Easier controlled.

Balanced labor -- better to control.

Negroes content with mode of living -- no labor troubles -- whites for leadership and to aspire Negroes to higher plane of living.

Negroes easier to get along with -- a mixture keeps them from "colonizing."

Too independent if all Negroes -- same if all whites.

Disciplinary.

It will be seen that practically all of the statements above emphasize the problem of control. Only a very few operators gave any other reason and these two or three emphasized the problem of regular work. Says one of these: "Activities of mines are less apt to be interrupted to any great extent by social activities or otherwise." This conscious policy of mixing the races was utilized by the operators under union control to make solidarity as difficult as

35 possible. Since the virtual destruction of the union in West Virginia, it persists as a precautionary measure against any incipient union movement. The whole problem of the Negro and the union has been dealt with so adequately by Dr. Harris as to require the merest mention in the present study. Much supporting evidence, however, was found for Dr. Harris'

36 statement: "Many of the operators, proceeding upon the theory of divide et impera, inaugurated the practice of mixing the different races."

In the minds of the employers the Negro is a safety measure against the threat of unionism. Says one high official of several companies: "We like Negroes because they are not constantly raising trouble. There is not that 'radical' element among them like there is in the whites." Another officer of the same company added: "The Negro only walks out in case of a strike because he is afraid not to. He'll be the first back to work when he feels safe." Another superintendent in Kanawha County said: "When I came here about twelve years ago there were only three Negroes on the place. Now there are over a hundred. I can get along with them much better than I can with white miners. And if you get in any trouble it doesn't take you long to find out who are your friends. I know because I have been through it. The Negroes are much more loyal. They don't care about organization at all. Often when I needed men I would tell the whites who applied that I did not have anything open

35 Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 220.

36 Ibid.

and would wait until a Negro applied." ³⁷

In spite of this universal stereotype of the Negro miner there is some evidence that the Negro has been loyal to the union in times of strike where he has not been discriminated against by it. ³⁸ A white miner who had been dismissed for participation in the "Keeney" strike in the summer of 1932, was picked up by the writer while driving in Kanawha County. He discussed the strike freely. He said the miners lost because they would not stick together. I asked him whether the Negroes stuck to the strike as well as the whites. He replied: "They are just like the whites -- some good, some bad -- but I believe they stuck even better than the whites." An interview which lasted an entire evening, with a former high official of the United Mine Workers and one-time organizer for them substantiated that the Negro, once in the Union, may transfer this "loyalty" to the union with quite the same fervor that other groups do. One Negro miner told me that the white men at a certain mine in Kanawha County struck, asking for the discharge of the Negro miners. The Negroes, not knowing what the strike was for, struck sympathetically. Finally, the superintendent asked them if they knew what the strike was about. They said they struck because the white miners did. When told of the reason for the strike they went back to work

37 It will be noticed here that the employer speaks of loyalty and in the next sentence explains it in terms of indifference to unionism.
38 See Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report for 1935-1936, p. 40; also Harris, op. cit., Chs. X, XVII.

and broke the strike. In spite of admitted discrimination against them in their locals, however, with only one exception those interviewed who had worked under union conditions said they preferred the union.

39

At the same time, there is undoubtedly reason for the operators' feeling that the Negro is his greatest security against unionism. Negroes spoke with the utmost frankness, even with pride, of their strikebreaking activities.

40

I asked one Negro miner in Wyoming County whether he had ever worked in the northern part of the state. His reply was: "Sure, I helped break the Scott's Run Strike in 1926."

The Negro, like most American labor, is likely to be opportunistic. There is some reason to believe that, perhaps unconsciously, he thinks of himself as aligned with his employers rather than with other workers. As Kelly Miller puts it: "Logic aligns the Negro with labor, but good sense arrays him on the side of capital."

41

As indicated in a quotation from one of the operators some companies have found it expedient to utilize certain of the Negroes in controlling the Negro group in conformity with their wishes. A superintendent of one mine, having imbibed somewhat more freely than was his wont, volunteered the information that during a union "scare" the company was paying several Negroes fifty dollars a month

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39 Cf. Harris, op. cit., p. 376.
40 Cf. Washington, B. T., The Negro and His Economic Value, International Monthly, Vol. II, Dec. 1900, pp. 672-686.
41 The Negro as a Workingman, American Mercury, Vol. VI, p. 310.
42 Supra, p.

extra to lead the Negroes in the "right" direction. They were known as "company niggers." Dr. Harris found that sometimes preachers and welfare workers were acting in this capacity.⁴³ When these methods fail there is reason to believe that in certain places stronger methods have been used. The following quotation from a man in Fayette County is an example: "When I was working on we caught a nigger loading dirty coal. I was with the mine foreman that morning when he went to the place of this man. He picked up a piece of coal and examined it.^b It was dirty and he told the miner not to load it. The miner said that he had no intention of loading it. Later that day down at the tippie I noticed two cars of coal come down. I picked up a piece of it and found it just full of slate. I had the tippie boss dig down and find the check and it belonged to this nigger whom we had told not to load it. We called the mine committee and asked them if they were satisfied that this was dirty coal. They said they were. We fired the nigger. However, the rule was that a man must be caught three times in the same month in order for us to fire him. What we did was to slip his check on another man's car and accused him of stealing coal and sent him to the penitentiary. We were justified in doing that because that was the only way to get rid of him."

It is not meant to indicate that the policy above is usual. It is simply given as an example of what one

⁴³ Op. cit., p. 378.

company has seen fit to do in controlling the employment situation. The writer was told further by a miner that threats of arrest by officers of the law, who are very close to the companies in some places, were also used. However, these measures are most unusual. Were they needed often in controlling the Negro group they would not be preferred for their docility as they now appear to be. The conclusion that the Negro group holds the place it does partly because it is controlled with the minimum of opposition seems inescapable.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEGRO MINER AND HIS EARNINGS

I. EARNINGS OF NEGRO MINERS.-

The character of the occupations by which Negro miners earn their living has already been given considerable attention, as has also somewhat incidentally the amount of wages paid. What in terms of a plane of living do these wages mean? In order to answer this question we must consider the degree of regularity of income, its purchasing power in the mining fields, and the ways in which it is spent. Anyone presented with company statistics, as was the writer, showing that for the year 1929 the average wage of machine men was \$10.93 per day and of coal loaders was \$7.16 per day, may get the impression that the earnings of workers in the coal industry are extremely high; but when the number of days the miner works is taken into consideration this first impression must be somewhat altered. The work in the mining industry has always been irregular. In the early days the usual reason for not "running" regularly was the lack of cars. The inability of the railroads to supply all the mines with cars to load was a condition not corrected until comparatively recent years. In late years, however, the reasons assigned on company day sheets for not running have been changed from "no cars" to "no market." The early problem was the procuring of cars to fill orders already taken; the present problem is how to dispose of

cars already loaded.

1
TABLE 50. AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS MINES OPERATED
IN CERTAIN WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES:
1897-1931

Year	Layette	Kanawha	Logan	McDowell	Raleigh	West Virginia
1897	158	128		197	150	197
1898	199	188		207	158	214
1899	211	190		243	214	240
1900	247	222		260	176	261
1901	231	211		259	127	225
1902	208	249		267	189	249
1903	173	167		215	208	201
1904	200	170		227	189	209
1905	205	163	142	238	167	213
1906	221	211	190	237	189	237
1907	225	205	204	246	216	234
1908	206	193	198	234	201	211
1909	199	158	253	211	186	213
1910	240	210	210	202	237	228
1911	212	189	190	212	217	194
1912	245	190	221	243	247	224
1913	236	171		232	236	220
1914	227	193	214	218	229	226
1915	179	170	174	193	200	190
1916	237	199	195	245	226	232
1917	205	184	189	225	205	215
1918	222	184	203	250	232	224
1920	173	165	181	209	190	182
1921	165	135	172	167	184	155
1922	105	77	173	169	145	131
1923	137	128	141	150	158	158
1924	142	128	169	164	166	155
1925	201	176	241	223	229	194
1926	211	196	238	246	258	195
1927	213	200	229	219	241	206
1928	210	196	218	216	249	196
1929	228	204	247	243	252	207
1930	193	184	207	182	210	170
1931	168	155	176	152	181	161
Average	201	179	199	218	202	205

Since 1897 the mines of West Virginia have operated an average of only 205 days a year. The year

1 Compiled from West Virginia Dept. of Mines, Annual Reports, 1897-1931.

Figure 2. Average Number of Days West Virginia

Mines Operated: 1897-1931

Number of
days worked

250
225
200
175
150
125
100
75
50

LEGEND:

West Virginia
Fayette County
Kanawha County
Logan County
Mcdowell County
Raleigh County

Year '97 '98 '99 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

1900 seems to be the year of steadiest production, the average for that year being 261 days. The counties with which we are most directly concerned in this study, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, and Raleigh, were, with one exception, below the average for the state in average number of days worked during this period. McDowell County, the exception, operated an average of 318 days a year. The highest average number of days operating in any one year was that of McDowell County in 1902. The mines of that county, profiting by the great strike in the New River and Kanawha fields, were in operation on an average of 267 days. The year in which the mines of the state were in operation the smallest average number of days was in 1921, the average being 131 days. Kanawha County had the smallest average of any county for this year, the average number of days operating being only 77.

The figures used in Chapter VI and the present chapter are based upon the pay rolls of 1929. The reason for choosing this year, as has been mentioned before, was because this year was the last recent year in which the work was fairly steady. For the purpose of Chapter VI, choice of such a year was essential. It should be borne in mind, however, that the earnings for this year are somewhat higher than average. Reference to Figure 2 will indicate that 1929 was a peak year, especially for the southern counties in which most of the field work for this study was done. The average for every one of our counties except

Kanawha was higher than that of the entire state, Kanawha being but one day below its average. Consequently, this fairly steady operation means high average earnings in all positions.

From the study of pay rolls of the three mines in Kanawha, Raleigh, and Wyoming counties already mentioned, we find that the approximate average earnings of Negro machine men was \$2,472.51 for the year 1929. The average for all machine men in Mine Number Three was \$2,776.22 and for Mine Number Two was \$2,364.60.² Mine Number One, however, was in Kanawha County and tended to lower the average considerably. Coal loaders received the next highest average earnings of \$1,454.37.³ Track men received an average of \$1,389.85, and the Negro motormen almost as much with an average of \$1,347.48. The comparatively few Negroes employed in outside labor received the next highest average annual wage of \$1,141.86. The efficient Negro brakemen, however, received an average yearly wage of only \$1,118.57. The Negro trappers, mostly boys and old men, were the lowest paid operatives inside the mine, receiving the average earnings of \$848.39.

As has been said, the earnings of 1929 are not representative of the earnings of the Negro miner since that time. Not only have there been frequent cuts in

² Figures taken from company cost sheets.

³ Company figures showed that one of the "best coal loaders" at Mine Number Two earned \$1,986.54 in 1929 and one of the "best coal loaders" at Mine Number Three earned \$2,188.59. It is likely that these figures represent the earnings of foreign miners.

⁴ wages but the operation of the mines has been much more irregular since that time. Figures in Table 51, obtained from one of the coal operators' associations, concerning

⁵
TABLE 51. AVERAGE EARNINGS OF OPERATIVES IN CERTAIN OCCUPATIONS IN TWO WEST VIRGINIA MINES: 1929-1931

Position	Average yearly earnings per man		
	1929	1930	1931
Loaders	1,383.90	936.58	637.17
Pick miners	1,022.26	838.05	912.84
Cutters (6)	1,500.40	1,128.42	935.59
Inside day men	1,181.26	612.45	485.71
Outside day men	1,247.36	900.20	812.04
Totals	1,309.92	854.88	642.76

two mines are indicative of a somewhat general condition. The earnings of coal loaders showed a reduction of 53.9 per cent from 1929 to 1931. The reductions in other positions were as follows: pick miners, 10.7 per cent; cutters, 37.6 per cent; inside day men, 58.9 per cent; and outside day men, 34.9 per cent. The average of all workers in these positions dropped from \$1,309.92 in 1929 to \$642.76 in 1931, a reduction of 50.9 per cent.

Conditions in 1932 were much more depressed than in 1931. In the summer few of the mines visited were running more than once or twice a week and some not oftener than twice a month. Wages were so low that employers were

⁴ See Charleston (W. Va.) Gazette, Feb. 15, 1933, p. 1.

⁵ Compiled from figures provided by one of the coal operators' associations.

⁶ Low amount for cutters is because of the fact that helpers wages are included in average.

reluctant to state just what they were. A frequent answer to a question concerning rates of wages was: "We are paying what all the other operations in this field pay." Another was: "We don't give out information of that sort." Some idea of the conditions in the fields may be given by the fact that at one operation the average earnings of native white coal loaders for four semi-monthly periods was only \$16.41 a half, or \$32.82 a month, and that the mine operated only 37 days in the first 6 months of 1932. With such wages it is necessary for the companies to "carry" the men; that is, to give them orders for food at the company store, charging it to their accounts. These food orders are called "Hoover orders" by the Negro miners. Rent, powder, light, coal, doctor fee, and other charges accumulate and will be, presumably, written off when the conditions improve and work is more regular. In January 1933, one company official told the writer that the charges on their books ran into many thousands of dollars. Because of this condition many Negro miners, as well as white miners, do not receive any money on pay day. They are issued "scrip" with which they may get supplies at the company stores and the balance goes to reduce their debts to the company. One Negro miner in Fayette County said he had not had twenty dollars in two years.

II. SOME NECESSARY COSTS OF LIVING IN THE MINING FIELDS.-

Even in 1939, when wages were high, the Negro by no means received all his earnings in cash. Such is not the custom in the mining fields. There are many fixed charges which are charged to the miner and deducted from his wage before he receives it. By this means the companies secure prompt collection of amounts owed them by their men. The miner receives in cash only what remains after all accounts are settled. Twenty years ago the United States Immigration Commission said in their report:⁶ "All Americans, both white and colored, usually spend a greater percentage of their earnings at the company store than do the recent or southern and eastern European immigrants. This is especially true with regard to the Negro, who usually can draw but a small percentage of his earnings in cash each pay day." There seems to have been no important change in this tendency by 1932. Study of the pay rolls revealed the fact that over a period of three months the average semi-monthly wage of 142 Negroes was \$59.15. Of this amount, however, only \$16.63 was received in cash. The balance of \$42.52 went to the company in charges of some kind. Thus the Negroes received in cash, on the average, only 28.1 per cent of their earnings and the company received 71.9 per cent back in charges of some kind. The average wage received by twenty-eight foreigners, however,

⁶ U. S. Immigration Reports, Vol. 7, p. 202.

over this same period was \$78.01. They received an average of \$52.84 in cash, or 67.5 per cent. The foreigners, although receiving an average wage of \$18.86 each pay day more than the Negroes, spent on the average \$17.15 less with the company. The native whites received 48.6 per cent of their wages in cash.⁷

A good part of the earnings of the Negro miners is spent in the company store. The Immigration Commission found that sixteen Negro miners spent 40.1 per cent of their earnings here,⁸ while 142 Negroes of the present study spent 44.6 per cent of their earnings in this way. This money was largely spent for food, clothing, household supplies, tobacco, gasoline, and for playing in the company pool room. Clerks and office men are unanimous in saying that the Negro is one of the best company customers. One company store manager in Kanawha County said: "The Nigger will buy anything -- anything! -- just so it's flashy."⁹ Another in Fayette County said, in a confidential tone, "If I wanted to make a killin' I'll tell you what I'd do -- I'd have nothing but Niggers on the place. You can sell them anything; they live well, and you can make if back off them that way." Another incident which happened in Raleigh County will show how general is the idea that the Negro is a liberal spender. A bookkeeper was showing the writer which ones of the men listed on the pay roll were Negroes

⁷ Cf. U. S. Immigration Commission, Reports, Vol. 7, p. 203.

⁸ Ibid., p. 202.

⁹ Cf. Brooks, R. P., op. cit., p. 96.

and which were whites. He was in doubt about one man. He hesitated a moment and then looked at the amount of scrip the miner had drawn. He said, "Yes, he was a Negro -- he cut scrip just as fast as he made it."

Some part of this portion of the Negro miner's earnings may have been spent outside the company store. When a Negro miner needs cash for some other purpose than that procurable through company agencies he often draws or "cuts" some scrip. There is usually some one in the mining town who will cash this scrip at a discount of 25 per cent. The company doctor not infrequently adds scrip discounting to his professional services. This practice at certain places is surprisingly lucrative.

The next largest single item of the miner's wage spent with the company was for rent. The average rent for the usual type of mining town house is about \$2.00 a room per month. Only 12 or 2.0 per cent of the six hundred miners whose schedules were taken either owned or were buying their own homes; 98 or 16.3 per cent were either boarding and rooming or living with relatives. The other 490, as shown in Table 56 were paying rent to the various companies that employed them. The average monthly rental paid by these 490 Negro miners was \$9.90. The average rental paid by the 142 Negroes more carefully studied was, however, \$6.92. In addition to house rent those Negroes who owned cars paid garage rent at the rate of \$6.00 a month. One Negro was in fact paying \$4.00 a month for his house and

TABLE 52. AMOUNT OF RENT PAID FOR COMPANY-OWNED HOUSES BY 490 NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA: 1932

(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Monthly rental	Number	Per cent distribution
Less than \$2.00	1	.2
\$ 2.00 - \$ 2.99	1	.2
3.00 - 3.99	1	.2
4.00 - 4.99	23	4.7
5.00 - 5.99	54	11.0
6.00 - 6.99	55	11.2
7.00 - 7.99	5	1.0
8.00 - 8.99	215	43.9
9.00 - 9.99	10	2.0
10.00 - 10.99	37	7.6
11.00 - 11.99	14	2.9
12.00 - 12.99	50	10.2
13.00 - 13.99	2	.4
14.00 - 14.99	3	.6
15.00 - 15.99	14	2.9
16.00 - 16.99	3	.6
25.00	2	.4
Totals	490	100.0

\$3.00 a month for his garage, a peculiar plane of living arrangement. We may estimate, then, that many of the Negro miners studied spend between 5.8 and 8.4 per cent of their average earnings for rent.

For one group of workers, the coal loaders, however, there is one fixed charge which will perhaps exceed or equal their charges for rent. This is the expense of "shooting" the coal. The miner must buy his own powder, fuses, "dummies," and other appurtenances necessary to blasting the coal away from the solid face of the vein. This expense varies somewhat from place to place but averages about \$1.00 for each working day. In other words,

this charge would run from \$6.00 to \$12.00 a half in times of regular work, although the approximation is much more likely to be the lower rather than the higher figure, for the higher is based upon the assumption that the mines would run every day, a condition that rarely exists. The United States Coal Commission, in the "bad" year of 1922 found that miners spent an average of 4.4 and 4.5 per cent of their incomes respectively in the New River and Kanawha Districts for miners' supplies and hardware.¹⁰ However, it must be borne in mind that this percentage was for all workers, not merely coal loaders. It is probable that a slightly lower per cent was spent for this purpose in 1929, a "good" year. The 142 miners whose average earnings were computed worked, in case they took advantage of every day the mines operated, 238 days, an extremely high average of working days. This would mean that they worked on an average of five days a week, hence, their shooting expenses, in the case of coal loaders, was probably around \$10.00 each half, or 16.9 per cent of the average earnings. This estimate is doubtless high, as probably \$1.00, the figure given by most of the employers, may have been a convenient round number rather than an exact figure. Since coal loaders constitute as a rule 50 per cent or fewer of the working force at any mine the figures given by the Coal Commission would necessarily be lower.

¹⁰ Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, 1925, Pt. III, p. 1456.

Expenditures for health maintenance, contrary to the rule in most other industries, are compulsory in coal mining. Every operation has its "company doctor" who receives his pay from the company, which in turn charges it to the miners. The charges for the doctor vary somewhat, ranging from a payment of 50 cents to 65 cents a half for single men and from 87 cents to \$1.00 for married men. This charge includes not only visits from the doctor whenever requested but also the usual medicine prescribed by him. One familiar with life in the mining fields never thinks of the company doctor without the inevitable bag in which he carries a large number of pills, powders, and potions which he leaves with the patients. Doctors have told the writer that many Negro patients do not feel satisfied that their treatment has been adequate unless some kind of medicine accompanies it. Hence, they keep pills made of ordinary wheat flour to use in such cases. Company dentists are practically non-existent. Only in the largest operations are there dentists and these practice independently.

A further feature of the fixed charges deducted from the miner's salary is that for hospital care. Few of the towns have their own hospitals, most of them depending upon hospitals in near-by independent towns for this purpose. The companies make contracts with these hospitals to treat any of their men or members of their families needing such attention. The company reimburses itself for this service by taking from the miners' pay envelopes an average

of 65 cents each pay day. Some of the companies maintain their own ambulances for use in taking the sick or injured to and from these hospitals. In addition, most coal companies contribute to the State Compensation Fund. In case of an accident resulting in permanent or temporary disability of the employee responsibility is thus shifted to the State. Thus, approximately \$1.00 to \$1.65 is deducted each pay day from the miners' pay, depending on whether he is married or single. Since, as we have seen, 76 per cent of the 600 Negro miners whose schedules were taken were married most of them paid the higher amount. The average percentage of the earnings of these 142 Negro miners spent for maintenance of health was exactly the percentage found by the Coal Commission, 2.5 per cent.¹¹

The usual fuel used for heating and cooking by the Negro miners is coal. However, a few operations located in gas as well as coal fields are provided with gas. In fact, one mining town in Wyoming County, although devoted to no other industry than the mining of coal, does not have a single coal fire. In the few towns where gas is used the miner pays for what he uses, the houses being equipped with meters. Where coal is used, however, a uniform charge for coal is made regardless of the size of house or amount used. The charges for coal ranged from 50 cents to \$1.00 a half. The problem of getting this coal to his house is often left to the miner himself, but in some places he may either have

it delivered, for which service a charge is made, or carry it himself. Many employees prefer to select the best lump mined and carry it home on their shoulders each day. Many miners expressed their complaint that the charges for coal were exorbitant. They felt that since they mined the coal there was no reason why they should have to pay very much if anything at all for it. However, the 142 miners whose earnings were averaged had little to say on this score, since they were paying 50 cents a half or only \$12.00 for the year, and thus spent only 0.85 per cent of their earnings for fuel. This low price, however, was exceptional as most of the towns charged double this amount. The average cost for fuel in the New River Field in 1922 was 1.5 per cent of the average earnings of the miners, or \$25.50.¹² These fixed charges, as may be seen, fluctuate much less than the price of coal or wages over a period of years.

All mining towns studied were equipped with electricity for use both as power in the mines and for lighting and domestic uses in the homes of the miners. Some mines had meters installed in the various houses and others made flat rate charges. Some charged so much a room and others charged so much a house regardless of the size of the house. Two towns charged every house in the town the same amount regardless of whether it was the one- or two-room shanty occupied by Negroes who were "batching" or the superintendent's house of eight or more rooms. The flat charge at

these mines was \$1.50 a house. More unrest was manifested by the Negroes at this mine because of what the Negroes considered unjust charges than any other place visited in six counties. These charges do not include all-day electric service in all communities. Lights at some places are turned off during the day except on Tuesday morning when the housewives are permitted to use electricity for ironing. Operators have said this restriction is necessary because of the fact that, where a flat rate is charged, the lights are left burning day and night. There^b was evidence in some places that this contention was not unfounded. Where meters are installed in the homes the usual rate is about 10 cents a kilowatt hour. It is very difficult to estimate the cost of the electricity to these 143 Negro miners because they all had meters and no separate charges were made on the pay roll for lights, but if the more frequent rates be used, based upon the number of rooms, the probable cost was about 70 cents a half for lights, or 1.2 per cent of the average earnings. This estimate is somewhat larger than the percentage found by the Coal Commission, their figures being .6 per cent and .9 per cent respectively for the New River and Kanawha districts.¹³ It may be that the Commission included mining towns which did not use electricity to a great extent in the houses. At any rate, the charges for electricity in the towns in the Kanawha and New River districts investigated by the present study are higher than

¹³ Ibid., p. 1456.

those found by the Commission.

Another charge which is practically universal is for the burial fund. These funds are for the purpose of bearing the expense of burial in case of the death of the miner or one of his family. The amounts which these funds pay the miner vary from mine to mine and with the age of the person dying. The burial of an adult calls for a payment of from \$150 to \$175 in most places. A death of a child usually calls for a payment of about \$50. For this "insurance" against these emergencies the miner pays an average of about 50 cents a half, or 0.85 per cent of his earnings. The figure given by the Coal Commission was 0.9¹⁴ and 0.5 per cent for New River and Kanawha districts.

Company charges for the support of the church are also customary in some places, a system in high favor with the preachers who hold charges under it. More frequently, however, the churches are supported by voluntary contributions. At certain of the mines the amount to be checked off each pay day is determined by the choice of the miner, but at one mine, the one in which the Negroes complained most, the church charge of 25 cents a half was made, and the writer was told by the bookkeeper that the employee who "knew what was best for him" at that particular mine paid it and asked no questions.

Another charge, optional in most places, was for the use of the bath house. Very few of the operations have

bath houses. Most of the miners take their baths in tin tubs in their kitchens. The usual bath house is an ordinary building with several shower baths where the men change their clothes before going to work or going home. By means of a rope through a pulley the miner pulls his clothes to the ceiling above the reach of persons entering the bath house and locks them in position by a pad lock through a ring on the end of the rope and a large staple in the wall. Many of the Negro miners elected to bathe in their kitchens and save this charge.

Thus we find that the fixed charges discussed above make up most of the 71.9 per cent of the earnings which the Negro miners paid back to the company. The remaining few per cent not accounted for by these usual charges may be for innumerable matters. The attitude of many of the Negroes toward the companies is one of dependence in time of need, whether the need be the purchase of some new article of furniture or release from jail after some unfortunate affair during a visit to a nearby city. The company thus makes advances of various kinds and writes them off each pay day. It is probable that the remaining charges were mostly of this kind.

III. PROPERTY OF THE NEGRO MINER.-

One of the most significant facts which, because of its importance as a factor in understanding the Negro miner in West Virginia, will bear repetition is that most

of these Negroes did not come to West Virginia with the idea of making their home permanently there. The very large majority of them came from agricultural parents from Virginia and the states south of it. Their economic values, in many cases, were agricultural values with emphasis upon ownership of land. Their idea, in most cases, was not to give up the farm home, but to leave it temporarily for the purpose of making money enough so that with increased prestige and comfort their lives could be lived out not in West Virginia, but in the places they speak of as "back home." Circumstances have intervened to prevent this return in many cases, and they have remained. It would seem, however, that their break from the land is a gradual process, and even though they remain in West Virginia many of them invest their earnings in farms or in some form of real estate. The Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics reports that several hundred Negro workers in the mines of McDowell, Mercer, and Mingo counties either own farms in Virginia and North Carolina themselves or have near relatives who own farms in these places. When "work is irregular and wages reach a certain minimum they go to these farms until work in West Virginia is more plentiful and wages higher."¹⁵

The effort was made in taking the schedules of the miners to ascertain the amount of real estate owned by each miner. Because of the economic conditions of the fields in 1932 the accomplishment of this task was most

¹⁵ Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report for 1932-1934, p. 9.

difficult. The specific reason was that in certain places it was necessary to give relief to the miners, who were not making enough during the summer of 1932 to feed themselves. If a miner had property, however, the agencies of relief were hesitant about giving to him. The miner, on the other hand, was not able to see why he should receive less aid when he was willing to work than some other miner who had worked no harder and had put his money in food, clothes, or automobiles instead of in land. He looked upon himself as entitled to aid, since his idleness was not of his choosing. The miners were consequently on the alert for any kind of an investigator who might find out they had property and stop their relief. Exploiters, particularly those with white skins, are no strangers to the Negro in the mining fields. They have learned much by bitter experience. Often the miner would stop the writer and ask, "What are you sellin'?" As a result it is probable that the property listed is somewhat less than complete.

One hundred and nineteen or 19.83 per cent of the 800 Negro miners answered the question concerning the ownership of real estate in the affirmative. These 119 miners owned 51 farms, 80 lots, 38 houses and lots, and one store independently. Three others, Tennessee natives, were part owners of farms in their native state. It must be remembered that the ownership of real estate by most workingmen means the ownership of home. This privilege is, for the most part, denied the Negro miner in West Virginia. As

stated before only 12 of the 600 miners were living in their own homes. If it were possible to own their homes rather than rent company houses, it is probable that this list of real estate owners would be much larger.

Fifty miners owned 51 farms in six states. Twenty-six of these, as might have been expected, were located in Virginia. Nine were in North Carolina, four in West Virginia, three each in Alabama and Tennessee, two each in New Jersey and Georgia, and one in South Carolina. The location of the remaining farm was not given. One miner owned two farms, both in Virginia. The highest value placed on any of these farms was \$20,000. Another was valued at \$10,000 while most of them were said to be worth \$2500 or less. Some of the miners would not put any value on their farms. Nineteen of them, however, valued their farms at an aggregate of \$58,850, or an average of \$3,097.37 per farm.

Although only a few of the 600 miners were living in their own homes, that fact did not keep them from investing in houses and lots. Thirty of them reported ownership of 33 houses and lots, 23 of which were located in West Virginia, as a rule in towns or cities near the mining operations to which the miners drive in their automobiles. Four of these homes were located in Bluefield, four in Charleston, three in Huntington, three in Keystone, two each in Welch, Logan, and Hill Top, and one each in Wilson, Institute, and Spring Hill. Near or in Charleston, Beckley, Fayetteville, Logan, Bluefield, and Welch, the county seats of Kanawha,

Haleigh, Fayette, Logan, Mercer and McDowell counties respectively, were Negro sections in which many Negro miners and their families lived. Johnson gives especial attention to Beckley, in which 95 per cent of the Negroes owned their

Home in Beckley Owned by a Negro Miner

own homes in 1928,¹⁶ the Beckley residents representing a larger percentage of Negro home owners than at any other place mentioned. These homes ranged in value from \$1,000 to \$15,000, the average being \$2632.50. Of the five per cent who live in rented property 62.5 per cent rent from Negro landlords. Twenty-two and eight tenths per cent of the renters own property in other cities. The average¹⁷ rental paid by the renters was \$17.43. The writer visited several homes of Negro miners in Beckley, or East Beckley as the section is called locally, and found them

¹⁶ The Negro in American Civilization, p. 219.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 220.

to be exceptionally attractive and well kept. All visited were nicely furnished. Negro sections were visited in all these towns mentioned, but none was as attractive or as well located as was that of Beckley, a center of the rich Winding Gulf and New River coal fields. Some of the 35 Negro business establishments of Beckley were run by men who were formerly miners, some of whom were interviewed. Of the thirteen homes owned outside of West Virginia 5 were located in Virginia, 4 in North Carolina, 2 in Alabama, and one each in New Jersey and Ohio. These homes ranged from the "shanty" of one Negro miner to a home valued at \$7,000. One miner valued his property, four houses, at \$25,000.

The eighty lots were owned by 43 miners. Like the houses and lots most of them were located in West Virginia. Eighteen were in Charleston, 7 in Beckley, 6 in Saint Albans, 4 in Wyoming, 3 in Bluefield, 2 each in Institute where the state college for Negroes is located, and Levi, both near Charleston, and one each in South Charleston, Deepwater, Fayetteville, and Matoaka. The total of the lots located in West Virginia was 46. Of the 34 lots located in other states 14 were in New Jersey, 6 in Virginia, 5 in New York, 4 in Ohio, 2 each in Alabama and North Carolina, and the location of one was not given. The location of the Ohio lots was the city of Warren and they were owned by Negroes in widely separated fields. These lots as well as some of those located in West Virginia

were probably sold as a result of the activity of sales agents. These lots were valued by the miners from \$150 to \$2,000 apiece, the average being about \$779.

Certain of the Negroes, while they reported that they held no real estate at the time of the interview, said that their property, previously owned, had been taken for taxes. Others said they were not sure whether their property had been sold or not as they had not paid their taxes for a good while. This loss of property is partly a result of the depressed conditions that have existed since 1929. The writer was told, however, that those Negroes who come from farms to which they have no idea of returning, if not able to dispose of them, often let them be taken for taxes.

One hundred and twenty-three of the Negro miners owned automobiles at the time of the interview. One hundred and forty more, although they did not own them at the time of the interview, had previously owned cars. Thus, 43.83 per cent of these miners either owned or had owned at some time an automobile, while 30.5 per cent of them actually owned them at the time of the interview. The kinds of cars owned by the Negroes, covering a wide range of price and size, were as follows:

<u>Make of Car</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Make of Car</u>	<u>Number</u>
Chevrolet	27	Oldsmobile	1
Ford	25	Stearns-Knight	1
Buick	16	Overland	1
Hudson	9	Cadillac	1
Dodge	9	Mormon	1
Nash	7	Willys-Knight	1
Studebaker	5	Chandler	1
Essex	3	Paige	1
Chrysler	3	DeSoto	1
Whippet	2	Hupmobile	1
Jewett	2	Plymouth	1
Pontiac	2	Reo	1
		Durant	1

Some of those who had formerly owned cars lost them during the present depressed conditions, the firms from whom they were bought repossessing them. One Negro miner said that he had paid all but \$30 on a \$1400 car and, being unable to meet the last payment promptly, his car had been taken from him. Some of the Negro miners were quite frank in saying that they lost their cars because liquor had been found in them. Liquor law violations according to the employers are probably the most frequent causes of arrests of Negro miners. Arrests seem in fact to be looked upon more or less as the normal thing to be expected, by some of the Negroes. At one of the mining towns a man was interviewed who, while living at the town, was not working in the mines. Upon inquiring what he did for a living, the writer was told: "Oh, nuthin' much, I just makes a little lickah once in a while."

In the purchase of both homes and automobiles by Negro miners the companies take a prominent part. Trusted

Negro employees are often given large "advances" by companies. For instance, one Negro miner at Mine Number Two was advanced \$441.92 to pay on a house for which he had paid completely except for \$300. This amount was checked off his account each pay day until finally paid. While the writer was working in one of the company offices on its pay rolls a Negro miner who had bought a car came in to see about borrowing money. The bookkeeper told him to get two good Negroes to endorse for him so that "if you get bumped off" the company would not lose. He was not to get "anyone like Henry W." to endorse, but to get good workers. He came back the next day saying that the man had come for his car and that he could not get anyone to sign for him. The bookkeeper then told him to get Henry W. to sign for him, which he did, and his car was saved. He was behind one payment because he had been sick.

These loans are sometimes not made through the coal company directly but through loan companies which, because of interlocking directorates and identical officers, amount to the same thing. Loans are made to the miners, as well as to other people, at high rates of interest. The present depression has all but wrecked several of these companies. In northern West Virginia certain of the big coal companies and finance companies dealing in small "personal" loans to miners were threatened with indiotment, because of illegal charges. The writer knows of no similar

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threats in the southern counties, however.

Another source of money, in amounts allowing the more expensive purchases of automobiles and other commodities, is "Compensation" for injuries received in the mines. The writer was interviewing the mother of a Negro miner and the question concerning the ownership of an automobile was asked. The reply was: "No, we ain't never had one -- but the boy had his finger' out off and we think we'll get a car." Company officials claim that miners deliberately chop their fingers off for this reason, a statement that the writer is inclined on a priori grounds to doubt. The crowds, which gather when the ambulance is called to the tipple to receive someone who has been injured, express great satisfaction when the injury is found to be merely a mashed foot, loss of finger, or some such injury. "He's lucky," observers say. "He'll get 'compensation'!" The compensation claims net the injured miner much more than he can earn by working every time the mines operate.

As has been said before, the Negro miners were reluctant to admit to the writer that they held real estate. To get them to say that they had any savings was almost impossible. Eleven miners, however, admitted having savings accounts totaling \$4,617.82, and many more probably had substantial savings accounts. Many were also carrying insurance of various kinds, sickness, straight life, and endowment policies. The endowment policy was seemingly very popular with Negro miners and represents their preparation for old age.

Such investments as those named above are the chief magnets which draw the earnings of Negro miners not spent with the company. As we have seen, most of the earnings of the Negro miners find their way back to the companies in some kind of charge which fact adds to the profits made in other ways than the direct production of coal. In spite of this fact, a considerable number apparently have been able to accumulate and to hold some property.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMPANY-OWNED TOWN

I. ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE COMPANY-OWNED TOWN.-

All but one of the towns visited were company owned. Company ownership is indeed inevitable under the system in which the coal fields were developed. For the most part, the mines were located in undeveloped and sparsely settled country. Isolation due to lack of roads and to the remote location of the operations from independent, self-sustaining towns or cities,¹ was a very real factor in shaping company policies. The operator, was forced in the absence of any other agency to build houses to shelter his men and to provide all other resources necessary to even the simplest and rudest life.² The system persists almost universally throughout West Virginia even though the former isolation has been partly overcome.

Company ownership of all agencies in the town, which means that the agencies are practically out of the control of the workers, brings about a condition for colored and white alike that cannot be overemphasized in any attempt to describe the life in a mining community. The Coal Commission found that miners pay a smaller rental

¹ See Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. III, p.1438.
² Cf. Stark, Louis, In the Blighted Realm of the Miners, New York Times Magazine, Oct. 11, 1931, p. 9.

for company-owned houses than for others; that the occupants of the company-owned house get their fuel and frequently their light at a much lower cost than other wage earners; that they frequently are not charged for water even though it is piped to the premises; and that they may have medical service for themselves and their families at small cost compared with the expense of such service under ordinary circumstances.³ The inference here is that these low costs allow a larger consumption of goods and services on the part of the miner. However, as North points out, in describing any culture we must bear in mind that all of the satisfactions of a group are "not covered by the plane of living."⁴ The same author in another volume refers to a writer who speaks of the present order as a "benevolent feudalism."⁵ Whether or not the limiting adjective above is applicable to the system inhering in the mining industry, there are certain resemblances between it and feudalism.

It is well, however, to keep in mind certain aspects of the situation sometimes overlooked. A part of this paternalism, as has been said before, is forced upon the operators by conditions they did not create. In the second place, because of the fact that companies have to provide all community resources under the capitalistic development of the coal fields of West Virginia, whatever

³ Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. III, p. 1437.

⁴ North, C. C., Social Problems and Social Planning, McGraw-Hill, 1932, p. 43.

⁵ North, C. C., Social Differentiation, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 30.

is furnished the employees by the companies is always subject to their own limited resources.

Another related consideration is the fact that the mining town is a single purpose community. When the mining of coal ceases, its reason for existence ceases and it dies. Consequently the mining companies have in most cases been unwilling to build costly houses and make expensive improvements, for they know that these investments would be an almost complete loss were the operations to stop. The Coal Commission infers that the restricted life of mining operations is an overstressed reason assigned for failure to provide substantial, permanent community organization, equipment and resources. It points out the fact that over 60 per cent of the West Virginia mines were estimated as having a probable life of 30 years or more, running as high as 200 and averaging 43 years.⁶ It further indicated the fact that of the 82 communities which the Commission considered as ranking lowest in this regard 31, or nearly 38 per cent, had a probable remaining life of from 30 to 100 years.⁷ The inference on the part of the Commission that this reason is somewhat overemphasized is no doubt correct. It should be borne in mind, however, that the probable life of the mines was based upon an assumption of the continuance of the conditions prevailing when the estimates were made. Mines do not cease to operate because the coal is exhausted

⁶ Report of the U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. III, p. 1432.
⁷ Ibid., p. 1433.

but because the increasing costs and decreasing returns as the mine is driven deeper into the earth reach a point where the company cannot compete in the market with the newer operations. Then, too, the same condition exists as a result of the competitive system in mining as in other industries: the employer of social vision is greatly handicapped by others interested only in profit who will, in case of his outlay for improvements, undersell him.

The mining industry, like other industries, functions through the agency of corporate organization. Stock holders as a rule ask but one question. They are interested only in the regularity and amount of dividends. The average superintendent or manager of company-owned towns therefore regards these communities not as experiments in social welfare but as "business propositions" with all that the term infers. Mining operations are, like most other industries, what one writer has termed "profits factories." Mining operators are not, in the opinion of the writer, a group of conscious exploiters, as they have often been described. They are playing the game of industry according to the accepted rules of the mining fields; if exploitation is permitted by the mores, only the very exceptional entrepreneur ever achieves a critical attitude toward prevailing norms of behavior. Conformity with the mores of the time and place rarely results in compunctious behavior.

All gradations of conditions were found in company-owned towns. Unfavorable physical location, limited

financial resources, and narrow social vision combine to make some of the communities highly undesirable places in which to live. As the Coal Commission well said, "In the worst of the company-controlled communities the state of disrepair at times runs beyond the power of verbal description or even of photographic illustration, since neither words nor pictures can portray the atmosphere of abandoned dejection or reproduce the smells."⁸ Such communities, however, are by no means in the majority. It should be observed that the newer towns are much superior to the old towns. Thirty years ago electric lights and running water near at hand were very infrequently found. In 1932 none of the towns visited were without them.

The resources of the companies have a great deal to do with the conveniences provided by them. The least desirable of the communities visited were those of small companies with little capitalization. It is to the conditions found in some of these smaller operations that the term, "mining camp," owes its origin. This term, widely used to designate any mining community, is resented by certain of the operators as being a misnomer, for many of the communities have none of the ear marks of a "camp," and, with paved streets, running water in the houses, electric lights, and sewage disposal, enjoy facilities superior to many non-mining rural communities. Bathrooms in the houses, however, are unusual except in dwellings occupied by a few

⁸ Ibid., p. 1431

men in the positions of authority. At certain places, too, it is most difficult to build attractive and convenient

Two of the best company-owned towns

towns because the only available locations are small spaces between high hills. These physical handicaps influence recreation facilities considerably. A baseball ground or even a tennis court is impossible in some of the towns.

A Difficult Location: Negro Section
of a Raleigh County Mining Town

A Mining Town of the Type Built Thirty
or Forty Years Ago

II. COMPANY STORES.-

One of the inevitable concomitants of the company-owned town is the company store. As has been pointed out before, the Negro miners appear to be, in proportion to their earnings, the best of the company customers. Company

stores are a source of a substantial part of the profits of many mines. These stores are managed, for the most part, by store managers who have identified their interests with that of the company.⁹ Some of them take pride in making money for "our company" by charging prices higher than are ordinarily charged in independent communities. One of these store managers boasted of the fact that he had been able to "get back" 46 per cent of the pay roll at that particular mine. When the writer expressed surprise at his feat he showed him the store reports for the years 1926-1929. The gross profits made by that company store for these years were 43.7, 49.9, 50.2, and 47.0 per cents respectively. The manager's figures confirmed his boast. There is no intent to infer here that all company stores operate at these exorbitant profits. At some stores the prices were found to be much lower than at others. A large company with mines in several states was said to be competing with the prices current in chain stores. These low prices, however, existed only in the presence of competition from independent stores; in isolated communities where the miners lacked easy access to independent stores the prices were not low.¹⁰

The Coal Commission made a study of the comparative prices of 54 food articles that in the aggregate

⁹ Cf. Payne, W. E., Behavior of Conflicting Economic Groups, Ohio State Univ. Press, 1930, pp. 100-101. Cf. also U. S. Coal Commission, Reports, Pt. III, p. 1461.

¹⁰ Cf. Rochester, op. cit., p. 97.

constituted 93 per cent of the total quantity of food purchased in 1922 in the communities where schedule studies were made.¹¹

The Commission found that a year's supply of food for a family in the New River and Kanawha districts cost 4.3 per cent more in company stores than in the independent stores.¹² With the coming of the many chain stores and of lower prices since the Commission's study, the difference between the price scales of the two systems has apparently increased. The writer in comparing the prices in individual concerns found certain articles of identical brands selling from one-fourth to one-third higher in the company stores. Although the store managers are wont to claim superiority of quality for their products, identity of brands of many articles sold in both independent and company stores tends to controvert such assertions. In fact one store making exorbitant profits was said by one of the bookkeepers to be selling second quality goods.

How can the company store charge higher prices and yet compete with the independent stores? In the first place, the company store is located conveniently in a central part of the mining community, usually in the same building with the post office, and hence it is frequented by the miners when they go to get the mail. The company store, in other words, is not only a place to buy goods, but in many towns it is a sort of community center where

¹¹ See Appendix II, Pt. III, pp. 1513-1541, Report.

¹² Ibid., p. 1461.

the men gather to loaf and talk with one another. The stock of goods is thus "at the elbow" of the shopper; it is also usually much larger than in the nearby independent stores. Another potent reason for company patronage is that the independent stores conduct business on a cash basis, whereas the company stores issue scrip with which supplies can be bought just as fast as the earnings of the miner accumulate. Finally, no independent stores may be erected on company property. In the more isolated sections this restriction is in effect a mandate to the local miners to trade at company stores.¹³ The partial break-up of the isolation of the mining fields has, however, tended to lessen the abuses of the company store monopoly.¹⁴ Grocery trucks and hucksters frequently drive through the mining villages soliciting trade from the miners. When the mines are running steadily and the miners have cash the trade at these "stores on wheels" becomes considerable, but in less prosperous times it takes very little patronage away from the company store. At one operation a conspicuous sign read: "Private Property -- No Trucks Allowed."

Some employers claim that they make no difference between the employees who trade at the company store and those who do not, usually adding, however, that they feel that the company should have part of the miners' trade since it provides them with work. There is evidence that

¹³ Cf. reasons given by Coal Commission, Reports, Pt. III, p. 1462.

¹⁴ Shurick, op. cit., p. 306.

some companies bring positive pressure to bear on their employees to trade with them. In response to the question as to the extent of the miners' trade outside the company store, a bookkeeper replied: "There is not much. You see we bring pressure to bear to make the men trade here. Of course, (he smiled here) we wouldn't fire a man for not trading at the store -- but he could be let out for something else." At an operation in Fayette County the wife of a Negro miner said that men were out off if they did not deal at the company store. In one of the northern coal counties not covered by this study a judge "scored the practices of coal operators who dismiss employees for failing to buy at company stores and who permit the store operators to charge exorbitant prices for commodities sold to miners."¹⁵

A store manager at one of the operations indicated a certain limited tolerance in this matter. He said: "We do not pay any attention to competition. We don't make the men trade in the store. The only case in which we bring pressure to bear is when the miner gets to shooting off his mouth and fighting the store."

In bad times, it is true, the company store allows the miner to charge food and supplies to tide him over until work is more plentiful. In this instance the company store may render a service impossible to the independent stores, for the independent stores seldom have the ability to extend the thousands of dollars credit needed

¹⁵ Morgantown (W. Va.) Dominion-News, Jan. 8, 1932, p. 1.

in such times, whereas the company store has the entire resources of the company back of it. In some instances the company seems to insist upon performing this service. One of the larger companies boasted that it took care of its men and pointed a disdainful finger at the companies whose miners were being given relief by the county. This company issued a certain amount of food to the miners and charged it to their accounts, to be repaid when work should get better. The superintendent told the writer that he had "fired" several men for soliciting county relief, and that he would "fire" any others who did.

The writer is inclined to agree with the Coal Commission that the company store is still a necessary institution in certain places.¹⁶ That it has not, however, been free from abuses and that its scrip system has operated to encourage extravagant and careless buying on the part of both whites and Negroes can scarcely be doubted.

III. COMPANY DOCTORS.-

Company doctors, like store managers and other members of the "white collar" store and office force, have a considerable identity of interest with the company. The doctors indeed manifest a transference of interest identity more complete than do the store managers. The average doctor's attitude prevails in spite of the fact that, whereas the store manager receives his salary from the company

¹⁶ U. S. Coal Commission, op. cit., p. 1463.

and is paid out of company profits, the doctor receives his salary from the miners by a direct check-off from their wages and is properly not a "company doctor" but a miners' doctor. Psychologically, however, the average doctor is consciously a "company" man. In any case demanding loyalty to one side or the other he is much more likely to be found on the side of the company than of the employee. Although the miners pay him in the non-union fields in which this study was carried on, he is employed and dismissed not by the men but by the company, an arrangement at least partially responsible for the rapport usually existing between him and the company.

Clashes of interest usually occur in questions of compensation for injury. Under the law of West Virginia the claims of the injured miners are handled through the company doctor. His recommendations have much to do with the disposal of the claims of the miners in the operations where he practices. The rate of a company, however, is based upon the amount of money paid out in claims to miners of that company. It is thus to the interest of the company to get the men back to work as soon as possible and the doctor must professionally make the decision as to just when a miner is able to go back to work. The company officials claim that much malingering occurs among the miners who sometimes refuse to go back to work when the doctor orders them. The writer has been present in company offices when conferences between managers and doctors resulted in

the discharge of miners following their refusal to go back to work after the doctor had dismissed their cases. The writer cannot of course decide upon the merits of these claims. It is true, however, that the Negroes in some places voice distrust of the doctors. The writer was told at one operation that the president of the company had a son-in-law on the staff of the hospital to which the miners were sent for treatment, who had them dismissed from the hospital even before cure was complete. The validity of such claims cannot be established, but the fact that the claims are made indicates that the Negro miners are dissatisfied with certain features of company control of medical facilities.

The company doctor, like the company-owned town and the company store, is an inevitable consequence of conditions in the mining fields.¹⁷ Although good and bad physicians may be found among the company doctors, the impression of the writer is that the doctors are on the whole an unusually competent and conscientious group. Some of them have been outspoken in opposing company practices which endangered the health of the miners and their families. Clinics are held occasionally and, in certain places, unusual programs have been fostered by the company doctors. Company doctors in the operations visited were without exception white men. A Negro physician practiced in a semi-independent town in Logan County; he was not, however, a

¹⁷ See U. S. Dept. of Labor, Children's Bureau, Bulletin 117, 1923.

company doctor. Although the doctors have pronounced company leanings and a very few showed violent prejudice, the attitudes were with few exceptions friendly to the Negro miners, some of the physicians expressing themselves as preferring to make a professional call in the average Negro's house rather than in that of a white miner. Probably the Negro miners get as a rule better than average medical care at a relatively small cost. Most of the doctors claim that malingering by Negroes is less frequent than by whites. Said one: "I have never had a case of trouble in getting a Negro back to work. When I tell a Negro to go back to work he does so -- and asks no questions."

IV. LIVING IN COMPANY HOUSES.-

In discussing some of the costs of living in the mining fields we have already indicated that the rentals paid by Negro miners in company-owned towns are lower than those which ordinarily exist in independent towns. Not only is the rent cheaper but other household expenses for light and water are frequently so. Little has been said, however, concerning the terms under which the miner, either white or colored, may live in company houses. These terms are quite different from those he would enjoy under the ordinary laws of tenancy. In fact, a lease used in Raleigh County expressly states that the ordinary relation of landlord and tenant is not created by signing of the agreement

between operator and miner. Its wording is as follows:

And it is expressly agreed and understood that this agreement shall not operate or be construed to create the relation of landlord and tenant between the parties hereto under any circumstances whatsoever, and that no holding over or continued occupancy of any house and premises, mentioned herein or contemplated hereby, after said employment or service has terminated, shall give rise to the relation of landlord and tenant or be construed to establish such relation; and this agreement is personal to said party of the second part.

Leases which both white, and Negro miners must sign in West Virginia do not differ materially from those required by the mining companies of other states. The coal companies build houses because they want to keep a supply of workers, or, in other words, a man gets his right to occupy a company house because of his status as a company employee. When this relationship of employer and employee is terminated so also is the right of the miner to occupy a company house, whether or not that relationship is terminated by the company with cause. The lease ordinarily may be terminated by either miner or company upon five days notice. In some of the mining communities the miner must agree not to allow anyone objectionable to the company upon the premises. In the wording of the lease quoted before:

The said party of the second part doth agree to take good and proper care of the said premises, and that he will not board or harbor, or permit to live or remain on said premises, anyone ob-

18 See Appendix, Exhibit No. 3.

19 See Appendix III, pp. 1578-1588, U. S. Coal Commission, Reports, Part III.

jectionable to, or against the wishes of, the said party of the first part, and that the party of the first part may enter upon said premises and evict any such objectionable person or persons;

The company pays itself in advance by subtracting the rental from the earnings of the miner. The company may legally put the miner and his family out without notice in case of discharge, and the company may withhold all wages due until the house is vacated, retaining \$2.00 to \$5.00 a day for such time as the miner shall occupy the house after discharge.

There is some reason to believe also that the companies prefer their men to live in company houses. As in the case of the company store it is doubtless true that men in company houses are sometimes given preference over men who do not live in them. One Negro woman insisted that at the operation at which her husband worked the men who did not live in company houses were being let out, even if they owned their own homes. On the other hand, it is quite true that miners are permitted to occupy houses in bad times whether or not they are able to pay their rent. This concession is, of course, necessary on the part of the company because it must have a labor supply on hand for resumption of operations when orders are to be filled. During the summer of 1932 the writer found that some companies had ceased charging rent until work became steadier, but these companies were exceptional. More often the charges were made each month against the miner to be paid at some future time. Even where such charges are omitted by the miners,

permitted to live on in company houses, the policy is indicative of a liberal attitude on the part of the company rather than any expression of legal rights of the employee. This insecurity of tenure of both job and shelter on the part of the miner and his family must be taken into account when considering the lower prices paid by the miner as completely positive values. The traditional American right that "a man's house is his castle" has undergone some major modifications in the mining fields. In the non-union mines covered by the present study a man may be discharged for any reason. The unintentional incurring of the displeasure of one of the officials of the company may result in not only cessation of income but immediate loss of shelter by the offender's family. It is not meant to infer here that all companies are ruthless in enforcing these provisions, but their right to do so and the concomitant lack of legal protection of the miner against such proceedings is not to be doubted.

V. THE COMPANY-OWNED TOWN AND LABOR ORGANIZATION.-

The role of the company-owned town in labor struggles is perhaps well enough known to omit any discussion here except the briefest comment. The ordinary civil liberties of free assemblage or free speech inside company communities have been frequently denied on the ground of property rights. ²⁰ The company has the right, of course,

²⁰ U. S. Coal Commission, Pt. I, pp. 170-180.

to expel any person from its land which it does not want there for any reason. No meeting can take place on company property which the companies do not countenance.

Miners in the Pocahontas Field are asked to sign an agreement before employment is given them. The first
21
part of this contract reads as follows:

I am not now a member of the United Mine Workers of America, the I. W. W., or any other organization of mine workers, and will not during this employment, join or affiliate with any such mine labor organization, because I believe the preservation of the right of individual contract, free from interference or regulation by others, and payment in proportion to service rendered to be to my interest, to the best interest of the public and of all industry, and I enter this employment with the understanding that the policy of the company is to operate a non-union mine, and that it will not knowingly employ anyone belonging to such Union, or organization, and would not give me employment under any other conditions.

Not all the mines require the signing of such a contract, but all operations in the counties covered by this study are non-union and contemplate remaining so. In realizing this intention the company-owned town is decidedly an asset to the companies.

VI. POLICE CONTROL.-

In maintaining a non-union status and in times of labor disturbance the coal companies have depended upon the law enforcement agencies to protect their rights as property

owners. At the present time the state police and perhaps a local officer are about the only law enforcement officials to be seen in most of the fields. The local officers or "squires" are likely to be ⁱⁿ close touch with the companies; they are in fact frequently to be found in the offices of the companies, having entered with no more ceremony than the office employees. These officers are white men in all cases except in McDowell County. There, one or two Negro Justices of the Peace or constables are to be found. The state police also cooperate closely with company officials. According to a report submitted to the Coal Commission by the Bituminous Operators' Special Committee, August, 1923, the United Mine Workers have consistently opposed the creation and continuance of the state police in West Virginia.²² This fact would seem to indicate that the miners' union felt that these police were at least more of a handi-
cap than an aid to unionization.

In one county, however, the system is somewhat different. In Logan County the regularly constituted law enforcement officers are augmented by deputy sheriffs who are paid by the coal companies.²³ The system owes its origin to the fact that the local government has been unable to maintain law and order. Nearly 50,000 people live in the mining towns of this county, in which there are but two incorporated towns. Tax rates are very low, for a high

²² "The United Mine Workers in West Virginia," pp. 133-135.

²³ See the Civil Liberties Union's study, "Civil War in West Virginia," for a balanced and seemingly impartial treatment of the system.

rate would be ruinous for the farmers of the county. Since sums raised by taxes are insufficient to maintain a large number of officers for the maintenance of order, the deputy sheriffs have been appointed by the courts and paid by the operators,²⁴ some of the deputies holding company positions as stable bosses, paymasters, sanitary officers, and the like. As the system has worked out these deputy sheriffs as one of their chief duties have had to be on the alert for union organizers. As a result Logan County became notorious for its breaches of civil liberty. A friend of the writer was stopped by one of these deputies for no other reason than that he was a stranger in town. He was simply walking around the streets of the city of Logan, but he was taken to the court house by the deputy and made to show as best he could that he had no ulterior motive in viewing the town. Other men known to the writer were beaten by these deputies. The writer himself was in fact warned to be careful in doing his field work in order to avoid a similar fate.

That the Negro has not fared too well when suspected under this system, Harris indicates by using the following quotation:²⁵

A Negro miner of Logan County tells of a conversation between himself and the sheriff. "Don Chafin (sheriff) says: 'I want you to go up and get around among them men and find out who is trying to organize and report back to me.' Then he told the others, 'Luther is going to come clean.'

24 U. S. Coal Commission, Report, Pt. I, pp. 172-173.

25 Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 378.

And Squire White says, 'If you don't come clean, by God, we will kill you.' I says, 'I come clean, you let me go.'"

This situation was probably not made better for the Negro miners in Logan County by the fact that, during the period in which the Ku Klux Klan thrived in West Virginia, Logan County was strongly Ku Klux, the organization adding anti-unionism to its more familiar criteria of Americanism.²⁶

VII. THE NEGRO IN THE COMPANY TOWN.--

How has the Negro adjusted himself to conditions in the company-owned town? From the point of view of the employers of Negro miners he has in the main made a most admirable adjustment. An occasional Negro of course raises his voice in protest similar to one by a Negro miner in another state:²⁷ "Company knows too much about you! Besides, if they get stuck, the foreman sends up for you any time, even if you've just come off a 10-hour shift any may-be worked overtime and are tired. You can't refuse, or you'd be fired." Some have even gone over to radicalism of different kinds.²⁸ The great majority, however, have shown the tendency to take whatever is offered to them with little opposition or complaint, of which fact we have had previous evidence.

²⁶ Cf. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report of 1925-1926, p. 40.

²⁷ Rochester, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁸ Interview with Mr. T. L. Felts, Bluefield, W. Va., Head of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency.

The tendency of Negro miners in Pennsylvania, mentioned by Harris, to accept conditions that no other group would be likely to tolerate, is apparent in large measure in the West Virginia group. That this tendency should exist is not surprising. These West Virginia Negroes, in large measure, coming from states in which survival value has been placed upon the culture trait of submissiveness in dealings with whites, tend to repeat traditional patterns. The acceptance of less than equality is not new to their behavior patterns. The culture traits endemic to their former homes are in fact daily exhibited in forms which have shown little modification as a result of their diffusion into West Virginia, for, after all, the differences between cotton fields and mining fields lie more largely in material traits and skills rather than in mores controlling Negro and white relationships. The dependence of the southern Negro on his "buckra" finds its counterpart in the attitudes of trust on the part of the Negro miner that his security will be assured if he plays the proper culturally defined role. Reference has been made before to the innumerable matters which Negro miners bring to their superintendents and managers. These requests are frequently taken care of, for a real and lasting affection is not infrequently found between employers and their trusted black workmen. The reward of uncomplaining and faithful service

29 Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 238.

30 See Wooster, T. J., Black Yeomanry, Holt, 1930, p. 15.

through the years is in many cases an easy job and free house rent in old age. Widows of Negro miners, grown old in service, are sometimes taken care of by the companies. Only one company had a pension system. The workings of a system resting on personal relations rather than legal guarantees are occasionally tragic. The change of ownership which sometimes occurs when old Negroes have worked many years for the same company, or the death of a superintendent who has always "taken care" of the faithful has meant real tragedy for certain of the aged Negroes interviewed.

Harris claims that this system of welfare work mentioned above is "more productive of sycophancy than it is of industrial democracy."³¹ With this statement the writer is inclined to agree. It is perhaps, however, too much to expect this group of migrants in the mines of West Virginia, culturally conditioned as most of them are, to be greatly interested in crusades for human rights which do not at the same time guarantee security. Their real attitude, were it to be expressed, would probably be more nearly represented by the words of their more articulate race brother, Claude McKay:³²

"But it ain't decent to soab," said Jake. --

³¹ Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 378.

³² Reid, Ira de A., Negro Membership in American Labor Unions, National Urban League, New York, (no date), Quoted on back of title page.

"Decent mah black moon!" shouted Zeddy, I'll scab through hell to make mah living. Scab job or open shop or union am all the same jobs to me. White mens don't want niggers in them unions nohow. Ain't you a good carpenter? And ain't I a good blacksmith? But kain we get a lookin on our trade heah in this white man's city? Ain't white mens done scabbed niggers outa all the jobs they useter hold down heah in this city? Waiter, bootblack, and barber shop? -- I got to live and I'll scab through hell to live."

CHAPTER X

EDUCATION

Since emancipation from slavery education for the southern Negro has become not only a badge of distinction but the object of a sort of blind faith which will in some way lead him out of the wilderness.¹ Illiteracy, which claimed about 95 per cent of all Negroes in 1865, has been swiftly reduced each decennial census until in 1920 but 22.9 per cent were unable to read and write.² In West Virginia only 15.3 per cent of the Negro population, augmented as it was by migration from the south, was illiterate in 1920,³ while in 1930 the proportion had fallen to 11.3 per cent.⁴ Illiteracy was still lower in the mining counties, only 10.3 per cent of the Negroes in Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, and Raleigh counties being reported as illiterate in 1930.⁵ The data of the present study tend to confirm the relatively low illiteracy of the mining group. Of the 537 miners from whom it was possible to get accurate information only 51 or 9.5 per cent reported that they had had no schooling.⁶ Illiteracy data, however, tell us very little concern-

1 Wooster, T. J., Black Yeomanry, Holt, 1930, p. 186; Washington, B. T., Up From Slavery, pp. 80-81.

2 Johnson, C. S., op. cit., p. 228.

3 Census Bulletin, 1920, Population, W. Va., p. 7.

4 Census Bulletin, 1930, Population, W. Va., second series, p. 10.

5 Computed from Ibid., pp. 20-22.

6 It is likely that a number of those miners who were indefinite about their schooling were illiterate but unwilling to admit the fact.

ing the educational level of the Negro population. The Census asks simply whether a person can read or write and raises no question relative to the actual use made of this ability. How much schooling have the "literate" Negroes had? Is the Negro mining group composed largely of men with one or two years of schooling or has failure to cross economic deadlines into other fields driven college men into the industry? Are there differences in the average education of miners coming from different states? The answers to these questions, concerning the miners interviewed, may be seen in Table 62:

TABLE 62. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF 537 NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA
BY STATE OF BIRTH: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Last year of school completed	Number of natives from each state with each specified amount of schooling										Percentage distribu- tion
	W.Va.	Va.	N.C.	Ala.	S.C.	Ga.	Tenn.	Ky.	Others	Total	
None		33	3	10		2		1	2	51	9.5
1 year		13	2	2			2		1	20	3.7
2 years	2	21	6	4	2	1	1		3	40	7.4
3 years	2	35	7	4	1	3	1	2		55	10.2
4 years	10	41	11	8	1	3	4		5	83	15.5
5 years	7	27	8	7	3	4	7			63	11.7
6 years	10	29	9	6	2	2		1		59	11.0
7 years	4	12	4	2	1		3		2	28	5.2
8 years	19	28	6	4	2	4	5	1		69	12.8
9 years	4	5	2	2					2	15	2.8
10 years	7	3	1	1			1		1	14	2.6
11 years	1	4		1	1			1		8	1.5
12 years	12	5	3			1		1	4	26	4.4
1 year college											.0
2 years college	2			1						3	.6
3 years college							1			1	.2
4 years college	1						1			2	.4
Total	81	257	62	52	13	20	25	7	20	537	100.0
Average number years schooling	7.8	4.4	5.0	4.3	5.5	5.0	5.8	6.1	5.9	5.2	

The better education of the native West Virginians is indicated by the following figures:

<u>Schooling</u>	<u>W. Va. Natives</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
None	.0%	11.2%	9.5%
One to four years	17.3	40.3	36.9
Five to eight years	49.4	39.2	40.8
High school	29.6	8.6	11.7
College	3.7	.7	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The greater average number of years of schooling of the West Virginia natives is to be explained in part by the fact that they have a larger proportion of younger men than do the non-natives. Many more Negroes are going to school today even in the most backward southern states than a few years ago. The younger West Virginians, therefore, have had as a rule educational advantages denied many of the older men. Another important reason for the greater schooling of the West Virginians lies in the character of the school system. Almost from its beginning on June 20, 1863, West Virginia took an interest in the education of Negroes. The first constitution contained no provision for the education of the freedmen,⁷ but in 1864 the report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools recommended the establishing of schools for Negroes as follows:⁸ "I regret to report that there are not schools for the children of this portion of our citizens; as the law stands I fear they will be com-

⁷ Woodson, C. G., Early Negro Education in West Virginia, W. Va. Collegiate Institute Studies in Social Science, 1921, p. 9.

⁸ Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1864, (quoted in Woodson, op. cit., p. 9).

pelled to remain in ignorance. I commend them to the favorable notice of the legislature." According to Woodson the legislature passed the law providing public schools for Negroes in 1866.⁹ In a volume published in 1865, however, a member of the United States Department of Agriculture¹⁰ says: "A board of education is provided for each township, fully empowered to act for the highest interests of the schools, and required to furnish facilities for a full course of common English education; and they may call a township meeting for an authorization of a High School, when the interests of education in their district seem to demand the establishment of such an institution. Schools are also provided for colored children." Whether or not the first law was passed in 1865 or 1866 it was amended in 1867 to authorize local boards of education to establish a school for Negroes at any place where there were more than 15 Negro children between the ages of 6 and 21.¹¹ In these early days the whites and Negroes sometimes used the same school houses. Since the school term was only four months of 22 days each, the whites went from September to Christmas and the Negroes moved in after that date.¹²

After the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1873 Negroes came to Fayette County in large numbers. The first Negro school, however, was not established until 1879 at Montgomery. The second school

⁹ Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁰ Dodge, J. R., *West Virginia*, Lippincott, 1865, p. 18.

¹¹ Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

followed in 1880 at Quinnimont, a mining town on New River. Very soon after the establishment of the Quinnimont school, Negro schools were to be found at Fire Creek, Hawk's Nest, Stone Cliff, Nuttallburg, Sewell, and Eagle, all of them mining towns.¹³ In the southern counties of McDowell and Mercer the instruction of Negroes prior to 1888 was largely private. The first public school was opened at the operation of the Turkey Gap Coal and Coke Company at Ennis in this year.¹⁴ Schools soon followed at Maybeury,¹⁵ North Fork (1892), Eckman (1894), Welch (1895), and Keystone (1900).¹⁶ From 1896 to 1906 one-room schools were established in almost every community in McDowell County. After that time consolidation of schools took place.¹⁷ The original school term of 3 months in 1888 was lengthened to 5 by 1890, and to 6 in 1896; at the present time it is 9 months.¹⁸

Today elementary schools for Negroes are to be found in almost every mining town. Where there is no school the children are provided transportation, usually by bus, to the nearest consolidated school. Junior and senior high schools with transportation provided for the students are located in places convenient to the largest number of mining communities. Of the 6 junior and 31 senior high schools in West Virginia in 1932, 3 and 15 respectively

¹³ Ibid., pp. 28-28.

¹⁴ Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Woodson, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁷ Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

¹⁸ Ibid.

were located in the mining fields. Some attention is also given to adult education in night schools. In 1932 West Virginia maintained 32 Negro night schools with an enrollment of 377, twelve of these schools with an aggregate enrollment of 151 being located in the mining fields.

The state maintains two institutions of higher education for Negroes. The larger, the West Virginia State College located at Institute in Kanawha County, was established by an act of the legislature in 1891 and opened its doors in 1893.²⁰

The value of the buildings and grounds of this institution was estimated in 1927 by the federal bureau of education at \$1,025,848.²¹

This college was admitted to membership by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges in 1927 and its graduates are admitted as full candidates for advanced degrees at such universities as Ohio State, Chicago, and Columbia.²²

The following courses are offered: Four years in liberal arts leading to the degrees of B. A. and B. S.; four years in education leading to the degree of B. S. in Education and a state teachers certificate; four years in home economics leading to the degree of B. S. in Home Economics and a state teachers certificate; four years in music leading to the degree of B. Mus.; four years in commerce leading to the

19 W. Va. Educational Directory, 1931-32, p. 17.

20 Lewis, Virgil A., West Virginia, W. Va. Commission of the La. Purchase Exposition, 1902, pp. 122-123.

21 U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Survey of Negro Colleges and Universities, Bulletin No. 7, 1928, p. 954.

22 Ibid., p. 625.

degree of B. S. in Business Administration; four years in Agriculture leading to the degree of B. S. in Agriculture; and four years in mechanic arts leading to the degree of B. S. in Mechanic Arts. Besides the courses leading to degrees are a two-year course in pre-medicine and a two-year course in normal training leading to a state elementary

teachers certificate.²³ Concerning the work of this insti-

tution the federal survey said:²⁴ "The West Virginia

Collegiate Institute²⁵ for many years has been rendering an excellent service to society in the education and advancement of the negro race." At this institution the aggregate fees for the child of a West Virginia citizen are about

\$20.00 a year, while the non-resident must pay about \$75.00.

Board may be obtained at the college for \$4.00 a week and a room in the dormitories costs from \$9.00 to \$13.50 a semester. The non-resident student must pay double the amount

paid by the West Virginia student.²⁶ Similar low fees are

charged at a second institution, the Bluefield State Teachers College, opened in Mercer County in 1895. This institution, devoted primarily to teacher training has²⁷ several buildings and more than eight acres of campus.

The West Virginia state-supported colleges offer no courses in law, medicine, and dentistry. They emphasize,

²³ Ibid., p. 639.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 638.

²⁵ Since the survey the name of the institution has been changed to West Virginia State College.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 626.

²⁷ Lewis, V. A., op. cit., p. 123.

as do most of the Negro colleges throughout the country,
preprofessional training.²⁸ If, however, a West Virginia
Negro student who has completed 2 years of college work
desires to pursue special courses not offered in West
Virginia State College but offered in white colleges in the
state, he may have his tuition expenses paid in a college
of his choice outside the state to an amount equal to the
difference between the tuition expense charged residents
and non-residents at West Virginia University. In order to
benefit by this provision the student must have been a
citizen of West Virginia for at least 5 years.²⁹ The intent
of the legislature in passing this law was to equalize the
difference between the greater variety of professional work
offered in the white and Negro state colleges.

The greatly disproportionate share of the Negro
and white groups in the educational funds of so many states
following a policy of segregated schools is not found in
West Virginia. According to the figures based on the
National Educational Association's study of "The Ability of
States to Support Education" the amount per year spent per
educable child in West Virginia for Negroes was \$51.59 and
for whites \$53.79.³⁰ Only two other southern or border
states, Missouri and Delaware, spend more per educable
child for Negro education than does West Virginia. A com-
parison of proportion of educational funds received by

28 Survey of Negro Colleges and Universities, p. 33.

29 Correspondence with W. Va. State Dept. of Education.

30 Johnson, op. cit., p. 261.

Negroes in West Virginia with that in the other 16 states with separate schools for the two races may be made by reference to the following list of expenditures per educable child:

	<u>Negro</u>	<u>White</u>
South Carolina	\$ 4.48	\$45.45
Alabama	5.45	37.63
Georgia	7.44	35.34
Louisiana	8.02	46.67
Mississippi	9.34	42.17
North Carolina	11.06	36.70
Florida	11.41	75.07
Arkansas	11.60	21.15
Virginia	14.86	54.21
Tennessee	20.15	33.47
Kentucky	26.57	26.57
Texas	28.34	40.04
Maryland	29.58	59.70
Oklahoma	31.65	50.04
West Virginia	51.59	52.79
Missouri	51.90	67.30
Delaware	53.40	47.16

In 1929 the following bill, written by William W. Sanders, State Supervisor of Negro Schools, and introduced by T. Edward Hill, Negro legislator from McDowell County, was passed by the State Legislature:

Salaries of Negro teachers shall be the same as salaries of other teachers in the same district, independent district, city or town with the same training and experience, and holding similar credentials. Any board of education failing to comply with the provisions of this act may be compelled to do so by mandamus.

Inquiry was made in all counties in regard to the actual effects of this law on the payment of salaries to Negro and white teachers. Elementary, secondary, and college teachers

31 Ibid.

32 Acts of the W. Va. Legislature, 1929, Section 67-A.

were pretty well agreed that elementary teachers were paid approximately the same salaries as whites. All alleged some discrimination in the salaries paid to high school and college teachers, and especially to school principals. According to the State Supervisor of Negro Schools the Negro teachers and principals are, on the average, better trained than the white teachers because of the economic restrictions placed upon the Negro in other fields and the resultant competition between them for teaching positions.³³ Assuming equality of training of white and Negro principals of elementary schools the following comparison between the average annual salaries in the mining fields indicate some difference in favor of the whites in all counties studied as shown in Table 63:³⁴

TABLE 63. COMPARISON OF AVERAGE SALARIES OF NEGRO AND WHITE PRINCIPALS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THE MINING FIELDS OF FIVE COUNTIES OF WEST VIRGINIA: 1931-32
(Compiled from figures in the West Virginia Educational Directory, 1931-32, pp. 84-137)

County	Number of schools		Average salary	
	Negro	White	Negro	White
Fayette	10	25	\$1,052.00	\$1,245.16
Kanawha	4	14	1,102.50	1,259.57
Logan	5	31	920.00	1,107.74
McDowell	23	30	1,311.96	1,607.73
Raleigh	14	32	1,123.93	1,124.22
All counties	56	132	1,168.57	1,267.50

33 Interview with W. W. Sanders, State Supervisor of Negro schools.

34 Figures were available only for elementary principals.

Accounting for the disparity between the salaries paid Negroes and whites in the secondary schools and colleges a man in a high administrative position in one of the state Negro colleges said: "Those people who want to be sincere about the matter tell us that it is a matter of demand and supply. While they may have to pay a good sum to get a white person to do a certain job they can get a Negro for less because the white may do other things and the Negro may not. He has to teach, so they are paying on a basis of demand and supply." In spite of the discrimination which may still exist, notwithstanding the legal requirement of strict equality, the salaries of Negro teachers are relatively high. The average monthly salary for elementary teachers in 1926-1927 was \$81.50, the salaries of only two other states, Oklahoma with an average salary of \$85.83 and Texas with an average salary of \$87.70, being higher.³⁵

Comparable figures were not available for high school salaries, but the federal survey of Negro colleges and universities reported the scale of salaries paid at West Virginia State College as above the average in Negro institutions.³⁶

In a letter to the writer an official of the West Virginia Department of Education says:³⁷ "...the educational advantages offered Negroes in mining sections are

35 Newbold, N. C., Common Schools for Negroes in the South, Annals, Vol. CXXXIX, Nov. 1928, p. 217.

36 U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 7, 1928, p. 636.

37 Letter from I. J. K. Wells, W. Va. Dept. of Education.

the same as those offered to whites in the same communities. In many instances the schools provided are superior to those of other communities except cities." The observations of the writer throughout the mining counties would lead to a substantial agreement with this statement so far as buildings are concerned. The types of school buildings vary from county to county and from town to town but the fluctuation of standards is found in both white and Negro schools. The Negro school, in fact, is superior to the white school in some communities. In one of the large mining towns in McDowell County the white high school basket ball team plays its games in the Negro high school because of superior facilities. Several of the Negro high schools to which the sons and daughters of miners come compare favorably with those in the largest cities of the state. Property valuations in the mining sections are usually higher than in strictly rural districts so that adequate tax money is available for the support of adequate schools for both white and Negro pupils.

TYPES OF NEGRO HIGH SCHOOLS

- (A) Elkhorn District Colored High School, McDowell County.
- (B) Aracoma High School, Logan County.
- (C) Gary High School, McDowell County.

TYPES OF NEGRO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- (A) Omar School, Logan County.
- (B) School formerly used by white children, Wyoming County.
- (C) Raleigh School, Raleigh County.

Small junior high school,
Kanawha County.

Apparently Negroes throughout the State of West Virginia are taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered them. The proportion of Negroes from 5 to 20 years old in all schools in West Virginia was, according to the 1930 census, almost as high as the proportion of the native whites, the percentages being respectively 66.0 and 66.3.³⁸ The percentage of each racial and national group attending school is shown in Table 64:

³⁸ Fifteenth Census, Population Bulletin, W. Va., Composition and Characteristics of the Population, p. 9.

TABLE 64. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF PERSONS FROM 5 TO 20 YEARS OF AGE IN URBAN AND RURAL DISTRICTS IN WEST VIRGINIA BY RACE AND NATIONALITY: 1930
(Compiled from Census Population Bulletin, West Virginia, Composition and Characteristics of the Population, 1930, p. 9)

District	All Classes	Native white-native parentage	Native white-foreign or mixed parentage	Foreign-born white	Negro
The State	66.6	66.3	71.2	50.6	66.0
Urban	69.8	70.0	70.4	52.5	69.2
Rural	65.5	65.2	71.7	49.4	65.0
Rural-farm	65.9	66.0	69.4	(a)	56.5
Rural-nonfarm	65.3	64.6	71.9	49.4	65.5

(a) Only 34 children.

Practically all of the mining towns fall under the classification of rural-nonfarm. Apparently a larger proportion of the children of Negro miners attend school than do the children of any other group except the children of foreign or mixed parentage.

A striking difference between the Negro school population in West Virginia and most of the other southern and border states is in the higher proportion of pupils in the secondary schools.³⁹ The number and proportion of Negro pupils in the schools of eight southern and border states is shown in Table 65:

TABLE 65. NEGRO PUPILS ENROLLED IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CERTAIN STATES
(Compiled from Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 20, 1931, p. 73)

State	Number of Negro pupils enrolled			Per cent enrolled		
	Elementary schools	Secondary schools	Total	Elementary schools	Secondary schools	Total
West Virginia	23,414	2,724	26,138	89.6	10.4	100.0
Delaware	6,144	587	6,731	91.3	8.7	100.0
Kentucky	43,436	4,100	47,536	91.4	8.6	100.0
North Carolina	244,413	15,182	259,595	94.2	5.8	100.0
Virginia	146,165	7,481	153,646	95.1	4.9	100.0
South Carolina	212,936	8,234	221,170	96.3	3.7	100.0
Alabama	188,356	6,375	194,731	96.7	3.3	100.0
Georgia	238,498	6,543	245,041	97.3	2.7	100.0

³⁹ See U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1931, No. 20, p. 73.

The Census figures of 1930 show that in the rural-nonfarm districts of West Virginia a larger proportion of the Negro children between the ages of 14 and 20 attend school than the children of any other racial or national group.⁴⁰ Since these ages presumably are likely to be those of high school children it seems safe to conclude that many of the children of Negro miners attend high school. Schedules taken in the present study revealed the fact that of the 552 children of Negro miners in school 440, or 79.7 per cent were in elementary schools, 101 or 18.3 per cent were in high schools, and 11 or 2.0 per cent were in college. Some omissions were necessary in computing these figures owing to the fact that Negro miners whose homes had been broken were unable to give complete data concerning their children.

Study of the ages and school status of 541 children of Negro miners in elementary and secondary schools revealed considerable retardation and some acceleration as shown in Tables 66 and 67. In Table 66 the figures between the zigzag lines show the number of pupils in their normal grades; i. e., ages six and seven years are considered normal for the first grade; seven and eight for the second grade; and so on. The figures listed to the left and below the line indicate retardation; the figures to the right and above the line indicate acceleration. The extent of the retardation or acceleration may be estimated by the relative length of the column of figures above or below the line.

⁴⁰ Fifteenth Census, Population Bulletin, West Virginia, Composition and Characteristics of the Population, p. 9.

Table 67 shows the number and percentage of pupils retarded, accelerated and in their normal grades.

TABLE 66. GRADE IN SCHOOL OF 541 CHILDREN OF NEGRO MINERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Age in years	School grade												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
6	22	4											26
7	24	26	8	1									59
8	8	27	20	6									61
9	1	4	18	10	9								42
10	1	6	10	18	16	6	3						60
11			4	6	12	7		1					30
12		1	5	6	15	9	8	1	1				46
13			1	3	5	9	7	2	1	1	1		30
14			2	2	6	7	11	10	7				45
15						2	8	7	5	3	1		26
16			1	1	1	2	7	8	8	6	4	2	40
17			1			1	1	5	8	4	9	5	34
18				1			1	2	2	2	8	8	24
19					1	1				4	3	2	11
20 and over								1	1		2	3	7
Total	56	68	70	54	65	44	46	37	33	20	28	20	541

TABLE 67. NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF NEGRO MINERS RETARDED, ACCELERATED AND IN NORMAL GRADES: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

School grade	Number of children			Total
	Retarded	Accelerated	In normal grades	
1	10		46	56
2	11	4	53	68
3	24	8	38	70
4	19	7	28	54
5	28	9	28	65
6	22	6	16	44
7	28	3	15	46
8	23	2	12	37
9	19	2	12	33
10	10	1	9	20
11	13	2	13	28
12	5	2	13	20
Totals:				
Number	212	46	283	541
Per cent	39.2	8.5	52.3	100.0

The sons and daughters of miners compose a large part of the student bodies of the two state Negro colleges. According to the Dean of the Bluefield State Teachers College 333 or 93.9 per cent of the 247 West Virginia students enrolled in that institution in 1932-33 are children of miners.⁴¹ The West Virginia State College, with an enrollment of 444 West Virginia students in 1932-33, keeps no record of the occupation of the parents of their students. The large number of students in this institution from the mining counties, however, indicates that here too the children of miners form a substantial part of the enrollment although not so large as in the case of the former college.⁴² At Bluefield State Teachers College only 11, or 4.3 per cent of the student body, come from other states. The number of students in each college from the mining counties is shown in Table 68.

41 Correspondence and interview with Dean H. L. Dickason of Bluefield State Teachers College.

42 About one fourth of the students come from other states, principally North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. (Correspondence with Dean David A. Lane, Jr., of West Virginia State College.)

TABLE 68. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN STATE NEGRO COLLEGES OF WEST VIRGINIA BY HOME COUNTY OR STATE: 1932
(Compiled from figures furnished by deans of the two colleges)

Home county or state	Number of Negro miners 1931	Number of Negro students enrolled			
		West Virginia State	Bluefield State	Total	
Barbour	117	1		1	
Boone	289	1		1	
Brooke	240	7	1	8	
FAYETTE*	3,060	43	15	58	
Greenbrier	221	12	1	13	
Harrison	167	8		8	
KANAWHA	1,054	173 (a)	12	185	
LOGAN	2,212	12	4	16	
MCDOWELL	6,092	40	32	72	
Marion	893	13		13	
Marshall	106	1		1	
MERCER	965	23	150 (a)	173	
Mingo	610	10		10	
Monongalia	591	8		8	
Ohio	439	8	2	10	
RALEIGH	3,632	21	15	36	
Taylor	20		1	1	
Totals:					
Mining counties		381	233	614	
Other counties		63	14	77	
Total W. Va.:					
Number		444	247	691	
Per cent		85.8	93.9	11.1	
Other states		146	11	157	
Total enrollment					
		590	258	848	

* Counties covered in the present study in capitals.

(a) County in which college is located.

The enrollment of Negroes in the two colleges in 1932-33 is somewhat smaller than in 1931-32, having dropped in West Virginia State from 652 to 590.⁴³ At Bluefield State the drop in the number of children of miners in 1932-33 has been sharper than for the children of any other occupational group, an effect of the hard times, especially in the coal industry.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Correspondence with Dean Dickason.

In spite of the large proportion of college students from the mining counties it is likely that only a small proportion of the sons and daughters of miners ever go to college. According to a McDowell County teacher about 5 per cent of all high school graduates go to college. Apparently a large number of the children stop their formal education after the completion of the eighth grade. The educational status of 198 working children of miners concerning whom it was possible to get this information is shown in Table 69.

TABLE 69. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF 198 WORKING CHILDREN OF NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Grade finished	Number of children having finished each specified grade	Per cent
None	1	.5
1	1	.5
2	2	1.0
3	6	3.0
4	21	10.6
5	12	6.1
6	21	10.6
7	17	8.6
8	56	28.3
9	18	9.1
10	7	3.5
11	8	4.0
12	21	10.6
1 year college	1	.5
2 years college	6	3.0
3 years college	2	1.0
4 years college	4	2.0
Total	198	100.0

- 45 Owing to the inability of many of the miners to state accurately the education of their children who are now working, this table represents probably not more than 60 per cent of all working children. Consequently any conclusions drawn from it must be of a highly tentative nature.

The average education of this group of working children is 8.2 years, exactly 3 years more than the average of the miners.

The State of West Virginia, while it provides separate schools for the two races, has made no distinction between the type of studies offered in the elementary and secondary schools. Says Mr. U. H. Prunty, President of the West Virginia State Teachers' Association,⁴⁶ "So far as the curriculum is concerned there is absolutely no difference in the type of education offered to the Negro children in West Virginia in comparison with that offered the white children. When our course of study was last revised it included in specific detail the offerings to be given for all schools. The only basis for differentiation was that of size." Like most states West Virginia offers very little opportunity for vocational training in Negro schools.⁴⁷

West Virginia State College, beginning in the period when Booker T. Washington's ideas on vocational education were so popular, has always provided work in "mechanic arts" and agriculture. The students for some years have manifested very little interest in the vocational work. In 1926-27 only 9 students were enrolled in the four-year vocational courses and since 1921 the enrollment wavered between 6 and 9 students a year, only 2 out of 20 freshmen so enrolled completing the course.⁴⁸ Since 1926-27, however, apparently

⁴⁶ The Negro teachers' organization of W. Va.

⁴⁷ Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 453.

⁴⁸ U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Education, 1928, Bulletin No. 7, p. 633.

some renewal of interest in these courses seems to have occurred as 39 men are enrolled in mechanic arts and 11 in agriculture in 1932-33. The enrollment in the different courses in 1932-33 is as follows:

<u>Courses</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Arts	63	49	112
Science	76	20	96
Music	6	13	19
Business	26	29	55
Home Economics	--	39	39
A B in Education ...	--	23	23
Mechanic Arts	39	--	39
Agriculture	11	--	11
Pre-Medical	8	1	9
B S in Education ...	54	115	169
Specials	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>18</u>
Totals	292	298	590

Neither state college offers specific courses in mining although the West Virginia State College offered, in the summer of 1929 in cooperation with West Virginia University, a course in "The Principles of Coal Mining." The content of the courses in "Essentials of Economics," "Labor Problems," "Rural Problems in Education," and "The Family" is based largely upon material from mining communities. ⁴⁹ Bluefield State College has, as has been pointed out before, offered "First Aid" courses by the Negro safety director of the West Virginia Department of Mines.

In spite of a curriculum identical with that of the white schools, the Negro schools have doubtless aided the development of race consciousness in the children of

⁴⁹ Correspondence with Dean Lane.

the miners. Interviews with the teachers and their students substantiate this point of view. Said a Negro teacher:

"Although there is nothing in the offerings of the schools to suggest racial propaganda, still there is an attempt made to supplement, correlate, and interpret history and all material in the traditional courses in the light of Negro contributions and his (the Negro's) relationship to all knowledge. This, I think, is the distinct contribution of the Negro school." Another teacher writes: "The Negro child in school learns that he has a great handicap in the color of his face. He learns that he does not have a chance to be the president of the United States; a Governor of the State of West Virginia; sheriff of the county; or a judge; while on the other hand, every white boy learns that he has a chance to achieve any of these positions. The Negro child has to fight hard in order to keep from getting the inferiority complex. I believe that the history of the Negro should be made compulsory for both groups to study."

One effect of the teaching of racial history and association with the type of teacher which the writer found with few exceptions in the mining fields is a heightened racial self-respect. At the same time the process of assimilation of white standards has been more rapid for many of these children than for their parents, thereby creating a wide gap between them. It is inevitable that in such a situation some are bewildered by the conflict of standards, family tensions increase, and family stability

is shattered. The hypersensitivity concomitant with the development of the racial psychosis leads many to see in the mining situation only racial exploitation. Seeing no hope at home they leave to face the deadlines of other industries and other places. Some are successful; others return in defeat to add their more articulate voices to those of their elders in the chorus of discontent.

CHAPTER XI

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

Many white persons in the United States consider the Negroes a happy, carefree, well satisfied group. In view of the restlessness indicated by the continued migration of southern Negroes from the states of their birth to the less familiar and more idealized states of the north these traits would seem to be superficial and compensatory rather than real. There can be little doubt that Negro farmers of the south have come north in quest of happiness, "to have a better time" or "to get more enjoyment out of life."¹ High wages and a better job have been, it is true, the immediate incentive of their coming, but these were only means to the end mentioned above. The jobs which most Negroes must accept preclude, by their very nature, the satisfaction which comes with many occupations.

What the Negro means pretty largely by "pleasure" is the possible use of leisure time. The Negro whose quest has ended in the mining fields has found the varieties of ways in which he may "pleasure himself" definitely limited. Most of the Negro miners come, as we have seen, from agricultural sections in which little diversity in recreational² activities exists, and can therefore adjust fairly easily to the monotony of mining town existence. In the mining

¹ Washington, Forrester B., Recreational Facilities for the Negro, Annals, Vol. CXXXI, Nov. 1928, p. 272.
² Young, D., op. cit., p. 267.

industry, however, they encounter a new type of inactivity. On the farm there is "always something to be done;" in the mining fields there are periods of enforced idleness without any tasks to enliven the day. The Negroes must therefore make a new and difficult adjustment for which their previous life has not prepared them and at the same time suffer the disillusionment of finding the life and conditions in the mining towns not all which they had imagined. The pain of adjustment together with the pain of unrealized anticipation undoubtedly constitutes a real element in the dissatisfaction evidenced by Negroes in all the counties studied.

Irregular work and lack of recreational facilities to fit their needs have resulted in the Negro miners' spending most of their leisure in mere time-killing rather than in activities likely to promote individual or social improvement. Owing to the fact that the miners, both white and Negro, were living at the time of the study upon a "minimum-of-subsistence level"³ which left no money for purchase of reading materials, no systematic study of normal reading habits was made. Inquiry, however, indicated that miners in West Virginia regardless of their race read very little. Occasionally an old Negro miner or his wife may be seen reading the Bible but reading is decidedly to be placed among the minor activities of the Negro miners. Libraries are practically inaccessible to the miners and, by the

³ Douglas, Paul H., Wages and the Family, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1927, p. 5.

summer of 1932, most of the number ordinarily subscribers to newspapers or periodicals had had to discontinue their subscriptions. Bookkeepers and postmasters reported that Negro newspapers such as The Chicago Defender, The Pittsburg Courier, Baltimore Afro-American, and the Norfolk Journal and Guide, as well as the Crisis and Opportunity magazines, were received by a number of Negro miners before the coming of the economic crisis. These papers, however, require a relatively small amount of time for their perusal.

Loafing in various forms takes up much of the time. Some of the men may be found at their homes asleep, or in some restful activity like "sitting down."⁴ More of them, however, seek amusement away from home, and on idle days, weather permitting, will be found in groups of varying sizes around the mining town. Some little groups are composed of a few who have come together at one spot while "visiting around," that is to say, going from one house to another and trading supplies of gossip and news. A glance at the railroad track in the vicinity of the company store is almost certain to reveal two long rows of men, seated on the rails, facing each other. Talking, laughing, teasing, bantering, gossiping, arguing, and story telling are the perpetual order of the day in these groups. In prosperous times these gatherings are made festive with purchases of candy, peanuts, "sto' cakes," cheese, sardines, soft drinks, and other delicacies. Additional popular places for con-

⁴ Of. Washington, F. B., op. cit., p. 272.

gregating are inside the company store, on the store platform, and at the "club house" or boarding house. These scenes are not unlike those commonly seen in the rural South at crossroads, railway stations, or stores. ⁵ Negroes learned the fine art of loafing before coming to the mining fields, and this trait represents a secondary diffusion of activity patterns rather than a new situation.

These groups not only provide amusement but also constitute informal agencies of communication and control. Politics, religion, "the times," local questions of interest, "the boss," and "the white folks" are frequent subjects of discussion. In the usual company-owned town of average size intimate contacts of the entire Negro group make these gatherings inescapable forums of group judgments and opinions. In the small mining town or village the lack of excitement insures the airing of the most commonplace happenings in the lives of the inhabitants. Gossip disseminated through male as well as female channels soon becomes common property and gets back to the persons most directly concerned, resulting at times in clashes between members of the Negro community. Because of these occasional altercations, many of which are due to sex irregularities, employers are almost unanimous in saying that Negroes get along with the whites more smoothly than with members of their own group.

5 Cf. Rutledge, Archibald, America's Kindliest Race, Readers Digest, Vol. 22, April 1933, p. 96.

The women of the mining towns have, as a rule, less time for leisure than their spouses. Even though the mine is not running meals must be cooked, houses must be cleaned, and clothes must be washed. The women, nevertheless, are much addicted to "visiting." The informal groups are rarely composed of members of both sexes unless a man is visited by other men at his own home and his wife remains. The usual gathering is either a woman's or a man's group. This informal visiting by the women goes on not only within the Negro group, but extends outward to the white group as well. Negro and white miners' wives visit together informally at their homes and exchange news. Interracial loafing groups among the men are more commonly found on the platforms of stores and along the railroad tracks.

In towns where they exist the "Y. M. C. A.'s" (company-owned amusement buildings) and the pool rooms are congregating centers for men of both races. Negro pool rooms are numerous and somewhat notorious in the United States.⁶ In the mining fields whites and Negroes frequently use the same buildings which, if under company supervision and management, are usually orderly places. Pool rooms owned and run by Negroes are to be found in almost every independent town in the mining fields.⁷ Some of these were found to be owned and operated by ex-miners who

⁶ See Young, D., op. cit., p. 309; also Washington, F. B., op. cit., p. 279.

⁷ See W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-1926, pp. 74-79; Report, 1927-1928, pp. 20-23.

had been "expelled" from the mines on account of their age. They are frequently visited by the miners on their occasional trips "to town." As a rule a crowd will be found on the outside as well as the inside of these pool rooms.

Negro barber shops, common recreational centers in Negro-American life, are found infrequently, except in the larger mining towns. What "barbering" is necessary is usually done by the Negro miners themselves. Not infrequently a Negro miner with some skill in such work supplements his earnings by "barbering." Occasionally the "barber" works on the "club-house" porch, in which case he and his customers become the nucleus for a gathering and

A Negro miner-barber

consequent "session." In the Negro barber shops found in a few mining towns and in the independent towns facilities for playing checkers and other games are common, wherefore these shops also become loafing as well as business centers.

Loafing near the company store

With the coming of good roads to the mining fields the automobile afforded the Negro miners the enjoyment of pleasures theretofore unknown.⁸ Their visits were extended beyond the limits of their own mining towns to include relatives in other towns or other counties. One of the keen pleasures of the McDowell County Negro miners was to fill their cars full of friends and drive to Northfork or Keystone to attend the movies. In some places the miners may still enjoy the movies if they have enough scrip and the theaters are still running. Many of the theaters, however, have been closed since early in the depression. One discouraged Negro woman who had lost her car as a result of the depression said: "Our car was about all the pleasure we had. We could at least get away from this dirty place

⁸ One of the factors that helped weaken the ties that bound the Negro to the soil in the South was the spread of automobile ownership. (Washington, F. B., op. cit., p. 273.)

sometimes then. Now that's gone." Having developed a liking for the activities made possible by their automobiles, the Negro miners who have lost their cars during the depression go back to the lower plan of living and the old isolation of the mining town only with the greatest difficulty. The loss of their cars is an important cause of the bitterness and consequent personal disorganization evidenced by some of the Negro miners. Many of them feel deeply the fact that they lost their cars through no fault of their own, for they were anxious to work.

Attendance at public dances is a form of commercialized recreation patronized almost exclusively by the younger Negroes. A good many of the older Negroes do not look with favor on these dances. Perhaps the disfavor they find in the minds of some of the "good people" of the town is not because of their "wickedness" per se, but because dancing is one of those activities at which the Negro Baptists, in imitation of their white co-denominationalists, have looked askance. The occasional occurrence of these dances on Sunday does not help to bring about a meeting of the minds of old and young in this regard. It is not surprising, however, that the young Negroes patronize this form of amusement since "in the majority of the communities provision for recreation and amusement is so meager as to be almost negligible." Even during the summer of 1932, however, notices of dances were to be seen in some of the

more fortunate coal towns.

It is not surprising, because of limited recreational activities, that commercialized sex vice is well known in the mining fields. Keystone in McDowell County, for example, is notorious for its Negro "red light" district, and similar conditions may be found in other towns bordering on the mining fields. As has already been pointed out, the Negro miners have a heritage of sex license from early mining history that makes success difficult for the Negroes who try to raise the standards in their communities. White citizens who look upon such conditions with indifferent amusement¹⁰ as being the thing to be expected of Negroes increase their difficulties. Although some companies have made a concerted effort to abolish commercialized vice due to houses of prostitution within their towns, Negroes and white employers alike admit the fact that illicit sex relations are relatively prevalent in the mining fields. Failing to control community morals the stricter Negroes have tightened social class lines, so that church and non-church people tend to be clearly differentiated. The Virginia and West Virginia native Negroes as a rule consider the Negroes from the states farther south as responsible for most of the lax standards and tend to draw away from them.¹¹

Baseball playing has been traditional with the miners of West Virginia, both white and Negro. As long ago

10 Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 304; also Allen, op. cit., p. 55.

11 See Chapter XIII for a more extended discussion of this differentiation.

as the writer can remember wherever there was room enough to build a baseball field Negro and white ball clubs have been in evidence. In some localities with no level spot wider than fifty or sixty feet teams exist just the same and go to the nearest available place to play. Many companies sponsor both Negro and white baseball teams which play the teams of rival companies. Baseball games in normal times are almost always played on Sunday. These games, especially in the days of comparative isolation, were attended by practically the whole town as they offered the only public amusement available. Keen rivalries developed between the different mining towns and the teams were the objects of much local pride.

In the present status of the mining industry, however, baseball teams are expensive luxuries for the employers, many of whom in cutting all unnecessary costs have discontinued sponsoring the teams. Thus at the time when public diversion is most needed it is least available, a very common condition. At a Kanawha County operation the writer noticed that a splendid baseball field though available was not used by an almost desperate Negro group. The reason was very simple. The miners could not buy even one baseball, for the company store allowed them nothing but food.

While the playing of baseball has thus been limited by the depressed conditions it is still a common form of recreation, for the Negro children in the mining

towns have refused to give up this activity merely for lack of equipment. In a McDowell County town the writer was watching Negro children playing ball. One of the boys asked a lad of nine or ten years to let him use his glove. His reply was: "You ought to 'a' made you one." This reply aroused the curiosity of the writer, who asked to see the glove. The boys had all made their gloves out of coffee sacks and rags. They were neatly done. A Negro miner sitting near by gave a loud laugh as he said: "Dem's Hoover gloves!"

In McDowell County "over on the W"¹² baseball was more in evidence than in any other county. Between Welch and Bluefield boys and girls of high school age were observed playing either baseball or playground ball every day. Occasionally two girls' playground ball teams played and sometimes the boys' team played against the girls'. In addition to these boys' and girls' teams every one of the towns in this area has its men's team which plays on idle days. At one place where owing to lack of space there was no ball ground, a large number of Negroes and whites were working together tearing down a row of old coke ovens. Upon investigation it was found that they were making a baseball diamond. The company furnished their mules and the Negro and white miners were doing the work free. To make a usable ball ground out of that particular location

¹² This term was used by Negroes in every county visited to mean the territory served by the Norfolk and Western Railroad. It is an abbreviation of N. & W.

required the complete wrecking of the brick coke ovens, hauling away the debris and filling in and leveling the entire field. In the end the company would have the old ovens out of the way and the men would have a place to play baseball. This instance illustrates two outstanding facts about life in the mining fields: (1) the spirit of cooperation and good will between white and Negro miners and (2) the extent to which miners will go to provide themselves with facilities for recreation.

Negro and white miners working together
making a baseball field

Baseball, of course, appeals most strongly to the younger men, and, as we have pointed out before, it was not played in all places even by the young men. The Negroes in every county studied have adjusted themselves to the depression situation by adopting a game which appeals to the old as well as the young and, at the same time, entails practically no expense. This game, in which a phenomenal interest

was exhibited by Negro miners in every county studied, was checkers. Interest in checkers has been shown by Negro miners for many years but the game has come into its own during the depression. Formerly checker games were held in the homes of the different miners but more recently the miners in several places have built rude shelters from the sun at central locations where checker games continue literally from morning till night. At some places these shelters are referred to as "the club." In some of these towns where the mines operate very infrequently checker tournaments continue for days at a time. By a process of elimination the champion of one mine is chosen and he is pitted against the champion of a neighboring town. These inter-mining town games are followed with keen interest by the Negro miners. At other places no such tournaments are held, but the same miners were observed to play day after day, apparently without tiring. Negro miners, as a rule, are very easy to interview, but the writer found the interest of the Negro miners, both players and spectators, so intense that they were reluctant to be disturbed during their checker games. No such extreme interest was apparent on the part of the white miners.

A checker "club"

The only possible rival of checkers is horseshoe pitching. This game also has the virtue of being inexpensive and at the same time admitting wide participation by both young and old. The horseshoe pitching contests are attended by large numbers. When losing pairs drop out additional contestants come forth from the crowd, the losers in turn becoming interested in seeing how the newcomers fare at the hands of the team which has just defeated them. The horseshoe pitching games, naturally enough, are somewhat more widely attended than the checker games, as vicarious participation on the part of spectators is a much

simpler matter.

Card playing is also very common among Negro miners. In more prosperous times there was much gambling, especially after pay days; the card games of the present time are more likely to be simply time-killing and not lucrative activities. In the early days of McDowell and other counties the games of chance were accompanied with liquor drinking and many murders resulted.¹³ Negro miners still drink liquor and make it,¹⁴ but in the present depressed conditions consumption of liquor as well as all other commodities has diminished. The writer encountered only one or two Negroes under the influence of liquor during the entire time in the field. Interviews with both Negroes and whites, however, revealed the fact that enough liquor is consumed by Negro miners to warrant mention of the time and money spent in its consumption.

Hunting and fishing occupy some of the leisure time of the Negro miners. Unfortunately, though Negro miners along the New and Kanawha rivers do some fishing with "trot line" and pole, comparatively few mines are located on streams large enough to provide good fishing. Since the mines are located in the mountain sections the Negroes can engage in hunting to a much larger extent than in fishing. The seasonal character of hunting, of course, limits the time which the Negro miners may spend in this

¹³ Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1928, p. 2.

¹⁴ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1929-32, pp. 55-56.

activity. Almost every Negro family has one or two dogs, and families particularly interested in hunting keep several. At one mine, in fact, where the miners had hardly enough food to keep them from being hungry a Negro woman showed the writer with a great deal of pride her husband's 13 hunting dogs. This miner and his dogs were taken with the superintendent on his hunting trips.

Since tennis requires so little space one might expect it to be a popular game in the mining fields, but neither whites nor Negroes have taken it up to any great extent. Among Negroes tennis is seldom found, except among the upper classes where it is looked upon somewhat as a badge of caste. In only two of the mining towns visited were facilities for tennis playing open to Negroes. Both towns were large and both had large Negro populations. At one there was a Negro tennis club organized by the principal of the Negro school. At the other the company furnished tennis courts for both white and Negro miners and a number of the older children of Negro miners played. For most of the Negro mining groups, however, tennis is practically non-existent.

It is not surprising that an awareness of the importance of a recreational program on an extensive scale is found among only a minority of the coal operators in the mining fields. Excepting the baseball grounds and the occasional company-supported baseball teams, relatively few facilities have been provided by the coal companies.

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A part of the reason for this fact is that many coal companies are so limited in their resources that, even though aware of the need for facilities, superintendents who answer to boards of directors for declining profits are not likely to recommend an outlay for such "unproductive" costs. A second reason for this fact is that many, if not most, of the operators of West Virginia have come up in the mining traditions of the state. Some of these men recalling that they themselves had not even the advantages of the miners of today, consider present conditions relatively very favorable. The initiative of the Negro miners in providing their own recreational facilities is further limited because the miners in the paternalistic company-owned towns habitually look to the company for provisions of all sorts, and because they feel as a rule that whatever goes into improvements immediately becomes "company" property.

It is not meant to infer here, however, that companies have entirely neglected this important aspect of the welfare of their employees. As a matter of fact, the coal operators in their company-owned towns have probably gone further in this respect than the average employer of labor. For instance, in the past few years the state department of mines has carried forward a safety education campaign which has attracted wide attention. Many of the mining towns have their first-aid teams which compete in sectional and state meets one or more times during the year. Negroes and whites do not compete, but a town is represented by both a

white and a colored team, which meet periodically and practice for the state and sectional meetings with other teams. The writer has visited more than one Negro home in which the living room mantel was lined with silver cups won by the miner as a member of these safety teams. Some of the companies look at the first-aid teams as just some "foolishness" of the officials of the mine department and will have nothing to do with them. Others consider them just as foolish, but tolerate and sponsor them because they feel it to their advantage to "humor" the mine department in this way. Others, particularly some of the largest companies, believe in them strongly. Regardless of the attitude of the company, these safety teams constitute a worthwhile leisure-time activity for miners of both races. At one place the "safety club," an organization of all the miners, meets twice a month for planned programs. A Negro miner gives his talk and is followed by a white miner. The clubs of this company are thus bi-racial and are participated in by Negroes as much as by the whites.

One of the largest companies in West Virginia, with mines not only in different counties of this state but in other states as well, gives picnics for its employees during the summer months. The Negro picnic and white picnic are held the same day, but in different places. The writer attended one of the Negro picnics at which the wife of a Negro editor was the mistress of ceremonies. Since these picnics are "on the company" they are widely attended,

apparently not only by the employees of the company giving them, but by others as well. On the day of the picnic mentioned the writer picked up Negro boys of high school age on the highway and drove them as far as twenty miles to attend this picnic. The fact that they were uninvited guests made little difference to them. The boys described the picnics as occasions so hilarious and festive that they could not afford to miss them.

Occasionally in the mining fields an operator is found with broad social vision combined with a unique knack of utilizing all available resources so as to provide the maximum amount of recreation and other services for his men. One superintendent, for example, had converted a pond once used as a watering place for company-owned mules into a swimming pool for the white children of the mining town. He brought the water for the pool from an abandoned mine.

A converted mule pond

At the time of the interview he was constructing a similar but larger pool for the use of the Negro children. Although this town was not in West Virginia, but a mile or so over the border in Virginia, its inclusion here seems warranted because the same company owns more operations in West Virginia than in Virginia. The building of the pools at this Virginia town was considered an experiment and may result in the building of similar facilities at some of the West Virginia towns. This instance suggests what a resourceful superintendent may do at comparatively small cost.

A company, which is backed by an interstate organization and enormous resources, employs social workers at several operations. These social workers direct adult education and leisure time activities. At the time the writer was in the towns of this company canning exhibits and demonstrations were being held for the benefit of the housewives. The Negro women were attending and found them quite helpful. Such work, however, is quite unusual in the mining fields, for few companies feel able to support it.

The Negro church in the mining fields, as is generally the case in rural sections, ¹⁵ has in part met the need for recreation. In fact, the church has played a part in the recreation of the southern Negro so important that Odum has seen fit to classify social gatherings into two general divisions: "those which are held under the auspices

15 Of. Young, D., op. cit., pp. 264-265.

of the church, and those which are not."¹⁶ The mere attendance at church services has immense recreational value for many Negroes, which is reflected in the fact that in some places the Negro church is open almost nightly even though it may have a regular preacher only twice a month. Mention has already been made of the Negroes' fondness for funerals. Negro miners are here only following a traditional leisure-time activity of the Southern Negro,¹⁷ although there is¹⁸ some point to the statement of Dr. Wesley when he says:

Where the Negroes are shut off from the amusements and the recreations which every normal person desires and which modern social workers are finding necessary for industrial workers, it is not surprising to find that the circus, the revival, the funeral, and large religious gatherings will take numbers from work.

This trait of funeral attending is powerful enough to influence Negro miners to remain idle, even in the dull times existing during the summer of 1932. Said one employer in McDowell County: "The Negro likes nothing more than a good funeral. One of my Negroes told me about attending the 'best funeral' last week he had ever been to. There was a funeral over at one of my mines last week and practically every one of the Negroes 'laid off.' I usually try to get them to have their funerals on Sunday -- but this woman died on Monday and they couldn't very well keep her that long."

16 Odum, Howard W., Social and Mental Traits of the Negro, Columbia Univ. Press, 1910, p. 228.

17 Ibid., p. 230.

18 Wesley, C. H., op. cit., p. 240.

Funerals provide the Negro with recreational activity, but allow him also a kindred but not identical satisfaction. The Negro has traditionally shown "respect" for the dead. Occasions for sympathy are, of course, culturally defined and become stimuli for folk behavior. These ways become group ritual, the observance of which brings forth the attitudes upon which the group has placed value. The Negro group has placed such a value upon ex-¹⁹hibitions of sympathy in times of sickness and death, and gets an immense emotional satisfaction from the observance of the ritual and behavior in ways defined as proper. Recognition and status are attained by adhering to the mores as²⁰ developed by the ritual observance. Thus a Negro miner, in debt to the company and reduced to a minimum of subsistence level, may prefer a funeral to the opportunity of a day's work.

Funerals are not the only church functions which have recreational value for the Negro miners. "Baptizings" and marriages are widely attended and are enjoyed to the fullest of their possibilities. Most of the Negroes are Baptists; hence the "baptizings" are held in the creek or river nearest to the town in which the church is located. These gatherings, together with the "socials," festivals, meetings of missionary societies and young people's societies, and the giving of religious plays, all serve the

19 Cf. Odum, op. cit., p. 250.

20 Cf. Sumner, W. G., and Keller, A. G., The Science of Society, Yale Univ. Press, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 34-35.

function of allowing a development of self-feeling so necessary for the satisfaction of the desire for recognition. These functions afford the occasion for exhibiting "best clothes" or serve as meeting centers for the young people ready for the marriage mart or the widowed looking for new companions. Not the least pleasurable part of these various functions is the informal meeting after their conclusion and the return home in groups. News, gossip, and stories are exchanged between people who meet mostly on these occasions. The recreational value of certain religious functions of the church is not therefore the result of conscious effort in these directions, but in the informal opportunities for expression which church gatherings afford the people. The decorum exhibited by the Negroes on these occasions, dressed in their best and behaving on the basis of norms of etiquette not called for in their usual routine, is accompanied by the satisfaction which comes from playing idealized roles identified with a heightened status. The resulting catharsis is important in breaking the usual monotony of the mining town regimen.

Negro lodges, which will be mentioned in more detail elsewhere in this study, have, as a rule, been associated with the churches in observation of funeral and other services, in fact many of the preachers have been also lodge leaders.²¹ Lodge activity has been traditional with the

²¹ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1927-28, pp. 64-65.

southern Negro and its presence in the mining fields is a
normal cultural sequence.²² In more prosperous days the
lodges were quite active in the social life of the mining
communities. At the time the present study was made, how-
ever, these fraternal organizations were practically in-
active due to depressed financial conditions. An analysis

A relic of better days

of the recreational functions of the Negro lodges would
differ in no important respect from what has already been
said concerning Negro churches. Particularly does the use
of brilliant regalia and high sounding titles enhance the
normal tendencies toward a type of megalomania found among
minorities whose status is limited by what Miller has named

²² See Odum, op. cit., Ch. III.

"cultocratic domination." Most of the organizations permit membership by women as well as men.

Negro teachers in the mining fields, taken as a group, have exhibited a greater awareness of the social role of education than any other persons in positions of potential leadership. Interviews with these teachers reveal the fact that they have sacrificed considerable time and energy to provide programs of recreational activities which would keep the young people, particularly during the adolescent years, at the school as long as possible after the regular class hours. Recognizing frankly the character of family influences under which many of their students live, these teachers have proceeded upon the assumption that the school has more to offer the pupils than the home, and have provided clubs of various kinds, athletics, civic campaigns, dramatics, and other forms of profitable leisure time activities. But the Negro teachers, though aware of the dearth of recreational facilities in the mining fields, have not been able to meet the situation adequately. Many of them are untrained in recreational leadership and are hampered by lack of funds. The school, moreover, is always at a disadvantage in carrying forward any program of voluntary activities on the part of the students, because many of them associate it inseparably with work and hence are anxious to get away from the school plant as soon as possible. In spite of its handicaps, however, the Negro school

has apparently made an honest effort to meet the need for recreation in the mining fields.

In some places Negro teachers have shown considerable leadership in organizing leisure time activities not only among the young people but among their parents as well. Under the leadership of the teachers in a McDowell County community, for example, Negro high school boys' clubs, girls' clubs, a women's industrial club, and a men's club have been organized. The writer first heard of these activities from the wife of a Negro miner in a distant county who had formerly lived in this community. Having become accustomed to the active and profitable recreational life here she was very unhappy and discouraged in her present home. These clubs for adults take the place of the usual gossip gathering and utilize their time in instruction of various kinds. Some work in weaving and in handicrafts has been done. The work of the different clubs is coordinated by a community council which acts as a sort of clearing house for the different clubs.

The Agricultural Extension Department of West Virginia University has done some work not only among the rural farm Negroes but among Negro miners as well. Four H clubs have been formed in a few places and are supported enthusiastically by Negro miners and their wives. Garden campaigns and instruction in canning and meal planning are also furthered by the State University in cooperation with the Federal Department of Agriculture. In addition to this

governmental activity the American Friends Service Committee has, in addition to giving relief, organized sewing clubs and health clubs, and has offered some opportunity to the men to work at carpentry and cobbling.²⁴ Negro miners in some places expressed a high regard for the activities of this organization.

Negro musical organizations have been traditional in the mining fields. Many years ago Negro bands were somewhat common. These bands played at different occasions and were always present at the numerous holiday celebrations. Labor Day, Fourth of July, and similar holidays were formerly accompanied by lodge parades and band concerts. These early demonstrations are now almost forgotten, except by the old Negro miners.²⁵ The writer, thinking the offices of the company would be closed on Labor Day, said to the bookkeeper: "I suppose you will be closed on Labor Day, won't you?" His reply was: "No, we'll be more apt to run on that day than any other day -- just because it's Labor Day. The company does not believe in giving the men the day. Fourth of July and Christmas are the only days we recognize. I believe in giving the men a day, but the company doesn't -- so I keep my thoughts to myself."

The practical disappearance of bands and enthusiasm for holidays is by no means a change peculiar to Negro

24 Report of the Child Relief Work in the Bituminous Coal Fields by the American Friends Service Committee, Sept. 1, 1931 - Aug. 31, 1932, pp. 7-8.

25 Cf. Lynd, Middletown, Harcourt, Brace, 1939, p. 77.

culture; white bands are much less numerous than twenty years ago, for the breakdown of isolation and consequent opening up of other channels of recreation have resulted in a lessened interest in these directions on the part of the majority group as well as the Negroes. Only one mining town visited had a Negro band. Both uniforms and instruments for this band were furnished by the company. Funds for this purpose were given at the instigation of an operator, now deceased, who was considered their patron saint by the Negroes in the coal fields. Negro musical organizations in the mining fields continue, however, the most common type being the vocal quartette. Many of the mining towns have these quartettes, some of them sponsored by the churches.²⁶ The quartettes of the different towns compete against each other for prizes, and the meets, which are frequently held on Sunday afternoons, are much more in favor with Negro churchmen than baseball games.²⁷ These quartettes each have a name, some of them taking the name of their mining town and others taking some descriptive title such as "The Humming Birds," "Jolly Boys," "Great 4 Wonders," etc. In many places these quartettes dress in formal attire for their appearances. While there are many more male quartettes than any other type, occasionally a mixed quartette is found, as well as singing clubs for girls alone. A contest in which

²⁶ See Appendix for handbill taken from a company bulletin board announcing one of these contests.

²⁷ Cf. Woodson, C. G., The Rural Negro, Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1930, p. 145.

both men and women competed was held in conjunction with the State Baptist Convention which the writer attended in the summer of 1932. These organizations provide the opportunity for dress, which is held in high regard as a basis for status, especially among the Negro women in the mining fields. In addition, the numerous practice sessions and "socials" provide opportunity for contacts outside of the regular routine of the organizations. Vicarious participation in the contests is provided for many others who become enthusiastic partisans in behalf of the quartette or quartettes representing their town.

At one of the mining towns most nearly devoid of recreational organization the young Negro miners formed what they called "The Kangaroo Club." The purpose of this organization according to its officers was the preservation of order and morality at this town. It was based upon the usual "Kangaroo Court" procedure current in many jails, but whether the idea came from some convert to the virtues of this organization was not ascertained. Whenever a member violated the code of the organization he was either beaten or fined by the other members. The violations punished most often were breaches of the peace and sex irregularities.

It has been impossible within the limits of the present chapter to mention all of the leisure time activities of Negro miners and their families; the more important through which the Negro group has adjusted itself to conditions in the mining fields have been discussed. Although

definite limitations are apparent, the character and standards of the use of leisure are similar to or, probably,²⁸ superior to those found in the average rural Negro community. The popular assumption that wholesale recreation always tends to reduce delinquency should be questioned. The whole question of delinquency must include many variables other than²⁹ the mere lack of recreational facilities. The importance of this lack in explaining certain types of personal dis-³⁰organization, however, may not be doubted. It is the opinion of the writer that an intelligent program of education and leadership in leisure time activities offers a means of social control through which the Negro culture in the mining fields may be changed in the direction of goals deemed socially desirable. That such a program is possible in the near future is very unlikely. A characteristic of the present economic order seems to be that in times of depression and enforced idleness which make the problem of leisure time more acute the resources for meeting the situation shrink; that is to say, they exist in inverse proportion to the need. It may be said, however, that in this respect the Negro miner occupies substantially the same position as his white brother. This lack of differential leisure time facilities is apparently one factor in the

28 See Woodson, op. cit., Ch. VII.

29 See Jones, William H., Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D. C., Howard Univ. Press, 1927, pp. 22-23.

30 Park, R. E. and Burgess, E. W., The City, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1925, pp. 199-200.

smooth relationship existing between whites and blacks in
the mining fields.³¹

³¹ Cf. Young, D., op. cit., p. 319.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION

American Negroes have always taken a keen interest in religion. Since that day sometime between 1773 and 1775 when the first Negro church in America was founded by Negro Baptists at Silver Bluff, South Carolina,¹ the church has occupied a unique place in the life of the group. Their churches were purely Negro institutions² and offered the Negroes a field, perhaps the only one, in which they were independent of white control.³ Church growth has continued unbroken from the beginning until, according to Reuter, five out of every eleven Negroes belong to some church.⁴ In 1926 there were 5,203,487 Negro church members, constituting 9.5 per cent of all church members in the United States, and this figure, according to the Census Bureau, underestimates their relative numerical strength because many of the younger children are not taken into Negro churches.⁵

In the mining fields of West Virginia, as in rural communities of other states, Negroes have been active in religious matters.⁶ In some of the towns visited the Negroes did not have a church building but they always had

- 1 Puckett, N. N., Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, Univ. of N. C. Press, 1926, p. 529.
- 2 See Haynes, G. E., The Church and Negro Progress, Annals, Vol. CXXX, Nov. 1928, p. 266.
- 3 Puckett, op. cit., p. 529.
- 4 Reuter, op. cit., p. 318.
- 5 Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. I, p. 69.
- 6 See Woodson, C. G., The Rural Negro, Ch. VIII.

a church organization which conducted services in the Negro school or some other available place. Three hundred and eighty-eight, or 71.6 per cent of the 542 miners from whom it was possible to get the information, were church members.⁷

Booker T. Washington used to say, "When I meet a Negro who is not a Baptist or a Methodist, I know some white man has been tampering with his religion."⁸ Apparently very little "tampering" has been going on in West Virginia, especially in the mining fields, for in 1926 Negro Baptists constituted 73.8 per cent of all Negro church members in the state,⁹ and information from a reliable source indicates that the percentage of Baptists is even higher in the mining communities.¹⁰ Two hundred and ninety-eight miners, or 73.8 per cent of the 389 church members interviewed, were Baptists, while 61 or 15.7 per cent were Methodists, as shown in Table 70.

7 Negro teachers hinted that, because of class distinctions on the basis of church membership in some places, it might be better policy not to press the matter of church membership if the miner appeared reluctant; hence, the somewhat large number for whom this information is not given.

8 Quoted in Embree, E. R., Brown America, Viking Press, 1931, p. 242.

9 Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. I, p. 69.

10 Correspondence with The Rev. J. J. Turner, State Director of Religious Education and Missions of the Baptist Church. Mr. Turner puts the proportion of Baptists in the coal fields at 80 per cent or above.

TABLE 70. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF 542 NEGRO MINERS IN
WEST VIRGINIA: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Denom national membership	Number	Per cent of all miners	Per cent of church members
None	154	28.4	
All denominations	388	71.6	100.0
Baptist	298	55.0	76.8
Methodist	61	11.2	15.7
Holiness	20	3.7	5.2
Others (a)	9	1.7	2.3
Total	542	100.0	100.0

(a) Presbyterian, 3; Disciple, 2; Apostolic Faith, Pentacostal Church of Christ, Church of God, Catholic, 1 each.

The reason for the exceedingly high proportion of Baptists and Baptist churches in the mining fields lies in the different policies of the Methodist and Baptist denominations in the matter of establishing their "charges." The Baptist Church, traditionally individualistic, has tended to put few restrictions upon the creation of new churches. Many of the Baptist ministers were originally miners with the knack of preaching, who augmented their wages by conducting services on Sunday. The following of these preaching miners formed the nuclei of churches and were recognized as such by the Baptist denomination, many of the Baptist churches originating in this way. Finally, with the growth of the church, the ministers gave up mining altogether and became "reverends." The Methodist Church, however, has held that their ministers must have a certain amount of training and go through a period of probation before a church may be established, hence the comparatively few Methodist churches. The Methodist ministers in the

mining towns are on the average consequently much better educated than the Baptist ministers. Many of the Baptist ministers still work in the mines, preaching being only their Sunday job. At the West Virginia State Baptist (Negro) Convention which the writer attended in Logan August 24-26, 1932, the fact of poor training was admitted by one of the ministers in a speech on "The Need of a Trained Ministry" when he said smilingly: "You know, we Baptists on the whole are not very well trained."¹¹

Some of the preaching miners voice antipathy toward and suspicion of the trained clergy. Said one such miner: "I ain't got much use for these fellows who have to depend on other people for their support. When somebody else has his hand on the money in their pockets they don't tell people the truth -- they just tell them what they want to hear. They're just a bunch of whoremongers." Although immorality among clergymen is of course not unheard of, this utterance is apparently an example of "professional" jealousy rather than a dispassionate discussion of facts.

Sectarianism among the Negro miners, as among American Negroes generally, is a matter of considerable importance.¹² Asked about his church membership a Raleigh County miner replied: "I'm a non-sextarian (non-sectarian)." Another Negro miner nearby observed: "Well, then, just put him down as a hypocrite." This emphasis on a church of a

¹¹ Speech of Rev. J. H. Younger, of the Zion Baptist Church, Parkersburg, W. Va.

¹² Cf. Puckett, op. cit., pp. 521-22.

CHURCH of a particular faith is somewhat deplored by an official of the Baptist denomination as follows: "As a rule wherever there are any number of colored people on a mining job they effect a church of their denomination. With the least encouragement they start as many denominational churches as there are groups of denominations on the job. On some occasions just one member asks for the opportunity to have a church established of his faith. Such is often made possible by the coal company as an inducement to hold people on the job; as they begin to build houses they also build a church with the understanding that it is for the employees with equal denominational rights. This in some instances is good, but at times is detrimental in that it divides the people up into so many groups none is strong enough to accomplish anything." ¹³ Congregations are, consequently, small in most of the mining towns. Among the chief denominations in West Virginia the average membership per church, including the large urban churches, is as follows: ¹⁴

Baptists	81
Methodist Episcopal	59
African M. E.	36
A. M. E. Zion	69
Colored Methodist	27
All denominations	68

¹³ Letter from Rev. J. J. Turner, Montgomery, W. Va.

¹⁴ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. II, p. 754.

Few mining towns have more than one Negro church and the sharing of this building by more than one denomination means that in many places Methodists and Baptists alternate from Sunday to Sunday in control of church services. While some miners and their families attend the services of both denominations, the class lines based on denominational affiliation tend to keep many persons away from any but their own services.¹⁵ In many places regular church is held only once a month by an itinerant preacher whose schedule may include as many as four different mining towns, but in the meantime church services are frequently held under the leadership of preaching miners and officers of the churches. This condition is hardly conducive to regular church attendance. One hundred and fifty, or 30.3 per cent of the 495 miners from whom it was possible to get the information, reported that they had attended no church services for the month preceding the interview; a considerably greater number attended at least once a Sunday or oftener, as shown in Table 71.

¹⁵ Cf. Reuter, op. cit., p. 325.

TABLE 71. CHURCH ATTENDANCE OF 495 NEGRO MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA FOR MONTH PRECEDING INTERVIEW: 1932
(Compiled from miners' schedules)

Number of times attending services	Number and per cent of miners attending each specified number of church services	
	Number	Per cent
None	150	30.3
One	44	8.9
Two	94	19.0
Three	30	6.1
Four	126	25.5
Five	13	2.6
Six	7	1.4
Eight	18	3.6
Ten or more	13	2.6
Total	495	100.0

In drawing any conclusions from this table it should be recalled that these figures were secured during a period of economic depression. The number of miners not attending church at all was consequently higher than in normal times, for instead of stimulating to increased religious activity as is ordinarily the case the hard times have kept many Negro church members away for reasons to be discussed later.

The Negro church, as has been pointed out before, like the churches of other minority groups in the United States, has never been a purely religious organization.¹⁶ It must fill recreational and social needs which for the majority group are filled by more specialized agencies. The Negro church in the mining fields continues despite temporary setbacks as the center of racial life.¹⁷ The

¹⁶ Young, op. cit., p. 529.

¹⁷ Cf. Reuter, op. cit., p. 332.

recreational and social functions of the church are dealt with in other chapters. The importance of these functions may not be overestimated; the present chapter, however, will be concerned more directly with religious and moral aspects not discussed elsewhere.

The chief role of many Negro churches in the mining fields has been to provide a place where the Negro miner may give full vent to his emotions and his unfulfilled desires.¹⁸ Religion not only consoles him in his present misery; it holds out the hope of a richer reward in some better world to be.¹⁹ Pointing toward the skies an old miner who had been at the same operation in Kanawha County for 20 years said: "I'm expecting my good times to come from up there. I don't expect much here. I wouldn't want to live at all if I couldn't trust Jesus." In the language of a Methodist preacher in the mining fields religion is, for most Negro miners, "a kind of anesthetic which will help them die an easy death 'when they come down to press a dying pillow' as one hears them say in their prayers and testimonies." The dullness and monotony of mining town existence, the uncertainty of life underground, and the discouragement of years of unrealized hopes may all be forgotten for a little while in uninhibited participation in highly emotional, rhythmic, religious behavior.

Reflecting the character of the churches in the

¹⁸ Cf. Young, op. cit., p. 529.

¹⁹ Cf. Ross, M., op. cit., p. 80.

southern states from which their members came many churches have been somewhat remotely concerned with the inculcation of white moral standards.²⁰ Puckett, who sees in this characteristic a parallel to West African religions which are interested not in the relationships of man to man but only of man to God, says in this connection, "An old Negro testified in meeting that he cursed some, had stolen some, had drunk whiskey some, and had done other things some, but could thank God that he had never lost his religion."²¹ A good bit of condemnation, however, has been given to dancing, card playing, and other amusements of minor social consequence.²² A Negro minister on being questioned concerning the attitude of the young people toward the church, said simply, "They are going away from the church -- after games." Many of the preachers, whose attitude is evangelical, have, to the neglect of the social ministry, placed their first emphasis upon increasing membership.

What has been said concerning many Negro churches and ministers in the mining fields applies by no means to all. Some of these men deplore the condition of much of the religion in the mining fields and are doing what they can for the "progress" of their people which is always defined in terms of the assimilation of majority standards.

20 Cf. Odum, op. cit., p. 54; Woodson, Rural Negro, p. 136; Reuter, op. cit., pp. 327, 330-31; Kreuger, E. T., Negro Religious Expression, A. J. S., Vol. XXXVIII, July 1932, p. 25.

21 Puckett, op. cit., p. 526.

22 See Morals and Manners Among Negro Americans, Atlanta Univ. Pub. No. 18, 1914, pp. 90ff.

One of the very unusual men in the Negro ministry of the mining fields writes the author as follows: "What I am personally trying hardest to do is to correct what I consider to be a primitive concept of my people concerning Christianity. I am trying to convince them that Christianity is honesty, purity, truth in the inward parts, salvation from sin in all of its ugliness, right here in this present life." Another says: "One truth we are endeavoring to emphasize in the local churches serving the mining population is, we must do more than others. That is, we must relate the church to the moral and social well-being of the community in a definite way. It will do no community any good simply to add another church to its already crowded list. The only excuse for the church in the community is its ability to transform the community into the kingdom of righteousness. The church was created for the community and not the community for the church. If the church will thus dedicate itself to the service of the community, it will prove a blessing and no other credentials will be necessary to occupy the field."

23

Such ministers as these, men of education and vision, are greatly outnumbered by men of little education and no conception of the social mission of the church.

24

23 Official Journal of the Fifty-first Annual Session and Laymen's Association, East Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1931, p. 37 (Report of District Supt. Thomas G. Howard of the Bluefield, W. Va. District).

24 Cf. Reuter, op. cit., pp. 326-27; Young, op. cit., p. 535.

The educated clergy, race conscious to a certain extent, are striving to hasten the assimilation of majority standards and the development of racial self-respect. By reason of the very magnitude of the problems with which they have to deal they inevitably suffer defeats and reverses. Concerning a recent disappointment a minister of this type writes: "The Negro, particularly the southern Negro, is dreadfully afraid of the white man and does not have the moral courage to strike out on his own initiative in self-defense, and until he does his future is precarious. The very people I tried to help fought against me vigorously and those who helped me at first deserted and left me alone."

Such a minister is likely to get the cooperation of the more intelligent Negroes in the mining fields who are generally one with him in desiring social improvement rather than mere ritual, emotionalism and preparation for death.²⁵ Teachers, particularly, offer their cooperation to many of the ministers although they admit and deplore the need for better trained preachers. Said a Negro teacher, "The crying need of my race has been and is today a competent ministry to lead and instruct the masses in the application of the principles of right life and conduct from the standpoint of the Bible. All honor to the pioneers who did their best under the circumstances and who served well their day and generation. But this is another age and a brighter day, one that demands improvement along all lines

and especially in the pulpit of my race." ²⁶ In some parts of the mining fields where this desired leadership is lacking ministers report that teachers take a "critical attitude" toward the church. This "attitude" is due in large measure to the fact that so many of the Negro clergy are "called" rather than prepared for their jobs and their limitations preclude their taking any but an emotional approach to ²⁷ social reform.

A Negro Minister,
Graduate of Lincoln University

²⁶ Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

²⁷ Cf. Young, op. cit., pp. 534-535; Dowd, op. cit., p. 590.

B

Better types of Negro churches

- (A) Methodist church and parsonage,
McDowell County
- (B) Church shared by Baptists and Methodists,
Raleigh County

Owing to the educational and cultural differences between the several congregations and between the various ministers in the mining fields Negro religious services vary widely. Some Negro churches have come to approximate majority standards of religious formality so closely that the differences between them and white churches are almost imperceptible. At the other extreme are churches highly emotional and "primitive" in their behavior. It is undoubtedly this type which led Dr. DuBois to look upon the Negro church as the only link between the American Negro and

27 Africa. All gradations and combinations of these two extremes exist in the churches of the mining towns. The type of service may not be predicted on the basis of denomination, although in general formal behavior in which the congregation listens quietly to a sermon, listens to hymns sung for the most part by the choir, and participates very quietly if at all in the service may be found among the Methodist churches owing to the general higher educational level of the ministers. Methodist churches, nevertheless, as well as those of other denominations, go to the opposite extreme.

The informal, emotional type of service in which the Negroes take part without apparent inhibition is much more interesting to the student of Negro culture than the type that merely duplicates white standards. The writer

37 See DuBois, W. E. B., The Negro Church, Atlanta Univ. Publications, No. 8, 1903, p. 5.

remembers distinctly one such service begun by the seemingly spontaneous outburst of a singer raising his voice in the refrain of a familiar hymn. He sang only a line or two before the congregation began to join in;²⁸ by the time the song was concluded the room was filled with a harmonious volume of sound which included the deepest bass and the highest soprano. The preacher next called on one of the church officials to lead in prayer. The petitioner began slowly but presently, stimulated by many exclamations such as "Amen!" "Praise God!" "Yes, Jesus!"²⁹ from members of the congregation, his words became rapid and eloquent. After the prayer the preacher, a big, handsome mulatto, began his sermon speaking with deliberate, faultless diction much after the fashion of any educated preacher of the majority group. The congregation appeared attentive, but only mildly interested in the proceedings. Presently the deliberate speech of the preacher quickened; cadence and rhythm became apparent. As the tempo increased and rhythm became unmistakable he lapsed into a sort of intonation characterized by those indescribable Negro endings so noticeable in the Spirituals.³⁰ The members of the congregation became eager, expectant now, many of them moving forward in their seats. As the contagion spread they began to respond to the sermon by the same calls heard during the

²⁸ Cf. Odum, op. cit., p. 63.

²⁹ See ibid., pp. 73, 75 for a list of commonly used expressions.

³⁰ See ibid., pp. 74-77 for a musical representation of a sermon which Odum says approaches "musical recitative."

prayer. The preacher's voice became higher and faster as he strode about the platform. Seemingly little attention was paid to what he said, but the listeners began to sway. Calls were so frequent that almost every sentence was punctuated by a chorus of responses. Smiles appeared on every face as the preacher strode about, talking faster and faster. His breath came with a gasp and at each inhalation he made a peculiar staccato sound like "huh!" jerking his head forward as he did so. ³¹ A woman jumped in the air twice and shouted after which, spiritual catharsis apparently complete, she bowed her head on the seat in front of her and remained quiet for the rest of the service. ³² After the climax of the sermon the preacher dropped suddenly into his seat exhausted, perspiration streaming down his face.

The sermon is the high-light of this type of service and by its very nature effective moral teaching is excluded. The interest of the congregation is primarily in the dramatic elements of the sermon, not in its didacticism. It matters little what these preachers, expert in stirring the emotions, say; their congregations are chiefly affected by the way they say it. Puckett, finding the same characteristic among the Mississippi Negroes, gives the following extract from a sermon that stirred its hearers greatly:

"Now I want you to get the bird called the Curiosity that

31 Cf. Kreuger, op. cit., p. 28.

32 Cf. Mecklin, J. M., Democracy and Race Friction, Macmillan, 1914, pp. 43-44; also DuBois, W. E. B., Souls of Black Folk, Chicago, 1903, p. 190.

can fly sixty-seven hundred thousand miles in a minute, and he carried him in the valley and he said the cup foamed so wrathful and the wrath looked so bitter and won't drink it up, O-o-oh, no-o (groans)."³³ The manner of presentation is such that the listener finds himself following the rhythm and actions of the preacher rather than the significance of the words. In spite of the lack of meaning of these sermons the writer is inclined to agree with Puckett that their rhythm "has a sort of tom-tom effect upon the nervous system -- even upon that of an educated white observer trained in emotional control."³⁴

Following the sermon is the taking of the collection, an important part of the service in the mining fields. Usually it is prefaced by a talk by one of the officers of the church who may stress the severity of the hard times upon everybody but emphasize the fact that the preacher and his family must live like other folks. He exhorts the members of the congregation to give even if they can give only a little. After the conclusion of this speech the collection is taken according to one of two general patterns. The method usually found in church services nearest to white standards is the simple passing of the collection plate, which is preceded or followed by the talk by one of the church officers concerning the purposes of or the need for giving. The more characteristic method is what Odum

³³ Puckett, op. cit., p. 533.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 533-534.

has called the "table way."³⁵ A table is placed in the front of the church and frequently by its side is a functionary known in the south as a "counter." The Negroes, particularly the women, come up one by one and "lay on" their contributions. This method has the practical advantage of making giving and not giving conspicuous as well as providing the opportunity to show off the Sunday clothes of the giver. In the south, where this practice is largely used, some Negroes instead of giving all their contribution at once have been known to go up six or seven times.³⁶ At the time of the field work the West Virginia miners, however, had so little to give that one trip to the table was the limit.

Music, which is an important part of Negro religious practice, varies from church to church as much as other elements in the service. Here again are gradations from the free, joyous, uninhibited singing, rich in rhythm and harmony, of the church farthest from majority standards to the "progressive" churches that have discarded the "old time" songs in favor of the newer "book" songs. The singing in some of the churches of this latter type appears stilted, artificial and less satisfying to the participants than that in the more "backward" churches. This statement, however, must be taken for what it is, a mere impressionistic observation, for the degree of inward satisfaction may not

be determined easily by superficial evidence. Furthermore, it must not be understood that all churches that have adopted majority standards in other parts of their service have discarded old musical habits for new; the music occasionally lags behind in the process of assimilation.

The same clash over religious beliefs and attitudes which exists among parents and children of the majority group is also present among the Negro miners and their children. The rural Negro church, the standards of which are reflected in many churches in the mining fields, is extremely orthodox. ³⁷ Children, especially those in high

school, occasionally gain from association with their teachers and from their studies something of a critical attitude toward the religious as well as other standards of their parents. One afternoon when the writer was talking with a Negro family consisting of the miner, his wife, and his son who had just finished the ninth grade, another old Negro miner joined the group. Learning that the writer was a teacher of sociology the old man delivered himself of a sermon on the departure of men of science from the way of religion. The boy spoke up and said, "But when you begin to think about it, Mr. S., do you believe the first chapter of Genesis?" The old man thereupon cast aspersions upon the practice of thinking about such things. The boy replied, "Well, I just have to think sometimes." "That's because you have never been converted," said his mother. The boy

³⁷ Woodson, op. cit., p. 151.

protested that he had been baptized, at least.

Opinions of Negro ministers in the mining fields differ on the attitude of the young people toward the church, some holding that the young people are indifferent, others that despite a critical and uncooperative minority they are generally loyal and interested, while still others claim that high enthusiasm for the church marks the attitude of the younger generation. The following quotations are from two ministers in the same mining town:

The attitude of the young people in the coal fields toward the church is one of indifference, disregard, irreverence. This is due in the main to the breaking down of leadership in the homes, where family worship and Bible study and the simple life are not observed. The young people are simply following in the footsteps of their parents.

In A---- District there are ten Baptist churches; nine of these have live young people's clubs that form a Young People's District Club Convention. These young people are very enthusiastic in supporting the ideals of the church.

The following are typical of replies received from preachers in answer to the question: What is the attitude of the young people in the mining fields toward the church?

The young people in the mining fields attend church very readily, though they often express themselves as being much displeased at the old time methods of meeting the problems of church work.

The tendency seems to be away from the Church; the attitude seems to be better on the coal operations than in the towns.

The Negro youth of the coal mining fields maintain a very fine attitude toward the church. In many respects superior to that of their elders. They can be saved for the church with the proper sort of leadership from adult Christians. This, to my mind, is the saddest need of the young people of the coal mining fields.

The attitude of the young people is favorable generally. There may be an isolated case here and there of irreverence and atheistic talk; but the great majority is with the church. This is evidenced by the large number connected with the church, and engaged in church activities, in young people's societies of various kinds.

Until recently miners made good money. Many of them gave their children the benefit of school and college education. Returning to their communities these young people, many of whom were brought up in the church, instead of rendering the church service commensurate with their training and opportunities, in many cases hold off from the church and criticize it. Many teachers in these communities take the same attitude. There may be found, therefore, in many coal-field communities a group of young people whose attitude towards the churches in the coal fields is one of criticism.

The vast majority of Negro churches in the coal fields are Baptist Churches. In keeping with the denominational viewpoint, these churches look with disfavor upon card playing, dancing, and the like. This attitude of these churches has alienated numbers of young people, who, having learned these things in school, and believing them to be harmless, consider the position of the church rigid, backward, and unintelligent, and choose freedom and enjoyment rather than submit to the restraints of the church.

These, however, constitute a small group in these coal-field communities. Young people in large numbers still support the church and acknowledge its claim upon them. The preponderance of young people in the churches of Beckley has caused me to take note of the proportion of old and young in churches elsewhere as I go about over the state and inquire of pastors as to the proportion of young and old in their services, and of their attitude towards the church. Invariably, I learn that young people are attending and supporting the church and often in larger numbers than their elders.

The writer is inclined to believe that the last quotation presents an optimistic but fairly accurate description of the actual situation. The children of miners under the influence of the schools, having in most cases assimilated white standards to a greater extent than have their parents, reflect the conventional unconventionality of white young people in religious matters. Many of them, as says the last pastor quoted, do hold to the church and are one of the forces making for the reshaping of the Negro church more nearly after the patterns of white churches. In those communities where church membership is a distinct badge of social status the young people are likely to be supporters of the church. Occasionally the entire choir is made up of young high school students. Church-sponsored musical organizations already discussed, as well as the conventional "B. Y. P. U.'s" and Epworth Leagues of the Baptist and Methodist churches, draw a certain following from the young people. Toward the more "emotional" type of church service, however, many young people are likely to assume an attitude of superiority and disdain.

It is a common generalization that in times of adversity the churches are filled and in prosperity attendance wanes. The generalization, however, does not hold true in the mining fields during the dull times since 1929; some preachers report that attendance has fallen off about 50 per cent, and others admit that the church is actually fighting to maintain its existence. The Negro ministers

unanimously cite as a reason for the decline the traditional

~~which was the basis of the collection the day is in~~
Negro church service. Negroes have been accustomed to sup-
38
porting their church liberally and conspicuously. The
trip to the "table", as has been noted, allowed the Negroes
dressed in their Sunday best, a type of self-expression upon
which high social value has been placed by the group. Hav-
ing neither new clothes to exhibit nor money to give, many
Negroes have chosen to remain at home rather than admit
what is to them a certain loss of status. A Negro miner
explained that he had gone to church only 3 times during
the month because he lacked clothes. He went only at night
when he could not be seen. Still another variable in the
situation appears to be the general weakening of the habits
and the personal morale of all classes of workers in times
39
of prolonged idleness and adversity.

The depression has been a real disaster to many
of the preachers in the mining fields. Said the Superinten-
dent of the Bluefield District of the Methodist Church in
September 1932: "Our pastors and their families have borne
a large share of the suffering. Not being on the companies'
pay roll they are not entitled to an allowance. They must
trust God and the loyalty of their parishioners. Out of
their poverty faithful Christians have shared with our
pastors and their families in a way that evidenced the real

38 Cf. Odum, op. cit., p. 79.

39 See Williams, J. M., Human Aspects of Unemployment and Relief, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1933, pp. 90-94.

Christian spirit. Then, too, companies have been generous⁴⁰ and considerate concerning the welfare of our ministers."

A Negro minister in a letter to the writer says in this connection, "Things have become so severe economically here that my good wife and I have resorted to a life of faith and prayer alone for our support in what we are trying to do for the Master, and I am happy to say that without telling anyone about our needs but Him alone, day by day out of His unseen treasury help comes to us. Whenever our store gets empty, we feel confident He is going to work a miracle for us, and up to the present time He has not disappointed us." In spite of hardships the ministers, like the Negro miners, are apparently standing their ground and hoping for better times. Concerning the behavior of the preachers in the economic crisis the president of the West Virginia Baptist State Sunday School Convention says: "I do not know of a single instance where a pastor has resigned because of the inability of the church to pay his salary. On the other hand, I know of numerous instances where pastors have voluntarily reduced their salaries and continue to serve at a great sacrifice. A number of ministers who live in Beckley and hold pastorates in near-by coal camps receive from their churches on their service days less than expense⁴¹ in going to and from their charges."

40 Official Journal of the Fifty-second Annual Session of the East Tennessee Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, Sept. 28, 1933, p. 28.

41 Correspondence with Rev. P. F. King, Beckley, W. Va.

While most of the churches have probably lost in attendance since 1929 some preachers claim that their churches are maintaining their pre-depression numbers, and still others claim actual increases. The preachers who report such increase account for it on the basis of the belief on the part of many Negroes that the depression is a curse sent by the Almighty as punishment for sin and the only way to end the hard times is to "make friends with God."⁴² The writer found among the Negro miners much evidence of this belief that personal or public misfortunes are the result of a vindictive supernatural power. As the self-maintenance organization crumbles many feel the need of reliance upon spiritual powers as an aid to their own impotence.⁴³ The following incident related by a Fayette County superintendent illustrates a belief typical of many of the older Negro miners: A superintendent was opening up a new mine and was very anxious to complete it as soon as possible. Consequently, he was working every day, including Sunday. One of his Negro miners came to him and said: "Mr. Superintendent, I don't believe it is quite right to work on Sunday -- de good book don't say to do dat." The superintendent, a little out of patience at the time, replied gruffly: "I'm running this mine on money." A few days later a terrific cloudburst destroyed practically all the work done up to that time. The Negro chanced to see

⁴² Cf. Wooster, Black Yeomanry, p. 142.

⁴³ Cf. Puckett, op. cit., p. 545.

the superintendent and remarked: "Well, Mr. Superintendent, it kinda looks to me like de Good Lawd had more water than you had money."

The one church which has shown a remarkable growth during the dull times is the "Holiness" church. New branches of this denomination for both whites and Negroes are springing up here and there in the mining fields and the membership is growing rapidly. This fact is easily explained inasmuch as the appeal of the Holiness churches is entirely emotional and rhythmic, the services being characterized by all the emotional phenomena of the old-time revival. Negro and white miners alike seek relief from monotony and find it here more easily than in a service in which their role is mainly passive. A Negro woman at Keystone explained her preference for the Holiness Church: "At the others you just have to sit still. At the Holiness Church you can get up and preach or pray and sing. I like it!"

The Negro church in the mining fields is, like the Negro family and the school, slowly but surely approaching majority standards. The children of the Negro miners and race-conscious preachers, teachers, and laymen are the most effective agencies in bringing about this culture change. The steady stream of migration from the south, which stopped only with the depression, has been the conservative force in the process. Assimilation of white ways moves on irrespective of the immediate religious needs

of many miners. Study of the Negro church in the mining fields has convinced the writer that diverse cultural elements, even in a group with racial homogeneity and bonds of common disadvantages, may not have their religious needs filled in the same way. Simple Negro peasants lately from the south, caught in the maelstrom of economic maladjustment, desiring the ecstasy which only a certain type of religion can give them, complain that they cannot "understand" the preacher. Educated and race conscious Negro ministers, for whom the adoption of white standards constitutes the most important desideratum complain because they must "talk down" to their congregations. Both are unsatisfied.

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIAL STATUS

One of the commonest popular fallacies in conventional white stereotypes of the Negroes is that of regarding them as belonging to a unified and homogeneous group.

Negroes were differentiated even before the abolition of slavery into free Negro and slave elements.¹ Differentia-

tion on various bases continued after emancipation so that the Negro group of the present is divided by many class

schisms.² Membership in a particular social class in American white society is based chiefly on economic considerations. American Negroes, however, most of whom have occupied a definitely low economic position, have developed other criteria for social status in addition to that of

wealth or occupation.³ In this chapter the main bases of status as defined by the culture of the Negro miners in West Virginia are discussed.

A common basis for the assignment of status to an individual in contemporary American culture is his function

¹ See Woodson, C. G., The Negro In Our History, Associated Publishers, 1927, pp. 236, 246, 253; Woodson, C. G., Free Negro Heads of Families in the U. S. in 1830, Associated Publishers, 1925; Nelson, A. D., People of Color in Louisiana, Jour. of Negro History, Vol. 1, pp. 361-376. Dodge, D., op. cit.

² See Frazier, E. F., La Bourgeoisie Noire, Modern Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 1; Frazier, E. F., The Negro Family in Chicago, Ch. III; Dunford, F. M., Conflicting Forces in Negro Progress, Social Forces, Vol. 3, p. 703; Park, R. E., Bases of Race Prejudice, Annals, Vol. CXXXX, Nov. 1928, pp. 11-20; Miller, K., Race Adjustment, Neale, New York, 1909, pp. 181-187.

³ Young, D., op. cit., 356ff.

in the economic organization.⁴ The different functions performed by the Negroes in the mining fields have already been discussed. The relationship between the position held by the Negroes and their social status is not striking. Preachers and teachers of course constitute the aristocracy of the mining town. Machine men, contractors, or night watchmen, as well as certain others who occupy positions denoting a particular trust in the men by the companies, are likely to occupy a somewhat higher status because of that fact; but the thrift, energy, and far-sightedness in saving and using money which these men usually exhibit probably affect their prestige more than the mere holding of responsible positions.⁵ Some of these men have become small capitalists, cashing scrip at 25 per cent discount and lending money for a consideration. The possession of money and the evidences of such position are highly respected by most of the miners, and especially by their wives and daughters. The style and quality of clothes worn by the women, like other kinds of "conspicuous consumption," have a great deal to do with the status the families hold in the mining town. The chief value of certain social and public functions to many of the women is that such occasions afford the opportunity for exhibiting a new dress.⁶ In the "dull times", as they are

⁴ See North, C. C., Social Differentiation, pp. 21-23.

⁵ In verifying and clarifying many of my ideas in this chapter interviews with Mr. U. H. Prunty, Principal of Elkhorn District Colored High School, McDowell County, were especially helpful.

⁶ Correspondence with Miss Laura Thornhill, Negro teacher in the mining fields of Logan County.

called in the mining fields, the women sometimes greatly alter their routines because of their inability to continue on the same plane of consumption they formerly followed.

As a rough index of the relation between the positions of the Negro miners and their social status a study was made of the occupations of the leaders in many mining towns visited. The identity of leaders was determined by interviews with Negro teachers and preachers as well as with employers. The occupations of 66 Negro leaders exclusive of preachers and teachers are shown in Table 72. The fact that leaders are drawn from all occupations is

TABLE 72. OCCUPATIONS OF 66 NEGRO LEADERS
IN WEST VIRGINIA MINING TOWNS;
1932

Occupations	Number
Coal loader	39
Track man	7
Machine man	3
Motorman	3
Boiler fireman	3
Janitor	2
Mechanic	2
Electrician	1
Brattice man	1
Pumper	1
Stable boss	1
Stone mason	1
Brakeman	1
Tipple man	1
Total	66

shown rather clearly. Usually the teachers or preachers also are considered as leaders. Sometimes, on the other hand, the Negro leader is one of the most illiterate

members of the Negro group. These leaders express their leadership in politics, civic matters, and in church and lodge affairs. The Negroes enjoy their full political rights in all parts of West Virginia. They may, it is true, vote at times as the operators wish them to,⁷ but such voting does not seem to detract from the satisfaction of participating in political practices. The very fact that they have been able to elect members of their own race to office, and to gain concessions from the political parties in the form of appointments to various state and federal offices gives the Negroes, especially those who come from states in which such achievement is not possible, a feeling of progress and protection. The Negroes have engaged strongly in these political activities in the mining fields and the political leader, even though he may come to the company office to find out who are "our men," still maintains his prestige. Although the church leader has traditionally been a man of high standing among the Negroes, he does not seem in some places to exert the influence he once did.

The development of culture traits through which status is recognized in any group is determined in many cases by the vicissitudes of group history. A circumstance in the history of the Negroes in the mining field has resulted in an attitude which has been incorporated into the mores of the upper stratum. The circumstance is the large number of Negro criminals who undoubtedly constituted a

7 See Spero and Harris, op. cit., pp. 371-374.

large part of the Negro population in certain parts of the mining fields in the early days. The Negroes belonging to the upper stratum, not only in the mining fields but throughout the state, feel that they have been done great harm by the presence of this early criminal element. They frankly admit the existence of this criminal group⁸ and make a decided distinction between them and other Negro groups.

Said a Negro teacher concerning this situation: "In justice to those who have toiled upward and are striving for the good of their fellowman, do not judge the entire race by the class of criminals that belong to all races."⁹ Some of the Negroes with whom the writer talked were hypersensitive on this subject of Negro criminality. The Director of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics requested the newspapers of the state not to use the racial adjective in reporting crime news.¹⁰

As a matter of fact the Negro miners have a relatively favorable record, so far as commitments to the state penitentiary is an index of criminality. Although miners, according to the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics,¹¹ constituted in 1925 about 75 per cent of all Negro males over 16 years of age, the Negro miners admitted to the penitentiary between July 1, 1924 and May 1, 1926 comprised

8 See W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, pp. 13-14.

9 Welch Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

10 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-26, pp. 114-116.

11 Ibid., p. 18.

only 24.4 per cent of all Negroes admitted during that period.¹² The corresponding percentage in the period January 1, 1927 to July 1, 1928 was somewhat larger, being 28.9 per cent of all Negro male commitments, but it was still much smaller than the percentage which miners form of the total Negro population.¹³ During the earlier period Cabell County, with a Negro population only one sixth as large as that of McDowell, but with its Negroes concentrated in the city of Huntington, sent 4 more Negroes to the penitentiary than McDowell.¹⁴ Kanawha County, with about half its Negro population resident in the city of Charleston, sent 43 Negroes to the penitentiary, whereas McDowell County, with about twice the number of Negroes, sent only 51.¹⁵ In all of the counties in which Negroes are concentrated in cities the numbers of Negroes sent to the penitentiary per thousand population are greater than in the coal counties having no large city. These figures may mean that, under the aegis of the paternalistic policy of many companies, the Negro miner has been more protected against prosecution than has his brother in the city. It is much more likely, however, that the figures are more nearly an index of the relative number of major crimes committed by the two groups, possibly because the Negroes from the rural south find adjustment less difficult in the comparatively rural mining communities than in an urban environment. In either case,

¹² Computed from Ibid., p. 114.

¹³ Ibid., 1927-28, p. 53.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁵ Ibid.

however, the fact remains that the "better element" maintains its distance from the "criminals" in the towns.

One very definite basis for differentiation is based upon the place of origin of the Negro miners. The West Virginia and Virginia Negroes tend to look down upon Negroes from more southern states, particularly the Alabamans. A Negro in Fayette County almost hung his head when he admitted he was from Alabama. A Negro in Kanawha County being asked whether he was from the south replied, "No, suh!" with evident pride in the fact that he was from Virginia. Many Negroes deny their far southern origin, while still others are inclined to be non-committal, saying: "I've been here twenty years." While the Virginians and West Virginians in the mining fields show the greatest antagonism for the Alabama migrant, they are by no means cordial to the Negroes from Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. The North Carolinian, however, is much less disliked than the others.

A Negro woman to whom the writer mentioned the hesitancy of the Alabamans about telling their birthplace had an explanation: "They won't tell it. Many of them got in trouble down there and that is the reason they came up here. They think the West Virginia people are 'over-bearin'.' So do the North Carolina people. I went down to North Carolina on a visit and stayed six months. I went to a house-party and there were three people killed. A man cut a woman's head clean off and people went by her laying

there and didn't even so much as look at her. I told them we might be overbearin' up here in West Virginia -- but we at least would glance at a dead person. I came out of there just about as quick as I could get."

While the schisms based on state of origin are not always apparent on the surface, and the casual observer may not notice any lack of fraternization, there is a decided differentiation due to a clash of mores. The Alabama Negroes and others of the south in many cases take pride in being "bad." ¹⁶ This criterion of distinction is not respected by the Virginia and West Virginia Negroes, who are habituated to a degree of independence which has given them pride in order and self-respect rather than in the cruder standard of the southerner. They consider the southerners as "bullies" and "too loud," and tend to hold themselves apart from them. Said a Fayette County woman: "Some of these Alabama boys brag about how bad they is. One of them was bragging to me one day about how mean he was. I told him that Alabama people wasn't the only ones that God gave a temper to. We don't like Alabama people any better than they like us." An older woman near by, overhearing the conversation, said: "I don't mess with these Alabama people. They'll kill you in a minute." As a result of this isolation of the southerners by the Virginians and the West Virginians the Negroes of the minority group have been driven to seek the association of persons of like origin

¹⁶ Cf. Peterkin, Julia, Black April.

and the southerners have therefore been more closely cemented together.¹⁷ West Virginians and Virginians whose attitudes have had much to do with this fact, however, regard the southerners merely as "clannish."

A degree of personal disorganization in this situation is inevitable. Many of the minority strive all the harder for recognition by the development of extreme aggressiveness and by becoming even "meaner" than before.¹⁸ Says one West Virginia woman: "The miners from Alabama and Georgia are not accepted by the West Virginians. In the church the southerners will join and take charge, putting the West Virginians in the rear. They believe in action, that is to say they are emotional and, of course, the West Virginians are not. Virginians do not have much to do with those from Alabama and Mississippi because most of them are mean and carry guns." The West Virginia and Virginia Negroes, then, feeling the difference between themselves and the cruder and more "emotional" southerners are concerned because of the possible effect the migrants may have on the attitudes of whites toward the entire Negro group.¹⁹ In self-defense they have isolated the far-southern minority²⁰ thus accentuating the traits they dislike. Of course,

17 Cf. Park, R. E., and Miller, H. A., Old World Traits Transplanted, Society for Social Research, Univ. of Chicago, 1921, Ch. III.

18 Cf. Miller, H. A., Races, Nations, and Classes, Ch. IV.

19 Cf. the attitudes of Negroes in northern cities toward newcomers from the south. See Mark, M. L., op. cit., p. 10; Frazier, E. F., Negro Family in Chicago, Ch. V; Young, D., op. cit., p. 48.

20 Cf. Park, R. E., Behind Our Masks, Survey, Vol. 58, May 1926, p. 138.

it is not to be inferred here either that all southern Negroes take pride in their "meanneess" or that all Virginians or West Virginians do not. The unfavorable stereotypes of the southern Negro held by the latter groups do, however, play an important part in creating intra-group attitudes among the Negroes of the mining fields and produce a very real differentiation. Some of the southerners, as has been pointed out before, attempt to escape the effects of this discrimination by "passing" into the majority Negro group through a denial of their origin; others do so by living in towns in which Negroes from southern states have concentrated.

Another cleavage in the Negro mining population is between the "church people" and the non-church people, for the church group as a rule considers itself as of a somewhat higher order than the group which is indifferent to the institution. The Negro church has never been purely a religious organization. Social, economic, civic, and literary activities have always formed a part of its program,²¹ and therefore membership in a church means more than the mere democratic attendance at religious services. The church members are likely to be the citizens active socially and economically, or in other words, the aristocracy of the town. In towns where exists more than one denomination, the social status of the individual is partly

²¹ See W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1927-28, pp. 65-67.

determined by the church to which he belongs. If, for example, both Methodist and Baptist churches are found in the same town the Methodists are likely to consider themselves somewhat superior to the Baptists, while the members of both of these larger denominations feel themselves separated pretty definitely from the adherents of the "Holy Rollers" or "Holiness" church. By far the largest number of towns, however, have only the Baptist denomination.

Before the present "dull times" the Negro lodges were very active, "socials" and parades, in brightly colored regalia, being very common. Funerals were usually conducted by the lodges, for it was the exceptional Negro miner that did not belong to at least one of the various lodges in the mining fields. The Odd Fellows and Household of Ruth claimed the largest number of Negroes. They were followed, in order of their respective numbers, by the Knights of Pythias and Court of Calanthe, Order of Saint Luke, Golden Rule Endowment Association, Masons and Heroines of Jerico,²² Masons and Eastern Star, and the Elks of the World. At the present time, however, the lodges in the mining fields are practically inactive, for the miners have had to drop all activities calling for unnecessary expenditure. Consequently, although membership in these lodges signified a certain status, this basis of status is of historical rather than present importance.

In spite of these class differentiations operators

²² Ibid., 1925-26, p. 23.

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report that the Negroes show a great deal of group loyalty. In mining towns where the giving of relief has been necessary Negroes have shown a decided tendency to share with others of their group whatever material aid is given them. Negro solidarity is often shown in any situation involving the Negro group as a whole. Even when difficulties arise between Negroes they frequently show their preference for adjustment without recourse to members of the white group. An employer gives an example in the following conversation: "You would be surprised at the loyalty the Negroes show toward each other. They gamble a good bit, but if they have a shooting scrape, or a cutting scrape, they are loathe to tell on the one who injured them. One night one of them came to the doctor with a stab wound in a very dangerous place. . It was a gash in the neck about two inches deep and it is a wonder it did not kill him. The doctor said: 'What's the matter, John?' He replied: 'I - I think I have been stabbed, suh.' The doctor answered: 'John, you know you have been stabbed. Where were you?' 'I was down to the lower end,' (the Negro section of the town) he replied. 'Who stabbed you?' 'I just don't know, suh.' 'Now, John, you know you know who stabbed you. Who was it?' 'No, suh, you know all of a sudden the lights went out and I don't know who stabbed me.'"

An antagonistic attitude, on the other hand, was exhibited by some of the Negro miners toward Negroes successful in other fields than mining. The writer found this

attitude to be quite prevalent, even, in some cases, to the detriment of the miners themselves. The following illustrates how this attitude of antagonism and suspicion may have stood in the way of their correcting an alleged wrong being done them. At a mine where relief was administered once a week by a county truck which came up and left bags of food for the miners whose names had been turned in by the company as needing help,^{the} Negroes, a disgruntled and protesting group, claimed that they had not been getting their share of relief as compared with the whites. The writer, knowing the name of the president of the nearest branch of the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People, suggested that they communicate their grievances to this man. The reply of the spokesman for the group was: "Mr. B.? What he care 'bout us? Why he's a rich man -- // he don't worry none about us people up here. He'll take our cases (the man was a lawyer) but he does it for the money in it. He don't care about us po' folks. That 'so-ciation won't do nuthin' for us." The rest of the group agreed that such was the case.

We have here an exhibition of the attitude that makes the part played by the Negro in positions of authority in the industry a difficult one. Perhaps one of the reasons for this attitude is to be found in the fact that the successful Negro tends to be separated to a certain extent from the group as a whole. For instance, the Negro of means has striven to allow his family the advantage of a good neighbor-

hood, and hence in many cases has moved outside the Negro neighborhood into a white area.²³ This move is made not because of any desire to leave the Negroes, but because the better neighborhoods are to be found outside the Negro sections, but to the less fortunate Negroes the change of residence simply means that the members of this family feel themselves "too good" to live with their people any more. The National Association For the Advancement of Colored People is the object of some of this antagonism because it has often fought for the right of these Negroes to live in white neighborhoods. In the "Dr. Sweet Case" in Detroit, for instance, the Association was fighting against the principle of segregation. A good many of the Mercer County Negroes said, however, of this case: "Well, he got too good to live among his own people. Let him fight his own case." Since the Association must fight a number of these cases many of the less fortunate Negroes have thought it was interested in the upper groups rather than in the common man.²⁴ On the other hand, some staunch supporters of the Association are to be found among the Negro miners.

Mention has been omitted, up to this point, of one of the most common bases for class distinctions within the Negro group. Distinction based upon color is discussed last not because of its absence but because, among West Virginia miners, its role is apparently less important than

23 See Frazier, E. F., Negro Family in Chicago, p. 249.

24 Interview with the president of the N. A. A. C. P. branch, Bluefield, W. Va.

some of the others already stressed. The advantages which the "bright"-skinned person has over his darker brother within the Negro group are probably ubiquitous in the American culture pattern.²⁵ Inquiry revealed the fact that in the mining fields there is little difference in the number of Negro leaders of light and dark skin color. Among the women, however, the situation is different. In West Virginia as elsewhere a woman with a dark skin is at a tremendous disadvantage in the marriage mart. For the Negro man the possession of a light wife is a badge of distinction. She is for him an article of conspicuous consumption which reflects upon him a sort of artificial prestige. The wife of light color and, through her, her husband may enter economic and social areas which would be closed to persons of darker pigmentation.²⁶ To the young women, then, color is of most vital importance. Just what men may secure the more desirable women of light color, however, and from what women the most desirable men will select their wives is determined by other cultural factors already discussed.

25 See Herskovits, Melville J., The American Negro, Knopf, 1938, Ch. IV.
 26 Ibid., pp. 59-66.

CHAPTER XIV

RACE RELATIONS

I. THE PRESENT STATUS OF RACE RELATIONS.-

1. General statement.-

Perhaps in no great industry have diverse racial and national elements been able to work together more peacefully than in that of mining. Race conflict between white and black in the mining fields of West Virginia is seldom known. This condition is not peculiar to West Virginia but is found in other states as well. Payne says of the situation at large in the United States:¹

Race conflict is noted as a very minor cause of unrest in mining communities. Miners are so accustomed to foreigners that for the most part their different culture is generally accepted by Americans as a matter of course. Sometimes, of course, too much racial diversity seems to interfere with unionization; at other times it actually aids.

This attitude toward the foreign born is paralleled by the attitudes toward Negroes. They too are accepted as a matter of course. Allen found race conflict in the mining fields of the Pittsburgh district almost non-existent.² Johnson³ mentions the cordial relations existing when he says:

¹ Payne, W. E., op. cit., pp. 129-130.
² Allen, op. cit., pp. 57-58.
³ Johnson, The Negro in American Civilization, pp. 360-361.

In lines of work in which Negroes are given preference by employers, by virtue of superior skill, strength or longer tenure, e. g., hod carrying and bituminous coal mining, it is pleasing to note how cordial and how lacking in race consciousness the men are.

Negro teachers, preachers, and other leaders in the mining fields are unanimously in agreement that relations between the races in the mining fields are cordial. Most of them were hard put to remember even sporadic outbreaks of ill feeling and conflict within recent years. Many of them made it a point to say that they knew of no other places in which relations were more amicable than in the mining communities. Said the Negro Director of the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, himself a former delegate to the state legislature from McDowell County, in his report for 1921-1922:

In the light of the low social order existing in the camps and communities to which Negroes came in such large numbers, it is remarkable that West Virginia now has such splendid Negro population -- in intellect, thrift, and morals, and that there has been little if any bitterness, strife and outbreaks of violence between the races. The harmonious relations which exist between the races speak well for the conservatism, tolerance and restraint of the great body of white West Virginians, the long line of State and County officials, the public press and the heads of institutions; also, the Negro preachers, teachers, leaders, editors and sane conservative home makers who came with the crowd to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities offered in this young State for the improvement of their conditions and to give to their children a greater chance for advancement.

In times of rapid movement of Negroes in large numbers conflict situations often develop.⁵ Following the Mingo strike in 1921 many Negroes went into the northern counties of Brooke, Ohio, Monongalia, and Hancock counties.⁶ This rapid penetration of these mining fields by the Negroes was accomplished without racial friction.⁷

Lest the preceding paragraphs may convey too sanguine an impression some explanation is advisable at this point. While all persons agree on the existing state of stable equilibrium of race relations in the West Virginia mining fields, they are speaking, of course, in relative terms. There is no intent here to picture conditions in West Virginia coal mining communities as ideal in any sense. West Virginia, being a border state, represents varying attitudes on race subjects. Some segregation exists throughout the state. State law provides for separate schools for the two races; Negroes find it difficult to own property in certain parts of the towns; Negroes and whites attend different churches and theaters and stay in different hotels; intermarriage is legally forbidden. On the other hand, the Negroes have full political privileges in all parts of the state and they are not segregated in common carriers. The question of race relations outside of the mining fields is,

⁵ See Chicago Commission on Race Relations, The Negro In Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, passim.

⁶ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1923-24, p. 37.

⁷ U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review, vol. 21, August, 1925, p. 11.

however, beyond the scope of the present study. We may now proceed more specifically to conditions as they exist in the mining fields at the present time.

2. Negro miners and their employers.-

Relations between employers and their Negro miners were observed to be almost without exception cordial and friendly. The only hostility noted was displayed by a superintendent who had come to West Virginia from a northern state, but who assured the writer that his attitudes were "southern." The West Virginia native operator is as a rule much more cordial in his relationships with individual Negroes than this northern operator evidently was. A certain superintendent in Fayette County, for instance, was walking with the writer up the railroad toward the tippie past a group of miners who were as usual seated on the rails talking. The superintendent paid no attention to the white miners, but as he passed a Negro miner he gave him a friendly, bantering blow with a strap he held in his hand. The Negro, obviously pleased with this attention, grinned broadly. The superintendent explained that the Negroes "like to be kidded" and that he did so a great deal.

This attitude toward the Negroes has been imitated somewhat by the bookkeepers, clerks, and other employees of the "white collar" class. While the author was working in coal company offices he watched carefully the transactions which went on between the Negro miners and these men. The

same good natured bantering which so often goes on between higher officials and the Negro employees takes place between the minor officials and the Negroes. An example or two will indicate the relations that the writer found typical in every county.

The first illustrates the friendliness of a Negro toward a bookkeeper. A Negro miner in Kanawha County supplements his earnings in dull times by selling peanuts, which he transports in a baby carriage all over the town where he is employed and in near-by towns. The bookkeeper and the writer were talking on the porch as he went by pushing his baby carriage. He sent over a bag of peanuts for each of us by a little Negro boy. The bookkeeper said he had a great deal of respect for and confidence in this Negro miner; that he was in no sense trying to make a bid for favors by his gift. The following conversation between the bookkeeper of a Raleigh County coal company and a Negro miner unmistakably implied the most informal and cordial relations. Foreigners, native whites, and Negroes had all been coming to the office on this particular day asking for "advances" of money, which without exception had been refused. One Negro came in after the rest and said, "Mr. L. (the bookkeeper), I would like to hold you up for about \$4.00." Mr. L. replied that he had no money and had turned down many requests that day. The Negro replied: "Shuah, I know you can't fix them all up -- but you can fix me up all right." More conversation ensued in which the Negro,

always smiling, insisted that he needed money badly. Mr. L., however, was not to be moved, and finally the Negro went out chuckling. The Negro consumed several minutes of the bookkeeper's time on a busy day, but the white man was friendly and goodnatured throughout.

Exceptions to such friendliness were occasionally observed. Some bookkeepers and store men showed decided antagonism to the Negroes, whom they had to serve, and some Negroes, including some wives of Negro miners, were disagreeable in their attitude toward these employees of the company. Such persons were, however, conspicuously in the minority.

The existence of cordial relations between the employing class and the Negroes is not surprising. Employers are far enough removed from the plane of competition with the Negroes and are sure enough of their status to be able to take a generous attitude toward them.⁸ The clerical force too can indulge in a liberal and friendly attitude toward the Negroes without loss of status, for the Negro role is too far removed from their own to warrant uneasiness on their part. No Negro was found in the offices of the company at any operation visited. These same employers, however, quickly react in a different way toward Negroes in other roles. Said a superintendent in Mercer County at the conclusion of an interview: "I suspect it is pretty clear to you that I like Negro miners. I like them in their

⁸ Cf. Miller, Kelly, The Negro As a Workingman, American Mercury, Vol. 6, p. 310.

place -- I don't like Negro lawyers and doctors." ⁹ The attitude of some of the operators is tinged by religious conventionalization. ¹⁰ Writes the president of a company employing large numbers of Negroes: "My fore-fathers were slave owners, but opposed to slavery and I was taught to respect negroes' feelings and have by doing so, nearly always had pleasant relations with them. I don't believe as a whole that the Negro will ever be equal to the Caucasian. Still he is human, his soul is as dear as the white man's, he is our brother in Christ and it is our duty to lead him in higher ways." This attitude is quite widespread, but those holding it mean, for the most part, by "higher ways" improved sex relations, honesty, and the adoption of "white" standards of personal conduct in general. The dichotomy between soul and body is well established, and "higher ways" are to be found within the culturally circumscribed area of "his place."

The generally friendly attitudes of employers toward their Negro employees is undoubtedly a factor in the labor situation in West Virginia mines. Employers have nothing to lose by the sort of pseudo-intimacy practiced by them in showing such little attentions as have been mentioned. The Negroes, on the other hand, are likely as a result to feel a sort of artificial prestige and are thus drawn more ¹¹ closely to employers who manifest these traits.

9 Cf. Bogardus, E. S., Immigration and Race Attitudes, Heath, 1928, pp. 91-92.

10 See Sumner, W. G., Folkways, Ginn, 1906, pp. 68-70.

11 Cf. Bogardus, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

3. Negro Miners and their fellow employees.-

Every employer interviewed was carefully questioned concerning any cases of trouble that he had known between Negro and white miners. The answers were almost unanimously in the negative. Most of the employers exhibited a sort of tacit but obvious surprise that such a question should be raised. Race conflict at the present time is a very minor problem. The writer has observed white and Negro men working side by side at the same job with no apparent effort on the part of the whites to keep a definite line of demarcation between themselves and the Negro workers - a work relationship by no means common to all industries.¹² This lack of friction may be due in part to the fact that much of the work inside the mine is individual in its nature, each miner having his own work out out for him with little help from others necessary.

Some evidence of race prejudice does, however, exist in certain places where whites must work in cooperation with Negroes in an inferior position. As has been pointed out before, the mores vary from town to town. In some places, for instance, a white man does not brake on the same motor with a Negro motorman; at other places a white man does not brake for a Negro motorman but will run the motor with a Negro brakeman at the same rate of pay. Another widely dispersed distinction is the relatively

¹² Cf. Miller, K., op. cit., p. 311.

common restriction of Negro motormen to the "gathering" motors and away from the "main line" motors, which in some places are reserved for white motormen. The distinction here is one of status, for motormen are usually paid at the same rate regardless of their runs. In some cases, however, Negroes were found on main line motors with white brakemen who received smaller wages. Thus harmonious relations are

A Negro motorman, with white brakeman,
on a main line run in Wyoming County

promoted in some places by culturally established roles to which both whites and Negroes are accommodated whereas in other places no such restrictions are to be found. The

fact that whites will sometimes impose on the Negroes led one employer to say that he preferred not to have too many whites. He said: "You know the white man just knows he is better than the Negro and wants to show it sometimes." This employer indicated, however, that the better class of whites do not act in this way.

Foreigners are disliked by many Negroes, for in the effort to become "American" they have been quick to imitate conventional white attitudes toward minority races, some of them, as might be expected, have according to Negroes outdone the native whites in this respect. A Negro principal of a high school claims that a foreigner in the position of foreman is likely to exhibit his prejudice, and cited a foreign-born foreman who was made to go back to loading coal - to the joy of the Negro miners, for as one of them put it, "I just can't stand being 'Jim-Crowed' by one of those fellows." A conversation between two Negro miners was overheard in which the right of the native whites to such an attitude was almost admitted, while the right of the foreign-born was enthusiastically denounced. There is a good bit of evidence that the contention of the Negroes concerning the antagonism of the foreigners is not groundless. The Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics quotes an employer as saying the Poles and Slavs in his mine have always opposed the hiring of Negro miners. The words of the report are: "He further said that the foreign element would drive the Negro out of his own country if he lets it and that a

Negro is a fool to turn 'red' with huskies and Russians whose first words in English are usually 'I won't work with a ---- black --- of a ----',¹³ The most bitter expression of race prejudice in the writer's personal experience was voiced by a foreign-born miner.

Negroes and whites in line
at the company office

While in normal times the relationships between Negroes and whites are friendly enough, under certain conditions conflict, always potential in the American racial situation, may become kinetic. One of these danger spots has been the employment of Negroes in times of strike. The use of "transportation" to bring in black workers to the strike area has been resorted to by employers in the past.¹⁴ The strike breaker is persona non grata at any time and in

¹³ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-26, p. 29.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

any situation. However, when "scabs" are Negroes the competitive element is brought to the forefront, race prejudice thrives, and a conflict situation easily arises.¹⁵

Where race prejudice has no meaning:
children of neighboring white and
Negro miners

At Ward, in Kanawha County, in 1931 during the
¹⁶

summer strike the company brought in about fifty Negroes for the purpose of breaking the strike. They were kept in a large boarding house, which the state police guarded, and were taken to work in box cars. The strikers dynamited the

¹⁵ Cf. Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 233.

¹⁶ See Wilson, Edmund, Coal Diggers, New Republic, July 8, 1931.

boarding house and shot at the box cars and, although by
chance there were no fatalities, the Negroes all left.¹⁷

Said a wife of one of the white miners: "That's what is
the trouble with the country today -- these colored fellers
would work for a loaf of bread a day. That makes it all
the harder for the white men." When asked if the whites
ever tried to run them out, she replied: "They did at Ward
during the strike." When asked further about any attempts
in normal times she said: "No, you see you have to keep
within the law."¹⁸

During the 1925 strike in the northern
counties union miners marched to the home of a Negro miner
at Glendale in Marshall County to make a demonstration.

Gun play resulted in which two white men and one Negro were
seriously wounded.¹⁹ In the union counties of the north
friction also developed in some places when Negroes were
placed on mine committees.²⁰

Another danger spot lies in the relationship of
the white miners to Negro women. The Negro, while he may
be, as Young has pointed out, "more readily assuaged"²¹
when his spouse proves unfaithful, is quick to resent any
threatened or actual irregularities of behavior between his
wife or sweetheart and men of either race. There is reason

17 Interview with wife of a white miner engaged in this
strike.

18 Ibid.

19 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report,
1925-26, p. 34.

20 U. S. Department of Labor, Bulletin 361, 1923, Labor
Relations in Fairmont, W. Va.

21 Young, D., op. cit., p. 383.

to believe that sex commerce between white miners and Negro women is not uncommon. Said a superintendent: "Often a white man who will refuse to brake for a Negro may think nothing at all about 'playing around' with his wife."

According to the white miners questioned on the matter, many²² of the whites prefer illicit sex relations with Negro women.

There is popular superstition among the white miners that sexual intercourse with a Negro woman will change one's luck from bad to good. Said a white miner: "Many white men say that all nigger wenches are crooked. I just about believe that. You know, they just can't stand temptation at all. They are more like brutes than we are." Stereotypes of the lack of morality of Negro women in the minds of the white men probably gives rise to a boldness in approaching them that results at times in a clash.

A group of white painters who were staying at the same boarding house as the writer in one mining town were employed to paint all the company houses. One of the painters got in trouble with one of the Negro miners. The painter immediately fled the town. One of the painters said that the man had been painting one of the Negro houses at which he had been getting home brew. He claimed that a Negro came in and threatened to kill a woman in the house. He remonstrated with him, but the Negro drew a knife and hit him with a rock. The deputy sheriff in the company office, however, having made the arrests of all concerned told a

²² Cf. Ibid., p. 381.

different story. He said the Negro had discovered the painter cohabiting with the woman. The outcome of the matter was that the woman was taken to jail on a charge of adultery and her husband on a charge of drunkenness. The painter apparently, having left the town, escaped without punishment. Trouble of this type, however, is very infrequent.

There are certain Negroes nevertheless who are known as "bad niggers" both among the whites and their own racial group. These have sometimes been involved in trouble not only with their own group, but with whites as well. A superintendent told of his method of handling such men: "After the war we found the Negroes were especially hard to manage. Before the war some of the 'bad niggers' were timid bad men. When they came back from the war they were still bad man -- but they were no longer timid. They were bold bad men. Fighting for their country seemed to make them much more impudent and aggressive. I would find some of them coming from the mine at 2:00 o'clock and would say, 'How come you men can't do a day's work?' They would answer, 'Well, what you goin' to do about it -- pay us off if you want to.' I got one of the Baldwin-Felts men, Buster -----, and, believe me, he was a buster. In fact, I think he was a little too drastic in the means he used. He would hit them. Once he cracked down on one and cut a big gash in his head with a pistol shot. One day they began to bunch up on him. He drew a mark in the dirt and said: 'Now,

I don't want to kill anybody -- but the first who steps across that line is a dead man. They hated him -- but he certainly calmed them down." Due to the fact that the early days brought many men of the "bad man" type, the companies have made a concerted effort to weed these out and rid themselves of them. The McDowell County superintendent who told the story above indicated that such happenings were very exceptional.

4. Segregation.-

Although no separation or segregation of Negroes and whites in their work was found at any mine, some segregation was found in other ways. In housing, policies differ from town to town and from company to company. Some towns had complete segregation of Negroes and whites while others had absolutely none. One town even had separate sections for Negroes, native whites, and foreigners. Probably the places with some degree of segregation were in the majority; the lines of demarcation were, however, very flexible in many places. In fact, although some companies were very emphatic in their statement of separation, the writer often found Negro miners living in the white sections and vice versa. One of the companies went so far as to paint all their white houses white and their Negro houses brown, but even here Negroes and whites were found living in the same section side by side.

Where separation was made the Negro sections were, if different, less desirable than the white locations. In a very common type of separation the Negro section was divided from the white section by some prominent company building, such as the tippie or store. Sometimes the two sections were designated as "colored town" and "white town."

Typical separation of white and Negro sections. Negro section in foreground. Houses of white section are to be seen beyond the tippie.

In one of the Fayette County mines a Negro section was found in the center of the town and a white section on either side. The superintendent was questioned as to the reason for this arrangement. He replied: "I do that so the whites will have to pass the Negro section and the Negroes the white. I think they learn to get along that way. That's just my idea but it has seemed to work."

The president of one of the companies owning probably the best town visited so far as housing is concerned

said: "We do not segregate our Negroes here. The only segregation is in the case of a double house. We do not put a Negro and a white family in the same house -- otherwise we do not separate them." Investigation proved this statement correct. Other companies allowed the Negro miner to have any house in the town so long as he could pay the rent for it, but the higher rents sometimes keep the Negroes, and some whites as well, from getting the better houses. Each of the companies, however, feels pretty sure its system is the better one, whether it segregates the races or allows complete freedom of choice of location.

Where whites and Negroes live as neighbors there seems to be no more racial strife than where they do not. Both whites and Negroes have testified to this fact. Said one Negro miner concerning his white next-door neighbors, "They couldn't have been nicer people, even if they were Negroes." Some of the Negroes, however, prefer not to live next to whites because "they borrow so much and never pay back." On the other hand, some whites do not like to live next to the Negroes because they are out late on Saturday or pay day and are noisy. The fact that the lack of separation has not resulted in unfriendly relations is supported by the statements of two superintendents who favor the policy of segregation. One in Kanawha County said: "I have tried to separate my white and colored miners, but they won't let me. Of course, right down here next to the store I can keep them separate -- but not up the hollow." Another in

Logan County says that he finds very little trouble between the native white West Virginians and the Negroes. He says he has even had whites ask to be transferred to a Negro camp. He has tried to bring about a system of segregation in camps where formerly no such system existed but has had trouble in getting the whites to move. He says they do not mind being with the colored.

Bath houses, where they existed, were separate. In most cases, however, the accommodations were identical. In some places the baths were located in the boarding houses or in the club houses which were always separate. As a rule, the white club house was the better structure, but in one case the Negro club house was equal or superior to the white.

Segregation is also observed in recreation buildings and theaters. In theaters the Negroes as a rule sit on one side of the center aisle and the whites on the other.

A pool room in Raleigh County. The door on the right is for Negroes; the one on the left for the whites.

In pool rooms a somewhat similar plan is utilized. Rather than build separate structures some of the companies have put up a single building, usually a one story affair with a counter built entirely across the room separating it into two identical compartments, one for the use of the Negroes and the other for the whites. Persons of the two races may and frequently do talk across the counter to one another and both buy drinks and candy at the same counter from their respective sides. They do not, however, play together and they enter the building by separate doors. In other places entirely separate accommodations are provided. These amusement places are often referred to locally as "Y. M. C. A.'s" although they have no connection with that organization, and serve no function other than commercialized recreation. At one place where the "Y. M. C. A." was used by both whites and Negroes a policy of segregation was used, but over a

Informal recreation. Card games under the store platform in which both whites and Negroes participate

period of a few years the whites and Negroes gradually came to play together rather than separately.

The Negroes and whites mingle frequently in informal recreational activities. Sometimes card games in which members of both races participate go on by the hour. The writer has also observed Negro and white boys play baseball together on the same team, a surprising alliance in view of the fact that in West Virginia the Negroes and

Negro and white boys playing baseball together

whites are strictly segregated in separate schools. The writer has not observed such intimacy outside of the coal fields. Occasionally, as might be expected, these contacts result in conflict. One of the writer's early ineradicable memories of the coal fields is that of a ball game between whites and Negroes at which one of the whites during an altercation was all but killed by a bat wielded by a Negro. In view of the risks of conflict some superintendents have attempted to enforce segregation on company ball grounds, a separation accomplished with difficulty in some places. While these clashes have occurred, they are quite exceptional.

5. Manifestation of race consciousness.-

A racial group is composed of a number of people the recognition of whose identity is called forth by a symbol in terms of certain hereditary features; hair color and texture, skin color, etc. Race consciousness develops, however, only in a conflict situation in which these common physical features are associated with and become symbols for a common condition shared by members of the group. Where these physical characteristics become the symbol for separation, discrimination, repression, and persecution the social cohesion of the group is strengthened and a distinct "we feeling" is developed in opposition to the oppressor.

There follows a hypersensitivity to insult or discrimination

of any nature and compensatory behavior which traits, taken together, are the result of the development of that neurotic condition which Miller has called "the oppression psychosis."²⁴ While differences in energy between individuals and cultural factors accounting for different degrees of accommodation make it inaccurate to say that race consciousness exists in direct proportion to the extent of the repression, still it is true that its development does not take place except in those situations in which a recognition of oppression, either real or imagined, exists in the minds of the group.

Considering the friendly relationships which exist both between the Negro miners and their employers as well as their fellow workmen of the white race it is not surprising that they exhibit relatively little of what we have described as race consciousness. An important reason for this fact is that in coming to the mining fields of West Virginia most of them come from an area of greater repression to one of less, so that a feeling of recognition and freedom tends to retard any incipient race consciousness which may have been developing. Equality of wage payment and opportunity for lucrative employment also tended to reduce any tendency in this direction. A further factor has been a distrust of the leadership of their own race.²⁵ Extreme suspicion of the sincerity of Negro leaders and successful men, with the possible exception of Negro politicians in whom they have great faith,

²⁴ Miller, H. A., Races, Nations, and Classes, Ch. IV.

²⁵ Cf. Garvey, Marcus, The Negro's Greatest Enemy, Current History, March 1925.

was expressed by Negro miners.

Sporadic instances of race consciousness have, however, occurred among Negro miners in West Virginia. One of these cases developed as a counter-reaction to the growth of the Ku Klux Klan after the World War. Opposition to the employment of Negro miners increased in the northern counties of the state as the result of the growing Ku Klux Klan spirit in certain of the mines.²⁶ The attitudes of union brothers who were also members of the Klan led some of the Negroes to withdraw from their locals. In some places in the northern counties where racial animosity of the Ku Klux Klan was highest there was a corresponding growth of Garveyism, which is to the Negro nationalistic movement what Zionism is to that of the Jews.²⁷ In some places in the southern counties, however, the Negro viewed the activities of the Klan with a nonchalance that must have been highly disappointing to the Knights of that order. At Crozer, in McDowell County, the white members of the organization planted their fiery cross on the hill periodically and each time the Negroes got their rifles and shot it full of holes.²⁸

In the field of politics the Negro miners have shown what is probably the greatest evidence of their group solidarity. The Negroes believe their political and civil rights are best guarded by a member of their own race;²⁹

²⁶ W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1925-26, p. 35.

²⁷ Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 371.

²⁸ Interview with Mr. U. H. Prunty, Principal of Elkhorn District Colored High School, Elkhorn, W. Va.

²⁹ Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 373.

consequently in those counties where they have held the balance of political power they have succeeded in electing some of their numbers to offices. In 1892 the Negro vote gave the control of McDowell County to the Republicans and³⁰ has enabled them to keep it ever since. By 1896 the Negro miners elected members of their own race to offices of justice of the peace, constable, and member of the board of education.³¹ The same year Christopher Payne, a Negro, was³² elected to the House of Delegates from Fayette County. Since that time Negroes have occasionally been elected to the state legislature from Kanawha, Fayette, and McDowell counties. The growth of state institutions for Negroes and the holding of many state offices by Negroes is indicative of the political power wielded by the Negro group.

Negro newspapers are commonly read by the Negro miners. In a single mining community in 1926 two hundred and seventy-five Negro papers were distributed weekly.³³ These papers included The Crisis, Chicago Defender, Pittsburgh Courier, Opportunity, The Messenger, Chicago Bee, and the McDowell Times. This last, the oldest Negro paper in West Virginia, has been published since 1904. It is interesting to note that one operator refused to allow the Chicago Defender to be sold in his company-owned town.³⁴

30 Welch (W. Va.) Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

31 Ibid.

32 Spero and Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

33 Welch (W. Va.) Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

34 Interview with Mrs. M. T. Garrison, teacher and Secy. of the Gary Branch of the N. A. A. C. P.

The National Association For the Advancement of Colored People has eight branches in West Virginia located at Bluefield, Charleston, Huntington, Keystone, Logan, Montgomery, Glen Rogers, and Gary. Keystone, Glen Rogers, and Gary are coal mining communities; it is probable also that miners belong to the branches at Montgomery and Logan. The branches at Gary, Bluefield, and Keystone were somewhat inactive during the summer of 1932. The officers interviewed indicated that owing to the economic condition of the coal fields the organization had lost many members, but before the depression some of the branches had as many as a hundred members. These branches when active devoted themselves, as does the national organization, mainly to fighting legal discrimination and providing funds for aid to Negroes accused of crimes of which they are probably innocent.

Some of the Negro preachers attempted to stimulate the ambition of their church members by various appeals to race pride, in some instances a difficult task. While it may be true, as has been said, that some of the Negro preachers lead their flocks in the direction desired by the companies, the sincere effort of others to stimulate their members to group action and self-help cannot be doubted. These attempts do not always, however, gain favor with everyone. A Scotch miner of definite racial prejudice said: "The boys that keep feeling high are the Negro preachers. They do it for their own benefit. You never find a good nigger who shoots off his mouth. I found one talking about

how some day Ethiope would spread its wings over the entire country. I told him to shut up. They would take the country if they only felt they were strong enough."

Some of the younger Negroes show a somewhat different attitude than do their parents. At one mine in Fayette County, as is the custom, representatives from each family congregate in the store after the train runs and the bookkeeper-postmaster calls out the names on each piece of mail. The older Negroes, on the occasion when the writer was present, remained in the background, not answering their names when called, and after the rest had gone they came up quietly for their mail. A young Negro, however, pushed to the front when his name was called, jostling the whites, who were crowded near the counter. At another place in McDowell County a movement was sponsored by some of the younger Negroes to try to have "Amos and Andy" taken off the air. They felt this program was creating a bad idea of the Negro in the minds of white people.

II. THE RACE RELATIONS PROCESS.-

Up to this point the attempt has been made to describe the status of race relations in the mining fields at the present time. The conditions as they exist today, however, represent only one stage of a development which has been going on over a number of years. In other words, inter-racial processes in the mining fields of West Virginia have tended to follow a more or less predictable cyclical

movement as discussed by Park and Bogardus. While these writers built their "race relation cycles" in studies of Orientals in the United States they constitute a hypothesis and an approach for a study of any situation in which members of two distinct races come in contact in large numbers.³⁷ From this point of view, then, we may briefly examine race relations in the mining fields.

The first relationships which the Negro miners had in West Virginia was the hearty economic welcome given them by the employers.³⁸ Individualistic mountaineer whites did not take too readily to the mining fields and Negro labor which was easily obtainable from Virginia and points south filled the need for a labor supply. As has been pointed out before, the promise of high wages brought the Negroes in great numbers to the mining fields. Many of these early Negroes in their native states had not had as favorable contacts with whites as had the native Negroes of West Virginia.³⁹ They settled in counties sometimes where the native whites had had no contact with Negroes and had in some cases reached manhood without seeing a colored

35 Park, R. E., in the Pacific Coast Race Relations Survey (unpublished manuscripts), quoted in House, F. N., Range of Social Theory, Holt, 1929, pp. 49-50.

36 Bogardus, E. S., A Race Relations Cycle, A. J. S., Vol. 35, p. 613 ff.

37 The stages in the cycle of Park are contacts, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation. Those of Bogardus are: curiosity and sympathy, economic welcome, industrial and social antagonism, legislative antagonism, fair-play tendencies, and quiescence.

38 Cf. Bogardus, op. cit., p. 613.

39 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 13.

man. With the Negroes came whites attracted like the Negroes by the high wages. These white workers were mostly ignorant, often illiterate "poor whites" from states where they had competed with Negro labor. The country was rough and the contractors and operators, needing men, were not too choicy in their selection. Among the groups of both colors were many criminals, some of them fugitives for crimes committed in their native states.⁴⁰

As might have been expected, the ensuing period of industrial and social antagonism⁴¹ resulted in a great deal of conflict. In 1887, at which time the miners in the New River District were mostly Negroes, a Negro killed a grade foreman near Quinnimont and was lynched by a white mob. In reprisal a mob of Negro miners formed at Stonecliff in Fayette County and began to march toward Fayetteville, the county seat. By the time they reached Oak Hill the mob was estimated at 3,000. Although they were dispersed without conflict the whites at the mines in the New River valley were terrified for the report was sent to them that the Negroes expected to "clean out" every white person along the river.⁴²

A similar incident occurred in Mercer County about 1888. Two old hucksters were returning to their homes after having sold out their wares to the miners at Goodwill. They were robbed by two Negroes who told them to run and shot at

40 Ibid.

41 Cf. Bogardus, op. cit., p. 614.

42 Interview with Mr. John Laing.

their feet as they did so. A white mob formed and lynched one of the Negroes. Soon word came that a Negro mob was forming at Pocahontas, Virginia, a few miles away, to march up Flipping Creek and kill all the whites. The Negroes in that territory were greatly in the majority at that time, but the whites made plans to hide the women and children in the laurel thickets near by and got ready to fight. The mob, however, dispersed before actual fighting had begun. Two other outbreaks occurred in that same region, in one of which the Negroes attempted to drive out the foreigners.⁴³

When the whites of Mercer County grew more numerous they attempted on several occasions to drive out the Negroes.⁴⁴ In fact, "during the two decades from 1890 to 1910, which marked the greatest development of the coal fields in southern West Virginia and the great increase of Negro population, crimes of murder and robbery were of very frequent occurrence and, in these counties, whites lynched Negroes and each other and there were a few cases where Negroes lynched other Negroes, but none of these lynchings were for crimes against white women and it is worthy of note that in these counties filled with a very crude and illiterate population, with criminals of all kinds in large numbers and weak law enforcement officers, there were in the early days of development and there have been since only a few cases of Negroes charged with crimes against women of

43 Interview with the writer's mother, who was at Goodwill during the entire incident.

44 Interview with Mr. T. L. Felts, Bluefield, W. Va.

either race."⁴⁵

Similar conditions existed in other counties. The coming of Negro saloons to McDowell County resulted in many clashes.⁴⁶

New River, according to a white miner living there at the time, was a "tough place up to 1908." At South Caperton for many years no Negroes with the single exception of a Negro servant of the superintendent were allowed in the town.⁴⁷

A similar situation existed in Mason County in the mines above Point Pleasant' on the Ohio River, for the Welsh who came there in the early days to teach the natives how to mine did not allow the Negroes there for many years.⁴⁸

Since the operators found these conditions unprofitable in many ways they inaugurated plans for definite labor policies and a controlled competition. Although the motive back of these policies was undoubtedly self-interest they resulted in improved race relations and a lessening of race conflict. Other variables in the West Virginia situation, such as the relatively stable race relations to which many of the Virginia Negroes, who later formed the bulk of the non-native population, were already accustomed before migrating,⁴⁹ and the lack of prejudice on the part of the West Virginia natives in the early days, might be considered; but the influence that seems to have been most powerful in

45 W. Va. Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics, Report, 1921-22, p. 14.

46 Welch (W. Va.) Daily News, Sept. 21, 1926.

47 Interview with Mr. John Gatherum, miner and former union official.

48 Interview with Mr. Clifford C. Myers, State Historian.

49 See Russell, J. S. op. cit., p. 561.

promoting the rapid accommodation and partial assimilation of the Negroes is in the judgment of the writer this controlled competition, one feature of which has been equality of wages for every racial group in the mines.

The West Virginia situation in the mining fields has, in the writer's opinion, certain implications for the theory of race relations. It is a common generalization that race prejudice in the case of white people is likely to exist in inverse proportion to the status of the white person.⁵⁰

As Park puts the matter, race prejudice is a defense reaction against the loss of status.⁵¹ The practical effect of race prejudice is to restrict free interracial competition which seems to be a potent stimulus to race prejudice.⁵²

In other words, as long as the Negro is in his culturally defined "place" peace is secured through a sort of conventionalized segregation.⁵³ The acculturation of the white has led him to expect the Negro to be necessarily lower, and to receive less of rights and privileges than he himself does. He therefore struggles to keep the Negro down. Whenever the Negro attains a position which approximates the status of the white man opposition is aroused.

The interracial situation in the mining fields of West Virginia, however, seems to provide sufficient evidence

50 Cf. Alexander, W. W., The Negro in the New South, Annals, Vol. CXXX, No. 229, Nov. 1928, pp. 145-152.

51 Young, Kimball, Social Psychology, Knopf, 1930, p. 500.

52 Park, R. E., introduction to Steiner, J. F., The Japanese Invasion, McClurg, 1917, p. xiii.

53 Cf. Young, D., op. cit., Ch. V.

for questioning the universal applicability of this generalization. Here there has been created a somewhat different cultural situation. Within the company-owned town competition is not free but controlled in large measure by the company. The relative number of members of different races who are to be employed and the positions they occupy are also decided, for the most part, by the company. Race prejudice is largely a response to the appearance of the unusual and the unexpected. In the mining fields, with few exceptions the whites do not expect Negroes to receive smaller wages or occupy a definitely lower plane. The status of the two groups has become, thus, more nearly identical, with the eventual decrease rather than increase of race prejudice quite contrary to the usual generalization. Conditions at the present time are in a state of flux and there are many evidences of culture lag. It appears, however, that under the stimuli of equality of wage payment and controlled competition the transition to the later stages of the race relations cycle has gone further than in any comparable situation within the knowledge of the writer.

CHAPTER XV

PROSPECT

Since 1929 conditions in the coal industry of West Virginia have made an extensive program of relief almost continuously necessary. A Kanawha County miner, in answer to the question concerning what he did when he was not working at a mine, which was "running" only one day a week, replied: "Oh, just set around -- lookin' and wishin' -- wishin' for the raven."¹ His "wishin'" was not entirely in vain for about once a week the raven, in the form of a county relief truck, came "up the creek" dispensing flour and bacon. In addition to relief given by the county the American Friends Service Committee, asked by the Federal Children's Bureau and President Hoover's Organization on Unemployment Relief to undertake relief work among children of unemployed miners in the bituminous coal fields, has since September 1, 1931, given food and clothing to many school and pre-school children as well as to nursing and expectant mothers.² The local Red Cross units added their help by periodic gifts of flour. Finally, as has before been indicated, most of the coal companies have "carried" their men by allowing charges at the company stores, some advancing the necessities of life more liberally than the

¹ This remark refers to the ravens whom, according to Scripture, Jehovah commanded to feed Elijah. See I Kings, 17:4-6.

² American Friends Service Committee, Report of the Child Relief Work in the Bituminous Coal Fields, Sept. 1, 1931 - August 31, 1932, p. 3.

county relief agencies, others allowing hardly more than enough to keep soul and body together.

"The Raven"

In spite of the activity of all these agencies the problems of relief which they have had to face have been so great that undoubtedly many cases of hunger or perhaps even starvation have occurred. Concerning the state of affairs in Kanawha County, where conditions have been among the worst in the central and southern counties, D. E. Shaffer, County Welfare Secretary, claiming that several hundred persons were "on the point of starvation," said during the winter of 1931: "The pitiful conditions in Cabin Creek cannot be exaggerated and relief must be given at once or many persons, particularly children will die." An investigation into the conditions in Monongalia, Marion, Harrison, Kanawha, Logan, and Boone counties was made in

³
3 Charleston Gazette, March 11, 1931.

April 1931 by Fred C. Croxton and Porter Lee, members of the president's emergency employment committee. Croxton, returning to Washington, reported conditions so bad that "they were almost unbelievable." Other details of his report are as follows:

Children and grownups fare alike. The standard food is cornmeal, some flour and beans. There is no meat and little if any green food.

These people are not farmers and cannot obtain government loans.

Many of the men have not worked for months and others only a day or two each week.

We went into homes everywhere we could. Some of the conditions we found were so bad I hesitate to try to describe them.

There is one thing about the coal fields, they have had shelter and fuel during the winter months. But beyond that there is little.

These conditions, which during the past few years have been by no means peculiar to the mining fields of West Virginia, have persisted and have led Malcolm Ross in a recent book to say with a great deal of feeling and some exaggeration, "Today the city of Charleston spreads over both banks of the Great Kanawha River. Coal profits built dignified mansions for miles along the shore where the old frontier fort stood. At the far end is the State's new Capitol, a magnificent mass with gold encrusted dome dedicated to the children of West Virginia. Within sight of the dome are children unable to go to school for lack of shoes, children who sleep four in a bed and wear filthy underwear because they have no change, children ignorant that the world is

larger than two hills framing a creek, a railroad track and
a row of hovels." ⁵ During the depression the plight of West
Virginia miners, both white and black, has been hard, but
because of the paternalistic policies of the companies it is
doubtful whether they have been as cold or as hungry as
thousands of their fellow Americans in urban districts where
loss of work has meant no similar "carrying" on the part of
their employers. Some of the miners were nevertheless suffi-
ciently hungry to stage a "hunger march" to the state capital
to appeal to Governor Conley for help, some 600 persons
⁶ participating.

Because of these hardships the Negro miners are
today a dissatisfied and downcast group. As a Fayette
County miner put it: "You see, we haven't worked but one
day a week for a long time. Rent and all the charges were
just the same during that time although we are willing to
work. All these things are marked up against us in the
office and when we finally do get to work we will be so far
in debt it will take years to get out. It makes a man dis-
encouraged." A sort of complaining hopelessness character-
izes the attitudes of many. In spite of their present
situation, however, migrated Negro miners as a rule do not
regret their coming to West Virginia. ⁷ Better schools for

⁵ Ross, M. op. cit., pp. 41-42.

⁶ Charleston Gazette, May 22, 1931; also Norton, H. G.,
Feudalism in West Virginia, Nation, Vol. 133,
August 31, 1931, p. 155.

⁷ This is not merely the opinion of the writer; Negro
teachers and others in a position to know are agreed
on this point.

their children and a larger opportunity for civic expression which they have exercised to the full in voting and political activity mean much to them. Many of them have made "a plenty of money" even though "it all got away." Their experiences in West Virginia are looked upon as advancement, and, having gone forward this one step they envisage newer opportunities, which at present they are largely denied because of economic paralysis. The total situation is productive of an attitude of disillusionment and dissatisfaction, but not of regret. Even though the economic situation crushes, they feel that they have achieved a certain status which would have been impossible had they remained in their native states.

The reaction of many of these Negro miners to the entire configuration bears an interesting relationship to the growth of race consciousness. Race consciousness, like race prejudice, exists in quantities, and it should be possible to plot diagrammatically a curve of its development from a condition in which it is lacking to another where it is manifested in its most extreme forms. In other words, the acquisition of race consciousness in the case of any individual is a process of transition from a state of unawareness to one of awareness. Their awareness of an enhanced personality as a result of their West Virginia

8 Cf. Scott, E. J., op. cit., *passim*. Letters written back to their friends in the south indicate a similar attitude on the part of man migrants, see Johnson, op. cit., pp. 22-28.

experience is, however, movement, be it ever so slight, in the direction of race consciousness. Cumulation of such awarenesses with consequent frustration of the desires created thereby is the stuff of which race consciousness is made; hence the attitudes of the majority of the Negro miners, while they are not manifestations of race consciousness per se, may be regarded as the incipencies of an emergent evolution the logical termination of which is race consciousness.

It is a commonplace that upon the economic front
Negroes are "last hired and first fired." Says Feldman:

The Negro's experience in earning a living involves a further complexity in the difficulty of holding on to his job. Of course, it is true that white workers have a serious problem of retaining employment and that most jobs have elements of insecurity. But it is also true that when employers hire, Negroes are among the last to be selected, and in times of depression, Negroes are often the first to be discharged.

Such is not the case and has never been the case with the Negro miners of West Virginia. In nine years between 1912 and 1931 the total number of miners employed was smaller than in the preceding year, but in each of these nine years the percentage of Negro miners increased, with the exception of a single year in which the percentage remained the same.¹⁰ The total mining population of West Virginia in 1931 was 9,879 or 9.2 per cent lower than in 1930 while the percent-

⁹ Feldman, H., op. cit., pp. 42-43.

¹⁰ See Table 13, p. 94.

age of Negroes employed increased from 21.8 per cent to 21.9 per cent. The figures for 1932, which are not yet available, will probably show a further decline in population and an increased proportion of Negroes.¹¹

The increase in the percentage of Negroes as the total number of miners decreases may be attributed both to the reluctance of the Negroes to leave the industry and to the favorable attitudes of employers towards them. Mining coal is a job which has in normal times combined a certain amount of "freedom" in working conditions with relatively high earning possibilities. The coal mines have afforded opportunity for the uneducated Negroes to earn in prosperous years wages not possible for them in many other industries. Then, too, the controlled competition, the friendly race relations, and the enjoyment of civil rights mentioned before have added to the desirability of remaining in mining. These considerations, which might be termed "holds" as contradistinguished from the "push" or undesirable features of the industry and the "pulls" or attractions of other industries, together with the Negro heritage of southern mores regarding white employer - Negro employee roles, have operated to make the Negroes as a whole a docile labor element. Consequently, in times of depression the employers prefer them for their "loyalty" and acceptance of the situation with ostensible good grace. A great deal of the

¹¹ The writer bases this prediction on the fact that the white miners generally had left the mines by the summer of 1932 in greater proportion than the Negroes.

complaining by Negroes is done elsewhere than in the presence of "the boss." Another condition which operates quite independently is the lack of opportunity in other industries. No matter how badly they may wish to leave many Negroes must stay because they have no other place to go.

What are the prospects for Negroes in the coal mines of West Virginia? Since the Negroes are already firmly entrenched in the mining traditions of the state, probably the best answer that can be given to this question is that their future is inextricably bound up with the fate of the coal industry. Today the failure of our present individualistic economic organization is nowhere more evident than in coal mining. Many carloads of coal were¹² actually given away during the winter of 1931 to save demurrage charges while miners were hungry and many Americans were cold. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into an involved discussion of the causes of the present conditions, some of the obvious ones are overcapitalization, surplus of miners, curtailment in the use of coal owing to competition of other fuels and development of water power, the seasonal character of the demand for coal, and the unwillingness of the operators enjoying unusual advantages in the conditions of production to cooperate with the less fortunate operators in any plan for

¹² Ross, M., op. cit., p. 234.

13
 stabilization. During the war boom period when coal sold
 as high as \$35.00 a ton¹⁴ any West Virginian who could get
 his hands on a few dollars opened a coal mine; even the
 little "wagon" mines proved profitable. Since the reduc-
 tion in the demand for coal these mines have been gradually
 going out of business, but the process is by no means com-
 plete. Many companies, in closing one operation, attempt
 to "take care of" their men by absorbing them into others;
 overcrowding results which leads many Negro miners to say:
 "Yes, we're workin' but they's so many miners we can't make
 nothin'." Finally, some operators who could operate with
 little overhead because of good natural mining conditions
 have pressed their advantages by underselling their competi-
 tors who have had to spend large amounts in order to provide
 reasonably safe working conditions for their men, and com-
 pany and sectional competition of the "cut-throat" variety
 has proved disastrous for both operators and miners.

For the most part the coal operators, steeped in
 an individualistic tradition, have reacted in the face of
 the crisis in a dazed and bewildered manner. They have
 gazed in vain for a Moses who would point the way out and
 have done little about the matter. They are hardly to be
 blamed for their inaction, however, since for years they
 were prohibited by court interpretation from forming

13 See U. S. Coal Commission Reports, Part I, pp. 203-233;
 Johnson, op. cit., p. 97; Rochester, op. cit., pp. 11-
 33.

14 Ross, M., Loc. cit.

15

cooperative sales organizations. Under the Sherman Act of 1890 such cooperative measures were declared illegal, interfering as they did with "Free Competition," the Sacred Cow of an individualistic economic order, which now even one of the mining trade journals considers "destructive." 16 Prevented from using this avenue of approach to their problems many operators looked to Congress for relief. The result was the much-discussed Davis-Kelly Bill which after some revision proposed a federal coal commission which should be empowered to license all coal companies in the United States. 17 At the international conference on bituminous coal held under the auspices of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1931 the assembled coal men were addressed by Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland who advised them "to keep clearly in mind that government control and ownership is in the last analysis a species of communism" and decried "this new American habit of looking to Washington for help." 18 at the same time suggesting that some revision of the anti-trust laws would be necessary.

Evidently the coal men accepted the Governor's advice, for the newest move to prescribe for the ills of the "sick giant of industry" has come from the coal men themselves. The operators of the high-volatile coal fields of West Virginia and Kentucky organized, for the purpose of

15 See Coal Age, Vol. 36, pp. 65, 648; Vol. 37, pp. 34, 85, 123.

16 Coal Mining, Vol. 10, March 1933, p. 24.

17 See Coal Mining, Vol. 9, June 1932, p. 97.

18 Charleston Gazette, Nov. 17, 1931.

a test case in the Supreme Court, a cooperative sales agency known as "Appalachian Coals, Incorporated" with the object of stabilizing conditions by cooperation among the competing companies. On March 13, 1933, the decision of the Court was handed down recognizing its legality, an exact reversal of former decisions.¹⁹ This sales organization, which began formal operations on April 17, immediately became the model for similar organizations in other territories.²⁰ After a meeting on March 31, 1933, the central Pennsylvania operators applied for a charter for Eastern Coals, Inc.; the operators of northern West Virginia on April 18 voted to form Northern West Virginia Coals, Inc.; representatives from eastern Ohio and the northern Panhandle of West Virginia met in Cleveland and approved plans for forming Northern Coals, Inc.;²¹ and it is likely that the operators in the low-volatile fields of West Virginia²² will soon form Smokeless Coals, Inc.

The new plan has been accorded a good bit of enthusiasm. Editorially, Coal Mining claims: "In the end it will mean the emancipation of the mass of men employed in our mines who as well as the operators are being made victims of conditions for which they are in no way responsible,"²³ while Coal Age looks forward to an era of

19 Coal Age, Vol. 38, April 1933, p. 109.

20 Coal Age, Vol. 38, May 1933, p. 168.

21 Coal Age, Vol. 38, May 1933, p. 168.

22 Charleston Gazette, May 8, 1933.

23 Coal Mining, Vol. 10, March 1933, p. 24.

24

"Freedom -- and Opportunity." It is too soon, of course, to say just what the effects of the sales agencies will be. From predictions in the West Virginia press concerning the likelihood of "enlarging the market" of West Virginia coals the writer suspects old wine in new bottles. The extending of the market for West Virginia coals, which must be done only at the expense of some other coal producing section, means competition, the only change being in the increased size of the competing units.

Two things seem almost certain to happen. The first is the eventual elimination of the smaller companies from production in favor of the larger. This process, according to the study of the National Industrial Conference Board, "will be worth the price that must be paid, if the final outcome is the elimination of inefficient producers and distributors, of destructive and unsound competitive units, and of uncontrolled and unbalanced production."²⁵

The other is a reduction in the number of men employed. Says R. M. Lambie, Chief of the West Virginia Department of Mines, in his latest report: "There is still a decline in the number of men employed. This, with the curtailed working time, has brought about a serious condition in the coal mining area of the state. It is to be hoped that this condition will correct itself in the near future. However, it is unlikely that the tonnage of 1927 will be surpassed

²⁴ Coal Age, Vol. 38, April 1933, p. 109.

²⁵ National Industrial Conference Board, The Competitive Position of Coal in the United States, 1932, pp. 269-270.

for many years to come; therefore, many men who have been attracted to mining during the high tonnage period will be compelled to return to their former occupations." ²⁶ If the Negroes remain during this period of reduction, and order replaces chaos as a result of a different system, they may be able to preëempt for themselves "a place in the sun" superior to any they have yet occupied in the mining industry. If, on the other hand, the new devices mean only anarchistic competition and production on the part of larger units the conclusion seems inescapable that the youth of the mining fields will continue their exodus to other parts, the void will be filled by recruits from the south, brief periods of prosperity will alternate with squalor, and Negro miners will continue, as in the past, to be "more easily handled."

26 W. Va. Dept. of Mines, 1931 Report, p. 15; see also Wolman, Leo, Unemployment Insurance -- Its Limitations and Its Promise, Nation, Vol. 134, May 4, 1932, p. 509.

APPENDIX A

THE MINER'S SCHEDULE

1. Place of birth _____ 2. Age at last birthday _____ 3. Marital status _____ 4. Color _____
 5. Yr. starting mining _____ 6. Age starting _____ 7. No. yrs. schooling _____ 8. Grade finished _____
 9. Places worked:

	LOCATION	MONTHS WORKED	POSITION	JOB SECURED THROUGH	REASONS FOR LEAVING
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					

10. Occupation of father _____ 11. Birthplace of wife _____ 12. Color _____
 13. Type of work done by wife outside home duties _____ 14. Approx. weekly earnings _____
 15. Living children in home:

	SEX	AGE	WORKING	SCHOOL	GRADE FINISHED	EMPLOYER	POSITION	WEEKLY EARNINGS	YEARS WORKING
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									

16. Living children outside home:

	SEX	AGE	WORKING	SCHOOL	GRADE FINISHED	EMPLOYER	POSITION	WEEKLY EARNINGS	YEARS WORKING
1									
2									
3									
4									

17. Children not living:

	SEX	AGE AT DEATH	CAUSE OF DEATH
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

18. Others in household:

	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP TO MINER
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

19. No. rooms _____ 20. Rent per month _____

21. Member what church? _____

22. No. times attended church in last month _____

23. Membership in clubs, societies, lodges, organizations, etc.

	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION OF ORGANIZATION	PRESIDENT OF ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

24. Leisure time activities last week:

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

25. Real estate owned: a. Value _____ b. Nature _____ c. Location _____

26. Amount savings account _____

27. No. yrs. owning present automobile _____ 28. Make _____ 29. Year _____ 30. Ever own auto? _____

31. Investments:

32. What is highest position you know of colored man having in mines? _____ 33. Where? _____

APPENDIX B

THE EMPLOYER'S SCHEDULE

1. Name of mine _____ 2. Company _____ 3. Field _____
4. As compared with the quality of work done by foreigners, is work done by Negroes in the following occupations.
(rate by number)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. much superior 2. considerably superior 3. slightly superior 4. about the same 5. slightly inferior 6. considerably inferior 7. much inferior 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coal loader _____ b. Machine man _____ c. Track man _____ d. Motorman _____ e. Brakeman _____ f. Drum runner _____ g. Tipple man _____ h. _____ i. _____
---	---
5. As compared with the quality of work done by native whites, is work done by Negroes in the following occupations
(rate by number)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. much superior 2. considerably superior 3. slightly superior 4. about the same 5. slightly inferior 6. considerably inferior 7. much inferior 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coal loader _____ b. Machine man _____ c. Track man _____ d. Motorman _____ e. Brakeman _____ f. Drum runner _____ g. Tipple man _____ h. _____ i. _____
---	---
6. On the whole, which of these employment systems would you prefer?
 1. All Negroes
 2. Many Negroes and few whites
 3. About equal numbers of whites and Negroes
 4. Many whites and few Negroes
 5. All whites
7. Reasons:
8. What positions of authority does a Negro hold in your mine?
9. Used a Negro in place of authority?
10. Reasons:

11. Reasons for discharge of Negroes in past year:

1.	3.	5.	7.
2.	4.	6.	8.

12. Do you separate your white and Negro miners?

13. Reasons:

13. What cases of trouble have there been in your mine between Negro and foreign or between Negro and native white individuals or groups?

14. Rank () the native white, () the foreigner, and () the Negro in order of their abuse of company property

15. Rank () the native white, () the foreigner, and () the Negro as a law-breaker

16. What crimes are the Negroes ordinarily convicted for:

17. What provision do you make for old Negro miners?

18. Whom do you consider the leaders among your Negro employees:

	NAME	POSITION	REASON FOR LEADERSHIP
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

19. What means do you use to keep order among your Negro employees?

20. Rate of pay and numbers in each occupational group:

	OCCUPATION	RATE OF PAY		NUMBER IN EACH OCCUPATION		
		1929	1932	NATIVE WHITES	FOREIGN	NEGROES
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

APPENDIX C

NOTE ON METHOD

IN

THE SCHEDULE STUDIES

While the general method of the study has been discussed in Chapter I it seems wise to append a somewhat more detailed treatment in order to answer the questions concerning the entree obviously needed in order to get the information included in the study and the selection of the sample in the schedule studies.

I. ENTREE.-

The unfavorable press reports of conditions in the mining areas of West Virginia and fear of union organizers have led to a defensive attitude on the part of coal operators which precludes the securing of informations by anyone not considered "insiders" by them. The writer's family have been for three generations in the coal business of the state. Consequently he was able to make contacts necessary to permit the study. Letters of introduction were secured from the Governor of the State, the Chief of the Department of Mines, and from the secretaries of the different coal operator's associations, as well as personal letters of introduction from one operator to another.

II. SELECTION OF THE MINES.-

In the most inclusive sense the selection of the mines to be studied extends over a period of years. The writer was born in the mining fields of West Virginia, lived in a mining community of Fayette County until the age of seven, spent every summer at the mines until the age of thirteen, and has been in close touch with the mining area all his life. This background of familiarity with the mining towns in the different fields aided greatly in the selection of particular mines for study.

After studying carefully the history of the mining fields by reading all sources of material in the West Virginia State Library at Charleston and interviewing men who were pioneers in the mining industry of the state, contact was made with the Department of Mines. The chief of the Department of Mines gave important information in regard to the mines in the state in which Negro labor was especially conspicuous and offered the cooperation of the one Negro member of the Department, which was, of course, gladly accepted.

Before beginning the field work in any particular coal field the writer first interviewed the secretary of the coal operator's association whose jurisdiction covered the territory. These secretaries not only provided, in some cases, important factual material to be obtained from no other source but always gave advice concerning

which mines should be visited in order to study all types of mining towns. Further suggestions were obtained from the different operators interviewed.

The suggestions of the employer class were checked by interviews with Negro teachers, whose names were secured from the State Supervisor of Negro Schools, preachers, leaders, and key-miners. Some sources of information here may not be divulged.

III. SELECTION OF THE MINERS.-

Most of the mining towns of West Virginia are small. Negroes as a rule constitute not more than one third of the total number of miners employed. The best "sampling" procedure, therefore, appeared to be to select towns carefully and to interview all the miners in them. By an "entire" town is meant all miners available for interview at the time of the call. Except in rare instances it was not practicable to pay more than one visit to a miner's home. In order to get information from the miners no names were asked and, hence, no check on those not at home was possible, since the houses in most cases are not numbered. Owing to the fact that many mines were in operation so little the great majority of miners were at home and available for interview at the first visit.

This procedure, if followed exclusively, would mean that miners in relatively few towns could be studied. In order to allow a wider selection of towns a smaller pro-

portion of the miners were studied where the writer was able to make contact with and secure cooperation of Negro teachers, preachers, or other persons whom he felt confident were reliable and intellectually capable of supervising the selection of miners. Because of the similarity of conditions in most of the towns of Logan County and most fortunate contacts with capable persons this method was followed exclusively there.

A few miners were interviewed in various chance situations. Some of them were "picked up" along the roadside, given a ride, and interviewed. The writer felt that these interviews were justified because of comparative information concerning their towns which they were able to furnish. Others were visiting friends in towns where schedules were being taken and their schedules were taken with the miners there.

Promises to operators not to reveal the identity of the mining towns studied will not permit the writer to give the names of them; hence they are indicated by number. The number of schedules taken in each county and the method of selection in each case are as follows:

<u>County and town</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Basis of selection</u>
Kanawha County:		
Mine Number 1.	63	All miners
Mine Number 2.	13	" "
Mine Number 3.	3	Chance interview
Mine Number 4.	1	" "
Total	<u>80</u>	

<u>County and town</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Character of sample</u>
Raleigh County:		
Miner Number 5	74	All miners.
Mine Number 6	34	Supervision of Negro
		Principal of school
Mine Number 7	18	Entire section of town
Mine Number 8	1	Chance interview
Total	127	

Fayette County:		
Mine Number 9	40	All miners.
Mine Number 10	19	" "
Mine Number 11	15	" "
Mine Number 12	14	" "
Mine Number 13	13	" "
Mine Number 14	12	" "
Mine Number 15	1	" "
Total	114	

McDowell County:		
Mine Number 16	122	All miners
Mine Number 17	48	Practically entire town
		under supervision of Negro
		minister.
Mine Number 18	44	Supervision of Negro tea-
		chers and cooperation of
		local officer of the
		N. A. A. C. P.
Mine Number 19	6	Supervision Negro teacher
Mine Number 20	3	" "
Mine Number 21	2	Chance interview
Mine Number 22	1	" "
Mine Number 23	1	" "
Mine Number 24	1	" "
Total	323	

<u>County and town</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Character of sample</u>
Logan County:		
Mine Number 25	12	Supervision of Negro teacher
Mine Number 26	5	" " " "
Mine Number 27	5	" " " "
Mine Number 28	5	" " " "
Mine Number 29	5	" " " "
Mine Number 30	4	" " " "
Mine Number 31	4	" " " "
Mine Number 32	3	" " " "
Mine Number 33	1	Chance interview
Mine Number 34	1	" "
Mine Number 35	1	" "
Mine Number 36	1	" "
Mine Number 37	1	" "
Mine Number 38	1	" "
Total	81	

SUMMARY

<u>Character of sample</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
"Entire towns"	403	57.3
Local superstition	150	20.9
Chance interview	17	2.4
Total	570	100.0

The number of schedules taken in each county is roughly proportional to the number of Negro miners in the county. In Kanawha County, however, a somewhat larger proportion was taken owing to the fact that it was the first county studied. The original plans of the study were to take more than 600 schedules but after taking 50 schedules it was found that the schedule study took so much time that the total number of schedules to be taken was necessarily reduced. This disproportionate number is unimportant since differences in Negro population

from pouny to county were not apparent.

APPENDIX B

HOUSE CONTRACTS

HOUSE CONTRACT

THIS CONTRACT, made, this the day
of 19....., between
.....
Company, a corporation, arty of the first part, and
.....
party of the second part,

WITNESSETH; That the said parties hereby agree as follows;

That they recognize that their relation is that of employer and employee respectively, and not that of landlord and tenant; that the said party of the first part, employer, hereby grantsto the said party of the second party, employee, solely as incident to his employment and to enable him to better perform the duties of said employment, the privilege of occupying house No....., at, so long as said employment continues, and no longer, for the consideration of \$..... per month, payable in advance in equal semi-monthly installments on the regular pay-days of said party of the first part, to be retained by said party of the first part out of the earnings of said party of the second part; provided, that if and when said employment ceases, any sum which has been so retained for any future period, the same shall be repaid to said party of the second part by said party of the first part; that when the right of occupancy hereby granted to said party of the second part terminates hereunder, said party of the second part shall revmove his effects from said housesand surrender the occupancy thereof within a reasonable time, which it is agreed shall not exceed five days, and, upon his failure so to do, said party of the first part, by its officers, agents, or employees, shall have the right, without any further notice, demand or proceeding, to re-enter upon said premises and expel the said party of the second part therefrom, and remove therefrom any and all of his goods and chattels, there found, without liability for any damage resulting therefrom, to which actions the said party of the second part shall offer no objection or resistance; and that any holding over or continued occupancy of said premises by said party of the second part beyond the expiration of said five days shall be deemed unlawful and shall in nowise change the relationship of the parties hereto or be construed to create the relationship of landlord and tenant between them.

It is further agreed that if , during said employment, said party of the second part ceases to occupy the above described premises and moves to and occupies another house belonging to said party of the first part, such occupancy of such other house shall be under and subject to the terms of this contract.

Witness the following signatures.

.....Company

By

.....Employee.

APPENDIX E

"YELLOW DOG" CONTRACT USED IN THE
POCAHONTAS FIELD

I am not now a member of the U nited Mine Workers of America, the I. W. W., or any other organization of mine workers, and will not, during this employment, join or affiliate with any such mine labor organization, because I believe the preservation of the right of individual contract, free from interference or regulation by others, and payment in proportion to service rendered to be to my interest, to the best interest of the public and of all industry, and I enter this employment with the understanding that the policy of the Company is to operate a non-union mine, and that it will not knowingly employ anyone belonging to such Union, or organization, and would not give me employment under any other conditions.

This is a contract for employment in the State of Virginia and the laws of that State are to govern in all matters pertaining to, incident to, or growing out of this employment.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Mining Laws of Virginia, and the Rules and Regulations of this Company. I have also been instructed in the hazards of this occupation.

SIGNED.....
Applicant

APPROVED.....

..... COMPANY MINE

APPENDIX F

HANDBILL TAKEN FROM A

COMPANY BULLETIN BOARD

Look! Look! Look!

WHAT IS GOING ON AT McALPIN, W. VA.

Sunday, July 24, 1932

A BIG QUARTETTE RALLY AND CONTEST WILL
BE GIVEN BY THE HUMMING BIRDS QUARTETTE
NO. 2 AT 3:00 O'CLOCK THE 4th SUNDAY.

First song by the Humming Birds of McAlpin then the following Clubs will begin in the contest: Jolly Boys, Tams; Stotesbury Male Quartette; W. Va. Rain Bow No. 4 of Glen White; Great 4 Wonders, Carline; Hill Top Quartette; W. H. F. S. Quartette; Lowe, W. Va. Quartette; Giatto Quartette; Nuriva Quartette; Mullens Quartette.

The Contest will be judged on tone, time and harmony.

A prize of \$5.00 will be awarded to the Winner.

After the contest is over the congregation will be entertained by the Silver Leaf Quartette of McAlpin, W. Va.

An admission price of 15c and 25c scrip or cash McAlpin and Stotesbury only will be accepted,

Rev. H. Hunt, Master of Ceremonies
A. J. Evans, President
Rev. S. A. Abram, Pastor.

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