INTRODUCTION TO THE 1967 EDITION

by E. Digby Baltzell

IN AN appendix to his famous study of the American Negro, *An American Dilemma,* Gunnar Myrdal discussed the need for further research in the Negro community. "We cannot close this description of what a study of a Negro community should be," he wrote, "without calling attention to the study which best meets our requirements, a study which is now all but forgotten. We refer to W. E. B. DuBois' *The Philadelphia Negro,* published in 1899."[1] One would hardly expect a greater tribute to this early classic in American sociology. It is no wonder that there has not been a scholarly study of the American Negro in the twentieth century which has not referred to and utilized the empirical findings, the research methods, and the theoretical point of view of this seminal book.

A classic is sometimes defined as a book that is often referred to but seldom read. *The Philadelphia Negro,* written by a young scholar who subsequently became one of the three most famous Negro leaders in American history, surely meets this requirement. Though always referred to and frequently quoted by specialists, it is now seldom read by the more general student of sociology. For not only has the book been out of print for almost half a century; it has been virtually unobtainable, as my own experience of almost twenty years of searching in vain for a copy in second-hand bookstores attests. Even at the University of Pennsylvania, under whose sponsorship the research was undertaken and the book published, although one copy has been preserved in the archives and one on microfilm, the sole copy listed in the catalogue and available for students in the library has been unaccountably missing from the shelves for several years. In writing this introduction, I am using a copy lent me by my good friend, Professor Ira Reid of Haverford College, a one-time colleague and friend of the late Professor DuBois at Atlanta

1. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma,* p. 1132.

University. Modern students, then, will certainly benefit from a readily available paperback edition of this study of the Negro community in Philadelphia at the turn of the nineteenth century.

In order to gain a full understanding of any book, one ought to know something of the life and intellectual background of its author, the place of the book in the history of the discipline (in this case sociology), as well as the climate of intellectual opinion and the social conditions of the era in which the book was written. Because *The Philadelphia Negro*—like all his other writings—was so intimately a part of the life of W. E. B. DuBois, I shall begin this introduction with a brief outline of his career. DuBois himself wrote in his seventies: "My life had its significance and its only deep significance because it was part of a problem; but that problem was, as I continue to think, the central problem of the greatest of the world's democracies and so the problem of the future world."[2]

It is one of the coincidences of American history that in the year 1895, Frederick Douglass, a crusading abolitionist and the first great leader of the Negro people, died, and Booker T. Washington rose to national leadership with his "compromise" speech at Atlanta, in which he made the famous statement that "in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to human progress." In that same year, which marked the passing of Negro leadership from the fiery and moralistic Douglass to the compromising and pragmatic Washington, a young New Englander, W. E. B. DuBois, obtained the first Ph.D. degree ever awarded a Negro by Harvard University.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois "was born by a golden river and in the shadow of two great hills," in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1868, the same year "Andrew Johnson passed from the scene and Ulysses Grant became President of the United States."[3] He was a mulatto of French Huguenot, Dutch, and Negro ("thank God, no Anglo-Saxon") ancestry. The Burghardt family had lived in this area of the Berkshires ever since his

2. W. E. B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1940), p. vii.

3. In writing of DuBois' life, I have tried to quote him directly where possible. I have profited greatly from the following biographical studies:

mother's great-grandfather had been set free after having served for a brief period in the Revolution. (In 1908, DuBois was accepted by the Massachusetts branch of the Sons of the American Revolution but was eventually suspended from membership by the national office because of his Negro ancestry.) DuBois grew up in a community of some five thousand souls which included between twenty-five and fifty Negroes. Social position in the small town was more a matter of class than of color. The rich people in town, mostly farmers, manufacturers, and merchants, were "not very rich nor many in number." Like the wealthier white children whom he "annexed as his natural companions," young Will DuBois judged men on their merits and accomplishments and felt, as was natural in that day, that the rich and successful deserved their position in life, as did the "lazy and thriftless" poor. He "cordially despised" the immigrant mill-workers and looked upon them as a "ragged, ignorant, drunken proletariat, grist for the dirty woolen mills and the poorhouse."

As his father, apparently a charming but irresponsible almost-white mulatto, died when he was very young, DuBois was brought up by his mother. Though always very poor, she did her best to pass on to her only son her own pride of ancestry and old-established position in the local Negro community. Fortunately, young Will was a precocious and brilliant boy, possessed of an infinite capacity for work and an abiding passion to excel. His stern New England upbringing was reflected in the following description of his values as a senior at Fisk: "I believed too little in Christian dogma to become a minister," he wrote many years later. "I was not without faith: I never stole material or spiritual things; I not only never lied, but blurted out my conception of the truth on many untoward occasions; I drank no alcohol and knew nothing of women, physically or psychically, to the incredulous amusement of most of my more experienced fellows: I above all believed in work—systematic and tireless."[4]

Francis L. Broderick, *W. E. B. DuBois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis,* and Elliott Morton Rudwick, "W. E. B. DuBois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1956).

4. W. E. B. DuBois, "My Evolving Program for Negro Freedom," in Rayford W. Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants,* p. 38.

From an early age, DuBois planned to go to college and was fortunately encouraged to do so by his friends and teachers. "A wife of one of the cotton mill owners, whose only son was a pal of mine," he wrote more than half a century later, "offered to see that I got lexicons and texts to take up the study of Greek in high school, without which college doors in that day would not open. I accepted the offer as only normal and right; only after many years did I realize how critical this gift was for my career."[5]

Among the Negroes of Great Barrington, young Will DuBois soon came to have a very special place. He was the only Negro in his high-school class of twelve and one of the two or three boys in the whole class who went on to college. After school and on weekends he worked at all sorts of jobs. Through his friendship with the local newsdealer, he obtained, for a brief period, a position as local correspondent for the *Springfield Republican.* He also contributed local news to two Negro newspapers, one in Boston and the other in New York. With a few harsh exceptions as he reached adolescence, he was accepted on his merits by his peers. Though not particularly good at sports, he was highly respected intellectually. At fifteen, he began annotating his collected papers, a practice he scrupulously followed until his death, in Ghana, at the age of ninety-five.

DuBois was, of course, aware of the color line as he grew up, but he had his first experience with a large Negro community at the age of fifteen, when he went to visit his grandfather in New Bedford. "I went to the East to visit my father's father in New Bedford," he later wrote, "and on that trip saw well-to-do, well-mannered colored people; and once, at Rocky Point, Rhode Island, I viewed with astonishment 10,000 Negroes of every hue and bearing. I was transported with amazement and dreams; I apparently noted nothing of poverty and degradation, but only extraordinary beauty of skin color and utter equality of mien, with absence so far as I could see of even the shadow of the line of race."[6]

DuBois graduated with high honors from high school in the

5. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

spring of 1884. His mother died soon after graduation day. Too poor—and also thought to be too young—to go to college, he finally took a job as timekeeper for a contractor who was building a fabulous "cottage" for the widow of Mark Hopkins, whose father-in-law had made a fortune in railroads and founded one of the first families in San Francisco. He learned a great deal about the ways of men on this responsible job, and was also able to save a little money. In the fall of 1885, he obtained some scholarship aid and entered Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, as a sophomore. He would have preferred Harvard, but Fisk in many ways proved to be a very valuable experience. Here for the first time he lived among, and learned about, his fellow Negroes. Though he did learn about a certain segment of the Southern Negro community at Fisk and in Nashville, he was, nevertheless, determined to see it whole. "Somewhat to the consternation of both teachers and fellow students," he obtained a job teaching school in the summer months in West Tennessee. "Needless to say, the experience was invaluable," he wrote. "I traveled not only in space but in time. I touched the very shadow of slavery. I lived and taught school in log cabins built before the Civil War. My school was the second held in the district since emancipation. I touched intimately the lives of the commonest of mankind—people who ranged from barefooted dwellers on dirt floors, with patched rags for clothes, to rough, hard-working farmers, with plain, clean plenty. I saw and talked with white people, noted now their unease, now their truculence and again their friendliness. I nearly fell from my horse when the first school commissioner whom I interviewed invited me to stay to dinner. Afterwards I realized that he meant me to eat at the second, but quite as well-served table."[7]

His years at Fisk, in contrast to his youth in New England, left DuBois with a strong and bitter sense of the "absolute division of the universe into black and white." Yet it was probably a good thing that he went there before finally realizing his boyhood dream of going to Harvard, which he entered on a scholarship, as a junior, in the fall of 1888. "I was happy at

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

Harvard, but for unusual reasons," he wrote much later. "One of these unusual circumstances was my acceptance of racial segregation. Had I gone from Great Barrington high school directly to Harvard I would have sought companionship with my white fellows and been disappointed and embittered by a discovery of social limitations to which I had not been used."[8]

On the whole, his days at Cambridge were very lonely. He made friends with only a very few of his classmates and reserved his social life for the stimulating Negro community in and around Boston: "I asked nothing of Harvard but the tutelage of teachers and the freedom of the library. I was quite voluntarily and willingly outside of its social life."[9]

Fortunately, the members of the faculty were far more friendly than the students:

> The Harvard of 1888 was an extraordinary aggregation of great men. Not often since that day have so many distinguished teachers been together in one place and at one time in America. . . . By good fortune, I was thrown into direct contact with many of these men. I was repeatedly a guest in the house of William James; he was my friend and guide to clear thinking; I was a member of the Philosophical Club and talked with Royce and Palmer; I sat in an upper room and read Kant's Critique with Santayana; Shaler invited a Southerner, who objected to sitting by me, out of his class; I became one of Hart's favorite pupils and was afterwards guided by him through my graduate course and started on my work in Germany. It was a great opportunity for a young man and a young American Negro, and I realized it.[10]

Apparently, even the haughty Anglophile and defender of Anglo-Saxon traditions Barrett Wendell knew a good man when he saw one. And DuBois never forgot the following experience:

> I have before me a theme which I wrote October 3, 1890, for Barrett Wendell, then the great pundit of Harvard English. I said: "Spurred by my circumstances, I have always been given to systematically planning my future, not indeed without many

8. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 34.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

> mistakes and frequent alterations, but always with what I now conceive to have been a strangely early and deep appreciation of the fact that to live is a serious thing. I determined while in school to go to college—partly because other men went, partly because I foresaw that such discipline would best fit me for life. . . . I believe foolishly perhaps, but sincerely, that I have something to say to the world, and I have taken English 12 in order to say it well." Barrett Wendell rather liked that last sentence. He read it out to the class.[11]

W. E. B. DuBois did indeed have something to say to the world and he soon went on to write and speak more eloquently in behalf of his race than any other man of his generation. But first he finished his work at Harvard, obtaining an A.B. in 1890, an M.A. in 1891, and completing most of the requirements for the Ph.D. before going abroad for two years on a scholarship. DuBois set sail for Europe on a Dutch boat in the summer of 1892, a year, as he put it, which marked "the high tide of lynching in the United States, when 235 persons were publicly murdered." He studied at the University of Berlin, where he listened to Max Weber and was accepted into "two exclusive seminars run by leaders of the developing social sciences." During the vacations, he traveled all over Europe where he was pleased to find far less racial discrimination than in the United States. He later summed up his experiences in Europe as follows:

> From this unhampered social intermingling with Europeans of education and manners, I emerged from the extremes of my racial provincialism. I became more human; learned the place in life of "Wine, Women, and Song;" I ceased to hate or suspect people simply because they belonged to one race or color; and above all I began to understand the real meaning of scientific research and the dim outline of methods of employing its technique and its results in the new social sciences for the settlement of the Negro problems in America.[12]

DuBois returned from Europe in 1894 with an almost blind faith in science and a determination to engage in a career of research, writing, and teaching. He had originally wanted to be a

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
12. Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

philosopher but "it was James with his pragmatism and Albert Bushnell Hart with his research method, that turned me back from the lovely but sterile land of philosophic speculation, to the social sciences as the field for gathering and interpreting that body of fact which would apply to my program for the Negro."[13]

After spending a year teaching the classics at Wilberforce, where he was frankly horrified at the low standards and especially the overly emotional religious atmosphere (as contrasted to his own rearing in the Congregational Church in Great Barrington), he was called to the University of Pennsylvania, where he was given an opportunity to carry out his program of applying the methods of science to the Negro problem. In the meantime, he received his Ph.D. from Harvard and had his thesis, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870,* published as the first volume in the Harvard Historical Series, in 1896, the year he began his research on the Philadelphia Negro.

W. E. B. DuBois was brought to Philadelphia largely on the initiative of Susan P. Wharton, a member of one of the city's oldest and most prominent Quaker families. She had long been interested in the problems of Negroes and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Philadelphia College Settlement, which had been founded in 1892. It is important to see that *The Philadelphia Negro* was a product of the New Social Science and Settlement House movements, both of which grew up in this country and in England during the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

"The best account of this new period," writes Nathan Glazer, "and indeed the most important book, to my mind, for an understanding of the rise of the contemporary social scientific approach, is Beatrice Webb's *My Apprenticeship.* Beatrice Webb describes the rise of her interest in social problems, and the unique vantage point afforded to her by the Potter family (she was Beatrice Potter) and its connections to further his interest. Although the most distinguished visitor to her home was Herbert Spencer, two other distinguished Victorians who played a central

13. *Ibid.,* p. 39.

role in the development of social science were often there. One was Francis Galton, whose discoveries in correlation were to be largely responsible for moving social statistics from the level of simple enumeration to that of a scientific tool of great precision and value. The other was Charles Booth, who, with his own fortune acquired from industry, was to conduct, beginning in the 1880's, the first great empirical social scientific study, an investigation into the conditions of life among all the people of London."[14]

It was in 1883, the year Karl Marx died, that young Beatrice Potter deserted the social life of fashionable Mayfair and went to the East End of London to work on her friend Charles Booth's famous and seminal study of the life and living conditions of the London poor. The next year, a group of Protestant clergymen, followers of Charles Kingsley and Frederick Dennison Maurice and their Christian Socialism, along with some young college men from Oxford and Cambridge, founded Toynbee Hall, which was an important landmark in the Settlement House and Social Gospel movements in England and also in this country. At the same time, Jane Addams, who had just graduated from college and was traveling abroad, made her first visit to the slums of London's East End. She was so horrified by what she saw there, and so impressed with the work being done at Toynbee Hall and with her newly acquired friend Beatrice Potter, that she came back and founded Hull House, in 1889, in the heart of the Chicago slums. Other settlement houses soon sprang up in most of the major cities along the Eastern seaboard. In the meantime, the famous *Hull House Papers and Maps* were published in 1895, based directly on Charles Booth's methods of research; even the colors on the maps, which indicated different degrees of poverty, were the same.

While the more famous founders of sociology, such as Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and Herbert Spencer, were predominantly armchair theorists in their approach to understanding the causes and consequences of the industrial and urban revolutions, the rise of capitalism and the problems of labor, it was the more empirical and pragmatic tradition of Charles Booth in England

14. Nathan Glazer, "The Rise of Social Science Research in Europe," in Daniel Lerner, ed., *The Human Meaning of the Social Sciences* (New York: Meridian, 1959), pp. 58-59.

and the Hull House work in this country, as the following paragraph suggests, that inspired young DuBois when he came to Philadelphia.

> Herbert Spencer finished his ten volumes of Synthetic Philosophy in 1896. The biological analogy, the vast generalizations, were striking, but actual scientific accomplishment lagged. For me an opportunity seemed to present itself. . . . I determined to put science into sociology through a study of the condition and problems of my own group. I was going to study the facts, any and all facts, concerning the American Negro and his plight, and by measurement and comparison and research, work up to any valid generalization which I could.[15]

It was in this same spirit that Susan P. Wharton went out to the Wharton School, which a member of her family had founded at the University of Pennsylvania, and prevailed on the Provost, Charles C. Harrison, to undertake a study of the Negro problem in the city's Seventh Ward (where, incidentally, Provost Harrison, Miss Wharton, and many of Philadelphia's more fashionable families lived at that time). Provost Harrison, heir to one of the great sugar fortunes in America, had turned away from business in his later years to devote himself to education and social reform. He was immediately receptive to her plans. (The project was outlined at a meeting at the Wharton residence, 910 Clinton Street, situated only a few blocks from the heart of the Negro ghetto and the College Settlement House at Seventh and South Streets [see map].) It was indeed fortunate for the University, Miss Wharton, and the city as a whole, that a young scholar of DuBois' ability, background, education, and scientific point of view was obtained for the job by a member of the Sociology Department of the Wharton School, Samuel McCune Lindsay. DuBois came to the city in August, 1896, and, except for a brief period of two months during the summer of 1897, when he studied rural Negroes in Virginia because so many of them had recently migrated to Philadelphia at the time of the study, he remained in the city until January, 1898. Many years later, DuBois described his call to Philadelphia and his stay there:

15. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 51.

> In the fall of 1896, I went to the University of Pennsylvania as "Assistant Instructor" in Sociology. It all happened this way: Philadelphia, then and still one of the worst governed of America's badly governed cities, was having one of its periodic spasms of reform. A thorough study of causes was called for. Not but what the underlying cause was evident to most white Philadelphians: the corrupt, semi-criminal vote of the Negro Seventh Ward. Everyone agreed that here lay the cancer; but would it not be well to elucidate the known causes by a scientific investigation, with the imprimatur of the University? It certainly would, answered Samuel McCune Lindsay of the Department of Sociology. And he put his finger on me for the task.
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> There must have been some opposition, for the invitation was not particularly cordial. I was offered a salary of $800 for a limited period of one year. I was given no real academic standing, no office at the University, no official recognition of any kind; my name was even eventually omitted from the catalogue; I had no contact with students, and very little with members of the faculty, even in my department. With my bride of three months, I settled in one room over a cafeteria run by a College Settlement, in the worst part of the Seventh Ward. We lived there a year, in the midst of an atomosphere of dirt, drunkenness, poverty and crime. Murder sat on our doorsteps, police were our government, and philanthropy dropped in with periodic advice.[16]

These are bitter words. And apparently DuBois was not quite true to the facts of the case. There was no evidence in the minutes of the University's Board of Trustees of any "opposition" to the appointment. On a request for information on the case from a DuBois biographer, the late Professor Lindsay replied that DuBois was "quite mistaken about the attitude of the Sociology Department. It was quite friendly, I am sure, and as far as I know that was true of the entire Wharton School faculty."[17] I have quoted this passage from DuBois' writings, nevertheless, because it suggests his own bitterness in 1944, when he wrote the passage, at the general neglect in this country of the Negro problem in the four decades following his publication of *The*

16. Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
17. Rudwick, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Philadelphia Negro. More important, I think, it may very well reflect the spirit if not the letter of the thoughtless rather than malicious attitudes of whites of that era toward an educated and fastidious Negro like DuBois. For DuBois was very sensitive to the climate of opinion at that time which, by and large, assumed the inferiority of all Negroes, whether educated or not.

The life and thought of every age, one would suppose, is always marked, like the life of every individual, by ambivalence, paradox, and contradictions. In other words, just when many men and women like Beatrice Webb, Jane Addams, or Miss Wharton were dedicating their lives trying to understand and alleviate the horrible conditions that surrounded the lives of the downtrodden at the turn of the century, the dominant values of the comfortable and complacent middle classes were crudely materialistic, smugly racist, and somewhat self-righteous, to say the least. In short, the 1890's were indeed marked by materialism at the top and misery at the bottom of both the class and racial scales. Thus DuBois, for instance, noted that the year 1892 marked the high tide of lynchings in the United States; it was also the year of the bitter and cruel Homestead Strike. In 1894, Coxey's Army marched on Washington. In 1895, South Carolina, following the lead of Mississippi, and under the leadership of the extreme racist Ben Tillman, disfranchised its Negroes; in the same year, the Supreme Court of the United States, in the Plessy vs. Ferguson case, sanctioned the "separate but equal" standard that Booker T. Washington compromised with in his Atlanta speech; and between 1895 and 1909, the Negro was systematically disfranchised throughout the South. It is no wonder that many Americans responded to Bryan's plea, in the campaign of 1896, that Wall Street should not "crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." Perhaps Kelly Miller, the son of former slaves who rose to become a professor of sociology at Howard University, caught the spirit of the "Gay Nineties," as seen from the Negro point of view, in the following summary of the distinction between Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington:

> The two men are in part products of their times, but also natural antipodes. Douglass lived in the day of moral giants; Washington lived in the era of merchant princes. The contemporaries of Douglass emphasized the rights of man; those of

> Washington, his productive capacity. The age of Douglass acknowledged the sanction of the Golden Rule; that of Washington worships the Rule of Gold. The equality of men was constantly dinned into Douglass' ears; Washington hears nothing but the inferiority of the Negro and the dominance of the Saxon.[18]

The Anglo-Saxon complex Kelly Miller was referring to was, of course, a reflection of the inevitable racial implications in Social Darwinism, which was the overwhelmingly dominant ideology in America at that time. In an age when men thought of themselves as having evolved from the ape rather than having been created in the image of angels, the Negro, it was almost universally agreed among even the most educated people, was definitely an inferior breed and situated at the very base of the evolutionary tree. "Now as to the Negroes," Theodore Roosevelt wrote to his friend Owen Wister, "I entirely agree with you that as a race and in the mass they are altogether inferior to the whites." And Roosevelt never repeated his "mistake," as he called it, of asking Booker T. Washington or any other Negro to the White House. For he was very sensitive to the opinions of an age in which, as the historian Rayford W. Logan has written, "both newspapers and magazines stereotyped, caricatured and ridiculed Negroes in atrocious dialect that shocks the incredulous reader today. Few newspapers in the Deep South today portray the Negro in such outlandish fashion as did the spokesmen for the 'Genteel Tradition in the North.'"[19] Nor must we forget that very distinguished and objective social scientists, almost without exception, agreed with the "Genteel Tradition" and Roosevelt's point of view. With calipers and rulers and all sorts of statistical devices, they were busy building up elaborate classifications of the "inborn" mental and psychological traits of Nordics, Aryans, Semites, Teutons, Hottentots, Japs, Turks, Slavs, and Anglo-Saxons—with Negroes of course at the very bottom of this biological hierarchy.

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18. Quoted in E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, p. 545.
19. Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in the United States*: A Brief History, p. 54.

Finally, it is important to place this dominant American ideology in a larger frame. For it was between the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species by Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life,* in 1859, and the Boer War in 1902, that white Western men conquered, explored, fought over, and partitioned among themselves the continent of black Africa below the Sierra. The year of 1896, when DuBois went to Philadelphia, also witnessed Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebration, a symbol of the high tide of "white supremacy" throughout the world.

It was, then, in the most discouraging and deplorable period in the history of the American Negro since the Civil War that young DuBois came to Philadelphia and set about doing a thorough and objective study of the Negro community. That the book, when finally published in 1899, succeeded in being objective, most modern readers, I think, will recognize. But even at the time of its publication, its reviewers were equally impressed with the author's critical and thorough methods of research. In the *Yale Review,* a reviewer found the book to be "a credit to American scholarship . . . the sort of book of which we have too few. . . . Here is an inquiry, covering a specific field and a considerable period of time, and persecuted with candor, thoroughness and critical judgment."[20] The reviewer in *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (a Southerner) found the book to be "exceptional and scholarly. . . . It is a critical, discriminating statement of the conditions and results of Negro life in a large, northern seaboard city a little more than thirty years after the Civil War . . . and its permanent national value to the scholar and the statesman is predicted."[21] The reviewer in *The Nation* was especially impressed with the historical material included in the book and only criticized the author for taking "too gloomy a view of the situation."[22] The *Outlook* review was long, detailed, and filled with praise: the historical background alone, thought the re-

20. *Yale Review,* IX (May, 1900), 110-11.
21. *The Annals* of the American Academy of Social and Political Science, XV (January-May, 1900), 101.
22. *The Nation,* LXIX (1899), 310.

viewer, "would of itself give this volume exceptional value."[23] And he went on to praise DuBois' objectivity: "In no respect does Dr. DuBois attempt to bend the facts so as to plead for his race . . . he is less apologetic than a generous-minded white writer might be. . . . Professor DuBois' aim is always to keep well within the field where his generalizations cannot be disputed."[24]

Thus the reviews at the time of publication invariably praised the book and remarked on the objectivity of the author. In fact, between the lines one has the impression that most of the white reviewers were rather surprised that a Negro author could have been capable of a work of such careful scholarship and objectivity. In spite of this, one is amazed to find that the reviewers did not come out openly and criticize DuBois' definitely environmental, rather than racial, approach to the problems of the Philadelphia Negroes. There was only a hint of this in the *American Historical Review*, in which the reviewer praised the book but questioned the author's optimism in regarding the Negro problem as soluble, in the long run, in terms of status and environmental improvement. The reviewer also, incidentally, appeared to be worried about "race pollution.' The tone of the review is suggested by the following lines:

> The book is not merely a census-like volume of many tables and diagrams of the colored people of Philadelphia. The author seeks to interpret the meaning of statistics in the light of social movements and the characteristics of the times, as, for instance, the growth of the city by foreign immigration. . . . He is perfectly frank, laying all necessary stress on the weaknesses of his people. . . . He shows a remarkable spirit of fairness. If any conclusions are faulty, the fault lies in the overweight given to some of his beliefs and hopes.[25]

After praising DuBois' fairness and outlining some of his findings, the reviewer criticizes DuBois' hopes:

> This state of things is due chiefly, in Dr. DuBois' judgment, to a color prejudice, and this he believes can be done away with in time, just as the class prejudices of earlier centuries in

23. *Outlook*, LXIII (1899), 647-48
24. *Ibid.*
25. *American Historical Review*, VI (1900-1901), 163.

> Europe are being wiped out gradually . . . but we need, what Dr. DuBois does not give, more knowledge of the effects of the mixing of blood of very different races, and the possibilities of absorption of inferior into superior groups of mankind. He speaks of the "natural repugnance to close intermingling with unfortunate ex-slaves," but we believe that the separation is due to differences of race more than of status.[26]

The hereditarian or racial as against the environmental or cultural approaches to the causes of the differences between Negroes and whites, both in America and in other parts of the world, divide men to this day. Perhaps the ultimate truth lies in a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" approach. Nevertheless—and especially in an age such as our own which tends to assume, often dogmatically, the greater importance of environment and culture—one must look back on *The Philadelphia Negro* as a pioneering attempt to objectively advance this modern approach in an era when most men deeply and sincerely felt that fixed hereditary aptitudes differentiated the races of men and consequently precluded any possibility of eventual integration on a plane of social, cultural, and political equality. Thus, in answer to his hereditarian opponents such as the reviewer in the *American Historical Review*, DuBois fell back on his own broad historical perspective by reminding his readers in the closing pages how many once-held hereditarian dogmas had already been eroded by the passage of time and the changing social situation:

> We rather hasten to forget that once the courtiers of English kings looked upon the ancestors of most Americans with far greater contempt than these Americans look upon Negroes—and perhaps, indeed, had more cause. We forget that once French peasants were the "Niggers" of France, and that German princelings once discussed with doubt the brains and humanity of the *bauer* (p. 386).

It was, then, not only DuBois' painstaking methods of research and his objective interpretations of the evidence that has given *The Philadelphia Negro* a permanent place in the socio-

26. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

logical literature. It was also the fact that DuBois brought a thoroughly sociological point of view to bear on this carefully collected evidence. In other words, the book, in emphasizing an environmental point of view, made a definite theoretical contribution. Some four decades later, for example, the authors of an important modern study of the Negro community in Chicago, *Black Metropolis*, explicitly referred to this contribution as follows:

> In 1899, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois published the first important sociological study of a Negro community in the United States—*The Philadelphia Negro* (University of Pennsylvania). At the outset, he presented an ecological map detailing the distribution of the Negro population by "social condition," and divided his subjects into four "grades:" (1) the "middle classes" and those above; (2) the working people—fair to comfortable; (3) the poor; (4) vicious and criminal classes. Despite the economic emphasis in this classification and his extensive presentation of data on physical surroundings, Du Bois concluded that "there is a far mightier influence to mold and make the citizen, and that is the social atmosphere which surrounds him; first his daily companionship, the thoughts and whims of his class; then his recreation and amusements; finally the surrounding world of American civilization" (p. 309). This emphasis upon the *social* relations—in family, clique, church, voluntary associations, school, and job—as the decisive elements in personality formation is generally accepted. The authors feel that it should also be the guiding thread in a study of "class". . . all serious students of Negro communities since DuBois have been concerned with the nature of social stratification. . . . In the Thirties this interest was given added stimulus by the suggestive hypotheses thrown out by Professor W. Lloyd Warner and by a general concern in anthropological and sociological circles with social stratification in America.[27]

As this quotation from *Black Metropolis* suggests, there has been a direct intellectual line between DuBois' emphasis on class and social environment as major causal agents in personality formation and a whole subsequent tradition in American soci-

27. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, pp. 787-88.

ology. Thus, for example, Franz Boas in his Lowell Lecture, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911), was echoing the findings and conclusions of DuBois when he wrote that "the traits of the American Negro are adequately explained on the basis of his history and his social status . . . without falling back upon the theory of hereditary inferiority."[28] And the tradition continued through W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's classic and pioneering study of the adjustment to the urban environment of Polish peasants in Chicago and Warsaw (*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* 1918-21), through the whole school of urban sociology which Robert E. Park (for some time an assistant and colleague of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee) inspired at the University of Chicago during the 1920's, to the later W. Lloyd Warner school of community studies at Harvard and Chicago, which inspired *Black Metropolis* and *Deep South* as well as the classic *Yankee City* Series. The origins, in both method and theoretical point of view, of all of these studies are to be found in *The Philadelphia Negro.*

In many ways, DuBois' whole life experiences before coming to Philadelphia in 1896—his youth, when he competed on his merits with his peers in the white community in Great Barrington, his observations of the faculty and students at Fisk as well as the poorest and most primitive Negroes in West Tennessee, his own achievements at Harvard as well as his contacts with great teachers like William James, and his witnessing the attitudes of educated Europeans toward himself—all combined to prepare him to see that racial inequality was partly a matter of class inequality and to emphasize the need for stratification and the creation of an open and talented elite class within the Negro community. And, above all, he emphasized the fact that this class, already existing in nascent form in Philadelphia, must be recognized by members of the white community who were forever judging all Negroes on the basis of the behavior of the "submerged tenth." "In many respects it is right and proper to judge a people by its best classes rather than by its worst classes or middle ranks," he wrote in the excellent chapter on "The Environment of the Negro" (p. 316). "The highest class of any

28. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York, 1911), p. 272.

group," he continued, "represents its possibilities rather than its expectations, as is so often assumed in regard to the Negro. The colored people are seldom judged by their best classes, and often the very existence of classes among them is ignored." Thus DuBois saw very clearly that the white community's propensity to see all Negroes as part of one homogeneous mass served as a rationalization for their own racist thinking. Much of the charitable work among the depressed classes of Negroes, more-over, only served to reinforce white prejudices: "Thus the class of Negroes which the prejudices of the city have distinctly encouraged," wrote DuBois, "is that of the criminal, the lazy and the shiftless; for them the city teems with institutions and charities; for them there is succor and sympathy; for them Philadelphians are thinking and planning; but for the educated and industrious young colored man who wants work and not platitudes, wages and not alms, just rewards and not sermons—for such colored men Philadelphia apparently has no use" (p. 352).

While DuBois was rightly critical of the white community, he also criticized upper-class Negroes for not taking the lead among their own people:

> The aristocracy of the Negro population in education, wealth and general social efficiency . . . are not the leaders or the ideal-makers of their own group in thought, work, or morals. They teach the masses to a very small extent, mingle with them but little, do not largely hire their labor. Instead then of social classes held together by strong ties of mutual interest we have in the case of the Negroes, classes who have much to keep them apart, and only community of blood and color prejudice to bind them togethere. . . . The first impulse of the best, the wisest and richest is to segregate themselves from the mass . . . they make their mistake in failing to recognize that however laudable an ambition to rise may be, the first duty of an upper class is to serve the lowest classes. The aristocracies of all peoples have been slow in learning this and perhaps the Negro is no slower than the rest, but his peculiar situation demands that in his case this lesson be learned sooner (pp. 316-17).

In emphasizing the need for a properly functioning class structure within the Negro community, DuBois was anticipating

one of the major themes of the late E. Franklin Frazier's classic study of the emerging Negro middle class in America. Half a century after DuBois' study of Philadelphia, Professor Frazier (the first Negro to be elected president of the American Sociological Society) wrote in his *Black Bourgeoisie*:

> Because of its struggle to gain acceptance by whites, the black bourgeoisie has failed to play the role of a responsible elite in the Negro community . . . they have no real interest in education and genuine culture and spend their leisure in frivolities and in activities designed to win a place in Negro "society." The single factor that has dominated the mental outlook of the black bourgeoisie has been its obsession with the struggle for status.[29]

In the long run, one of the most important contributions of this book, as more than one reviewer at the time of its publication noted, may well be the fact that it is the best documented historical record of an urban and Northern Negro community in existence. Fortunately, DuBois was well trained in, and devoted to, the historian's craft. But it was also fortunate that the city of Philadelphia possessed the oldest and, in 1896, the largest Northern Negro community in the nation, exceeded in population only by the three Southern Negro communities of New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore (a border city).

In fact, Negroes had been brought up the Delaware by the Swedes before Penn founded the Colony in 1682. In the city where the Declaration of Independence was written and the nation founded, the Negroes also had an important history, which DuBois carefully documented: here in Philadelphia was the first expression against the slave trade, the first organization for the abolition of slavery, the first legislative enactments for the abolition of slavery, the first attempt at Negro education, the first Negro convention, and so forth.

Since DuBois himself, in this study and in many others, contributed so much to the understanding of his people's history, it seems most appropriate to close this introduction with a brief history of some of the more important sociological changes in the

29. E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, pp. 235-36.

Philadelphia Negro community since the turn of the nineteenth century.

The Philadelphia Negro Since DuBois

The most striking thing about the development of the Philadelphia Negro community since DuBois' day is its steady increase in size. In fact, the steady migration of Southern Negroes to Philadelphia began in the decade of the 1890's (see Table 1)

Table 1

PHILADELPHIA NEGRO POPULATION
Increase by Decades (1890–1960)

DECADE	POPULATION	INCREASE	
		NUMBER	PER CENT
1880	31,699		
1890	39,371	7,672	24
1900	62,613	23,242	60
1910	84,459	21,846	33
1920	134,229	49,770	58
1930	219,599	85,370	63
1940	250,880	31,281	14
1950	376,041	125,161	50
1960	529,239	153,198	30

and kept up throughout the twentieth century. DuBois saw this increasing pace of migration and consequently went to Virginia during the first summer of his study in order to see how the Negroes lived in the rural areas, the better to understand their problems of adjustment to urban life. The pace of migration, of course, was greatly increased during World War I and the 1920's. At the same time, anti-Negro attitudes increased, producing racial strife, increasing segregation in public places, and a rapid rise in residential ghettoization. Migration slowed down during the 1930's, then increased again during World War II and the postwar years, until today the Negroes constitute over one fourth

Table 2

PHILADELPHIA NEGRO POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY CITY SECTIONS IN 1890 AND 1960

	1890				1960			
	Number Negro	Number Total	Per Cent Negro	Per Cent of Negro Total	Number Negro	Number Total	Per Cent Negro	Per Cent of Negro Total
Center City	15,627	104,154	(15)	(40)	7,476	38,323	(18)	(1)
South Phila.	7,914	218,506	(4)	(20)	66,621	260,767	(30)	(13)
West Phila.	4,080	99,182	(4)	(10)	169,100	402,161	(42)	(32)
North Phila.	7,504	267,044	(3)	(20)	234,646	342,857	(70)	(44)
Kensington	1,329	250,555	(1)	(3)	8,148	257,508	(3)	(2)
Northmest-Far North	1,891	72,229	(2)	(5)	36,506	347,464	(10)	(7)
Greater Northeast	1,026	35,294	(3)	(2)	6,742	353,432	(2)	(1)
City Total	39,371	1,046,964	(37)	(100)	529,239	2,002,512	(26)	(100)

Source: Population of Philadelphia Sections and Wards 1860–1960, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1963 (Mimeo.).

Table 3

THREE NEGRO GHETTO WARDS IN PHILADELPHIA 1890–1960

	30TH WARD SOUTH PHILA.			32ND WARD NORTH PHILA.			24TH WARD WEST PHILA.		
YEAR	NUMBER NEGRO	NUMBER TOTAL	PER CENT NEGRO	NUMBER NEGRO	NUMBER TOTAL	PER CENT NEGRO	NUMBER NEGRO	NUMBER TOTAL	PER CENT NEGRO
1890	1789	30614	6%	382	30050	1%	930	42556	2%
1900	5242	28874	20%	962	39889	2%	2193	53200	4%
1910	9999	29209	34%	1517	40293	4%	3958	54370	7%
1920	15481	29471	51%	3926	47540	8%	8152	60408	13%
1930	19537	27783	70%	14476	45663	31%	13041	54947	24%
1940	22185	27605	82%	24975	50062	—50%	18343	53803	34%
1950	23789	27208	88%	44872	60860	73%	36741	63391	58%
1960	21587	23527	96%	52191	54497	96%	45666	57987	80%

Note: These three wards, whose boundaries have remained unchanged since 1890 (see Map p. 59), lay in the heart of the three Negro ghettos of Philadelphia as of 1960 (see Table 2). The 30th, the oldest ghetto ward in the city, became half-Negro for the first time in 1920; the 32nd, over half foreign born or foreign stock in 1920 (largely Jewish), first became over half Negro during World War II. In 1960, the 32nd was the largest Negro ward in the city.

Source: Population of Philadelphia Sections and Wards 1860–1960, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1963 (Mimeo.).

of the city's residents in contrast to the less than 5 per cent minority of DuBois' day.

With the steady increase in the size of the Negro population, the pattern of residential distribution also changed. In contrast to 1890, when most of the city's Negroes lived in the center of the city and close to their white neighbors, by 1960, a majority of Negroes had moved to the southern, northern, and western sections of the city (Table 2). In 1960, for the first time in the city's history, one whole city section contained more Negro than white residents (Table 2: 70 per cent Negro in North Philadelphia). The changing size and residential distribution of the Negro population has, of course, been both cause and result of changing social relations between the races.

In Philadelphia in the 1890's, the largest concentration of Negroes was in the Seventh Ward which DuBois studied in detail. But this Ward was, at the same time, the center of the city's "silk stocking" or upper-class neighborhood. The majority of the Negroes in the Ward were employed as domestic servants, and lived in close proximity to (if not in the homes of) their employers. Social relations between whites and Negroes, therefore, were marked by clear status differentials and high social interaction, rather than by the residential segregation and low social interaction which characterizes the relations between the races today. In 1960, the Seventh Ward, as in its heyday of fashion in the 1890's, is still about one-third Negro. But most of the members of the white upper class have migrated to the suburbs. Though there are still a few fashionable white blocks, many of the old mansions have long since been converted into cultural institutions, apartments, rooming houses, and offices for physicians and other professional people. Both the white and Negro populations have steadily declined in absolute numbers: In 1890, the Seventh Ward had 30,179 residents of whom 8,861 (or 30 per cent) were Negroes; in 1960, there were only 17,079 residents in the Ward, of whom 6,308 (or 35 per cent) were Negroes.[30] And of course, in our modern, mechanized world of smaller middle-class households, live-in domestic servants are no

30. *Population of Philadelphia Sections and Wards 1860-1960.*

longer fashionable or economically feasible, producing a consequent decline in social relations between the races.

Following a pattern set by the Georgetown community in Washington, D.C., in an earlier day, the Seventh Ward has been witnessing, during the 1960's, a steadily increasing pattern of white invasion of the Negro areas of the Ward. Though the Ward has recently been absorbed into one all-inclusive center-city ward, its traditional area will be largely white by 1970. More and more white, suburban families are now moving back to the city, both those who have raised their children and those of the younger generation who are disenchanted with the suburban way of life. But they will be moving back to a more and more segregated city, as the figures in Tables 2 and 3 clearly show.

Fortunately for the historian and the sociologist, there were three major ghettoized Negro wards in the city in 1960 which had not had their boundaries changed since 1890 (Table 3). The changing racial composition of these three wards reflects the history of the Negro community in the city in the twentieth century. As an inspection of the figures in Table 3 will show, all three of these wards contained a small minority of Negro residents in 1890. But, as the size of the Philadelphia Negro community steadily increased in the twentieth century, each ward eventually became ghettoized in a definite historical pattern. The Thirtieth Ward, which lies just to the South of the Seventh (see Ward Map in 1890, p. 60), became the city's first Negro ghetto (51 per cent Negro in 1920). It was no accident that Philadelphia's first race riot in the twentieth century, in the summer of 1918, took place on the southern boundary of the Thirtieth Ward. Thus in her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, published in 1921, Sadie Tanner Mossell (now Mrs. Raymond Pace Alexander, wife of a noted jurist, and herself a lawyer and chairman of Philadephia's Commission on Human Relations) wrote that "a colored probation officer of the Municipal Court, a woman of refinement and training and an old citizen of Philadelphia, purchased and took up residence at the house numbered 2936 Ellsworth Street. The white people in the neighborhood

resented her living there and besieged the house. A race riot ensued in which two men were killed and sixty injured."[31]

The steady migration of Negroes into the city during the war years and the 1920's not only contributed to the ghettoization of the Negro community; it also contributed to the segregation of Negro children in the schools and the closing of most of the city's commercial and entertainment centers to Negroes: As Miss Mossell noted, "such social privileges as the service of eating houses and the attending of white churches and theaters by Negroes, were practically withdrawn after the influx of Negro migrants into Philadelphia."[32] The older Negro residents of the city were naturally upset by this new segregation. The Mossell study continued:

> The old colored citizens of Philadelphia resented this. Placed the blame at the migrant's door and stood aloof from him. Negro preachers invited the new arrivals into the church but many of the congregations made him know that he was not wanted. In some cases the church split over the matter, the migrants and their sympathizers withdrawing and forming a church for themselves.[33]

South Philadelphia, especially the southern part of the Seventh Ward running along Lombard and South (the oldest Negro commerical street in the city) streets, together with the whole Thirtieth Ward, was Philadelphia's first Negro ghetto. And it remained so from the 1920's through World War II. Beginning in the 1920's, however, another Negro ghetto began to develop in North Philadelphia (see Tables 2 and 3). Thus in 1920, the Thirty-second Ward was composed primarily of residents of foreign-born and foreign-stock (mostly Jewish) origins. In the course of the next decade, however, the Negro population increased almost fourfold, and by 1930 made up nearly one third of the Ward's residents (Table 3). By 1940, the Thirty-second Ward was about half Negro, as was the Forty-seventh, an immediately adjacent ward to the south (the

31. Sadie Tanner Mossell, "The Standard of Living Among One Hundred Negro Migrant Families in Philadelphia," p. 9.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*

Forty-seventh was cut out of the eastern half of the Twenty-ninth after the 1910 census and hence not used for Table 3). By 1950, the Thirty-second, the Forty-seventh, and three other North Philadelphia wards were over half Negro; by 1960, this whole section became the city's major ghetto (70 per cent Negro).

During the long, hot summer of 1964, a series of race riots broke out in major American cities, beginning in Harlem in July and ending in Philadelphia on the last day of August. Just as the riot of 1918 had broken out along the boundary of the Thirtieth Ward ghetto, so it was no accident that the racial disturbance in 1964 broke out on the boundary between wards Thirty-two and Forty-seven, along Columbia Avenue at 22nd Street, when a husband and wife, both intoxicated, were found quarreling by the police. Rioting soon spread throughout the North Philadelphia ghetto, killing two persons, injuring 339, and producing some $3 million worth of property damage.

The causes of any riot are many and complex. But DuBois would have agreed that one of the important causes in 1964 was the fact that the Negro masses in North Philadelphia were almost completely cut off from the more affluent and successful members of their own race. Most of the solid Negro citizens live in more suburban areas of the city and, like their counterparts whom DuBois criticized in his day, are more concerned with their own careers than with the problems of racial leadership. An exception was the local head of the NAACP, Cecil Moore, a flamboyant, charming, but often irresponsible individual who has stepped into the leadership vacuum left by the more solid Negro establishment. For unlike the establishment Negroes, Moore resides within the North Philadelphia ghetto and was on the scene during the riots, doing his best to calm his neighbors down. Lenora E. Berson, in her study of the riot, wrote:

> Today, only the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has any real following in North Philadelphia. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) have made little headway in the city.
>
> Since his ascension to the presidency of the Philadelphia

Branch in January, 1963, Cecil Moore has transformed the NAACP from a conservative institution into a mass-membership action organization.

Much of Moore's strength within the local NAACP comes from its North Philadelphia members, whom he recruited into the organization. Unlike most Negro leaders, Moore lives in the riot area. He calls the North Philadelphians "my people," and many feel they are just that. In a poll of residents conducted by Radio Station WDAS, Moore was found to be far and away the best-known Philadelphia Negro.[34]

The last Negro ghetto to develop was that of West Philadelphia. By 1950, the Twenty-fourth Ward had more Negro than white residents for the first time. It has never reached the high proportion of Negroes which marks the Thirtieth in South Philadelphia, or the Thirty-second in North Philadelphia, largely because, since the 1950's, the southern part of the ward has developed into a bohemian and intellectual community. Once an elite residential neighborhood containing some of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in the city, this part of the Twenty-fourth, known as "Powelton Village," has become a more or less integrated and middle-class community, made up largely of graduate students and faculty members of the University of Pennsylvania and other local institutions, as well as other professionals possessing liberal or bohemian values. There is a great deal of neighborhhod pride in this area and some civic concern for life in the neighboring ghetto to the north.

By 1960, fourteen wards in the city—eight in North Philadelphia, three in South Philadelphia, and three in West Philadelphia—contained a majority of Negro residents. Indeed, the racial composition of the city and the residential distribution of its Negroes had changed beyond recognition since DuBois' day.

And so in many ways had the economic position of the Negroes, both for the better and for the worse. DuBois was vitally concerned with the depressed and segregated economic plight of the Negroes in the last decade of the nineteenth century, which was probably worse than it had been during the first decade of the century. He considered freedom and political rights

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34. Lenora E. Berson, *Case Study of a Riot,* p. 30.

to be a mere sham unless Negroes were also able to take their rightful place in the city's economic life. He was, for instance, horrified to find that the depressed economic plight of his people pushed them into close social relationships with the most corrupt elements of machine politics. Above all he stressed the fact that the lack of opportunity to advance by education or hard work corrupted the Negro and drove him into the psychological environment of "excuse and listless despair." Thus he wrote: "The humblest white employee knows that the better he does his work the more chance there is for him to rise in business. The black employee knows that the better he does his work the longer he may do it; he can not hope for promotion" (p. 328). Aware of his own position in spite of his educational qualifications, DuBois saw that educational attainments of Negroes only led to frustration: "A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in mechanical engineering, well recommended," he wrote, "obtained work in the city, through an advertisement, on account of his excellent record. He worked a few hours and then was discharged because he was found to be colored. He is now a waiter at the University Club, where his white fellow graduates dine." A graduate in pharmacy applied for a job and was given the following answer: "I wouldn't have a darky to clean out my store, much less stand behind the counter" (p. 328). Clerks and white-collar jobs were, of course, unobtainable, but so were both skilled and unskilled jobs in industry. DuBois noted one exception to this at the Midvale Steel Works, where the manager, dubbed a "crank" by many of his peers, had employed some 200 Negroes who worked along with white mechanics "without friction or trouble."* Finally, DuBois deplored the fact that, unlike other minority groups, Negroes were rarely found running their own businesses. Those that did exist were marginal. In short, the vast majority of Negroes in the city in DuBois' day were relegated to domestic service or allied personal services such as catering or hotel jobs as waiters, porters, shoe-shine boys (some in their fifties and sixties), and so forth.

As of the 1960's, though Negroes are surely a long way from

*Though DuBois did not mention it, the "crank" at the Midvale Steel Works was Frederick W. Taylor, who eventually became world famous as the "father of scientific management."

obtaining equal opportunity with whites, there is no question that opportunities for Negro employment in the city have improved greatly since the 1890's when DuBois painted a dismal picture of their plight. Perhaps the first wave of improvement in employment opportunities in the city, as well as all over the nation, came during World War I—incidentally a mixed blessing. While, as noted above, there was virtually no industrial employment of Negroes in 1896, Miss Mossell estimated that some 30,000 Negro laborers were employed by Philadelphia firms as of 1917. The Midvale Steel Company, which was the exception in 1896 when it employed some 200 Negroes, employed some 4000 Negroes in 1917. While this new employment was a change for the better in some ways, it also had unfortunate consequences. "The Pennsylvania Railroad," wrote Miss Mossell at the time, "was the only industry which provided any kind of housing for the migrant. The camps in which it lodged him, however, proved to be of little assistance, since the camps themselves, consisting of ordinary tents and box cars, did not provide adequate shelter."[35]

The living conditions of the Negro migrants were miserable enough during the war. But things were even worse when the war came to an end. Unemployment, idleness, racial riots, and continual strife marked Negro-white relations during what Eugene P. Foley has called "the warring Twenties."[36] In fact, racial unrest was continual up to and after the time of the passage by Pennsylvania of its first Civil Rights Act of 1935. Though Negroes were now employed in industry, their inferior position and pay was taken for granted. For example, the city went through the most crippling transit strike in its history in the early 1940's. The strike, which cost the taxpayers more than $10 million, was due to the fact that white workers refused to go back to their jobs as long as Negro workers were given equal pay for equal work. On the whole, then, it can be said that Negroes made very little headway in breaking down discrimination in employment throughout the 1920's and 1930's. Employment in industry, of

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35. Mossell, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

36. Eugene P. Foley, "The Negro Businessman: In Search of a Tradition," p. 573. This is an excellent study of Negro business in America and is most relevant here because most of the empirical data was taken from the Philadelphia community.

course, picked up during World War II, but real gains awaited the postwar period.

The 1950's were definitely years of increasing opportunities for Philadelphia Negroes, even though in 1960 Negroes were twice as likely to be unemployed as whites (10 per cent vs. 5 per cent). In the first place there was a great decline in the proportion of Negroes engaged in domestic service.* DuBois found that 88.5 per cent of the females, and 61.5 per cent of the males in the Seventh Ward were domestic servants. By 1960, these proportions had declined on a city-wide basis to 0.6 per cent of the males and 3.3 per cent of the females.[37] The big change came in the 1950's, when male domestic service declined by 61.2 per cent, and female by 29.9 per cent, in the course of a single decade. In contrast to this decline in the proportion of Negroes in these occupations which stigmatized their inferior position, white-collar employment among Philadelphia Negroes increased in a relatively spectacular fashion. Between 1950 and 1960, for example, the proportion of Negro males employed as clerical workers increased by 58.9 per cent, that of females by 221.8 per cent. At the same time, the proportion of Negro males in professional occupations increased by 45.9 per cent, of females by 90.9 per cent; salesmen increased by 30.7 per cent, saleswomen by 88.4 per cent.

These statistics showing the quantitative increase in the proportion of Negroes in white-collar occupations during the 1950's reflect unprecedented changes in the quality of race relations in the center city. As of the 1930's, for instance, one rarely saw a Negro in the major downtown department and clothing stores, in banks, moving-picture houses, theaters, or other public places. No major department store or bank had Negroes in white-collar positions dealing directly with the public. No Negro lawyer could obtain office space in the center city business district. Negroes sat in the balconies of the big movie palaces. Hotels and restaurants were strictly segregated. Most of these strict taboos came in

*DuBois was very concerned about the low sex ratio (80) among Negroes and its effect on the family. It is consequently of interest that, in 1960, the sex ratio of Negroes in the city had increased to 90, partly a reflection of the decline of domestic service as the main Negro occupation.

37. *Philadelphia's Non-White Population 1960,* Tables 5 and 5a.

during and immediately after World War I; all of them were removed in the decade of the 1950's.

DuBois was particularly interested in the poor record of Negroes as businessmen. In 1896, there were no more than 300 Negro-owned businesses in the city. The majority of them were barbershops, catering establishments, and restaurants—all extensions of the servant role. And most of them were marginal, with the exception of a few well-known caterers. There is a direct relation, according to Eugene P. Foley, who has studied the Negro businessman in Philadelphia and elsewhere, between the ghettoization of the Negro and the growth of Negro businesses.[38] In fact, among Negroes, as among whites, immigrants to the city seem more likely to go into business for themselves than older residents. Thus in 1964, there were over 4000 Negro-owned businesses in the city, most of them located within the boundaries of the three Negro ghettos. Unfortunately, however, most of these businesses were pretty much of the same marginal character as those of DuBois' day. Along with the absence of responsible leadership this lack of success in business enterprise was certainly an important factor in the North Philadelphia riots of 1964. In her study of the riots, for example, Lenora E. Berson found this to be true.

> The history of the Jews and of North Philadelphia combined to make the Jewish merchants the major representatives of the white establishment in the area. But it was as whites and as merchants and realtors rather than as Jews per se that they bore the brunt of the Negroes' attack. Anti-Semitism was not a primary factor in the rioting.
>
> Nevertheless, the Jews do have a special and ambiguous position in the Negro ghetto. In every large city, Jewish organizations and individuals have long been in the forefront of the civil rights campaigns. In Philadelphia, two white board members of the NAACP are Jews, as is the only white elected official from North Central Philadelphia, State Senator Charles Weiner. The two Negro-oriented radio stations in the city are owned by Jews. It is likely that many, if not most, of North Philadelphia's residents are treated by Jewish doctors, advised by Jewish lawyers and served by Jewish community agencies.

38. Foley, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

> But the landlord, too, is likely to be Jewish, as is the grocer and the man who owns the appliance store on the corner. All too often the Negro sees himself as a victim of their exploitation, and the contrast between himself and the more affluent businessmen of the community generates bitterness and resentment.[39]

The living conditions in the North Philadelphia ghetto are still deplorable and probably getting worse; and they are so dehumanizing largely because of the moral myopia of white residents of the City of Brotherly Love. At the same time, there is cause for hope if one takes DuBois' position that the ultimate salvation of the Negro community depends on its "Talented Tenth." He opened his famous essay on the "Talented Tenth" as follows:

> The Negro Race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.[40]

Opportunities for the Talented Tenth within the Philadelphia Negro community have opened up at an increasing rate since the end of World War II. Of non-white Philadelphians aged twenty-five and over, for example, the proportion that had finished high school tripled, the proportion that had finished college doubled between 1940 and 1960. Furthermore, in contrast to DuBois' day when employment for educated Negroes was almost non-existent, there are now more jobs available for educated Negroes than there are educated Negroes to fill them. Finally, DuBois would have been most gratified that, since World War II, talented Negroes have moved into elite positions on the local bar and bench, in business, in politics, and on the faculties of the local colleges and universities.

In closing, perhaps the best way to gain a historical perspec-

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39. Berson, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

40. W. E. B. DuBois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem* (New York, 1903), p. 33.

tive on the dramatic changes in the opportunities that have opened for talented Negroes since DuBois' day, might be to speculate how he himself would now be received by the University of Pennsylvania. And certainly there is no question that today, if a gifted young Negro with a recent Ph.D. from Harvard, a book published in the Harvard Historical Series, and two years study abroad should apply for a position in the Sociology Department, he would be welcomed with open arms as an Assistant Professor at least, and at a salary of over $10,000 a year. In fact, he would hardly need to apply; for he would have been vigorously recruited; and he probably would not even consider Pennsylvania because of the great demand for young Negro sociologists at the very best sociology departments in the nation.

E.D.B.

University of Pennsylvania
June, 1967

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