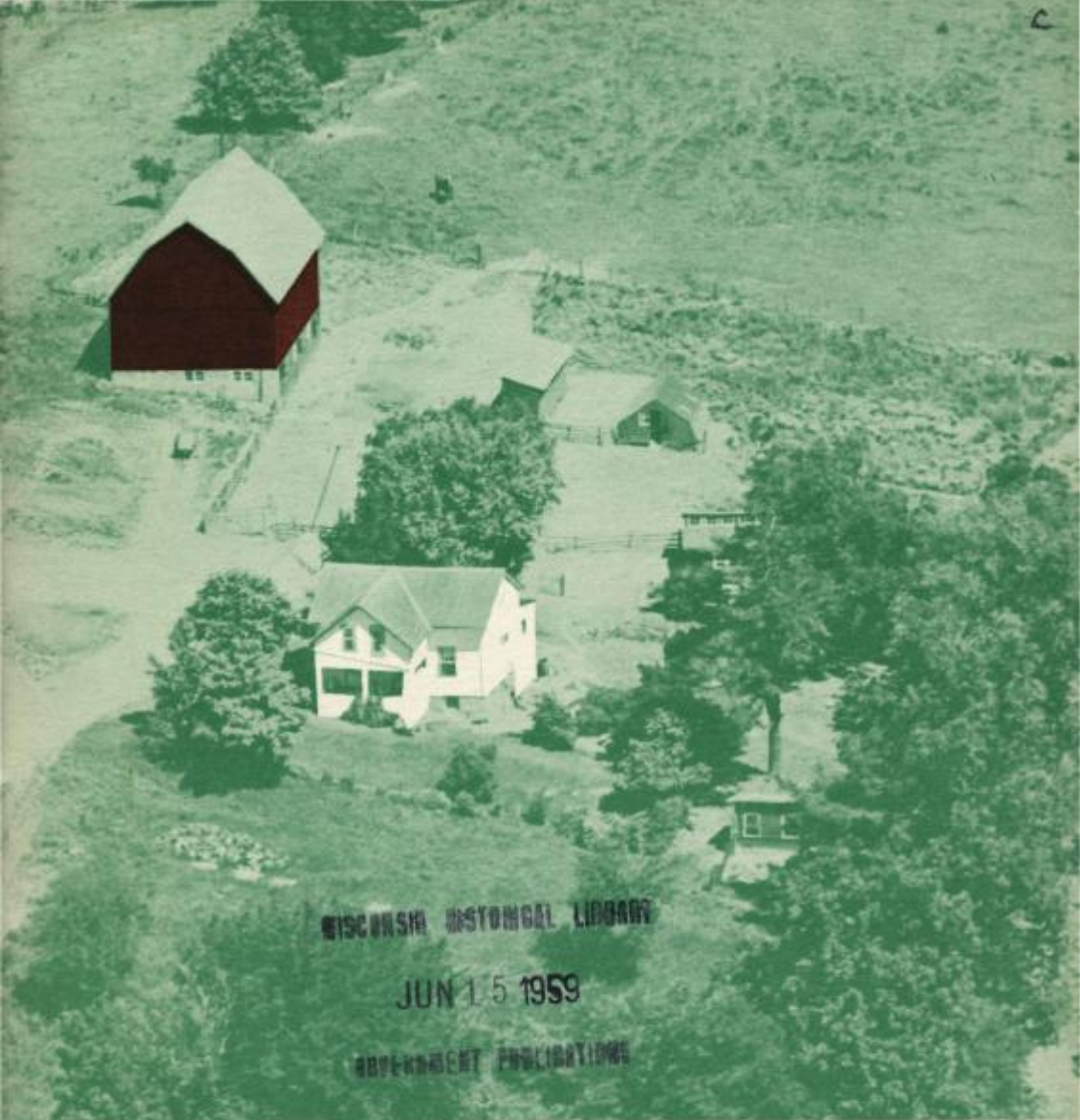




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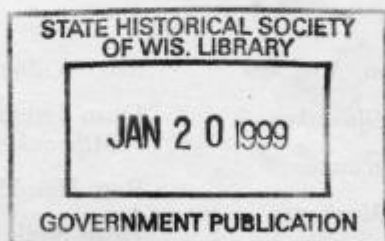
# Negro Families

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# *Negro Families in Rural Wisconsin*

A Study Of Their Community Life



GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin  
1959

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN  
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## *Acknowledgements*

We wish to express appreciation to the many individuals who contributed to the research here presented. Inasmuch as this is a study of families in rural communities, the research had to be conducted at community level. But because no lists of Negro families by location were available, the Governor's Commission on Human Rights turned to community officials in the 71 counties for this information. The excellent cooperation of County Clerks and County Agricultural Agents in locating Negro families helped to make the study possible. The families, in turn, helped us locate additional families so that the study was able to grow and grow.

We also wish to thank those departments of Wisconsin state government whose suggestions were invaluable in the planning phase of the survey: The Department of Agriculture, the Board of Health, the Motor Vehicle Department; and the librarians of the Legislative Reference Library, the University of Wisconsin Memorial Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

A special commendation goes to our research worker chosen for this project. Dr. William L. Ristow showed imagination in understanding Commission objectives, initiative in locating, interviewing and photographing the Negro families concerned, and efficiency in correlating statistical information, writing reports, and preparing the text for publication. His varied ability was a great asset.

Finally, our great appreciation to the many people of Wisconsin communities who freely gave their time, assistance, and suggestions during interviews in order to present this study of a segment of Wisconsin community life.

## Foreword

This is a presentation of facts about 150 Negro families living in rural Wisconsin. This number represents a large sampling of all the known families in such areas. Several levels of adaptation were examined: the individual Negro family to the community in terms of social and economic factors; the attitudes and practices of the white community to the Negroes.

Because the survey scope included only those families who live in population areas of 5,000 persons or less (according to the 1950 Decennial Census of the United States) a number of these Negro families are farm operators. Others are residents of small towns.

In order to control the survey procedures scientifically, the sociological study of these families was divided into two elements:

1. A questionnaire phase which requested information about such factors as income, occupation, group participation and other indices of societal status. This phase of the study applied to Negro families only.

Upon completion of the total survey, the data secured by the questionnaire during interview were tabulated. These tabulations, covering all the families sampled, are presented in statistical form in the following pages.

2. A depth interview phase which applied to the Negro family, its neighbors, and other members of the community. During the execution of this phase, verbatim statements of the persons interviewed were recorded. Some of those statements are quoted in the second section which follows.

Seventeen of these family interviews in detail are included. These were chosen on the basis of representative location in Wisconsin and variation in types of occupation. The results of interviews with school officials in connection with integration are discussed in a separate section.

Because so little was known about rural Wisconsin Negroes, this study attempted to secure factual information about the people concerned. The data are necessarily both objective and subjective in form. Those elements which are purely objective are those which deal with personal statistics. But the opinions expressed by Negroes and whites when com-

menting about one another are also "objective" in the sense that they exist factually and are acted on, even though their origins are primarily in subjective opinion.

It is hoped that these data which reveal the general tenor of Wisconsin community attitudes toward rural Negroes will help toward a better understanding of this group of residents and of what may well be similar groups in other states. The fact that no such study has been made to date in any northern state should enhance its usefulness as a research tool in community relations.

*The Facts.....*

# *Total Interviews*

## **Family and Community Interviews**

150 Negro families were personally contacted and interviewed.

365 community members were questioned regarding the Negro families.

These members of the community included neighbors, business men, clergymen, educators, civic officials, and executives of various public agencies.

## **Persons in the 150 Negro Families**

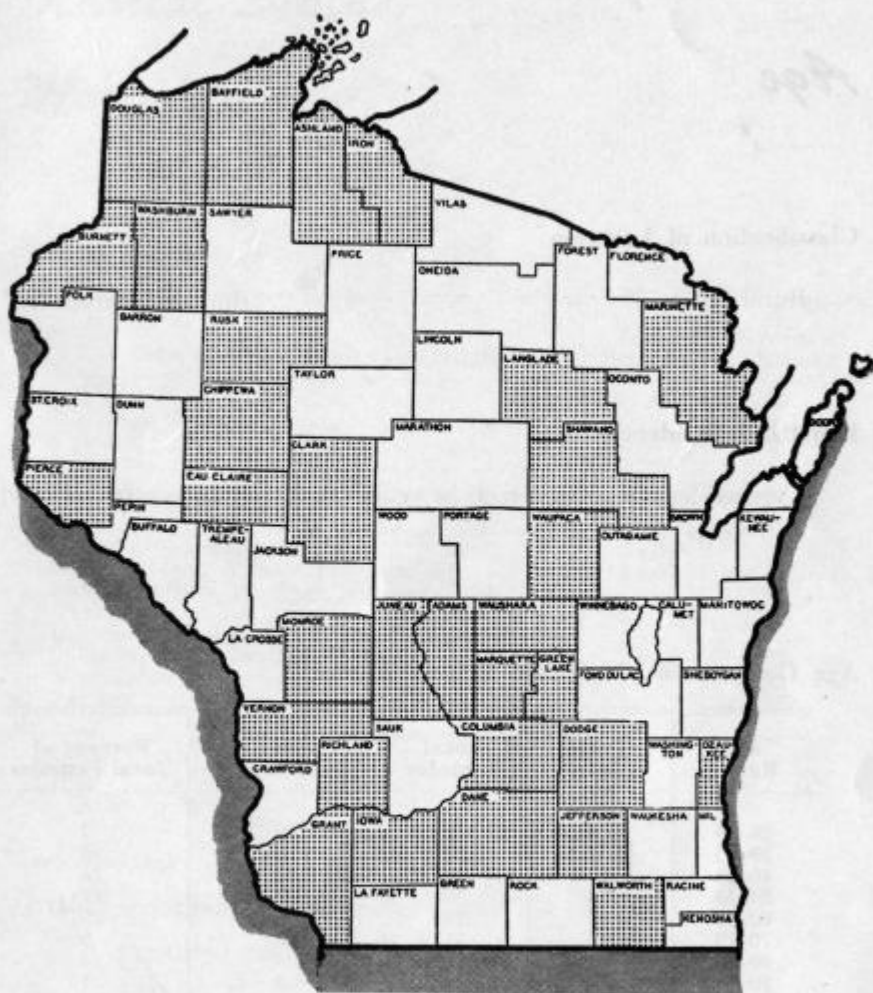
486 persons comprised the 150 families.

112 persons were male heads of household.

125 persons were female heads of household.

116 minor children live at home (1.3 per family).

## Location of the Families



*Shaded counties indicate locations of the Negro families interviewed. 31 of the 71 counties were sampled. The greatest concentration of Negro families is in the southeastern counties. The fact that a county was not included in the sampling does not mean that it has no Negro residents.*

# Classification.

## Residency.

## Age

### Classification of Location

Rural Farm: 28

Rural Nonfarm: 122\*

### Length of Residency

Average length of residence in years per family in present county:  
18.5 years

### Age Comparisons, Male and Female Adults

| Age Range          | Total Males | Total Females        | Percent of Total Males | Percent of Total Females |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 20-29              | 9           | 9                    | 9                      | 7                        |
| 30-39              | 7           | 23                   | 6                      | 18                       |
| 40-49              | 18          | 18                   | 16                     | 14                       |
| 50-59              | 36          | 33                   | 32                     | 27                       |
| 60-69              | 18          | 25                   | 16                     | 20                       |
| 70-79              | 19          | 11                   | 17                     | 9                        |
| 80-89              | 5           | 5                    | 4                      | 4                        |
| 90-99              | 0           | 1                    | 0                      | 1                        |
| Mean Male Age..... | 55.1 years  | Mean Female Age..... | 53.2 years             |                          |
| Median, Male.....  | 57.0 years  | Median, Female.....  | 54.0 years             |                          |
| Mode, Male.....    | 58.0 years  | Mode, Female.....    | 50.0 years             |                          |

\* *Nonfarm* here means any residential location in a population zone of 5,000 or less which is not being cultivated for agricultural purposes. Twenty of these locations were in small towns.

# *Point of Origin, Marital Status, Mortality*

## Point of Origin

| City, State, or Country of Origin                                            | Total<br>Persons | Percent of<br>Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Wisconsin born.....                                                          | 62               | 26.0%               |
| Chicago.....                                                                 | 48               | 20.0                |
| Alabama.....                                                                 | 15               | 6.5                 |
| Georgia.....                                                                 | 13               | 5.5                 |
| Illinois (excluding Chicago).....                                            | 11               | 4.5                 |
| Mississippi.....                                                             | 9                | 4.0                 |
| Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas.....                                              | 7 each           | 3.0 each            |
| Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Tennessee.....                                       | 5 each           | 2.1 each            |
| Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey.....                       | 4 each           | 1.5 each            |
| Ohio.....                                                                    | 3                | 1.3                 |
| Colorado, Missouri, New York, North Carolina,<br>Pennsylvania, Virginia..... | 2 each           | 0.075 each          |
| Washington (State).....                                                      | 1                | 0.05                |
| Jamaica.....                                                                 | 1                | 0.05                |

## Marital Status

141 marriages are represented in the 150 interviews

8 unmarried males      1 unmarried female

## Mortality

(Based on marriages which ended in death)

24 deceased males

7 deceased females

## Religious Preference

| Church Affiliation         | Percent of<br>138 Families<br>Stating* | Total<br>Families |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Methodist.....             | 30.0                                   | 41                |
| Catholic.....              | 16.5                                   | 23                |
| Baptist.....               | 16.0                                   | 22                |
| Lutheran.....              | 6.0                                    | 8                 |
| Presbyterian.....          | 3.5                                    | 5                 |
| United Brethren.....       | 3.0                                    | 4                 |
| Seventh Day Adventist..... | 1.5                                    | 2                 |
| Christian Science.....     | 1.5                                    | 2                 |
| Congregational.....        | 1.5                                    | 2                 |

\*Some religions were not known because interview data had to be obtained from someone other than a family member. Membership of one family only in a denomination is not included. Balance of families not included indicated no religious preference.

# Occupations

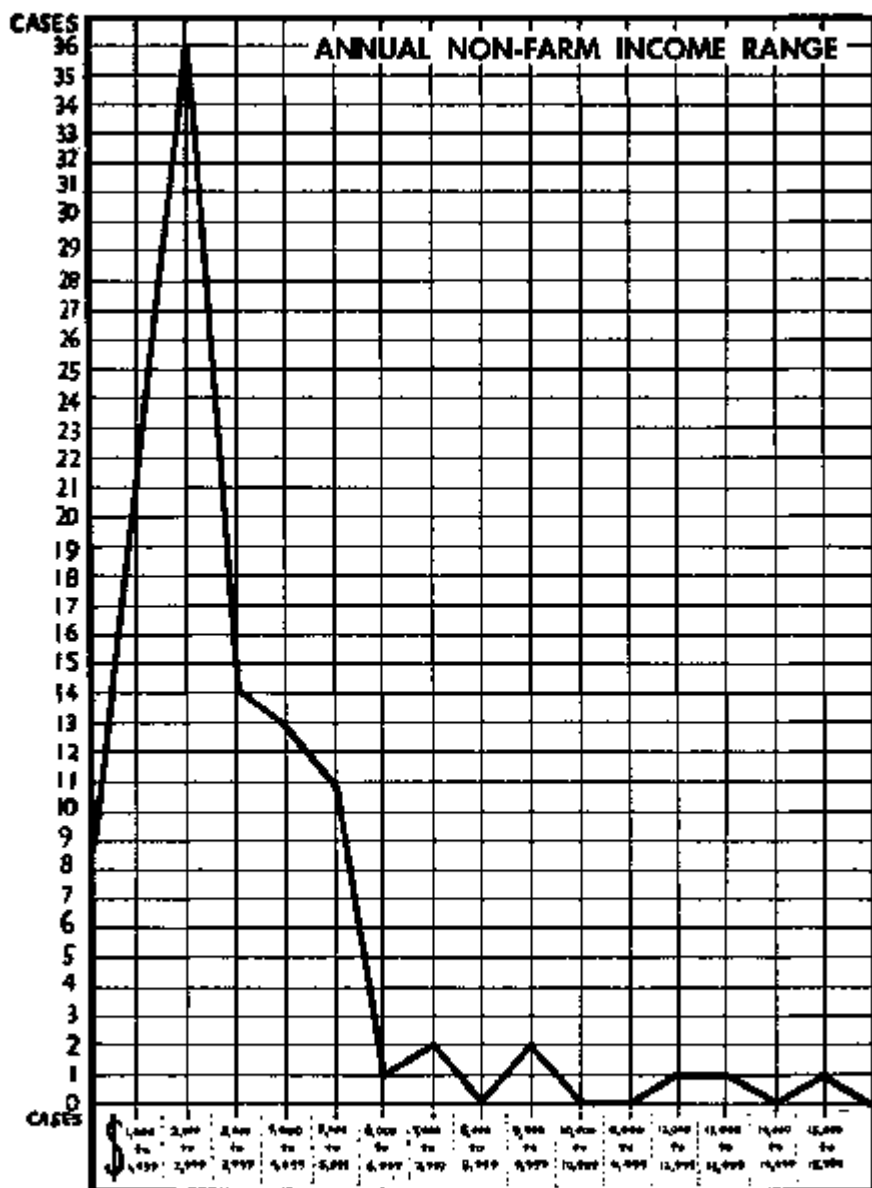
| Occupational Title                | Total Persons | Sex       | Occupational Title       | Total Persons | Sex      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Artist.....                       | 1             | F         | Meat Inspector.....      | 1             | M        |
| Assembler, Plastics.....          | 1             | M         | Mechanic.....            | 1             | M        |
| Barber.....                       | 2             | M         | Medical Attendant.....   | 1             | M        |
| Canner.....                       | 1             | M         | Minister.....            | 2             | M        |
| Car Polisher.....                 | 1             | M         | Mortician.....           | 1             | M        |
| Caretaker.....                    | 1             | M         | Paint Dipper.....        | 1             | M        |
| Cemetery Manager.....             | 1             | M         | Painter, House.....      | 1             | M        |
| Chauffeur.....                    | 1             | M         | Paint Sprayer.....       | 1             | M        |
| Chef.....                         | 2             | 2 M, 1 F  | Policeman.....           | 1             | M        |
| Clerk, Office.....                | 4             | M         | Porter, Train.....       | 1             | M        |
| Hotel Desk.....                   | 1             | M         | Postal Workers.....      | 9             | 8 M, 1 F |
| Shipping.....                     | 1             | M         | Practical Nurse.....     | 1             | F        |
| Tool Crib.....                    | 1             | M         | Printer.....             | 1             | M        |
| Coal Yard Operator.....           | 1             | M         | Realtor.....             | 1             | M        |
| Contractor, Electrical.....       | 1             | M         | Reporter.....            | 1             | F        |
| Brick.....                        | 1             | M         | Restaurant Operator..... | 2             | F        |
| Cook.....                         | 2             | 1 M, 1 F  | Rest Home Operator.....  | 1             | F        |
| Die Caster.....                   | 1             | M         | Resort Operator.....     | 6             | 5 M, 1 F |
| Dishwasher.....                   | 1             | M         | Salesman.....            | 1             | F        |
| Doctor.....                       | 1             | M         | Secretary.....           | 1             | F        |
| Electrician.....                  | 1             | M         | Shoe Repairman.....      | 1             | M        |
| Farm Operator.....                | 23            | 26 M, 2 F | Social Worker.....       | 2             | F        |
| Fireman.....                      | 1             | M         | Soldier.....             | 3             | M        |
| Foster Home Operator.....         | 1             | F         | Steward, Dining Car..... | 1             | M        |
| Garage Attendant.....             | 1             | M         | Teacher.....             | 2             | 1 M, 1 F |
| Garbage Collector.....            | 1             | M         | Truck Driver.....        | 1             | M        |
| Gardener.....                     | 1             | M         | Type setter.....         | 1             | M        |
| Hospital Worker.....              | 8             | F         | Veterinarian.....        | 1             | M        |
| Junk Yard Operator.....           | 4             | M         | Waitress.....            | 3             | F        |
| Library Clerk.....                | 1             | F         | Welder.....              | 1             | M        |
| Loader, Boat Factory.....         | 1             | M         |                          |               |          |
| Machine Operator, Automotive..... | 1             | F         |                          |               |          |
| Machinist.....                    | 2             | M         |                          |               |          |
| Maid.....                         | 10            | F         |                          |               |          |
| Maintenance Man.....              | 6             | M         |                          |               |          |
| Mason.....                        | 2             | M         |                          |               |          |

N.B. 141 persons are represented in these categories. In a few cases, occupations were not known because interview data was furnished by someone other than a family member.

## Self-Employment:

20.5% of the heads of household were self-employed.

# Economic Status



## Annual Income Range

The graph shown should be read as follows:

1. There were 22 instances in which annual family nonfarm income was from \$1,000 to \$1,999 per year.
2. There were 36 instances in which family income was from \$3,000 to \$3,999 per year, and above.

Average (Mean) Annual Nonfarm Family Income .....\$3,285

Median Annual Nonfarm Family Income .....\$2,600

## Residences

110 of the 150 families own their own homes.

35 of these homes are mortgaged.

40 families are renters.

89 residences have television sets.

146 residences are electrified.

The average house is a 5-room structure.

## Automobiles

82% of the cars owned were 1950-1958 models.

18% were 1949 or older.

43% were "low priced" makes.

# Farms

28 farmers were interviewed in these counties:

Adams  
Bayfield  
Burnett  
Clark  
Dane

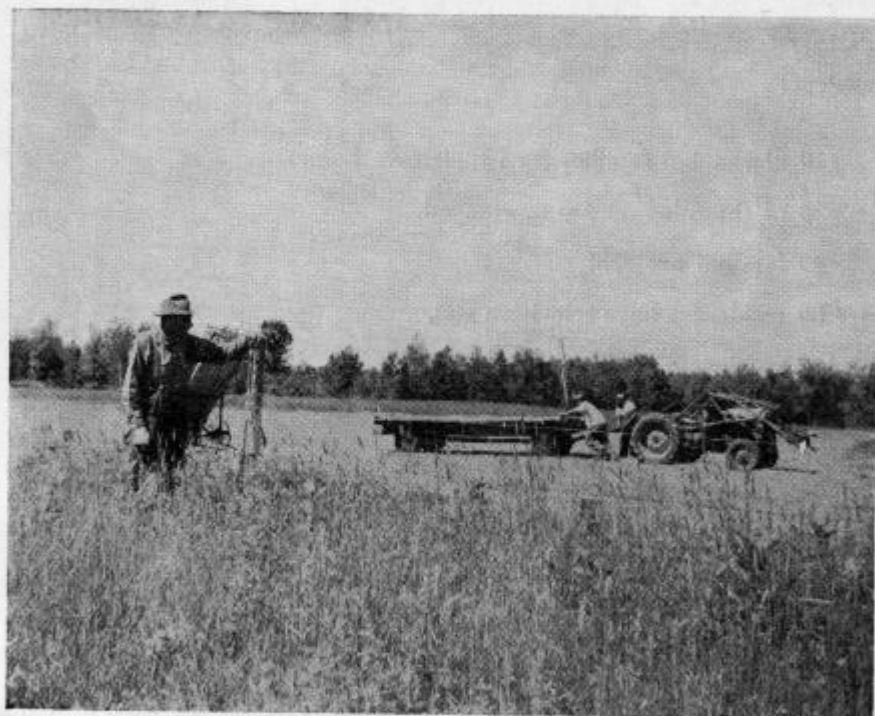
Dodge  
Grant  
Jefferson  
Juneau  
Marinette

Richland  
Rusk  
Vernon  
Walworth  
Washburn  
Waupaca

The average farm acreage is 95 acres.

58% of the farm operators are dairy farmers.

21 milk cows is the average size of dairy herds.\*



*Springtime on a farm in northeastern Wisconsin*

---

\* According to rural mail carrier surveys, 19 head is the average size herd for all Wisconsin dairy farms as surveyed December, 1958 by Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

# Education

## Elementary

Of 101 adult males, 77 finished 8th grade.

Of 110 adult females, 85 finished 8th grade.

## Secondary

(Grades 9 to 12)

|                             | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Freshman year only .....    | 2            | 5              |
| Sophomore .....             | 3            | 5              |
| Junior .....                | 4            | 3              |
| Completed high school ..... | 36           | 48             |
|                             | <hr/> 45     | <hr/> 61       |

This represents a total of 35% of the 237 adults who are high school graduates.

In the 1950 Census, 20.2% of all persons 25 years old or older were high school graduates.

## College

|                              | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| One year .....               | 1            | 3              |
| Two years .....              | 6            | 7              |
| Three years .....            | 0            | 2              |
| Four years (Graduated) ..... | 5            | 3              |
| Postgraduate work .....      | 3            | 1              |
|                              | <hr/> 15     | <hr/> 16       |

This represents a total of 5.0% of the 237 adults who finished four years or more of college work.

In the 1950 Census, 6.0% of all persons 25 years old or older were college graduates.

*The Families.....*

## Pioneering Families

Some contemporary Wisconsin Negro families trace their origins to ancestors who came North on the "underground railroad" during the Civil War period. But not all these *circa* 1860 newcomers were refugees; some were freed men who came with their former masters, plantation owners looking for new frontiers. The cooperative construction and development of rural settlements resulted.

It was in the southern counties, for the most part, that these people settled. One of the locations, known as Pleasant Ridge, is in Grant County. Here an elderly white resident who remembers some of the pioneering families testified that there was no degree of negative racial attitude. He explained that "... we got to know each other—the colored people and the white people. They helped us, we helped them. Life wasn't so easy those days clearing the land, homesteading. We had no time for hatred."

One of the Negro survivors of the Pleasant Ridge settlement, Mrs. Dick Lewis, is a highly respected member of her community.\* Described by a community leader as "... a true gentlewoman, everybody's friend, a very natural person with a mature, native dignity," Mrs. Lewis participates actively in the life of her community. She is a farmer; her farm neighbors describe her as "... a wonderful neighbor." One of them added:

"Ollie Lewis and I both go to the same church in town. I go with her, she drives me there. We have a mother's group at our school and she's a member of that. She belongs to other organizations in town."

A civic official summed it up:

"I've known her all my life. Her folks lived here. They are just a part of our community."

---

\* Recently deceased.



*Mrs. Lewis in the living room of her farm residence. Her parents, shown in wall portraits, were early Wisconsin settlers.*



*White and Negro pioneers at Notwell Sunday School, Grant County. Picture taken about 1885.*

## *Migrants of the 1930's*

There is a second type of Negro pioneering family in rural Wisconsin. During the period of the 1930's, the time of economic collapse, some families left the cities and moved to farms. Most of these families were unemployed; many of them had lived and worked in Milwaukee prior to the period of depression. Some of them felt that moving to farms where they could grow their own food was the answer to family survival.

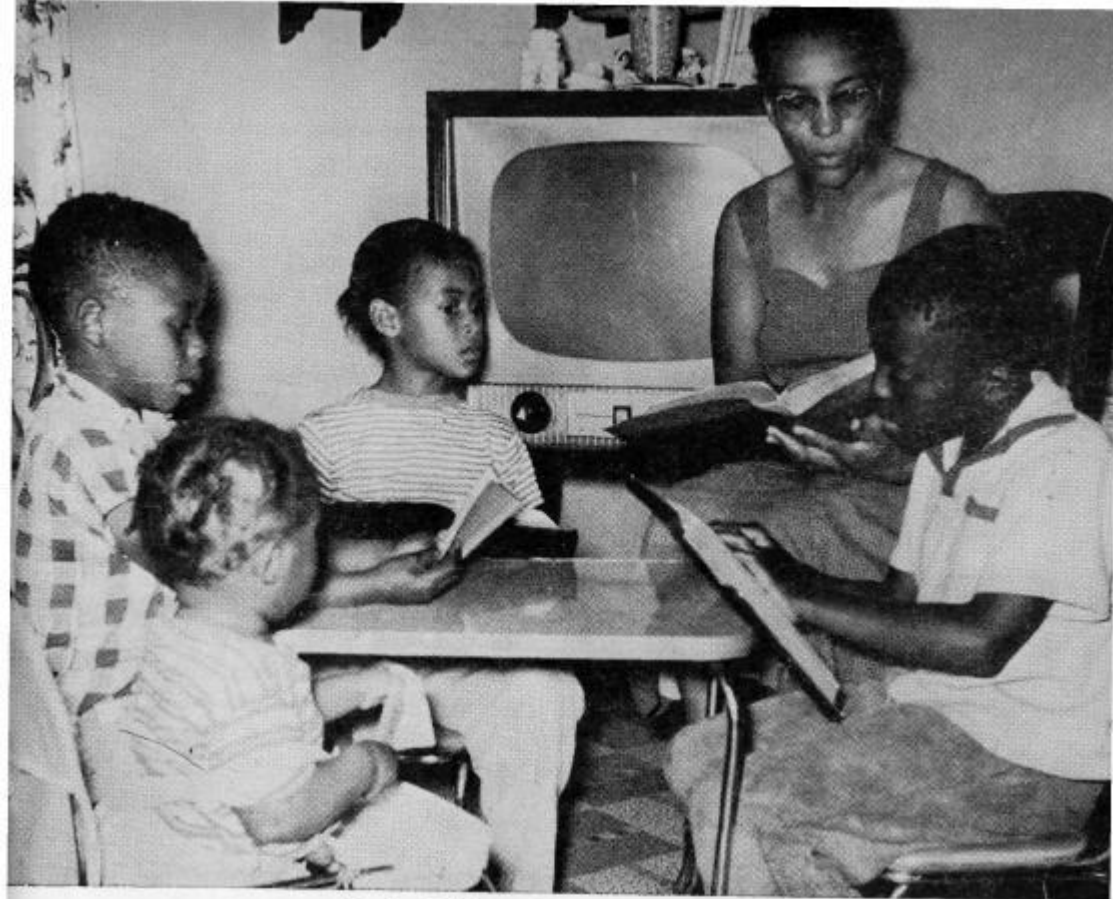


*Harvey Adams and his sons haul trees cut for fencing. Heavily forested land still remains on this farm.*

Unfortunately, too many of these people had no prior farm experience—most had been laborers in foundries and other types of industry. They bought land on land contracts, most of it cut-over timber land. Those who succeeded as farmers at this time did so in spite of major obstacles.

One of the successful farmers of this period is Harvey Adams. He and his wife Ruth and their sons operate a 160-acre farm on which they have twenty milk cows. They raise an oats crop for feed; they also grow many vegetables for personal consumption—Mrs. Adams does considerable canning. Very much aware of the problems they had to meet through the years, she concludes, "But I'm glad I came here from Milwaukee even through that hard time. We have comfortable living, plenty to eat. My husband is good on the farm, but we had to learn it the hard way. I hadn't even milked a cow, but boy—I can milk 'em now!"

Of Harvey Adams, a county official spoke warmly: "He's a good farmer. He's doing a pretty decent job; he takes an interest in it. In fact, he's one of the better farmers—white or colored—in the whole community. When you meet him you know he's sincere—a farmer who's succeeded in spite of major problems. The worst of them here was the land."



*Daily Bible reading in a foster home.*

## *Foster Mother*

Edna Jackson is a licensed foster mother. Explaining why she and her husband, northwestern Wisconsin residents, contracted to care for foster children, she said, "... because we love children, my husband and I. Ours are just about grown."

These are community reactions to the Jackson family:

*A county employee:* "I know them well. Mrs. Jackson is in Homemakers and her children were in 4-H work. They were well respected for their accomplishments in school."

*A business woman:* "They have two places. They live on a farm and own another. I know her, I have met her, I like her."

*A friend:* "Mrs. Jackson is a very intelligent, respected woman."

*A social worker:* "I was very favorably impressed. The Jacksons get along very well in the community."

*A religious leader:* "I feel the daughters have had careful and mature handling. They have poise and charm. The boys are being raised with the same care."

*A close neighbor:* "They have lived in our community two years. We couldn't ask for better neighbors. Their own children speak for the character of their parents and their desire to be home whenever possible tells you what love is there."

## Dairy Farmer

Negro farmers in Wisconsin operate farms located as far south as the state line and as far north as Lake Superior.

AL BURMAH is a dairy farmer in southern Wisconsin. His farm experience began four years ago when he and his family moved from Illinois to Wisconsin. Today his small farm is profitable and he wants to increase his acreage.



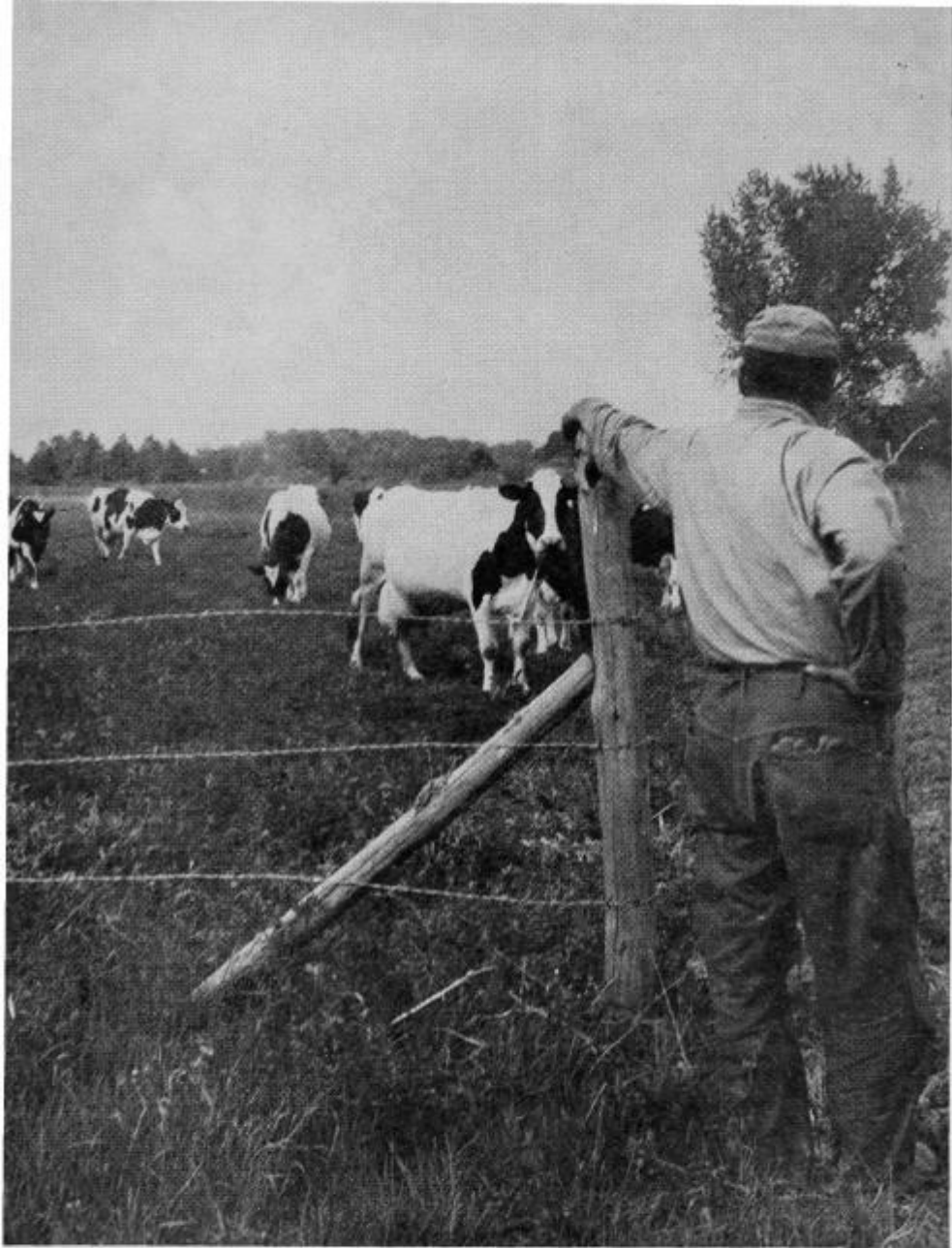
*Burmah operating one of his tractors.*

A business man in a position to evaluate this farm said, "That land is poorer than other farms around here. He does well for what he has to work with. If some of our other people were doing as well on the land they farm there'd be a lot of prosperous farmers in our county."

Of the Burmah family an educator said, "Those children have established a good relationship in school and are very cooperative. They participate in school activities such as band. Their father is a pretty substantial man. His credit is good; he is honest. Both the children are courteous."

On the Burmah farm, buildings are clean and in good repair. The premises are exceptionally well-kept in appearance; the farm residence is modern and neat—interior and exterior.

Burmahs are now well-known in their neighborhood. One of the close neighbors commented, "I know them well. They're the only colored family around here. They're nice people. I've been in their house. We all like them very much."



*Milking time on the Burmah farm. The cattle come home when called.*



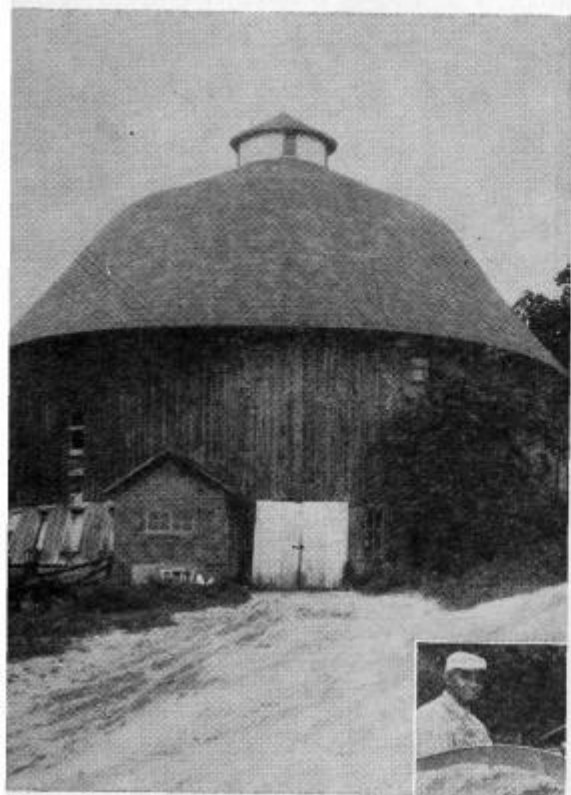
## *Clerks*

Hilda and Okee Perryman own their home in a southern county. Its location is just six miles from the nearby city in which both are employed.

Mrs. Perryman works in the city library. Okee Perryman came to Wisconsin some years ago as a cook in resort hotels. During the past eleven years, however, he has been employed by a department store. He and his wife were born in Mississippi.

Civic leaders of the Perrymans' community were unanimous in agreement that this couple epitomize the highest qualities of "... good residents and good citizens. Really top-notch people."

Perryman also had good things to say about his community: "I think attitudes are generally better in Wisconsin. For example, I have never been any place in this state where I was approached by a policeman, stopped and questioned, like they do many places. Never have, and I've been here close to 27 years now. Mrs. Perryman and I think this is a wonderful state—and we like this part of it especially."



## *Carpenter-Farmer*

In his youth Alga Shivers was a carpenter and engineered the construction of many round barns. Later, he took over the management of his father's 259-acre farm of which he is now the sole operator. He maintains a herd of 20 dairy cows, raises oats and hay crops. The balance of his farm income is from hogs.

*Round dairy barn in western Wisconsin. Alga Shivers (inset) engineered and constructed 15 of these in his youth.*

This is a man who is respected in the entire community as a farmer and a citizen. A com-

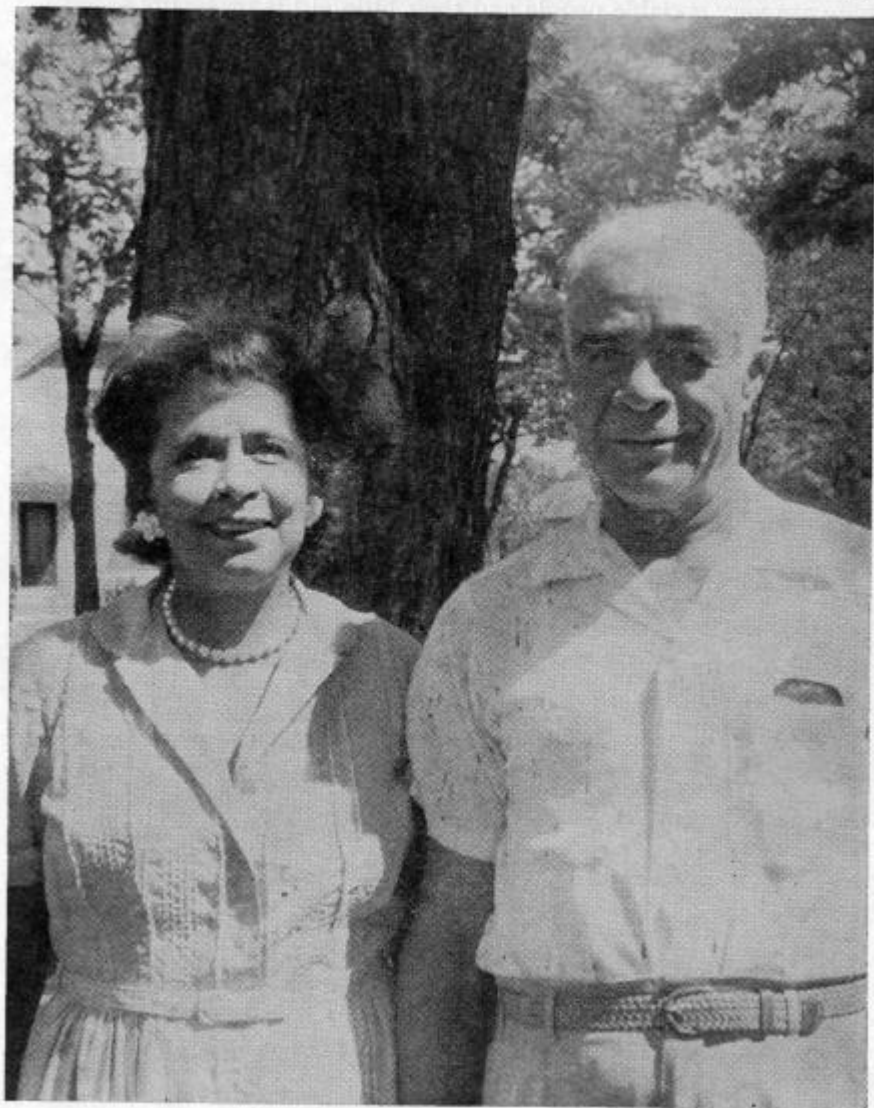
munity business man described him as "one of our leading citizens. He attends our Town Board meetings and he speaks up. When he does we listen because he has something to say."

But the respect he receives is not only on these more public levels of life. A merchant reminisced, "I used to be Alga's neighbor for many years. We exchanged farm work back and forth. We visited and ate in each other's homes. He's an example to our community, a Christian."

Alga Shivers is a Missouri college graduate and a veteran of service in France during World War I.

## *Social Workers*

Helen and Fred Graham are relatively new Wisconsin property owners. They are most recently from Chicago where they met. Fred attended school in Arkansas, came to Chicago, and became a City of Chicago



*Partners in social services . . .*

policeman—an occupation he continued for twenty years until his retirement. Helen Graham is still employed in Chicago as a social worker. Their daughter, 14, attends a parochial school, is a Girl Scout, and a member of her school band.

A leader in their Wisconsin community—where they own property for summer vacation purposes and later retirement—said, "He and his wife are very sociable people and their little girl is especially so."

This attitude is probably accounted for by the professions of the parents themselves and their point of view to society. Mrs. Graham, for example, is sensitively aware of the variables in racial attitudes. She has served on the Mayor's Commission on Civil Rights of the City of Chicago.

The Grahams selected their Wisconsin community as one in which they wanted to vacation now and later live permanently. Relationships between white and colored members of the community they chose are good. Their church leader explained, "In our community we are used to Negro residents. When the Grahams came from Chicago and joined our church, I simply told them not to pay attention if members of the congregation looked at them—that it would be because they were newcomers, not because they were colored."

## Berry Farmer

MATT JORDAN is a berry farmer in the central sand plains. According to a banker, "The people in our community respect him a great deal. A nice fellow—very pleasant and friendly."

A postal employee added: "His place appears to be very successful. He fits right in."

A friend and neighbor: "He's been a fine neighbor. I was sick for two and a half months and he came to see me regularly. He'd say, 'If there's anything I can do for you or get for you, let me know.' Those things you can't forget. He's been coming to our home five, six years. We've loaned money back and forth and never signed any papers. I can say I'm proud to have him as a friend."

Matt Jordan is one of the few farmers in Wisconsin who uses irrigation extensively. He began on a small scale, gradually reclaiming land for strawberry planting from surrounding forest area. When he first began, he installed a small soaker system. Later he expanded to his present irrigation plant.

But lest anyone be deceived, Matt cautions that it wasn't all easy. His land was heavily forested and had to be cleared of trees and stumps before any planting could begin.

Today he employs fifteen teen-agers and adults from the neighboring community to pick the strawberry crop. He is planting a new hybrid berry developed by Professor R. H. Roberts of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Wisconsin. The Roberts' berry is one which combines the fine qualities of large berries with the hardy qualities of those varieties which are easily shipped.





*Harvesting strawberry crop on irrigated farm land.*

Professor Roberts, commenting about Jordan's irrigation system, said, "If he was successful in getting through the bad frosts this year, he did it because he irrigated and the ground was soaked. Many farmers lost their crops this year. Irrigation has increased in Wisconsin in recent years; prominent growers now use it as a supplementary method. It can easily determine whether or not they will have berries."

Matt Jordan's future plans include the expansion of his arable land by the removal of more timber. He also hopes to plant blueberry and raspberry crops within the next few years.

## Resort Owner

In southern Wisconsin, on Lake Koshkonong (an Indian name believed to mean *place-where-it-is-shut-in-by-fog*), is a fishing lodge and motel operated by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burns. Here 28 rental units are available with or without housekeeping facilities. In addition to a dining room in the main building, the resort also has extensive dock area. Boats are included with the motel accommodations.



*Dock at Burns' Resort, Lake Koshkonong*

Mr. and Mrs. Burns did not plan deliberately to open a resort. They had gone to northern Wisconsin to vacation and fish in years past, but they wanted a place closer to their home location in Milwaukee. They found swamp land on Lake Koshkonong for sale.

"At first people thought we were a little silly, I guess," Mrs. Burns explained, "filling in the swamp near the road so we could dock our boat. They'd drive by and some would stop to talk. That's how we got to know the people here."

Their resort facilities grew naturally: they built a house for themselves, then later added a few cabins to accommodate friends. As their clientele grew, they expanded their existing dock and motel accommodations. Last year they had to expand their dining room.

The adjoining community thinks well of the Burns' Resort. A religious leader said, "I take my hat off to both of them. They run a clean place. Mrs. Burns participates in civic affairs too."

Another community leader added, "I have been out there a few times. They are very fine people. I've heard neighbors who live around there say what a nice lively conducted place they have."

When it was necessary for Mr. and Mrs. Burns to finance their construction at the resort they did not try to borrow money in the local community. As to whether or not they could have, Mrs. Burns commented, "When we first came here, no one knew us so of course we had to pay cash. We never tried to borrow. Now they take my husband's word at the banks when he approves a loan for someone who wants to buy a yacht 'on time.' I guess if they take his word for that they would also if he wanted to borrow."

White tradespeople and delivery men servicing the resort treat Mrs. Burns with a great deal of respect and cordiality. As one of them noted, "She's a lady who deserves it."



*Interior of main lodge and dining room, Mrs. Robert Burns behind counter.*

## *Rest Home Operators*

Two women in northern Wisconsin are doing their part to help provide solutions to the problems of advanced years. At the Hilltop Nursing Home, Almeda Smith and Emma Thielbar have been operating a rest home in partnership for several years.

Almeda Smith is a Negro; Emma Thielbar is white.



*Partners at Hilltop Nursing Home, northern Wisconsin.*

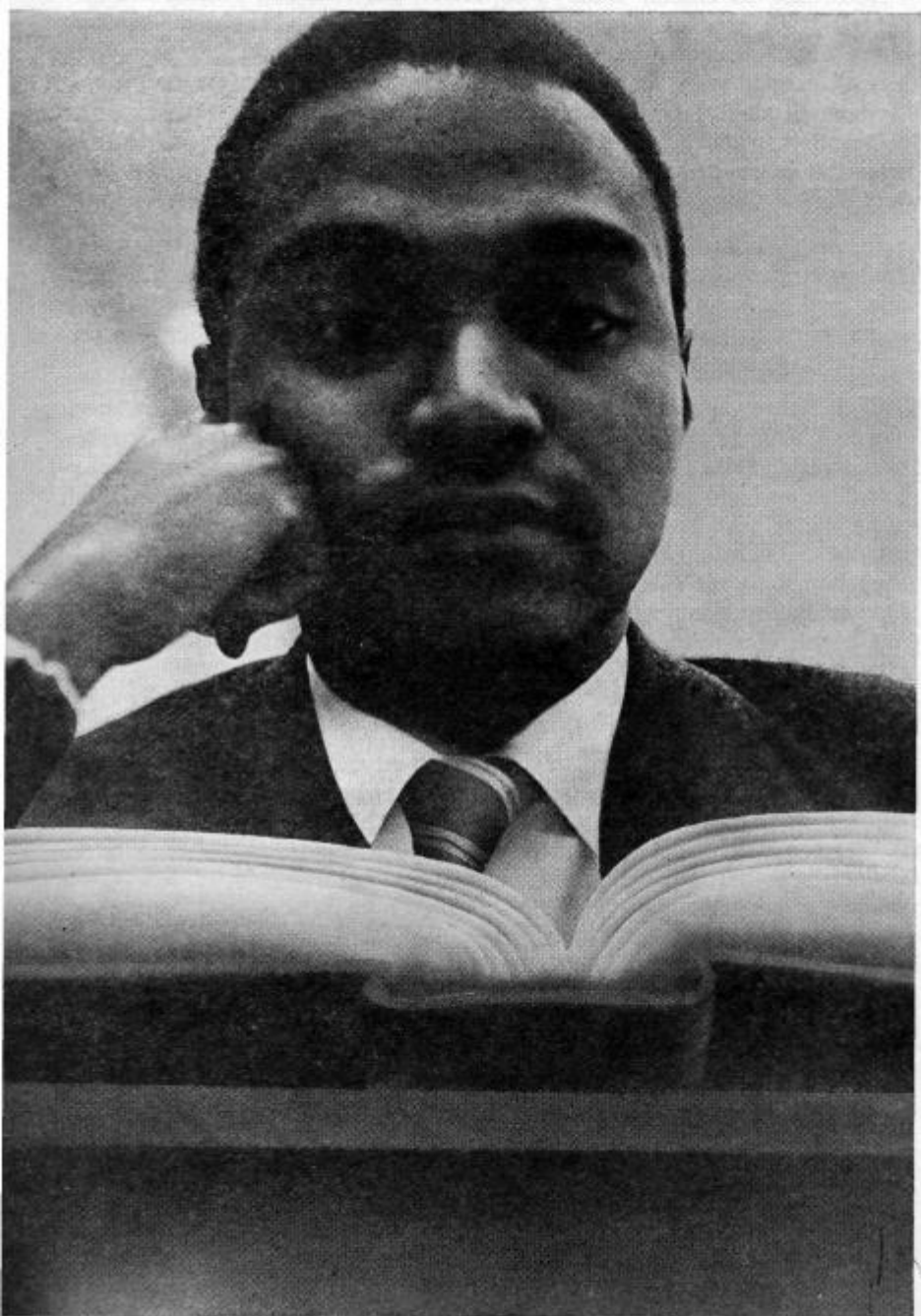
This rest home is unique because its partners began it as an example to the community that two races can get along in partnership. It is open on a non-discriminatory basis. An educator in this community commented: "The reaction to the nursing home is good. The people go along with it."

The manager of a motel in the vicinity agreed that Hilltop Nursing Home is a well-managed place for the aged. This business woman stated, "And they run a clean place too. I couldn't ask for a better white friend than that colored woman was to me."

Mrs. Thielbar commented, "Well, she's a wonderful woman and a dear friend. And she's a good manager. When we first went into business here, we had to decide who would be the food buyer. Both of us had been practical nurses, and I had done a lot of buying as well, but Almeda had done more than I. I knew she was better at it—and when I meet someone who can do something better, I recognize it. We are partners. So we agreed Almeda would be the buyer and that's the way we operate."

The two practical nurses care for their patients with this philosophy: "At best, getting old is not easy. But if we are as well taken care of when we are old ourselves as we try to care for our patients we won't need to worry about anything."

## *College Teacher*



—Wisconsin State College photo

*Robert B. Bailey, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at a Wisconsin State College. He is the first Negro teacher who has been employed at this institution.*

According to Doctor Bailey's superiors, his standing among the students is "... that of a competent instructor." That this should be so is borne out by his academic record: He graduated from Talladega College, Georgia, with first honors. He completed the equivalent of his master's degree at Birmingham University, England. He studied at the universities of Munich, Frankfurt, and Utrecht. His learned doctoral dissertation was titled *Sociology Faces Pessimism: A Study of European Sociological Thought Amidst A Fading Optimism*.

In his Wisconsin community, this teacher's activity has not been limited to the classroom. He has been invited to address civic organizations and gatherings for such events as Memorial Day. Doctor Bailey is accustomed to public activity; he has been a recreation leader, a secretary, a translator for an export company, and a psychiatric aide.

This Negro teacher's appointment to his position was based on merit alone. The state college advertised for a sociology teacher in a professional publication. Nine educators examined Doctor Bailey's written application and offered him the job. They knew from the location of his alma mater that he might or might not be a Negro. But they did not set out deliberately to secure a colored teacher or a white one; instead they hoped to get a competent sociologist. According to school officials, Doctor Bailey demonstrates a high degree of competence, both in and out of his classroom.

Definitive proof of this fact is found in the following quotation by one of his present neighbors:

"He's very well respected in this community. I'm one of his neighbors. My daughter is in school here. The students who have been in his classes think a great deal of him, and they respect him.

"Doctor Bailey is a brilliant man. I hope he continues to teach in the college here because we need him."

## *Community Founder*

In the southern part of Wisconsin, about seven miles from the nearest city, is a rural subdivision of land on a small lake. This community, known as Lake Ivanhoe, had its inception in 1918 when Frank Anglin, Sr., and two other interested parties bought 718 acres of land, subdivided these parcels into forty foot lots, and placed them on the real estate market.

Frank Anglin, Sr., was born in Jamaica. He was employed for fifty years as an automotive engineer. His present residence is located on the shore of the lake across from the community he helped to bring into existence. Anglin is characteristic of many persons light in skin color who are taken as white out of their setting. This was true many times for Anglin who admits, "I have never been taken for anything but white. I have lived with whites as much as colored. But it was my choice to be considered a Negro because my mother was, and my sympathy goes to the Negro."

A neighbor and farmer who knew Frank in the 1920's when the Ivanhoe community was being formed said of him in 1958, "The colored people in Ivanhoe have always been willing to shake hands with me. Anglin, he is a nice fellow, honest. He always paid his bills. I can't say anything but good about those fellows. My property adjoins theirs. I knew almost all the original fellows. If you can find any better I don't know where you'll find them."

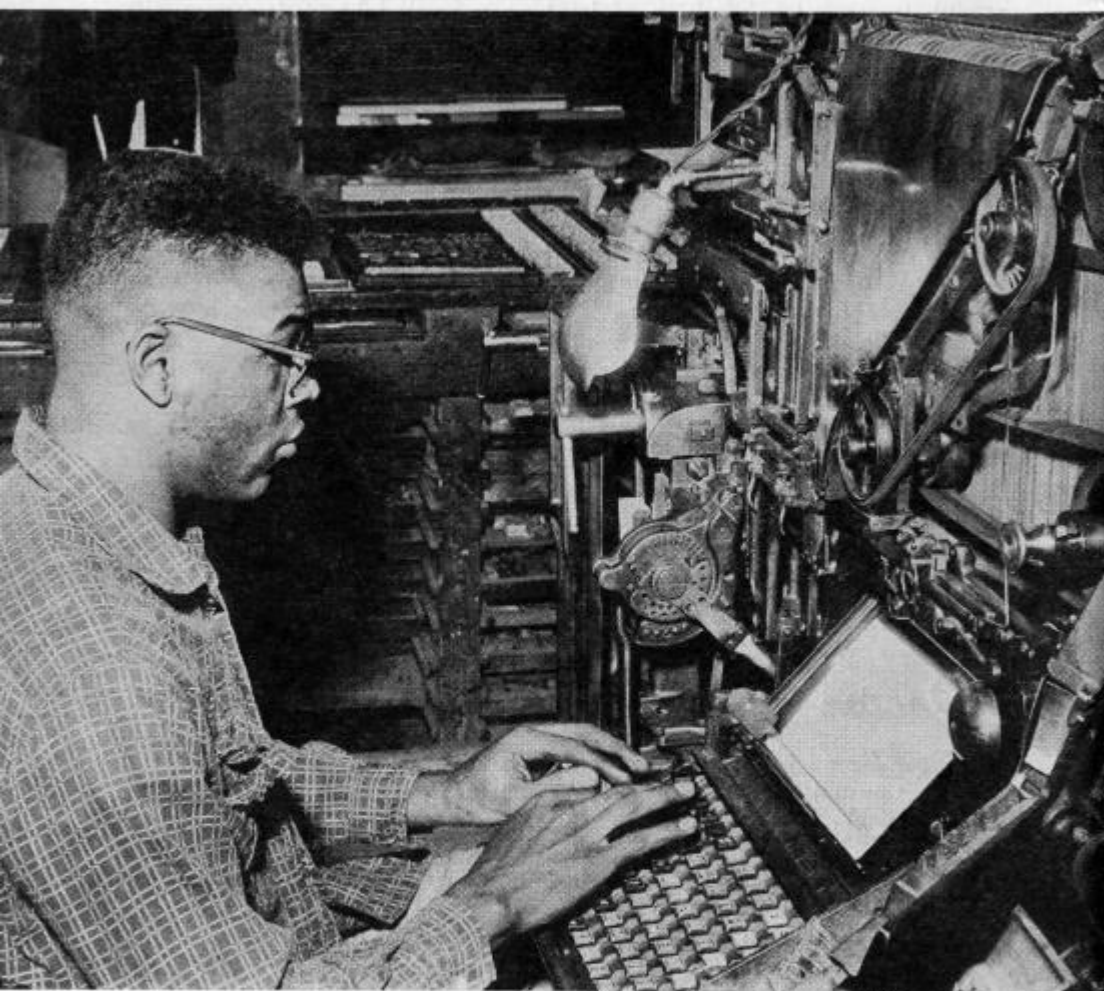
## *Doctor*

Near Grand Marsh Dr. Nathaniel Calloway is developing one of the most unusual game farms in Wisconsin. A Chicago physician and surgeon who operates his own clinic there, Doctor Calloway purchased a 280-acre farm which he is converting into a game ranch where rare species of animals may be seen in a natural setting. These animals include long horned cattle, buffalo, and species of deer.

The development of this project is in the nature of hobby activity. The total plans for the farm are extensive; it will be some years before they are finally complete. Specifications for exhibiting these wild animals in captivity were drawn up by the Wisconsin Department of Conservation.

Doctor Calloway is primarily interested in exhibiting the animals to children. Described as a man who loves youngsters, Grand Marsh residents added, "We feel that Doctor Calloway is really doing something for this community. He's a popular man around here. We are very much impressed with him. So are the children."

## *Printer*



*—Courtesy Juneau County Publishers*

etaoinshrdlu—a meaningless jumble of letters—is actually a linotype operator's test to see if his machine is running properly. This is the kind of test Jim Burrell runs repeatedly on his job as a linotype operator. He is employed by the publisher of a Wisconsin weekly newspaper.

Jim Burrell came to Wisconsin from Iowa. He served in the Navy four years, later attended one year of college. He is well accepted in his new Wisconsin community, testifying:

"I have been invited to several homes here in town and they treat me like an individual. Since I've been here I've been elected vice president of our archery club. Now of course you can find anything you want to. Sometimes people make statements they don't really mean deep down and you can take offense if you want. But I figure that like me they have their good and bad days, too. You know, when you're a stranger in a small community people look at you regardless of who you are."

His fellow workers concluded: "We all get along okay."

## *Musician-Farmer*

Emory Madry, farm operator in a northern county, is also a musician. Members of his community identify him with the fact that he played cornet in the town band for many years. A resident of the town said, "Emory and Clara Madry have a pretty nice farm out there, very well kept. They've lived there a good many years. They always got along with their neighbors. They're good people, and friendly."

And immediate neighbors added, "They are good people. Quiet, neighborly."

It is certainly true that the Madrys have "lived there many years." They homesteaded their farm land in 1918. Emory came from Michigan; his wife was born in Wisconsin. Together they cleared their land and built their farm buildings. When they first arrived, Clara said, "There was nothing, only brush. We cleared the land, built the house. It was all timber country. We built all our buildings and we just finished the barn and in two years the wind took it down so we had to do it again."

The Madrys are members of the Farmers' Union, the Breeders' Association, and the Rural Electrification Association. They have known the rigors of hard winters in the north, the hardships of crop failure. Now in their 70's, they are enjoying the results of their labor. Both agree that "... it was well worth it."



## *Artist*

ETHEL NOLAN, ARTIST AND TEACHER, with one of her oil paintings. The scene depicted was one she witnessed in Paris in 1953 when General Jonathan Wainwright visited the city. Moroccan troops of the French Guard of Honor pass on parade before Napoleon's Tomb in Wainwright's honor.

The pottery is also Ethel Nolan's work. The larger vase was constructed by the coil method; the smaller was thrown on a potter's wheel.

Mrs. Nolan and her husband Thomas have owned Wisconsin property for 26 years. Thomas Nolan, a funeral director, has his business location in Chicago. Ethel Nolan teaches art in the Chicago public school system.

The Nolans are some of the first Negro residents in their Wisconsin community. Their neighbors, people who have known them a quarter of a century, said, "The Nolans are fine people. They're concerned with community affairs." Thomas Nolan confirmed his long acquaintance with members of the Wisconsin community: "We have known the people who live around here for years. When we first came here we had no phone. Sometimes neighbors would come and get me to their phone when there was a message for me to return to Chicago because of a death."

Mrs. Nolan's work as an artist has been frequently displayed. She is a member of the National Association of University Women and is currently active in tracing origins of African art. Her present research is with museum pieces; she proposes a trip to Africa eventually for first-hand research on her project.



## *Caretaker*

In western Wisconsin lives a young Marine Corps veteran, Willie Smith. Born in Florida, he was employed by a West Palm Beach hotel. A Wisconsin business executive vacationing in Florida met Willie, liked him, and asked if he would accept a job in Wisconsin. Willie agreed,

came North with his present employer, and for several years he has worked as a caretaker and chauffeur.

According to residents of his community, he is a young man who has made an excellent adjustment to a new location. He has been a member of the town ball team; he is regular in church attendance.

One of his friends, a service station attendant, said, "He's one of the best guys around. The town stands behind him all the way. He lived here three years and then went into service. Now he's back. We go fishing together."

Willie, too, spoke well of his Wisconsin community: "It's a whole lot different from the South. Everyone in town is nice to me, I have no trouble here. It makes me feel wonderful to know that."

According to other young people in his town, "Willie will always get along wherever he is. He's all personality."

## School Integration

Speaking about this family, an educator said, "The Jefferson children are very well thought of and this is because they are intelligent. They are leaders in school. We have no problem of integration. We have talked about race and I have explained we are all one—the human race."



School integration in rural Wisconsin communities within the scope of this survey has been capably handled by local communities and school officials. Practices and policies applied have been in accordance with Wisconsin law:

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Sec. 40.51 Exclusion on account of religion, nationality or color a misdemeanor.** No person shall be excluded from any public school on account of his religion, nationality or color. No separate school or department shall be kept for any person on account of his religion, nationality or color. A member of any board of education who votes to exclude from any public school any child, on account of his religion, nationality or color shall be fined not more than \$100 or imprisoned not less than 30 days, nor more than 6 months, or both.

*(created by 1949 c. 433; 1953, c. 90)*

Although the State of Wisconsin legislature formally established this principle by law in 1949, some communities had put the practice into effect many years before the word "integration" came to refer to schools. In some smaller communities, attendance of white and Negro children in the same classrooms dates to the 1870's. In other localities, integration became a matter of record in the 1930's when some Negro families moved from urban to rural areas. And in certain other areas, integration became a fact in very recent years simply because the families arrived.



*Mrs. Mary Lins, the teacher in the back row, has taught in a 8-grade rural school for seven years. Of her children, she says, "They don't think of themselves as different. Integration is very natural for them. This is the way they grew up in the community and their parents before them."*

There has been a variable community attitude during the several periods—the historical past, the depression years, and current time—an attitude which varied according to the time when the Negro families arrived, their economic level, and their location within the State. Location as a variable of attitudes is probably controlled by the feelings of the particular ethnic groups which happen to dominate the several communities. Historical research might reveal that the activity of organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan may have been partly responsible for the fact that some Wisconsin communities had no early Negro population.

But in those communities to which Negro families did come in numbers, school integration seems to have been accepted as a routine matter. The colored population was usually a small minority; the rural

communities were without great wealth; there was no possibility for "separate but equal" provisions. Both practicality and humanitarian principles then became the controlling factors.

In some communities, Negro families arrived and homesteaded at the same time as did the white families. Hillsboro and Lancaster residents, for example, remember early days when school facilities were cooperatively constructed by both races. Each needed the skills and ability of the other in the pioneering process. In those days of settlement, schools were recognized by the people as a necessary part of community life. Some of these original integrated schools were log cabins.

Today's rural schools, in contrast, range from modern one-room graded school buildings to consolidated district facilities of construction as recent as 1958. In these schools, public and parochial, white children and colored children share available facilities. Cooperative sharing and the

*Integrated high school classroom in a southern county; a Speech class is in process.*



attendant instruction takes place with only those incidents of behavioral problems common to most children. Comments of teachers seem to indicate that the degree of adaptation of the students is good.

Negro children are enrolled at elementary and secondary education levels. The elementary level of education presents the lesser problem; children at this level of education do not see one another as different unless parents have made a point to emphasize the differences.



*Kindergarten, public school. Their teacher reports they are well adjusted.*

Those problems that do exist seem to be due to opinions and actions of occasional individuals, whether parents or educators, regardless of race. But these are isolated instances and do not reflect the attitudes either of the majority of rural residents surveyed or of school administrators. Furthermore, any prejudices are checked if carried over into the behavior pattern of actual discrimination.



*Elementary classrooms in the same school district. Negro children attend the several schools by administrative decision.*

When the secondary level of education is examined, some social problems do become apparent, according to the educators. At this level, parents are likely to comment or act adversely in connection with social activity in the schools. It seems to be the case that if the only male Negro attending high school is average or below average in academic or athletic activities, his social problems increase when the school conducts extra-curricular group activity. But if the male student excels—as happened with one young man, the only Negro enrolled—he may be both basketball star and prom king. Negro girls seem to be accepted with fewer reservations; some of those in this survey excelled to the extent of being class officers, student council officers, and on honor rolls for academic achievement.

School administrations have applied various techniques toward meeting school integration. In some cases, doing nothing was the answer because there was nothing to do except proceed. In other districts, school administrators purposely spread the colored children over several schools within a newly consolidated district. When interviewed, one principal explained that “. . . we felt this is a part of social maturity, part of growing up, part of total education—to have the experience of attending school with people of another race.”

The decision of this school district to “spread out” the Negro children over the several schools negated the possibility for criticism of segregation. It happens that the children involved live in one rural part of the total school district; if they had been assigned to school by geographic location of their residences, they would have attended one school only. This was not the desire of the school administrators. They report that their distribution system has succeeded; they have no problems in connection with racial matters.

## *Community Problems*

The preceding section which presented biographic data about Negro families analyzed *current* community attitudes. However, some of the families who are now highly accepted in their communities did experience earlier problems. There are also instances of families, well accepted in their counties, who bear the brunt of unpleasantries administered by vacationers from other states.

The lesser problems rural Negro residents experience, according to their statements, are those of finding suitable housing, securing personal services, subjection to personal slights, or sometimes feeling unwelcome in group gatherings such as church services. The more critical problem, they state, is finding adequate employment; sometimes, apparently, this becomes the problem of finding any employment at all.

### **Housing Problems:**

There have been instances of housing difficulties connected with both farm and town locations. One Negro farmer, for example, had owned a farm near Racine. The right-of-way for a new state highway ran through his farm buildings and he had to relocate. During this process he found suitable farm property through a real estate agent, but when the sale was to be consummated the Chicago owner of the property refused to allow the property to be sold to a Negro. This story reached newspapers and as a result the Negro received sympathetic letters from white farmers who testified they would be glad to have him as a neighbor. He also received offers of help from other real estate agents. He located a farm, finally, and seems to be well thought of in his new community.

Housing problems have also occurred in town communities. This type can be categorized as "petitions and apologies." In several cases, the new Negro property owner was met on arrival with petitions asking him to leave. In one case, such a petition was destroyed by a local business man while being circulated.

The petition sequence of events follows a pattern. In each instance analyzed, six months to two years elapsed after the petition action. In no case did the Negro family move. During the intervening time, the community had an opportunity to observe the family's living conditions. In time, the originator of the petition paid a visit to them. This visit was usually in the nature of an apology, including a statement which said, essentially, "I know you know I'm the one who circulated the petition for you to move when you first came here. But at that time I thought

you would be like the rest—not care for your property, cause the neighborhood to run down. I was wrong, and I've come to apologize."

One family, the recipients of such a petition some years ago, were described today by a neighbor: "I think they are fine people. They are certainly better people to have as neighbors than some of the whites I have known. They live well, they stick together as a family. They are really good people—a credit to any neighborhood."

### Church Attendance:

Although the matter of church attendance is of a personal nature, it does serve as an index of group acceptance. It seemed generally that, when a family or individual was of socially acceptable calibre within his community, he was also highly acceptable within the church of his choice. A second conclusion disclosed during interviews was that those families who do participate *actively* in church activity are exceptionally well thought of by the group. It is probably the case that if a Negro family makes the attempt to participate in church activity in a new community, the group will think of them as welcome.

However, there was an instance in which the clergyman of the faith expressed as preferred by the family was queried about family participation. His reply was, "I invited them to come but they never do." The mother of the family, in a later interview, stated, "If he doesn't know what would happen if I walked into that church on a Sunday, then he doesn't know his congregation."

This may be a case of misunderstanding on both sides; direct invitation to attend services by members of the congregation and the clergyman might bring this Negro family to attend services of the faith they profess.

### Personal Humiliation:

Rural Negro residents of Wisconsin sometimes experience unpleasantness from "outsiders." According to the families, "outsiders" are tourists, vacationers, and white newcomers from other states. Some of the Negro families, for example, stated that although they are Wisconsin born they sometimes encounter strangers on the street who confront them with the question, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" The Negroes subjected to this type of remark usually were able to determine later that the speaker drove a car bearing out-of-state license plates.

There is also the incident of the long-time Negro family residents in a small town who were the target of antagonism by a white newcomer from another state. This newcomer made a concerted effort to have the Negro family across the street from him evicted even though they live in a residence once owned by their grandparents.

Another Negro, a professional man, recounted an experience which had occurred while he was waiting for his wife to finish shopping in their home town. Standing at his car, he was accosted by several young whites who threatened to take his car and attack him. "But," as he explained, "they didn't know I had been a Judo instructor in World War II."

These incidents vary; yet they seem to have common ground in that they are usually attributed to persons who are not Wisconsin residents.

### **Personal Services:**

According to the testimony of the Negro residents, most communities present no problem at all insofar as eating in restaurants, or securing barber, beauty shop, or hotel services are concerned. Yet, some stated, a few communities seem to exercise so-called "gentlemen's agreements" and do refuse personal services. Or, if personal service is not actually refused, they feel it is offered in such a manner as to be unacceptable. For example, one barber was quoted as having told a Negro customer, "Now I'd be glad to cut your hair, but I might lose my customers. Come back after dark and we'll pull the shades." In this community, the Negro residents stated that they by-pass local attitudes by driving eighteen miles to secure barber and beauty shop services in another town.

### **Employment Problems:**

The greatest Negro criticism and complaint by far center around equal employment opportunity.\* These employment problems can be classified as:

1. *Those causing migration from rural areas to cities.* In some cases, it was claimed that young people of smaller communities who graduated from high school were unable to find work in the local area. As a result they migrated to larger cities where they blend into a larger Negro segment of total population. This is atypical of the reasons for the trend of rural-to-urban movement in the total population inasmuch as these young people might not find local employment even if they had wished to remain at home.

2. *Those causing commutation of adults from Wisconsin to employment in Chicago.* In many cases, residents of southern Wisconsin counties who are Wisconsin property owners commute daily to work in Chicago. Most of these people claimed they had been unable to find satisfactory local employment.

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\* Verification of these claims was not a function of this survey; such verification would need considerably more detailed and specialized research.

3. *Those causing self-employment.* The claim was made that some smaller communities offer Negroes employment only in service occupations: maids, bus boys, cooks. This, some of the Negroes felt, accounts for the high incidence (20.5%) of self-employment. Some of these self-employment categories, often successful, are: resort operator, farmer, rest home operator, electrician, and contractor.

4. *Those in which employment is not commensurate with education.* This category involves the charge that some "train porters have master's degrees but can't find better work." This type of claim is exceedingly difficult of proof because of individual variations.

There is also the element of adequate training and experience for certain occupations, i.e., a college degree does not necessarily qualify an individual for technical and/or manual skills. However, it is a fact that the survey did reveal college-trained persons working as factory assemblers who said they were holding these jobs because they had been unable to find other employment.

## Conclusions

In general, it may be definitely concluded that Negro-white relations in rural Wisconsin are good. Most Negro families interviewed openly praised their communities. The attitudes of white people seem to indicate "good acceptance" of the Negro families into community life. The word *acceptance* here does not infer "tolerance," but rather a goal any newcomer regardless of race desires.

The fact that most of the families and individuals surveyed are well accepted in their communities is a certain index of their adjustment to the life of their communities in its several aspects. Participation in group activity is one key to this type of adjustment. The element of participation has two aspects:

1. The family should feel welcome in the group, and
2. The family, feeling welcome, must then participate. But there is a third element, often considered necessary, which precedes the other two:
3. The family must be *made* to feel welcome. Sometimes, apparently, this required conscious effort by the community. This conscious effort, incidentally, seems to act as a counterbalance to those vocal elements who are inclined to first petition and later apologize.

Families included in this survey participated in a variety of public group activities. Some of these were Parent-Teacher Associations, Future Farmers of America, 4-H Chapters, Future Homemakers, Boy and Girl Scout troops, Brownies, unions and lodges.

On the more private levels of group participation, 117 of the 150 families claimed church membership. Of these, 87 said they were in active attendance. The balance said they did not attend church either because there was no church of their denomination within feasible distance or they felt they might be unwelcome. Of the 87 families who do claim regular church attendance, 17 attend services at an all-Negro church.

The Negro families also participated in a variety of miscellaneous social activity. In the schools, young people took part in band and athletics. Adults claimed membership in archery and rod-and-gun clubs. Others belonged to the American Legion, to the Association of University Women, Wisconsin Historical Society, and the Farmers' Union. Medical professional people belonged to the American Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association.

White members of the communities occasionally said during interview, "Yes, the Negroes come to our meetings, but sometimes only when asked." On the other hand, some of the Negroes stressed the fact that they deliberately participate in group activity whenever possible "in order that the people of the community will know us better." One banker when interviewed about a Negro farmer in his community commented in a tone of warm understanding: "Well, I'll tell you—he's holding up the pillars of our bank! He's a community leader."

A logical conclusion seems to be that a community will generally accept an individual on his own merit, once he passes the point of being a newcomer, and once people have grown to know and understand him as an individual. The Negro as a newcomer has added problems to surmount: because of the stereotypes about his group it takes time for him to prove himself an individual; he also has the problem of a different skin color. This latter, however, is not always a negative factor; in some interviews it was learned that the Negro family in an all-white community received additional favorable attention *because* they stood out in the community as different in appearance. There are other contingencies; economic level, for example, is a strong factor in determining acceptance; this is possibly related to that old cliché, "Nothing succeeds like success."

Cooperation on the part of the people interviewed was good; there were only a few instances of antagonism on the part of the white community. In the case of the Negro families, cooperation was complete with the exception of two persons. This is a low percentage in terms of public response to a survey—particularly one of this type. The Negro families were told that members of the white community would be questioned at random.

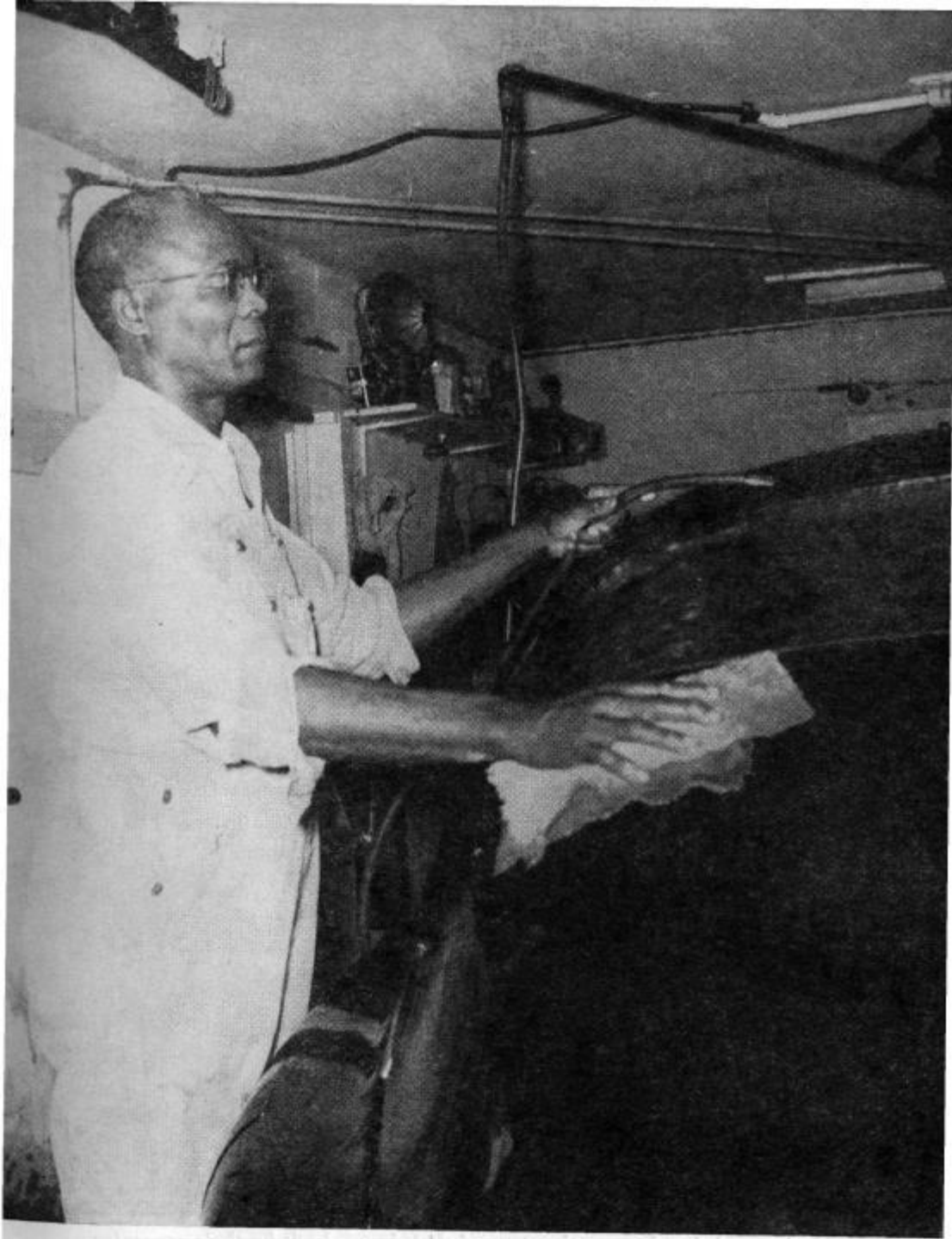
A valid conclusion is that rural Wisconsin residents are genuinely concerned with the matter of fair treatment to Negro residents. Fair play seems to be the rule, not the exception. And most of the Negroes interviewed rated Wisconsin high despite those problems that do exist.

The problems previously described would seem to be capable of modification and control through proper information and education. Except for the matter of employment, they do not appear to be major.

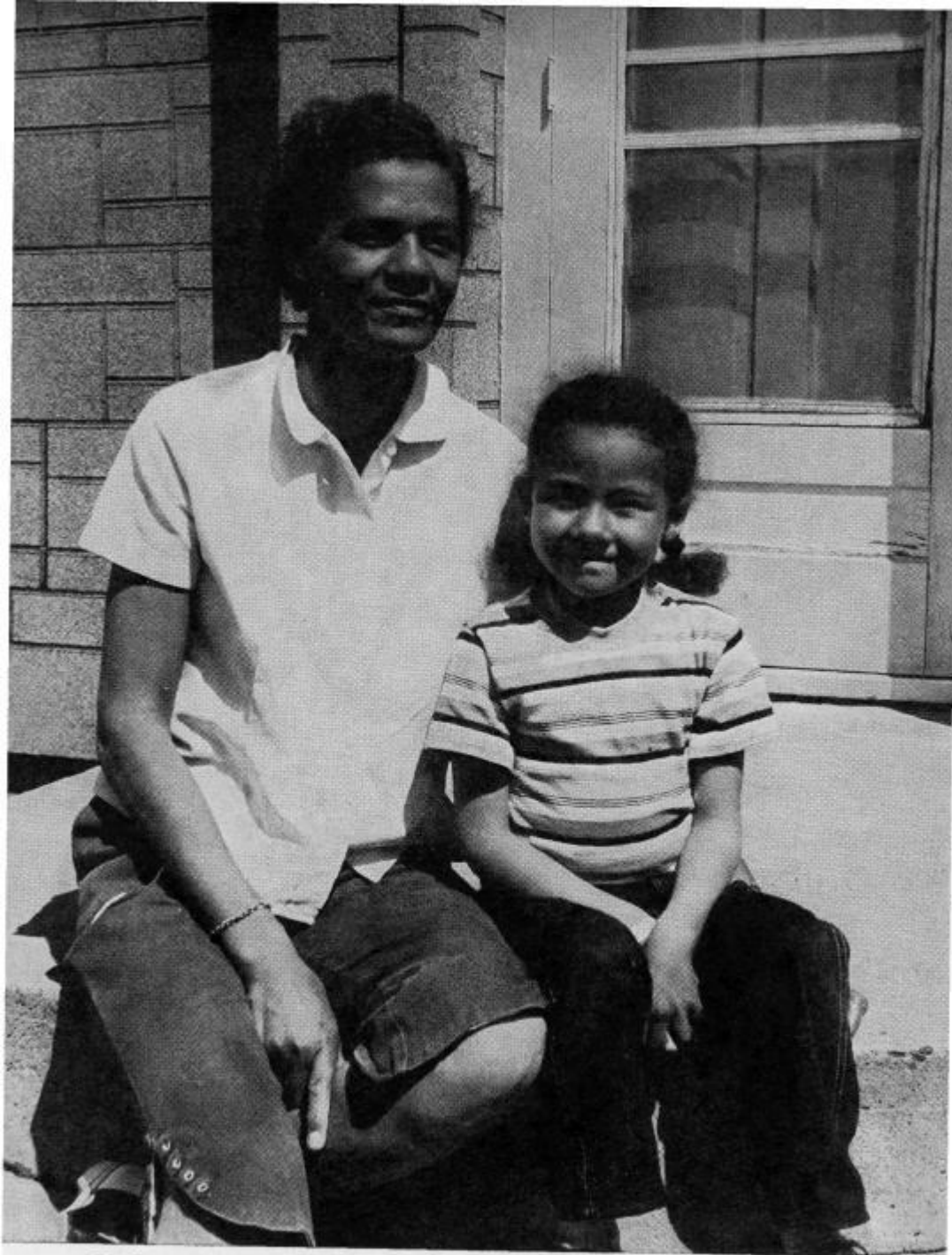
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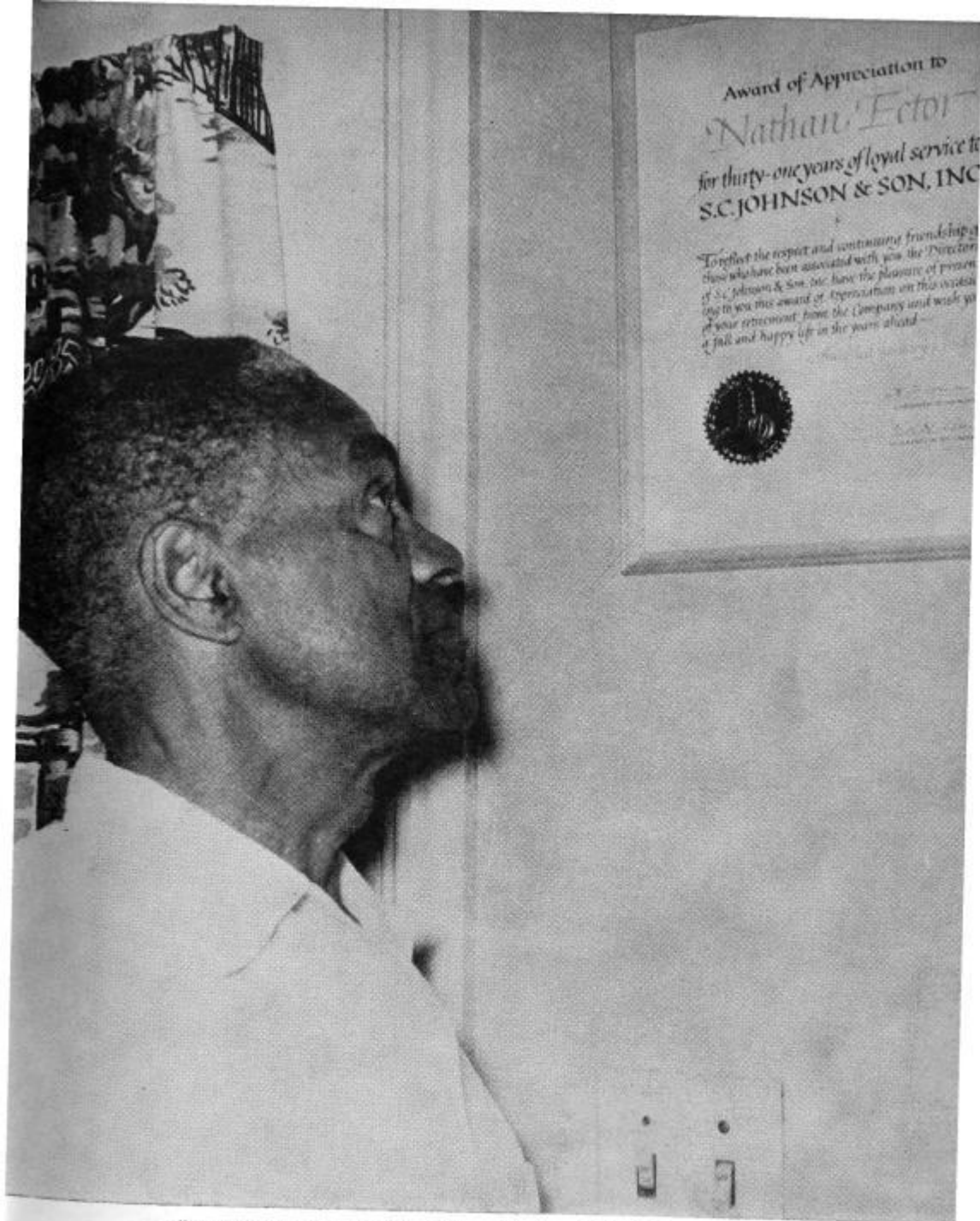
*The head of this family of newcomers to southern Wisconsin  
is employed in Chicago.*



*Owner of a profitable car polishing business.*



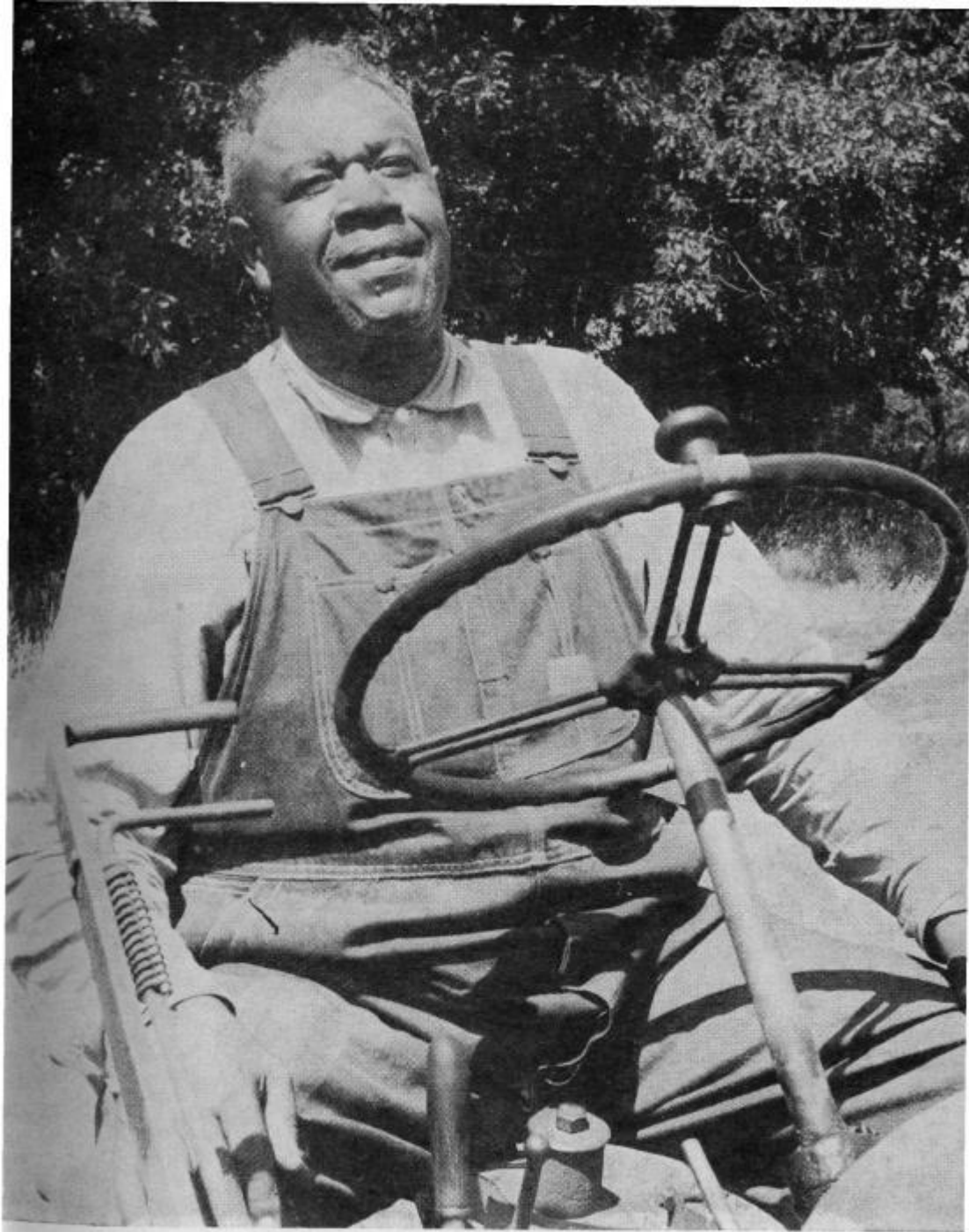
*Mother and daughter on the steps of their home, built by their carpenter husband and father. Northern county.*



*"To reflect the respect and continuing friendship of those  
who have been associated with you . . ."*



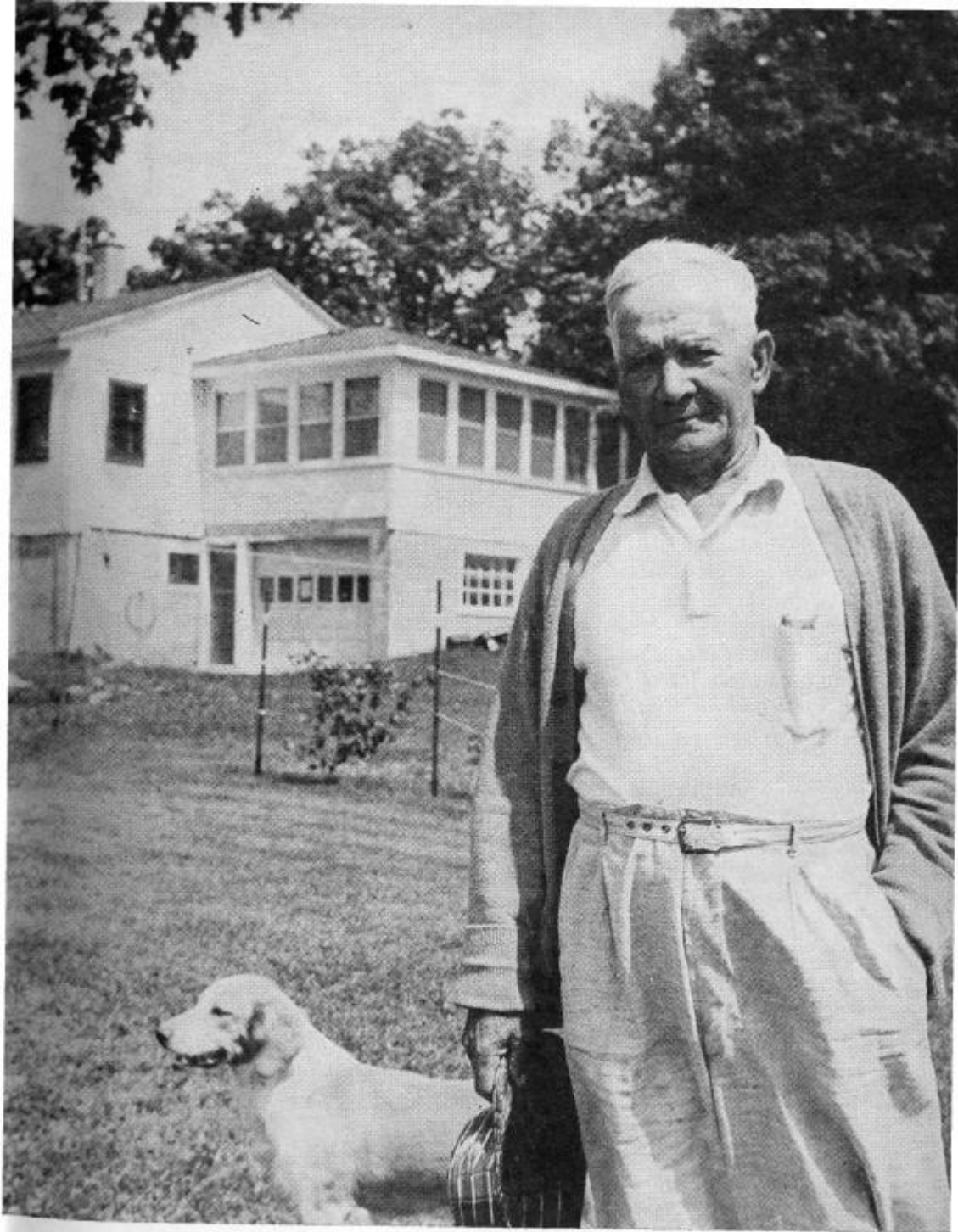
*A disabled veteran of the Battle of Bougainville, World War II,  
this man and his wife are renters.*



*Truck gardener, central county, preparing his land for planting.*



*Start of the corn, early spring, Marinette county.*

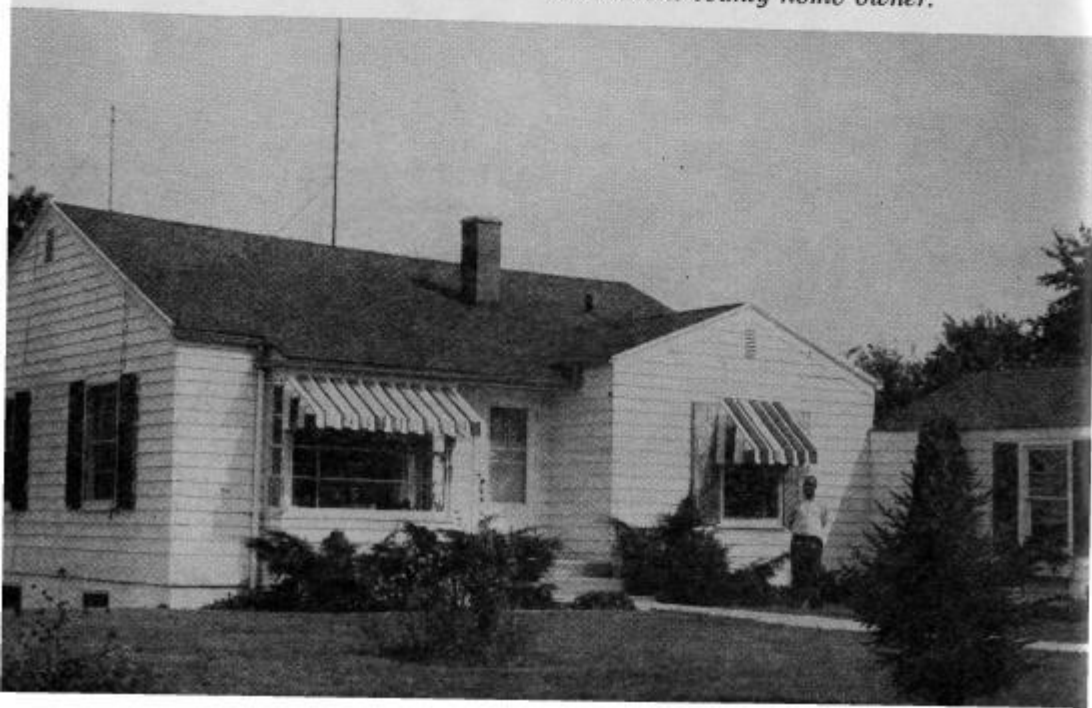


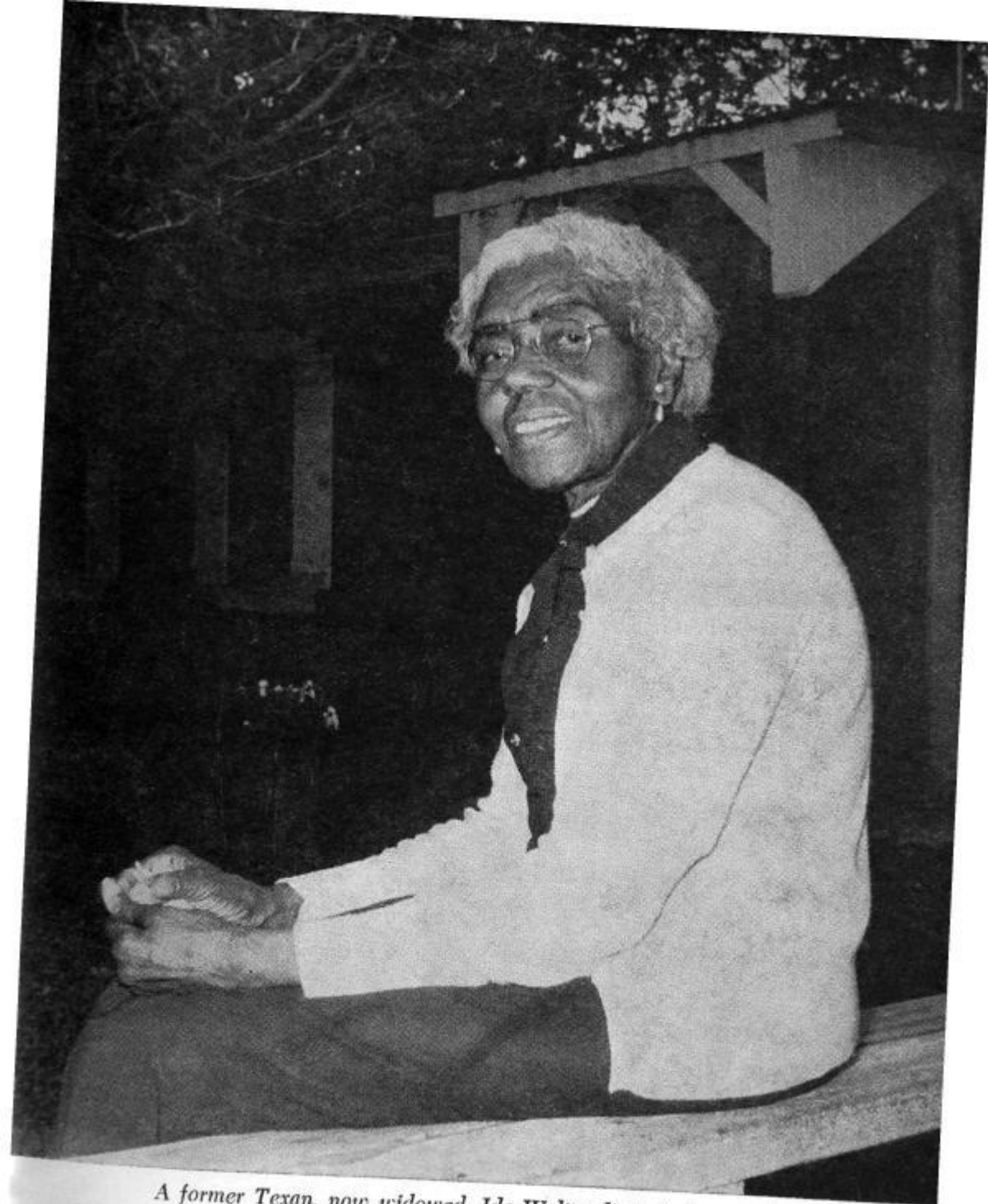
*Founder of a Wisconsin community, at his lakeshore residence.*



*Living room of a ranch-style home along a northern forest road. Marlan Smith and his wife built their own home.*

*The well cared-for property of a southern county home owner.*



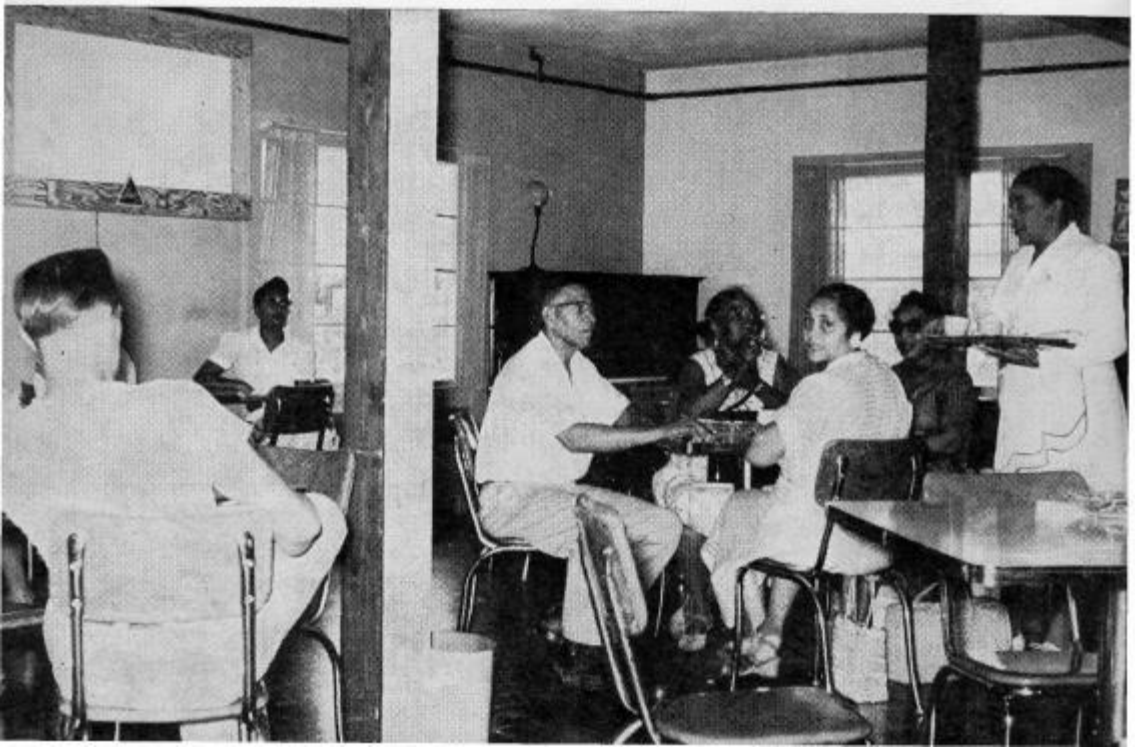


*A former Texan, now widowed, Ida Walton lives in her small rural bungalow.*



*Hotel facilities, Franklin's Lodge,  
Lake Ivanhoe*

*Dining room, Franklin's Lodge*





*"In our County Home for the Aged, the other men surely enjoy Sam. He has a lot to offer—he is very humorous, dry humor. Sam's children are good to him. And his roommates like him."*



*Mrs. Lucy Simmons, walking down the road on a summer day  
to a neighbor's home for an afternoon prayer meeting.*

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*On the cover: a Negro-owned  
farm in Southern Wisconsin*

COURTESY, NATIONAL AIR PHOTOS  
BLOOMER, WISCONSIN

