CHAPTER 1

The Shadow of the Plantation

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Pittsburgh lies fifty miles north of the Mason Dixon line, the accepted dividing line between those two great districts of the nation known as the North and the South. Below this line lies Dixie, the Old South, the Deep South, the once Solid South, dominated by the plantation with its one-crop system of agriculture. Here lies the Kingdom of Jim Crow, with its Black Belt, sharecroppers, backdoor movies, Jim Crow streetcars and trains, disenfranchised citizens, and lynch law.

North of this line are the chief industrial centers of the country, a dozen cities in which the Negro people have developed communities such as Harlem, the South Side of Chicago, South Philadelphia, and the Hill in Pittsburgh. To these settlements have migrated hundreds of thousands of southern Negroes. Here they vote and serve on juries, send representatives to Congress and state legislatures, participate in county and city government, publish newspapers, attend school and college with their white neighbors, ride unrestricted on train and streetcar, attend the same theaters and movies.

The Negro people are one of the many national groups that make Pittsburgh dynamic. In streets, shops and foundries, in parks, churches and concert halls one sees almost every race and nation, hears almost every tongue spoken—white, yellow, black, red. Turk, West Indian, Japanese, Mexican, Chinese American, French, Finn, Magyar, Slav, Welsh and Irish inhabit their little sections and preserve their customs, traditions and languages while they become active citizens. Of every five people making their home in Pittsburgh, three are either foreign

born or Negro. Of all Americans, the Negro people in 1930 made up almost one tenth, of all Pennsylvanians about one seventh. And of Pittsburghers the Negro people make up roughly one twelfth. Among northern cities, Pittsburgh ranks ninth in its number of Negro people.

In Pennsylvania the Negro population is concentrated in eight counties. Four of these—Beaver, Westmoreland, Allegheny and Washington—are in the Western Pennsylvania steel district. This fact is basic in determining the manner and condition of living for the 54,983 Negro people who make their homes in this northern industrial city.

Steel is the barometer of the standard of living in Pittsburgh. When the mills roar and shake the earth, men in Pittsburgh have jobs. The worker feels secure. Unquestionably, the greater number of Negroes are wage workers. In 1930, of the city's employed people 26,121 were Negroes. One third were steelworkers, glassworkers, laborers, carpenters, and workers in manufacturing and industry. Almost half of these were in domestic and personal service—servants, chauffeurs, barbers, and the like. One sixth worked in trade and transportation, or were small shop owners, bus and car repairmen. All others—white collar and professional workers—were but seven percent or one fifteenth of the whole.

The welfare of the Negro worker, then, is a gauge of the welfare of the Negro community. And in turn the welfare of the Negro and other national groups who predominate in the mills, factories, and offices helps gauge the social and cultural temperament of Pittsburgh.

In other respects the Negro people of Pittsburgh help determine the character of the city. Pittsburgh has had from its beginning a strong liberal tradition, never completely lost sight of in the growth of industrial paternalism, and stoutly defended by national minorities who make up the majority of its citizens. The extent to which these national groups enjoyed prosperity, civil and social security, natural and cultural rights is, therefore, a standard of the enlightenment and progressive character of Pittsburgh.

The impact of the Negro people on the general mood of the city has been deep. The folkways of the dense population of the Hill and the Strip have been adopted by thousands of people. The food, drinks, dances, "jive," songs, proverbs, anecdotes, and the consciousness of peoples or nationalities living together within a community, for better and for worse, have been enhanced by the presence of thousands of Negro people.

Negroes participate broadly in the working of the complex organism of this modern industrial center. In paving the streets and digging tunnels through the rocky hills, in constructing the railroads that follow the three rivers, in erecting the skyscrapers of the downtown triangle, in repairing the cars and buses that provide transportation, in working behind the scenes in the department stores, in

distributing mail, on river boats and along city wharves, or catering in restaurants and hotels, the Negro worker has contributed to the welfare of one of the first industrial regions of the world. The Negro professional—architect, lawyer, doctor, surveyor, social worker, accountant and clerk, City Assessor and Building Inspector, Workmen's Compensation Referee and Assistant in Labor and Industry—has recently added his training and skill. And on the culture of the region he has also left his mark. His music has exerted an influence from the time of Stephen Foster to Earl "Fatha" Hines, Bennie Carter, Leroy Eldridge, and "Honey Boy" Jones. Martin R. Delany did much for the national progress of the Negro through the publication of his *Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*. The poetry of George B. Vashon—"Vincent Ogé," and "A Life Day"—marked a peak of achievement. Henry Ossawa Tanner, the painter, was born here. Johnny Woodruff, Olympic champion, enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh, and John Henry Lewis, the pugilist, makes Pittsburgh his home.

The Negro began his service in the Pittsburgh region with the establishment of the earliest frontier. As freeman, slave, and indentured servant, he aided in opening the Pittsburgh frontier to settlement. Legend says "Black Jack," a frontier scout and guide, was a Negro. But the deeds of this Herculean, swarthy frontiersman known as "Black Jack, the Hunter" or "Captain Jack, the Wild Hunter," supposed to have accompanied General Braddock as guide, were frontier myths which had their origin in a very real person, Captain Patrick Jack of the Cumberland Valley. The names of Charles Richards, however, a Negro tavern keeper in the frontier village, and of Benjamin Richards, a land merchant and cattle dealer, are inscribed on the petition drawn up in 1787 by residents of Pittsburgh and the neighborhood to set up Allegheny County.

Of the forties, the heyday of river traffic, when Charles Dickens visited Pittsburgh, when abolition and temperance societies were strong, Thomas A. Brown, employed on a river steamer, a man of character and intellect and the father of Hallie Q. Brown, said:

> The City of Pittsburgh boasted of stalwart characters in these days. Lewis Woodson, Augustus Green and William Wells, powerful pulpit orators; John Peck, the first Negro to own and control a fine Hair Goods Establishment; Joseph Miller, leader of the famous choir of Old Wylie Street Church; George B. Vashon, Samuel Neale, and Martin H. Freeman, noted professors of Avery College, and other city schools; Martin R. Delany, distinguished physician and scholar; George Knox, Jesse Wells, William Austin, Barney Mahoney, Matthew and Charles Jones and a host of others I could mention. Ah! These were giants in their day! Given a fair chance in the race of life they

> would have measured arms with the greatest of earth's noblemen. They served their day and generation; noblemen they were in point of splendid service.

Harlem, South Chicago, South Philadelphia are cities in themselves. In these cities within cities have grown great and small industries, businesses, and social organizations, which give life within them a unity. Pittsburgh is different. Here the Negro people are concentrated not in one community only, but in half a dozen island-like groups into which and around which wash other nationalities—Poles, Italians, Jews (foreign-born and native), Germans, Irish, Russians, Mexicans, and Hungarians.

These islands of population are the Hill District, East Liberty, Homewood, the South Side, the Strip, Manchester, Woods Run, and Beltzhoover. In this city of heavy industry the Negro worker works not in his own community, but travels to the mills and factories, or to the downtown business section. Neither has Negro business grown up in the separate communities. Usually the Jew and the Italian have remained there to run groceries, drugstores, gas stations, variety stores, and movies. At times group tensions have formed and have been played upon by politicians and opportunists.

The history of the Hill is the usual sorry tale of deterioration from a once attractive living place. When the second part of the historic Woods plan of Pittsburgh was laid out in 1784, it contained four farms and 40 outlets lying along the Monongahela River from the present Grant Street to Frasier Street in Oakland, and along the Allegheny River from 11th Street at the edge of the Golden Triangle to 33rd Street in Lawrenceville. Farm number three on this plot consisted of 274 acres, owned by A. C. Reed, which, after the Revolutionary War was subdivided for a home for General Tannehill. This is now the heart of the Hill District. What is known as "The Hill" was populated slowly. In 1815 only thirteen of the town's 5,000 persons lived on Grant's Hill, but a business directory in 1837 listed 413 people on all that land now referred to as the Hill. These were chiefly merchants and professionals who had built in the growing suburb. As late as 1887 the Hill was still country land, set at wide intervals with good houses, some of them well-known for traditional hospitality. Several of the old homes survive, dilapidated reminders of former delightful prosperity. At the far end of the old Seventh Street Road was the Jacob Ewart farm and the house which later was for some years the Montefiore Hospital. The now dismal house adjoining the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was the home of General Moorhead, famous during the Civil War and for years afterwards for its feasts and festivities, and for such visitors as James Garfield, William McKinley, Horace Greeley and General Grant. The Rosalia Home for Foundlings on Cliff Street was the home of James P. Tanner. But wealth

and social position gave way before the advance of the usual succession of new groups of people. As the city grew, the lower parts of the Hill, nearer the noise and dust of business and the smoke and grime of iron mills and foundries became peopled with Irish workers. These, as Jews settled among them, moved up the Hill. And then as the Negro people grew in population and took up the long-used houses on the lower slopes, the Jews also pushed further out.

So the successive tides of people have worked up the long slope and out towards Oakland, leaving finally the Negro people, largely, in the dwellings discarded by their predecessors; and leaving them for many years in alley-houses behind the dwellings of the Jewish, Italian and other foreign populations.

As early as the 1860's the lower section of the Hill was known as Hayti. By 1900, the Fifth Ward, where the Negro people of Pittsburgh are most concentrated, recorded 211. Within the next ten years the Negro population of this ward grew to 6,146 and by 1920 it had reached 10,383.

On the Hill, 25,000 or almost half of the Negro people of Pittsburgh now try to live, fighting poverty, squalor, disease, crime, vice—every human handicap. Here thrive saloons and speakeasies, gambling houses and pawn shops, pool rooms, dope dens, houses of prostitution and assignation.

The Hill is the symbol of the worst that a fiercely industrial city like Pittsburgh can do to human beings. Its dominant note is squalor. Narrow streets are lined with tawdry houses, dingy red, their scarred doorways and tottering porches often reached by crumbling wooden steps. Roofs sag. Walls lean. Window frames are rotted and patched. Chimneys are cracked and gaping with holes.

It rises, an abrupt, tremendous mound from the flat land between the three rivers. No street on the Hill runs level for more than a quarter of a mile. Dozens of them, many of which are dirt and ash, gullied by open sewers, climb almost perpendicular. Many break at a ravine or a cliff edge, convert themselves into long flights of wooden steps, hundred in a flight, and continue on the other side.

Along the Hill streetcars side-swipe parked automobiles and trucks, and wait for the driver to push or pry loose his vehicle. Curbs are broken, cobbles dislodged, macadam split and bulging. Doorways and curbs are littered with paper; discarded boxes and crates inconvenience the pedestrian. A dead cat may be crushed against a curb. A man may lie bleeding in the angle of a house wall.

The Hill is a district of small businesses trying to prosper—dingy pool rooms; the yellow fronted Big 4 Barber Shop or the garish green Cold Turkey Barber Shop; red front variety stores; smudgy, ill-smelling restaurants—Tom's Lunch, Mother's Lunch, Southern Bar-B-Que, Lucky Chop Suey, Rosa's Beauty Saloon or the Paradise Shoe Shine. An occasional broad plate glass window displays gold letter inscriptions—Hod Carriers Local 11 or Refuse Drivers and Collectors Local.

In the midst of squalor and dullness the New Granada Theater displays its glazed orange, green and purple front, pseudo-modern, pseudo-Spanish.

On hot summer days the Hill reaches its saturation point. Old wigged women sit on steps or in doorways clacking their Yiddish tongues. Drunks lurch past or stand reeling and singing on corners. Old men sleep in alleys or on church steps. On the pavements—their chief playground—children stretch out to draw or read. They dash between cruising trucks after wildly thrown balls. Prostitutes lean from windows or stand half-concealed in doorways—motioning trade with cigarettes held in white or black fingers.

From garbage wagons driven uncovered through the streets, the sun draws sickening odors. From open bars and cafes mechanical victrolas screech; the stale odor of beer and sweat drift out. Passing the ends of sun-seared alleys, one breathes the stink of urine.

And most of the people on the Hill fit appropriately into the background—impoverished Jews, Italians, Negroes; slump-shouldered men with hungry eyes; Negro women, spindle-legged from childhood rickets; spine-sagging, down-at-heel, listless men and women, or drink-blurred white and black faces screeching filth and strident jokes.

Here and there survives an old garden wall, a bit of iron grill work wrought in leaf and tendril. And occasionally a clean, modern storefront, or freshly painted, clean-curtained house front gives relief.

In summer every yellow clay hillside, ravine or discarded quarry—and there are dozens of these on the Hill—is overrun with sunflowers, from whose dense leaves glow hundreds of brown and yellow heads.

Schenley Heights, East Liberty and Homewood, to the Pittsburgh Negro, connote life lived in other ways than the social disorganization and disintegration of the Hill. In these sections professional and middle class people own their homes—some in the usual city row, some isolated from their neighbors by as much narrow ground as city crowding permits. Here lawyers, doctors, teachers, clerks, may take the air on a summer evening on front porches screened by vines. Hedges, though they bear as much grime as leaves, set off houses from street or neighbor. Front lawns with forsythia or hydrangea, gardens of pansies, hyacinths or geraniums or patches of lawn and a garden bench allow breathing space. Gardens and lawns with crocus, tulip, roses, iris, snapdragon, and aster give charming backgrounds for parties, fetes, weddings or social loitering. In these sections, radios, automobiles, vacations with pay, pianos and bathrooms, high school and university study, theater and concert attendance are more plentiful than in the Hill and the Strip, on the South Side or Woods Run.

In these communities living is organized on a level different from that of the Hill. Bridge clubs and literary clubs meet in comfortable, well-furnished living

rooms. Invitational luncheons and dinners are served at well-laid tables. Musicals, formal parties, formal calls and entertaining maintain a "genteel tradition."

On the North Side, for more than a century pleasantly known as Allegheny, lies Manchester, once a green and open village, with lawns reaching to the river, and elm trees sheltering porticoed houses. This was Margaret Deland's *Old Chester*. In Manchester, Negro life is almost as old as the city itself. In Allegheny, too, was the Avery Mission settlement where one of the first Negro schools in the country was established. Here also Avery College taught the sciences and the humanities. In old Allegheny several of the earliest churches were founded. Part of the Avery Church settlement had grown up in streets easily reached by the spring flood of the Allegheny River. Year after year streets and houses were submerged and, when the waters subsided, left under layers of slime and mud. There came also to this settlement an influx of that human wreckage that found quarters most easily accessible near rivers and railroads. Old residents moved out, discouraged, and crowded into the Carrington Street and Manchester districts. Housing became an acute problem here, and with it grew problems of health, infant mortality, delinquency and other evils.

Carrington Street, Boyle Street and the Brighton Road district are not so decrepit as the lower Hill District and the South Side, not so substantial as Homewood and Schenley Heights. They are, nevertheless, among the less desirable parts of the city for living. Manchester and Woods Runs, with the South Side, are scarred by social decay. These are the steel-mill settlements—black, congested, sorry with mill grime, industrial disease, and misery. Ramshackle houses of frame or brick, when the mills are running, tremble with the beat of trip hammers and vibrating rollers. To these settlements in the early days of the iron industry came German and Irish mill workers, their numbers growing as the iron industry grew. Woods Run was largely English and Welsh laborers. Then came other workers in the usual succession—Italians, Poles and the various Slavs. In Manchester and Woods Run now the six thousand odd Negroes are chiefly families whose fathers do hard labor in the nearby mills. Today many of them live on relief. A few run small businesses for their own people—barber shops and restaurants, chiefly. Here, too, came many people from the South during and after the migration of the First World War. And here some special effects of this migration appeared sharply, for many of the newcomers brought their native community organizations with them—their preachers and congregations in particular. These groups, furthermore, kept to themselves and the older families held aloof in a belief in their social superiority because of longer residence in a northern city with its advantages for literacy, development of culture, "refinement" and achievement of somewhat greater economic security and a higher standard of living.

These North Side communities have developed their own social unity ex-

pressed in the North Side and Suburban Civic League of about 400 members, in women's clubs, in the Olympian Dramatic Club and in young people's social clubs. The pastors of sixteen churches form the Ministerial Association. Four or five doctors and three dentists practice.

"The Strip," once notorious as the "Stormy Ninth" Ward, is a narrow stretch of industrial slums between the Allegheny River and the Pennsylvania Railroad running from the Union Station almost to the old United States Arsenal. Very early it was the site of an Indian Village, Shannopin's Town. At its eastern end young Major Washington landed after his winter crossing of the Allegheny River on a raft, from which he had fallen into the frozen water. It was later laid out as Bayardstown, an early American residential suburb along the Braddock's Field Road. Not long afterwards, it became one of the level sections of city land, conveniently lying along the river banks, preempted by the early iron industry, and for years was inhabited by German, then Irish foundry and mill workers. As the Black Diamond Steel Mill was the first in the city to employ Negro workers, numbers of Negroes moved in with Poles and Slovaks, and the German and Irish drifted eastward.[1]

It is now a grimy backyard of the city, a kind of ghost city, a deserted mill area, discarded by industry, partly demolished; churches and schools for the most part have moved to neighboring sections. Once notorious for violent political battles, highjackers and gangsters, crime and delinquency, it became the site of one of the city's Hoovervilles, and is now a degenerated region of forlorn Negro, Polish, and Slovenian homes.

On the industrial South Side lives another island community of Negroes, five percent of the Germans, Poles, Hungarians, and Russians squeezed into the smoke and dust-corroded flats along the Monongahela River, or climbing the bleak hills just beyond the flats. Here again are the tawdry and barren homes of unskilled millworkers, washed and scorched to uniform dreary gray by rain and sun and falling cinders from mill stacks in whose hot shadow they stand. Dilapidated, dark from crowding together and from the smoke-filled air that settles around them, roofs leaking, steps broken, porches hanging—kitchens frequently used for sleeping, these houses are human habitations. Rooms of semi-darkness, where the plaster has fallen and rain seeps in, two beds, a table, a stove, and soap boxes or orange crates for chairs, sometimes house a family.

Here a number of southern Negroes have migrated in the last two decades, and formed two rival communities centering about a Methodist and a Baptist Church, finding amusement in two neighborhood theaters, several pool rooms and beer gardens. Negro youth of this section go to the Hill or to East Liberty for

1. Black Diamond was located in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh.

dances. For the older residents, house to house visiting largely suffices for recreation.

Beltzhoover, a conservative community lying on the outer hills of the city, has a Negro population of approximately 2,000. This settlement grew rapidly when the Liberty Tubes were begun in 1924. Italian and southern black laborers employed on the construction of the tubes lived in shanties overhanging the tube area and, after completion of the tubes, many of them did not leave but moved into better houses. Residents from the degenerating parts of the Hill moved into the greener, more open district of Beltzhoover. Here they built or rented more modern types of homes than had been theirs on the Hill, sometimes graced with amenities like flower gardens. Beltzhoover has a less mobile population of millworkers, postal service employees, two physicians, a dentist, social workers, nurses, clerks and people in other occupations, about one third of whom are homeowners. The families of several school teachers, who because of the prejudice in our Pittsburgh school system must seek employment elsewhere, live there. The relief situation is less acute here than in the Hill, Manchester, or the Strip. It is a neighborly community. Frequently Negroes and whites visit back and forth. Occasionally in time of illness a white family takes home a Negro family's wash and vice versa. At Christmas, pudding and pastries are exchanged.

Community life is organized around two Baptist Churches, a Methodist Church, a Church of the Saints of God in Christ, a branch Sunday School of Bidwell Presbyterian Church, and, outside of the church, two Negro Democratic Clubs, a Negro Republican Club active only when primaries are held, a woman's Dorcas Circle. A club of young women, the Gay Hill-Toppers, raise funds to reduce the mortgage and interest on the Methodist Church building, and have programs of book reviews, lectures and discussions. For larger social activities the people indulge in much intra-city activity among other neighborhoods.

The economic basis upon which rests the social, political, and cultural life in Pittsburgh is weaker and more shifting than that of any other group. Because of such variability, as well as the existence of several communities rather than one concentrated settlement such as Harlem or South Chicago, the group mood and outlook has not established or coalesced; group unity has remained weak. In addition to economic instability and geographic separation there exists within the population itself the ancient order of three—rich man, poor man, and he who lives between, eager to lift himself into the class that enjoys luxuries, fearful of falling into that much larger group which suffers privation. Three fourths of Pittsburgh Negroes live in poverty, one sixth of them have the necessities of decent living, about one tenth maintain comfortable middle-class circumstances. Several have accumulated small fortunes; a few have incomes above $10,000 a year. Fif-

teen percent of the community own their own homes, as compared with about one third of the native whites and one half of the foreign born.[2]

Occupations, though limited, are various. In addition to those employed at common labor there are chauffeurs, janitors, commercial clerks, domestics. Besides these, Pittsburgh has a large professional group—attorneys, physicians and surgeons, pharmacists, actors and showmen, musicians and teachers of music, trained nurses, undertakers, dentists, school teachers, real estate dealers, engineers, an architect and other professionals. There are 143 clergymen and three artists and teachers of art.

A considerable number of small businesses thrive in the various neighborhoods—fruit and vegetable markets, groceries, or combination groceries and butcher shops; confectioneries, bakeries and fish markets, filling stations and garages; fuel and ice dealers, secondhand shops, drug stores with or without soda fountains; a millinery shop, a costume tailor, and greater than all, 133 eating and drinking places.

Among cities with a large Negro population, Pittsburgh ranks last in the number of Negro operated retail stores. In 1938, 81 such stores were run by Negro proprietors and firm members. Between 1929 and 1935 almost half [of Pittsburgh's Negro-owned retail stores, numbering 150 in 1929] closed.

In spite of economic, political and social achievement, the Negro in Pittsburgh, as anywhere else, is made to feel that he is a member of a minority group, and he lives not only under the disadvantages of all such groups but also under the added one of having a black skin. Programs and movements exist for encouraging the Slavs, the Italians and other nationalities to assimilate, and for hastening their adjustment to American society. Little has been done, however, to promote interracial relations, to explain Negro to white or white to Negro; to inform white students in schools of Negro history and culture. The quicker the adjustment of other nationalities the more desirable citizens they are thought to be. Such capability is taken as a mark of versatility and adaptability on the part of the Greek, the Italian, the Hungarian—of any group except the Negro. Instead of such help he meets obstacles.

He is kept conscious of the difficulty he faces to become a free, reliant, fully productive member of society. He is restricted in professional practice. Interns cannot practice in Pittsburgh hospitals; no Negro doctor is employed on a permanent hospital staff. At only one hospital are Negro nurses in service. No Negro students have been admitted to the School of Medicine at the University of Pitts-

2. The true figure for black property ownership was lower. See chapter 6, "Homeownership," in John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

burgh since 1914. Although civil service examinations are open to Negroes, practice teaching in the schools is not open; therefore, but two full-time teachers and a home visitor are employed by the Board of Education. He is barred, in spite of the Equal Rights Bills, from many restaurants and middle-class hotels. He is denied the free use of public swimming pools.

The dominant psychology of the Negro Pittsburgher has been that of the middle-class Negro who has achieved some reasonable economic security, is satisfied to maintain it and is, therefore, unwilling to risk rebuff, to excite animosity, to invite discomfort by participation in aspects of civic and social life other than those allotted him by a prejudiced community. He has kept largely to himself, in nationalist isolation or racial pride. He has felt that he belonged to a strategic group among his people. Lucretius-like, he has achieved a sense of well-being, rather from commiseration of those less fortunate than himself, than through complete economic and social participation.

For years the Negro community in Pittsburgh has, admittedly on the part of many of its members, lacked strong leadership. Under the handicaps of an environment dominated by heavy industry and divided into communities not strong enough or wealthy enough to support their own schools and colleges, there had developed no sizable intelligentsia, no strong group of intellectuals to bring conditions and problems to attention and discussion. Consequently, the Negro in Pittsburgh has been less articulate than elsewhere, slower in coming to social and cultural maturity. With such backwardness has gone passivity in political action. Divided into a half dozen communities, Negro voters have not been able until recently to place representatives in state or municipal bodies through which they might work for the welfare of their group.

New moods and attitudes, however, are forming. A little weary of being tolerated, philanthropized, patronized, kept in the shadow, the Negro people are becoming articulate. The depression has had its effect. It has jarred open doors; it has focused issues; it has coalesced groups; it has given voice to many needs and joined many hands. Many of the white population, white workers and middle class groups are waking to consciousness that most of their problems and the problems of their Negro neighbors are not separable. Jobs, relief, security, leisure and culture, education cannot be easily maintained in an economic crisis where division into many groups weakens the maintenance of these things by scattering social energy. What have in the past been looked on as psychological, social, national or racial differences, under the pressure of general social insecurity are coming to be understood as common economic interests. Social, national, racial and psychological levels have become more uniform and are more clearly divined as, at bottom, job levels or levels of economic opportunity. The Negro in Pittsburgh has two major desires—equal chance with all other groups to make a liv-

ing; and the breaking down of prejudice against complete social, political, and cultural fruition. No longer does he accept his former primary role as a source of cheap labor nor his cultural role as perpetuator of stereotypes growing out of the white man's romantic conceptions—the Rastuses, the mammies. He has grown conscious of his value as builder; as millworker who supplies steel for American bridges, railroads and buildings; as road maker. He realizes his training for teaching, for producing music or painting. He believes in his capacity to administer justice in courts or magistrates' offices, to perform social service to his community. There is a growth of group unity—broader, more progressive, more liberal. Until the jolt of depression, neither Negro nor white had realized generally that the need of one is the problem of all, and that poverty, political and cultural restrictions of any one group are a drag on general progress. The lowest economic group naturally first felt the pressure, and responded first. Unemployed and W.P.A. workers, evicted tenants, relief clients organized into the Workers' Alliance, Tenants' Leagues, Housewives' Leagues, and similar groups were created to alleviate distress and maintain some degree of social security.

A bitter period of unemployment and relief subsistence more than anything else has awakened this, the largest and weightiest group. In waking, it has stirred the whole Negro community into thought and action. To bring forward the condition and elevation or integration of the Negro into the Pittsburgh scene the large community has begun to work through the National Negro Congress, the NAACP, a coordinating committee for jobs for Negroes, the Workers Council of the Urban League, and discussion groups formed by the Negro Branches of the YMCA and YWCA.

A tendency away from such movements as the Garveyites is manifest. At one time Herron Hill and Lower Wylie Avenue Branches of this movement enrolled several thousand members. But the "Back to Africa" idea did not take a strong hold in Pittsburgh. It was thought too narrow and unbecoming to the pride-of-race characteristic of many Negro people. Although in changing its name to the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the society claimed interest in improvement of the status of the Negro everywhere, it lost ground. Attempts to carry out its plan of Negro businesses by and for Negroes by establishing a few restaurants, laundries and similar enterprises proved unsuccessful. The Association held meetings and carried on propaganda campaigns. As late as 1938 they sent a delegate to their International Convention held in Toronto, Canada. They still maintain a small hall on the Hill. But the movement amounts to little now in the city.

Slowly but with acceleration the community is learning that the solution of its problems does not lie within the race itself, that education, economic independence, culture and employment skills alone will not dissipate the shadow of the

plantation. More than that, they will not guard them against further discrimination, segregation, or national oppression in a crisis that has brought many new words into books and papers, one of the most frequently used of them—fascism.

Little wonder then, that diverse moods and attitudes have developed. Under the dominance of the southern tradition, under the northward reaching shadow of the plantation, the Negro in Pittsburgh has sought many adjustments. Whereas he wants chiefly to feel himself part of an industrial and social community he is constantly reminded that in many phases of the city's life he cannot yet join without uncomfortable consciousness of nationality. He may not live in the street of his choice. It is not long since a fiery cross was burned in front of the home of a physician who was not wanted in the district; the home of an attorney was stoned repeatedly until he withdrew to a Negro residential section. The old device of the more expensive restaurants and hotels ignoring Negroes at tables, or serving salt in their coffee is still practiced to circumvent the Equal Rights Bill. Settlement houses in the most congested Negro areas discourage or openly refuse their advantages to Negroes most in need of them.

Dominated by a feeling of race, the Negro nevertheless does not want to be thought of as an African or Ethiopian but as a Pittsburgher. Yet many Negroes have not yet assumed their share of responsibility in the development of a homogeneous community. Many have developed a retaliatory mood; they do not want, they say, to mingle with white citizens. They have come to feel "you don't want us; so we don't want you."

Such a mood may become resentful and suspicious of the outstretched hand of the white man. It results in isolation from the main currents of life; it rejects the stimulus of other ways of living and becomes inbred. Its worst aspect is "racism" or the false aspect of "race pride." This way of life, they say, is ours—this music, these churches, this form of sociability. Take it or leave it. Then, too, there are other attitudes, survivals from the more conciliatory elements in the history of the Negro in America. Jupiter Hammon, for instance, while thousands of slaves were revolting and making their escape, felt it his duty to bear slavery with patience, but opposed it as a system and urged manumission of Negro youth. Peter Williams, one of the early national figures, after the beginnings of the convention movement in the 1830's wished not to offend the powers of the Episcopal Church by an aggressive attitude in defense of Negro rights. This weak stand on the question of Negro liberation lost him prestige among his people. Men like Hammon and Williams lacked the aggression of Bishop Richard Allen, of Prince Hall or Martin Delany. The Hammonses and Williamses of today retard the integration of communities where Negroes live in large numbers, set off, but side by side with native born white and European, many of whom are eager to develop a unified community of friendly nationalities. Negro and white, native and European are

coming however, to understand that the maintenance of national cultures within any social unit, city, county or country, if allowed to interact freely will produce a many colored harmonious whole, without losing them individuality of any single factor.

These attitudes of conciliation and retaliation endanger the flowering of people in such "melting pots" as Pittsburgh. Any national group which exists in too self-contained a manner becomes easy prey to dangerous social forces. Withdrawal and isolation or too great passivity make possible movements such as the White Crusaders who circularized the district in 1936 with a demand to "Put the Mason-Dixon line north of Pennsylvania." They encourage the burning of fiery crosses and impede the opening of many doors closed simply because the doors have not been pushed open.

A Negro woman wrote recently: "We Negroes teach our youth that the salvation of the Negro lies within the race itself; that, as soon as we become economically independent, educated, cultural, and skillful, we shall arrive. But wealth, education, culture and technological advancement did not save the Jew in Germany."

Martin R. Delany saw clearly, almost a century ago, the dangers of racism. He wrote: ". . . a fact worthy of observation, that wherever objects of oppression are the most easily distinguished by any peculiar or general characteristics, these people are the more easily oppressed. This is the case with modern Jews and many other people who have strongly marked, peculiar, or distinguishing characteristics. The policy of all those who proscribe any people, induce them to select as the objects of proscription, those who differed as much as possible, in some particulars, from themselves." These various attitudes taken by the Negro to his problem, whether individually, in groups, or in organizations such as the Garveyites, are attempts to explain his position and respond to it, to change his world, to develop and satisfy him more completely.

It behooves the Pittsburgh Negro in particular to educate himself, to clarify his attitudes to himself, and to educate white nationalities on the role of the Negro in American life, past and present. This he must do by intelligent use of the ballot, by energetic participation in programs such as that of the NAACP youth organizations, by promotion of sound legislation in behalf of all minorities, by introduction of Negro history into the schools, and by correction of the distortion of Negro history in texts now in use. More than all these he must participate in energetic attempts to integrate himself with progressive white groups, and especially he must participate more extensively in the progressive trade union movement. The Pittsburgh Negro has an important job to do in removing from northern cities the shadow of the plantation, and by extending his own democratic rights, extending democracy in the community at large.