

An honest question merits an honest answer. . . . The answer is, directly and bluntly: American whites and blacks both possess deep-seated resistances against the Negro problem being presented even verbally, in all of its hideous fullness, in all of the totality of its meaning. The many and various groups, commissions, councils, leagues, committees, and organizations of an interracial nature have consistently diluted the problem, blurred it, injected foggy moral or sentimental notions into it. This fact is as true of the churches as of the trade unions; as true of Negro organizations as of white; as true of the political Left as of the political Right; as true of white individuals as of black.

RICHARD WRIGHT, 1945

Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto

NEGRO NEW YORK, 1890-1930

By Gilbert Osofsky



HARPER TORCHBOOKS
Harper & Row, Publishers
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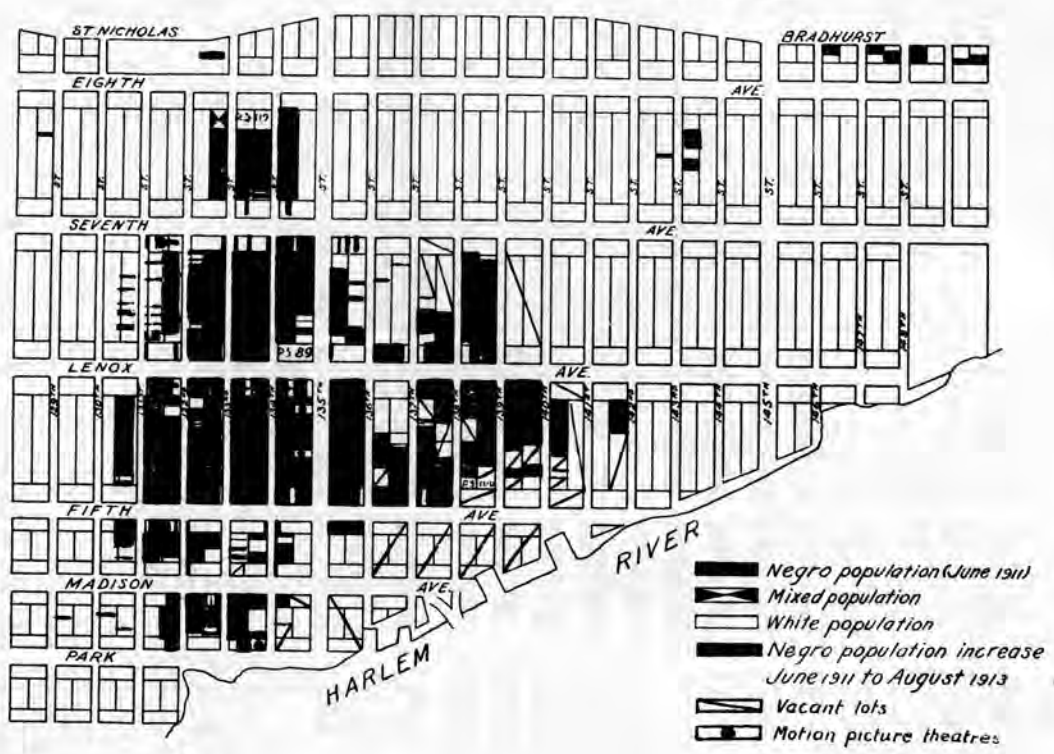
Kitrick helped keep them open. My greatest debt is to Professor Cross, an amazingly warm, sympathetic and gifted person, who advised, cajoled and directed me throughout the writing of this book. I hope his demands for intellectual independence are somewhat met in the pages that follow.

Ernest Kaiser and Jean Blackwell Hutson introduced me to the treasures of the Schomburg Collection, and dozens of other librarians went out of their way and occasionally stretched regulations to assist me in my research. I would like to thank the staffs of Columbia University's Oral History Research Office, the New York City Municipal Archives, the Archives of the New York City Hall of Records, the New-York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, Yale University's James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection and the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Some of the chapters in this book have been published in different form in *American Quarterly*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Freedomways* and *New York History*; they appear here with the permission of the editors of these journals. A University of Illinois Faculty Fellowship and grants from the University's Graduate Research Board permitted me to complete my research. Folkways Records made a generous gift of Negro folk songs, excerpts of which appear throughout the book. Whatever the value of this book, its style and content have been considerably enhanced by the interest and effort of Jeannette Hopkins of Harper & Row, Mrs. Ida Cullen Cooper, Langston Hughes, Mrs. Gerri Major of Johnson Publishing Company and Joan Meinhardt of Harper & Row aided in the securing of illustrations. Marcia, Lisa Kate and Judith Aileen, my swinging family, helped make the work enjoyable and worthwhile.

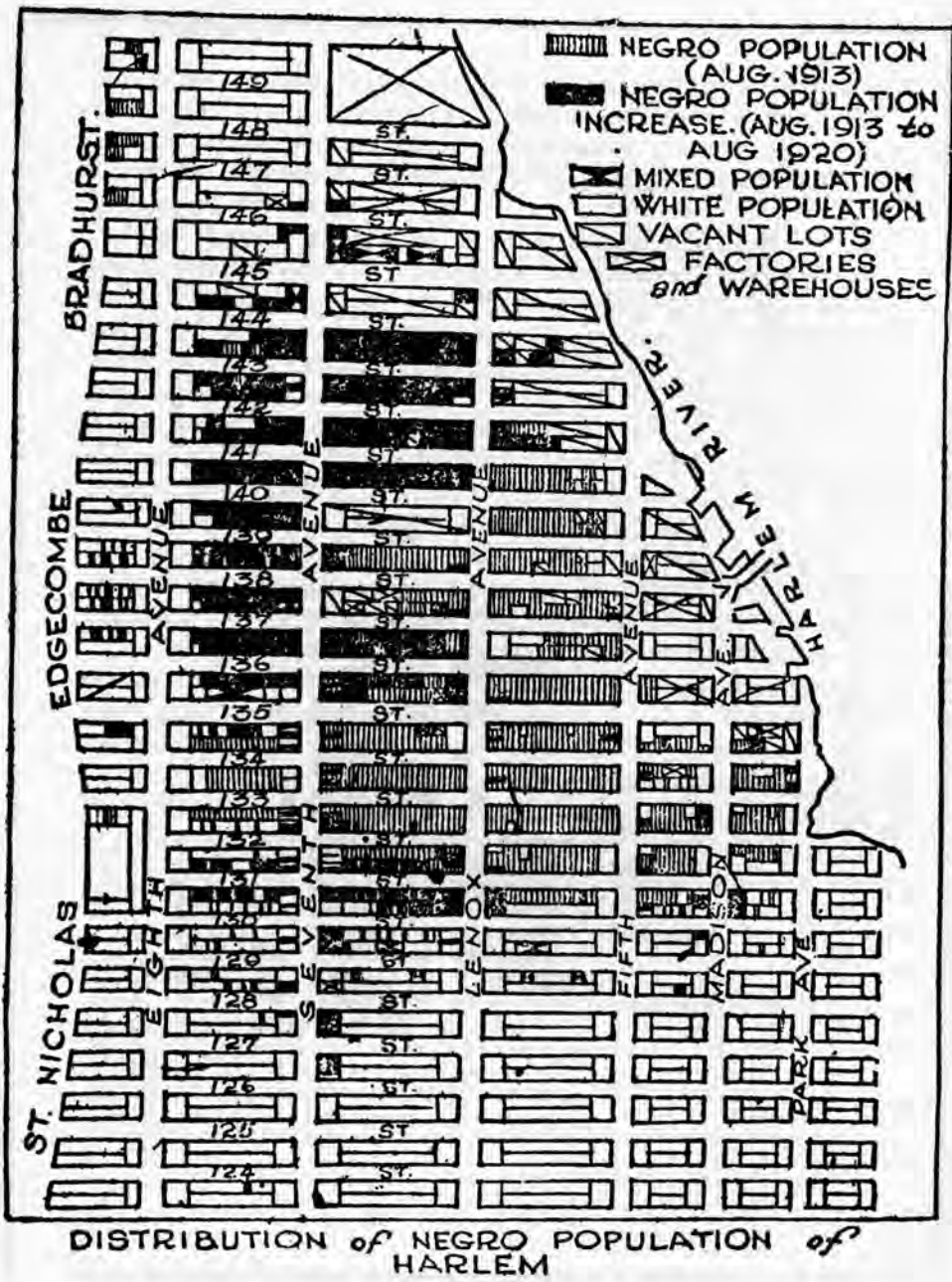
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GILBERT OSOFSKY

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION OF HARLEM

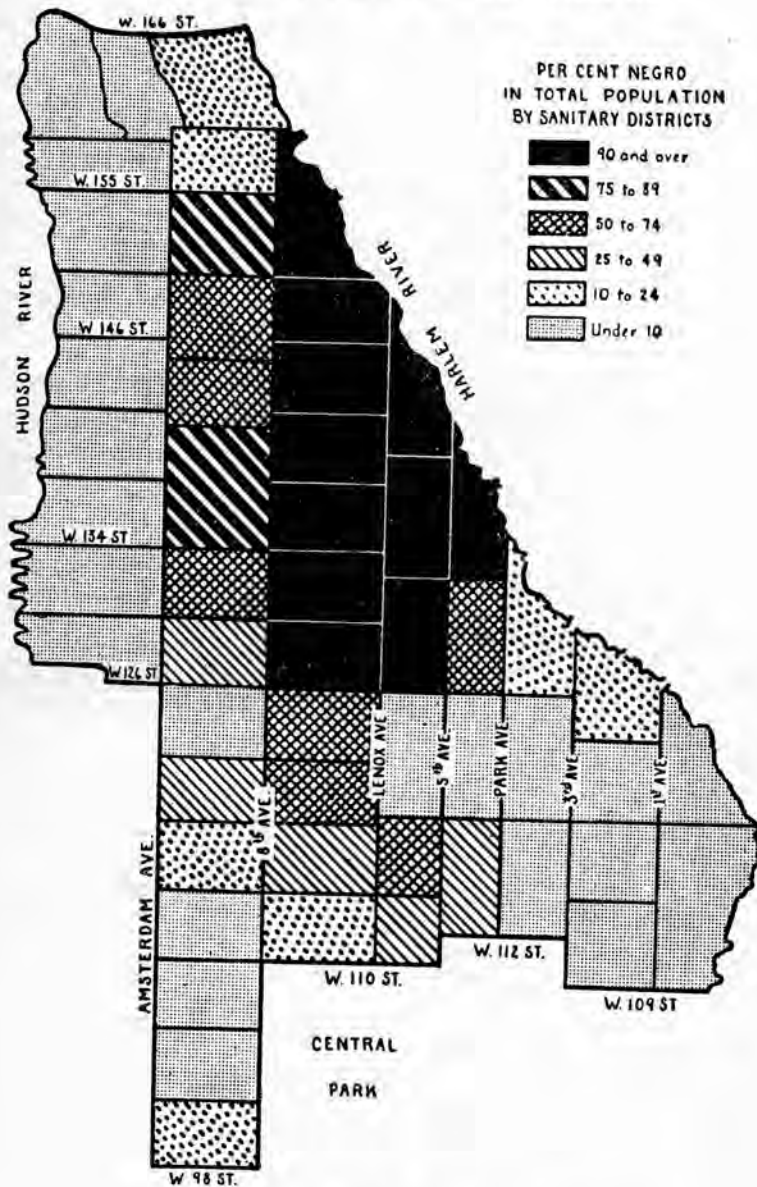


1. Black Harlem, 1911-1913. New York City census.



2. Black Harlem, 1913-1920. *New York City census.*

PRINCIPAL NEGRO AREA OF MANHATTAN, 1930



3. Black Harlem, 1930. *New York City census.*

“No Crystal Stair”: Negro New York, the 1890’s

“Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.”

—LANGSTON HUGHES, *Mother to Son*

I

In the early twentieth century Booker T. Washington made a tour of eastern and western Europe to study working-class life. He wanted to find “The Man Farthest Down,” he said, to gauge the relative position of American Negroes with poor people elsewhere. Washington doggedly avoided museums, art galleries, cathedrals and palaces to mingle with the peasantry, urban industrial workers and miners. When he completed his journey he believed that American Negroes were much like “men at the bottom” throughout the world, and that the future seemed promising for all. “To the man in the tower the world below is likely to look very small,” wrote Washington characteristically. However, he concluded, he never found “things as bad as they were advertised.” Had Washington made an intensive survey of Negro New York in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he most certainly would have judged the colored man “The Man Farthest Down” in America’s largest metropolis.¹ To have concluded that the situation contained significant signs of improvement would have been utopian. Negro life in New York City was certainly “no crystal stair” in the 1890’s; nor had it ever been.

The 60,666 Negroes of New York City at the turn of the century were widely scattered throughout the five boroughs, but most heavily concentrated in Manhattan. Some 5,000 were foreign-born, from many islands in the Caribbean, but primarily from the British West Indies. Although they represented an exceedingly small portion of the general population, there were more foreign-born Negroes in New York City than in any other city in America. Approximately two-thirds of all the Negroes in New York State lived in the city, and of

these, more than half resided in Manhattan. There were considerably more Negro women in the population than men: "The excess of negro females," wrote Howard University professor Kelly Miller, "is a most striking feature of the Negro population in most of the large cities." In 1890 there were 810 Negro men for every thousand Negro women in New York City; in 1900, 809 for each thousand; in 1910, 850.²

This disproportionate number of women in the general Negro population, a reflection of the greater economic opportunities for Negro women in cities, created social problems of importance. Most Negro women in New York City were young and of marriageable age, but there were simply not enough men to go around: "In their hours of leisure," social worker Mary White Ovington recorded, "the surplus women are known to play havoc with their neighbors' sons, even with their neighbors' husbands, for since lack of men makes marriage impossible for about a fifth of New York's colored girls, social disorder results."³ Nor did the typical married man earn enough money to support a family without the assistance of his wife. These conditions largely account for the fact that more than twice as many Negro women (59 per cent) in the city had to work to support themselves than did foreign-born (27.2 per cent) and native-born (24.6 per cent) white women. There was also, as W. E. B. DuBois noted in 1901, a high rate of illegitimacy among them.⁴

The greater financial stability of Negro women created serious social and psychological difficulties for Negro men. Forced reliance on female economic power minimized the sense of control and responsibility that Negro men had for their families, and often (more often than for other ethnic groups) led to disrupted or broken homes. This economic situation deprived Negro males of an essential symbol of full manhood. Family instability became a dominant characteristic of Negro urban life in the twentieth century.

Most of the Negro population in the 1890's worked at varieties of unskilled and low-paid jobs. The Negro middle class was quite small. The largest number, some 450, were clerks, followed, in descending order, by actors and actresses, musicians and music teachers, and small businessmen. A population of about 60,000 was serviced by only forty-two Negro physicians and twenty-six Negro lawyers. More than 90 per cent of the community, male and female, were employed as menials or laborers: servants, porters, waiters, wait-

resses, teamsters, dressmakers, laundresses, janitors and "laborers not specified" (as the census-takers termed it).⁵

Many members of the Negro community in the late nineteenth century believed that economic conditions had deteriorated since the Civil War. Samuel R. Scottron, an aged Brooklynite in the 1890's, a well-known inventor of household appliances, and a member of Brooklyn's Board of Education, spent a good part of his old age writing about the displacement of Negroes from occupations they supposedly dominated previously. "The ancient colored New Yorker didn't wait for some one to hire him," wrote Scottron, "he went at it alone and made a place for himself." "Think of our city's most famous caterers of forty or fifty years ago," he continued. "They were Downings, Watsons, Van Dykes, Ten Eycks, Drys, Greens and others, all colored. Their names were . . . representative of high class work. . . ." "In fact," Scottron concluded, "it would be quite difficult to name a livelihood in which [Negroes] had no representation." This, he and others bemoaned, was all gone now—"superseded by foreign white help"; "gone out of fashion."⁶

There was some truth in Scottron's observations. One of the key sources of wealth among New York Negroes in the nineteenth century was the catering business. Some caterers began as janitors in banking and business houses. At first they sold sandwiches and snacks to employees and eventually expanded their services to full-scale businesses. William H. Smith, for example, began as a janitor in the Bank of New York and died a comparatively wealthy owner of New York real estate. There were a handful of others with similar careers: Peter Van Dyke, Thomas Downing, Charles G. Bowser, David Roselle. Many of these people, and other members of the Negro middle class—small merchants, clergymen, journalists—lived in comfortable homes in Brooklyn, owned summer houses, and left substantial estates at their deaths. Their children often became lawyers, teachers, physicians, businessmen. "Had they been white," wrote Mary White Ovington, "they would have slipped into the population and been lost. . . ."⁷

These careers were far from typical of the general Negro population, however. They were the elite of the race, lived apart from the masses, and objected to being lumped together in the public image with lower-class Negroes. The small Negro middle class continually bemoaned the fact that white America refused to distinguish between

different Negro social classes, and equated them with the "worst class [of the] great stream of rural immigrants from the South simply because they happen to be of the same race." "All Negroes are not alike," said one wealthy Negro in 1895. "There are various grades of colored people. . . . We are not to be judged by the street loungers and drunkards of our race."⁸

Scottron's memories, blurred by the passing of time, tended to overlook the poverty of the race as a whole in the nineteenth century. Many of the jobs he and others remembered as part of the glories of the past ("occupied almost exclusively by Negroes") were in domestic service: coachmen, chambermaids, waiters, chefs, footmen, valets. To employ Negro servants was a mark of stature among upper-class white families in the city in the nineteenth century. This was clearly a heritage of slavery when ownership of Negro slaves was a sign of social distinction. "The Nineties," records one New York historian, "saw about the last of the old family servants that were part of every well regulated menage among the elite of the city . . . as much fixtures to a house as the very walls themselves."⁹ The passing of this slave tradition was then not an unmixed blessing. Nor, given the relatively small numbers of Negroes in New York City in the early nineteenth century, is it conceivable that they dominated even the service positions then: "Did the colored man have all this fifty years ago when they were only one and a half per cent of the population?" wrote a student of Negro life in the early twentieth century. "If so, there were giants in those days. . . ."¹⁰ It was historically true that a disproportionate number of Negroes were employed as domestics in the city in the mid-nineteenth century but, in numbers, they ranked a far third behind Irish and German servants.¹¹

Complaints of limited economic opportunities for Negroes, similar to Scottron's, were often made in the age he characterized as a period of prosperity. There was very little upward mobility among the majority of Negro New Yorkers in the nineteenth century: "The Negro American found it extremely difficult to rise above manual labor and domestic service," concludes one historian of New York City in the early nineteenth century.¹² When J. W. C. Pennington escaped slavery in Maryland and arrived in New York City in 1829, he was so shocked with the "misery, ignorance, and wretchedness of the free colored people" that he, the slave, devoted his life to "their

elevation. . . ." (Pennington became a leading Negro clergyman and militant abolitionist.)¹³ A teacher at a Negro school in 1830, Charles C. Andrews, wrote that the Negro student graduated "with every avenue closed against him which is open to the white boy . . . [he is] doomed to encounter prejudice and contempt because he is black."¹⁴ Negro newspapers published articles on the low-paid jobs that racial prejudice forced Negroes to accept in Jacksonian America; complained that "colored youths" were barred from "workshops and offices" in the 1830's.¹⁵ Negroes "are sunken much lower than they were a few years ago and are compelled to pursue none but the meanest avocations," concluded an observer in 1846.¹⁶ In the 1850's the perceptive Frederick Douglass complained that Negroes "were shut from all lucrative employments and compelled to be merely barbers, waiters, workmen and the like at wages so low that they could lay up little or nothing."¹⁷ Charles L. Reason, a prominent nineteenth-century Negro educator, echoed Douglass's views in 1854. As the Civil War began, abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher commented that the "only chance for a colored man North nowadays is to wait and shave and they are being driven from these as fast as possible."¹⁸ Only a very small number of New York City Negroes could meet the qualification of a \$250 freehold for voting established by the state constitution of 1821. In 1865, for example, 44 Negroes in a population of 9,943 owned enough property to vote.¹⁹ "The Black man goes to the wall," was the *New York Tribune's* summary of the economic status of Negro New Yorkers in the nineteenth century.²⁰

II

And similar generalizations can be made about practically every other aspect of Negro life in the metropolis. The Negro population of New York City remained relatively stable and small throughout most of the nineteenth century, for example, primarily because of an exceedingly high death rate. Between 1800 and 1865 the numbers of Negroes living in Manhattan wavered between 9,000 and 15,000—about one per cent of the city's population on the eve of the "Rebellion." In each of the three decades preceding the Civil War the Negro population actually declined. By 1865, in fact, there were fewer Negroes in Manhattan (9,943) than there had been in 1820 (10,368).

It was not until southern and West Indian migrants came to New York City (in small numbers between 1865 and 1890, and in much larger numbers after that) that the Negro population actually expanded. By 1900, for the first time in New York history, more than half the Negro population (53 per cent) was born outside the state.²¹

An exceptionally high death rate had been a major fact of Negro life in slavery; it continued to be so after emancipation: "And Death heard the summons/And he leaped on his fastest horse," wrote poet James Weldon Johnson. Of all the peoples in New York City, foreign-born as well as native, Negroes had, proportionally, the highest mortality rates. In 1890, for example, 37.5 Negroes in every thousand died, contrasted with 28.5 deaths in the white population. Between 1895 and 1915, in fact, the Negro death rate in New York State exceeded the birth rate by some 400 annually. And what was true of the state was also true for the city.²²

Death took a tragic toll of very young Negro children either through stillbirths or other causes in the first year of life. Consumption (the "Plague of the Cities"), and pneumonia, however, were the great adult killers. From 1884 to 1890 the Bureau of the Census conducted an intensive study of New York City and found that more Negroes died of these illnesses than of all others. Almost one-fourth of Negro deaths then were caused by tuberculosis, and the general rate of death among Negroes from this disease was twice that of the white population. "Tuberculosis in all its forms is met with everywhere," wrote a social worker active in the Negro districts.²³ Ironically, the Great White Plague took, and would continue to take, its highest toll among black New Yorkers.²⁴

This "frightful mortality rate from lung and bronchial diseases" offered great opportunities to local quacks whose private and ingenious home remedies were reputed to cure everything from a broken heart and overly curly hair to the most lethal ailments. They exploited a real need of the Negro community—the desire for answers to medical problems which science itself had not yet found. ("If you want to prevent the contraction of tuberculosis," preached one Negro clergyman, "you must lead moral lives.")²⁵ One man who regularly advertised in the Negro press sold "Hale's Honey of Horehound and Tar" guaranteed to purge the recipient of every imaginable ailment.²⁶ Another, Dr. T. A. Slocum, was so sure that his formula cured tuberculosis that he gave free samples away.²⁷

CONSUMPTION

I have a positive remedy for the above disease. . . . Indeed, so strong is my faith in its efficacy, that I will send TWO BOTTLES FREE. . . .

The continual presence of sickness and death in the Negro community permitted other bogus healers, Negro and white, to enrich themselves in similar fashion for generations. Reliance on quackery and medical superstition played a more harmful role in Negro social life than it did for any other minority group.

III

Throughout the nineteenth century most Negroes lived in the poorest working-class sections of the city. Negro neighborhoods were traditionally located in the less attractive residential areas on the outskirts of Manhattan Island, or along the east and west sides near the waterfronts—the sections doomed to become slums by the unimaginative grid pattern of urban planning instituted in 1811. Here Negroes lived apart in generally rundown quarters because of their poverty and were further separated from other working-class families in these neighborhoods on the basis of color. Within this pattern, however, was a built-in source of instability. New York was a rapidly expanding city throughout the nineteenth century and, as its population grew, new neighborhoods came into existence. What was the periphery of town or a slum for one generation was not necessarily the same for the next. As the city moved northward, so did the principal places of Negro residence.²⁸

In the early nineteenth century New York Negroes generally lived in the Five Points district, on the site of the present City Hall and in the blocks surrounding it, which were then considered "well uptown." The Sixth Ward, which encompassed most of Five Points, was a heavily populated working-class neighborhood; the Negro section within it was popularly called "Stagg Town" or "Negro Plantations." This was the first place of major settlement of New York's freed slaves. The gradual abolition of slavery in New York began in 1799 and was finally completed on July 4, 1827. The Five Points, parts of which were grazing land, housed the freedmen.²⁹

Descriptions of life in this section repeatedly emphasized its dire poverty, its squalor, its vice. It was known as a "notorious center of

crime." Charles Dickens visited some of the local Negro homes in 1842 and described them as places where "dogs would howl to lie." Here, he wrote, "women and men . . . slink off to sleep, forcing the dislodged rats to move away. . . ." ⁸⁰ A teacher in the area found that Negro children failed to come to school because they lacked proper clothing. "A large number of our colored people are very poor," he observed, "and [are] unable to provide for their children suitable clothing to attend school. . . ." ⁸¹ When a missionary came to comfort a dying "Poor Black Man," he found him lying on a homemade bed of straw surrounded by a ragged family. ⁸² Negroes lived in the rickety frame houses of this shantytown, and in unpaved cellars known as the "Dens of Death." ⁸³ Others were housed in the "Old Brewery," an early-nineteenth-century beer factory turned into a tenement. Drunkenness and prostitution were commonly found in the neighborhood. ⁸⁴ In response to these conditions of poverty and degradation, the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor built the Workingmen's Home in 1855. This first model tenement for the city's poor was constructed for Negroes at Elizabeth and Mott Streets. ⁸⁵

But poverty alone did not fully define Negro life in the Five Points. What the occasional visitor like Dickens failed to see were the solid institutions of the neighborhood and the more hopeful side of life there. The African Society of Mutual Relief, a Negro beneficial organization, was founded in 1808 and continued its existence into the twentieth century. There was a Negro theater, the African Grove, on Mercer Street in the 1820's. ⁸⁶ Abyssinian Baptist Church, founded in 1808, was on present-day Worth Street. St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church (1809) was located on what is now Centre Street; Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (1819) was on Mott Street; and there were a few other churches as well spread across the Lower East and West sides. ⁸⁷ At Leonard and Church Streets stood the queen of Negro religious institutions, "Mother Zion" Church (African Methodist Episcopal Zion), founded in 1796. In 1800 a frame building replaced the stable in which its founders worshiped; in 1820 a stone structure replaced the frame; in 1840 a solid brick building took the place of the stone. ⁸⁸

The outstanding nonreligious institution of the neighborhood was African Free School Number 2, founded by the New York Manu-mission Society on Mulberry near Grand Street in 1820. ⁸⁹ Many of

the most prominent Negroes of the city and the North in the nineteenth century were educated there. Charles L. Reason, teacher; Patrick Reason, engraver; J. McCune Smith, physician; Ira Aldridge, actor; Samuel Ringgold Ward, abolitionist; Henry Highland Garnet and Alexander Crummell, clergymen; and Thomas Downing, caterer, to mention a few of the outstanding, were all students at the school. ⁴⁰ The "Old Mulberry Street School" was remembered with pride by its graduates. The Reverend Dr. Crummell delivered eulogies on John Peterson, a Negro teacher there for half a century. ⁴¹ Former students of "Number 2" gathered together in the John Peterson Association in the 1880's to preserve its memory and keep bright some outstanding aspects of Negro life in New York City in the nineteenth century. ⁴²

IV

By the 1830's the Negro population of Five Points began to decline. Some Negroes continued to live there until the end of the century, but it essentially became a backwash community as the majority of people moved north and west into Greenwich Village. A survey made of Five Points in 1860 found it to be an overwhelmingly Irish district. There were only a few hundred Negroes left there. ⁴³ By the 1880's only a handful of Negroes remained: "In a few years there will not be a family living on the East Side of our city, that part known as Stagg Town, where the colored people lived years ago," an editorial in a Negro journal said in 1887. ⁴⁴

"Little Africa" replaced "Stagg Town"—Bleecker, Sullivan, Thompson, MacDougal and Carmine Streets took the place of their counterparts to the south and east. The public reputation of the Negro community in Greenwich Village was simply an adaptation of the previous general impressions of Five Points. By those who were attracted vicariously or directly to fast living, it was called "the notorious district," ⁴⁵ "Coontown," ⁴⁶ "Nigger Alley." ⁴⁷ In it were "black and tan saloons" where all kinds of underworld and salacious activities could supposedly be bought for the right price. ⁴⁸

The general Negro population of the Village, those who worked regularly at hundreds of different menial jobs and were members of the many Negro fraternal orders, were unnoticed by the creators of such stereotypes. These Negroes, whose contributions built the fine churches which followed them into the new neighborhood, constituted the majority of the population. Between 1880 and 1890,

however, their numbers began to decline. At the turn of the century they had dwindled to 1,900. In 1920, the few hundred Negroes of Greenwich Village were janitors living in basements of tenements that housed whites, or tenants in the very few houses still occupied by colored people.⁴⁹ "Look at West Broadway . . . Thompson Street, Sullivan Street, Bleeker Street and think of those streets . . . years ago," wrote Samuel R. Scottron in 1905. "Think of our people . . . and look upon the present occupants, all [Italians]."⁵⁰ The "Old Africa," Jacob Riis observed in 1890, "is now becoming a modern Italy."⁵¹ As "Little Africa" had replaced "Stagg Town" a generation or so before, now the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill continued the "steady procession passing up the West Side."⁵²

V

At the turn of the century most Negroes lived in what would be the present-day midtown area, on a wide range of blocks between Twentieth and Sixty-third Streets. Although there were sections of Negro concentration within this area, no single large neighborhood was an all-Negro community. Handfuls of small and densely populated ghettos, usually a block or two in length, were found throughout Manhattan Island, on the east and west sides, from Greenwich Village to Harlem and even further north. Thirty-seventh and Fifty-eighth Streets, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues, for example, were Negro blocks. They were surrounded by white people, the majority of whom were first- and second-generation Irish and German immigrants. There were six wards in Manhattan in 1890, the twelfth, fifteenth, sixteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-second, in which 2,000 to 4,000 Negroes lived.⁵³

Of these sections the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill were the most heavily populated in the 1890's. They were areas "thickly studded with black and colored faces," recalled Negro journalist John Edward Bruce.⁵⁴ As the "Tenderloin" was a folk designation, its boundaries are nowhere clearly defined. Contemporaries sometimes spoke of an "Old Tenderloin" which perhaps ended near Forty-second Street, and a "New Tenderloin" which extended north from there through the upper Fifties.⁵⁵ The Negro sections scattered within this general area began at approximately Twentieth Street and ended at Fifty-third. The boundaries of San Juan Hill, on the other hand, are easily delineated. They stretched from Sixtieth to Sixty-fourth Streets, Tenth and

Eleventh Avenues. San Juan Hill was one of the most congested areas in America's most populated city—3,580 people, more than a town in itself, lived on just one of its streets.⁵⁶ The western boundary of this Negro neighborhood was the open railroad tracks that ran along Eleventh Avenue. (Because of the number of accidents involving children who played along the tracks, contemporaries called this street "Death Avenue.") San Juan Hill received its name after the Spanish-American War as a parody on the neighborhood interracial battles that took place on the steep upgrade leading to Sixtieth Street.⁵⁷

Between 1890 and 1900 the Negro population of the city expanded by 25,000 people and both these new neighborhoods were a response to the demand for more Negro living space. As Negroes moved in whites moved to more desirable residences in upper Manhattan. When New York City built its elevated lines on the West Side in the late nineteenth century another stimulant for movement was created. The clatter and noise of the new trains made for less than pleasant living, and those who could afford it moved out. Apartments were taken over by Negroes ("The Choicest Apartments in the City for Select Colored Families"), many recent southern migrants, who were forced to accept second-class accommodations at first-class prices. Of the twenty-seven ethnic groups in the neighborhood, Negroes paid the highest rents—generally two to five dollars per month more than others. "A colored man in this city . . . pays higher rental and gets far less for his money than does the white man," a group of housing reformers recorded at the turn of the century. "The colored people of New York City suffer more injustice in the matter of rental than any other class of citizens," agreed the Negro journal, *New York Freeman*, in 1885. "The present housing conditions of the vast majority of colored families in New York," another man wrote, "can only be characterized as disgraceful."⁵⁸

New institutions as well as new neighborhoods were called for to meet the needs of an expanding population. For the first time in decades new Negro churches were founded in the city. In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century six new Negro churches were opened in the Tenderloin and San Juan alone.⁵⁹ Some, like Union Baptist Church, were housed in storefronts and catered to the needs of recently arrived southern migrants. The Reverend Dr. George H. Sims, pastor of Union Baptist and a Virginian himself, gathered the "very recent residents of this new, disturbing city" and made Christi-

anity come "alive Sunday morning," a contemporary remembered. Union Baptist was known as a "shouting church."⁶⁰ Others, like St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, offered somewhat more reserved services. By 1900 the majority of religious institutions formerly established in Greenwich Village had moved to the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill.

The reputation of the new sections was as unsavory as that of any former Negro neighborhood. The Tenderloin, for example, housed New York's red-light district and was generally known as the roost of underworld characters. Preachers called it "The Terrible Tenderloin." The Reverend Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, always in the forefront of some antivice crusade, attempted to clean up the area in 1892-1895, but business was being carried on as usual in 1900.⁶¹ Negroes and whites owned saloons, cafés and gambling houses that were scattered throughout the neighborhood.⁶² "These dens of infamy . . . are little less than a corner of hell," warned a Negro clergyman. "Fathers and mothers, away down south, or far off in the West Indies, little know of the shame and degradation that have overtaken many of their sons and daughters who have come to the city. . . ."⁶³ The Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., of Abyssinian Baptist Church lived in a coldwater flat "with prostitutes living over me and all around me." He preached what he called "gospel bombardments" to the "pimps, prostitutes, keepers of dives and gambling dens," who sometimes attended his prayer meetings. They seemed to shout the loudest for the Lord's forgiveness. Others never came to church. Some "harlots would stand across the street on Sunday evenings in unbuttoned Mother Hubbards soliciting men as they left our service," Powell recalled.⁶⁴ The Tenderloin was also a plum for corrupt and grafting municipal officials. Policemen preferred to work there, it was said, to get their share of underworld graft. A means of reprimanding a disobedient officer was to move his beat from the vice areas. "Anyone who was captain of that district a year," said one man, "could live on tenderloin steaks the rest of his life."⁶⁵ Local police inspectors were known as "Czars of the Tenderloin."⁶⁶

There was also a vital and hopeful aspect about life in this Negro community. It centered around West Fifty-third Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues—the Main Street for respectable folk of Negro Tenderloin. "West Fifty-third Street," the pastor of Bethel African

Methodist Episcopal Church remembered, "was the principal place of resort for *our* group."⁶⁷ On this street could be found, in 1900 or shortly thereafter, many of the major institutions of Negro New York: Negro political clubs, Mount Olivet Baptist Church, St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Benedict the Moor Roman Catholic Church,⁶⁸ offices of the major Negro fraternal societies, two Negro hotels, varieties of small businesses and the Negro YMCA.

The YMCA was the center of intellectual and social life of New York Negroes in the first decade of the twentieth century. Lectures were given, plays and music performed, classes in liberal arts as well as industrial skills were offered to the public. The Y was originally founded in 1899 at Mount Olivet Baptist Church by its pastor, the Reverend Dr. Charles T. Walker. Walker, a clergyman of national reputation, appealed to his church members and to the Negro community for financial assistance. He wanted to establish a home in the metropolis for southern migrants: "So much trouble is made by the poor fellows having no place to go when they come here. What we need is a place that shall be known to every young man in the South as a home where he can come and find friends. . . ."⁶⁹ Walker raised enough money to lease a building on West Fifty-third Street for one year and applied to the general New York YMCA for membership in 1900. His appeal was accepted and the "Colored Men's YMCA" became one of the first of many all-Negro Y's established in northern cities in the early twentieth century.⁷⁰

The Tenderloin was also known as the gathering place of "Negro Bohemia." New York City was the center of Negro vaudeville at the turn of the century and James Weldon Johnson has described the active and productive lives of Negro show people in these years. Bert Williams, George Walker, Aida Overton Walker, Will Marion Cook, Theodore Drury, Rosamond Johnson, Bob Cole, Harry T. Burleigh, Johnson himself—outstanding artists, actors, vaudevillians, songwriters—lived on West Fifty-third Street and met at Jimmie Marshall's Hotel to trade stories and discuss race problems: "Our room, particularly of nights, was the scene of many discussions; the main question talked about and wrangled over being always the status of the Negro as a writer, composer and performer in the New York theater and world of music," Johnson recalled. "It was an alluring world, a tempting world."⁷¹

Most of the performers earned money that would have staggered

the imaginations of the majority of Negroes of San Juan Hill and the Tenderloin. The royalties that Johnson earned for a few songs were equal to twice his annual salary as principal of a Negro secondary school in Florida. The typical Negro of the neighborhood, and of the city as a whole, was employed as a laborer or servant and earned four to six dollars a week at the turn of the century. The average combined incomes of all the working members of a Negro family was twelve to fifteen dollars a week.⁷² A greater proportion of this income than that of any other ethnic group in the area had to be expended for the necessities of life. Houses in which Negroes lived were reputed to be the worst of the district, often ill-ventilated and located in the rear portions of dumbbell-shaped tenements so that they could be reached only by passing through a long and often dingy alleyway: "from 61st Street to 62nd Street [Negroes] occupy 400 rooms that have no access to the outer air," concluded a study of a group of church reformers in the 1890's. To make ends meet more Negro women had to be employed ("the laundress is the economic supplement of the porter"), more lodgers taken in, and more children kept out of school than in any other minority group. The average Negro wage earner, male or female, had to work more hours to earn less money than anyone else.⁷³

"Now I started at the bottom, and I stays right there, don't seem like I'm gonna get nowhere," runs a line from the Blues. "The rise of a nation, the pressing forward of a social class," wrote W. E. B. DuBois, "means a bitter struggle, a hard and soul-sickening battle with the world such as few of the more favored classes know or appreciate."⁷⁴

CHAPTER 2 □

"Come Out from Among Them": Negro Migration and Settlement, 1890 - 1914

"There can be no doubt of the drift of the black South northward."

—W. E. B. DuBois, 1901

"The Afro-American population of the large cities of the North and West is being constantly fed by a steady stream of new people from the Southern States."

—*The New York Age*, 1907

I

The most important factor underlying the establishment of Harlem as a Negro community was the substantial increase of Negro population in New York City in the years 1890–1914. That Harlem became the specific center of Negro settlement was the result of circumstance; that *some* section of the city was destined to become a Negro ghetto was the inevitable consequence of the Negro's migration from the South. This pre-World War I population movement, the advance guard of the Great Migration (as the movement of Negroes during the First World War is generally called), laid the foundations for present-day Negro communities in Chicago and Philadelphia as well. These were the formative years for the development of Negro communities throughout the North.

In spite of the high Negro death rate, the colored population increased by "leaps and bounds"¹ in New York City in the early twentieth century. By 1910 there were 91,709 Negroes in the metropolis,² the majority southern-born: "A Census of the Negroes in any city of the North," said a speaker at the first organizational meeting of the NAACP in 1909, "would show that the majority

of . . . them . . . were more or less recent arrivals from the South."³ Mary White Ovington, in her excellent study *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York*, found that most of the Negro neighborhoods were populated by southerners.⁴ Only 14,309 of the 60,534 Negroes in Manhattan in 1910 were born in New York State. The majority of the others (61 per cent) came from other states, practically all in the South. Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, in perfect geographical order, were the major southern sources of New York's migrant population.⁵

Contemporaries in both the North and South, Negro and white, were aware of this movement. Unable to foresee that the First World War would bring even larger numbers of Negroes northward, they were staggered by the myriad problems this migration created for them: "There are more Southern Negroes in the North and West than original Northern ones, and they are coming all . . . the time," wrote a Negro journalist in 1913. "What to do with the needy and those who fall by the wayside is becoming a problem of the greatest magnitude. . . ."⁶ Historians, impressed by the enormity of changes that occurred at the time of the "Great War," have tended to overlook or underestimate the significance of the pre-World War I migration of Negroes to northern cities.

II

Since the end of the Civil War there was a steady but small movement of Negroes northward. It averaged 41,378 persons for each decade between 1870 and 1890. In the following ten years, however, the migration more than doubled as at least 107,796 southern Negroes moved north and west. The Negro populations of the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois increased some two and a half times between 1890 and 1910 and that of New York almost tripled.⁷ In 1910, New York City was the second largest Negro urban center in America (just behind Washington, D.C.); Philadelphia was fifth; and Chicago eighth. By 1920, they were ranked first, second and fourth respectively. A total of some 200,000 Negroes migrated from the South and to the North and West, primarily to cities, between 1890 and 1910.⁸ In the decade 1900-1910, for the first time since their establishments as states in the early nineteenth century, Mississippi and Louisiana lost Negro population through emigration.⁹ Practically

every southern state showed the first significant deficit in its Negro birth-residence index (the index that measures population increase and decrease through migration) for the decade 1890-1900. "Prior to 1890," observes one student of population movement, "the migration of Negroes was not great and seems to have been local, from state to state, and only to a slight extent out of the South. But after 1890, the northward direction of the movement has been steadfastly maintained and has increased in amount decade after decade."¹⁰ The number of Negroes migrating to the principal southern cities declined significantly in the years 1890-1900. The Negro population in these cities increased 38.7 per cent between 1880 and 1890, but the growth amounted to only 20.6 per cent in the next ten years.¹¹ Northern cities were draining off the residents of, and prospective migrants to, the larger southern cities at the turn of the century.

A few discerning analysts were aware of this new shift in Negro migration in the 1890's. Working with census data, Frederick J. Brown pointed to the new northward migration from the Border States in 1897.¹² In 1898, W. E. B. DuBois noted the decline of Negro population in Farmville, Virginia, and explained it as "a fact due doubtless to the large emigration to Northern cities."¹³ In his pioneering study of Philadelphia Negroes (1899), DuBois showed a significant increase in southern immigration since 1887,¹⁴ and later depicted the "typical colored man" of Philadelphia as a young person "from the South, from twenty to forty years of age. . . ."¹⁵ Similar conclusions were made by a student of New York City's Negro community in 1898,¹⁶ and the United States Department of Labor undertook a detailed analysis of the movement of Negroes to urban areas in these same years.¹⁷

By the first decade of the twentieth century the migration was well recognized: "It needs no long argument to prove the existence of a large movement of Negroes northward," a social scientist recorded in 1905.¹⁸ An entire issue of the social service magazine *Charities* was devoted to a survey of the migration and the problems that arose from it in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁹ New York's leading Negro journal, *The New York Age*, carried innumerable articles in the early 1900's on the "marvelous increase of Afro-American population," "the enormous and steady growth in the Negro population," "the young people in New York City from our

Southern States who are constantly coming,"²⁰ and so on. In 1901 a Negro minister delivered a public lecture on what seemed to him to be "The Wholesale Exodus of the Negro from the South."²¹

This pre-World War I exodus has sometimes been characterized as the "Migration of the Talented Tenth." Politicians, businessmen, the educated, and especially skilled workmen, are supposed to have constituted the majority of people who left the South in these years. Southern Negroes, it has been said, were robbed of their leadership as the talented fled north.²²

It is undoubtedly true that many educated and gifted Negroes did come north then. William Lewis Bulkley, for example, a South Carolinian born a slave, became a principal in the New York school system and a leader of the Negro community during these years. P. B. S. Pinchback, for a time Reconstruction governor of Louisiana and thereafter an active Republican politician, worked in the New York City Custom House a short while. He used the influence of Booker T. Washington and the Negro Republican leader of New York City, Charles W. Anderson, to get the position.²³ Pinchback's friend, J. Ross Stewart, a former member of the Louisiana legislature, worked there too.²⁴ North Carolinian George Henry White, member of Congress 1897-1901, practiced law and became a banker in Philadelphia when Negroes were disfranchised in his state. White later established an all-Negro community in New Jersey.²⁵ T. Thomas Fortune, editor of *The New York Age*, was a Floridian by birth. There were, in fact, *very few* prominent Negroes in New York City in the early twentieth century—lawyers, physicians, businessmen, clergymen, politicians—who were not born in the South.

These people were not typical urban Negro migrants, however. The majority, like all migrant populations, were young people, generally unskilled and unmarried, the earliest Negro generations born in freedom. W. E. B. DuBois described them as "the Southern freedman's sons and daughters," "untrained and poorly educated countrymen, rushing from the hovels of the country or the cottages of the country towns. . . ."²⁶ Most contemporaries spoke of them as such.²⁷

In one group of 240 Negroes interviewed in New York City in 1907, for example, only eighteen were born in New York, and just three of the 222 others were over forty when they migrated. The vast majority were between the ages of fifteen and thirty, and 96 per cent

had arrived in New York City after 1887.²⁸ Another survey of 365 workers found that 68 per cent were born in the South, the largest number single young men and women.²⁹

III

There were as many individual and varied reasons for migration as there were people who moved. The less respectable as well as the educated came north. Negroes themselves characterized some as a "hoodlum element," "rovers," "wanderers," "vagrants," "criminals in search of a sporting life."³⁰ "Many of the worthless people of the race are making their way northward," said *The New York Age* in an editorial.³¹ Some wayward husbands—the "travelin' men" of Negro folk songs—abandoned their families and responsibilities and sought the anonymity of a city: "I was raised in the country, I been there all my life/Lord I had to run off and leave my children and my wife."³²

Others came north on excursion trains to get a look at the big city and never returned.³³ One man "heard so much of this town," he said, "that he decided to look it over." Another stated that he "didn't want to remain in one little place all my days. I wanted to get out and see something of the world."³⁴ Migratory laborers found work on New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York farms every spring and summer. Some traveled back and forth each year; others simply went to the nearest city when winter came.³⁵ "Tired of the South," "Wanted to make a change," "Ran away from home," were some of the reasons advanced by Negroes for coming north.³⁶ All received nominally higher wages in the North, and this was certainly a great attraction. One woman who came to New York City from Virginia, for example, said she was "willing to live anywhere, if the wages were good."³⁷

There were also those who fled social proscription and violence in the South. C. Vann Woodward has described the "Capitulation to Racism" that characterized the southern attitude toward the Negro from the late 1880's through the early twentieth century. Vast numbers of Jim Crow laws were passed in these years as the forces which held virulent southern racism in check suddenly crumbled. The conservative, *noblesse oblige* attitude of former Whig leaders ("it is a mark of breeding to treat Negroes with courtesy") was replaced by a violently racist white supremacy movement; the paternalism of a

Wade Hampton was followed by the viciousness of a Ben Tillman (whose racist tirades even embarrassed his southern colleagues). Free rein was given to mass aggressions as all forces joined together in an active program of "keeping the Negro down." The great heresy that proclaimed the Negro capable of attaining equality with the white had to be rooted out at all costs, it was argued. There were more Negroes lynched, burned, tortured and disfranchised in the late eighties, nineties and first decade of the twentieth century than at any other time in our history. The militant Negro Ida B. Wells graphically and sadly described this *Red Record* in 1895.³⁸ It was not surprising to find that the American Colonization Society, organized in 1817, experienced a long-hoped-for revival in the 1890's,³⁹ and various other plans to colonize Negroes in Africa were rekindled in these years. "I used to love what I thought was the grand old flag, and sing with ecstasy about the stars and stripes," wrote Negro Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of Georgia, "but to the Negro in this country today the American flag is a dirty contemptible rag. . . . Hell is an improvement upon the United States when the Negro is involved." "No man hates this Nation more than I do," Turner said on another occasion. He looked longingly to Africa as the only possible place of Negro freedom.⁴⁰

Negro leaders and the Negro press continually stressed their belief that migration was primarily a movement away from racism: "The large cities of the North and West have had a marvelous increase of Afro-American population in the last ten years, and the increase is growing . . . because of the conditions in the Southern States which make for unrest"; "the terrors of mob wrath."⁴¹ When T. Thomas Fortune, William Lewis Bulkley, and North Carolina educator and politician Edward A. Johnson came north, each emphasized he could no longer live under Jim Crow and racial violence.⁴² George Henry White said he left North Carolina because he "couldn't live there and be a man and be treated like a man." He believed that thousands of others would follow him.⁴³ Booker T. Washington told the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee, in 1903, that "for every lynching that takes place . . . a score of colored people leave . . . for the city."⁴⁴

In general, however, the migration could best be considered not so much a flight from racial violence, as it was a desire for expanded opportunity. This is best summarized in a phrase commonly used by the migrants themselves—the attempt "to better my condition."⁴⁵

People moved away from the South in search of a better and more fulfilling life. A Negro shoemaker came north, for example, because he felt "choked" by the "narrow and petty life" he was forced to lead in a small Virginia town. To him, the great attraction of New York City was the "wider scope allowed the Negro."⁴⁶ One woman who "never could work . . . in a menial way" was proud that she could earn a living as an independent seamstress in New York.⁴⁷ Moving north, wrote DuBois in 1907, offered "the possibility of escaping caste at least in its most aggravating personal features. . . . A certain sort of soul, a certain kind of spirit, finds the narrow repression and provincialism of the South simply unbearable."⁴⁸

Where I come from
folks work hard
all their lives
until they die
and never own no part
of earth nor sky.⁴⁹

The *possibilities* for such movement resulted from two basic changes in American life. One was the overwhelming industrial expansion of the late nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution created economic opportunities for rural people, Negro and white, and both migrated to industrial and urban centers in the North. For the Negro, hedged about by union restrictions and racial antagonism, employment was usually found in the fringe jobs that an industrial and commercial society creates—as janitors, elevator operators, general laborers of all kinds, longshoremen, servants. Negro women almost always worked as domestics. During periods of labor disputes, Negroes were commonly found among the strikebreakers.⁵⁰

There was, however, an added factor that influenced Negro migration and distinguished it from the general rural migration to cities. Why, it might be asked, had Negroes not moved in similar numbers in response to industrialization in the 1870's—the period of great social upheaval and dislocation that followed the destruction of slavery? The answer undoubtedly lies in an understanding of the differences between the slave and post-slave generations. The Negroes who came north now were the first descendants of former slaves. They had listened to tales of slavery, gentle and harsh, but had not experienced and lived its blight—the denial of full manhood.⁵¹ To them, "*War, Hell, and Slavery were but childhood tales. . . .*"⁵² Their parents

and grandparents, psychologically and economically unprepared to enter what contemporaries called the "competition for life," tended to remain as tenants, sharecroppers or laborers on their former plantations or on places similar to them. They continued in freedom to live the only life they had knowledge of. "There were great upheavals in political and labor conditions at the time of emancipation, but there was little shifting in the populations. For the most part, the freedmen stayed on in the states and counties where they had formerly existed as slaves," writes one historian of Negro life.⁵³ In 1900, practically all southern Negroes continued to work on the land and some 75 per cent remained sharecroppers, tenants and laborers.⁵⁴ On one Georgia plantation in 1901, as on others, lived many Negroes who had been slaves there: "I have men," the white owner testified, "who were slaves on the place. . . . They have always lived there and will probably die there, right on the plantation where they were born." "It was predicted [during the Civil War] that the Negroes would leave the . . . fields and fill the towns in case of emancipation," said a southern planter at the turn of the century. "That prediction has not been realized suddenly as we anticipated it would be, but it seems to be approaching."⁵⁵

Those who migrated to the North in the 1890's were a new generation. Many Negroes no longer felt any strong attachment to the soil. They could at least *conceive* of life in a new and different way. For some, the discontented and restless, there was now both the ability and willingness to move. They left a South in which their futures were sealed: "There is absolutely nothing before them on the farm. . . . Working year in and year out with . . . no prospect . . . but to continue until they die."⁵⁶ In many rural communities of the South, it was reported in 1907, a "number of youths have expressed their conviction that since their fathers and mothers have accumulated nothing after years on the land, they did not intend to stay on the plantation to repeat the process."⁵⁷ A leading Republican politician and defender of Negro civil rights, James S. Clarkson, took a trip to the South in the 1890's and "saw many a grey head . . . talking to the young people . . . encouraging the young people to become content," he wrote a Negro confidant.⁵⁸ The migrants who came north were aptly described by George Edmund Haynes as "groping seekers for something better. . . ."⁵⁹

IV

To southerners this seemed to be a different and puzzling kind of Negro—not a people especially educated or skilled, but a group willing to make some change in the traditional patterns of its life. To the stereotype of the docile, irresponsible, immoral, dishonest Negro was now added a new "racial" characteristic—"a migratory disposition."⁶⁰ Philip A. Bruce, Virginia historian, called the "new generations" worthless. They "rarely remain long enough under the supervision of any planter to allow him sufficient time to teach them," he wrote.⁶¹ "Habits of diligence, order, faithfulness"—all the qualities of a good slave—were absent in the "new generation," said another. There exists "a certain unrest and discontent," a white planter commented.⁶² "Under its influence the boys and girls are beginning to drift to the cities." To contrast the supposedly "faithful old darkies" with "the new generation, which has become restless, dissatisfied, and worthless" (and "migrated from the plantations to the cities") was a standard and hackneyed statement found throughout the racial literature of the time.⁶³

This attitude toward the Negro was accepted in popular thought as well: "The superiority of the older farm-hands to the younger generation is so universally asserted throughout the South," wrote Thomas Nelson Page in 1904, "that it must be given some of the validity of general reputation. The Negro has retrograded as a workman," he concluded.⁶⁴ There existed, said a Georgia Negro minister, "among a large number of older people, both white and black, the definite conviction that the present generation of Negroes is hopelessly degenerate. . . ."⁶⁵

Most southern farmers who testified before the United States Industrial Commission in 1899-1901 expressed similar opinions. They spoke of the differences in attitudes between the freed slave and his children. The "good old negroes, as we call them . . . negroes about grown before the war," "old-time negroes" ("before-the-war negroes," they were sometimes called), were touted as the best farm workers and tenants. "The younger ones" are "discontented and want to be roaming." "The older class of colored labor," repeated a West Virginia farmer, "men that are pretty well up in years—are a first rate class of labor. The younger class . . . are . . . very trifling.

. . ." The Negro "is not as steady as he was," thought another. "The South laments to-day the slow, steady disappearance of a certain type of Negro—the faithful, courteous slave of other days, with his dignified . . . humility," W. E. B. DuBois commented at the turn of the century.⁶⁶ "He is passing away just as surely as the old type of Southern gentleman is passing. . . ."

Related to the belief of the emergence of a new and different Negro generation was the revival of scientific attempts to prove the Negro a degraded being. During this same period Darwinism invaded the South (as well as the North) to revive the debate over the place of the Negro in the human community. Arguments strikingly similar to the old proslavery diatribes of natural Negro inferiority were dressed up in the new scientific garb and presented to the public by "objective social scientists" who claimed to be uninfluenced by "preconceived ideas."⁶⁷ The improvident, dishonest, immoral, lazy, lascivious Negro was shown to be incapable of education: "he is a fungus growth that the white man will totally destroy. . . . The only race that has never made any progress in any respect," more similar in mind to the chimpanzee than to man.⁶⁸ The greatest menace and curse to our Anglo-Saxon civilization, some thought, was its pollution with the blood of the "depraved Ethiopian." Aryan supremacy could only be achieved, it was argued, after total separation, by colonization or extermination, of the entire Negro race.⁶⁹

This ideology combined with the reality of Negro migration and encouraged southerners to attempt to replace Negro laborers with European immigrants. The substitution of immigrants for Negroes was an integral part of the philosophy that preached southern progress through industrialization—the New South. It was in these very years that the South attempted to rejuvenate its efforts, first begun in Reconstruction, to attract European immigrants.⁷⁰ State immigration bureaus were created and offices established in the principal port cities to direct the newest arrivals to southern farms. Southern emigration agents were even sent abroad.⁷¹ There was more myth than reality in the conception of a New South—a South where factories were to spring up "like stars after twilight."⁷² The movement to encourage settlement of immigrants to replace Negro labor was an almost total failure.⁷³

This reality presented southerners with a major paradox. The new generation of Negroes seemed unreliable (even inhuman) and yet,

at the same time, it was also clearly recognized that the southern economy was largely dependent upon them: "I think the Negro is a necessity in the South as a farm laborer," stated a South Carolinian. "*We have no other. . . .*" "I do not know how the South could live without negro labor," a Georgia plantation owner said. "It is the life of the South; it is the foundation of its prosperity. . . . God pity the day when the negro leaves the South. . . ."⁷⁴ "Think twice, before committing the State to a policy which may strip the land of its best . . . laborers," editorialized a North Carolina newspaper opposed to European immigration.⁷⁵ In the minds of most southerners, Negroes seemed racially adapted to agricultural life, permanently tied to the soil. To forsake farm life would necessarily lead to their degradation. This was their only "proper calling," their "proper place."⁷⁶

Negro farmers in the South cultivated twice as much acreage as did all the farmers in New England combined. Nearly one-half of all farms under fifty acres in the South Atlantic states and one-fourth of those between fifty and one hundred were operated by Negroes. Negroes were also the most important farm laborers throughout the South.⁷⁷

If Negroes began leaving the South in great numbers, Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts predicted, "there would be a general alarm on the part of the men who now depend on their labor, and they would find themselves pretty earnestly solicited to change their minds."⁷⁸ It was the reality of this practical dependence on Negro farm labor that produced a series of laws limiting the free movement of Negro workers and tenants and heavily taxing all labor agents sent south to "entice" them away. From the late 1880's through the first decade of the twentieth century such legislation was passed in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee and Virginia.⁷⁹ Southern courts generally interpreted these laws for the benefit of the white farm owner, forcing Negro workers to remain on the land. The Department of Justice in 1907, for example, received eighty-three complaints from Negroes protesting what they considered to be their practical peonage.⁸⁰ Although the Supreme Court outlawed peonage in 1911, the practice continued through subterfuge for decades. (As late as 1947 the President's Committee on Civil Rights documented a case of forced labor.)⁸¹

Exaggerated accounts of the destitute conditions of migrants were commonly published in the press and every hint of failure was described as destitution. The high Negro mortality rate in northern cities was presented as absolute proof that the Negro could not live in cold climates: "they will take colds and develop pneumonia and consumption . . . and will die there."⁸² The Southern Negro Anti-Exodus Association was founded in Virginia in 1905 to "preach the gospel of contentment to the colored people South of Mason and Dixon's line. . . ." When a labor agent was arrested in Georgia, an editorial in the *Age* said: "If there is one thing the Southern man preaches all the time it is that the young Negro is worthless and is not to be mentioned in the same breath with the older. . . . The young Negro is pictured as worthless and a general nuisance that has been tolerated too long. . . . But as yet no one can be found to deny the cold fact that this agent was arrested to put a stop to the exodus. . . . In spite of all this talk, there is a desire to keep the Negro help in the South."⁸³

These reactions were a reflection of a basic dichotomy in southern thought. On the one hand, it was believed that the Negro was worthless, inefficient, untrustworthy, less faithful than the slave. The failure to use improved agricultural machinery and in industrialization in general was often blamed on his ignorance.⁸⁴ On the other hand, the Negro was encouraged to remain in the South (and sometimes forced to do so) as the only source of labor available—"the backbone of the South when it comes to labor"; "the best labor we could have in the South."⁸⁵ With the failure of attempts to attract European immigrants the reliance of the South on Negro farmers and laborers became even more evident. In reality, Southern society fundamentally distrusted the very people it seemed most hopelessly dependent upon. It was caught in a vise of restricting the migration of Negroes who, at the same time, were looked upon with the utmost disdain, even denied fully human qualities. This paradox in southern thought provided a seedbed for bitter racial antagonism. It added an emotionalism to the racial hatreds of these years that make them stand out, above all others, as a period of great violence.

V

Most of the Negro migrants who came to New York City prior to the 1930's settled in Manhattan. The Negro population of that borough increased by 24,288 between 1900 and 1910, whereas that of

Brooklyn expanded by 4,341. Seventy-eight per cent of the city's industry was located in Manhattan in the early twentieth century and the migrants filled many of the unskilled jobs that these factories created.⁸⁶

The typical Negro migrant to the metropolis originally came from some rural area in the South. Most grew up on farms or in small southern towns. In 1913 a study was made of thirty-five Negroes in Harlem. Thirty-four came from the rural South, and only one grew up in a town whose population exceeded 10,000. Of the twenty-one born on farms, only three were children of parents who owned their land outright. The others were sons and daughters of sharecroppers and farm laborers. The majority of Negroes in this group were indirect migrants—they had lived in some large town or city for a time before coming to New York. All but four were presently employed as domestics, servants or laborers.⁸⁷ Similar findings were made in other surveys of northern cities.⁸⁸

Among the immigrants who settled in New York City were young women who came north on what were sometimes called "Justice's Tickets."⁸⁹ These were tickets supplied to them by employment and labor agents. In exchange for transportation and the guarantee of a job on arrival, the women signed contracts to work where the agent placed them and swore to pay a fee usually equal to one or two months' wages. These employment agents thus collected money from both employers and workers. The following is a typical labor contract:

In consideration of my expenses being paid from Richmond to _____ and a situation provided for me, I agree to give _____ services after arrival as _____ to party or persons paying my expenses. And I further agree that all my personal effects may be subject to their order until I have fulfilled that contract, forfeiting all claims to said personal effects after sixty days after this date should I fail to comply with agreement.⁹⁰

Social service organizations founded to assist Negroes in the city were vitally interested in protecting these girls from "the agents with oily tongues [who] come about and offer flattering inducements. . . ."⁹¹ "Many of them," concluded one report, "are brought from the South, consigned like merchandise to Northern agents." Trunks, "slender satchels," clothing, trinkets—personal possessions of all

kinds—were often kept as security until fees were paid.⁹² Migrants commonly complained of extortionate charges and generally shoddy treatment.⁹³

These women who worked as domestics and most of the Negroes who came to the city prior to World War I made the trip on boats that ran along the Atlantic Coast. "Negroes," observed one man in 1898, "are coming on every boat from southern waters." "Nobody knows how it happened," an old resident of the Tenderloin recalled, "but [on] every old Dominion Steamship that docked there [were] from two to three hundred negroes landed in New York."⁹⁴ This was the cheapest means of transportation from the South, and New York's migrant population was, and would continue to be, primarily composed of Virginians or people from states bordering the Atlantic. Steerage fare, with meals, from Norfolk or Richmond cost \$5.50 or \$6.00—the approximate equivalent of a week's wages in New York City. Cabin fares were \$9.00. The Old Dominion Steamship Company (migrants called it the "O.D. Line") had a bi-weekly service between Virginia and New York. The Baltimore, Chesapeake and Atlantic Railway ran steamers from Washington and Baltimore, and others went as far south as Florida. Many of the waiters and seamen on these ships were Negroes, some of whom lived in New York City.⁹⁵ Negroes were generally berthed in separate quarters, ate at separate tables, and were served food inferior to that given white passengers. Some migrants complained that, besides these indignities, the Negro sections of the boats were also reserved for the dogs and pets of other travelers.⁹⁶

It was common practice for migrants, who lived within a day's journey of their former homes, to shuttle back and forth for regular visits. If European immigrants found the Atlantic no great barrier to such journeys (as evidenced by what contemporaries called the "birds of passage"), the Negro migrant was even less restricted by distance and cost. Practically every issue of *The New York Age* carried some report of such movement: "R. C. Turner the barber, is back in the city after two months' vacation to his old home, Hillsboro, North Carolina"; "Mrs. Mary E. Swan . . . has gone to Virginia to bury her niece. . . . She will soon return."⁹⁷ Many migrants wrote home of their supposedly glowing successes in the North. Some returned to their birthplaces dressed in the latest fashion, pockets full of cash, to tell the rural folk of their exploits. George Edmund Haynes described

"the exaggerated stories of prosperity which relatives and friends in these cities write to friends at home and the prosperity shown by those returning home in their display of clothes and cash."⁹⁸ Negro students and teachers from the South regularly came to study in New York City during their summer vacations. Some attended the summer session at Columbia University and lived in segregated quarters in Hartley Hall. Others came in search of summer jobs, lived at the Negro YMCA and YWCA, saved their money and returned south when school began: "New York is . . . crowded with a host of young men and women students from . . . southern schools. . . . These young [people] come North every season and work. . . ."⁹⁹

For those who remained permanently, the city was a strange and often hostile place—it was so noisy and unfriendly, so cold, so full of "temptations and moral perils," a "pernicious influence," a "fast and wicked place." "Many of those who have come North complain of cold and chills from the like of which they had not previously suffered," wrote one scholar.¹⁰⁰ The oft-told tale of the sale of the Brooklyn Bridge to the rural hayseed had a basis in fact. One naive migrant wanted to know how it was done: "I heard about 'selling the Brooklyn Bridge,' " he said, "and I wondered how it was sold, and asked questions about it."¹⁰¹ In 1902 Paul Laurence Dunbar published a novel, *The Sport of the Gods*, which described the dissolution and eventual destruction of a southern Negro family in the "fast life" of the "great alleys of New York."¹⁰² Southern Negroes were commonly subject to intraracial as well as interracial prejudice.

Confronted with this estrangement and antagonism many migrants banded together to try to retain as much contact with the patterns of their former lives as possible:

I'm a poor boy and I'm a stranger blowed in your town,
Yes I am,
I'm a poor boy and I'm a stranger blowed in your town,
I'm a poor boy and I'm a stranger blowed in your town,
I'm goin' where a friend can be found.¹⁰³

Negroes, foreign-born and native, established benevolent, fraternal and protective societies to keep up old friendships and provide insurance for themselves and families in sickness and death. The vast majority of New York's Negro population belonged to insurance and fraternal societies. The largest Negro insurance company of Virginia, the True Reformers, had a branch office in the city.¹⁰⁴ Prior to

World War I, New York City had its Sons and Daughters of South Carolina, Sons of North Carolina, Sons of Virginia, Sons of the South, Southern Beneficial League. When one North Carolinian was appointed Assistant District Attorney of New York County a celebration was given for him "in the fullness of the North Carolinian pride."¹⁰⁶ Storefront churches revived the spirit of southern preaching. These and other churches held special services and celebrations in honor of communicants from individual southern states. There were regular South Carolina days, Virginia days, and so on.¹⁰⁶ When the World War drew migrants in greater numbers from the Deep South and the West Indies, new societies were founded by Floridians, Georgians and the varieties of West Indians.

The entire Negro community of New York City took on a southern flavor. Businesses expanded to service the wants of a growing population: "The great influx of Afro-Americans into New York City within recent years from all parts of the South has made . . . possible a great number and variety of business enterprises," editorialized *The New York Age* in 1907.¹⁰⁷ Negro restaurants, undertaking establishments, saloons, barbershops—the plethora of small businesses necessary to satisfy a community's needs—catered to the newcomers. Restaurants advertised special "southern-style" breakfasts and dinners. Negro grocers specialized in Virginia fruits, vegetables and chickens. Migrants asked friends to send them special southern delicacies.¹⁰⁸

New York was also the center of Negro philanthropy.¹⁰⁹ The offices of the Armstrong Association which supported Hampton Institute, the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee, Rockefeller's General Education Board, the Phelps-Stokes Foundation and the John F. Slater Fund were all located in the city. Many wealthy New Yorkers contributed individually to the support of southern Negro schools. Southern ministers and educators arrived in town regularly in search of financial assistance. Many of the clergymen preached "southern-style" sermons in local Negro churches that were "not soon forgotten." Southern Negro school principals, including Booker T. Washington in the 1890's, held mass meetings "to request race support." Fisk University Jubilee Singers and the Hampton Quartet came north to give concerts. "As the recently arrived Richmonder meanders along," commented one man, he "recognizes so many familiar faces [that] he readily concludes there is some . . . relationship between his city and this."¹¹⁰

Migration to the city created possibilities for economic mobility that were largely absent from southern life. Many of the businesses which provided services for Negroes were owned by migrants themselves. Some recent arrivals began as small entrepreneurs but made modest fortunes in a relatively short time.

Perhaps the most interesting and among the most successful was Lillian Harris, born in a shanty on the Mississippi Delta in 1870. She came north as a teenager and, in 1901, after having knocked around many northern cities for a decade, hitched her way from Boston to New York City on hay, milk and vegetable wagons. Miss Harris had \$5.00, and with this capital went into business. She spent \$3.00 for an old baby carriage and boiler and \$2.00 for pigs' feet. This was the beginning of her career as New York's most widely known Negro peddler. Her converted buggy became a "traveling restaurant."

Hawking her wares in Negro sections, specializing in southern cooking (hog-maws, chitterlings), Lillian Harris was popularly called "Pig Foot Mary." She lived in a tiny room and scrimped and saved for years: "Saving for a respectable old age," she always said. When Negroes began moving to Harlem this astute street-corner saleswoman grasped at opportunity and invested her savings in Harlem property. By the First World War "Pig Foot Mary" (now Mrs. Lillian H. Dean) was a wealthy landlord—"one of the wealthiest women in Harlem"; "one of the most successful colored business women in New York." "Send it and send it damn quick," she wrote tenants who fell behind in their rent. "Pig Foot Mary" spent her "respectable old age" in retirement in California, where she died in 1929.¹¹¹

William Mack Felton was another southern Negro who made good in New York. He arrived in the city in 1898 with a dollar tucked away in his shoe: "Heeding the call to the Big City," he said. Felton grew up on a small farm in Georgia with little opportunity for formal education. He was naturally bright, however, and gifted with mechanical ability. When he came to New York he worked as a longshoreman long enough to save some money to open a repair shop. The first big job that came his way called for the repair of dozens of clocks left in a Manhattan pawnshop. Most of them had simply stopped running because they had picked up dust and dirt lying around the shelves. Felton realized this, bought a large washtub, filled it with gallons of kerosene and oil and cleaned all the stripped-down clocks in one day. He used this same ingenuity to fix watches,

pistols, bicycles—anything that needed repairing. In 1901, when wealthy New Yorkers began to buy the new automobile, Felton opened an auto school and garage. He later invented a device that washed cars automatically. By 1913 his Auto Transportation and Sales Company employed fifteen people and was housed in a seven-story building which he owned. Felton rode back to Georgia in his new car to visit his family and old friends and tell them of life in the "Big City."¹¹²

Success came to other southern migrants who arrived in New York City in these years. Madame C. J. Walker, born in Louisiana in 1867, was a laundress before she discovered a hair-straightening process (the "Walker System") which brought her great fortune. In 1913 she built a mansion for herself on West One Hundred and Thirty-sixth Street and four years later built a magnificent country estate, Villa Lewaro, in exclusive Irvington-on-the-Hudson.¹¹³ H. C. Haynes, formerly a southern barber, founded a company which manufactured razor strops; Edward E. Lee, a Virginian, was Negro Democratic leader of New York County for fifteen years; J. Franklin Smallwood became chief collector of the State Bank of New York; J. S. Montague ran a mortgage and loan company on Wall Street; Ferdinand Q. Morton, of Macon, Mississippi, was prominent in Democratic politics and ruled "Black Tammany" from the First World War through the Great Depression.¹¹⁴

Practically all of these migrants were born in the direst southern poverty and achieved their positions, as the Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., later wrote, "Against the Tide."¹¹⁵ Very few southern Negroes had such fortune, however. The majority of those who came to New York City ended in the ranks of the poor and swelled the slum populations of the Tenderloin, San Juan Hill or Harlem. To many northern Negroes, who had never known or had since forgotten the restrictive conditions in the South, the life of the typical migrant seemed no great improvement on his former condition.

The average Negro migrant to New York City obviously found life harsh and difficult. For those who came, however, conditions in the North did offer a measure of self-respect and the possibility for future advancement that was generally denied the Negro in the South. "To many of them oppressed within the limitations set up by the South," wrote Ray Stannard Baker, "it is indeed the promised land."¹¹⁶

Alienation: New York and the Negro

"And the Nation echoed . . . : Be content to be servants, and nothing more; what need of higher culture for half-men."

—W. E. B. DuBois, 1903

"This is a mass in the midst of . . . an alien and hostile people."

—*Harper's Weekly*, 1900

I

For the Negroes of New York City the years after 1900 marked not only a new century but a breaking point in a way of life. As the Negro population of New York and other northern cities increased, so did racial antagonism, violence and patterns of social and residential segregation. "One of the striking developments of very recent years," one white northerner noted in 1906, "is the recrudescence of . . . prejudice against people of African descent. . . ."¹

At no period in the history of New York City were Negroes accepted as full American citizens. Restrictions on Negro voting, equal access to public facilities and education were maintained even after emancipation was proclaimed in the early nineteenth century. Jim Crow street stages, with "For Colored People Only" signs hung over their sides, ran along Manhattan streets until the eve of the Civil War. Colored people sat in special Negro pews (whites called them "Nigger Pews") or in the balconies of white churches: "Negroes were not permitted to sit in any public assembly, court or church, except in the particular quarter set apart for them, [and] generally in the most remote and worst situation." In 1837, *The Colored American* denounced the "Negro Pew" as a technique which whites used to degrade Negroes.² The only minority group to suffer franchise re-

strictions in the state was the Negro. Negroes were forced to meet property qualifications for voting after these had been abolished for all other New Yorkers in 1821, and they were further subject to longer residential requirements for voting than whites.³ Although racial prejudice was never absent from city life, it was not always uniformly intense. The attitudes of New Yorkers toward Negroes—sometimes eased, at other times hardened—wavered with national trends of racial adjustment.

In the late nineteenth century, and especially in the 1870's and 1880's, most northern communities made significant progress in attacking *institutionalized* racial prejudice. Laws were passed in most state legislatures, including New York's, which attempted to guarantee equal rights for Negroes. The motivating force for this liberal attitude toward the Negro was undoubtedly a spirit for racial reform which came in the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Serious restrictions on Negro rights that had existed in some form since colonial times were done away with. In New York State, Negroes were given the right to vote without impediment by the Civil Rights Act of 1873, and this was followed by two other civil rights acts before the end of the century. New legislation permitted Negroes to travel on transportation facilities, attend theaters, eat at restaurants, and be buried in all cemeteries which served the public. Acts which had previously outlawed intermarriage were repealed, and insurance companies were specifically prohibited from charging Negroes rates higher than those paid by white clients.⁴ The first Negro to serve as a juryman in Manhattan did so in the 1880's.⁵ In 1884, the last three Negro public schools in the city were made ward schools, thus ending the tradition of separate education which had existed in New York City since the eighteenth century. In 1895 the first permanent appointment of a Negro teacher to a predominantly white public school was made. Susan Elizabeth Frazier, a graduate of Hunter College, won an extended legal battle with the school board. After Miss Frazier's breakthrough other Negroes received similar appointments. Statewide, the *coup de grâce* to separate Negro education came through a general education act passed in 1900.⁶

Negro and white people in New York were aware of the change in racial status typified by these acts. Cases of discrimination in public places continued to occur,⁷ but it was generally recognized that significant progress was made in the area of race relations subject to

law since the end of the Civil War. Jacob A. Riis commented on the "wavering color line" in New York City in 1890,⁸ and Samuel R. Scottron later wrote of the "decline of color prejudice" in these years.⁹ When southern Negro politicians passed through New York City in the 1880's they lived in the most exclusive hotels. P. B. S. Pinchback regularly stayed at the Hoffman House, John Mercer Langston at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, John R. Lynch at the Metropolitan Hotel.¹⁰ The Negro *New York Freeman*, in an 1887 editorial, said that "Now in many of the best restaurants, hotels and churches decent colored people receive courteous treatment."¹¹ "Respectable colored men have little trouble in finding accommodations in the very best hotels," a Negro New Yorker indicated in the 1880's.¹² It was the easing of racial tensions in the North in these years that rekindled the traditional drive of the Negro middle class for total acceptance as Americans, not Negroes, within our society: "From the earliest times the attitude of the free negroes has been opposed to any organization or the segregation of the negroes as such," W. E. B. DuBois wrote in 1901. "Men like Fortune, McCune Smith, and Redmond [*sic*] insisted that they were American citizens, not negroes. . . ."¹³

II

In spite of the attack on institutionalized discrimination, however, there was very little (if any) change in the stereotyped conception of the Negro that most white Americans held. With rare exception, even in the North during the late nineteenth century, there was general agreement on what contemporaries called the "peculiar genius" of the Negro people.¹⁴ The stereotyped image of the "sensuous," "lazy," "good-natured," "childlike," "faithful" Negro was presented by defenders as well as critics of the race—both Negro and white. The literature of the time abounds with relevant examples of this image. A New York rabbi, for example, in a sermon at Temple Emanu-El in 1906, attacked the vicious racism embodied in the Reverend Thomas Dixon, Jr.'s, novel, *The Clansman*. (Dixon's trilogy on race relations, of which *The Clansman* was a part, was the basis for the successful movie *The Birth of a Nation*, a film which Negroes have protested against for five decades.)¹⁵ The rabbi defended "the faithful, loyal Negro—his humor, his pathos, his geniality, his shrewdness, his love of his master . . . his sympathy and charity, his even childlike patriotism, and love of freedom."¹⁶ An Episcopal clergyman advo-

cated the extension of church services to Negroes in the city in 1884: "The negro is exacting," he said, "therefore, let the Church . . . arouse him. If he is emotional, let the Church meet these emotions with a lively service, and thus subdue them. The negro is imitative," he concluded.¹⁷ Train and hire Negro workers and they will always be loyal and never strike, a southern Negro educator told a group of northern businessmen in 1902: "Look at the great strikes you are having, and every time you have to make concessions," he said. "But if you educate this million and a half colored boys and girls and make skilled laborers of them they will take the place of these strikers."¹⁸ "The negroes are . . . good-natured and happy under all circumstances," concluded a late-nineteenth-century writer.¹⁹

Negroes of prominence of New York City were often considered dark counterparts of white leaders. The Negro abolitionist Samuel Ringgold Ward was popularly known as a "Black Daniel Webster" prior to the Civil War.²⁰ After the war, a well-known Negro singer was called "Black Patti," and another "Colored Jenny Lind."²¹ Three local colored politicians were respectively: "Black Depew," "Colored Croker," Negro "Mark Hanna."²²

Popular images of the Negro were portrayed to New Yorkers in the numerous vaudeville and minstrel shows which regularly appeared in the city. New York City was the theater capital of America at the turn of the century and Negro vaudeville reached the height of its popularity then.²³ Many of the performances, including the Creole shows which specialized in presenting scantily clad and beautiful Negro women, were hits.²⁴ The hackneyed themes running almost without exception through all these plays were, in exaggerated form, a reflection of the generally accepted attitudes of white America toward Negro life. For the most part, they presented a comic and derisive caricature of an entire people: "The 'darker' to the white man is grotesquely amusing," Mary White Ovington wrote.²⁵

The Negro of these plays was a ludicrous figure of a man—he was "darker," he was "coon." Williams and Walker, for example, were billed as the "Two Real Coons."²⁶ Such plays as the *Gentlemen Coons' Parade* (Chorus: "You'll find no common second-class nigs/ In the gentlemen coons' parade"), *The Coon at the Door*, *The Coon Musketeers*, *Dat Famous Chicken Debate* ("Resolved, That Stealing Chickens Ain't No Crime"), *Dat Watermillion*, *The Coonville 'Ristocrat Club*, *The Coon and the Chink*, *Jes' Like White Folks*, *The*

Irishman and the Coon, *The Policy Players*, *The Sons of Ham*, *In Bandanna Land*, *In Dahomey*, *In Abyssinia* and dozens of others were performed on the stage in New York City and cities throughout the country.²⁷ Songs such as "All Coons Look Alike to Me," "Coon, Coon, Coon," "I Wish My Color Would Fade," had "wide currency" in New York City in the 1890's. "It was no longer the 'darkey melody' [that was popular in the 1890's] but the 'coon song.'" New York historian Henry Collins Brown noted. These songs presented a "ribald school of 'babies,' 'honies,' mercenary wenches . . . and sundry 'no account niggers.'" ²⁸ Characters like "Useless Peabody," "George Washington Jones," "Moses Abraham Highbrow," "John Jacob Astor House" (crushed silk hat, big bow tie, long white gloves, worn-out shoes), were always about to steal a chicken or a watermelon, or pretending to be something they were not. "Sam Lightfoot," the waiter in *Badly Sold*, changed his attitudes to suit the customer, or lied to get a bigger tip.²⁹ "Careless Cupid" applied for a job in a bakery and listed the following qualifications to his prospective employer: "I kin eat an' I kin sleep, and de res' ob de time jes' lay round. Say, boss, whar's yo lounge? I's gettin' tired standin' yere. . . . I'm a straight out nigger, I am, yessir."³⁰ Sam Caesar, Pompey Ducklegs, Julius Crow, Doolittle Black, were waiters, porters, servants, butlers, confidence men, who shuffled along in baggy pants, liberally used ungrammatical language, loved whiskey, shot dice, seemed eternally shiftless or carefree. The covers of *Denison's Black-Face Series* showed a broadly smiling, white-toothed Negro woman whose hair was always tied with white bows and curlers, or a white-haired old Negro man strumming on a banjo. James Weldon Johnson, who was personally involved in the production of some of these shows in New York City, summed up the themes that ran throughout them: "The Negro songs then the rage were known as 'coon songs,'" he wrote, "and were concerned with jamborees of various sorts and the play of razors, with the gastronomical delights of chicken, pork chops and watermelon, and with the experiences of red-hot 'mamas' and their never too faithful 'papas.' These songs were for the most part crude, raucous, bawdy, often obscene."³¹

Many Negroes seriously objected to these ludicrous characterizations of Negro life. "It is humiliating to be regarded as a curiosity," wrote one man in 1895. *The New York Age* angrily denounced

"plays which burlesque the character of a people and tend to degrade them in the estimation of their fellow citizens." It proposed that they "be prohibited."³² Negro performers attempted to gain recognition for themselves as true artists, not hacks, but they were unable to convince theater managers that anything but the standard fare was profitable: "Every show had to be studied carefully for anything that might offend white prejudices. . . ."³³ In speaking of his friend Bert Williams, the most famous Negro comic of the early twentieth century (whites called him "the darky comedian"), James Weldon Johnson later wrote that he expressed "only certain conceptions about Negro life that his audience was willing to accept and ready to enjoy."³⁴ "My job," said Bert Williams simply, "is to make them laugh."³⁵

Why should the world be otherwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.³⁶

What was most striking about the Negro stereotype was the way it portrayed a people in an image so totally the reverse of what Americans considered worthy of emulation and recognition. The major and traditional American values were all absent from the Negro stereotype. The Negro was conceived of as lazy in an ambitious culture; improvident and sensuous in a moralistic society; happy in a sober world; poor in a nation that offered riches to all who cared to take them; childlike in a country of men. He seemed more fit to be a servant, a "half man," than anything else: "And the Nation echoed . . . : Be content to be servants, and nothing more; what need of higher culture for half-men."³⁷ "Let the Negro learn," said a *New York Times* editorial in 1900, "to clean stables, care for horses, feed and harness and drive them, run lawn mowers, make and keep gardens, and also keep engagements. . . ."³⁸ Negroes hoped for full acceptance in a culture which mocked their aspirations.³⁹

III

With the increased migration of Negroes from the South, the brighter side of race relations in the city—the softening of institutionalized prejudices—came to an end. Among white people, Kelly Miller remarked in 1906, there was a "prevailing dread of an overwhelming influx from the South."⁴⁰ Even during the late nineteenth century

Negroes argued that most white northerners knew little, and cared even less, about Negro life: "The Northern white man knows practically nothing of the Negro; he is looked upon more as a problem than as a factor in the general weal, with the same desires, passions, hopes, ambitions as other human creatures," a journalist concluded.⁴¹ "Do we ever think of how such people live?" a reviewer of Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods* wrote. "It is a . . . whole stratum of society of which all of us are densely ignorant and of whose very existence most of us are wholly unaware."⁴² As the population increased, however, the city became more aware of its Negro residents, and responded by reversing the trend in formal race relations that had typified the 1870's and 1880's. The early twentieth century in New York City and in the North generally was a period of intensified racial alienation.

Racial antagonism was rekindled in a variety of ways. White churches, for example, which had formerly allowed small numbers of Negroes to participate in regular services, now attempted to ease their Negro members out: "In each of these churches when the number of Negro communicants was small the colored brother was accorded a hearty welcome, but as the Negro population steadily increased . . . from the white members would be heard generous suggestions that the Negro members get a place of worship of their own."⁴³ An Episcopal church in the area of San Juan Hill resolved its problem by holding separate services for Negroes.⁴⁴ Once the Negro population of Harlem expanded, the pastor of one white church told Negro members they were "Not Welcome," and then gave them an ultimatum to join one of the Negro institutions moving into the neighborhood: "When there were few black and colored communicants in the Harlem district the white . . . churches received them," a Negro *New Yorker* observed in 1913. "Of late years conditions have greatly changed. . . ."⁴⁵ "Trinity Vestry, in New York City, is making arrangements to provide a separate place of worship for the colored members," the NAACP journal *Crisis* recorded in 1914. "At present all worship at the same place."⁴⁶

The separation that was evident in the churches was true of many other areas of racial contact in the city. When the "Colored Men's YMCA" was opened on West Fifty-third Street, it was taken for granted that Negroes would use these facilities exclusively rather than those Y's which catered to white people.⁴⁷ White fraternal organiza-

tions brought suit against Negro societies which used the same names.⁴⁸ The New York State Boxing Commission outlawed bouts between Negro and white fighters, and American society longed for a "White Hope" to defeat Negro heavyweight champion Jack Johnson.⁴⁹ There were innumerable legal suits brought by Negroes against white hotels, restaurants and theaters for refusing them service in the early twentieth century: "Northern Negroes believe this discrimination in public places against the black man [is] increasing in New York," Mary White Ovington noted.⁵⁰ Union restrictions and racial barriers in industry were so widespread that Negroes were largely excluded from "employment along lines other than those of beggarly paid menials."⁵¹ As a result of these exclusions, the urban Negro continually represented a large group of unemployed workers readily available for strikebreaking: "In this matter of excluding colored men from unions, skilled mechanics must remember that they run the risk of building up in the United States a great body of justly indignant and always available STRIKE BREAKERS," a white journalist wrote in 1910. In 1895, 1904, 1907, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1916 and 1920 Negro strikebreakers were used to help break strikes of New York City longshoremen, laborers, street cleaners, baggage handlers, hod carriers, waiters, and garment workers.⁵² There was even an unsuccessful attempt in 1910 to re-establish the state law barring intermarriage. The proposed "Act to Amend the Domestic Relations Law, in Relation to Miscegenation," proposed to void all marriages "*contracted between a person of white or Caucasian race and a person of the negro or black race.*"⁵³ Negroes organized to oppose these new "Black Codes."⁵⁴ Assemblymen were urged to defeat the miscegenation bill. It was, a Negro New Yorker thought, but one part of a general "sentiment . . . that would 'Jim Crow' us at every turn, and that sentiment is growing in this State."⁵⁵ Negro Harlem was created in these years. It was a world within a world that reflected the subtle and radical changes then taking place in many areas of life in major cities of the North.

Was there any solution to the problems created by the migration and the intensified racial hatreds? With almost no exception the only opinion that was publicly stated was that it was necessary to convince Negroes their proper place was in the South. Booker T. Washington made a tour of the tenement districts of New York City in 1904. One journalist said that his trip would be of great value because Washing-

ton could then return south and describe the poverty he saw. He would tell the "country negroes [to remain] on the farms in the South rather than [come] to an overcrowded city" where they certainly would die.⁵⁶ "Northern men visiting southern colored industrial schools advise[d] the pupils to remain where they [were]," a white reformer noted in 1910.⁵⁷

IV

The migration of southern Negroes also created antagonisms which were intraracial in nature. Negroes who had lived in the city for generations, especially those who gloried in the easing of racial tensions during the late nineteenth century, blamed the southern migrant for reversing this trend. Similar antagonisms were evident among most immigrant groups—Jews, Italians, Greeks, and others—when earlier generations seemed overwhelmed by the problems of later arrivals from their countries. Negroes of "the old Knickerbocker stamp," "the old time aristocracy bearing Knickerbocker names" ("the best people," "aristocratic dark race circles"), some of whom were members of the Negro Society of the Sons of New York, railed against the lower-class southern Negro with the virulence of good white racists: "The taint of slavery was far removed from these people," Mary White Ovington remarked, and they "looked with scorn upon arrivals from the South."⁵⁸ "These people are thoroughly embarrassed by the raucousness, vulgarity, and violence with which they find themselves surrounded," a Negro clergyman concluded. "They do everything possible to disassociate themselves from it." Middle-class Negroes in Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston reacted in a similar manner.⁵⁹

To many New York Negroes the migrants were "riff-raff," "illiterate," "thoughtless," "lazy," "overdemonstrative," "boastful," "uncouth," "undesirable," "common." It was the southerner, they said, who created the "epidemic of negrophobia," the recent "spread of race antipathy in the North."⁶⁰ They listened too readily to "Tramp Preachers," and were too dirty—they were "the low element to our race . . . the class who own a lot of dirty rags and dogs and crowds of children," a correspondent of Booker T. Washington said.⁶¹ The "Old Settlers" struck out against "the lower masses of their people" with an automatic, instinctive drive for "self-defense and self-preservation," DuBois wrote.⁶² "We have too much unwarranted

criticism to fight to be handicapped in this way," a Negro New Yorker complained in 1905.⁶³

God knows
We have our troubles, too—
One trouble is you:
you talk too loud,
look too black,
don't get anywhere,
and sometimes it seems
you don't even care.⁶⁴

The only solution that these people had to offer was basically the one that white New Yorkers proposed—keep the migrants in the South. In the 1880's, prior to any significant migration, *The New York Age* encouraged Negroes to flee the social and economic proscriptions of the South: "Why should they not seek in other sections to better their social, material and civil condition," it said. When migrants came in larger numbers, however, the *Age* changed its tune: "It will well repay them to consider whether it will not be better to bear some of the ills they now do, than fly to others they know not of." "We believe the South is the best place for the great masses of the Afro-American people."⁶⁵ This same theme was emphasized and re-emphasized in a whole spate of articles, editorials and speeches printed in Negro journals in the years preceding the First World War. The interracial Committee for the Industrial Improvement of the Condition of the Negro in New York, established in 1906, sent circular letters to southern newspapers, churches and schools discouraging any thoughts of migration to New York City.⁶⁶ Kelly Miller and Booker T. Washington wrote numerous articles on "The Farm" as the "Negro's Best Chance," and on the evils and destructiveness of life in northern cities. Only "country life" and "working on the soil" would "uplift" the Negro, it was argued. "There should be organized . . . a bureau of information which should furnish the masses of the race . . . accurate knowledge of the evil of indiscriminate influx to the North," Miller thought.⁶⁷ But "even while they exclaimed," Paul Laurence Dunbar said, "they knew there was no way, and that the stream of young negro life would continue to flow up from the South. . . ." ("I was born and raised in the country/But Mamma I'm stayin' in town.")⁶⁸

V

This negative view of the migration expressed by Negroes and whites was felt most intensely in the working-class districts of the city into which migrants moved. Interracial conflicts became so common at the turn of the century, it will be remembered, that San Juan Hill was named as a parody on them. Small but regular clashes ordinarily involving Negroes and the Irish were recorded in the New York press then. The antagonism between these two peoples was undoubtedly one of the harshest intergroup hatreds in American history. The deep strain of nativism that traditionally runs through American Negro thought was especially evident during this period of overwhelming foreign immigration. The Negro, born in the United States, commonly expressed his antagonism for foreigners in general and for the Irish immigrant in particular: "It is to be regretted," the Negro journalist John E. Bruce said, "that in this land of Bibles where the outcasts—the scum of European society—can come and enjoy the fullest social and political privileges, the Native Born American with woolly hair and dark complexion is made the Victim . . . of Social Ostracism." Such statements as "These low-foreheaded, beetle-browed fellows . . . driven from Europe"; "tens of thousands of aliens are being landed on these shores and freely given the employment which is denied Negro citizens"; "his brogue was so heavy it sounded like he had marbles in his mouth"; "the time is upon us when some restriction will have to be placed upon the volume and character of European immigration," were written by Negroes. A Negro journal spoke of "the open dislike of the Irish and colored people. . . ." One man put it tersely. Whatever the Negro is, he said, "he is no hyphenate."⁶⁹

The Irish immigrant, in turn, was given full leeway by American society to look with disdain upon the Negro. A European traveler to the city in the 1860's maintained that Irish immigrants considered Negroes "a soulless race." "I am satisfied that some of these people would shoot a black man . . . as they would a hog," he concluded. "Pat O'Flannagan does not have the least thing in the world against Jim from Dixie," a Negro educator remarked in 1909, "but it didn't take Pat long after passing the Statue of Liberty to learn that it is popular to give Jim a whack." "It is quite remarkable how easily

. . . foreigners catch on to the notion . . . to treat Afro-Americans disdainfully and contemptuously," *The New York Age* noted.⁷⁰

Throughout the nineteenth century this mutual antipathy erupted into violence many times. Since the Draft Riots of 1863, however, there were no major clashes between Negroes and Irish in New York City. Now, with increased racial tensions pervading the city, especially in the neighborhoods where the two groups had closest contact, there was a revival of bitterness. The Tenderloin was a common battleground.

A major race riot occurred in New York City in 1900. It was the first serious outbreak of racial violence since the Draft Riots. The riot of 1900 was a symbol of the entire new trend of increasing racial alienation and violence taking place throughout the city. The generally apathetic response of the white community to the demands Negroes made after the riot for justice was a reflection of the growing lack of concern of white New Yorkers for the increasingly serious impediments to Negro equality.

VI

In August 1900 New York City was in the midst of a heat wave. The weather bureau recorded stifling temperatures throughout the month: "The warmest August since the Local Bureau kept track of it." At noon on August 12, the temperature reached 91 degrees. New Yorkers spilled out of their tenements seeking relief. Stoops in the Tenderloin were crowded throughout the night. Local saloons were packed to capacity.⁷¹

Arthur J. Harris left his house at 241 West Forty-first Street on the evening of August 12 to buy some cigars and pass some time at McBride's Saloon. Harris, twenty-two, was typical of many young Negroes who came to New York City at that time. Born in Richmond, Virginia, of an unstable family (his mother lived in Washington, D.C., in 1900, his father in Cranford, New Jersey), he had left home at fourteen and lived in Washington for seven years. In 1899 he came north to visit his father and find work. The Washington police never had any trouble with him, his record showed "No Prior Convictions." When asked about his previous education, he responded "Yes"; he could read and write.⁷² He called himself a Protestant.⁷³

In Jersey City in 1899, he had picked up money working at odd

jobs—as a cook, baker, carpenter and poolroom attendant—and lived with 20-year-old May Enoch, who had left the husband she had married at sixteen. Harris and "his woman," or, as he often referred to her, "my wife," came to Forty-first Street at the beginning of August 1900, rented a room at Annie Johnson's, and said they were looking for work. At 2 A.M. on August 13, May came down to McBride's: "I says to Harris, 'Kid come on up home.'" ⁷⁴ While she waited for him at the corner of Forty-first Street and Eighth Avenue, Robert J. Thorpe, a plain-clothes policeman, approached her and charged her with "soliciting." To Harris he looked like a white man who was mishandling his woman: "The policeman grabbed my girl. I didn't know who he was and thought he was a citizen like myself," he maintained later at his trial. Harris was clubbed in a struggle with the policeman. He said the policeman pummeled him with his club and shouted, "Get up you black son-of-a-bitch." "I thought the man was trying to kill me, and I believed that he would kill me if I didn't protect myself." Harris pulled out a knife and "cut him twice." May ran home where she was later picked up and arrested; Harris took a train to his mother's home in Washington; Thorpe died in Roosevelt Hospital the next day.⁷⁵

Little more was needed to set off the racial tensions that now lay so near the surface of everyday life in the Tenderloin. A Negro, a recent southern migrant, had killed a "cop"—the son-in-law to be of the acting captain of the local police station. Rumors of violence spread throughout the Negro sections. One woman went to the police and begged for protection: "the tenants of her house were terror-stricken," she said. "They had been warned of an attack in the late night."⁷⁶ "Feelings against the Negroes in the neighborhood of Thorpe's late home had been at white heat for a couple of days," it was reported. Large crowds, including sixty members of the Thirty-seventh Street station house, gathered at the home of the Thorpe family to pay their respects.⁷⁷

The immediate cause for the outbreak was a fight between a Negro, Spencer Walters, and a white man, Thomas J. Healy. The Police Board, in its official findings on the riot, claimed that Walters attempted to shoot Healy on the night of August 15. The fight took place near Thorpe's home the evening before the burial. Negroes said that Walters had been set upon by some hysterical people who just

visited the Thorpe family.⁷⁸ It makes little difference who was right. If it was not this, there would have been some other excuse for violence.

The entire neighborhood went wild with rage. Walters was immediately attacked by a mob. He "was a wreck when placed under arrest." "If there had been a carefully arranged plot and this had been the agreed signal, the outbreak could not have been more spontaneous," a journalist reported. "Men and women poured by the hundreds from the neighboring tenements. Negroes were set upon wherever they could be found and brutally beaten."⁷⁹ The word spread that a "nigger chase" was on.⁸⁰ Up and down the streets, through hotels and saloons, in cellars and streetcars, Negroes were attacked and beaten. White street gangs mobbed the electric cars on Eighth Avenue ("Nigger, nigger never die, black face and shiny eye"), pulled Negroes off at random and beat them: "Every car passing up or down Eighth Avenue . . . was stopped by the crowd and every negro on board dragged out. . . . The police made little or no attempt to arrest any of [the] assailants," *The New York Times* noted. One man brought a clothesline, tied it to a lamppost, and looked for someone to lynch.⁸¹

A group of Negro waiters at a midtown hotel remained there all night rather than tempt the mob. Stephen Small and Adolphus Cooks were beaten by the police and decided to hide in a cellar all night. Zeb Robinson, a Negro barber, was attacked on the streets and taken to Bellevue in a disheveled state. Charles Mitchell became hysterical after repeated "blows on the head."⁸² A friend of James Weldon Johnson never fully recovered from the beating he received with a lead pipe.⁸³ Affidavits were later collected from eighty Negroes—waiters, porters, elevator operators, chimney sweeps, laborers, longshoremen—attesting to police and mob brutality. Although there are no reliable estimates of the number of persons injured in the riot, any Negro who happened to be on the streets of the Tenderloin that night was attacked and beaten. That serious injury was done to many is attested in the individual complaints collected in *Story of the Riot* (1900). Others never bothered to protest.

Acting Captain Cooney of the Twentieth Precinct called out the reserves to quell the trouble. However, the predominantly Irish police force hardly acted as detached enforcers of the law. Some did protect Negroes, but most, at the height of the frenzy, encouraged the rioters:

"It was said freely by witnesses of the disorderly scenes of Wednesday night that the police had done as much as anybody to encourage and promote the abuse of inoffensive negroes," a reporter indicated. Policemen often led mobs that attacked Negroes. Some dragged Negroes off streetcars and beat them. Others looked the other way rather than witness trouble. A white woman, Mrs. Davenport, sheltered a few Negroes in her home on the night of August 15. When she refused to turn them over to the police, they replied: "What kind of woman are you to be harboring niggers?" It seemed their ambition to "club the life out of a nigger," a witness said.⁸⁴

William J. Elliott, a Negro waiter, was arrested for carrying a revolver. Reporters saw him entering the Thirty-seventh Street station house uninjured. When he left the next morning he was beaten and bloody. Elliott told the Police Commissioners that as he passed through the muster room the lights were turned out and he was kicked, punched and clubbed into insensibility.⁸⁵ As he could not identify any specific assailant, however, the Commissioners found this evidence "contradictory," and ruled that "no conviction of a violation of the Rules of the Department could be sustained [on it]."⁸⁶

At about 2 A.M. on August 16 a providential summer thunderstorm drenched the city. It ended the initial violence. Emergency staffs on all-night duty at Roosevelt, Bellevue and New York hospitals handled the many cases of battered heads. The local police courts were jammed to capacity—with Negroes. One of the magistrates criticized the police and asked to see "some of the white persons who participated in this riot." By 1:30 A.M. his request was fulfilled. A teenager, Frank Minogue, was brought in and charged with trying to trip a policeman who was dispersing a crowd of rioters.

VII

Although the riot had ended, the neighborhood remained tense. Negroes began to arm. Revolvers and other weapons were easily purchased at local pawnshops and hardware stores. In a survey made of the Tenderloin, just one day after the riot, it was found that 145 revolvers and a substantial amount of ammunition had been sold—"all had gone to negroes."⁸⁷ Lloyd Williams, a Negro bartender, was seen leaving one store with an arsenal of weapons. When asked what he was going to do with them, he replied: "I understand they're knocking down negroes 'round here. The first man tries it on me gets

this. . . ." Other Negroes warned that no white men were going to bother them. As policemen patrolled the Negro blocks they were showered with bricks, bottles and garbage from rooftops and tenement windows. They fired back with revolvers. It seems miraculous that no one was killed then.

Orders went out to keep the Negroes off the streets. Paul Laurence Dunbar went into the Tenderloin, visited Negro homes and attempted to restore peace. Innumerable arrests were made, practically all of Negroes, on the charge of carrying concealed weapons. For more than a month after the riot there were almost daily clashes between individual Negroes and whites. At least two people were killed in these fights. Slowly, the Tenderloin returned to its normal state of semipeace.

VIII

The white community was shocked.⁸⁸ Editorials appeared throughout the press criticizing the police for their brutality and the vicious for their violence. The tone of the responses, however, lacked sympathy for the injured Negroes. The riot was made a political issue as the Republican press and the Good Government Society attacked Tammany Hall. The *New York Daily Tribune* printed a cartoon of a massive Tammany tiger in police uniform swinging a club. Huddled on the floor in the background was a bloody Negro. The caption read: "He's On the Police Force Now." The "Respectable Citizenry" attacked the "white trash" and advised Negroes to vote Republican.⁸⁹

Negro leaders demanded punishment of the guilty and compensation for the injured. The Reverend Dr. W. H. Brooks of St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church led the protest. Brooks, born on a Maryland plantation, had been at St. Mark's since 1897—well equipped with a voice that could drown out the clatter of elevated trains that ran near his church.⁹⁰ One of the most important leaders of the city's Negro community, he later became a founder of the NAACP and the National Urban League. From his pulpit, and from the pulpits of all the Negro churches in the city, the mobs and police were vilified. An honest public investigation was demanded,⁹¹ and prominent members of the Negro community—lawyers, clergymen, politicians, businessmen—were urged to use their influence to seek justice.⁹² An *ad hoc* defense committee, the Citizens' Protective League, was organized at a meeting in St. Mark's on September 3. Two

lawyers, Frank Moss and Israel Ludlow, were hired. Moss vowed never to let the riot "fade into forgetfulness." Suits were filed for damages against the city in the names of persons injured by the police.⁹³ At a mass meeting at Carnegie Hall to raise money and gain public support, some speakers urged caution and peaceful agitation. D. Macon Webster, a Negro lawyer, wanted justice done for the "humblest citizen." "One might think we [were] all aliens" from the manner in which we were treated, he concluded.⁹⁴ Others, more belligerent, urged Negroes to arm and defend their homes.⁹⁵ All agreed that right must be done.

The protests were militant and idealistic, the results cold and bleak. There was no mass response to the appeal for public support: "I heard many native Americans . . . say after the riot," a contemporary noted in *Harper's Weekly*, "that they would have been glad if many of the negroes had been killed." "This is a mass in the midst of what is . . . an alien and hostile people," another believed.⁹⁶ The August Grand Jury refused to indict a single policeman, alleging that accusations were brought against groups rather than individuals. When cases were presented against individual policemen, they too were dismissed.⁹⁷ The Police Board set up a committee of investigation, which refused Moss and Ludlow permission to cross-examine witnesses, and concluded in its report that "there is nothing in the evidence taken by your committee which will justify preferment of charges against any officer. . . ." ⁹⁸ The *Tribune* quipped: "The Police Board wants it understood that the riot inquiry is to be full and impartial, only no evidence against the police will be admitted."⁹⁹ Arthur J. Harris was arrested in Washington for killing policeman Thorpe, tried in New York, found guilty of murder in the second degree, and "sentenced to the State Prison at Sing Sing at hard labor for the term of his natural life."¹⁰⁰ The Reverend Dr. Brooks created "The Arthur J. Harris Liberation Fund" and continued to fight for his release, but Harris died in prison on December 20, 1908.¹⁰¹ The Citizens' Protective League simply ceased to exist. It accomplished nothing. The little power it could wield ran into an almost solid wall of indifference and opposition. "It is like sheep proclaiming the law of righteousness to a congregation of wolves," Kelly Miller commented on another occasion. "A complaint is effective only in so far as there is power to enforce it."¹⁰²

And the Police Department, in its *Annual Report*, provided its own

conclusion to the sad affair: "In the month of August the west side of the city was threatened with a race war between the white and colored citizens. . . . Prompt and vigorous action on the part of the Police . . . kept the situation under control, and . . . quiet was restored in districts . . . which were affected."¹⁰³

Was the riot and the reaction to it a sign of intensified racial alienation in New York City, as some people claimed? No, said a columnist for *The New York Times* in an emphatic rejoinder. There is no "settled race hatred . . . in New York. There are no signs that the citizen of African descent is distrusted or disliked. . . . His crude melodies and childlike antics are more than tolerated in the music halls of the best class."¹⁰⁴

Urban Progressives: Negro and White

"To my amazement I learned that there was a Negro problem in my city. I had never honestly thought of it before."

—Mary White Ovington, 1900

"We seem to be doing things in the same old unprogressive ways as when society was less complex. . . ."

—Frances A. Kellor, 1907

I

The emergence of racial violence and antagonism and the increasing number of complex social problems created by the urbanization of the Negro produced a need for racial reform in the North in the early twentieth century. The movement for social and economic reform in northern cities, a vital part of the national Progressive movement, showed deep concern for the welfare of the Negro people.¹ The years preceding World War I found a revitalization of interest in Negro life among urban reformers in every major northern city to which migrants came in large numbers. When "Race was against the colored man," a Negro New Yorker recalled, "the reformers turned out. . . ." These Progressives were, in the words of a Negro businessman, the "doers," not the "talkers," of American society.²

The white people involved in this movement were primarily social workers and urban reformers who attempted to improve living conditions in the industrial and tenement house areas of northern cities. Those who established settlement houses for immigrants in the 1890's also founded similar institutions for Negroes. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Progressives organized the Frederick Douglass Center in Chicago, the Robert Gould Shaw House in

Boston, the Eighth Ward Settlement in Philadelphia, the Stillman House and two Lincoln Settlements in New York City. Frances Bartholomew, Carl Kelsey and R. R. Wright, Jr., in Philadelphia; Isabel Eaton, who had worked with DuBois on his study of Philadelphia Negroes, in Boston; Celia Parker Woolley, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Mary E. McDowell and Louise DeKoven Bowen in Chicago; Mary White Ovington, Elizabeth Walton, Victoria Earle Matthews and William Lewis Bulkley in New York City were all actively engaged in social work among Negroes.³ Perceptive studies of Negro society were undertaken as well in these years, in the first major scholarly effort to analyze America's racial problems since the abolitionist era. In typical Progressive fashion, volumes of facts and statistics were gathered to learn how best to improve living conditions. "We must not forget," W. E. B. DuBois wrote in 1903, "that most Americans answer all queries regarding the Negro *a priori*, and that the least . . . human courtesy we can do is to listen to evidence."⁴ Between 1899 and 1915 a number of books on race problems appeared, among them DuBois' *Philadelphia Negro* (1899), Ray Stannard Baker's *Following the Color Line* (1908), R. R. Wright, Jr.'s, *The Negro in Pennsylvania* (1908), Mary White Ovington's *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York City* (1911), George Edmund Haynes' *The Negro at Work in New York City* (1912), Louise DeKoven Bowen's *The Colored People of Chicago* (1913), Frank U. Quillin's *The Color Line in Ohio* (1913), John Daniel's *In Freedom's Birthplace: A History of the Boston Negro* (1914), William A. Crossland's *Industrial Conditions Among Negroes in St. Louis* (1914), and Frances Blascoer's *Colored School Children of New York* (1915). Numerous articles on Negro life were printed in contemporary periodicals early in the century. In 1909-1911 the first national Negro defense and improvement agencies were founded—the NAACP and the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes—both in New York City.

II

Concern for the welfare of Negroes among white people in New York City had traditionally been associated with religious groups, and most particularly with the Society of Friends. Quakers, leading abolitionists in New York City, played an important role in founding free schools for Negro children. After the Civil War, the only white

organization that continued its works among the city's Negroes was the New York Colored Mission, founded by the Quakers. A few Negro churches in these years gave some assistance "to needy persons who find themselves in the great city without a home for a few days," but this effort was not highly organized.⁵

The "Friends' Mission," as some contemporaries called it (more vituperative observers christened it "Nigger School"),⁶ offered missionary work and "Christian Fellowship"⁷ to Negroes, distributing religious tracts, temperance literature and Bibles by the thousands to the city's Negro population.⁸ Before its incorporation in 1871, the society was called the "African Sabbath School Association," and its first home was over a stable. When incorporated, it conceived of its task basically as a religious one: "To conduct in the City of New York a Sabbath School for Religious Instruction," and hold "Social, Religious Meetings."⁹ Whatever practical assistance the organization would give Negroes was considered secondary to its religious obligation. The City Mission and Tract Society contributed enough money to the Colored Mission to permit it to purchase a building of its own in the Tenderloin, its motto: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."¹⁰

But, as the Negro population of Manhattan increased, slightly in the 1870's and 1880's, more rapidly in the 1890's, the Colored Mission was slowly transformed into a social service agency. It conducted an employment bureau, provided temporary housing and inexpensive meals for migrants (a "Sunday bowl of soup and slice of bread"), opened a small "infant school" which cared for and fed Negro children for five cents a day, and bought glasses for Negroes who wanted to learn how to read (most wished to read the Bible). Destitution was so widespread in the depression winter of 1893-1894 that the Colored Mission distributed tons of coal and barrels of food to Negro families—flour, corn meal, oatmeal, hominy, rice, bread, beans, pork, milk. "The records of those months are so sad that one shrinks from recurring to them," the society's missionary recorded in his journal. "No fire, no food, dispossession impending, illness, death . . . confronted us. [People] were found actually dying of want."¹¹ Between the Civil War and the 1890's, with this one modest exception, no organizations in New York City were concerned with the welfare of Negroes. By 1915 there were more than a dozen.

III

Increasing interest in Negro life developed in the 1890's and first decade of the twentieth century among white and Negro reformers. The movement was widespread and involved people who disagreed with one another on the over-all methods of improving the status of the Negro in American society. Some were avid supporters of the gradualism of Booker T. Washington, others more militant followers of W. E. B. DuBois. Mary White Ovington, for example, considered herself "an ardent disciple of the DuBois School."¹² Whatever theoretic differences existed among them, they held basic agreement on the need for immediate practical reforms to improve the generally harsh lives of Negroes in the city. Urban reformers' primary concern was to find jobs and decent homes for Negro migrants, to open playgrounds for Negro children, to break the color barrier in businesses and unions, to improve health, educational and sanitary conditions in the Tenderloin, San Juan Hill and Harlem, and to protect Negro domestics from the exploitations of city employment bureaus.

The first organization this spirit of "social justice" produced, founded in 1897, was the White Rose Industrial Association; the "White Rose Working Girls' Home," as the sign which hung over its door read. A Negro, Mrs. Victoria Earle Matthews, the youngest daughter of a Georgia slave,¹³ organized the society. Born in slavery herself just one month after the Civil War began, she came to New York City with her mother and family in the 1870's. She was young enough to attend the Negro public schools; after graduation she became a writer, and her stories and articles were published in white and Negro journals. She thought of herself as an emancipated woman, founded a Negro protest and women's rights society in the city (the "Women's Loyal Union of New York and Brooklyn"), supported Ida B. Wells' antilynching crusade, and delivered lectures on "The Awakening of the Afro-American Woman." When she learned of the "unscrupulous employment agents who deceived the unsuspecting girls desiring to come North," "those unprincipled men who haunted the wharves," she decided to "check the evil."¹⁴

Mrs. Matthews' association provided lodgings and meals for women until they could find work. The society kept agents at piers—"meeting the boats" it was called—in Norfolk as well as New York

City to answer questions, escort women to their places of employment or, instead, to the White Rose Home: "Our principal object is to protect our girls, to direct and help them amid the dangers of our great city." The White Rose Home became a settlement house as well as a temporary lodging place for migrants. The classes presented there in domestic training and "race history," the library of books on Negro life, and the facilities for recreation admitted the public as well as residents of the home. Paul Laurence Dunbar and Booker T. Washington gave lectures at the settlement. The White Rose Home continued its work among Negroes even after Mrs. Matthews' death in 1907, and finally moved to larger quarters in Harlem in 1918.¹⁵

The fear of exploitation of Negro women by "intelligence agents" that motivated Victoria Earle Matthews also led to the founding of an organization which attempted to do on a national scale what the White Rose Home did for Negro migrants who came to New York City. The initiator of this movement, a white reformer, Frances A. Kellor, wrote a perceptive series of articles on criminality among Negroes, one of the earliest sociological analyses of racial problems in the city.¹⁶ She also spent a good part of her early crusading career attacking the corruptions of private employment bureaus. In 1903, the Woman's Municipal League of New York hired Miss Kellor to collect as much data on employment agencies as a thorough investigation could produce.¹⁷ She gathered information from 732 private employment bureaus, published her findings in 1904 in an important book of the Progressive era, *Out of Work: A Study of Employment Agencies*, and bombarded municipal officials with the information she uncovered. Her criticisms and prodding led to the creation of the Office of Commissioner of Licenses in New York City, and helped establish the first state-controlled employment bureau in New York in 1911.¹⁸

Frances A. Kellor and other municipal reformers interested in job placement believed that many employment agents were dishonest and treated their clients in a shoddy manner, and, even worse, that many agencies served as subtle guises to draw women into the arms of "the alluring procuresses of the city."¹⁹ Some Negro women found their jobs as maids and cooks to be in what Miss Kellor called "sporting houses." "They are often threatened until they accept positions in questionable places and are frequently sent out without knowing the character of their destination," she wrote in *Out of Work*.²⁰ In

Chicago also, Louise DeKoven Bowen discovered that "most of the maids employed in houses of prostitution were colored girls. . . ." ²¹ The recruitment of women for "immoral purposes" by "intelligence agents" was the first point the New York City Commissioner of Licenses listed in a memorandum which explained why the office had been created. ²² "The southern states, especially Virginia and Georgia, are honey-combed with the slick agents of these employment bureaus," Miss Kellor said in 1905. ". . . Good wages, easy work . . . and good times, are promised. . . . To them, going to Philadelphia or to New York seems like going to Heaven, where the streets will be paved with gold, all will be music and flowers!" ²³

The disparity between image and reality led Miss Kellor to establish a society for the protection of Negro women—the National League for the Protection of Colored Women. The League had offices in New York City and Philadelphia and agents in many southern port cities. It distributed literature to southern Negro pastors and schools urging them to "educate the women on these conditions." ²⁴ Like the White Rose Home, and sometimes in conjunction with it, the League stationed workers at the major depots within the city and offered general fellowship and advice to country strangers who came to town for the first time: "It is the aim of the League to furnish helpful information to colored girls who are intending to come North, to protect them during the journey . . . and to find work or friends or homes for them [when they arrive]." ²⁵ The National League for the Protection of Colored Women continued this work until 1911, when it became one of three Negro reform agencies to consolidate into the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes.

IV

Reformers Victoria Earle Matthews and Frances A. Kellor had concentrated on a single aspect of the problem—the exploitation of Negro domestic workers. Mary White Ovington became the first prominent New Yorker to devote herself to the improvement of all aspects of Negro life in New York City, and eventually in the entire nation.

Miss Ovington, like many other urban reformers of her generation, grew up in comfort and gentility. She was the daughter of a well-to-do New York merchant. Her home in an exclusive section of Brooklyn lay not far from the working-class districts, but it was as separate

from them in spirit as two distinct worlds could be: "In my youth," she recalled in an autobiographical sketch, "no place was more remote than the section of the city in which persons of different caste lived." ²⁶

With the typical education of a young woman of refinement, Miss Ovington had studied as a child exclusively in private schools, and then went to Radcliffe. Her family expected her to take her proper place in society—"what we called 'going into society,'" she remarked. But the quiet, secure and stable world into which Miss Ovington was born seemed too remote in the America of the 1880's and 1890's. Massive industrialization and urbanization created major social dislocations on a scale unequaled in the previous history of the nation. It created urban slums, and the immigrants who lived in them often experienced poverty, distress, illness and a sense of hopelessness difficult for the socially conscious to overlook: "I found out about conditions in my own city of which I was utterly ignorant." ²⁷

Miss Ovington's reaction to these new conditions, similar to the responses of other Progressives, was positive and optimistic. Involvement in a movement for social reform also gave added meaning and fulfillment to her own life. There was, she recalled, a "fervor for settlement work in the nineties, for learning working-class conditions by living among the workers and sharing to some small extent in their lives. . . . The desire for such knowledge was in the air—*hope was in the air.*" In 1896, with the financial assistance of civic leader Frederick B. Pratt, Miss Ovington opened a settlement house "among white working-class people" in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Her five-room home grew into a forty-room settlement in the seven years she remained there. "That I should later work for the Negro never entered my mind," she wrote. ²⁸

Her first awareness of the seriousness of urban problems among Negroes came at a lecture given by Booker T. Washington. The "Social Reform Club," of which she was a member (she was also a member of the Socialist Party), invited Washington to speak before it: "To my amazement I learned that there was a Negro problem in my city. I had honestly never thought of it before." At that time she decided to find out more about these conditions and, from 1904 till her death in 1951, devoted her life to improving them. ²⁹

Although Washington's descriptions may have appeared new and shocking to her as an adult, Mary White Ovington had heard similar

stories as a child. The Ovington family was one of those ubiquitous New England families that controlled much of New York commerce, and much of the mercantile operations of all the seaboard cities, for a good part of the nineteenth century. William Lloyd Garrison had been a friend of her grandmother's and Miss Ovington, born in 1865, grew up when memories of the "Great Rebellion" were very much alive. She listened attentively to her grandmother's tales of abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, anti-abolitionist rioting in Boston, and the preaching of Garrison's close friend and follower, the Reverend Dr. Samuel J. May. She was taught to despise Daniel Webster and Henry Clay for compromising on the slavery issue. When Frederick Douglass came to speak at Plymouth Congregational Church, Miss Ovington went to see one of her idols. "I was," she wrote, "a sympathetic listener." Garrison "was my childhood's greatest hero."⁸⁰

Mary White Ovington's parents were abolitionists too. Her father told her he severed connections with Plymouth Congregational Church because Henry Ward Beecher supported a missionary association which dealt with a slaveholder. He joined a Unitarian congregation, and his daughter continued in this religion, led by an abolitionist "of the strictest brand." Her brother later became a lifetime member of the NAACP. "Ours was an abolition family."

The Ovington family, like many other supporters of abolitionism, lost contact with Negro life after the Civil War. Slavery had been the great evil, they thought, and it was now destroyed. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were passed and Negroes were *legally* made equal American citizens. It seemed to them that nothing was left to be done: "Slavery was ended," she said. "That was the great point."

Booker T. Washington reawakened Miss Ovington's interest in the Negro people. She decided to open a settlement house for Negroes in New York City and asked Mary Kingsbury Simkovitch of Greenwich House for advice. They both decided the first step was to gather as much specific information as possible on Negro urban problems. Miss Ovington was appointed Fellow of Greenwich House in 1904 and began the studies which led to the publication of *Half A Man* seven years later.⁸¹

One of the enduring problems of the twentieth-century city has been its inability to supply decent and inexpensive living accommoda-

tions to Negroes: "The need for model tenements for colored people is perhaps the greatest of all . . . our's city's population," a group of tenement house reformers indicated in the early twentieth century. Miss Ovington, impressed with the desire of urban Negroes for "wholesome homes," decided to do something about it. She sought to contact Henry Phipps, steel magnate and philanthropist, who previously constructed model tenements for immigrants in New York. The City and Suburban Homes Company, incorporated in 1896, managed the houses built by Phipps and other patrician reformers—Alfred T. White, the Phelps Stokes family, and others—and they accepted a modest profit of five per cent on their investments.⁸² It seemed an artful combination of philanthropy and sound business. Miss Ovington and Phipps had a mutual friend, John E. Milholland,⁸³ whom she went to see. Milholland was another early supporter of the civil rights cause and a good friend of W. E. B. DuBois. In 1904 he founded the Constitution League in New York City, and the League tried to breathe some life into the dormant post-Civil War constitutional amendments.⁸⁴ Milholland, convinced of the need for the project, in turn persuaded Phipps to construct a model tenement for the Negroes of San Juan Hill. When the new Phipps Houses were completed on West Sixty-third Street in 1907 they seemed an incongruity in the neighborhood. These fireproof, steam-heated, roof-gardened, six-story houses stood out against the older rundown tenements on the West Side. (The Phipps apartment houses have somehow survived a half-century of urban renewal and may be seen today.) Miss Ovington also hoped that Phipps would support a settlement house for Negroes in the building, and decided to live there herself: "I hoped by quietly renting on my own account, to persuade him to add social work," she wrote to a Negro friend.⁸⁵

Mary White Ovington moved into the model tenement, the only white person in the entire house, in January 1908. There she gathered information for her book, became a close friend of the Reverend Dr. George H. Sims of Union Baptist Church on the block, attended his services occasionally, and read *Peter Rabbit* and other stories to the Negro youngsters who knocked at her door. (She later published stories for Negro children.) Miss Ovington lived on West Sixty-third Street for eight months, but failed to get the philanthropist to support a Negro settlement house.

In September 1908, after having attended meetings of the Negro

Niagara Movement, she read an article in *The Independent* which diverted her attention to national civil rights problems, and redirected the course of her life. William English Walling's since-famous article, "The Race War in the North," attacked the growing racial antipathy and apathy evident in the North and called for a revival of "the spirit of the abolitionists. . . ."³⁶ Miss Ovington responded to this appeal and called a small meeting of her friends to discuss what could be done to counteract this burgeoning racism. A National Negro Conference met in 1909 at the Henry Street Settlement and the National Negro Committee was established at this gathering. The NAACP had been born. Mary White Ovington spent the rest of her career within this organization.³⁷

Although her main energies were channeled into the NAACP—she was called "Mother of the New Emancipation"—she remained active in social work among the city's Negroes. She was an executive of the Committee for Improving the Industrial Condition of the Negro in New York City, chairman of its "Neighborhood Work" subcommittee, president and main fund-raiser of the Lincoln Settlement, which she helped found for Negroes in Brooklyn, and organizer of the West End Workers' Association, active among the Negroes on San Juan Hill.³⁸ Her Negro secretary from 1905 to 1951 remembers Miss Ovington as a person totally dedicated to the struggle for Negro rights and honestly devoid of any racial prejudice.³⁹ Negro poet and novelist Claude McKay, in florid tones, wrote that "her personality radiated a quiet silver shaft of white charm which is lovely when it's real."⁴⁰ "No white woman's life in America has been colored more by the clash of color and race," concluded a Negro newspaper in an editorial.⁴¹ "That the sincerity of my friendship has never been doubted has been my greatest joy," Miss Ovington said on her resignation as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NAACP.⁴²

V

The reforming zeal evident in Mary White Ovington reached a high point with the founding of the Committee for Improving the Industrial Condition of the Negro in New York (CIICN) in 1906. The primary motivation for the creation of the CIICN was the desire to broaden employment opportunities for the city's Negroes. Its members, supporters, directors and subcommittee chairmen were the most important municipal reformers in New York in the Progressive era,

many later active in founding the NAACP. Interracial in structure, the CIICN included social workers, philanthropists, educators, clergymen, writers, publishers, physicians, supporters of Hampton and Tuskegee and businessmen.⁴³ The founder of the CIICN was a Negro principal in the New York City school system, Dr. William Lewis Bulkley. Bulkley decided to organize the Committee, he said in 1906, after seeing Negro students leaving his schools "to open doors, run bells or hustle hash" for the rest of their lives. "On every hand avenues of employment are shut tight, discouragement begins and [Negro children] leave school to work at any menial employment that offers itself," Bulkley observed. "The constant cry of the negro," another man wrote, "is for 'a white man's chance.'"⁴⁴

Bulkley was the leading Negro educator in New York City in the early twentieth century, a bright, idealistic and ambitious man who rose from the slavery in which he was born in 1861 to earn a doctorate in ancient languages and literature from Syracuse University. As a boy he attended the local log cabin school in Greenville, South Carolina, and finally was graduated from Claflin University, in his home state, in 1882. Bulkley came north to Wesleyan University in Connecticut and continued his studies in France and Germany. In 1893, after completing his master's degree, he earned the Ph.D. at Syracuse.⁴⁵

For a time, Bulkley taught as professor of Latin and Greek at Claflin, but as a student, he worked as janitor, steward, cook and salesman. To save the little money he earned this way he scrimped wherever he could. His meals often consisted of oatmeal and water, he washed and darned his own clothing, and pressed socks and handkerchiefs between the pages of books or under the mattresses on which he slept. William Lewis Bulkley, in the language of his day, achieved "Success Under Difficulties." The "Slave Boy Now a Professor" was "A Noble Example of the Triumph of Perseverance."⁴⁶

Bulkley thought of himself as a southerner driven from his home by racism: "There is not one of us who would not gladly go back home if we did not know that every right dear to any full man has been ruthlessly torn from our grasp," he said in 1909. He longed to share the "soul-refreshings that only a [southern] Negro revival can give."⁴⁷ Bulkley came to New York City in the 1890's and was appointed seventh grade teacher in a lower Manhattan public school. In 1899 he became principal of P.S. 80 on West Forty-first Street in

the Tenderloin.⁴⁸ This school, in the heart of the Negro district, had formerly been an all-Negro institution which was made a ward school in the integration of 1884. In 1909, despite protest meetings and petitions from the teachers of P.S. 125, Bulkley became the first Negro principal of a predominantly white school in city history.⁴⁹

William Lewis Bulkley insisted that Negroes be given full equality in American society—constitutional, political, social, economic—immediately. He supported the demands made by W. E. B. DuBois along these lines, and became a founder of the NAACP. During his summer vacations he was a temporary expatriate who lived in Switzerland and France with his wife and children. His family sometimes remained in Europe when he returned to resume his duties in the fall. On retiring from the New York City school system in 1924 he left the country and established a private school in France. He died in Paris in 1933.⁵⁰ That a supporter of DuBois should found an organization to foster practical, industrial employment for the Negroes in the city seemed the height of inconsistency to Booker T. Washington's supporters. "You will see that this opponent of industrial education is not practicing what he preaches," one of them wrote. "This is inconsistency with a vengeance." Washington even had agents attend meetings of the CIICN to check the activities of "Bulkley and his crowd. . . ." "It is hard to carry out plans if our friends are in the minority," Washington observed.⁵¹ White social workers, like Mary White Ovington, Jane Addams and Julia Richman, on the other hand, thought highly of Bulkley's work.⁵²

A pragmatist, Bulkley met conditions in the city as he saw them and tried to improve them immediately as best he could. He "set out to make his school a social center," a contemporary journal commented. Soon after becoming principal of P.S. 80, for example, he opened a kindergarten to relieve the working mothers of the neighborhood. He delivered special lectures to parents and students five times a semester on proper nutrition and sanitation, health and other social problems. He visited homes, addressed church groups, attended parents' meetings, wanted "to awaken [Negroes] to a larger self respect and aspiration for better living."⁵³ In 1903 he started an evening school in the building which specialized in industrial and commercial training. Some of the most diligent students in the school were elderly Negro men and women, some in their seventies and eighties, who had no opportunity for education as youngsters but now

wanted to learn to read and write.⁵⁴ Bulkley invited friends and associates to visit the school.⁵⁵ Members of the Board of Education, on one inspection tour, described it as "the most successful evening school that ever was established in New York. . . ."⁵⁶

The idea of a permanent industrial organization to assist Negroes in New York City apparently originated with William H. Baldwin: President of the Long Island Railroad, philanthropist, and one of Booker T. Washington's key financial supporters. Bulkley, however, initiated the movement which led to the creation of the CIICN.

Bulkley had agitated since 1902 for an organization to do on a broad scale what he attempted to do as an individual at his school: "With an Afro-American population in New York increasing yearly at a very great, I had almost said alarming rate," he maintained in one speech, "it behooves every thoughtful man and woman in this city to stop long enough to think what it may mean to us and to them."⁵⁷ Early in 1906 he began a series of local meetings to discuss the subject. He, Mary White Ovington and others lectured these gatherings on the harsh facts of Negro urban life. Finally, in May 1906, at a meeting of some sixty Negro and white New Yorkers, Bulkley's hope became reality. The CIICN was founded and issued a public statement on its goals. "Here at home," the report maintained, "conditions are piling up which must be met at once." The Committee would endeavor to provide equal "economic opportunities" for all citizens: "A square deal in the matter of getting a livelihood is held to be fundamental."⁵⁸ William Jay Schieffelin, philanthropist, urban reformer, heir to the Jay family abolitionist tradition, and president of the Board of Trustees of Hampton's Armstrong Association, was appointed chairman. Schieffelin immediately began to contact friends to mobilize support for the new organization. With "seventy thousand Negroes in New York," he wrote in a letter, "we ought to feel a responsibility concerning them."⁵⁹

The CIICN was divided into subcommittees, each headed by an eminent specialist in a particular area of service—"Employment," "Neighborhood Work," "Craftsmen," "Publication," "Trade Schools," "Social Centers," "Legal Affairs," "Public Meetings." They canvassed Negro streets in the city to gather information on social problems which seemed most pressing. Regular public meetings in Negro churches stimulated interest in the Committee's work and provided a sounding board for local discontent. An employment

bureau located and helped create jobs for Negroes. The names of skilled Negro workers were collected and these craftsmen were organized into small trade units for dressmakers, printers, mechanics, waiters, carpenters and the like. The policies of racial restriction normally adhered to by unions cracked a bit when, under prodding from the CIICN, the Grand United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America issued a charter to a Negro local in the city. Plumbers, construction workers, painters, bricklayers, masons, decorators, found jobs. Subway companies were asked to hire Negro motormen. The subcommittee on Trade Schools, headed by a New York City school superintendent, collected a thousand names on a petition for new night schools in the Negro districts. Two more evening schools primarily for Negroes began in these years. The City and Suburban Homes Company was encouraged to build additional model tenements for Negroes.⁶⁰

The CIICN also co-operated with the other Negro reform agencies in the city. In 1908, for example, it began to send people to the docks to assist Frances A. Kellor's organization. When the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes was established in New York in 1910, the CIICN sent spokesmen to the new organization to map out lines of co-operation with it. The problems which emerged from Negro migration grew more complex each year. In response to the obvious waste of a number of separate bodies' defining their spheres as particular aspects of what was really one broad and interrelated problem, a general agreement for consolidation in 1911 merged the CIICN, the National League for the Protection of Colored Women, and the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes. A new and stronger society, which is still operating today, resulted—the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes (National Urban League). William Lewis Bulkley was its first vice-chairman. He probably originated in one of his speeches the phrase "Not Alms, But Opportunity," which became the organization's motto. "We do not ask for charity," he said in 1909, "all we ask is opportunity. We do not beg for alms; we beg only for a chance."⁶¹

The founding of the two most prominent national Negro organizations, the NAACP and the National Urban League, was a culmination and fulfillment of individual local reform efforts begun in the North in the first decade of the twentieth century. The serious revitalization of concern with racial problems this demonstrated was evident in New

York City in a variety of other ways as well. Each year brought to spontaneous life some new Negro welfare institution. Two settlement houses, one a branch of the Henry Street Settlement, were founded for Negroes in 1904 and 1907. In 1911 they consolidated into one large unit, the Lincoln Settlement House. Lillian D. Wald sent Negro nurses into the Tenderloin, San Juan Hill, and Harlem to help these communities with their medical problems; they still offer free nursing service today. A Negro Music School Settlement, numerous free nurseries, kindergartens, homes for delinquent girls and two new Negro Y's began. Housing bureaus attempted to clean up the streets of Negro slums and locate clean, respectable and inexpensive homes for Negro families. New York City's Board of Health conducted special evening classes for colored people in tuberculosis prevention.⁶² Some migrants, fresh from the country, received rudimentary lessons in the use of modern sanitary and plumbing devices.⁶³ A Negro Fresh Air Committee was established in 1905; playgrounds and summer camps for Negro children were opened.

When the new century began the prevailing attitude toward the Negro in New York City had been one of hostility and increasing alienation. And as far as the majority of the population was concerned, there was no change in this dominant reaction of the city to the Negro people. The racial antagonism of the majority made necessary the creation of segregated communities like Harlem. But a sense of renewed promise and hopefulness among Negroes was born of the important reform movements that coped with the problems of rapid Negro urbanization. In 1900 Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois would have agreed that American reform seemed to overlook the Negro. Ten years later, both recognized a new "awakening" of interest in Negro life.⁶⁴ Some may question the degree of commitment and success this basically middle-class reform movement reflected. It obviously could not end the deep strains of racism that pervaded American culture, and it remained a minority movement. Yet these urban reformers were the first major group of Americans to manifest a serious concern with racial inequities since the abolitionist era. To some Negroes they were "a veritable god-send to the colored people."⁶⁵

A Limited Community
History (1911)

PART TWO

The Making of a Ghetto

CHAPTER 5 □

A Genteel Community: Harlem, 1890

"A great city is developing north
of Central Park."

—*Harlem Local Reporter*, 1889

"It is evident to the most superficial
observer that the centre of fashion,
wealth, culture, and intelligence,
must, in the near future, be found in
the ancient and honorable village of
Harlem. . . ."

—*The Harlem Monthly Magazine*, 1893

I

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century Harlem was a community of great expectations. During the previous quarter century it had been an isolated, poor, rural village. After the 1870's, however, it was transformed into an upper- and upper-middle-class residential suburb—Manhattan's first suburb.

Prosperity had come to Harlem before.¹ Throughout the colonial period its lands brought wealth to farmers. The estates of some of America's most illustrious colonial families were located there—De-lanceys, Beekmans, Bleekers, Rikers, Coldens, Hamiltons and others.² The stamp of respectability and distinction colored Harlem's name and later settlers recalled its past glories proudly: "Who among [you] then," a lecturer on the history of the community said in 1882, "with Harlem's . . . history before you, and the goodly prospects in store, are not proud of being called Harlemites. . . . The spirit which animated their [the founders'] breasts," he concluded romantically, "is rooted in the soft rich soil of Harlem. . . ."³

For some two hundred years the village of New Harlaem remained remarkably stable. Most of its small population, following the general ethnic patterns of New York City's population (as it would continue

to do in the future), descended from Dutch, French and English pioneers. The surnames of Harlem's residents in the late eighteenth century recall those of the seventeenth century.⁴ Generations quietly passed into generations: ". . . Old Resolved Waldron built himself a house . . . where his children were born and where he finally died. His son inherited the home . . . reared his family under its roof, and was likewise buried from it. This homestead has been in the possession of the lineal descendants of Mr. Waldron ever since," a journalist recorded in 1883.⁵

There was no need for town government in a community of this size and social structure. Committees and magistrates appointed at town meetings settled matters of public concern. So it had been in 1667, so in 1774 and again in 1820. The commission appointed to lay out the streets of New York City in 1811 did not think Harlem would be "covered with houses for centuries to come."⁶ In the 1820's the ninety-one families of the "delightful village" of Harlem had one church, one school, one library.⁷

And this tradition was not completely extinct in the late nineteenth century. Harlem always remained a strange combination of the old and new. A fifth-generation descendant of a man who came to Harlem in 1667 continued proudly to live on part of the family estate at the turn of the century.⁸ At least four other heirs to seventeenth-century land titles lived in Harlem in 1882: Bensons, Montagnes, Hoppers, Raubs.⁹ The Watt Mansion, originally built by John Delancey in the eighteenth century, was standing to meet the twentieth.¹⁰ Hamilton Grange, completed in 1803-1804, may still be seen today, and the Hamilton Estate owned Harlem land in the 1890's. (In 1904, a hundred years after Hamilton's death, the community publicly honored his memory.)¹¹ Scattered throughout the area were other formerly stately colonial homes, two erected prior to 1670,¹² others "yet in good repair."¹³ A boy fishing in Harlem Creek could still find a button from the uniform of a soldier of the American Revolution.¹⁴ In 1910, the Collegiate Reformed Church, founded in 1660, celebrated its 250th anniversary, a solid reminder to newcomers of Harlem's distinguished past.¹⁵

II

To most residents of Harlem in the 1840's and 1850's, however, these were skeleton remains of a never-known age. Harlem's decline

began when its lands, worn out after centuries of use, lost their former productivity. Hamilton's widow, for example, had abandoned the Grange because the farm was "yielding trifling returns."¹⁶ Others, rather than eke out a grudging existence in an America of great opportunity, simply deserted the seemingly worthless property and went elsewhere. Formerly great estates were sold at public auction.¹⁷ The city acquired much property and resold it.¹⁸ In 1838 the New York City Board of Aldermen described Harlem as a "third or fourth-rate country village."¹⁹

Into this decaying community came groups of people to whom the once productive soil seemed less forbidding. Those in search of cheap property bought land there and built one- and two-story frame houses. Others, including many newly arrived and destitute Irish immigrants—some of whom remained in Harlem to see the twentieth century—squatted on the forsaken land or lived in mud flats at the river's edge. They created Harlem's shantytowns and lived in two-room cottages pieced together with any material that could be found: bits of wood, twigs, barrel staves, old pipes, tin cans hammered flat.²⁰ In the backwash of a growing metropolis, Harlem's squatters made money by raising animals and vegetables for local markets. Geese, cows, horses and "genus goat of the Harlem species" roamed over the area. There were so many hogs in one section of One Hundred and Twenty-fifth and One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Streets that it came to be known as Pig's Alley.²¹ Parts of Harlem Plains²² were marshes, which reeked so badly that they could "knock the breath out of a mule!"²³ Harlem at midcentury was largely "a village of shanties and huts with here and there a farm house. . . ." ²⁴ And so it remained until the pressure of urban population growth and the subsequent need for living space restored value to Harlem lands.

With the exception of the marshes, Harlem's topography maintained much of its earlier beauty. Relatively untouched for centuries, it had the physical possibilities of becoming the country retreat of a burgeoning metropolis: "Everything that is lovely and much that is grand are assembled in a moderate space. Hill and dale, stream and wood, rock and meadow . . . river views . . . of surpassing magnificence," a historian noted in the 1890's. "The walks through the woodland shade . . . are always charming. . . . The clear brooks, the yellow leaves of autumn, the birds . . . lead one to forget the city and all its toils. . . ." ²⁵

Of a Sunday, from the 1860's on, the residents of Harlem shanties would find "downtowners" wandering about on country jaunts. They could walk to Harlem Lane (St. Nicholas Avenue) and watch men of the "exclusive class," "the horse-racing fraternity," "swells"—Commodore Vanderbilt was probably the most prominent—working out their "fast trotters": "Any fine afternoon you could see the wealthy horse-fanciers driving their . . . sulkies through Central Park on their way to 'the road' as they called Harlem Lane."²⁶ After a day in the country these "fashionable people" might stop at Topsy McGuire's Clubhouse or sip wine at the intriguing Brossi's Tunnel, bored out of rock at One Hundred and Twenty-second Street. "Harlem had become the rural retreat of the aristocratic New Yorker," an old Manhattanite recalled, and its "chief charm [was] its well-bred seclusion. . . ."²⁷

In the late nineteenth century, this remoteness from city life served as the one great barrier to Harlem's development as a residential community. Harlem was approximately eight miles from City Hall and, under no great urgency to be otherwise, its transportation facilities remained rudimentary. The New York and Harlem Railroad ran trains from lower Manhattan to Harlem after 1837.²⁸ Horsecars started opposite City Hall and stopped at Forty-second Street. At this junction the horses were replaced by a locomotive and the train went directly to One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street. The entire trip, scheduled to take forty minutes,²⁹ often took much longer. Young boys ran alongside the tracks and jeered:

The Harlem Road is a smashing line,
It starts at four and stops at nine,
And if you want to go to town,
The quickest way is to foot it down.³⁰

There were other means of transportation to the city. Stage lines on the east and west sides operated after the 1830's as well ("Murphy's Economical Accommodation Line" was one), but they were even less reliable than the Harlem Railroad. Under ideal conditions they took an hour and forty minutes to the city but in the winter often bogged down in the snow.³¹ After 1856 the picturesque steamboats of Sylvan Line, remembered with great fondness by Harlem's older residents, made the trip to Manhattan in thirty minutes, but closed during the winter months as ice clogged the East River.³² Such a transportation system obviously did little to encourage settlement in Harlem.

III

The phenomenal growth of Harlem in the late nineteenth century was a by-product of the general development of New York City. From the 1870's on, the foundations of the modern metropolis were laid. This urban revolution was characterized by improvements in methods of sanitation, water supply, transportation, communication, lighting and building.³³ As the city expanded, so did its population. In 1880, for the first time in its history, and in the history of any American city, the population of Manhattan alone passed the one million mark (1,164,673),³⁴ and "New Immigrants" had just begun to arrive. This increase in population coincided with an expansion of commercial and industrial activity and both made serious inundations on living quarters in formerly staid residential sections. The only way for the island city to grow was northward. Many older residents and older immigrants, attempting to avoid the bustle of the new metropolis and escape contact with its newest settlers, looked to Harlem as the community of the future: "In our family, we were always careful to explain that we lived in Harlem, not in New York City," a man whose family moved uptown in these years recalled. "It was our way of avoiding contact with such uncouth citizens as might be found downtown. . . ."³⁵ The neighborhood would become "the choicest residential section of the city," predicted another resident. "Upper Seventh Avenue in Harlem has become one of the finest streets in New York. . . . Rows of trees and pretty gardens . . . lend to it a semi-suburban aspect."³⁶

Harlem expanded gradually in the 1860's and was annexed to New York City in 1873.³⁷ The city filled some 1,350 acres of marshland in 1870, sold them to the public, and constructed houses over them. A few city fathers in the heyday of the Tweed Ring appropriated promising lands for themselves and built fashionable homes there.³⁸ The turning point in Harlem's history came in 1878-1881. During these years three lines of the elevated railroad came as far north as One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street and, by 1886, the elevated line came even further north.³⁹ Rows of brownstones and exclusive apartment houses appeared overnight: "Business grows, blocks and flats go up with apparently so little effort, that the average Harlemiter is in a continuous swim of development and prosperity," the local newspaper commented in 1890.⁴⁰ Practically all the houses that stand in Harlem today were built in a long spurt of energy that lasted

from the 1870's through the first decade of the twentieth century. Electric lights were first installed in 1887 and the telephone followed the next year.⁴¹ Shanties, doomed by "the wilderness of brownstone, brick and mortar . . .,"⁴² took with them Harlem's celebrated goat, the subject of much newspaper lampooning. An irate "Harlem Goat" begged the *New York Herald* to leave it in peace: "I feel as if my browsing days in Harlem are over, and I can hardly find a . . . blade of fresh grass. . . ."⁴³ "No more goats in Harlem/There's prosperity in Harlem," sang the Harlem Board of Commerce at a neighborhood fete. "When Harlem was a Prairie," echoed the motto of the Harlem Old-Timers Association.⁴⁴ An Irish resident of the community since the 1840's saw a "one horse town . . . turned into a teeming metropolis. . . ."⁴⁵

Speculators made fortunes buying Harlem land, holding it for a short while, and reselling at great profit. Builders purchased land, constructed houses and sold them as soon as they were completed. They used the profits for reinvestment. Oscar Hammerstein I, Henry Morgenthau, and August Belmont were among them. "Hammerstein bought and sold properties in that area with great speed and generally at a profit," his biographer wrote.⁴⁶ Edward H. W. Just, another speculator, born in Eisleben, Germany, in the 1830's, came to New York City as a young man when the ready-made clothing industry was becoming a major source of city wealth. He became a successful shirt manufacturer and invested heavily in Harlem property. When he died in 1893 he left an estate worth more than \$2,000,000.⁴⁷ One plot of land purchased in 1852 for \$3,000 was worth \$200,000 in 1890.⁴⁸ "When I see the prices that real estate is now bringing in Harlem," one old-timer bemoaned in 1889, "it makes me feel that I was a fool for not making . . . investments years ago when property was so cheap. Twenty years [ago] the meadow lands of Harlem were not considered worth paying taxes for. . . ."⁴⁹

IV

If this man thought himself a fool, those who previously abandoned or sold their Harlem property felt cheated: "The country town grew, until this . . . almost valueless land has become worth millions." Descendants of Harlem settlers, some tracing their rights to the earliest seventeenth-century grants, now attempted to reclaim what they maintained was still their property. The first man to do so, Alfred E.

Tilton, gathered his old land titles and brought suit against the city in the 1870's, but he died in 1876 before any settlement was made. His idea, however, was exploited for more than a generation as the heirs of other settlers organized and tried to do in grand style what Tilton attempted to do as an individual. The movement to reclaim Harlem lands had all the overtones of a great land grab: "the Great Harlem Land Claim," newspapers called it.⁵⁰

In 1883, the Harlem Commons Syndicate was organized and incorporated. Descendants of earlier residents, sought throughout the country, were made shareholders, for a price, in the great scheme. General John C. Frémont, a Harlem heir himself, became president of the corporation. Schuyler Colfax, former Vice-President of the United States, was a claimant. Every available scrap of information—genealogical data, wills, letters—was gathered to prove that descendants still held valid rights in the old commons land and in the recently filled marshes. The Syndicate pressured for congressional intervention and brought suit against New York City, but all efforts proved unsuccessful. The corporation finally collapsed in 1895.

The fortune-hunting temptation outlived the Harlem Commons Syndicate in the Harlem Associated Heirs Title Company, founded immediately after the demise of the Syndicate, in another group active at the turn of the century and still another as late as 1932.⁵¹ Each, of course, sold shares to Harlem heirs. Genealogical information collected by researchers went for a price—\$10 to \$15. Stock was sold to some 1,400 persons. Two claimants of a family sued each other over contested rights to property neither legally owned. Provisions in old leases and sales were carefully checked for possible discrepancies, and many were supposedly uncovered. Books were written to show these claims valid and one man even tried to demonstrate by scripture that the cause was a righteous one: that "divine direction constituted the sole motive for the recovery of . . . Harlem rights and properties. . . ." Terrestrial forces, however, proved obdurate in their refusal to share Harlem's new-found prosperity, and these efforts were as unsuccessful (for all save the promoters, perhaps) as those of the Harlem Commons Syndicate.⁵²

V

People generally took it for granted that Harlem would develop into an exclusive, stable, upper- and upper-middle-class community: "a

neighborhood very genteel." The newly built elevator apartment houses, many equipped with servants' quarters, rented for prices that could be paid only by the wealthy. The most magnificent was a group of spacious, luxurious brownstones built on One Hundred and Thirty-eighth and One Hundred and Thirty-ninth Streets in 1891. Stanford White, the well-known architect so closely associated with the architectural history of the city (he designed Madison Square Garden, Washington Arch, Grand Central Station), had been commissioned to build one hundred and six distinguished homes, each with ten to sixteen rooms and flower-bedecked driveways. They were advertised to be as "distinctive as a suburban colony but with all the advantages of city life": "These driveways are ornamented at their intersections by circular beds of flowers, making a decorative feature even of their utility. Great care is taken of the property to preserve its exclusive appearance, and a general air of being well-looked-after pervades the surroundings." Houses set back twelve feet from the street added privacy and rear entrances "permitted the business of housekeeping to be kept out of sight." In a society whose working-class families paid an average of \$10-18 a month rent, the rents for these homes *started* at just under \$80, and ranged between \$900 and \$1700 a year.⁵⁸

Another group of twenty-eight three-story exclusive homes, Astor Row, constructed in the 1890's on West One Hundred and Thirtieth Street, provided large porches and shade trees. They were known "as one of the most attractive and exclusive home centres" in Harlem, and "presented a picture of domestic tranquility and comfort which few other . . . blocks in the city possess," a *New York Times* reporter noted. In spite of high rentals Astor Row had a long waiting list of prospective tenants.⁵⁴

Prosperity and optimism seemed the order of the day. One merchant built a large department store on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street in 1890 and had such confidence in Harlem's future that he offered to pay half the rent for five years of any businessman who followed him.⁵⁵ Local citizens could attend the Harlem Opera House, built by Oscar Hammerstein I in 1889, or go to one of Harlem's many theaters.⁵⁶ In 1900 they might dine at the luxurious German Pabst Harlem: "Where Gentlemen and Ladies can enjoy good music and a perfect cuisine amid surroundings which have been

rendered as attractive to the eye and senses [as] good taste, combined with expenditure, could make them."⁵⁷

The people attracted to this "residential heaven" were obviously older and wealthier New Yorkers—"people of taste and wealth."⁵⁸ Few neighborhoods in the entire city at the turn of the century had so disproportionate a number of native Americans or immigrants from Great Britain, Ireland and Germany, including German Jews, living in it. In 1902, of the 103,570 families in the Twelfth Ward, only 10,786 could be classified as "New Immigrants."⁵⁹ Many late-nineteenth-century Harlemites were born in downtown Manhattan or immigrated to America in the years 1830-1850, and subsequently moved to the community after 1870.⁶⁰ One man came to visit a friend in Harlem in 1889 and was surprised "to see so many downtowners who have come here to live. It looks as if everybody will be rushing up here from downtown before long," he said.⁶¹ A future director of the Harlem Board of Commerce moved to the neighborhood in the 1880's and was surprised to meet so many Greenwich Village friends there.⁶² The homes of municipal and federal judges, mayors, local politicians (including Tammany boss Richard Croker), prominent businessmen and state politicians (Chauncey M. Depew, for example), were scattered throughout Harlem.⁶³ Their children attended Grammar School 68, "referred to as the 'Silk Stocking School' of the City" because its "pupils were practically all from American families, and . . . more or less prosperous people."⁶⁴ Their daughters could go to "Mme. De Valencia's Protestant French and English Institute for Young Ladies," one of the many private schools for the wealthy that flourished in the nineteenth-century city.⁶⁵ A young Jewish boy moved to Harlem from the Lower East Side in the first decade of the twentieth century and recalled seeing rich German Jews, "Uptown Jews," strutting down Seventh Avenue in top hats, black coats and canes.⁶⁶

Among the institutions developed to service Harlem's newest residents was Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1883 with forty members, but ten years later the congregation worshiped in a magnificent Gothic structure. Its membership had increased to over a thousand and two missions were in the process of being established.⁶⁷ Nor was this a unique story. New churches proliferated in Harlem in these years. Between 1870 and 1894, for example, six

Presbyterian churches were founded there.⁶⁸ Harlem had a First German Baptist Church, a Temple Israel of Harlem, and a St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church, to mention just a few.⁶⁹ There were German *Turnvereins*, cafés and choirs, German-Jewish fraternal societies, a Harlem Catholic Club, the elite Harlem Club (initiation fee \$100), a Harlem Yacht Club, a Harlem Literary Society, active local Democratic and Republican clubs, a branch of the YMCA, a Harlem Philharmonic Orchestra, and even Harlem orders of the Daughters of the Revolution and Loyal Women of American Liberty: created "to defend our free institutions."⁷⁰ The Twelfth Ward Savings Bank, founded in 1889, moved to larger quarters three times by 1896.⁷¹ Harlem supported a monthly literary magazine, a weekly magazine of Harlem doings, and bi-weekly newspaper.⁷² It was a vital, ever-growing, genteel community of great promise whose future seemed boundless.⁷³

To the generation that remembered only this Harlem, those who had never known the Harlem of squatters, shanties and mud flats (and would little understand the causes for its future changes), its memory remained warm and bright. It was a neighborhood "old-timers have cherished," a resident wrote years later. Few could disagree with the editor of *The Harlem Monthly Magazine* who saw Harlem developing as a "district . . . distinctly devoted to the mansions of the wealthy, the homes of the well-to-do, and the places of business of the tradespeople who minister their wants. . . ." ⁷⁴ "We have no adequate idea of . . . the greatness that lies in store for Harlem," another thought in 1890.⁷⁵

The Other Harlem: Roots of Instability

"Foreigners are crowding up the whole length of the island."

—*The Harlem Local Reporter*, 1893

"The existing speculation in flats and tenements surpasses . . . anything of the kind which has previously taken place in the real estate history of the city."

—*Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 1904

I

Within the general prosperity and optimism characteristic of the Harlem community in 1890 a few sources of possible instability could be noted. Much of the neighborhood was rebuilt in the 1870's and 1880's but some sections along the waterfront and others inaccessible to transportation remained undeveloped. One Hundred and Thirty-eighth to One Hundred and Forty-eighth Streets west of Eighth Avenue was unfilled marshland, known locally as "Canary Island." A gang of youths who lived nearby called themselves the "Canary Island Gang," and guarded their territory like an armed brigade when Negroes began moving into the Canary Island neighborhood in the early twentieth century. "The Irish boys on Eighth Avenue wouldn't let the other races come on Eighth Avenue at all," an early Negro resident recalled. "Up here . . . we had the Canary Island gang. . . ." ¹

Other low and marshy sections of what were then the fringes of the community served as garbage dumps, one on West One Hundred and Forty-first Street between Fifth and Lenox Avenues and another at West One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street. In the early 1890's it was generally believed that apartment houses would be constructed on these grounds in the near future, and that the garbage piled ten to twelve feet high would act as filler and save future work.² Residents

of the neighborhood complained to municipal officials about these health hazards, spawning grounds for all kinds of disease. One prominent local businessman admonished the city fathers for failing to clean up the dumps: "You must remember, gentlemen," he protested, "that Harlem is no longer a country village."³ "Fill in the Flats," a local newspaper said in an editorial.⁴

When the flats were filled in the late 1890's, they helped initiate another wave of land and property speculation in Harlem. In the aftermath of the collapse of this second speculative mania, during the first decade of the twentieth century, Negroes moved to Harlem in considerable numbers.

II

Near the less attractive areas of Harlem, on the periphery of the middle-class community, lived people by-passed by Harlem's late-nineteenth-century affluence. Italian immigrants crowded in "common tenements"⁵ from One Hundred and Tenth to One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Streets, east of Third Avenue to the river. This section, the future bailiwick of La Guardia and Marcantonio, was "as thoroughly Italian as Rome, Naples, Palermo or Messina," a journalist noted. In the 1890's the poverty of "Harlem's Little Italy" seemed a glaring incongruity in a neighborhood known as the home of "the great middle-class population, the very cream of our citizenship."⁶ Italians were the first New Immigrant group to come to Harlem and a source of embarrassment and displeasure to the richer people who lived nearby. The smells that emanated from their "vile tenements," one critic said in 1894, "annoyed their brownstone neighbors."⁷

The "Italian Colony" appeared like a "Foreign Village" to one man. Inquisitive Harlemites would stroll across town on religious holidays and feast days to gaze at the strange doings. They could see a marionette show or men grinding their street organs: the "boxes full of music that come around on four wheels everyday."⁸ Pushcart peddlers hawking their wares upset the quiet demeanor of the neighborhood and a campaign was waged by local businessmen and street cleaners to keep them off the streets. In 1891 the city opened an area along the East River for use as a produce market: "Adieu! Peddlers Forever!"⁹ The poorest of the poor groveled for leftover food in garbage dumps and trash cans: "Here can be found the refuse of Italy

making a poor living on the refuse from Harlem ashbarrels," a caustic reporter commented.¹⁰

Those who lived through the transition of Harlem to a Negro ghetto tended to forget that substantial numbers of Negroes were also scattered throughout the neighborhood in the late nineteenth century. It seemed to many that Negroes came to Harlem suddenly in the twentieth century; older white residents never really understood the nature of the change that reshaped their entire community.¹¹ In reality, the Negro sections of Harlem predated those of its late-nineteenth-century residents. The first Negroes to live and work in Harlem were slaves and references to them are found in seventeenth-century documents. The original wagon road constructed between New Amsterdam and Harlem was built by the "Dutch West India Company's Negroes."¹² Slaves worked on farms and estates in Harlem in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and colonial Harlem even had its own "Negro Burying Ground." One local farmer bequeathed his slaves to his children in 1752.¹³ The New York Census of 1790 listed 115 slaves for the "Harlem Division," just under one-third of its total population.¹⁴

With freedom Negroes continued to live in the general area. A white Methodist church in Harlem had some Negro communicants in 1832,¹⁵ and Negro squatters and farmers settled in the community at the time Irish immigrants came in the 1840's and 1850's.¹⁶ Harlem African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ("Little Zion") was constructed as a mission to Harlem's Negroes by the downtown "Mother Zion" Church. In 1843 its sixty-six members worshiped in a small brick building on East One Hundred and Seventeenth Street. "Little Zion," a center of Negro life in Harlem throughout the nineteenth century, became an independent church in the twentieth.¹⁷ There was a branch of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Harlem in the 1840's,¹⁸ and a Negro public school there in the 1850's.¹⁹ Draft Rioters tramped through Harlem in 1863 destroying Negro cottages in their rage: "Many of them went through 125th Street carrying clubs toward the east side where they burned almost an entire block at 130th Street and the Harlem River," a white resident remembered.²⁰

Harlem's small Negro community gradually increased in size in the late nineteenth century as colored servants worked in homes of the

wealthy who moved into the neighborhood. One family paid for the passage of a Negro woman from Virginia in 1875 ("a genuine Virginia darkey," they recalled),²¹ and later brought her daughter to Harlem also. Occasional advertisements for jobs by Negroes appeared in local periodicals: "Colored woman wants family washing."²² William H. Butler, a Negro musician, offered lessons to the public.²³ A Harlem tenement house, "Hooker's Building," which had once been occupied by Irish refugees of the Famine, "fell an easy prey to the negro" in the 1890's, a white Harlemiter recalled.²⁴ Salem Church, a mission of St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded in a Harlem store at the turn of the century.²⁵ Other Methodist and Baptist storefront missions "up in Harlem [were] doing much-needed work for colored servants" in 1900, the *New York Sun* observed.²⁶

In fact, a substantial Negro population lived in Harlem at the turn of the twentieth century. Though much smaller but more disparate than the Negro sections in the Tenderloin and San Juan Hill, it included occasional Negro blocks distributed throughout Harlem: "they are found clear across the city from river to river," a Columbia University student wrote in 1898.²⁷

In the 1880's and 1890's Negroes lived on East One Hundred and Twenty-second, One Hundred and Twenty-fourth and One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Streets, and on West One Hundred and Twenty-fourth, One Hundred and Twenty-fifth, One Hundred and Twenty-sixth and One Hundred and Thirty-fourth Streets.²⁸ There were two Negro apartment houses, the Garrison and the Sumner, of One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street and Broadway in 1890.²⁹ West One Hundred and Forty-sixth Street had "a large colony of the poorest colored people" in the 1890's, and was popularly known by the choice epithet "Nigger Row."³⁰ The "Negro tenements" on West One Hundred and Thirtieth Street were called Harlem's "Darktown."³¹ Colored Knights of Pythias had a lodge in Harlem, Negro churches used the Harlem and East Rivers for baptisms, public outings were held in Sulzer's Harlem Park.³² In 1891 a Negro political organization conducted public meetings in a Harlem assembly hall.³³ "Colored Tenants Preferred," "The Neatest Apartments in Harlem," "Desirable Properties for Colored People," and similar signs appeared on tenements in Harlem in the 1890's.³⁴ In 1902 the New York City Tenement House Commission made a block-by-block sur-



Woods and meadows, Harlem Plains, 1812; lithograph by G. Hayward for *D. T. Valentine's Manual*, 1856 (*Brown Brothers*)

Boating on the Harlem River, around 1900 (*Brown Brothers*)





On the way to the Harlem
Speedway, around 1905-
1910 (*Brown Brothers*)

The WATT ESTATE—An Entire City Block

From Lenox to Seventh Avenues, 139th to 140th Streets



THE PINCKNEY HOMESTEAD

A Natural Playground Site in the Heart of Harlem

Endorsed by City Officials, The Harlem Board of Commerce,
The Boys' and Girls' "Get-What-You-Want" Club and
others, as one of Harlem's most needed public improvements.

¶ If you want the City to acquire this property for a play ground,
NOW is the time to act.—Write to the Mayor, Presidents of the
Borough and Board of Alderman, how badly you need this play-
ground for your children.

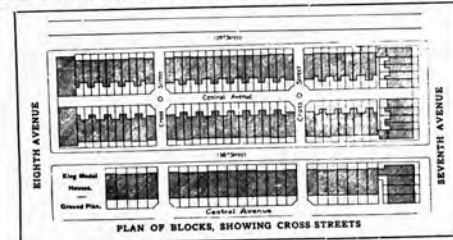
The eighteenth-century Watt
Mansion, which was later a
cafeteria, The Lybia, and
finally torn down (*"Harlem
Magazine," October 1913*)



HOMES OF BEAUTY AND CONVENIENCE WITH PRIVATE GARAGES

In a restricted residential section—on tree-shaded streets—quiet
and refined—as distinctive as a suburban colony—with all the
advantages of city life. Situated on

138th and 139th Streets, West of Seventh Ave.



Call and See Me About
My SPECIAL OFFER **John J. Halleron, Agent,** 252 West 138th St.
Telephone AL 60881 1008

"Restricted" residential area in "quiet and refined" section, central Har-
lem, 1917, advertisement in the organ of the white Harlem Board of
Commerce (*"Harlem Magazine," April 1917*)

Harlem Board of Commerce dinner, 1913 (note "Boost Harlem" sign),
at Pabst Harlem Restaurant, which by 1920 was a Kress 5 & 10 cents
store (*"Harlem Magazine," February 1913*)



STAND BY!

Harlem Has a Bright Future—
If You Will Help to Make It.

STAND BY!

Cooperate with this organization and conserve property values.
Take advantage of what we offer you—help us to help you.
United we stand, divided we are at the mercy of the "clever buyer"
Call on us or write for prospectus.

PROPERTY OWNERS' IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
217 West 125th Street

"United we stand, divided we are
at the mercy of the 'clever buyer'"
—white Harlem, 1914 (*"Harlem
Magazine,"* October 1914)

Anti-Litter League, part of the
campaign for "desirable" citizens
(*"Harlem Magazine,"* April 1917)

A CAMPAIGN FOR A CLEANER HARLEM

The Anti-Litter League, with Co-Operation of the Harlem Board of Commerce, Seeks Block Captains to Assist in Educating Public to Keep the Streets, Sidewalks and Parks Free of Rubbish and Litter

With the aid of the Harlem Board of Commerce and several other organizations in Harlem the Anti-Litter League proposes to preach the gospel of cleanliness to the residents of Harlem from now on. The gospel is a very easy one for them to live up to, and the Anti-Litter League with the co-operation of the Harlem Board of Commerce eventually hopes to bring about better street conditions as regards cleanliness.

The aim of the Anti-Litter League, of which Mr. Charles Coml is founder and Mr. John C. James is president, and Mr. Robert J. Kennedy, secretary, is to raise an army of "block captains" in Harlem among the boys and girls attending the parochial and public schools and adults as well, whose duty it will be to point out to all they see throwing newspapers, burnt matches, cigar and cigarette stubs, discarded envelopes and a thousand and one other varieties of litter on the sidewalks, roadways and parks that they are violating the city ordinances and can be sent to prison or fined. The "block captain" will also point out that it is wrong to sweep refuse from the sidewalk to the roadway. Section 53 of the Sanitary Code permits the sweeping of the sidewalk between the hours of six and eight A. M. each day. The fault with a great many residents of Harlem is that they sweep their sidewalks at any time they feel like doing so, and rather than gather up their filth and place it into a receptacle they sweep it into the roadway where it is blown around, the result being that many believe the Street Cleaning Department is not on the job. At a recent conference and luncheon held under the auspices of the Anti-Litter League the Harlem Board of Commerce and other organizations were represented, the Board of Commerce being represented by Mr. John A. Wilbur, secretary; Mr. Charles

H. Fuller and Mr. Edward W. Forrest. Mr. Wilbur when called upon by Mr. James said that he would do all in his power to aid the work of the Anti-Litter League and would bring the matter up at the next meeting of the Harlem Board of Commerce. What the Anti-Litter League wants everyone to do is a very simple matter. It simply requests that the residents of Har-



A Block Captain's Mission
lem do all in their power to prevent the littering of the sidewalks, roadways and parks. No one in Harlem would like to have his front walk, or his porch, or his parlor messed up with newspapers, fruit peelings, burnt matches, cigar and cigarette stubs, discarded envelopes and a thousand and one other varieties of litter. Any person who would do this would be regarded as a very undesirable guest, and looked at from the standpoint of the community at large he is not a desirable citizen. The aim of the Anti-Litter League is to make every citizen in Harlem as jealous of the orderly and tidy appearance of Harlem streets, sidewalks and public

places as they would be of their own lawns and yards, their own sidewalks and even their own living rooms. A roadway may be swept out each day. It may be thoroughly cleaned at regular intervals; but it will not remain neat or tidy for any length of time if pedestrians habitually use the sidewalks, roadways and parks as they would garbage receptacles for material they have no longer any use for.

The Anti-Litter League can be useful in a great many ways if of all kinds contribute more accidental deaths and injuries than any other single type of misdeed. A great many falls are occasioned by slipping. Fruit peelings under any conditions, cigar or cigarette stubs or bits of paper on a sidewalk are fertile causes of dangerous accidents, and the Anti-Litter League is, therefore, a co-worker in the great cause of public safety.

Anyone in Harlem can become a "block captain." There is no fee charged. Anyone who volunteers to become a "block captain" is doing a patriotic service. To be interested in the block in which he lives, and to pledge himself to refrain from throwing waste materials of every nature upon sidewalks, streets, avenues, parks and other public places and premises, to call the attention of offenders to the laws against throwing or sweeping rubbish upon streets and highways.

125th street, Harlem's principal thoroughfare, side streets and avenues and the parks of Harlem are in a badly littered condition and no criticism can be directed at Commissioner Fetterston and the Street Cleaning Department for he is doing all he possibly can to keep Harlem streets clean.

It is entirely up to the residents of Harlem themselves. If they want clean streets they had better refrain from making them dirty. Cleanliness costs nothing.



Homes of Negroes who had moved north from Greenwich Village to San Juan Hill district, the West 60's, midway to Harlem (*Brown Brothers*)

Opposite: "For Respectable Colored Families Only," Harlem street scene, around 1915-1920 (*Brown Brothers*)

ORIGIN
OF THE
**Afro-American
Realty Company**

THE Afro-American Realty Company recently incorporated under the laws of the State of New York for \$500,000 to operate in New York City Real Estate, had its origin in ten men, who over a year ago, joined themselves together, into co-partnership for the above mentioned purpose. They began by taking five year leases on flat houses and renting them to people of their own race. The success that met their efforts by far exceeded the expectation of the most optimistic of the co-partnership. In less than six months they were in control of ten flat houses, with an earning capacity of over \$5,000 per annum.

Prejudice of White Owner and Agent Cause of Present Condition.

The reason for the present condition of the colored tenancy in New York City to-day, is because of the race prejudice of the white owner and his white agent. When the owner becomes colored and his agent colored, then there is compelled to come an improvement of the condition.

Race Prejudice Turned into Dollars and Cents.

Race prejudice is a luxury and like all other luxuries, can be made very expensive in New York City, if the Negroes will but answer this call of the Afro-American Realty Company. With a cash capital of \$500,000, the Afro-American Realty Company can turn race prejudice into dollars and cents. The very prejudice which has heretofore worked against us can be turned and used to our profit.

From the prospectus for Afro-American Realty Company, 1904 (bankrupt in 1908), organized by Negro realtor Philip A. Payton, Jr., known as the "Father of Colored Harlem"

How to Elevate the Moral and Civic Tone of the Negro Community

Negroes—good, bad and indifferent—as long as they have lived in tenements, have had to live shamefully intermingled. Formerly they were forced to live in ramshackle tenements that had been abandoned by the whites, at exorbitant rents for wretched accommodations. But now, thanks to the thrift and enterprise of certain progressive Negro real estate agents, they may live in houses having the same conveniences and accommodations as the whites. While, happily, the physical surroundings of the Negro tenant have been radically altered, unhappily his moral surroundings remain unchanged. How, then, can we improve his moral surroundings? Co-operation is a *sine qua non* in the solution of this problem. Tenants MUST co-operate with their agents and agents MUST co-operate with one another in ameliorating the moral and civic condition of Negro communities. We can't lean on the landlord. He is an indifferent third party. He cares not, so to speak, whether his house is tenanted with respectable or disreputable tenants, so long as it is full and he gets his rents. If he's at all concerned about the disreputable or respectable tenants in his house, it's only to the extent that he's afraid the former may be the cause of some or all of the latter moving, thus leaving him with some vacancies.

The present moral conditions of Negro tenancy are indeed bad. The individual efforts of certain Negro agents toward bettering the conditions have been praiseworthy, to say the least, but as far as making any progress toward the desired goal is concerned, such efforts must needs be and practically have been of little or no avail. What is the desirable goal is too obvious to command explanation. But how to reach that goal is the matter under consideration. In the first place, we repeat that the united efforts of tenants and agents are the desideratum.

Let the agent compel a prospective tenant to furnish references satisfying fair and reasonable requirements as imposed by, agreed upon and accepted in *toto* by all agents. The respectable tenant will be glad to do it. Any tenant not furnishing such references should be "jimmied," as it were, from decent neighborhoods.

This matter of bettering the moral and civic condition of Negro communities is a case of a wheel within a wheel. As has been emphasized before, the agent can do absolutely nothing without co-operation. Ministers wielding great influence over large congregations can lend a powerfully helping hand, if they will. We must all pull together. We cannot work resultfully in factions. It is unquestionably within our power to do it, if all others do their respective parts and the colored real estate agent does his.

Desirable Apartments for Desirable Tenants
Also Homes for Sale on Easy Terms

Philip A. Payton, Jr., Company

New York's Pioneer Negro Real Estate Agents
BROKERS—APPRAISERS

TELEPHONES 917-918 HARLEM 67 West 134th St., New York City



Harlem family, around 1915 (Brown Brothers)

Shack at Fifth Avenue and 140th Street, 1927 (United Press International photo)



Successor to the ill-fated Afro-American Realty Company seeking "desirable tenants" through the NAACP magazine ("The Crisis," January 1911)

vey of Manhattan's population. Its records present an exact description of the *distribution* of Harlem's Negro population at the turn of the century.

DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO FAMILIES IN THE TWELFTH WARD, 1902⁸⁵

Families	Streets	Avenues
50	88th and 89th	2nd and 3rd
24	94th and 95th	2nd and 3rd
77	96th and 97th	2nd and 3rd
50	97th and 98th	Lexington and 4th
72	97th and 98th	3rd and Lexington
19	97th and 98th	2nd and 3rd
40	99th and 100th	3rd and Lexington
15	99th and 100th	2nd and 3rd
11	102nd and 103rd	2nd and 3rd
29	103rd and 104th	2nd and 3rd
17	114th and 115th	Madison and 5th
11	121st and 122nd	1st and 2nd
46	122nd and 123rd	1st and 2nd
13	123rd and 124th	7th and 8th
16	123rd and 124th	Pleasant and 1st
51	124th and 125th	7th and 8th
56	124th and 125th	Pleasant and 1st
16	125th and 126th	Amsterdam and Broadway
28	125th and 126th	Columbus and Amsterdam
27	125th and 126th	8th and Columbus
16	126th and 127th	Columbus and Amsterdam
46	126th and 127th	2nd and 3rd
14	127th and 128th	2nd and 3rd
12	130th and 131st	Broadway and West to River
39	133rd and 134th	Lenox and 7th
30	133rd and 134th	5th and Lenox
74	134th and 135th	Lenox and 7th
101	134th and 135th	5th and Lenox
48	135th and 136th	5th and Lenox
56	146th and 147th	7th and 8th
23	147th and 148th	8th and Bradhurst

III

The Negro and Italian sections of Harlem seemed, when thought of at all, curiosities, sources of minor annoyance or objects of charity to the typical Harlemitte of the 1880's and 1890's. Women's clubs and religious organizations offered varieties of assistance to the poor of



"Striver's Row," spacious brownstones at 139th Street, designed in 1891 by Stanford White (photo by Roy DeCarava)

Paul Laurence Dunbar Apartments, at 150th and 151st Streets, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, built by Rockefeller in the 1920's for middle-class Negroes, sold by Rockefeller in 1937 (*The Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library*)



these neighborhoods. A young Negro educator from the South, known even then as a level-headed fellow, visited the Lenox Avenue Unitarian Church in 1893. He gave a lecture and appealed to Harlem's "substantial citizenry" to raise money for his small school in Alabama, and undoubtedly left the community with a sizable contribution.³⁶ He was Booker T. Washington.

The Republican Ladies Auxiliary of Harlem gave lessons in American democracy and voting to residents of the "Italian Quarter." (It was reported they taught immigrants to make the "X" next to the Republican column.)³⁷ In the Depression of 1893, the Harlem Relief Society, composed of volunteer workers from the local branch of the Charity Organization Society, was founded. The Society distributed food, clothing and fuel to the poor in the winter of 1893. (Winters in the city were always harshest for the poverty-stricken who lived in cold-water flats.)³⁸ In response to widespread economic distress churches in the neighborhood took up collections for the needy.³⁹ A Society for Befriending the Poor Catholic Children of Harlem was organized.⁴⁰ Tammany politicians opened "People's Restaurants" to offer decent five-cent meals to the hungry.⁴¹ (Make the "X" next to the Democratic column.) With the growth of the Negro population of Harlem, the Relief Society boosted its work among colored people and eventually hired a Negro nurse and social worker to visit their homes. "No white person can quite understand the underlying thoughts and actions of this race," the Society said in explaining its reasons for hiring a Negro assistant. "Our work among Negroes increases year by year."⁴²

The concern of Harlemites for the lower classes, Negro or white, was not always charitable. Newspapers mocked what they considered the peculiar social and religious lives of Negroes and Italians. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, typical of its age, made light of the "colored pussons" who attended the wedding of a Negro janitor, spoofed the Negro "ristocrats" who danced the Cake Walk (a cake or pie was given to the winning couple).⁴³ Harlemites who laughed at *A Trip to Coontown* and *In Old Kentucky* made them highly successful vaudeville shows.⁴⁴ Italian immigrants seemed to some knife-wielding members of the Mafia. Articles described "Harlem's Bowery Sights."⁴⁵ No one suspected that these minority groups and others who settled in Harlem in the early twentieth century would eventually become a serious threat to the stability of the community.

IV

Harlem life altered radically in the first decade of the twentieth century. The construction of new subway routes into the neighborhood in the late 1890's set off a second wave of speculation in Harlem land and property. Speculators who intended to make astronomic profits when the subway was completed bought the marshes, garbage dumps and lots left unimproved or undeveloped in the 1870's and 1880's. Between 1898 and 1904, the year that the Lenox Avenue line opened at One Hundred and Forty-fifth Street, "practically all the vacant land in Harlem" was "built over," the *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* noted in 1904. "The growth of . . . Harlem . . . has been truly astonishing during the last half dozen years."⁴⁶

The real estate boom created a wave of new building activity in Harlem dominated primarily by speculators, although some individuals made long-term investments. It was taken as business gospel that investments would be doubled and trebled after the completion of the "tunnel road." "Even a 5-story single flat in Harlem would net . . . at the end of . . . three to five years . . . at the utmost . . . a very handsome unearned increment," a realtor concluded. "It would be impossible to err."⁴⁷ Another supposed expert in urban real estate maintained that no "other class of public improvements had such a great, immediate and permanent effect upon land values as rapid transit lines. . . ."⁴⁸

Speculation in Manhattan land along the routes of new transportation facilities originally occurred when charters were granted to horse-car companies in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Trafficking in city lots throughout urban America proved often more lucrative than speculation on the western frontier. At the turn of the century the "grey wolves" who dominated so many other urban commercial and industrial enterprises in the Gilded Age controlled New York City's building industry: "expert professional operators [who raised] amounts of money varying between a few thousand and many million dollars. They . . . eagerly scan . . . New York real estate values, and . . . make a rush for any section in which they see possibilities of profit."⁵⁰ The Equitable and Metropolitan Life insurance companies invested heavily in Harlem land. "The existing speculation in flats and tenements," an observer wrote at the turn of the century, "surpasses . . . anything of the kind which has previously taken place in the real estate history of the city."⁵¹

This real estate fever "seized upon [the Jewish] Ghettos of Greater New York" too. Offices were set up in people's homes, investments were discussed in Lower East Side restaurants, as workers with modest savings conceived themselves as budding realtors. Abraham Cahan, the well-known Jewish newspaper editor and novelist, graphically described the "boom atmosphere" which even pervaded the immigrant ghettos of the city: "Small tradesmen of the slums, and even working-men, were investing their savings in houses and lots. Jewish carpenters, house-painters, bricklayers, or instalment peddlers became builders of tenements or frame dwellings, real-estate speculators. Deals were being closed and poor men were making thousands of dollars in less time than it took to drink a glass of tea or the plate of sorrel soup over which the transaction took place. Women, too, were ardently dabbling in real estate. . . ."52

In the section of Harlem north of Central Park to One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, and west of Lexington Avenue to Seventh Avenue, new tenements and apartment houses went up in the late 1890's. These properties seemed to offer "good profit on investments," as East European Jews spilled out of the Lower East Side in search of better homes⁵³—part of the migration to lower Harlem and other boroughs that reflected their economic mobility. The disintegration of the Jewish sections on the Lower East Side that began in the first decade of the twentieth century continued for thirty years. As Russian and Polish Jews replaced German Jews in the garment industry in these years, they now began to encroach on the residential center of "Uptown Jewry." To live in lower Harlem became a symbol of good times to many East European Jews. Some families who moved into the neighborhood, one contemporary recorded, "speak apologetically and at times are actually embarrassed when their former residence in the lower parts of the city is mentioned." The newspapers called this section of Harlem "Little Russia."⁵⁴

The University Settlement, founded on the Lower East Side, followed its people to Harlem. An "Experimental School in Harlem" established in 1902⁵⁵ became the "Harlem Guild of the University Settlement" in 1903.⁵⁶ Maurice H. Harris, a social worker, started another settlement on East One Hundred and Fifth Street in 1906. "It is from the inspiration . . . I obtained from your Settlement that I have been enabled to start a humble venture of my own," he wrote his mentor Lillian D. Wald.⁵⁷ Jewish synagogues bought property in

the neighborhood: "Calvary Presbyterian Church is now one of the prettiest little Jewish synagogues in . . . New York."⁵⁸ A variety of social institutions arose: the Harlem Home of the Daughters of Israel, Harlem Hebrew School, Harlem Hebrew Educational Institute, Harlem Hebrew Retail Grocers' Association, and so on. Local libraries began to acquire books of Jewish history and Yiddish literature for their newest readers.⁵⁹

Older residents objected to the "migration of the better class of East Side Jews into the district north and east of the Park, then the new quarter of the most prosperous Russian Jews,"⁶⁰ in terms similar to those previously reserved for Italian immigrants and Negroes. "Foreigners are crowding up the whole length of the island," the *Harlem Local Reporter* said in an editorial.⁶¹ Elmer Rice and his family, like many of their Harlem neighbors, moved away from One Hundred and Sixth Street in 1903 because the "neighborhood had been growing less 'refined'. . . ."62 The sometimes bitter response of German Harlemites to the settlement of East European Jews in their community was symbolized by a to-let sign which hung on one building: *Keine Juden, und keine Hunde*. [No Jews, No Dogs.]⁶³

V

More luxurious apartment houses were built around 1900 in West Harlem, along Seventh and Lenox Avenues in the One Hundred and Thirties and One Hundred and Forties, the first section of the neighborhood to become Negro Harlem. Contemporaries called these blocks "the best of Harlem." This section of the community suffered most from inaccessibility in the 1880's and 1890's,⁶⁴ and hardly an edition of the local newspaper in the 1890's failed to demand improved transportation facilities there. To contemporaries this "old, old story of rapid transit" would make Harlem "even more popular than it is as a place of residence. . . ."65

Speculation in these properties was probably more widespread and involved larger expenditures than realty manipulations in other sections of Harlem or the city. Two brothers, John D. and Thomas F. Crimmins, for example, bought the entire blocks of One Hundred and Forty-fourth and One Hundred and Forty-fifth Streets between Lenox and Seventh Avenues in 1895, thinking the "Lenox Avenue electric car" would "greatly enhance the value of the property."⁶⁶ In keeping with the traditions of the neighborhood and the type of homes con-

structed in the 1880's, it was believed richer people who wanted "high-class flats," "costly dwellings," and who earned enough to afford them, would come to West Harlem. Many of the newly constructed buildings were equipped with elevators, maid's rooms and butler's pantries.⁶⁷ In 1899 William Waldorf Astor erected an apartment house on Seventh Avenue at a cost of \$500,000.⁶⁸ Sunday real estate sections of New York City newspapers at the turn of the century bristled with full-page advertisements and pictures of the elegant homes in West Harlem.⁶⁹ The revived building activity of these years created the physical foundations for what became the most luxurious Negro ghetto in the world.

Speculation in West Harlem property led to phenomenal increases in the price of land and the cost of houses there—increases inflated out of all proportion to their real value. John M. Royall, Negro realtor, recalled that "from 1902 to 1905 real estate speculative fever seized all New York City. The great subway proposition . . . permeated the air. Real estate operators and speculators [imagined] becoming millionaires, and bought freely in the West Harlem district in and about the proposed subway stations. Men bought property on thirty and sixty day contracts, and sold their contracts . . . and made substantial profits. I have known buyers to pay \$38,000 and \$75,000 for tenements which showed a gross income of only \$2600 and \$5000 a year. On they went buying, buying. . . ." Houses continually changed hands. Each time a house was sold, Royall said, it brought a higher price. In the urge to get rich quick on Harlem property, few persons realized how artificial market values had become.⁷⁰

The inevitable bust came in 1904–1905. Speculators sadly realized afterward that too many houses were constructed at one time. West Harlem was glutted with apartments and "excessive building . . . led to many vacancies."⁷¹ No one knew exactly how long it would take to construct the subway and many houses built four and five years in advance of its completion remained partly unoccupied. The first of them to be inhabited by Negroes, for example, was never rented previously.⁷² Rents were too high for the general population (\$35–\$45 per month) and precluded any great rush to West Harlem even after the subway was completed.⁷³ There was a widespread "overestimation of . . . rental value," a contemporary remarked. When the market broke, landlords competed with each other for

tenants by reducing rents, or offering a few months' rent-free occupancy to them. Local realtors unsuccessfully attempted to eliminate these cutthroat practices.⁷⁴

By 1905 financial institutions no longer made loans to Harlem speculators and building-loan companies, and many foreclosed on their original mortgages. The inflated prices asked for land and property in West Harlem "solemnly settled beneath a sea of depreciated values."⁷⁵ In the aftermath of the speculative collapse, and as a consequence of the initiative of Negro realtors, large numbers of colored people began to settle in West Harlem.

Race Enterprise: The Afro-American Realty Company

"The books of the Afro-American Realty Company are now open for stock subscription. Today is the time to buy, if you want to be numbered among those of the race who are doing something toward trying to solve the so-called 'Race Problem.'"

—The Afro-American Realty Company, *Prospectus*, 1904

"In numerous conversations with you both, I have urged that the very least the Company could do, since it has ceased to do business, is to make . . . an Explicit statement giving the reasons which led to . . . failure. . . ."

—Emmett J. Scott to Philip A. Payton, Jr., and Fred R. Moore, 1908

I

The individuals and companies caught in Harlem's rapidly deflated real estate market were threatened with ruin. Rather than face "financial destruction" some landlords and corporations opened their houses to Negroes and collected the traditionally high rents that colored people paid.¹ Others used the threat of renting to Negroes to frighten neighbors into buying their property at higher than market prices. Shrewder operators (contemporaries called them "clever buyers" and "white blackmailers," present-day realtors refer to them as "blockbusters") hoped to take advantage of the unusual situation by "placing colored people in property so that they might buy other parcels adjoining or in the same block [reduced in price by] fear on the part of whites to one-half of the values then obtaining," John M. Royall noted. By using these techniques "a great number" of property owners were able "to dispose of their property or . . . get a . . .

more lucrative return from rents paid by colored tenants," he concluded.²

The existence of a loosely rooted Negro population ready to settle in Harlem was primarily the result of ever-increasing Negro migration to the city. Further, the destruction of many all-Negro blocks in the Tenderloin when Pennsylvania Station was built in the first decade of the twentieth century, part of a more general commercial expansion in midtown Manhattan, dislocated the Negro population. Negro businessmen who owned property in the Tenderloin made substantial fortunes by selling and moving uptown. Negro tenants, offered decent living accommodations for the first time in the city's history, "flocked to Harlem and filled houses as fast as they were opened to them."³

This situation offered unusual money-making opportunities to a Negro realtor, Philip A. Payton, Jr. Payton was keenly aware of the housing needs of New York City's growing Negro population. His plan seemed foolproof, and guaranteed to satisfy Harlem's white landlords, the Negro people and himself. Payton offered to lease Harlem apartment houses from white owners and assure them a regular annual income. He, in turn, would rent these homes to Negroes and make a profit by charging rents ten per cent above the then deflated market price.⁴ Many Negroes were willing to scrimp to live in beautiful apartments in an exclusive section of the city and Payton's initial operations were highly successful. His name became a respected one in Negro New York.

II

Phil Payton, as his friends called him, was born and brought up in Westfield, Massachusetts. His father, a southerner by birth, was an educated man—a graduate of Wayland Seminary in the District of Columbia. The elder Payton came north in 1872 and earned his living as a merchant and barber. His barber shop was a gathering place for the small Negro community in Westfield. In 1873, he married a Baltimore girl, and Phil was born three years later.⁵

The younger Payton's career started in similar fashion. He went south for his education and was graduated from Livingston College in Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1898. When he married and came to seek his fortune in New York in 1899 he worked at odd jobs to support himself. At first he was a handyman at six dollars a week, then a barber (a trade he learned in his father's shop), and finally a

janitor in a real estate office. Payton became intrigued with the real estate business in the boom atmosphere that pervaded the housing market at the turn of the century, and also picked up a touch of the speculator's urge himself.⁶ In 1900 the twenty-four-year-old Philip A. Payton, Jr., decided to go into business for himself: "Management of Colored Tenements A Specialty."⁷

At first the nascent entrepreneur was far from successful. In fact, he did so little business initially that he could not pay rent on his office and was evicted from his apartment. Payton's first break came as a result of a dispute between two landlords. In an interview in 1912 he described the incident: "I was a real estate agent, making a specialty of the management of colored tenement property for nearly a year before I actually succeeded in getting a colored tenement to manage," he said. "My first opportunity came as a result of a dispute between two landlords in West 134th Street. To 'get even' one of them turned his house over to me to fill with colored tenants. I was successful in renting and managing this house, and after a time I was able to induce other landlords to . . . give me their houses to manage."⁸ Within a short time Payton began to advertise his services in white real estate journals:

Colored Tenements Wanted⁹

Colored man makes a specialty of managing colored tenements; references; bond. Philip A. Payton, Jr., agent and broker, 67 West 134th.

By 1904 the young man who four years earlier could not afford a decent meal¹⁰ became the most prominent Negro realtor in New York City.

Payton was a light-skinned man of medium height and build. He wore pince-nez glasses and could easily have passed for a young teacher or clergyman, but his physical appearance belied his personality.¹¹ Friends knew him as an ambitious and impetuous man, the archetype of a hard-driving salesman. When it was rumored that he was going to visit Liberia, for example, one of them wrote: "You had better cause the Liberians to be notified of his approach that they might get out their padlocks, and nail down everything that's lying around loose."¹²

Payton's business success brought him public recognition. By the first decade of the twentieth century he was an intimate of Negro

politician and Internal Revenue Collector Charles W. Anderson, and a friend of Fred R. Moore, editor of *The New York Age*¹³ and general manager of the National Negro Business League. He was on the closest terms with practically every other member of the small Negro business and professional community in the city. Payton corresponded with Booker T. Washington and Washington's secretary, Emmett J. Scott. He was president of a short-lived local Negro defense society organized to protest police brutality in 1905, and a respected member of Washington's National Negro Business League.¹⁴ Payton certainly conceived himself as a leader of the race and his public and private statements tended to foster this impression. When Emmett J. Scott learned that white landlords in Harlem were organizing to prevent the settlement of Negroes there, Payton told him not to worry: "*The fight that I am making,*" he replied, "*has got to be made sooner or later and I see no better time than now.*"¹⁵ Four of the apartment houses he rented to Negroes in 1906 were called "The Washington," "The Langston," "The Douglass," "The Dunbar."¹⁶ When asked about his role in securing homes for Negroes in Harlem, Payton emphasized his personal importance: "By opening for colored tenants first a house on one block and then a house in another I have finally succeeded in securing . . . over two hundred and fifty first-class flats and private dwellings," he said in 1912.¹⁷ The letters "P A P," in red and black, appeared on all the houses Payton controlled. Philip A. Payton, Jr., has been called the "Father of Colored Harlem."¹⁸

There is no serious question of Payton's personal honesty, although he was later sued for fraud by some stockholders in the Negro real estate company he founded—the Afro-American Realty Company. He was, however, a young man who clearly saw the possibilities of exploiting Harlem's depressed real estate market for his own as well as for the race's interest. He seemed to have complete confidence in his own business judgments. He got rich almost overnight, and made deals involving large sums of money before he had much practical business experience. Sometimes his activities as a businessman were less than exemplary. He could, for example, forget to file his corporate financial statements at the proper time, as he did in 1910, and thereby make himself liable to penalties of \$1,000 to \$10,000. His friend, Collector of Internal Revenue Charles W. Anderson, got him out of this jam by extending the filing date: "Payton

went away without arranging for any report of his corporations, as required by the corporation tax law," Anderson wrote. "Learning of this, I availed myself of the authority conferred on collectors in the law to extend the time . . . thirty days."¹⁹

Nor could Payton hold on to money once he made it. One of his properties, at One Hundred and Thirty-second Street and Lenox Avenue, was hopefully to become the site of the "Payton Building." He confessed to a friend that he sold the land for \$10,000 in cash instead, and quickly spent it all: ". . . It is all gone," he lamented, "and now I need some more." Alluding to a commonly held stereotype that Negroes spent money freely, he concluded sadly, "I am colored, too."²⁰

III

Payton's activities in Harlem real estate reached a high point in 1904 with his founding of the Afro-American Realty Company. The company had its genesis in a partnership of ten Negroes organized by Payton. This partnership specialized in acquiring five-year leases on Harlem property owned by whites and subsequently renting them to Negroes. In 1904, Payton conceived of reorganizing this small concern into a regular real estate corporation, capable of buying and constructing homes as well as leasing them. The company, incorporated on June 15, 1904, was permitted to "buy, sell, rent, lease, and sub-lease, all kinds of buildings, houses . . . lots, and other . . . real estate in the City of New York. . . ." It was capitalized at \$500,000 and authorized to issue 50,000 shares at \$10 each. Ten of the eleven original members of the all-Negro Board of Directors subscribed to 500 shares each. The company began with an estimated capital of \$100,000.²¹

Some of the important backers of the Afro-American Realty Company were Negroes who succeeded in what the Negro press called "Race Enterprise." Wealth in the Negro community came principally from businesses which provided services to Negroes, or larger extensions of such businesses. Real estate men, undertakers, lawyers, barbers, hair stylists—small entrepreneurs of all kinds—were the leading figures in the Negro business world. They supported the new corporation.

James C. Thomas, first president of the company, was probably

Payton's key backer initially. (Payton, the real power of the corporation, held the offices of vice-president and general manager.) Thomas was born in Harrisburg, Texas, on Christmas Day in the year of Emancipation, 1863. As a young man he worked as a cabin boy on steamers that plied their way between Galveston and ports of the northeast. In 1881, at the age of eighteen, he came to New York City and never left.²² He worked as a steward in some of Manhattan's private clubs; like many other Negro businessmen of his generation he found it necessary to accept service positions in the early years of his career. (Payton, a college graduate, was a porter and barber; the Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., was employed as a waiter in Atlantic City even after his ordination;²³ a Negro public school teacher earned her education by working as a janitress;²⁴ Negro educator William Lewis Bulkeley was a cook, janitor and waiter.)²⁵ While working as steward Thomas attended a local embalming school and was graduated as registered undertaker.

After a short-lived partnership with another Negro undertaker in the 1890's, Thomas opened his own business in the Tenderloin. A good funeral was all that many Negroes could look forward to—death was often the high point of life—and Thomas, tall and distinguished-looking in his Vandyke beard, was known as the man to do a proper job. His business was so successful that he purchased two buildings on Seventh Avenue at the turn of the century. Thomas' luck was with him in the selection of these houses—they were near the site of the future Pennsylvania Station. He later sold them for \$103,000 and, shortly afterward, moved his establishment to Harlem. By 1907 he was known as "the richest man of African descent in New York. . . ."²⁶

James E. Garner and Wilford H. Smith also served as officers in the Realty Company. Garner, corporation secretary and treasurer, had been born a slave in Charles County, Maryland. He grew up in the District of Columbia and worked as a porter in a drugstore and as a waiter when he came to New York City. In 1880 he established a small janitorial service in the Tenderloin. By the turn of the century, Garner's Manhattan House Cleaning and Renovating Bureau regularly employed thirty to thirty-five workers. When the National Negro Business League was founded in 1900, he was appointed treasurer of its New York branch.²⁷ Smith, another southern migrant, was the

corporation's lawyer, a close friend of Booker T. Washington, and one of the most esteemed Negro lawyers in Manhattan in the early twentieth century. Initially, Smith, Garner, Thomas and Payton held all the offices in the Afro-American Realty Company. In the next few years other well-known Negroes became directors and investors: Emmett J. Scott, the Reverend Dr. W. H. Brooks, Fred R. Moore and Charles W. Anderson.²⁸

IV

The Afro-American Realty Company was founded with high hopes of success—hopes which proved unfounded. At first, the corporation seemed to have sound financial backing and the support of eminent members of the Negro community. "The personnel of the Board of Directors of the company is bound to commend it to the respect, trust and confidence of even the most skeptical of our race," its prospectus stated. "Most of them are men who have made a success in their individual lines and are well-known in New York City for their ability, worth and integrity."²⁹ Early company transactions were profitable and tended to verify Payton's optimistic judgments. In 1904, for instance, the Afro-American Realty Company sold three of its newly acquired houses on West One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street to a white real estate concern, the Hudson Realty Company. Hudson Realty proceeded to evict its Negro tenants in order to replace them with whites. Payton, in turn, "blocked the game" by buying two other houses on the same street and evicting the white tenants in them. Within a short time, he was able to repurchase the original three (at 40, 42 and 44 West One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street), "filling the houses with Afro-Americans." These first highly publicized transactions boosted the reputation of the Realty Company. They "gave great publicity to the existence of the Afro-American Realty Company," *The New York Age* concluded in 1905.³⁰

Payton did not let the company rest on its laurels. To attract financial support from the Negro working class he advertised regularly in the Negro press and promised the average investor much more than he was able to fulfill later. (The prospectus offered profits of seven to ten per cent, the weekly advertisements omitted the seven.)³¹ Investment would not only yield "Tempting Profit," Negroes were told, but it was also their obligation to support an enterprise which would help end "relentless race prejudice": "To-day is

the time to buy, if you want to be numbered among those of the race who are doing something toward trying to solve the so-called 'Race Problem,' " it was argued. The anticipated success of the company would become a symbol of Negro business acumen and would end racial segregation in urban housing: "A respecting, law-abiding Negro will find conditions can be so changed that he will be able to rent, wherever his means will permit him to live," the *Prospectus* maintained. Race prejudice would be turned into "dollars and cents" for *Negroes*, not whites.³² Although public reports showed stocks being sold rapidly, privately the company found it necessary to hire a salesman to drum up business at a commission of 20 per cent. And stocks were sold, usually to individuals who could afford only a few shares at a time.³³

The Realty Company promised the world and delivered little. It had hopefully been incorporated for fifty years, but folded after four. During its short and hectic existence it was wracked with internal dissension. In four years there were three major reorganizations of its Board of Directors and officers. James C. Thomas and James E. Garner severed connections with the company in its first year. Wilford H. Smith was later influential in bringing suit against Payton for fraud. The final reorganization, in 1906, left Payton as president and general manager. It was formal recognition of the power he had wielded since the founding of the corporation.

V

In September 1905 Fred R. Moore, then secretary and treasurer of the corporation, wrote that the "Realty Company is coming on slowly. . . . If a conservative policy is followed profits can be made. . . ."³⁴ Payton played for bigger stakes. As general manager, he finally leased or purchased on loans and mortgages, at high interest rates, some twenty-five houses, the majority in Harlem.³⁵ The paper value of this property was estimated at \$1.1 million and its annual rental income at \$114,500.³⁶ Some members of the company objected to Payton's management, but they apparently had little say in the day-to-day operations of the corporation. The "directors," Wilford H. Smith wrote in 1906, "exercise no control. I think the near future will reveal all that I do not care to say."³⁷ Booker T. Washington, on close terms with all the officers of the Afro-American Realty Company, received regular reports of its progress. He was also

a sounding board for the internal opposition to Payton's control. In May 1906, for example, Smith informed him he was severing connections with the corporation. "I still believe that if the Company is properly handled, it will pay each investor well," he wrote, "but I do not believe it will ever be handled in the interest of the stockholders as long as the present manager is in control."⁸⁸

The dissension came into the open in October 1906 when forty-three dissatisfied stockholders, represented by Smith, sued Payton and the Realty Company for having issued a "fraudulent prospectus"; one which "intended to mislead and deceive, and to cheat and defraud the general public, and especially the colored people. . . ." The specific charge leveled at Payton was that he held absolute control of the company and was therefore personally liable for any misrepresentation. All the initial statements of the corporation's financial stability and the amount of property it owned were highly exaggerated, the accusation ran. Charles J. Crowder, the stockholder in whose name the suit was filed, charged that \$100,000 in stock "had not in fact been honestly subscribed for," but issued to Payton and his associates on "fictitious values"; that the contracts for the ten apartment houses the Realty Company claimed to control on five-year leases contained sixty- and ninety-day cancellation clauses, and that "nearly all of them had been cancelled" when the prospectus was issued; and, finally, that most of the houses the company claimed to own were, in reality, mortgaged nearly to their "full value." Crowder and another litigant, Frank S. Armand, each held one hundred shares of the corporation's stock. Practically all the others involved in the suit owned one to ten shares.⁸⁹

A touch of the ludicrous ran through the case. Payton, arrested in January 1907, immediately won release in the custody of one of his lawyers. The order of arrest was itself declared illegal and vacated when the judge ruled the suit a civil not a criminal action.⁴⁰ The lawyer for the plaintiff, Wilford H. Smith, had been the corporation's lawyer at the time of the writing of the supposedly fraudulent prospectus. During the trial, Payton's attorney introduced a manuscript copy of the original prospectus containing penciled corrections and revisions by Smith himself. The specific charge of fraud against Payton was dismissed on the grounds that he was only one of the officers in the corporation. The Realty Company itself, however, was found

guilty of misrepresentation and Crowder and other stockholders recovered their initial investments plus damages and legal costs. Justice Victor J. Dowling cited the company for claiming it owned property without restriction, when all its houses were heavily mortgaged.⁴¹

VI

The Afro-American Realty Company, with Payton as president, continued to do business through 1907 and the early part of 1908. After some prodding from stockholders, and in an attempt to restore confidence in the company's name, the first (and last) dividend was declared in June 1907.⁴² Further attempts to stimulate interest in the company after the bad press it received from Crowder's suit—letters sent to officers and stockholders asking them to encourage friends to invest, a stockholders' meeting in Mercy Baptist Church at which participants were "requested to bring any friends whom you think will be interested in subscribing to our Capital Stock"⁴³—were unsuccessful. Before the end of the year the Afro-American Realty Company floundered and, by 1908, it ceased to do business.

The corporation had been confronted with the first organized effort of white property owners in Harlem to prevent the sale of houses or the rental of apartments to Negroes, but this movement itself did not do any serious damage to the company. Payton himself scoffed at its importance. "I have taken no steps," he told his friend Emmett Scott, "without serious talks with some of the *large Real Estate interests in our City.*" Any fear on this account, he concluded, "is groundless. . . ."⁴⁴ Payton's connections must have been solid for, once the company was in financial trouble and no longer met its mortgage payments, some of the receivers gave it leeway. They initially permitted the Realty Company to collect rents and apply this money to its indebtedness: "the receiverships are friendly," Fred Moore wrote in the winter of 1907.⁴⁵ The suit against Payton, however, was certainly harmful for the company's reputation. He and his friends said that *all* the troubles of the company were caused not by any opposition to his business methods but by personal enmity. "The purpose of the action seems only to be to harass and discredit me," Payton claimed. "The past grand masters of the United Orders of Envy and Jealousy are arraying themselves against Mr. Payton," one of his friends wrote.⁴⁶ When Payton was asked about the higher rents he charged Negroes, he justified them on the grounds that he was forced

to borrow money at higher interest rates and had to pay more for his options than white realtors did.⁴⁷

In spite of charges and countercharges the major burden for the failure of the Afro-American Realty Company was Phil Payton's speculations. He had continued to buy property at a rapid pace even after Crowder's suit, and refused to listen to those who counseled a more moderate policy of acquisition. Rather than encourage interest in the corporation, this tended to further alienate other stockholders: "No matter how friendly we may feel for Mr. Payton there seems to be an opposition in the Company against him as its head that prevents it from making any progress," Fred Moore told Emmett Scott in 1907.⁴⁸ Payton's management and continued purchases finally led to an overextension of the company's holdings. The success of the Afro-American Realty Company, as with all Race Enterprise, was inextricably tied to the earning capacity of the city's Negro community. This predominantly lower-class group was always hardest hit by economic recessions. The recession of 1907-1908 coincided with Payton's speculations and left the company with many new tenements, but few tenants. "The cause of . . . the trouble," Fred Moore explained privately, "was due to taking on some property which remained unoccupied for months, and the money received from the property which was occupied had to go toward keeping up the unoccupied property. . . ."⁴⁹ The Realty Company could not generate enough income to meet its mortgage and interest payments in 1907. It needed the comparatively small sums of \$10,000 to \$20,000 to keep solvent, but simply could not raise the money. In November 1907 Moore wrote: "The Realty Co. is [in] a bad way, am trying to help straighten it out by persuading Payton to resign."⁵⁰

By the end of 1907 it was evident to the officers, only Moore and Payton then, that the corporation was on the verge of collapse. Payton tried desperately to keep the company from going under. Since he could no longer borrow any money on his name ("He has tried all the white folks who have money without result"),⁵¹ he wrote Booker T. Washington for a letter of introduction to Andrew Carnegie. "The Doctor," as Washington was known to intimates, refused to intercede in what was a business not a philanthropic matter.⁵² Payton went to see Carnegie anyway and Oswald Garrison Villard as well, but he won no support from either of them. Their response might have been different, Moore told him, if the Realty Company charged Negroes

modest rents: "If, as I told him, we could show that we were housing these people at a nominal rent, and the rents were very much lower than those charged by the white people, then perhaps they might look into it."⁵³

In a final gesture to keep the corporation in business Booker T. Washington himself was asked to underwrite the company's notes due on January 1, 1908. "I have promised to advise all parties as soon as I hear from you," Moore told him. Washington rejected this proposal and the last thread of hope was cut.⁵⁴ By 1908 the Afro-American Realty Company collapsed, and all its properties were lost.⁵⁵

The underlying causes for the failure of the company were never made public—they have remained hidden in private correspondence for more than half a century. Emmett J. Scott, who fully supported Payton throughout "his hour of trial," and who lost \$500 in the corporation's demise, addressed an angry letter to the officers. He criticized them for permitting the company to fail without "a single word" of explanation to the stockholders. "In numerous conversations with you both," he told Payton and Moore, "I have urged that the very least the Company could do, since it has ceased to do business, is to make a statement, to be signed by you both . . . an Explicit statement giving the reasons which led to the failure of the Company. As honorable men I do not see how the Company could do less than this."⁵⁶

Payton was out of town when Scott's letter arrived in July 1908. Moore promised to issue such a statement "if I have to do it myself. . . ."⁵⁷ By October, Moore was still promising to do so "at the very first opportunity."⁵⁸ No public statement was ever issued.

Payton was "down but not out."⁵⁹ He continued to operate in Harlem real estate as a private businessman and seems to have been successful in later ventures. His public reputation remained untainted, for all except those who lost their investments in the Realty Company. In one Negro encyclopedia he is remembered as "without a doubt the greatest Negro real estate dealer that ever lived."⁶⁰

The Afro-American Realty Company played a significant part in opening homes for Negroes in Harlem. Philip A. Payton, Jr., owned and managed apartment houses and brownstones in sections never previously rented to Negro tenants. His holdings were scattered throughout Harlem from One Hundred and Nineteenth to One Hundred and Forty-seventh Streets. When the company folded, white

realtors and mortgagors took over its property but the Negro tenants remained. The new owners continued to advertise the Negro company's former houses in the colored press.⁶¹ The speculations of Philip A. Payton, Jr., led to the downfall of the Afro-American Realty Company, but they also helped lay the foundations of the largest Negro ghetto in the world.

CHAPTER 8

A Neighborhood Transformed

"The agents promise their tenants that these houses will be rented only to WHITE people."

—Harlem realtors, 1910

"The colored [people] are in Harlem to stay, and they are coming each year by the thousands."

—John M. Royall, Negro realtor, 1914

I

The pressing need and desire for accommodations to house an expanding Negro population made the founding of the Afro-American Realty Company possible. This need continued to exist with greater intensity after the company's demise, and Negroes found other means to buy or rent homes in Harlem. The "border line" which separated whites and Negroes "rapidly receded" each year, and by 1914 some 50,000 Negroes lived in the neighborhood.¹

But not all property owners were ready to open their houses to colored people. It seemed unbelievable to some that theirs, one of the most exclusive sections in the entire city, should become the center of New York's most depressed and traditionally worst-housed people. Some owners banded together in associations to repulse what they referred to as the Negro "invasion" or the Negro "influx." The language used to describe the movement of Negroes into Harlem—the words "invasion," "captured," "black hordes," "invaders," "enemy," for example, appear repeatedly in denunciations of Negroes—was the language of war.²

In the 1880's and 1890's Harlemites annually celebrated the historic Revolutionary Battle of Harlem Heights. These patriotic fetes were symbols of community pride and pamphlets were widely distributed informing the neighborhood of the dignitaries participating in them.³ In the early twentieth century, however, Harlem's residents gathered not to preserve the memory of a Revolutionary conflict, but to fight their own battle—to keep their neighborhood white.

and *Housing: With Special Reference to New York City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 2 Vols.; *Annual Reports of City and Suburban Homes Company* (1896-1930); Winfred B. Nathan, *Health Conditions in North Harlem, 1923-1927* (New York, 1932); Owen R. Lovejoy, *The Negro Children of New York* (New York, 1932); The President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Report of the Committee on Negro Housing* (Washington, D.C., 1932); and Committee of Fourteen, *Annual Reports* (1905-1929), are exceptionally enlightening.

The revolutionary recognition of the Negro and Harlem in the twenties may best be traced through the periodicals. Practically all the major magazines, from the *Ladies' Home Journal* to *The American Mercury*, printed stories and articles on Negro life. The white journals that carried the most material on the Negro were: *The World Tomorrow*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic* and *The American Mercury*. The major theme I attempted to develop in the "Epilogue" is clearly typified by the following articles: Konrad Bercovici, "The Black Blocks of Manhattan," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, CXLIX (October 1924), 613-623; Clement Wood, "Hosea Before the Rotary Club," *The World Tomorrow*, VIII (July 1925), 209-210; George S. Schuyler, "Blessed are the Sons of Ham," *The Nation*, CXXIV (March 23, 1927), 313-315; Joseph Wood Krutch, "Black Ecstasy," *ibid.*, CXXV (October 26, 1927), 456-458; and Hermann Keyserling, "What the Negro Means to America," *The Atlantic Monthly*, CXLIV (October 1929), 444-447. Diana N. Lockard's "The Negro on the Stage in the Nineteen Twenties" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1960) analyzes the image of the Negro as "savage" in the drama. Perceptive contemporary criticisms of the distorted view of Negro life that emerged when the "Negro was in vogue" are Wallace Thurman's "Nephews of Uncle Remus," *The Independent*, CXIX (September 24, 1927), 296-298; and George Chester Morse's superb "The Fictitious Negro," *The Outlook and Independent*, CLII (August 21, 1929), 648-649.

The most valuable manuscript sources for a study of the Negro Renaissance are the papers of Carl Van Vechten, James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes in the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection, Yale University. Two excellent autobiographies by Negro writers discuss Harlem in the twenties: Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York, 1940); and Claude McKay, *A Long Way From Home* (New York, 1937). Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring* (New York, 1932) is a novel about the Renaissance. The novels written by Negroes in the twenties are full of information on Harlem life, as are "The Reminiscences of Carl Van Vechten" (1960); "The Reminiscences of George S. Schuyler" (1960); and "The Reminiscences of Benjamin McLaurin" (1960). All these are in Columbia University's immensely valuable Oral History Collection. Alain Locke's *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York, 1925) is a classic statement of the views of the 1920's.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Booker T. Washington and Robert E. Park, *The Man Farthest Down: A Record of Observation and Study in Europe* (New York, 1912), *passim*.
2. Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915* (Washington, D.C., 1918), pp. 43-45; *Twelfth Census, 1900: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1901), I, 869, II, 193; Kelly Miller, "The Economic Handicap of the Negro in the North," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XXVII (May 1906), 547.
3. Mary White Ovington, *Half a Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York, 1911), p. 148.
4. Bureau of the Census, *Statistics of Women at Work, 1900* (Washington, D.C., 1907), p. 146; W. E. B. DuBois, "The Black North," *The New York Times*, November 17, 1901; Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in New York City, *Second Sociological Canvass* (New York, 1897), p. 40.
5. *Twelfth Census: Occupations*, pp. 634-641.
6. Booker T. Washington, *The Negro in Business* (Boston, 1907), pp. 104-109; Samuel R. Scottron, "The Industrial and Professional Pursuits of Colored People of Old New York," *The Colored American Magazine*, XIII (October 1907), 265-266; *The New York Age*, July 27, 1905; *The New York Globe*, March 29, 1884; *The New York Times*, January 30, 1901; "The Negro Artisan," *Atlanta University Publications*, No. 7 (Atlanta, 1902), p. 134.
7. Waring Cuney, "Interview with Jerome B. Peterson: An Account of Wealthy Negroes, 1880-1890" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); Ovington, *Half a Man*, p. 29.
8. "Wealthy Negroes," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1895; "The Negro Artisan," *Atlanta University Publications*, No. 17 (Atlanta, 1912), p. 132.
9. Henry Collins Brown, *In the Golden Nineties* (New York, 1928), p. 84.
10. Ovington, *Half a Man*, p. 78.
11. Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York, 1949), pp. 66-67, 214-217.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
13. James W. C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith* (New York, 1849), p. 55.
14. Quoted in Lucille Genevieve Lomax, "A Social History of the Negro

Population Living in the Section of New York City known as Greenwich Village" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1930), pp. 79-81.

15. "Our Friends Discourage Us," *The Colored American*, August 12, 1837; "Importance of the Mechanic Arts to Colored Youth," *ibid.*, December 22, 1838; Arnett G. Lindsay, "The Economic Condition of the Negroes of New York Prior to 1861," *Journal of Negro History*, VI (April 1921), 195.

16. "The Negro Artisan," pp. 29-30.

17. Quoted in Philmore L. Groisser, "The Free Negro in New York State, 1850-1860" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1939), pp. 102-114.

18. Lomax, "A Social History," pp. 81-84.

19. The following are the exact numbers of Negroes in New York City who owned enough property to qualify for the franchise, 1825-1865. Adapted from Franklin B. Hough, *Statistics of Population of the City and County of New York*. . . . (New York, 1866), p. 240.

	Total Negro Population of New York City	Qualified to Vote
1825	12,559	68
1835	15,061	84
1845	12,913	255
1855	11,840	100
1865	9,943	44

20. Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, p. 67.

21. Hough, *Statistics of Population*, p. 230; *Negro Population, 1790-1915*, p. 64.

22. Bureau of the Census, *Vital Statistics of New York City and Brooklyn, 1890* (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 7 and *passim*; City of New York, *Annual Reports of the Department of Health and Monthly Bulletins of the Department of Health; Twelfth Census, 1900: Vital Statistics*, III, 458-464; R. R. Wright Jr., "The Migration of Negroes to the North," *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, XXVII (May 1906), 563.

23. *Vital Statistics of New York City*, pp. 14, 441; New York Colored Mission, *Annual Report for 1905* (New York, 1906), p. 11; *The New York Age*, January 22, 1922.

24. For contemporary recognition of these medical problems and their continuing influence on Negro life see: "Mortality Among Negroes in Cities," *Atlanta University Publications, No. 1* (Atlanta, 1903); "Social and Physical Conditions of Negroes in Cities," *Atlanta University Publications, No. 2* (Atlanta, 1897); The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, *Health Work for Mothers and Children in a Colored Community* (New York, 1924); Ransom S. Hooker, *Maternal Mortality in New York City: A Study of all Puerperal Deaths, 1930-1932* (New York, 1933), pp. 57, 77, 91, 163-165; Jean Downes, *An Experiment in the Control of Tuberculosis Among Negroes* (New York, 1950); Janet B. Hardy and Miriam E. Brailey, *Tuberculosis in White and Negro Children* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), 2 Vols.

25. Mary White Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York, 1947), p. 51.

26. *The New York Globe*, February 16, 1884.

27. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1883.

28. The following sketches of Negro neighborhoods in the early nineteenth

century are primarily intended to describe them. Little information about them is extant and to find the exact causes for the decline of Five Points and the succession of Greenwich Village as Negro sections would involve a more detailed study of fugitive sources than I have been able to make.

29. Joan Cohen, "The Social Conditions of the Negro in New York City, 1830-1865" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1951), pp. 6-12; Herbert Marshall and Mildred Stock, *Ira Aldridge: The Negro Tragedian* (London, 1958), p. 32; *The New York Freeman*, February 19, 1887; *The Colored American*, March 25, 1837; Caroline F. Ware, *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930: A Comment on American Civilization in the Post-War Years* (Boston, 1935), p. 12.

30. Charles Dickens, *American Notes* (London, 1900), pp. 102-105; Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, p. 39.

31. Charles C. Andrews, *The History of the New-York African Free Schools*. . . . (New York, 1830), pp. 57, 121-122.

32. Five Points House of Industry, *Monthly Record*, II (May 1858), 54-55.

33. "The Dens of Death," *New York Daily Tribune*, June 5, 1850; G. G. Foster, *New York by Gas-Light: With Here and There a Streak of Sunshine* (New York, 1850), pp. 56-57.

34. Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, p. 39; Groisser, "Free Negro," p. 88; Kate Holladay Claghorn, "The Foreign Immigrant in New York City," *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration . . . and on Education* (Washington, D.C., 1911), XV, 453.

35. For a photograph of the Workingmen's House and the Negroes of the district see James Ford, *et al.*, *Slums and Housing: With Special Reference to New York City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), II, 673.

36. Marshall and Stock, *Ira Aldridge*, pp. 28-47.

37. Wesley Curtwright, "Rise of Negro Churches in New York, 1827-1860" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection), p. 1; *The New York Age*, December 9, 1909, March 30, 1911, April 17, 1913; Monroe N. Work, "The Life of Charles B. Ray," *Journal of Negro History*, IV (October 1919), 361-371.

38. *The New York Age*, May 29, 1913; *The Crisis*, IX (February 1915), 166-167.

39. Andrews, *African Free Schools*, pp. 23-24.

40. *The New York Freeman*, January 31, 1885; "History of Our Schools in New York," *The New York Age*, July 13, 1905; Wesley Curtwright, "Life of James McCune Smith"; Simon Williamson, "The Life and Work of Henry Highland Garnet" (WPA research papers, Schomburg Collection); *Calendar of the Manuscripts in the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature* (New York, 1943?), pp. 51-55. On the Downing family see Lorenzo T. Greene, "Protest Against Separate Schools in Rhode Island, 1859," *The Midwest Journal*, I (Summer 1949), 102-103; and *The Crisis*, XII (June 1916), 61.

41. Rev. Dr. Alexander Crummell, "Lecture Sermon on John Peterson, for 50 years a Teacher in An African School. . . ." Crummell Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection.

42. *The New York Age*, March 22, 1890; "For He Was a Good Man" (1886), Crummell Papers.

43. Five Points House of Industry, *Monthly Record*, IV (May 1860), 12-14.

44. *The New York Freeman*, February 19, 1887.

45. New York City Board of Health, *Annual Report, 1893* (New York, 1894), p. 164.

46. Charles W. Gardner, *The Doctor and the Devil: A Startling Exposé of Municipal Corruption* (New York, 1894), pp. 52, 57.
47. Henry Collins Brown, *In the Golden Nineties* (New York, 1928), p. 348.
48. Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York, 1957), p. 117.
49. Lomax, "A Social History," pp. 91 ff; Jacob Riis, "The Black Half," *The Crisis*, V (April 1913), 298-299.
50. *The New York Age*, July 27, 1905.
51. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, p. 112.
52. John P. Clyde, "The Negro in New York City" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1899), p. 3.
53. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census, 1890: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1894), I, 564.
54. "Bruce Grits Column" (n.d.), Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection.
55. William McAdoo, *Guarding a Great City* (New York, 1906), pp. 91, 93 ff.
56. Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, p. 40; *The New York Age*, December 26, 1912; "Oldest New York's Past and Present Racial and Religious Conditions," *Federation*, III (December 1904), 4; George Edmund Haynes, *The Negro at Work in New York City: A Study in Economic Progress*, in *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, XLIX (New York, 1912), p. 51.
57. "The Reminiscences of Samuel J. Battle" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1960), p. 22; Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, p. 35; William Fielding Ogburn, "The Richmond Negro in New York City: His Social Mind as Seen in His Pleasures" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1909), p. 48; Niles Carpenter, *The Sociology of City Life* (New York, 1932), p. 78; *The New York Age*, January 13, 1916.
58. The Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in New York City, *Second Sociological Canvass* (New York, 1897), p. 85; *The New York Freeman*, March 7, 1885; Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, pp. 113-114.
59. These were Mount Olivet Baptist, St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal, St. James Presbyterian, Union Baptist, St. Cyprian's Episcopal and St. Benedict the Moor's Roman Catholic.
60. Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, p. 40; Ogburn, "The Richmond Negro," pp. 49-52.
61. M. R. Werner, *It Happened in New York* (New York, 1957), pp. 36-116; Reverend Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, *Our Fight With Tammany* (New York, 1895), *passim*; *New York Daily Tribune*, August 25, 1900; *The New York Times*, January 8, 1898, March 19, 1900, March 31, 1900; *The New York Age*, April 5, 1906, March 21, 1907; "The Terrible Tenderloin," *ibid.*, March 29, 1906.
62. Richard J. Latimer, "History of Negro Saloons" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* (New York, 1933), pp. 175-176; Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, p. 117. At one place the management provided dusters for clients who bet themselves down to their bare essentials. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (New York, 1960), pp. 96-97.
63. Reverend Charles S. Morris, "The Terrible Tenderloin," *The New York Age*, February 22, March 29, 1906.
64. Powell successfully campaigned to clean up West Fortieth Street. "The

last woman carried out of the block to serve four months in Blackwell's Island for prostitution was a member of the Abyssinian Church and one of the loudest shouters of the Sunday Morning Prayer Band," he remembered. Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., *Against the Tide: An Autobiography* (New York, 1938), pp. 49-57. See also Reverend Charles S. Morris to J. G. Phelps Stokes, December 6, 1902 (Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 18).

65. Battle, "Reminiscences," p. 35.
66. "The Reminiscences of John T. Hettrick" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1949), pp. 46-47, 73; Wirt Howe, *New York at the Turn of the Century, 1899-1916* (Toronto, 1946), p. 27.
67. Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom, *The Pilgrimage of Harriet Ransom's Son* (Nashville, 1950?), p. 202.
68. St. Benedict's was partially founded on a legacy to Negro Roman Catholics bequeathed by Father Thomas Farrell. Father Farrell was a pastor of a church in Greenwich Village during the Civil War and a strong supporter of the Union. When the war began he nailed an American flag to the roof of his church and vowed to leave the country if the South won. St. Benedict's was opened in November 1883 on Bleecker Street and moved to West Fifty-third Street in 1898. It remains there today. *The New York Age*, February 20, 1913; "St. Benedict the Moor" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); *The New York Globe*, July 28, 1883, November 10, 1883, March 8, 1884.
69. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 29, 1900.
70. A Negro YMCA had been established in 1867 but it was unsuccessful. Mount Olivet Baptist Church, *Mortgage Liquidation Journal* (New York, 1946), p. 9; Silas Xavier Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker, D.D.* (Nashville, 1902), pp. 104, 108-109; *The New York Age*, May 9, 1912, May 22, 1913. The title "Colored Men's YMCA" comes from a letterhead in the J. G. Phelps Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 18.
71. Johnson, *Along This Way*, pp. 152, 170-183.
72. Haynes, *The Negro at Work*, pp. 80-81; Ernest Jasper Hopper, "A Northern Negro Group" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1912), pp. 22-23, 34-35.
73. The Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in New York City, *First Sociological Canvass* (New York, 1896), pp. 88-90, 92, 97, 102-105; *Second Sociological Canvass*, pp. 16-17, 20-21, 25-27, 67-70, 73, 76, 85, 93-95; Frances Blascoer, *Colored School Children in New York* (New York, 1915); Robert Coit Chapin, *The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City* (New York, 1909), *passim*; Louis Bolard More, *Wage-Earners' Budgets: A Study of Standards and Cost of Living in New York City* (New York, 1907), *passim*; Tom McConnon, *Angels in Hell's Kitchen* (New York, 1959), p. 35; Ovington, *Half A Man*, p. 36.
74. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (New York, 1953), p. 161.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. *The New York Age*, August 1, 1912.
2. There are two problems that confront anyone attempting to determine the increase in New York City's Negro population, 1890-1910. In 1890 the Census reported statistics for "Colored" people, including Chinese, Japanese and Indians. Another problem is the consolidation of counties into Greater New York

in 1898. "New York City" meant Manhattan and the Bronx in 1890, but Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Richmond and Brooklyn in 1900 and 1910. I have corrected the statistics of 1890 for these two problems so that a more accurate comparison of population growth can be made. In doing so I have subtracted 5,000 (which is approximately accurate) from the 1890 figure to allow for Oriental population:

	1890	1900	1910
Manhattan	25,674	36,246	60,534
Bronx		2,370	4,117
Brooklyn	10,946	18,367	22,708
Queens	3,582	2,611	3,198
Richmond	981	1,072	1,152
	41,183		
	-5,000		
Approximately	36,183	60,666	91,709

United States Census Office, *Eleventh Census, 1890: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1895), I, 509, 543-545; *Twelfth Census, 1900: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1901), I, CXX, 631; *Thirteenth Census, 1910: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1913), I, 178.

3. William L. Bulkley, "Race Prejudice as Viewed from an Economic Standpoint," *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference* (New York, 1909?), p. 90.

4. Mary White Ovington, *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York, 1911), p. 48.

5. Sources of New York State In-Migrant Population, 1910.

Born in:

Virginia	29,157
North Carolina	10,283
South Carolina	6,698
Georgia	3,792
Florida	1,257

There are no published statistics that give the exact states of birth for the Negro population of New York City in these years. These statistics are for the state as a whole. New York City was the center of the migrant population, however, and it is safe to assume that these figures would be even more heavily weighted on the side of southern migration there. They do present the general trend of migration to New York City typical of pre-World War I years. United States Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915* (Washington, D.C., 1918), pp. 77, 78. In 1890, of the 68,543 Negroes in New York State, 40,177 were born there. United States Census, *Eleventh Census, 1890: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1895), I, 576-579.

6. *The New York Age*, June 5, 1913.

7. *Negro Population, 1790-1915*, p. 68.

8. The exact figure is 198,679. *Idem*. These statistics omit the migration of 1910-1914, which was considerable.

9. United States Census, *Thirteenth Census, 1910: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1913), IV, 707-709.

10. C. Warren Thornthwaite, *Internal Migration in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 12 and map opposite p. 12.

11. George Edmund Haynes, *The Negro at Work in New York City: A Study in Economic Progress*, in *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, XLIX (New York, 1912), p. 17.

12. Frederick J. Brown, *The Northward Movement of the Colored Population: A Statistical Study* (Baltimore, 1897).

13. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Negro in Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," United States Department of Labor, *Bulletin No. 14* (Washington, D.C., 1895), p. 5.

14. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, in University of Pennsylvania Series in *Political Economy and Public Law*, XIV (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 79-80.

15. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Black Vote of Philadelphia," *Charities: A Review of Local and General Philanthropy*, XV (October 7, 1905), 31.

16. John P. Clyde, "The Negro in New York City" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1899), p. 3.

17. "The Condition of Negroes in Various Cities," United States Department of Labor *Bulletin*, II (May 1897), 257-369.

18. Carl Kelsey, "Some Causes of Negro Emigration: The Men," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 16.

19. *Ibid.* In 1906 *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* also studied "The Industrial Conditions of the Negro in the North," XXVII (May 1906); and in 1913 "The Negro's Progress in Fifty Years," a book-length survey, in XLIX (September 1913).

20. *The New York Age*, June 10, 1907, July 4, 1912, November 16, 1911.

21. *The New York Times*, March 18, 1901.

22. Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington, D.C., 1918), pp. 159-166.

23. "Hope something has been done regarding Pinchback." Booker T. Washington to Charles W. Anderson, July 4, 1905; Anderson to Washington, July 17, 1909, July 20, 1909, January 11, 1910, August 1, 1910. Washington Papers, Library of Congress.

24. *The New York Age*, October 6, 1910, May 22, 1913.

25. *Ibid.*, November 21, 1907; *New York Daily Tribune*, September 5, 1900; August Meier, "Negro Racial Thought in the Age of Booker T. Washington, Circa 1880-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957), p. 807.

26. DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 44-45.

27. Lillian Brandt, "The Make-Up of Negro City Groups," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 7-11.

28. Helen A. Tucker, "Negro Craftsmen in New York," *The Southern Workman*, XXXVI (October 1907), 545-551.

29. Haynes, *Negro At Work*, pp. 58-61.

30. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Northern Negro Problem," *The New York Age*, October 3, 1907; R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Migration of Negroes to the North," *The Annals*, XLIX (September 1913), 570.

31. *The New York Age*, April 6, 1905.

32. Paul Oliver, *Blues Fell This Morning: The Meaning of the Blues* (London, 1960), p. 23.

33. *The New York Freeman*, September 19, 1885.
34. *The New York Age*, September 22, 1910; William Fielding Ogburn, "The Richmond Negro in New York City: His Social Mind as Seen in His Pleasures" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1909), p. 33.
35. *Report of the Industrial Commission on Agriculture and Agricultural Labor*. . . (Washington, D.C., 1901), X, 351; R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Migration of Negroes," 564. *Report of Industrial Commission* hereafter cited as *USIC*, X.
36. R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Migration of Negroes," 566; Haynes, *Negro At Work*, pp. 31-32.
37. Seymour Paul, "A Group of Virginia Negroes in New York City" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1912), p. 41.
38. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955), chapter II; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, passim*; Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration*, p. 161; NAACP, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (New York, 1919); James Elbert Cutler, *Lynch Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States* (New York, 1905), p. 161; Paul, "A Group of Virginia Negroes," p. 12; Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States* (Chicago, 1895).
39. Meier, "Negro Racial Thought," pp. 157-158, 916.
40. There actually were some Negroes who did go to Africa in these years. An Abraham Lincoln African Aid and Colonization Society was established in Oklahoma in 1909. "Chief Sam" (Alfred Charles Sam), a bogus African chief, outfitted a steamer which left Galveston in 1914. T. McCants Stewart, Negro clergyman and lawyer of New York, finally settled in Liberia in 1906. *The New York Age*, April 27, 1905, November 30, 1905, February 26, 1906, September 20, 1906, January 3, 1907, July 11, 1907, September 16, 1909, January 22, 1914, January 29, 1914, April 2, 1914, July 9, 1914. William E. Bittle and Gilbert Geis, *The Longest Way Home: Chief Alfred C. Sam's Back to Africa Movement* (Detroit, 1964).
41. *The New York Age*, January 10, 1907, July 4, 1912.
42. *The New York Freeman*, February 28, 1885; Bulkley, "Race Prejudice," p. 90.
43. *New York Daily Tribune*, September 5, 22, 1900.
44. "Negro Exodus to Cities," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1903; Sutton E. Griggs, *Needs of the South* (Nashville, 1909), pp. 15, 28.
45. Tucker, "Negro Craftsmen," 550.
46. Paul, "A Group of Virginia Negroes," p. 35.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
48. *The New York Age*, October 3, 1907; W. E. B. DuBois, "The Black North," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1901.
49. Langston Hughes, "New York," *Phylon*, XI (1950), 14.
50. R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Negro in Times of Industrial Unrest," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 69, 73; James Samuel Stemons, "The Industrial Color-Line in the North," *The Century Magazine*, LX (July 1900), 477-478; Mary White Ovington, "The Negro in the Trades Unions of New York," *The Annals*, XXVII (May 1906), 555-556.
51. Stanley M. Elkins has added great depth to our understanding of the personal psychological blight of the Peculiar Institution in his *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959).
52. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1953), p. 68.

53. Edwin R. Embree, *Brown America* (New York, 1931), p. 37. "The Government by whom we were emancipated left us completely in the power of our former owners." Frederick Douglass, *Three Addresses on the Relations Subsisting between the White and Colored People of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1886), p. 16. Also see Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C., 1924), pp. 25, 55; Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in Reconstruction Virginia* (Washington, D.C., 1926), pp. 90-97.
54. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Negro Farmer," *Supplementary Analysis and Derivative Tables of the Twelfth Census* (Washington, D.C., 1906), *passim*.
55. *USIC*, X, 379, 820.
56. *Ibid.*, 428.
57. Haynes, *Negro at Work*, p. 30n.
58. J. S. Clarkson to J. E. Bruce, March 21, 1891. Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection.
59. George Edmund Haynes, "Conditions Among Negroes in the Cities," *The Annals*, XLIX (September 1913), 105-119.
60. *USIC*, xxi.
61. Philip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia* (New York, 1889), p. 182.
62. John R. Rogers, *The Importance of Time as a Factor in the Solution of the Negro Problem* (New York, 1900?), p. 7; William Hannibal Thomas, *The American Negro: What He Was, What He Is, and What He May Become* (New York, 1901), p. 63.
63. John Ambrose Price, *The Negro: Past, Present and Future* (New York, 1907), pp. 101-103; Howard W. Odum, *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro: A Study in Race Traits, Tendencies, and Prospects* (New York, 1910), pp. 184ff; Thomas Nelson Page, "The Negro: The Southerner's Problem," *McClure's Magazine*, XXIII (May 1904), 100; *USIC*, X, 166-167.
64. Page, "The Negro," 100; Edgar Gardner Murphy, *The Task of the South* (n.p., 1903), pp. 29-34; Guion Griffis Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy, 1876-1910," in Fletcher Melvin Green, ed., *Essays in Southern History* (Chapel Hill, 1949), 148, 154n., 156.
65. J. J. Watson, "Churches and Religious Conditions," *The Annals*, XLIX (September, 1913), 126. ". . . In the time of slavery the parents exercised a much stricter control over their children than they do now." *The Southern Workman*, XXIX (February 1900), 68.
66. *USIC*, X, 50; 504; 770; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (New York, 1903), p. 310.
67. Frederick S. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* (New York, 1896), p. 310.
68. William P. Calhoun, *The Caucasian and the Negro in the United States. They Must Separate. If Not, Then Extermination; A Proposed Solution: Colonization* (Columbia, S.C., 1902), pp. 139, 141-142.
69. Robert Wilson Shufeldt, *The Negro: A Menace to American Civilization* (Boston, 1907); Carlyle McKinley, *An Appeal to Pharaoh: The Negro Problem, and Its Radical Solution* (Columbia, S.C., 1907); Charles Carroll, *The Negro a Beast, or, In the Image of God* (St. Louis, Mo., 1900); William P. Pickett, *The Negro Problem: Abraham Lincoln's Solution* (New York, 1909).
70. Bert James Loewenberg, "Efforts of the South to Encourage Immigration, 1865-1900," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XXXIII (October 1934), 363-385.

71. In 1907 the Attorney General of the United States ruled that states, but not individuals, could advertise for immigrants abroad and pay their passage to America without violating the Contract Labor Law. *The New York Age*, March 28, 1907, June 21, 1906, July 19, 1906, October 31, 1907.
72. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, passim*; *The New York Age*, May 26, 1888.
73. Rowland T. Berthoff, "Southern Attitudes Toward Immigration, 1865-1914," *The Journal of Southern History*, XVII (August 1951), 328-360.
74. *USIC*, X, 382-383; 518.
75. *Raleigh Signal*, February 28, 1889, quoted in Frenise A. Logan, "The Movement of Negroes from North Carolina, 1876-1894," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, XXIII (January 1956), 54.
76. Price, *The Negro*, pp. 105-106.
77. DuBois, "Negro Farmer," pp. 523, 527, 532-533; Woofter, *Negro Migration, passim*.
78. Senator George F. Hoar to J. E. Bruce, February 25, 1895. Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection; "Italian Cotton vs. Negro Cotton in the Southern States," *The Colored American Magazine*, XIII (September 1907), 167.
79. Commissioner of Labor, *Labor Laws of the United States, with Decisions of Courts Relating Thereto*, in *Twenty-Second Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1908), *passim*.
80. Lafayette M. Hershaw, "Peonage," *The American Negro Academy, Occasional Paper, No. 15* (Washington, D.C., 1915), 10; Katherine Coman, "The Negro as a Peasant Farmer," *Quarterly Publication of the American Statistical Association*, IX (June 1904), 54; Thomas J. Edward, "The Tenant System and Some Changes Since Emancipation," *The Annals*, XLIX (September 1913), 38-46.
81. Jack Greenberg, *Race Relations and the American Law* (New York, 1960), p. 157. A Georgia plantation owner stated in an interview in 1903 that "the planters in the black belt will have to maintain their right to claim their contract labor, or else they will have to go out of business. . . ." Quoted in John R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America* (New York, 1920), p. 138. In *Bailey vs. State of Alabama*, the Supreme Court held such labor contracts in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment. Justice Hughes, delivering the opinion of the Court, concluded that the "words involuntary servitude have a 'larger meaning than slavery.' . . . The plain intention was to abolish slavery of whatever name and form . . . to make labor free, by prohibiting that control by which the personal service of one man is disposed or coerced for another's benefit. . . ." 219 *United States Reports*, 241.
82. *The Crisis*, XIII (December 1916), 89.
83. *USIC*, X, 429; *The New York Age*, May 11, June 8, 29, 1905; Logan, "The Movement of Negroes," 57-59.
84. *USIC*, X, 906-912.
85. *Ibid.*, 514; *The New York Age*, June 29, 1905. "Without the colored laborer," wrote Frederick Douglass, "the South would be a howling wilderness, given up to bats, owls, wolves, and bears." Douglass, *Three Addresses*, p. 13.
86. *Report of the New York City Commission on Congestion of Population* (New York, 1911), p. 11.
87. Benjamin H. Locke, "The Community Life of a Harlem Group of Negroes" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1913), *passim*.
88. Ogburn, "The Richmond Negro," *passim*; Paul, "A Group of Virginia

- Negroes," *passim*; R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Negro in Times of Industrial Unrest," 565; Clyde Vernon Kiser, *Sea Island to City: A Study of St. Helena Islanders in Harlem and Other Urban Centers* (New York, 1932), p. 219.
89. Ogburn, "The Richmond Negro," p. 47.
90. This is an exact copy of a typical labor contract. See Carl Kelsey, "Some Causes for Negro Emigration: The Men," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 16-17.
91. *USIC*, X, 428.
92. *Report of the New York Colored Mission, 1872* (New York, 1873), p. 8.
93. *The New York Age*, May 8, 1913.
94. Clyde, "Negro in New York City," p. 6; "Night Clubs," James Weldon Johnson Collection, Yale University.
95. *The Richmond Planet* carried regular advertisements for these companies. See, for example, February 23, 1895; Kelsey, "Some Causes for Negro Emigration," 17; *The New York Age*, September 11, 1913, February 5, 1914.
96. *The New York Globe*, July 7, 1883, October 18, 1884; *The New York Age*, August 17, December 28, 1905.
97. *The New York Age*, December 24, 1908, July 27, 1911.
98. "The Movement of Negroes from the Country to the City," *The Southern Workman*, XLII (April, 1913), 235.
99. DuBois, "The Black North," *The New York Times*, November 17, 1901; *The New York Age*, May 11, 1905.
100. Paul, "A Group of Virginia Negroes," p. 3.
101. The Reminiscences of Samuel J. Battle" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1960), p. 13.
102. Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods* (New York, 1902), pp. 112-113.
103. Folkways Records, Album No. FC7533.
104. Nellie M. Quander, "A Study of Insurance Among Negroes in the State of Virginia" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1914), pp. 37 ff; "Some Efforts of American Negroes for their Own Social Betterment," *Atlanta University Publications, No. 3* (Atlanta, 1898), p. 19.
105. *The New York Age*, April 7, 1910.
106. Silas Xavier Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker, D.D.* (Nashville, 1902), pp. 105-106.
107. *The New York Age*, February 28, 1907.
108. "Dear Charlie—I find that the chitterlings went forward to you last week." Booker T. Washington to Charles W. Anderson, January 26, 1907. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 35.
109. Box 18 in the J. G. Phelps Stokes Papers at Columbia University is full of requests for contributions from Negro institutions. Also see B. C. Caldwell, "The Work of the Jeanes and Slater Funds," *The Annals*, XLIX (September 1913), 173-176.
110. *The New York Freeman*, November 28, 1885; *The New York Age*, July 13, 1889, June 25, 1908, February 9, 1911.
111. Odette Harper, "Sketch of Pig Foot Mary" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); *The New York Age*, November 12, 1927, July 20, 27, 1929.
112. *The New York Age*, February 13, 1913.
113. Mary McFadden, "Madame Walker" and Odette Harper, "Biographical Sketch of Madame C. J. Walker" (WPA research papers, Schomburg Col-

lection); *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 5, 1932. For pictures of the cabin in which Madame Walker was born and her villa in New York see *The Messenger*, VI (August, 1924), 255.

114. Biographical sketches of these and many other successful Negro migrants are scattered throughout the issues of *The New York Age*.

115. Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., *Against the Tide: An Autobiography* (New York, 1938).

116. Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line* (New York, 1908), *passim*; *The New York Age*, January 27, 1910.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Linton Satterthwait, "The Color-Line in New Jersey," *The Arena*, XXV (April 1906), 394.

2. Joan Cohen, "The Social Conditions of the Negro in New York City, 1830-1865" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1951), p. 38; Philmore L. Groisser, "The Free Negro in New York State, 1850-1860" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1939), pp. 31-39; Dwight Lowell Dumond, *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 300; Wilbur Young, "Plymouth Congregational Church" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); *The Colored American*, June 3, 1837; Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York, 1949), p. 41; Charles Townsend Harris, *Memories of Manhattan in the Sixties and Seventies* (New York, 1928), p. 61.

3. Herman D. Bloch, "The New York Negro's Battle for Political Rights, 1777-1865," *International Review of Social History*, IX (1964), 65-80.

4. "Health and Physique of the Negro American," *Atlanta University Studies*, No. 11 (Atlanta, 1906), p. 91; *The New York Age*, June 8, 1889, April 26, 1890, April 11, 1891; *The New York Globe*, February 9, 1884.

5. *The New York Freeman*, July 2, 1887.

6. The subject of Negro education in the North and in New York City is studied in great detail in Robert S. Dixon, "Education of the Negro in the City of New York, 1853-1900" (M.A. thesis, City College, 1935), and Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., "The North and the Negro, 1865-1900: A Study in Race Discrimination" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1954), pp. 183-248, 326-369, *passim*. The Fishel study is the most thorough history of race relations in the North in the late nineteenth century, and discusses all the specific points mentioned in this paragraph. It does not, however, emphasize the changing patterns of racial attitudes as I have attempted to do. Also see *The New York Age*, February 9, 1924, and June 27, 1925, for information on Miss Frazier.

7. *The New York Globe*, December 29, 1883; *The New York Freeman*, June 19, 1886, July 9, 1887; *The New York Age*, June 7, 1890.

8. Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Poor* (London, 1891), p. 148.

9. *The New York Age*, January 4, 1900.

10. *The New York Globe*, June 30, August 25, September 1, 1883; *The New York Freeman*, July 25, 1885, July 16, September 3, 1887.

11. *The New York Globe*, July 28, 1883.

12. *The New York Freeman*, July 16, 1887.

13. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Black North," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1901. For an analysis of this attitude as a major theme in the Negro novel,

1890-1920, see Robert A. Bone, *The Negro Novel in America* (New Haven, 1958).

14. Benjamin Brawley, "The Negro Genius," *The Southern Workman*, XLIV (May 1915), 305-308.

15. The success of *The Clansman* and other of Dixon's works in the first two decades of the twentieth century must be set against the rise of racial antagonism in the North in these years. See *The Crisis*, LXII (January 1955), 37-38; Maxwell Bloomfield, "Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots*: A Study in Popular Racism," *American Quarterly*, XVI (Fall 1964), 387-401.

16. *The New York Age*, January 4, 1906.

17. *The Churchman*, L (September 20, 1884), 316.

18. *The Worker*, May 18, 1902.

19. Moses F. Sweester and Simeon Ford, *How to Know New York City* (New York, 1888), p. 11.

20. Dumond, *Antislavery*, p. 330.

21. *Harlem Local Reporter*, February 25, May 6, 1893; "Black Patti," in James Weldon Johnson Collection, Yale University.

22. *The New York Times*, October 4, 1900.

23. Diana N. Lockard, "The Negro on the Stage of the Nineteen Twenties" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1960), chap. 1.

24. "Emma Harris" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection).

25. Mary White Ovington, *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York, 1911), p. 135.

26. William L. Holler, "Bert Williams (Egbert Austin Williams), 1875-1922" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection), p. 3.

27. These plays and many others are collected in a special box of Negro vaudeville and minstrel shows at the Schomburg Collection, and in the extensive and magnificent Atkinson Collection at the University of Chicago.

28. Henry Collins Brown, *In the Golden Nineties* (New York, 1928), pp. 173-174; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1926), pp. 183-184.

29. George H. Coes, *Badly Sold: A Negro Act in Two Scenes* (Chicago, 1893).

30. F. E. Hiland, *Careless Cupid* (Boston, 1893), p. 5.

31. James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* (New York, 1933), pp. 152-153.

32. *The New York Age*, January 31, 1907; "Wealthy Negroes," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1895.

33. Johnson, *Along This Way*, *passim*; Holler, "Bert Williams," p. 8.

34. Johnson, *Along This Way*, p. 159. The game "Hit the Nigger" or "African Dodger"—in which vacationers threw baseballs at the head of a real person—was played in New York summer resorts until outlawed in 1917. *The Crisis*, X (July 1915), 114; *The New York Times*, October 2, 1916, May 3, 1917.

35. Lawrence Gelbert, "Bert Williams: Philosophical Tidbits Gleaned from His Songs and Stories" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection).

36. "We Wear the Mask," in *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (New York, 1921), p. 71.

37. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (New York, 1953), p. 10.

38. "Raw Labor from the South," *The New York Times*, September 9, 1900.

39. There was a constant mockery of the so-called Negro aristocracy and

"400." See, for example, John Martin, "Dancing Through Two Centuries," Museum of the City of New York *Bulletin*, V (February 1942), 37.

40. Kelly Miller, "The Industrial Condition of the Negro in the North," *The Annals*, XXVII (May 1906), 543.

41. *The New York Freeman*, July 11, 1887.

42. A clipping of this review which appeared in *The Bookman*, XXIII (April 1906), was pasted on the back of an obituary of Dunbar in the Gumby Collection, Columbia University.

43. *The New York Age*, April 1, 1909.

44. Clyde Griffen, "An Urban Church in Ferment: The Episcopal Church in New York City, 1880-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1960), p. 32.

45. *The New York Age*, April 17, 1913.

46. *The Crisis*, VIII (May 1914), 12.

47. *Ibid.*, IX (December 1914), 77-80.

48. *The New York Age*, April 9, June 21, 1906.

49. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1913. The depth of national racial hatred in the early twentieth century is clearly demonstrated in the longing and search for a "White Hope" to defeat Jack Johnson. Some of the anti-Negro legislation of these years, including those laws banning intermarriage, were partially stimulated by Johnson's second marriage to a white woman. See clippings under title "White Hope" in Gumby Collection, Columbia University. Florence Murray, editor, *The Negro Handbook, 1949* (New York, 1949), p. 350. The following, an article by Bill Corum in the *New York Journal American* at the time of Johnson's death in 1946, clearly demonstrates this racial antipathy: "Man alive, how I hated Jack Johnson in the Summer of 1910! Nor did I ever quite get over it. In recent years it became an aversion rather than a stronger feeling. But when he knocked out Jeffries at Reno I hated him. . . . I was 15 in a town of 4,000 people and until the Jeffries-Johnson fight . . . never heard of professional boxing." Clipping in Gumby Collection.

50. Ovington, *Half A Man*, p. 210. *The New York Age* and *The Crisis* carried dozens of articles and comments on this subject.

51. *The Crisis*, III (February 1912), 141.

52. *The New York Evening Journal*, December 12, 1910. Also see *The New York Times*, December 1, 1901; Mary White Ovington, "The Negro in the Trades Unions in New York," *The Annals*, XXVII (May 1906), 551-558; R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Negro in Times of Industrial Unrest," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 69-73; Mrs. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Hope Deferred," *The Crisis*, VIII (September 1914), 238-242; Alma Herbst, *The Negro in the Slaughtering and Meat-Packing Industry in Chicago* (Boston and New York, 1932), pp. xviii-xix, 14-32, *passim*; *The New York Age*, June 13, 1907, August 19, 1909, January 20, 1910, November 30, 1911, June 6, 13, 1912, January 16, 1913.

53. Italicized in the original. Copy of act in Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection.

54. *The New York Age*, February 6, 1913.

55. Henry A. Spencer to John E. Bruce, March 22, 1910; Bruce to the Hon. Jesse S. Phillips, March 23, 1910. Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection.

56. Clippings from the *New York American*, September 30, 1904, in Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 75.

57. Ovington, *Half A Man*, p. 76.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 34; *The New York Freeman*, July 18, 1885, January 16, 1886; *The New York Age*, January 31, 1907; "Certificate of Incorporation of the Society of the Sons of New York," November 28, 1891, in New York City Hall of Records.

59. See John H. Johnson, *A Place of Adventure: Essays and Sermons* (Greenwich, Conn., 1955), p. 10; "Boston, and Some Boston People," Bruce Manuscripts; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 73n, 80; Roi Ottley, *The Lonely Warrior: The Life and Times of Robert S. Abbott* (Chicago, 1955), pp. 84-85; St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York, 1945), pp. 73-74, *passim*.

60. Charles Winslow Hall, "Racial Hatred," *The Colored American Magazine*, I (September 1900), 246; *The New York Age*, December 17, 1908, and *passim*.

61. *The New York Age*, June 22, 1905; Letter to the editor from Melvin J. Chisum, *The New York Times*, June 10, 1900.

62. DuBois, "The Black North," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1901.

63. *The New York Age*, April 6, 1905.

64. Langston Hughes, "High to Low," *The Midwest Journal*, I (Summer 1949), 26.

65. *The New York Freeman*, January 16, 1886; *The New York Age*, January 5, 1889, January 25, 1890, July 6, 1905, July 27, 1908.

66. *The New York Age*, May 14, 1908, July 7, 1910.

67. Miller, "Industrial Condition," 548; *The Boston Chronicle*, September 4, 1936. From 1900 to 1905 *The Southern Workman* printed an entire series of Miller's articles on this subject, and he continued to advocate a return to the farm until his death in 1939. See the excellent essay by Bernard Eisenberg, "Kelly Miller: The Negro Leader as Marginal Man," *Journal of Negro History*, XLV (July 1960), 182-187.

68. Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods* (New York, 1902), p. 213. The development of intraracial antagonism would be incomplete without mentioning the hostility that American Negroes, northern and southern, showed toward Negro immigrants from the West Indies. New York City was the largest urban center for foreign-born Negroes in the early twentieth century (12,851 in 1910). As this antagonism did not become a major theme in city history until the 1920's, I have saved discussion of it for Chapter 9.

69. John E. Bruce, "Practical Questions," Bruce Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection; *The Colored American Magazine*, XIII (July 1907), 68; "The Reminiscences of Samuel J. Battle" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1960), pp. 16-17; *The Crisis*, XII (August 1916), 166-167; *The New York Freeman*, May 15, 1886; *The New York Age*, May 25, 1905, October 5, 1916.

70. Florence E. Gibson, *The Attitudes of the New York Irish toward State and National Affairs, 1848-1892* (New York, 1951), p. 66; *The New York Age*, January 26, 1905; W. L. Bulkley, "Race Prejudice As Viewed from An Economic Standpoint," *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference, 1909* (New York, 1909?), 94.

71. This information and much that follows is derived from contemporary press reports.

72. Of the fifty Negro migrants studied by William Fielding Ogburn, all read the daily newspapers. "The Richmond Negro in New York City: His

Social Mind as Seen in His Pleasures" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1909), p. 71.

73. The People vs. Arthur J. Harris, October 29, 1900. Transcript and summary of trial in New York City Magistrates Court.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*; *The World*, August 17, 1900.

76. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 17, 1900.

77. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1900.

78. Bernard J. York, Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Discipline, to Police Board, December 8, 1900 (Mayor Van Wyck Papers, Municipal Archives).

79. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 16, 1900.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *The New York Times*, August 16, 1900; *Autobiography of Dr. William Henry Johnson* (Albany, 1900), p. 148.

82. [Frank Moss], *Story of the Riot: Persecution of Negroes by Roughs and Policemen, in the City of New York, August, 1900* (New York, 1900), p. 5; Richard O'Connor, *Hell's Kitchen: The Roaring Days of New York's Wild West Side* (New York, 1958), p. 151.

83. *The New York Times*, August 20, 1900; Johnson, *Along This Way*, pp. 157-158.

84. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 16, 17, 1900.

85. Israel Ludlow to Bernard J. York, August 30, 1900 (Mayor Van Wyck Papers, Municipal Archives).

86. Bernard J. York to Police Board, December 8, 1900. *Ibid.*

87. *The World*, August 17, 1900.

88. Less than a month before the riot, the New York press had bitterly criticized the South for a race riot in New Orleans. Southerners now responded gleefully; stressed the universality of race hatred; made some comments about casting the first stone; and warned against the "young country negro" who flocks to the city to "lead a life of idleness." *Ibid.*, August 17, 18, 19, 1900.

89. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 19, 1900.

90. Clement Richardson, ed., *The National Cyclopaedia of the Colored Race* (Montgomery, Alabama, 1919), I, 223; Mary White Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York, 1947), pp. 25-26.

91. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 27, 1900.

92. Some of the original postcards sent out by the Reverend Dr. Brooks may be found at the Schomburg Collection.

93. *New York Daily Tribune*, August 25, September 8, 1900; Israel Ludlow to Bernard J. York, President of Board of Police Commissioners, August 30, 1900 (Mayor Van Wyck Papers, Municipal Archives); Frank Moss to York, September 14, 1900, *ibid.*

94. "Notes of D. Macon Webster for a speech at protest meeting" (Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Schomburg Collection).

95. *The New York Times*, September 13, 1900.

96. J. G. Speed, "The Negro in New York: A Study of the Social and Industrial Condition of the Colored People in the Metropolis," *Harper's Weekly*, XLIV (December 22, 1900), 1249.

97. *New York Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1900.

98. John Hains vs. Herman A. Ohm, October 26, 1900; George L. Myers vs. John J. Cleary, October 26, 1900 (Mayor Van Wyck Papers, Municipal Archives).

99. Bernard J. York to Police Board, December 8, 1900 (Mayor Van Wyck Papers, Municipal Archives).

100. The People vs. Arthur J. Harris, October 29, 1900 (New York City Magistrates Court).

101. Harold W. Folletta, Acting Warden, Clinton Prison, to author, August 14, 1961.

102. Kelly Miller, "The American Negro as a Political Factor," *The Nineteenth Century*, LXVIII (August 1910), 297.

103. *Report of the Police Department of the City of New York* (New York, 1901), p. 10.

104. *The New York Times*, August 24, 1900.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Historians have too often analyzed Progressivism primarily as a political movement. I define Progressivism as a national, broad-based movement—social, economic, industrial, medical, educational, religious, political, and so on. It was the *positive* national response to the shocking changes and inequities created by massive industrialization and unprecedented urbanization and the often-expressed awareness that American culture was being radically altered by them. The most enduring accomplishments of the Progressive movement, in my opinion, have been its social, industrial and economic reforms and these were most evident on the local, municipal and state levels. As any national reform movement in a democratic society would, it necessarily created issues which became influential in national political life. If one analyzes Progressivism only in its national political phase, however, it was often anti-Negro. Presidential candidates were sometimes willing to overlook the desires of a largely disfranchised group in hope of attracting white southern support. Theodore Roosevelt refused to seat southern Negro representatives at the 1912 Progressive convention in spite of protests by Jane Addams, Henry Moskowitz, Joel Spingarn and others. The segregationist and anti-Negro policies instituted during the Woodrow Wilson administrations are well-known. Progressivism as a political movement did therefore, as historians have pointed out, bypass the Negro. If, however, one includes social workers and industrial and municipal reformers in his definition of Progressivism, there was a serious, positive and hopeful interest expressed in Negro welfare by the Progressive movement. See Arthur S. Link, "The Negro as a Factor in the Campaign of 1912," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXII (January 1947), 81-99; Kathleen L. Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson and Federal Segregation," *ibid.*, XLIV (January 1959), 158-173; Henry Blumenthal, "Woodrow Wilson and the Race Question," *ibid.*, XLVIII (January 1963), 1-21; Jane Addams, "The Progressive Party and the Negro," *The Crisis*, V (November 1912), 30-31.

2. *The New York Age*, November 3, 1910; "Night Clubs," James Weldon Johnson Collection.

3. A more thorough study of each of these cities would undoubtedly extend this list considerably.

4. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (New York, 1953), p. 99.

5. *The New York Freeman*, May 23, June 6, 1885, January 9, February 13, April 3, 1886.

6. Augustus Taber, "New York Colored Mission: The Beginning of its Work," appended to the New York Colored Mission, *Twentieth Annual Report*, 1885 (New York, 1886), p. 23.

7. *Report of the New York Colored Mission, 1904* (New York, 1905), p. 7.
8. *Report of the New York Colored Mission, 1880* (New York, 1881), p. 8.
9. "Certificate of Incorporation of the New York Colored Mission," August 3, 1871. New York City Hall of Records.
10. *Report on the New York Colored Mission, 1871* (New York, 1872), p. 3; and *Report, 1881* (New York, 1882), p. 8.
11. "The great ambition of the older people was to read the Bible before they died." Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York, 1959), p. 21; *Report of the New York Colored Mission, 1893* (New York, 1894), pp. 13-15.
12. Mary White Ovington, "Beginnings of the N.A.A.C.P.," *The Crisis*, XXXII (June 1926), 76-77.
13. *New York Evening Post* as cited in *The New York Age*, July 6, 1905; Mary L. Lewis, "The White Rose Industrial Association," *The Messenger*, VII (April 1925), 158.
14. White Rose Industrial Association, *Annual Report for . . . 1911* (New York, 1912), p. 6.
15. See obituary in *The New York Age*, March 14, 1907; *The Crisis*, VII (December 1911), 51; Lassalle Best, "History of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); Victoria Earle Matthews to Booker T. Washington, March 23, 1902. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 1; August Meier, "Negro Racial Thought in the Age of Booker T. Washington, Circa 1880-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957), pp. 380-381.
16. Frances A. Kellor, "The Criminal Negro: A Sociological Study," *The Arena*, XXV (January-November 1901).
17. Frances A. Kellor, *Out of Work: A Study of Employment Agencies*. . . (New York, 1904), p. vi.
18. For a detailed reply to Miss Kellor's charges see John N. Bogart to Mayor George B. McClellan, November 22, 1906, McClellan Papers, Municipal Archives. Also *Reports of the Commissioner of Licenses and Bureau of Industries and Immigration*; Kellor, "Report of the Research Department of the Woman's Municipal League," *Woman's Municipal League Bulletin*, IV (April 1906), 3-7.
19. *The New York Freeman*, May 16, 1885.
20. Agents "corral girls from the country districts." Kellor, *Out of Work*, pp. 73-74, 83, 97.
21. Louise DeKoven Bowen, *The Colored People of Chicago* (Chicago, 1913), n.p.
22. "Conditions Existing in the City of New York Prior to May 1st, 1904, Which Led to the Creation of this Office" (1909). Municipal Archives.
23. Frances A. Kellor, "Assisted Emigration from the South: The Women," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 12-13.
24. *Ibid.*, 14.
25. E. M. Rhodes, "The Protection of Girls Who Travel: A National Movement," *The Colored American Magazine*, XIII (August 1907), 114-115.
26. From September 1932 to February 1933, in twenty-four installments, Miss Ovington published her "Reminiscences" in *The Afro-American* of Baltimore. Most of the information for the following biographical sketch comes from there. *The Afro-American*, September 24, 1932.
27. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1932.
28. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1932.

29. *Idem.*
30. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1932; Mary White Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York, 1947), chap. 1; *The New York Age*, January 18, 1930.
31. *The Afro-American*, October 1, 1932; Mary White Ovington, *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York, 1911), p. ix.
32. City and Suburban Homes Company, *Annual Report, 1904-1905* (New York, 1905), p. 11; *Annual Report, 1906-1907* (New York, 1907), pp. 7-8.
33. On Phipps as philanthropist see Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 109; and "Reminiscences of William H. Allen" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1950), pp. 57-58; *Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide*, LXXV (March 4, 1905), 460; "Model Tenements," *The Outlook*, LXXIX (February 11, 1905), 364-365.
34. Arthur Gary, "Sketch of the Constitution League of the United States" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); Ruth Worthy, "A Negro in Our History: William Monroe Trotter, 1872-1934" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1952), p. 91. On Millholland's role in the NAACP see *The Crisis*, XXXIII (February 1927), 181-182, XXXV (April 1928), 124, XXV (May 1928), 166.
35. "I feel as though now that the tenement is promised us things are going pretty well for a settlement in it. Mr. Phipps, I know, is interested." Mary White Ovington to Fred R. Moore, February 23, 1905. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 29. *The Afro-American*, October 15, 1932; *Half A Man*, pp. 41-42; *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, pp. 33-34.
36. William English Walling, "The Race War in the North," *The Independent*, LXV (September 3, 1908), 529-534; William English Walling, "The Founding of the NAACP," *The Crisis*, XXXVI (July 1929), 228.
37. *The Afro-American*, November 26, December 10, 1932; *Then and Now: NAACP, 1909-1959* (New York, 1959?); Mary White Ovington, *How the NAACP Began* (New York, 1914).
38. *The Crisis*, V (February 1913), 163-164.
39. Interview with Mrs. Richetta G. Wallace, November 3, 1961; Richetta G. Wallace to author, November 7, 1961.
40. Claude McKay, *A Long Way From Home* (New York, 1937), p. 113.
41. *The Afro-American*, September 10, 1932; "A Tribute to Miss Ovington," *The New York Age*, July 2, 1932; Oswald Garrison Villard, *Fighting Years: Memoirs of a Liberal Editor* (New York, 1939), pp. 191-198.
42. *The Afro-American*, February 25, 1933.
43. For a list of members of the CIICN see "Committee on the Industrial Improvement of the Negro in New York," a small booklet in the Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 18; *The New York Age*, May 17, July 12, 1906.
44. *The New York Age*, July 12, 1906; Bulkley, "The School as a Social Center," *Charities*, XV (October 7, 1905), 76.
45. J. Wayne Wrightstone, Director of the New York City Board of Educational Research to author, February 7, 1962; *The Crisis*, II (October 1911), 236; James K. Owens, Syracuse University Archivist, to author, January 8, 1963; *Alumni Record and General Catalogue of Syracuse University* (Syracuse, 1911), III, 1546.
46. "A Slave Boy, Now a Professor," *Success*, April 8, 1899.
47. William Lewis Bulkley, "Race Prejudice as Viewed from an Economic

Standpoint," *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference, 1909* (New York, 1909?), pp. 92-93.

48. Interview with Henry S. Coshburn of Board of Education, February 23, 1962.

49. *The New York Age*, July 22, 1909.

50. Ralph Ellison, "William Lewis Bulkley" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection); *The New York Age*, March 22, 1924, September 3, 1933.

51. "I wish very much that you could see your way clear to attend the meetings of the Commission for Improving the Industrial Condition of the colored people in Greater New York. I am very much afraid that unless you do attend that Bulkley and his crowd will get hold of this important organization." Booker T. Washington to Charles W. Anderson, October 1, 1907. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 37.

52. Charles W. Anderson to Booker T. Washington, April 3, 1909. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 43; *The New York Age*, April 6, 1905.

53. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1914; Bulkley, "The School as a Social Center," 77.

54. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1907. "A Square Deal for New York Negroes," *The Outlook*, LXXXIII (June 23, 1906), 398-399.

55. William Lewis Bulkley to J. G. Phelps Stokes, November 14, 18, 1906. Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Boxes 18 and 77.

56. Charles W. Anderson to Booker T. Washington, March 23, 1906. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 2; William Lewis Bulkley, "The Industrial Condition of the Negro in New York City," *The Annals*, XXVII (May 1906), 595.

57. *The New York Age*, May 17, 1906.

58. "CIICN," Stokes Manuscripts; "Committee for Improving the Industrial Condition of Negroes in New York," *The Colored American Magazine*, XII (June 1907), 459-64; *The New York Age*, April 26, 1906.

59. William Jay Schieffelin to J. G. Phelps Stokes, May 24, 1906. Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 18. On Schieffelin see "The Reminiscences of William Jay Schieffelin" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1949), and "Harmful Rush of Negroes to the North," *The New York Times Magazine*, VI (June 3, 1917).

60. From 1906 to 1911 *The New York Age* regularly printed articles on the CIICN and this information is largely derived from them.

61. *Ibid.*, October 19, 1911; *The Crisis*, VIII (September 1914), 243-46; *The Urban League: Its Story* (New York, 1939); Bulkley, "Race Prejudice," 97.

62. *The New York Age*, June 22, 1905.

63. *Ibid.*, June 26, 1913; *The Colored American Magazine*, XIII (September 1907), 211.

64. *The Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line*, V (November 1909), 1-2.

65. *The New York Age*, July 22, 1908.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. There is no legally definable modern community of Harlem. The first settlement was made in the area in 1636, and the town of New Harlaem created in 1658. The last Harlem colonial patent was made in 1686. Its boundaries ran roughly from present-day Seventy-fourth Street to One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street, East River to Hudson River. Subsequent grants made

in the general area of New Harlaem in colonial times outside these boundaries were also often referred to as Harlem grants. Sometimes the name Harlem was used to designate all upper Manhattan. Harlem in the late nineteenth century was part of the Twelfth Ward, which included all Manhattan above Eighty-sixth Street. At the turn of the nineteenth century its residents generally defined the community as bordered by One Hundred and Tenth Street on the south, One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street on the north, East River on the east, and present-day Morningside and St. Nicholas Avenues on the west, but were never rigid in applying this definition. The same holds true today. This absence of legally designated boundaries presents no significant difficulty for this study because after this chapter I shall use an ethnic definition—the specific sections within the general area of Harlem occupied by Negroes, and these can be traced in the greatest of detail. In the 1920's Negro Harlem was most often called Central Harlem or North Harlem.

2. James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem (City of New York): Its Origin and Early Annals* (New York, 1904), *passim*.

3. Col. Alonzo B. Caldwell, *A Lecture: The History of Harlem* (New York, 1882), pp. 20, 30-31.

4. *Deduction of the Harlaem Commons* (New York, 1872), pp. 28-29. For extensive genealogical data on Harlem descendants consult Riker, *Revised History*, pp. 426-814.

5. *The New York Times*, November 17, 1883.

6. Richard Webber, Jr., "Historical Sketch of Harlem," *Harlem Magazine*, I (October 1912), 17.

7. New York Public Library, *Book of Charters, Wills, Deeds and Other Official Documents* (New York, 1905), pp. 307-325; *Constitution of the Harlaem Library Formed by a Convention of the Inhabitants* (New York, 1817); William B. Silber, *A History of St. James Methodist Episcopal Church at Harlem, New York City, 1830-1880* (New York, 1882), p. 22; James Ford, et al., *Slums and Housing: With Special Reference to New York City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1936), I, 324.

8. This information is from a nonpaginated collection of typewritten material at the New-York Historical Society entitled "Harlem Commons Syndicate."

9. Caldwell, *A Lecture*, pp. 12, 18-19.

10. *Harlem Magazine*, II (October 1913), 11-13.

11. Broadus Mitchell, *Alexander Hamilton: The National Adventure, 1788-1804* (New York, 1962), pp. 499-500; *Harlem Local Reporter*, May 10, 1893, July 9, 1904.

12. Caldwell, *A Lecture*, p. 24.

13. Riker, *Revised History*, pp. 191n., 256n., 398n., 474, 530n., 588-589.

14. "Old Timers' Tales of Harlem's Growth," *Harlem Magazine*, III (December 1914), 16.

15. Rev. Edgar Tilton, Jr., *The Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem: Historical Sketch* (New York, 1910), p. 11; The Collegiate Reformed Church of Harlem, *Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary* (New York, 1910), p. 1.

16. Mitchell, *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 552.

17. "Harlem Commons Syndicate"; Riker, *Revised History*, pp. 488-489.

18. Riker, *Revised History*, p. 298.

19. "Harlem Commons Syndicate."

20. "The Fall of Shantytown," *Harlem Local Reporter*, March 5, 1890; "A Shanty Scene in Harlem," *ibid.*, August 13, 1892; Kate Holladay Claghorn, "The Foreign Immigrant in New York City," *Reports of the Industrial Com-*

mission on Immigration . . . and on Education (Washington, D.C., 1901), XV, 457.

21. "Old Timers' Tales of Harlem's Growth," *Harlem Magazine*, III (December 1914), 16-22; Michael C. O'Brien, "Memories of Hooker's Building," *ibid.*, IV (May 1916), 11, 17; *Harlem Local Reporter*, September 21, 1892.

22. Harlem Plains, the area that became Negro Harlem, is made of limestone which eroded more readily than the schist of Harlem Heights. For a general geological history of the area see Edward Hagaman Hall, "A Brief History of Morningside Park and Vicinity," American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, *21st Annual Report* (Albany, 1916), 537-598; *History and Commerce of New York, 1891* (New York, 1892?) p. 82.

23. Caldwell, *A Lecture*, p. 27.

24. Charles H. Fuller, "Harlem—from 'Cradle Days' to Now," *Harlem Magazine*, XIV (October 1925), 6-7; Charles H. Haswell, *Reminiscences of New York by an Octogenarian, 1816-1860* (New York, 1896), p. 459.

25. *The Harlem Monthly Magazine*, I (April 1893), 1-2; James Grant Wilson, ed., *The Memorial History of the City of New York* (New York, 1893), III, 453.

26. Lloyd Morris, *Incredible New York: High Life and Low Life of the Last Hundred Years* (New York, 1951), pp. 95-96; Reginald Pelham Bolton, *\$5,000,000 Speedway: A Useless Driveway* (n.p., n.d.); Charles Townsend Harris, *Memories of Manhattan in the Sixties and Seventies* (New York, 1928), p. 78; Herbert Manchester, *The Story of Harlem and the Empire City Savings Bank, 1889-1929* (New York, 1929), pp. 13, 16, 19.

27. *Harlem Magazine*, XVIII (May 1929), 15; Charles Henry White, "In Up-Town New York," *Harper's Monthly*, CXII (January 1906), 220-228.

28. New York and Harlem Railroad, *Act of Incorporation and Subsequent Acts, 1831-1863* (New York, 1864), pp. 3-4.

29. *Taintor's Route and City Guides, Harlem Route* (New York, 1867), p. 6.

30. Samuel M. Brown, "Harlem's Early Transit Facilities," *Harlem Magazine*, IV (September 1915), 11; Joseph Warren Greene, Jr., "New York City's First Railroad, The New York and Harlem, 1832 to 1867," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin*, IX (January 1926), 107-123.

31. Ella Bunner Graff, *Reminiscences of Old Harlem* (n.p., 1933), p. 5; Caldwell, *A Lecture*, p. 28.

32. A. J. Wall, "The Sylvan Steamboats on the East River, New York to Harlem," *The New-York Historical Society Bulletin*, VII (October 1924), 59-72.

33. I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* (New York, 1918), III, 808-831; Thomas Adams, Harold M. Lewis and Theodore T. McCroskey, *Population, Land Values and Government* (New York, 1929), pp. 51 ff; James Austin Stevens, *The Physical Evolution of New York City in a Hundred Years, 1807-1907* (n.p., n.d.); James L. Bahret, "Growth of New York and Suburbs Since 1790," *The Scientific Monthly* (November 1920), 404-418.

34. Walter Laidlaw, *Population of the City of New York, 1890-1930* (New York, 1932), p. 51.

35. Frederic A. Birmingham, *It Was Fun While It Lasted* (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 39.

36. *Harlem Magazine*, II (April 1914), 17-18; *Harlem Local Reporter*, May 28, 1892.

37. *History and Commerce of New York, 1891* (New York, 1892?), p. 90.

38. "Harlem Commons Syndicate"; *The Harlem Local: Twelfth Ward News*, January 4, 1873.

39. *Harlem Magazine*, V (December 1916), 13; Manchester, *The Story of Harlem*, p. 21.

40. "During several years after the discovery of Harlem (from the stations on the elevated railroad) its growth was phenomenal. . . ." *Harlem Local Reporter*, March 1, 1890.

41. *Harlem Magazine*, XVIII (May 1929), 14.

42. *Harlem Local Reporter*, March 5, 1890.

43. Wirt Howe, *New York At The Turn of the Century, 1899-1916* (Toronto, 1946), pp. 2-3; *Harlem Local Reporter*, March 25, 1891; "Last Rites on Billy Goats," *ibid.*, March 30, 1895.

44. *Harlem Magazine*, IV (November 1915), 13, XV (July 1926), 4.

45. O'Brien, "Memories of Hooker's Building," 17.

46. Berta Gilbert, "Morgenthau Reminisces About Harlem," *Harlem Magazine*, XX (May 1931), 4, 15-16; Record and Guide, *A History of Real Estate, Building, and Architecture in New York City During the last Quarter of a Century* (New York, 1898), pp. 94-95, 112; *Harlem Local Reporter*, January 2, 1895; *Harlem Life*, XV (October 28, 1899), XVI (February 3, 1900), 6; Vincent Sheean, *Oscar Hammerstein I: The Life and Exploits of an Impresario* (New York, 1956), pp. 40 ff.

47. *Harlem Local Reporter*, March 1, 1893.

48. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1890, July 4, 1894.

49. *Ibid.*, December 28, 1889; Newspaper clipping in "Harlem Commons Syndicate."

50. The operations of these Harlem claimants are preserved in a collection of their official transactions, reports of annual meetings, letters, genealogical charts and newspaper clippings in the "Harlem Commons Syndicate," New-York Historical Society. See also Walter H. Shupe, *First Annual Statement of the Harlem Commons Syndicate* (New York, 1884).

51. *Harlem Magazine*, XXI (August 1932), 9, 16.

52. Henry Pennington Toler, *Arise Take Thy Journey* (New York, 1903), p. 48; Carl Horton Pierce, *New Harlem Past and Present: The Story of an Amazing Civic Wrong Now At Last to be Righted* (New York, 1903).

53. Charles C. Baldwin, *Stanford White* (New York, 1931), pp. 194-195, 200; Birmingham, *It Was Fun While It Lasted*, p. 41; *Harlem Library Bulletin*, I (March 1903), n.p.; *Harlem Magazine*, II (September 1913), 25; Robert Coit Chapin, *The Standard of Living of Workingmen's Families in New York City* (New York, 1909), p. 85; *The Hammer and the Pen*, I (August 1898), 3-4.

54. *The New York Times*, November 21, 1920.

55. *Harlem Magazine*, XVI (June 1927), 4-5.

56. Sheean, *Oscar Hammerstein I*, pp. 42-46, 57, 66.

57. *Harlem Magazine*, I (June 1912), 29.

58. Birmingham, *It Was Fun While It Lasted*, p. 14.

59. *First Report of the Tenement House Commission of New York City* (New York, 1902), II, 103.

60. This is taken from a survey of biographical sketches that appeared regularly in *Harlem Magazine*.

61. *Harlem Local Reporter*, December 28, 1889. "An army of downtowners [are] making their residences in this delightful section." *Ibid.*, May 2, 1891.

62. *Harlem Magazine*, II (April 1914), 17-18.

63. *Harlem Local Reporter*, January 7, 1890; *135th Anniversary of the*

Battle of Harlem Heights: With a History and Ready Reference Directory of Harlem (New York, 1911).

64. Graff, *Reminiscences of Old Harlem*, p. 4.
65. *The Local Reporter*, January 6, 1883.
66. Interview with Max Bolt, February 9, 1962.
67. *Harlem Local Reporter*, May 10, 1893.
68. Harlem Presbyterian Church, *Church Bulletin* (April 17, 1908), n.p.
69. *New York Street Directory and Shoppers' Guide for 1898* (New York, 1898), p. 73.
70. *Harlem Local Reporter*, February 15, 1890, October 19, 1892, November 26, 1892.
71. Manchester, *The Story of Harlem*, pp. 24-25.
72. Respectively: *The Harlem Monthly Magazine*, *Harlem Life and Harlem Local Reporter*.
73. The Independence Day Association of Harlem, *Celebration*, 1886 (New York, 1887), 17; Harlem Wohlthätigkeits Verein, *Constitution* (New York, 1896); Harlem Independent Schützen Corps, *Golden Jubilee, 1880-1930* (New York, 1930); Konrad Bercovici, *Around the World in New York* (New York, 1924), 215; Harlem Regatta Association, *Official Programme* (New York, 1902); Harlem Democratic Club, *Constitution, By-Laws, Rules...* (New York, 1889), 5; Harlem Republican Club, *By-Laws and List of Members* (New York, 1892); *Harlem Evening High School News*, November 1907; Harlem Board of Commerce, *Constitution and By-Laws* (New York, 1896).
74. *The Harlem Monthly Magazine*, I (April 1893), 2; *Harlem Magazine*, XXI (December 1932), 8.
75. *Harlem Local Reporter*, April 16, 1890.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. "The Reminiscences of Samuel J. Battle" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1960), p. 21; *The Harlem Local Reporter*, April 4, 1894.
2. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, March 1, 1893.
3. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1895.
4. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1893.
5. *The Sun's Guide to New York* (New York, 1892), p. 26.
6. William McAdoo, *Guarding A Great City* (New York, 1906), p. 91.
7. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, December 26, 1894. "A Walk in Harlem Brings Surprises," *The New York Times*, January 2, 1921.
8. *Ibid.*, July 18, 1894, August 4, 1894; *The Harlem Local Reporter and Bronx Chronicle*, January 1, 1898; Frances Blascoer, *Colored School Children in New York* (New York, 1915), p. 75.
9. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, September 1, 1894; *Harlem Magazine*, IV (June 1915), 9; *Uptown New York* (May-June 1934), 9.
10. *Ibid.*, September 21, 1892, March 1, 1893.
11. Frederic A. Birmingham, *It Was Fun While It Lasted* (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 39.
12. James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem (City of New York): Its Origin and Early Annals* (New York, 1904), p. 189.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 287; Rev. Edgar Tilton, Jr., *The Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem: Historical Sketch* (New York, 1910), p. 31; "Harlem Commons Syndicate," n.p.; Col. Alonzo B. Caldwell, *A Lecture: The History of Harlem* (New York, 1882), p. 23.
14. *The Daily Advertiser* [New York], January 15, 1791.

15. William B. Silber, *A History of St. James Methodist Episcopal Church at Harlem, New York City, 1830-1880* (New York, 1882).
16. Robert S. Dixon, "Education of the Negro in the City of New York, 1853-1900" (M.A. thesis, City College, 1935), pp. 13-14.
17. Jonathan Greenleaf, *A History of the Churches, of All Denominations, in the City of New York from the First Settlement to the Year 1846* (New York, 1846), p. 322.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 330.
19. Dixon, "Education of the Negro," pp. 14, 19, 25.
20. Ella Bunner Graff, *Reminiscences of Old Harlem* (n.p., 1933), p. 8.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
22. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, December 8, 1894.
23. *Harlem Library Bulletin*, I (September 1902), 10.
24. Michael C. O'Brien, "Memories of Hooker's Building," *Harlem Magazine*, IV (May 1916), 17.
25. *The New York Age*, March 6, 1913.
26. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1890; "The Negro in New York," *The Sun*, January 30, 1901.
27. John P. Clyde, "The Negro in New York City" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1899), pp. 3-4.
28. This information is derived from advertisements and personal notices which appeared in the Negro and white press in the 1880's and 1890's.
29. *The New York Age*, February 21, 28, 1891, January 26, 1895.
30. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, November 4, 1893; Jacob A. Riis, *The Battle With the Slum* (New York, 1902), pp. 110-111.
31. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, December 26, 1894; *The New York Times*, December 26, 1901.
32. *The New York Age*, October 20, 1888, April 20, 1889; *The New York Globe*, May 12, June 2, June 30, 1883.
33. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, October 31, 1891.
34. *The New York Age*, May 17, 1890, February 21, 1891.
35. I have compiled these statistics by locating the exact blocks delineated by the Tenement House Commission on the ward maps which the Commission published. The selection I made was limited to blocks with ten or more Negro families. The statistics omit nonfamily groups and are therefore no accurate guide to the exact number of Negroes in Harlem in 1902. They do, however, present a description of the distribution of Negroes in the general area. *First Report of the Tenement House Commission of New York City* (New York, 1902), II, 103, and maps.
36. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, April 12, 1893.
37. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1895, March 1, 1894.
38. The Harlem Relief Society of the City of New York, *First Annual Report, 1893* (New York, 1894), and *Second Annual Report, 1894* (New York, 1895). James Baldwin, who obviously speaks for a later generation, writes of the "bitter expectancy with which, in my childhood, we awaited winter: It is coming and will be hard; there is nothing anyone can do about it." "The Harlem Ghetto," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston, 1955), p. 57.
39. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, December 13, 1893.
40. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1893.
41. *Ibid.*, December 23, 1893.
42. The Harlem Relief Society, *Twenty-Second Annual Report, 1914* (New York, 1915), pp. 2-3, 13.

43. For a wonderful description of the Cake Walk see *The New York Age*, September 1, 1934. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, February 28, 1891, March 29, 1890; Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York, 1890), p. 154.
44. Vincent Sheean, *Oscar Hammerstein I: The Life and Exploits of an Impresario* (New York, 1950), pp. 58-59, 63; *Harlem Life*, XV, (October 21, 1899), 3.
45. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, May 20, 1893, August 4, 1894.
46. *Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide*, LXXIII (January 16, 1904), 105, and LXXIII (June 4, 1904), 1306.
47. *Ibid.*, LXV (January 27, 1900), 141.
48. John Martin, *Rapid Transit: Its Effects on Rents and Living Conditions* (New York, 1909), p. 13; James L. Bahret, "Growth of New York and Suburbs Since 1790," *The Scientific Monthly* (November 1920), 412.
49. Walter Stabler, "Development of the West Side: A Review of Past and Present Phases," *Record and Guide*, LXX (August 2, 1902), 157.
50. ". . . More than ever before the market is dominated by expert professional operations." *Ibid.*, LXIX (January 10, 1903), 37.
51. *Ibid.*, LXXIII (March 26, 1904). ". . . much of the remaining vacant land on the Upper East Side and in Harlem has passed into the hands of building loan operators. . ." *Ibid.*, LXXV (January 14, 1905), 58.
52. Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (New York, 1960), p. 464.
53. *Record and Guide*, LXX (September 6, 1902), 328.
54. Howard Marion Lesourd, "A Harlem Neighborhood" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1913), p. 6; Eleanor L. Symonds, "Population Shifting in Manhattan" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1924), pp. 3 ff.
55. James Speyer to J. G. Phelps Stokes, September 30, 1903. Stokes Manuscripts, Columbia University, Box 4.
56. Lillian D. Wald to J. G. Phelps Stokes, September 30, 1903, *ibid.*
57. "There is no one whose presence in the Harlem Federation I will value more than yours. . ." Maurice H. Harris to Lillian D. Wald, December 7, 1906. Wald Manuscripts, New York Public Library; Sarah Sussman, "A Settlement Club" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1918).
58. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, September 10, 1900; "Liber 150," p. 124 and "Liber 127," p. 359, New York City Hall of Records.
59. *Harlem Library Bulletin*, I (September 1902), 4-6, I (July 1903), n.p.; *The New York Times*, November 3, 1913, February 21, June 8, 1914.
60. *Record and Guide*, LXXII (October 3, 1903), 574; Cahan, *Rise of David Levinsky*, p. 191.
61. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, May 10, 1893; *Record and Guide*, LXXII (August 29, 1903), 373.
62. Elmer Rice, "A New York Childhood," *The New Yorker*, IV (September 22, 1928), 36-40.
63. Konrad Bercovici, "The Black Blocks of Manhattan," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, CXLIX (October 1924), 615.
64. "The district north of 125th Street has suffered most severely from inaccessibility." *Record and Guide*, XLVII (January 10, 1891).
65. *The Harlem Local Reporter*, July 5, 1893.
66. *Ibid.*, July 13, 1895.
67. "There is every reason to believe that the rapid transit railway will have the effect of reserving the better part of Manhattan Island as far north as Harlem . . . for elevator flats, costly dwellings, and business buildings. . ." *Record and Guide*, LXV (February 24, 1900), 317; LXXV (June 25, 1905),

370. "Harlemites are naturally more interested in rapid transit than any others in the city. . ." *The Harlem Local Reporter*, January 25, 1893.
68. *Harlem Life*, XV (October 28, 1899), 3, XVI (February 13, 1900), 6.
69. See, for example, *New York Daily Tribune*, August 26, 1900.
70. *The New York Age*, June 11, 1914.
71. *Record and Guide*, LXXIV (October 1, 1904), 667.
72. "Interview with John E. Nail" (WPA Research Paper, Schomburg Collection).
73. *Record and Guide*, LXXIV (October 31, 1903), 775.
74. *Ibid.*, LXXV (January 14, 1905), 287; James Weldon Johnson, "The Making of Harlem," *Survey Graphic*, VI (March 1925), 635.
75. *The New York Age*, June 11, 1914.

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1. *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, LXXV (January 14, 1905), 58.
2. John M. Royall in *The New York Age*, June 11, 1914; *Harlem Magazine*, III (October 1914), 24.
3. *The New York Age*, June 11, 1914.
4. Wilfred R. Bain, "Negro Real Estate Brokers" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection), p. 1.
5. Obituary in *The New York Age*, October 22, 1908.
6. Clement Richardson, editor, *The National Cyclopedic of the Colored Race* (Montgomery, Alabama, 1919), I, 258.
7. From letterhead on Payton's stationery. See Philip A. Payton, Jr., to Emmett J. Scott, August 3, 1906. Booker T. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Box 4.
8. *The New York Age*, December 5, 1912; Booker T. Washington, *The Negro in Business* (Boston, 1907), pp. 197-205.
9. *Record and Guide*, LXXI (January 31, 1902), 316.
10. Washington, *The Negro in Business*, pp. 197-205.
11. See photograph in E. F. Dycoff, "A Negro City in New York," *The Outlook*, CVIII (December 23, 1914), 951.
12. Charles W. Anderson to Booker T. Washington, January 5, 1910. Washington Papers, Box 49.
13. When Booker T. Washington bought a controlling interest in the *Age* in 1907, Moore was made editor. August Meier, "Booker T. Washington and the Negro Press," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXVIII (January 1953), 67-90.
14. *The New York Age*, December 28, 1905.
15. Underlined in original. Philip A. Payton, Jr., to Emmett J. Scott, August 3, 1906. Washington Papers, Box 4.
16. *The New York Age*, November 15, 1906.
17. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1912.
18. Bain, "Negro Real Estate Brokers," p. 2; Richardson, *National Cyclopedic*, p. 258; Arthur J. Gary, "Housing and Sanitary Conditions of Negroes in Harlem" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection), p. 1.
19. Charles W. Anderson to Emmett J. Scott, April 1, 1910. Washington Papers, Box 49.
20. Philip A. Payton, Jr., to Emmett J. Scott, January 16, 1914. Washington Papers, Box 12.
21. "Certificate of Incorporation of the Afro-American Realty Company Filed and Recorded June 15, 1904." New York City Hall of Records.
22. Wilbur Young, "Sketch of James C. Thomas" (WPA research paper,

Schomburg Collection); *The New York Age*, April 21, 1910.

23. Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., *Against the Tide: An Autobiography* (New York, 1938).

24. Robert S. Dixon, "Education of the Negro in the City of New York, 1853-1900" (M.A. thesis, City College, 1935), p. 52.

25. "A Slave Boy Now a Professor," *Success*, April 8, 1899.

26. Young, "Sketch of James C. Thomas"; Washington, *The Negro in Business*, pp. 104-109.

27. Biographical sketch of Garner in *The New York Age*, September 21, 1905; W. E. B. DuBois, "The Segregated Negro World," *The World Tomorrow*, VI (May 1923), 136-138.

28. See stationery of Afro-American Realty Company with names of directors in Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, May 31, 1906. Washington Papers, Box 33.

29. The Afro-American Realty Company, *Prospectus* (New York, 1904), p. 7. Original in New York City Hall of Records.

30. E. F. Dycoff, "A Negro City in New York," 949-950; *The New York Age*, December 21, 1905; L. B. Bryan, "Negro Real Estate in New York" (WPA research paper, Schomburg Collection), pp. 2-3.

31. See *The New York Age* in 1905 and 1906 for advertisements.

32. *Prospectus*, pp. 3-7.

33. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, December 27, 1905. Washington Papers, Box 29.

34. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, September 21, 1905. *Ibid.*, Box 29.

35. This estimate, probably a conservative one, is derived from advertisements which appeared in the Negro press under Payton's name and scattered references in the Washington Papers.

36. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, December 12, 1906. Washington Papers, Box 33.

37. Wilford H. Smith to Emmett J. Scott, May 8, 1906. *Ibid.*, Box 5.

38. Wilford H. Smith to Booker T. Washington, May 17, 1906. *Ibid.*, Box 5. Moore also thought of resigning with Smith and advised Scott to join them. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, December 27, 1905. *Ibid.*, Box 29.

39. Charles J. Crowder vs. Afro-American Realty Company, a domestic corporation, and Philip A. Payton, Jr. Original in New York City Hall of Records.

40. Papers on Appeal from Order Vacating Order of Arrest. *Ibid.*

41. Crowder vs. Afro-American Realty Company, *passim*; *The New York Age*, January 31, February 7, 1907, November 19, 1908.

42. See Scott's prodding in Emmett J. Scott to Philip A. Payton, Jr., June 11, 1907; and Moore's reply, Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, no date. Washington Papers, Box 36.

43. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, September 21, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

44. Underlined in original. Philip A. Payton, Jr., to Emmett J. Scott, August 3, 1906. *Ibid.*, Box 4.

45. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, November 26, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

46. Melvin J. Chisum to Booker T. Washington, February 5, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 6. Payton was interviewed during the course of the trial and declared: "The whole affair is a spite action brought against me by the former counsel of our company and several dissatisfied stockholders. . . ." *The New York Age*, January 31, February 7, 1907.

47. *The New York Age*, February 7, 1907.

48. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, November 26, 1907. Washington Papers, Box 36.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, November 11, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

51. *Idem.* "I sincerely hope that a way out may be found. Payton can't borrow. . . ." Fred R. Moore to Booker T. Washington. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

52. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, November 11, 1907; Booker T. Washington to Fred R. Moore, December 16, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

53. Fred E. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, November 26, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

54. Booker T. Washington to Fred R. Moore, December 16, 1907; Fred R. Moore to Booker T. Washington, December 23, 1907. *Ibid.*, Box 36.

55. The houses at 40, 42 and 44 West One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street, the place where Payton and the Hudson Realty Company clashed in 1904, were advertised by a white corporation, Manheimer Brothers, in 1908. *The New York Age*, December 3, 1908.

56. "The company is allowed to lapse without one single word of explanation to the public or the stockholders. . . ." Draft of letter from Emmett J. Scott to Philip A. Payton, Jr., and Fred R. Moore, July 1908? Washington Papers, Box 41.

57. "Payton is out of the city. I shall take up your letter with him as soon as he returns—will see that a statement is issued if I have to do it myself. . . . Will send it to you as soon as prepared." Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, August 1, 1908. *Ibid.*, Box 41.

58. Fred R. Moore to Emmett J. Scott, October 19, 1908. *Ibid.*, Box 41.

59. *The New York Age*, July 30, 1908.

60. Richardson, *National Cyclopaedia*, I, 258.

61. The houses that Payton controlled and their exact locations are derived from advertisements which appeared in *The New York Age* over a number of years.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, *Housing Conditions Among Negroes in Harlem, New York City* (New York, 1915), p. 7. Hereafter cited as *Housing Conditions*.

2. Robert C. Weaver has pointed this out on a national scale in *The Negro Ghetto* (New York, 1948), *passim*; *The New York Times*, November 5, 1922.

3. The Independence Day Association of Harlem, *Celebration, 1886* (New York, 1887), p. 30.

4. At least five restrictive covenants were filed. See Section 7, Liber 127, pp. 365-368; Liber 128, pp. 145-150; Liber 151, pp. 134-146; Liber 152, pp. 297-301; Liber 159, pp. 7-15 at the New York City Hall of Records. The racial proviso in one agreement was also printed in *The Crisis*, IV (September 1912), 222.

5. *The New York Age*, June 8, December 4, 1911; *The Crisis*, III (January 1912), 99.

6. *Harlem Magazine*, II (February 1914), 21.

7. "Harlem Property Owners Discuss Negro Problem," *Harlem Home News*, April 7, 1911, July 31, August 28, 1913.

8. "Heart of Harlem Now Invaded by Negroes," "Harlem's Black Belt Is a Growing Menace," "Black Invaders Capture White Flat in 121st Street," *ibid.*, July 28, August 25, 1911, July 24, 1913.

9. *Ibid.*, June 2, June 23, August 25, September 22, 29, 1911.

10. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1911.

11. *Ibid.*, June 19, 1913; *The New York Times*, June 28, 1915; *Harlem Magazine*, II (February 1914), 24, II (April 1914), 25-28, II (August 1913),