

# Houston's Colored Citizens

## Activities and Conditions Among the Negro Population

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WITH the largest colored population of any city in Texas—variously estimated from 55,000 to 60,000—"Heavenly Houston" can rightfully boast of as intelligent, thrifty, substantial, upstanding, law-abiding and patriotic a group of colored citizens as can be found in any other city in America, without regard to geographical lines or location. This is as it should be, for the progress, peace, growth and well-being of this community are indissolubly linked and intertwined with the black race; since it is an accepted fact that no community or social order can rise, permanently, above its lowest member.

A recent survey of colored business enterprises in twenty Southern cities, made under the auspices of the National Negro Business League of which Dr. R. R. Moton of Tuskegee Institute is president, reveals that Houston tops the list with business concerns owned and operated by members of the colored race.

Professionally, colored Houston has twenty-two physicians, fourteen dentists, seven registered pharmacists and four lawyers. These professionals are graduates and post-graduates from some of the leading colleges and universities of the country, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Pomona, Illinois, Chicago, Northwestern, Howard, Meharry, Pennsylvania, Fisk, Bishop, Wiley, Prairie View and other institutions of learning.

According to available statistics, more colored citizens own or are acquiring homes in Houston than in any other purely Southern city. It is further estimated that Houston's colored population has approximately \$7,000,000 deposited with local banks and financial houses.

The religious or church life of colored Houstonians has been given the most prominent place on the racial program,

resulting in about 116 churches of various denominations. Frankly and candidly, the writer holds to the opinion that "colored Houston" is top-heavy with churches. The leading churches of the city are: Antioch Baptist, Rev. E. L. Harrison, pastor; St. John Baptist (Dowling), Rev. S. A. Pleasant, pastor; Bethel Baptist, Rev. J. R. Budette, pastor; Trinity Methodist Episcopal, Rev. J. H. Lovell, pastor; Wesley Memorial African Methodist Episcopal, Rev. J. B. Butler,

pastor; Bebee Tabernacle Colored Methodist Episcopal, Rev. L. G. Porter, pastor; Mt. Corinth Baptist, Rev. A. Hubbard, pastor; Brown's Chapel African Methodist, Rev. L. J. Sanders, pastor; Boynton Chapel Methodist Episcopal, Rev. T. M. Jackson, pastor; St. Nicholas Catholic, Father Carl Schappert (white), pastor; Gregg Street Presbyterian, Rev. J. H. M. Boyce, pastor, and other smaller churches of many and sundry denominations.

The residential sections inhabited by colored citizens, which, during the last two or three years, have received considerable civic consideration and physical improvement are still lacking (many of them) in the permanent type of improvements so essential to the moral, physical, civic and aesthetic welfare of the community. Rent houses are built in such close proximity to each other that one can stand in one house and hear the inmate in the adjacent house change his mind. This is both literally and figuratively true!

If the City of Houston has an ordinance on its statute books regulating and prohibiting this method of building houses for tenants, the law is neither invoked nor enforced when it comes to rent houses for colored citizens. Surface privies are still ubiquitous in many sections occupied by colored residents, while drainage is extremely bad in most of these colored sections, with cess-pools and ponds of stagnant water which seldom dry up between rains.

Street lights are few and far between, and the resultant darkness obtaining in these colored neighborhoods becomes a potential and actual incubator of crime and criminals; for the Holy Writ is true when it proclaims the doctrine that evildoers prefer darkness to light. These districts have very little fire and police

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Colored Old Folk's Home on the Crosby Road.



Sunshine Mary at the Old Folk's Home.

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