

V.F. Ves. - Negro

THE NEGRO IN PEORIA

# Some of Most Persistent Myths Explode

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What about all those stories you hear about Negroes? Is the race really different from the white race? Some of the most persistent myths are explained in this sixth article on "The Negro in Peoria."

By BILL CONVER

Now about the myths and misconceptions which build fear and lead to racial prejudice . . . most of them can be exploded, not by personal opinion, but by scientific studies and plain common sense.

**FIRST OF ALL, IT IS** a scientific fact that there is no superior or inferior race. As a matter of fact we all belong to the same race . . . the human race. Any differences between the races on the earth can be explained as accidents of geographic, climatic, nutritional nature and other conditions, which over a great period of time have made for the differences in human types.

For instance, skin color is caused by two chemical substances . . . melanin, a brown pigment, and carotene, a yellow pigment. In the white man, the genes produce a relatively small amount of melanin. In the American Indian, Eskimo and Asiatic men, melanin is so mixed with carotene as to produce the yellowish tint to the skin, while all of the skin color genes are at work in the colored man to produce the dark skin.

**RACIAL BLOOD IS** A superstition just as "Ham's Curse" is a myth as far as explaining the skin coloring of a Negro. This was a favorite excuse for the exploitation of Africans and their American descendants by white men.

Body odor produced by perspiration from sweat glands, seems to be determined by climate. White men in the United States have fewer sweat glands than white men in India and Negroes in the United States have fewer than Negroes in Africa.

In the United States, white women and Negroes both have more sweat glands than white men. In blindfold tests, judges have been unable to pick out racial differences in perspiration samples.

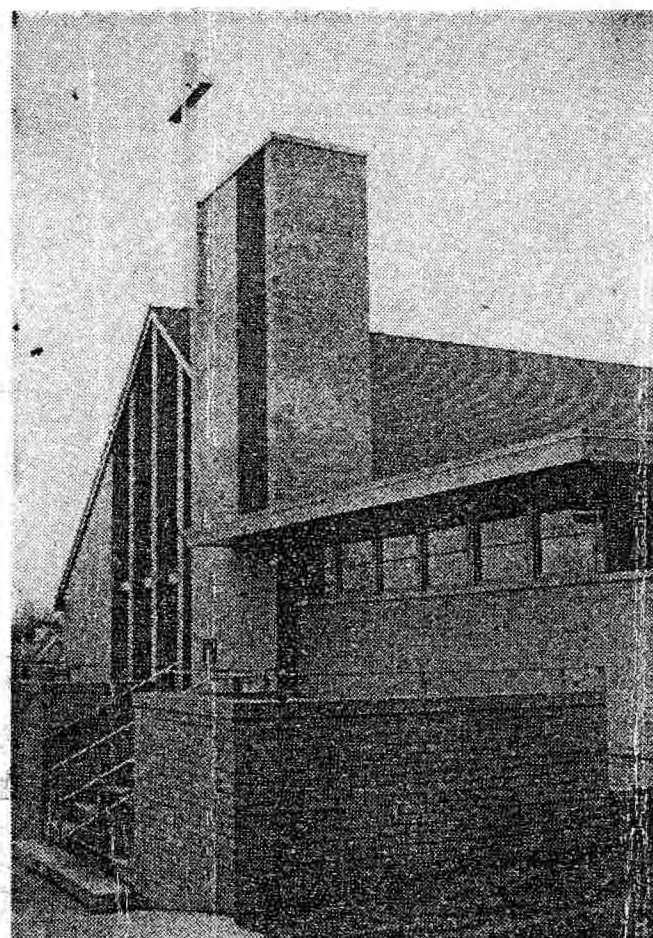
**AMERICAN** Negroes are farther removed in most cases from their African backgrounds than their fellow citizens of white ancestry.

It has been pointed out many times that the "Negro Problem" is in reality a white man's problem because it was the white

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FROM



**SOCIAL, CIVIC AND CHARITABLE PROGRAMS** of Peoria's Negroes are centered around their churches. Mrs. Ruth Wright, left picture, an interviewer in the office of Zack O. Monroe, Peoria county overseer of the poor, records information given

her by an applicant for relief. One of the oldest and most popular churches is the Zion Baptist, second picture, at 7th and State Sts., of which the Rev. William H. Donaldson, lower center, is pastor. Rev. James S. Benn, upper center, is pastor of Ward

Chapel, second from right, newest in the city, at 5th and Elliott Sts. Ward Chapel is equipped with a huge auditorium in the basement offering parishioners both a recreation center and a church in the same building. Mrs. Leonard Crooks, right pic-

ture, was named a board member of St. Francis Clinic March 25. With her in the picture are Louis L. Watson, seated, new chairman, and Robert Heiden, new board member.—Staff photos.

## Myths

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man who insisted in colonial times on denying the Negro his rights as a human being.

Other claims against Negroes are that they are prone to illnesses and disease and that they are unreliable workers. Bad environment and diet caused by a lower economic status forced on them by the white man should account in a large part for the higher death rate among Negroes while as for their worth as workers, you will find good and bad workers among Negroes just as you will find good and bad workers among whites.

**THIS MINORITY** group is also charged with being dirty and destructive of property, but a survey of areas in San Francisco

noted in the Appraisal Journal in July of 1952 states that real estate experts say Negroes take good care of property that is all worth taking care of and that they are good credit risks if business is handled with ordinary business common sense.

Racial segregation is resented by the Negro because it is imposed for reasons which imply he is less human than other people and a sort of menace to the community.

Over and over Negroes have proven that they are an asset to our country. There is no reason to suppose that they would be less of an asset to a community.

Crispus Attucks defied the British with four white companions and died in the Boston Massacre. Lemuel Haynes, a leading minister in early American history has been replaced by such men as Cecil A. Fisher, chairman of the Milwaukee Housing Authority, and Martin King, the advocate of passive resistance in the recent southern troubles.

**JOSHUA JOHNSTON**, portrait painter, has his modern counterpart in the person of George

Wright, a graphic arts director in Peoria. Poetess Phyllis Wheatley has been succeeded by novelists Frank Yerby, conductor Dean S. Wright and correspondent Carl Rowan.

In politics and government, there are men such as Dr. Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize winner and United Nations official; Judge Homer Brown, common law jurist in Pittsburgh; Representatives Charles C. Diggs Jr. and Adam Clayton Powell in Congress.

Dr. Grace M. James, now on the medical school faculty at Louisville University, is one of the educators taking the places of such men as Booker T. Washington and Dr. W. E. B. DuBois. George Washington Carver has plenty of followers in the field of science. For instance there are J. Ernest Wilkins Jr., a Nuclear Developments senior mathematician who earned a doctorate

at the age of 19, and Dr. Peter M. Murray, gynecology specialist and president of the New York Medical Society.

**NEW IDEAS** are not foreign to the Negro either. There was Jan Maczlinger, who invented the lasting machine which put mass

production of shoes on the road to new heights. He has been succeeded by men like Howard F. Davis, who designs shoes. Dr. Percy Julian was the discoverer of cortisone and ACTH.

It is not yet a hundred years since emancipation. The Negro has made long strides toward

equal human rights in the United States, but there is still a long, long way to go over frustrating obstacles of segregation and discrimination.

**TOMORROW:** The story of Embert place—how two determined young men tried to rebuild a community.