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St. Elizabeth's Parish and the Negro

Mary Robert Dennis
Loyola University Chicago

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ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH

AND

THE NEGRO

Sister Mary Robert Dennis, S. B. S.
ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH AND THE NEGRO

Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of

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For the Degree of Master of Arts

With Education as Major Subject

by

Sister Mary Robert Dennis, S. B. S.

Chicago, Illinois
June, 1940
VITA

Graduated from Girls' High School, Boston, Massachusetts; attended Boston Normal School; took Post-graduate Course in Home Economics at Boston Normal School.


Attended the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., the summer of 1920; courses at Villa Nova College, Villa Nova, Pennsylvania, and at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois; received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Villa Nova College, Villa Nova, Pennsylvania, 1931.

Registered for the degree of Master of Arts at Loyola University, Chicago, June, 1935.
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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM

Today there is a popular demand for first-hand information concerning the Negro. Secondary schools, colleges, forums and clubs are interested in the actual conditions as they effect the race and in the Negro's reaction to these conditions. During the last six years there have been seven hundred and two Masters' theses and ninety-seven Doctors' dissertations on topics relating to the Negro.¹

Research questions are legion, and many phases of the race have been considered. Few of these research papers have dealt with the Catholic attitude, and too many books have ignored the contribution of the Church toward the education of the Negro.

It is hoped that this brief study of St. Elizabeth's Parish, Chicago, will urge others to acquaint themselves with the spiritual, financial, and educational problems of the twelve million Negroes of the United States, two hundred fifty thousand of whom are Catholics.

There is a constant influx of Negroes to Chicago. A large proportion of them have come from Catholic sections of Louisiana where the Church was the center of activity and the priest was father, friend, and

advisor; or from little rural sections of Mississippi, Arkansas and other southern states. Because of financial conditions, together with considerable racial prejudice, they find themselves segregated in houses that prove a barrier to morals and health.

Among these Colored migrants from the South are Catholics, who not infrequently meet here from their own and from the white groups a ridicule which seeks to destroy the simple faith which is theirs. They were used to segregation in the South, and the question, "Dare I enter a church which whites attend?" fills them with fear. It is here that the Catholic Church, true to the command of her Divine Founder, "Teach all nations," springs to the rescue and invites not only the constituted members, but, likewise any and all who wish to become such.

For thirty-five years the Negro has had his own Catholic community on the South Side. It is the purpose of this paper to study the cultural and educational contributions of St. Elizabeth's Parish to these Negroes, under these headings:

1. To survey the educational offering and opportunity offered;
2. To show the effect of these contributions;
3. To suggest, if possible, adequate curriculum changes.

As no formal studies have been made relating to this problem, much of the information given in this study has come directly from living members of the Parish, and from the Sisters who have worked among the people. Case studies of some of the former students of the high school are submitted.
BACKGROUND OF ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH

According to the 1930 census, there are 236,305 Negroes in Cook County. This is not counting the many who are "passing", that is, those who are able to leave the rank and file of the segregated group and enjoy all the advantages of the white man.

The period between 1920 and 1930 shows an increase of 113.7% in the Negro population of this area. In the South from which most of the migrants came, the living conditions of the Negroes were, in general, but little better, if not actually worse, than in the dreadful days of slavery. Their homes were shacks of the poorest type, and large numbers were forced to live without sanitary conditions and with no protection for family relationships.

Reports from the North from friends or from northern Negro papers, to the effect that here in this new Canaan there was no Jim-Crow system, no lynching, that his children could have the same opportunities as the white child, that there was more money to be made from the many jobs available, urged the poor Negro to try to better himself in these northern climes. Reduced rates on the trains and various transportation companies made it easy for the great influx.

2 World Almanac and Book of Facts - 1939.
3 E. B. Reuter, The American Race Problem, p. 45. - "In most of the towns and villages and in some of the larger cities such as New Orleans, the houses are duplicates of the plantation shacks, typically dilapidated and usually devoid of sanitary conveniences."
4 Ibid., p. 222.
and today on our South Side, known as the "Black Belt", we have hundreds of people not properly housed, in sections where material and moral standards are lowest. 5 Many of these houses had been occupied by white people. 6

A trip along State Street, Dearborn, Federal, Indiana Avenue, Calumet Avenue, or any of the cross streets from 29th to 43rd will show the visitor tenements of the old type, in varying stages of delapidation. The streets, alleys, and vacant lots are littered with paper and garbage. The alleys around the school, church, rectory, and convent are as sadly ignored by any civic cleaning department as those around the poorest hovels. In the houses visited, the ordinary conveniences, today considered necessities, are often lacking. Heating in many of these cases is done by stoves; no bathroom facilities are to be found, electricity has been cut off and the old-time kerosene lamp is doing service.

5 Mary E. Ogden, The Chicago Negro Community, pp. 126-140.

District 6 - Population 4,271
Population density per square mile, 21,248
Families doubled up 10.1%

District 7 - Population 5,278
Population density per square mile, 22,354
Families doubled up 14.9%

District 9 - Population 7,465
Population density per square mile, 32,400
Families doubled up 12.4%

District 10- Population 18,166
Population density per square mile, 38,816
Families doubled up 24.7%

District 13- Population 23,357
Population density per square mile, 54,129
Families doubled up 25.2%

6 Jerome Dowd, Negro in American Life, p. 31.
To meet the heavy demand for living quarters, apartment houses have been remodeled, and as a result, kitchenettes are to be found in this area visited. This condition means that privacy and morals must suffer.

In a recent visitation of homes in this district, such conditions as the following were found:

- A 6-apartment house made into 46 kitchenettes with 7 bathrooms
- A 2-apartment house made into 25 kitchenettes with 2 bathrooms
- A 12-apartment house made into 74 kitchenettes with 12 bathrooms
- An 8-apartment house made into 58 kitchenettes with 9 bathrooms
- A 24-apartment house made into 125 kitchenettes with 24 bathrooms
- A 6-apartment house made into 66 kitchenettes with 6 bathrooms
- A 5-story house made into 159 kitchenettes with 25 bathrooms
- A 24-room house made into 48 kitchenettes with 4 bathrooms
- An 11-room house made into 12 kitchenettes with 2 bathrooms

In one kitchenette, we found a father, mother and six children. Living rooms were to be found in the basement of many of these houses and in several cases, hall closets were used for sleeping quarters. Landlords demanded exorbitant rent from these people, who were either on relief or were receiving mere pittances for their labor. In the clothes closet was found a gas plate for cooking purposes. In these sections, people paid five dollars for one dingy room. Dirty ice boxes and garbage in the hall were common sights. Eight dollars to eleven dollars a week were paid for apartments with a clothes closet kitchen. No laundry facilities were to be found.

Close by the convent is a six-apartment building which may serve to illustrate the exorbitant rents paid by the poor, struggling Negro. Each apartment has been divided into three apartments. The front and rear
apartments cost $32.50 a month - the middle ones cost $25. Down in the basement were found five apartments - the front ones cost $25, the others, $22.50. This building with its constantly shifting occupants nets the owner $657.50 a month. Compare this income to that of the days when six white families lived in the house. In the better sections visited, where the apartments consist of three and one-half rooms, the rent is $42.50 a month. In these houses each family has its own bathroom. The electric washing machine is found in the basement and one may use it after dropping a dime in the slot. The four-room apartment costs the Colored family, $47.50 a month. Directly across from this neighborhood were the apartments for "Whites only." Visiting one of our former students, who is "passing", we found apartments of five rooms, with frigidaire, laundry and automatic drying - all for $35.00 a month. The Negro, with his meagre wages or his W. P. A. compensation, must pay dearly to live, while he knows his white brother across the dividing line, with his fairly good salary, can live better and cheaper. The white tenant has his home decorated, but the agents collecting the darker man's money, see little use for bettering the living conditions so dearly paid for by those suffering from segregation. 7

7Chicago Commission on Race Relations, p. 201 - "Little repairing is done from year to year. . . . . . . . . . One of the reasons for the delapidated character of the Negro houses is that the landlord, knowing the difficulty of the Negro's finding a house elsewhere, does not feel compelled to keep up repairs. Another reason is that, when a Negro purchases a home on the installment plan, the periodic payments often leave nothing for maintenance."
Of course, there is a brighter picture to be painted. As we visited on South Parkway, and went farther South in the neighboring parishes we met the "better class" who have rented or bought the brown and grey stone residences with balconies of stone and ornamented iron. The greater number of these people have forfeited the luxury of privacy and have had recourse to roomers to help meet the financial problem. Dowd tells us that the reason for this is chiefly that the Negro tenant feels compelled to take in lodgers to meet the high rents.

Labor conditions are acute in this section. The stockyards and the railroads furnish employment to many, but approximately 88,600 Negroes are on relief. The low wages of the father very often necessitate that the mother seek employment outside the home. The long working hours of both parents compel the children to be without protection. In one house we found the following condition existing:— a mother forced to leave home at five every morning, leaving the ten-year-old girl and the eleven-year-old boy alone in the house. The alarm was set and put in the boy's room, trusting that he would awaken, call his sister, get breakfast and hurry away to school. Reuter tells us, "The women are forced into work away from home and their children left without oversight."

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8 Jerome Dowd, *Negro in American Life*, p. 37. - "One of the worst phases of home life in Negro quarters is the large number of lodgers per house."
9 Chicago Relief Administration Report: "Total number on relief in Chicago, 221,497. Estimated that 40% are Negroes, 88,598.8
10 Jerome Dowd, *Negro in American Life*, p. 37 - "Married Negro women, to a greater extent than the married women of any other group in the United States, carry on some kind of gainful occupation and work away from home."
Since a very high percentage of the Negroes in the city (perhaps 50%) are unemployed and forced by their home restrictions to loll about the streets or in taverns, it is easy to realize that crime should be rampant. Houses of ill fame are allowed to openly carry on their evil work, as reports show the Negro quarter and vice quarter have always been close together. Gambling houses and taverns are numerous; low-class moving picture houses are well advertised and well patronized. Feeble-minded and defective Negroes roam at will. We read in Reuter, "The general statistics seem to indicate a greater amount of criminality on the part of the Negro than of the white element of the population." These statistics may not be absolutely true because of the difference in the way offenders of the two races are handled. It has been declared that, "An offense committed by a Negro is perhaps more likely to be punished than the same offense committed by a white man. It is probable that the Negro, when brought to trial on a criminal charge, is in fewer instances able to employ

12 E. B. Reuter, American Race Problem, p. 356. - "Their housing conditions are poor, crowded and unsanitary. Their surroundings are usually vicious; the houses of prostitution are in most cases either in or adjacent to the Negro settlement."

13 Chicago Committee on Race Relations, pp. 343-344. - "Invariably the largest vice districts have been created within or near the settlement of Colored people. The situation along State Street from 16th South is an illustration. Vicious resorts and an abnormally large number of them are found between 31st and 55th Street. In close relation to the disorderly houses are the vicious cabarets. Gambling is found to be prevalent in many places in this section."

14 E. B. Reuter, American Race Problem, p. 356. - "There is nowhere any adequate provision made for the segregation and proper care of feeble-minded and otherwise defective Negroes. In general it is only the helpless and idiotic who are turned over to the public authorities; the great majority of the mentally defective remain at large. This failure adequately to restrain and segregate the defectives explains many crimes committed by members of the race."

15 Ibid., p. 351.
the expert counsel to defend his case and assist him in taking advantage of any technicalities in the law which may be in his favor. The Negro is more often unable to pay the fine and is, therefore, more likely to be sent to jail."16

Tuberculosis, pneumonia, heart trouble and venereal diseases cause many deaths.17 According to Reuter, "The Negro death rate is higher than that of any other large group in the population."18 The infant mortality is very high, due to ignorance and poverty.19 In sections where the Negro finds better housing facilities, the death toll is very different, varying little from that of the white race.

Religion has always played an important role in the life of the Negro. The Catholics of Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Maryland permitted the slaves to attend religious services with them. Pews in the rear of the church or places in the gallery were reserved for them. Today in the South, in some so-called "white churches" we find a few rear seats marked, "Colored people only." In many states, laws were enacted preventing the education of the Negro, but the law was often ignored by the Catholic slave-holder. During the week, the mother and daughters would gather the house slaves for instruction. On Sundays, the other slaves were included. Later on we read in the works of Woodson that, "Put to shame by the noble example of the

16 Ibid., p. 336.
17 Ibid., p. 183.
18 Ibid., p. 175.
19 Ibid., p. 179
Catholics, the English colonists had to find a way to overcome the objections of those who, granting that the enlightenment of the slaves might not lead to servile insurrection, nevertheless feared that their conversion might work manumission. To meet this exigency, the colonists secured through legislation by their assemblies and formal declaration by the Bishop of London, the abrogation of the law that a Christian could not be held as a slave."\(^{20}\)

Hence the Protestants permitted the baptism of slaves.

Before the emancipation of the slaves, the Catholic Church, while not forgetful of her duty to the Negro, could do little even for those who held membership in the church.\(^{21}\) The Church in the South was without priests and without money, hedged round by the many laws and conventions which a bigoted hatred of Catholicity had engendered. Joseph Butsch tells us that, "Before the emancipation of the slaves in the United States, great difficulties prevented the Catholic Church from benefiting the slaves, especially in those parts where the church had no adherents, and no freedom to act. The Church had but a limited number of clergy and small means. The most of the South was predominantly Protestant and in some sections, penal laws were in force against Catholics."\(^{22}\) Even today the lack of priests is so great that a map of the Southern states with the counties in black where there are no resident priests shows the region to be veritably a "black belt."

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\(^{20}\) Carter Woodson, *Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: Introduction.*

\(^{21}\) John T. Gillard, S.S.J., *The Negro American,* p. 23. - "The Catholic Church was never in a position to exert much influence on slavery in what is now the United States."

\(^{22}\) Joseph Butsch, *Catholics and the Negro,* Journal of Negro History, II, pp. 393-410
Priests representing the Jesuits, Sulpicians, Josephites, Holy Ghost Fathers, Society of the Divine Word; Sisters of the Holy Family, the Oblate Sisters, Franciscan Sisters and the Blessed Sacrament Sisters are proving to the world that the Negro is hungering for his God and for education. Yearly, other orders are going into this field and finding great joy in bringing sunshine to the most neglected and despised people of our country.

The greater number of Negroes have been surrounded by Protestant influences and the majority are Methodists and Baptists. Little churches were established in many sections where the ministers were uneducated men, whose only qualifications were their power to preach a "powerful" sermon and to raise money.

The Negro was glad to have a church of his own. He had held an inferior position in the white man's church, having no voice in church affairs. The church became an instrument wherein he could voice his opinions; it became a center around which the social and public life evolved. Politicians, business and professional men often depended upon their church membership to increase their prestige. The emotional frenzied type of services attracted the illiterate Negro.

The great majority of Negroes with whom we are associated belong to

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23 E. B. Reuter, *American Race Problem*, p. 319. - "The great majority of the Negro Church members belong to one of the Baptist or Methodist bodies."

24 Ibid., p. 324. - "In the early days the educational equipment of the Negro ministers was very meager. Any man who could deliver a 'rousing' sermon became an outstanding character and a religious leader of the people."
one of the Baptist or Methodist sects. Variations of these sects are almost as numerous as the individual churches. There is almost a "mushroom" growth of store-front churches with strange titles, such as "First Timothy Baptist", "St. Luke Free Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas", "Israel of God, Jesus Saves, ""St. Peter Rock Baptist", "The Body of Christ Bible Church", "Second Colored Fundamental". On State Street, between 41st and 49th Streets, one can find twenty-three such churches. James W. Johnson condemns these small churches in no uncertain terms, calling the ministers "Bootleggers of religion, parasites who peddle a spurious brand of Christianity.".

THE CATHOLIC NEGRO OF CHICAGO.

In 1888, the Colored Catholics of Chicago, consisting of twenty-three families numbering sixty people, anxious to practice their religion, sought a place of worship. "Old" St. Mary's, Ninth and Wabash Avenue, had watched over this group for many years. The Paulist Fathers, Father Rales and Father Lonergan, were very kind to them and gave the basement of the church to the group. It was not the wish of the Paulists to segregate; this was done at the request of the Negro himself, who felt that greater progress would be made if all could meet as a group. St. Mary's basement remained their church until they built St. Monica's Church.

25 From a questionnaire given to 135 students of our school, we have the following church affiliations of the parents:-
- Baptist - 80
- Methodist - 69
- Catholic - 63
- Other denominations (Episcopal and Sanctified) - 19
- No religion - 11
- No answer - 28

27 From letters in files of writer.
A group of Negro men sought Archbishop Feehan's permission to have their own pastor and church. While the Archbishop readily granted the favor, yet he told these men that they would regret their step as it would lead to segregation. Accordingly, on January 28th, 1889, Father Augustine Tolton came to Chicago from Quincy, Illinois. Father Tolton was born in slavery, April 1st, 1854. He was educated in Rome, where he was ordained April 24th, 1886. On April 2nd, 1892, joy filled the heart of every Catholic Negro of Chicago, for Saint Monica's Church, 36th and Dearborn Street, was opened. This joy, however, was not to be of long duration as Father Tolton's heroic work was cut short by an untimely death. A victim of a sunstroke, he died at Mercy Hospital, July 8th, 1897.

Unable to procure a priest to carry on the work, "St. Monica's" became a mission of St. Elizabeth's Church under Monsignor Riordan until Father John Morris volunteered to minister to the 600 souls scattered over Chicago. In 1917, the Fathers of the Divine Word took over the parish.

In 1924, Cardinal Mundelein gave the Colored Catholics, St. Elizabeth's church, school, rectory, parish hall, and club house, at that time the best equipped parish plant in the Archdiocese.

The church, with its beautiful marble altars, magnificent stained glass windows, sweet sounding organ and with a seating capacity of eleven hundred, was the pride of every Catholic Negro.

28 Letter in files of writer.
29 Church files.
This joy was to be short-lived, however, for a mysterious fire utterly destroyed the church on the first Friday of January, 1930. Today, nothing but a barren playground marks the spot where stood this handsome edifice, the scene of many sorrows and joys of both the white and Colored races. The fire was first discovered about 12 o'clock noon. At 3 P.M., the daily papers were publishing the sad news. The parishioners who lived in the suburbs were notified by telephone and a sorrowful group assembled at the scene of disaster. With heavy hearts they watched the flames devour the sacred structure. In tears and sobs and with wringing of hands they saw the parish priest driven back three times as he tried to rescue the Blessed Sacrament. Suspended head downward, the brave fire Chaplain, Reverend W.J. Gorman, finally brought the Blessed Sacrament to safety.

Broken-hearted, but not crushed, men and women appeared early Saturday morning to offer their services. Until midnight the sad group worked, washing and scrubbing the walls and the floor of the auditorium. The altar from the rectory was moved over to the stage, folding chairs were placed in position, and the next morning Mass was celebrated at the usual time. This auditorium, where famous socials were held in the olden days, was later renovated and remains St. Elizabeth's Church up to the present day.

The neighborhood of St. Elizabeth's was old, and because its inhabitants had been removing to newer and more desirable sites, the migrants had been able to secure dwellings there and to transfer St. Elizabeth's from a white to a Colored parish. But the Negroes, too, sought better locations
as they prospered and moved further south and southwest, so that soon, with the growth of the Catholic body, there was need of other churches and schools. Those who lived south of 45th Street went to St. Anselm's at 61st Street and Michigan Avenue, or to Corpus Christi Church at 49th Street and South Parkway. In 1932, St. Anselm's became the parish church for all Negroes south of 58th Street. In 1933, Corpus Christi became the parish church for all Negroes between 45th and 58th Streets. These two parishes, with their magnificent churches and splendid schools, are doing an excellent work, but St. Elizabeth's auditorium church, poor and humble, continues her struggle to save souls.
CHAPTER III

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH

Convert work is outstanding and hundreds have learned to carry their crosses with resignation because St. Elizabeth's bade them welcome.

Many of the people of this district had lost interest in the church they had attended in other sections of the country. Kind friends told them of the peace that has been theirs since they accepted the Catholic religion. Anxious to turn their thoughts to God they gladly accepted the invitation to learn something of the faith they had not known in the South. Because of this longing for religion, the priests and Sisters of St. Elizabeth's parish give over much time to the instruction of these seekers of truth. Three nights a week from 7:30 to 9, large groups gather in the school hall to study the catechism. Eager to be on time, many come directly from laborious work without stopping to get food. The instruction classes last about three and a half months, before the formal admission into the church. Oftentimes men and women continue to come, though they know marriage difficulties will not permit their being baptized.

If anyone believes the Negro to be shiftless, lazy, and carefree, let him come to these classes on a stormy night with the thermometer below the freezing point and see these joyful souls interested in the word of God, rather than in their own physical comforts.
Why do these people, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, old and young, come to our Church? Not because of any financial gain, for the Church has nothing to offer; not for the architectural beauty of the church, for our church displays poverty and dilapidation in every corner. Perhaps the words of individuals will enlighten us:-

Mrs. A. came to the class several weeks after it had begun. She spoke to the Sisters in charge:— "I have just had a very great sorrow, and I do not know yet if I want to live. I feel I cannot. I had a lovely daughter, who had grown up to be all that I had hoped she would be, but, Sister, she was killed! The grief was too great for my husband and two weeks later he left a note saying he could not live. He put an end to his life. I tried to pray and it seemed to me if I came to instructions I would feel better."

Peace and comfort have come to this doubly afflicted soul. Faith and confidence in God and a good position in answer to prayers were her reward.

Mrs. B. — "I just love the Catholic faith and for fifteen years I have spent one or two hours each day in the Catholic Church. It is so easy to pray there. One day I went to the priest to find out just what I should do to become a Catholic. He was amazed to hear I was not one, because he had seen me at church for many years. Here I am, Sister."

Mrs. B. has persevered and has interested her husband and mother.

Mrs. C. came to the school office one morning with her little six-year-old son. Addressing the Sister in charge, she said: "Shortly after I started my child in the Catholic school, he said to me, 'Mother, the Sisters will teach me their religion, then I will be different from you.' To satisfy him, I told him I would learn about it some day. Last week he said, 'Mother, one time you made me a promise and you know, Mother, you always keep your promise; you said you would learn the Sisters' religion. Well, now it's time to go.'"
Against all the arguments and remarks of friends, Mrs. C. continued her instructions and is very happy to be one with the little boy in the Catholic Faith.

Mrs. D., a member of the Eastern Star, gave up all connections with the society to join the Church. Her friends deserted her because of her "foolish" move. Her husband said he would rather see her dead than a member of the Catholic Church. The husband, through an accident, had lost the sight of one eye and soon after, a cataract developed on the other. He was forced to go to the hospital for an operation. A visit from the Sisters destroyed his bitter feeling toward the Church. When sufficiently well, he came three nights a week for instructions. In spite of the cold, inclement weather, and slippery sidewalks, he walked eleven blocks each evening and never missed a lesson.

Today, husband and wife are faithful Catholics.

Mr. E. had attended many churches, but he never felt sufficiently impressed to join any. One day while cleaning the basement, he found a catechism that had been thrown in the ash can. He read it and re-read it and could not part with it. He came unbidden to the class, "Because," he said, "I know there is a God. From the catechism I learned that I have a soul, that there is a hereafter and that God made me to serve Him. That is why I want to study about religion."

Mr. F. came one night in his policeman's uniform. Naturally he was asked why he came. He said, "I have noticed the Catholic religion has made such a change in my fellow policemen who have lately joined the Church. I have come to find out what is in the religion to bring about such a change."

He continued to come and brought his wife. Today, both are happy and loyal members of the Church.
Mrs. G. "A little child shall lead them." One day a little five-year-old of the pre-primer class received the Blessed Ashes. That evening she tried to tell her mother all about it, but the poor woman couldn't understand. The following Friday, the same little lady went with her class to the "Stations". When the mother returned home, the little one told her of her day's experiences. When little Alice thought of her visit to the Church to say the "Stations" she said to her devoted parent, "But it's no use telling you, Mother, for you wouldn't understand, anyway." There was only one thing left for Mrs. G. to do, and that was to go and find out all about these strange happenings.

Mother and her little ones have been baptized.

Mr. H. said that he was first attracted to the church by the smell of incense. As a little boy he would go to the church just for the odor of the incense. He began to love the devotions but his parents, on finding out he went to Catholic services, forbade him to continue. Though his parents objected, yet, he made up his mind that he would become a Catholic when he was older. Twenty years later, at the age of thirty-two, he attended instructions and with his wife and son joined the church he loved as a boy.

Forty or fifty people attend the classes and persevere to the end. Some move from the parish, but the greater number of those who remain in our district show their stability and prove themselves to be practical Catholics. They have learned that the Ten Commandments are as important today as they were when God gave them to Moses on Mt. Sinai. They have received new courage to carry the burdens placed on them by prejudice and injustice.

One often hears the remark, "Colored people are emotional." Yes, many are emotional, and the "store front" church with its "old time religion, appeals, but the seeker after the Catholic Doctrine does not depend on his
emotions. The faith means much, and no sacrifice is too great, as the two following cases will show:

For three years Mrs. X. wanted to attend instructions, but sickness prevented her. As the new class opened last Fall, she turned to her father and said, "Dad, I am going to instructions tonight, if I die on the way." Mother and daughter reached the school building. As she entered the door, Mrs. X. fainted. She was taken into the school office while messengers ran for the doctor and priest. The priest arrived at once, baptized her and in a few minutes her soul had left her body.

The second case is of an old lady who in her earlier days of prosperity had been a faithful Baptist. Unable to come to class, the Sisters went to old Anne's home. It was Lent and Sister spoke about fasting and mortifications. To the Sisters' surprise, her pupil said, "I haven't eaten anything for two days." Sister remonstrated with her and told her at her age God didn't expect such sacrifice. Again the good soul spoke: "But honey, you don't understand. I ain't had nothin' in the house for two days." Lifting her eyes to a cheap holy picture on the wall, she continued, "Lord, if that is what You want - hunger - I accept it, I accept it, Lord."

"Negroes are like children, incapable of self-discipline and forethought, living only in the moment," has been said so often by those who think they know the Race. We could give many examples to show the Colored man and woman in a different light, but we shall be content with telling you about "Uncle Tom". For several years the Sisters visited the old man, happy and contented in his miserable cabin. He had been rather careless about his religion, causing his good wife much sorrow. During one of our visits, the Sisters talked of mortification and penance. Several weeks later he told them about his eighty-third birthday. No amount of persuasion could stop him from Mass that morning. The day was unusually stormy, but the

Journal of Negro History: Vol. xv. 3, Dr. Mary Williams.
old man, imbued with the thought "Mortification-penance" reached the church in safety but thoroughly wet. When he returned home, "Mortification-penance" was his slogan and all day he kept the wet clothes on. As a result he became sick and for one year had a grand chance to show Our Lord his sincerity. His absolute acceptance of every pain was worthy of a saint, and conscious to his last moment, he rejoiced that he was going "Home to Mother Mary." Some may call his actions stupid, but the old man had nothing to offer but his wet clothes, and he did it cheerfully.

The Church as a perfect teacher knows that teaching the principles of religion is not all; these principles must be put into practice, they must be guarded carefully. Ways and means must be found to preserve them. Poverty and lack of contact with those of the same faith, would soon undermine the good work. The Negro demands a social religion, hence societies for each group have been formed; the Senior Holy Name Society takes care of the men; the Christian Mothers' Sodality looks after the women; the Young Ladies' Sodality and the Junior Holy Name take care of the youth not in our schools. These societies have their regular meetings and have plenty of socials, proving that good times can be had without the dissipation so common to the "Modern" dance or party. The "Legion of Mary" has been recently formed in the parish—all members are pledged to help their neighbors. As a result, many homes of the sick are visited and many instructions are given by the lay people.

The parish is fortunate in having a splendid club-house which is constantly being used. After Mass on Sunday morning, one can wander in and
have breakfast for a small sum, sitting down and chatting with friends. The many social affairs of the Church societies give an opportunity to test the loyalty and honesty of all. These affairs are a splendid test of character.

The gymnasium, once the magnificent ballroom of the Swift Club, furnishes the youth with ways and means to develop physically and morally. It is a place to put in practice interracial ideas. Many white teams are glad to play with our lads.

Perhaps the greatest project the Church has undertaken is her "Regina Home". Here women of any faith are able to get rooms at a very reasonable rate. It is a haven of rest and safety for those of little means, who want to be assured that they are morally safe and surrounded by respectable people. It is a joy to go to any socials held in the lovely parlors.

The social question keeps the priests ever on the watch to guard their people. Even the most vigilant eyes do not always detect the visitor who has come to break down the morale of the dancers or the diners. In our district are many houses of disrepute and oftentimes members are sent to our affairs to sow the seed of destruction. Many times the evil conquers. Some of the "victims" however, realize their foolishness and the prodigal finds the teachings of his early days haunt him.

Much is said today about leisure moments. Because of the great lack of work, many evils have crept in, and one wonders sometimes which is greater, the good or the evil influence. Only recently, one of our young men who had
a splendid record in school was arrested. His record for the last two years has been a surprise to everyone who knew him. Idle time, bad companions, evil environment, and marijuana caused him to miss Mass and the Sacraments and led to his downfall. His sentence is a heavy one. After several weeks at the prison, one of the guards approached him and told the twenty-year-old lad that he was not the type usually booked for that institution. The lad answered: "Don't blame the Sisters; blame my companions."

Few there are in Chicago who know the great problems of St. Elizabeth's parish, and fewer still realize her great obstacles. To encourage the "born" Catholic and to give light to the non-Catholic are the incentives of every spiritual and social activity. As we have seen, some of the people have come from Louisiana, where their Church was everything to them. Their parishes were small and everyone was known by the priest. The Northern atmosphere is so very different. Poverty, lack of employment, and frightful housing conditions cause many to get discouraged and give up Sunday Mass. Others come from regions where the very word "Catholic" means everything that is evil, but contact with Catholics through work, school, or sometimes their seeking relief brings them to the convert class. The converts have been many and numerous have been the marriages validated, but the work has been greatly impeded by prejudice - prejudice of the white Catholics and prejudice of the various divisions of the Colored people themselves.

According to Webster's New International Dictionary, prejudice is "a judgment formed beforehand or without due examination; an opinion or leaning adverse to anything without just ground or before sufficient knowledge."
If every good Catholic would analyze the meaning of this word, "prejudice", and sincerely study Webster's definition, he would realize that the Negro as a class has not been examined; an individual case has been sufficient to judge all. With prejudice swept from the heart of every Christian, God's churches would be filled and the Catholic Negro would be able to keep the commandments of God and the Church, and there would be few on the relief rolls. Prejudice has done untold harm and has hindered the work of justice in a degree few realize.

Although we are primarily interested in racial prejudice as an obstacle to church progress, yet the following example will help to show the unnecessary sufferings that prejudice causes. One of our young ladies was able to get a position in an excellent department store. In the term so well known to the Negro, she was "passing". Beauty, education, amiability, attractiveness were all hers. She was loved by everyone. Many times she was invited to the homes of her fellow workers, but each time she refused. She was "passing". Fear and dread that she would be found out were always uppermost in her mind. Once her companions would know she was Colored, their love and friendship would turn to hatred, so she was forced to leave her work before she was discovered. It was too much of a nerve strain. Here was a girl, who because all thought she was white, would have been welcomed in any home, but if the truth were known, what then?

Much could be said of the white man's attitude towards his Colored brother, and many, many times we are told about this prejudice in church, in business, and in the renting of homes. Some years ago, a doctor and his
wife were received into the Church. The wife, a professional woman, wished to place her boy in a nearby Catholic school. The usual answer was given to her by the principal, "We have no room". The boy finished in the public school. The father was most anxious to have the boy go to the Catholic High School in the Fall. Fortunately, a "big" principal said, "Send the boy down for the entrance examinations. He will be marked and registered by a number, not by his name. If successful, he will be admitted." The boy passed, was admitted and spent four happy years in the Boys' High School. Today he is finishing in a Jesuit college. His father is a great leader in the interracial field, and his mother remains a staunch Catholic. What would have happened to the entire family if this principal hadn't been Catholic in principle as well as in name?

Those who have read Booker T. Washington's "Up From Slavery", will remember that absurd distinction made on the boat and at the Washington hotel. Washington was delegated to take an Indian student home. They were both of the same complexion. The Indian could be served in the dining room of the ship and he could be accepted as a guest at the Washington hotel, but Washington could not be.

All the prejudice is not on the side of the white man against his darker brother. A great deal of prejudice and ill feeling is shown by individuals of the same race. Too many incidents can be cited of the "educated" Negro exploiting his own in the professional field or in real estate problems. Much bitterness exists between the "Creole" and the American Negro, as well as between the West Indian and the American Negro.
Perhaps one little instance will show the feelings existing between the two groups last mentioned. A club for Converts was being organized in the parish. A large number responded and a splendid meeting resulted; but the second meeting brought a difficulty. The moderator announced, "We shall elect a president." Immediately two groups gathered in separate parts of the room and each became very excited. Fortunately the moderator understood the situation and quickly said: "There will be no election, I am president." Peace reigned and both sides had won, for the American Negro would not have a West Indian, President, and the West Indian would not have an American Negro.

The following sad story of a member of our parish will show how the various shades sometimes make a difference in the Negro home. All families are not as inhuman as this, but the color will be duly examined before a partner is picked for marriage. Many excellent men and women have been condemned by their own, because he or she is too dark.

As octoroon beauty married a mulatto. The first child was as dark as the father, but the other children were all very light, with the most important thing, to the mother, straight hair. From the time the oldest child was six, she was made to feel her affliction, dark skin, and hair that would not straighten. The mother taught the other children to look down on her, and when Bertha was sixteen years old, her mother gave her a dollar, and told her to look out for herself. The other members of the family were given a good education. Today, Bertha, a self-made woman, is showing a truly Christian spirit. Her sister, very much reduced in
circumstances, and physically unable to support herself and her demented husband, has been welcomed by the sister she was taught to hate. Gratitude is an unknown virtue to the sick woman, and she daily accepts, in a most ungracious manner, the hospitality of her sister. "Beauty is skin-deep" is an old saying and it is surely true in this one. Today, the older woman of sixty-five reflects in her face her charity and goodness, while the younger one of sixty-one is just an old, embittered woman, causing herself and all around her to be unhappy.

Poverty is another great obstacle to the work of the Church, but one could almost say prejudice is the only obstacle. Why are our Colored people so poor? Because they do not get a living wage. Why do they live in such poor homes? Because exorbitant rents and low wages force them to live in localities they loathe. Why do they get such low wages? Why are they the first discharged and the last hired? In many cases, prejudice must be the answer to the last two questions.

Today an example of prejudice was cited. In a workroom of a large industrial plant here on the South Side, are many seamstresses, one of whom is a mulatto. On one side of her sits a Lithuanian, on the other, a Czecho-lovakian woman. The man in charge is an Italian. One is paid according to the pieces finished. Daily this Italian piles work before the foreigners and the American-born dark woman is given barely enough to keep her busy an hour. Her neighbors, with a more charitable attitude, manage to get pieces smuggled to her from the different piles. How soon prejudice is taught to the foreigners in a country that has opened its door to many an afflicted
Due to poverty, poor housing conditions, lack of work, desertion by the husband, the Negro family must often move. Sometimes this means to places outside of the parish or to rooms too far away from the church to walk. Little interest, or interest of the wrong kind, is shown to the poor wanderer, and little by little he loses contact with those who understood him and discouragement and lack of clothes cause him to miss Mass. Missing Mass and the Sacraments are followed by laxity in his observance of the Commandments that mean so much to him. Perhaps a kind helping hand would prevent many of these Negroes from becoming a prey to the Communistic propaganda.

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Years ago in an Eastern city a great effort was made by Protestant sects to rob the Catholics of their faith, especially the immigrants who were coming in such numbers to our country. In disgust, these zealous Protestants, organized under the title of "American Protective Association", said, "We can do nothing with grown-ups. Let us work with the children." On hearing these words, the venerable and saintly Archbishop Williams urged his priests to establish parochial schools. The priests of earlier days realized the importance of parochial schools and many were the sacrifices of priests and people to obtain a place where their children could attend school. Today there is the same need for Catholic schools.
Father Morris was conscious of this need from the very beginning. Poverty did not prevent his cherished hope from being realized. In 1912, St. Monica's "school" was opened to the delight of all. A small building, at the corner of Wabash Avenue and 37th Street, had been used as the priests' rectory. It was turned over to the Sisters for a convent and Father Morris moved to Michigan Avenue. Here six Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament started the first school. The convent was small and the Sisters needed every room, yet each day they turned over three rooms for classroom purposes - the sacristy, parlor, and dining room. One hundred children were literally packed into these tiny quarters. No one complained. Desire for religious and moral training for their children urged mothers to send their little ones to this "makeshift" school rather than to the fine public school two doors away. The number of children anxious to come to St. Monica's forced the priest to look for larger quarters. On 37th Street was an old armory, used by the 8th Regiment. In the basement were the stalls where the horses had been kept. Father Morris purchased this old building, and eager hands remodelled it into a school, poor and dingy, but loved by every child who enrolled. "I am a St. Monica's boy" or "I am a St. Monica's girl" is an expression of love amongst many Chicago Colored people today. How truly can the words of Bishop Spalding be applied to St. Monica's school: "What we need above all things, wherever the young are gathered for education, is not a showy building, or costly apparatus, or improved methods or text books, but a living, loving, illumined human being who has deep faith in the power of education, and a real desire to bring it to bear upon those who are intrusted to him."31

Well did the mothers of St. Monica's children know that the little ones would receive an "education that unites intellectual, moral and religious elements, that inculcates a sense of responsibility, a respect for authority, and a consideration for the rights of others."  

St. Monica's school was merged with St. Elizabeth's, which had been opened in 1922 by Father McCarthy. Many new classes were opened and in a few years the rooms were filled with one thousand eager, alert children.

The Protestant as well as the Catholic mothers know that there is a strict supervision of every child from the opening of school in the morning until the closing at 2:45 in the afternoon. Cafeteria and playgrounds are carefully supervised during intermission. Many children are too poor to bring any luncheon. The Sister in charge finds many a stray sandwich or piece of fruit that a well-nourished child doesn't need. Daily the children bring her their extra lunch and in a quiet way, unknown to the others, these hungry children are made happy. Teacher and pupil are very close to each other, in the school. Spiritual interests come first, then follow intellectual, moral, physical. Nothing is neglected. The secular standard is as high as in the neighboring public schools, but the mothers want more—they want character training, and that cannot be had without a religious background.

It means a great sacrifice to many parents to send their children to the school. A fee of one dollar a month is required from those who are able to pay. Of course there are some who overlook their obligation of  

32 Ibid., p. 131.
meeting this debt, but other sacrifice much to pay it. For instance, a poor
widow who gets $35.00 a month pension, pays $20 of it for an old house that
would be a terrible fire trap if a fire broke out. This good soul has $15.
left to support herself, one boy in school and an idiot son. She has never
missed her monthly dollar for tuition.

Another widow, a recent convert, is anxious that her four children
receive a Catholic education. As she was able to get a nice apartment
for much cheaper rent, she moved far from the school. It means carfare for
four. Oftentimes only the older girl can go because there is no carfare.
The mother's people declare her foolish but the little woman struggles on,
happy that she is able to sacrifice to get the tuition or at least part of it.

A mother of eight little ones tries to meet her obligations. After
she became a Catholic, her husband showed his contempt for her by failing to
give her sufficient money to take care of her family. Any chance she can
get to work, she accepts it so the children can pay their tuition.

Not only are many parents anxious to meet their obligations, but
also students in the high school show the same desire. During the summer
one of the girls had a little job that brought her the paltry sum of three
dollars a week. Every Sunday, without fail, she brought one dollar to the
convent to pay her tuition of the previous year and one dollar she put in the
Postal Savings Bank to buy her books in September.

Unfortunately, the school has the child only five hours while the
remaining nineteen hours are often spent in an atmosphere very different.
The school does not end with five hours, for the Sisters at St. Elizabeth School. Daily they spend their recreation hour visiting the homes, thus strengthening the bond between home and school. The sick are visited at the hospitals, and sometimes these visitations are made to the less fortunate in prison. Many of the Protestant children ask to be received into the Catholic faith, but no one is allowed to take the step unless some member of the immediate family is a Catholic. Occasionally children go through the eight years of grade school and the four years of high school without becoming Catholics, but they have learned a great deal about religion.

"Thoughtful men of the present day, whose experience and knowledge extend beyond the horizon of their own circumscribed sphere of action, voice the conviction that the dechristianizing of modern education is one of the causes of the chaotic conditions of our present-day civilization; and to bring Christ and His teachings back into all the relations of life as a normal and guiding principle, would prove the most potent factor in the social reconstruction that this age demands."\(^{33}\)

The great contribution of St. Elizabeth's school is her Christian teaching and her Christian atmosphere. What Dubois says of the college, can be applied to the High School: "Function of the Negro College is clear; it must maintain the standards of popular education; it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro; and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and co-operation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop man."\(^{34}\)

\(^{33}\) Margaret Diggs, Catholic Negro Education in U.S., p. 126.
\(^{34}\) The Souls of Black Folks, Dubois, p. 108.
"It must maintain the standards of popular education."

To be of service to a larger group of Negroes our school had to be accredited. Our building used as the high school is not an attractive one. This fact was very much against us when the supervisors visited the school. The building used was formerly the Swift Clubhouse. Wealthy people of a generation ago attended many socials in the spacious hall. The building suffered with the change of the section. The beautiful rooms were turned into classrooms, a purpose they were never built to serve. The woodwork of dark mahogany, glorious for the night socials, gives a gloomy background for a day school. The building is a school by day, and a clubhouse at night. To look at the building or to walk along the lower corridor would convince the ordinary visitor that a school could not function here. Think of the magnificent buildings that the "School Visitor" sees during the year and then picture his feelings when he enters our inadequate building. Very much in our favor is the "atmosphere", the relation of teacher and pupil. The first time one of the visitors ever visited a Colored Catholic High School, he marvelled at many things; the docility of the young men, very much taller than the Sisters, the splendid response in the classroom and the great respect for authority. He maintained we had a very much superior type of Negro to those in the neighboring schools. No, only the student was in a religious environment, one where justice functions and prejudice ceases to be. He was among friends that were ever seeing the good in him, ever kindly correcting him, ever giving him the square deal, and where there was mutual understanding.

The course of study is subject to the courses recognized in all accredited schools. Oftentimes the pupil will ask, "What good is this going to be?"
"Why am I studying this?" The answer is often hard to give other than, "These subjects are necessary for credits." One subject that needs no explanation is the General Science. Here a splendid opportunity is given to help the child physically. Much time is taken during the required hygiene lessons to discuss health, food, sleep, fresh air, personal hygiene, under-eating, over-eating, the prevention and care of common diseases. Definite planning of meals with a consideration of money and nutritive value of the good, is discussed. The Negro, as a group, has little knowledge of the art of buying. Our students are often surprised at what constitutes a good meal. For days they study the cost and nutritive value of foods and the best way of cooking them. It is hoped that this knowledge will be of great service when they are in homes of their own. Supplementing the work, are two courses, "Home Hygiene" and "First Aid" given by a Red Cross nurse.

"It must seek the social regeneration of the Negro."

Many white people will misunderstand this expression, "the social regeneration." Through prejudice or misunderstanding they say, "The Negro is all right so long as he stays in his place." He place is in manual work, apart from and below the white person's place. To these same people, Negroes are mentally and morally inferior to their white brothers, - morally; who have been our greatest criminals? Mentally; have those people heard or read about Dr. Washington Carver, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, Dr. Williams, Dr. Lawless, Booker T. Washington, Kelly Miller, or Mrs. Mary Bethune?

From the Negro point of view, what does he mean by "social
regeneration"? "The Negro asks only an equal opportunity, and a square deal to prove his fitness for sharing on an equal basis, all the privileges that are the guarantee of American citizenship."35

He wants to be an American and a Negro, at the same time, without being cursed and spit upon, without having the doors of opportunity closed to him. Until the Negro invaded new fields of labor, until he desired to prosper, until he struggled for an education, for a decent scale of living, for self-respect, there was no worry on the part of the white man.

Years ago, Booker T. Washington sought the education and uplift of his people through industrial education. He taught them to toil skillfully. He taught them the gospel of industry and self-reliance; he taught them to be self-supporting.36 Others led by Dubois, advocated and advanced education and political equality.37

The Catholic High School must take its place in the education of the Negro. There must be leaders trained, and they must be educated in Christian principles. At St. Elizabeth's, every opportunity for Christian leadership is given. First and foremost, they are given a sound religious training. This teaching must be more than learning the catechism. These boys and girls come from homes that are not Catholic, their environment is not Catholic, their friends know no religion except the necessity to scoff at "the saints", as they call the students of St. Elizabeth High School.

35 Robert Moton, What the Negro Thinks, pg. 37
36 Arthur H. Fauset, For Freedom, pg. 98
37 W. E. Burghardt DuBois, Souls of Black Folks
The religion class prepares the students to go out and meet sincere objections to the faith. Many boys and girls prove themselves real apostles, fearless as in the days of old. Several years ago, a very sincere Baptist brought up many arguments against the faith. She proved a wonderful asset to the class, for all profited by her objections. Her arguments and difficulties were sincere, and they were all answered by the priest in charge of the class. Convinced for the moment, she would return the following week with more "amunition" furnished by her minister. Although our "friendly enemy" was graduated from our school a Baptist, yet we feel the seed of belief has taken root, for she was the only graduate to enter a Catholic college. St. Elizabeth High School does its greatest work through religion. In the Catholic home of the white students, we find good mothers and fathers interested in getting their children to Mass. The obligation to hear Mass has been a part of the white child since infancy. Many of our boys and girls come from homes where Sunday means a day of sleep. In some homes every possible obstacle is presented to keep the child from getting to Mass.

A great menace to their faith and morals is the indecent literature so commonly sold and read in the section. In many homes one finds filthy magazines, so the need for Catholic literature is stressed and all have a chance to read the many Catholic magazines and books in our splendid school library. Once a week, in an assembly conducted by the students, various members tell the "silent" good being done in their homes or those of neighbors by papers they have bought and left lying around in the home or have placed on the corner news stand. One case may be cited of two girls who
brought home Catholic magazines and left them in a careless manner around the home. An older brother who had neglected his faith often waited until the girls retired. He took the magazines to his room and read them, with the result that he surprised the family when he was seen at the Communion rail.

Many problems other than religious are freely discussed in the weekly club meetings. The students are taught to be race conscious; they are taught they have race contributions, and they are taught their obligations in meeting the ever present prejudice without hatred. Classes are held in Negro History, and several times a year the members entertain their fellow-students with interesting facts. A very splendid Glee Club has been organized. Their repertoire will show the unusual training they are receiving. When this club was first organized, the instructor had difficulty in getting the students to sing Negro Spirituals, but they have learned to love these folk songs.

The curriculum of the high school corresponds to that found in any accredited high school. At two o'clock each day the building is turned into a social centre. Classes are held in typewriting, shorthand, commercial drawing, radio, music, arts and crafts, public speaking and dramatics. Most of our students are in one or two of these classes. A school "maintenance" project is carried on at the same time. This project, the art of learning to skillfully use a broom and a scrubbing brush, is perhaps the least interesting of all. There is a small remuneration for this work, but the greatest gain is "respect for labor".
The students learn in school, and also in the social centre, the doctrine of Washington, that any privilege that will come to them will be "the result of severe and constant struggle" and "that merit, no matter under what skin found, is in the long run, recognized and rewarded."\(^{38}\)

So many times we read of the "mis-education" of the Negro. Yes, there are many who have been wrongly educated, but they rarely are students of Catholic schools. Our boys and girls are taught that honest labor never lowers the individual. Many of our pupils are holding rather inferior positions, but these are the only opportunities that present themselves. The money earned is saved for their high school or college work of next year.

A little incident may be told here about one of our recent graduates who was working during the summer to earn something for her college work. The family was exceedingly kind to her and she sat down to table with them. The family, though Catholic, sat down the first day without saying grace, but Alice didn't. Immediately, the Catholicity of the mother was stirred. All rose and Alice said grace for the family. She did it at every meal. The mother was "big" enough to acknowledge the silent correction.

The school recognized the necessity of home co-operation, so the afternoon of the last Thursday of each month is devoted to the parents. In every case where we have interested parents, we have interested children.

The public library, George Hall Branch, has been most helpful. One of the Librarians conducts our Negro History work and many Catholic books have been added to this branch because of its interest in our school. Negro
History week is celebrated yearly at the Hall Branch. Our high school is permitted to have a booth illustrating our work in the field of Negro History.

"And it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and co-operation."

There are many radical Negroes who are trying to solve this racial contact problem. The philosophy of our school is "Have something superior to offer and you will be recognized." We feel we have something to offer in the form of concerts given by our Glee Club. At a meeting of students, who were assembled to discuss the interracial problem, the opportunity was given these young people to test their sincerity. They were told about our Glee Club and its attempt to aid our Building Fund. Students of Catholic Action, these boys and girls lived up to their name. Twenty-five high schools and colleges invited our group to their schools. These high schools and colleges were sincere in their appreciation, and the social hour after the concert brought joy to both the visitors and those who acted as hosts and hostesses. This contact has been a splendid education to our boys and girls, and it has shown the sincere white students that the Catholic Church is doing much for the Negro. This contact has done much to break down the barrier and surely everyone who heard our Glee Club members will have a different feeling toward the Negro. The Negro is going to be educated, but for what — for Communism or for Catholicism?

The Catholic student meets a few of our students at the Saturday
morning meetings of Cisca - Catholic Inter-Scholastic Catholic Action. A splendid feeling exists between both races, and our delegates are very courteously received. Much good will results from the Cisca and Glee Club contacts.

Our greatest contribution is the Annual Testimonial Dinner Dance in honor of the Glee Club. At this dinner there is absolutely no race distinction among the hundreds of guests and all have a splendid time.

"And finally, beyond all this, must develop men."

As the high school pupils leave us, we cannot say we have developed men; we can only say we have planted the seed of desire in their hearts; desire for honesty, chastity, fidelity to contract, thrift and character. Though many do not go to college, they have learned that they must solve their own problems by leading a life that will keep them live members of the Mystical Body. They have learned that "Prejudice cannot be laughed away, nor always successfully stormed at, nor easily abolished by an act of legislation." 38

Ever the gentlemen, he will stoop to nothing that will betray his training at St. Elizabeth's High School, if he wishes to do something for his race.

38 DuBois, Souls of Black Folks, p. 90
CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES

There have been failures in the past, and there will be failures in the future, but somehow, the Colored boy or girl, once a good Catholic, will find his way back, even though the return is on his deathbed. Lack of work, immoral surroundings, and the un-Christian people they meet often turn the young persons from the path they learned to travel in high school. In some of the following case studies, one sees the boy or girl a victim of others. It is interesting to see the courage finally exhibited. In relating these individual stories, we have said little about their academic work. We have not tried to give their I. Q. or compared their mental ability to that of their white brother; we are trying to show that they learned the great lesson the school tried to teach, how to live virtuous lives.

CASE NO. 1.

Amanda attended a Catholic boarding school for two years; she was baptized at this school; returned home and finished at a Catholic grammar school in this city; attended St. Elizabeth High School almost four years; did not graduate from our school; was an excellent student with Grade A in Algebra, Civics, French I.

She came from a home of moderate means, clean and well kept, yet her life was not happy. Her father, a non-Catholic, was a stern man and was
often very unreasonable in his demands from the girls. His fondness for liquor added to the family unhappiness. The stepmother was interested in the family, and did all in her power to keep the girls "straight". She became a Catholic several years ago and a closer bond was established between mother and daughters. Unfortunately, the father was obsessed with the idea that it was smart to have Amanda, his favorite daughter, disobey the stepmother. Friction between the parents increased and the girls began to find the home unattractive, often seeking excuses for being absent longer than usual.

Amanda was young and attractive, affectionate and full of life. She was interested in a young man who owned an automobile. The father told the girl not to listen to the mother when the latter tried to impress on Amanda that she endangered herself in staying out late at night. The usual consequences followed, necessitating a clandestine marriage. Days of misery followed; fear of being found out, and being dismissed from school haunted her. One month before graduation she was forced to acknowledge everything and was dismissed from school. The father was crushed and intensely angry at the girl's dismissal. Things became unbearable at home so Amanda and her husband went to the home of a Catholic cousin. Days of regret were intermingled with days of bitterness.

The Sisters did not drop the case. Visits to the new home were many, but the young man was bitter and refused to have the marriage validated. Absence from the Sacraments brought no happiness. Grace prevailed and the husband consented to see the priest, and to conform to the demands
made by the latter.

Happiness radiates from the young mother because she can now live the way her faith teaches. She is continuing her school work, attending evening classes and making up the work she missed.

The Catholic school was the means of her becoming a Catholic. The home drove her to sin. The visits of the Sisters gave her confidence in the Mercy of God.

CASE NO. 2.

Joe attended St. Elizabeth's Grammar School for six years; attended the high school for four years; received his diploma; was an average student.

He was a Catholic from infancy or as the Colored people say, "He was a born Catholic". Both parents were Catholic. The father died recently, fortified by all the rites of the Church. The home life was happy and Joe didn't have to worry about material things.

At the time of his graduation the school was not accredited. This should have meant little to this lad, as he did not intend to go to college. For some unknown reason, Joe joined a small group of his classmates and did a great deal of unnecessary talking about the non-accredited school. He and one other boy were outstanding in their want of loyalty. Even after the school was accredited, neither boy could be convinced that the news was true.
Shortly after he was graduated from school, Joe married, but was not married by the rites of the Church. Joe was too "big" to be governed by the laws of the Church. Joe joined several societies of importance in the material world. He wanted to aid the school, that meant so little to him, and whose teachings he failed to follow. Great was his surprise when his services were refused and the principal ordered him from the building. Seven years passed, home life was most unhappy, separation resulted. Thoughts of his empty life, of his separation from the Sacraments, of his inability to convince the school of his "importance" began to bear fruit. He was told by the Sisters it was useless to ask admission to the school until he lived as a graduate should live.

Last week his "superior" attitude changed, the sneer has left his face. He made his humble submission in the confessional and acknowledged his foolishness.

Here is a lad who was imbued with the idea of "Freedom" and of "Modernism" - Church and school were all wrong. He found this "ism" brought only unhappiness though he tried to show all his friends he was happy. His early training as well as the lessons at school could not be forgotten. In his silent moments when alone with himself, he realized, like the prodigal of old, that the only way to obtain peace of soul which he had lost, was to return to his Father's house. Acting on the movement of grace, he received the Sacraments.

Joe is now a wiser and happier man and is anxious to be a helper for school and church.
CASE NO. 3.

Jack attended St. Elizabeth Grammar School for four years; attended St. Elizabeth High School for four years; received his diploma; scholarship was very good with "A" in Algebra, Geometry and Science.

He became a Catholic while in Grammar school. The other members of the family did not persevere in their attempts to become Catholic. His mother is an active worker in her own church, but never tried to interfere with her son's religion. In fact, she did her best to see that he lived up to the teachings of the Catholic Faith. The family had little means, yet the home was made attractive and company was always welcome.

During his senior year at High School, suspicious rumors reached the Faculty. It was reported that Jack's private life was not what it should be. Every means were taken to prove the reports true or false. Dismissal from school was pending, but the stories could not be proved. Jack received his diploma, though the principal hated to give it to him, because of these reports.

As soon as school was over the hidden life became a public one. Religion was forgotten, the Sisters were avoided. He could not face the Sisters when they went to his home. He had fallen a victim of evil companions and five years of dissipation followed. If by any chance the Sisters met him, he would smilingly promise to amend, hoping he had fooled them and that he would be permitted to go his way. Suddenly he was rushed to the hospital and his name was on the dangerous list for weeks. Like many
another wayward soul, he had time to think. Things were different and
he was facing his God. His Catholic training came to his rescue. He
pleaded with God for just one chance. If God would only show mercy, he
would show his sincerity. God heard his prayer. The day Jack was dismissed
from the hospital, the two Sisters he had been avoiding, and a former com-
panion of his, were at the hospital door to take the prodigal home.

Jack has kept his word. As soon as he could drag himself to
church, he went to confession, one could say, "fell into the confessional"
because the effort to get to church cost him all his physical strength.
Every Sunday he can be seen at the six o'clock Mass.

"It wasn't worth it. No good can come from giving up God. Never
again," are his words. Another soul saved by the teachings obtained in a
Catholic school.

CASE NO. 4.

Marion attended a Catholic boarding school one year; baptized at
this school; is the only Catholic in her family; went to St. Elizabeth's
Grammar School for two years; attended St. Elizabeth's High School for two
years; took Commercial Course but received no certificate; went to work
before school closed for the summer; scholarship was very poor.

Marion was the youngest of a large family and very poor. Her
sisters had left the South and moved to Chicago. Marion went to live with
her married sister. The sister was very sickly and her home desperately
poor. In the middle of winter, in the visitations of the Sisters, they
found little food and no fire except in the iron grate in the front room. In spite of poverty, the girl radiated happiness; there was never any complaining, just a hope that it would not always be like the present conditions. The sister died and Marion was forced to look out for herself. For several years we lost all trace of her. She appeared one day at the convent to announce her coming marriage. Her husband was not a Catholic, but the ceremony was performed by the priest. The home was ready and the husband had a nice car that Marion had learned to drive. The thought of a home with plenty of furniture and the pleasure of driving a car must have blinded Marion in her choice of a husband. We visited the home and saw husband and wife together. We were not favorably impressed; she had chosen unwisely and without consulting friends or relatives. One look at the man showed everything, and we were not wrong in judging him. Two months after the marriage, Marion found out that Smith had a living wife. Her hopes were crushed; could she put her church laws before this material happiness? A girl of character, she left immediately. This break has meant physical suffering, but peace of mind. She works hard and the traitor can enjoy a good position without thought of his contemptible act.

If Marion had had a mother to go to, perhaps this experience would not have been hers; however, she is not grieving over the affairs. She is happy that she can still be a Catholic and receive strength through the Sacraments.

CASE NO. 5.

Ethel attended St. Elizabeth's Grammar School for four years; was
baptized while attending this school; attended St. Elizabeth's High School for four years; she did not receive her diploma because of poor scholarship and for failing to meet her financial obligations. She did not apply herself to school work because of (1) home conditions (2) desire to socialize.

Her home life was not happy. Business reverses caused the father to drink. For a time mother and daughter left home. The father had no faith but the mother was a lukewarm Catholic. Divorce proceedings were pending but the little faith the mother had won out and father and mother are together again. One of the rules of the school is that every student be at St. Elizabeth's Church on the 4th Sunday for nine o'clock Mass. Every Catholic student is expected to go to Communion. Neglect of this rule allows us to think the student is not a practical Catholic. Ethel neglected to go to the Sacraments with her classmates. It was a sign something was wrong. Directly after graduation Ethel contracted marriage before a Justice of the Peace. We saw no more of her for three years.

The Sisters, ever on the trail of the erring, finally located the unhappy girl. Separation from her Church has cost her a great deal, but fortunately her foolish adventure could be corrected. The demands of the Church relative to the marriage ceremony have been met, and her husband is now taking instructions.

CASE NO. 6.

Jacqueline attended St. Elizabeth's Grammar School for eight years; attended the High School for four years; her entire schooling was received
in the parish schools; she was a Grade "A" pupil; her best work was done in French and English; a scholarship was pending, but unfortunately the offer had to be withdrawn.

Jacqueline's home life has been very happy. Her people own their own house, hence she did not have to experience unpleasant housing conditions. The mother became a Catholic before Jacqueline was born, so the girl knows no other religion. For a time our young friend had hopes of entering a convent. She realized her outstanding fault, a violent temper, must be curbed, or else no convent for her. No nun with her particular examen could show more meticulous care than did Jacqueline. One day she rushed from the classroom without permission. She reported at the office and declared it was either leave the classroom as she did, or lose her temper and be disrespectful to the Sister. The battle is still going on, but the convent doesn't seem to be the goal. Financial conditions will keep her home.

Shortly after school was over, Jacqueline found a position. The man in the office was an apostate Catholic. Jacqueline was fearless in her defense of the Church. It meant nothing to her if this defense would cause her dismissal. She gave the work up later because of the advances made by the man.

Her faith is everything to the girl, and the commandments of God are her guide. Whether marriage or the convent will be hers, she will ever be the sincere champion of a Catholic education.
CASE NO. 7.

Louise attended a Catholic boarding school for two years; entered St. Elizabeth's High School and repeated her second year; was graduated at the end of the 3rd year from the Commercial Course; was a "B" student at school.

In her early days Louise did not have the home training her father had hoped. Father and mother had been divorced. Louise remained with her mother, who permitted the young girl to do whatever she wished. The father married again and insisted that Louise should live with him. The boisterous and uncouth ways of this young high school girl were a problem to the father. The new home was well furnished, the "new" mother was cultured and the many friends, who came to the house, were of the "better" class. The father was willing to do anything to undo the early training of his daughter. A young man at the office said one day, "Mr. Smith, why don't you send Louise to a Catholic school?" That Fall, Louise was sent to a Catholic boarding school. Two years and the school could stand it no longer, so back to Chicago came our young lady. She entered the high school and for one year every Sister's patience was tried. Little by little, the girl adjusted herself, and with the acceptance, whole-heartedly, of the Catholic religion, the better side appeared. Today she is a splendid leader, fearless in her practice of her faith.

Many a laugh she gives us rehearsing her early days and her impressions of a Catholic school. Her father is tireless in singing the
praises of the training found in the school. He has implicit faith in the Sisters and when a "problem" rises in regard to Louise, the Sisters must be consulted. Just before graduation, it looked as though Louise was "slipping" and was going to interest herself in a young man not her equal. Immediately, the Sisters were interviewed. Louise was "big" enough to listen and soon the lad found himself in the wrong house. She realized he was seeking her for financial reasons. He was discovered in time, and he was dismissed as only Louise could do it.

The next question was, "To what college shall we send Louise?" Money was no object, but it must be a Catholic college. Fortunately, there are two Catholic colleges in Chicago that have opened their doors to the Colored student and Louise will graduate from one of them next year.

Louise is a splendid example of what the Catholic school can do. She will always be a leader and her future work will need the training found in a Catholic Law School.

CASE NO. 8.

Lucy attended public school for six years; attended Catholic grammar school for two years; attended St. Elizabeth High School for four years; she was an "A" student with a special interest in English.

Lucy's father and mother are both college graduates. They are both aggressive Colored people. They are among the very few people of our parish who own their own home. Lucy entered a Catholic school because of the attitude of some of the teachers in the public school, who were
apparently opposed to Colored children. The child became a Catholic after a year in Catholic school. She never rested until both parents attended instructions and were received into the Church. Daily, while a student at the school, she made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. She is torn between the school influence and that of the home. She has never been taught at home to curb her ideas, she has imbibed the bitterness of the mother, and with all the venom of a radical, she exclaimed, "I hate white people." She hates them, yet is getting her entire education from the white people.

She was a difficult pupil to handle during her school days. She was able to fool her companions because of her greater ability to talk than they. It would never enter her head that she was sowing seeds of discord by advertising half statements. For instance, she aroused an intense bitter feeling in her class, asserting the standard of the school was below that of the public school because a girl left our school and had to repeat her third year. Never once did she think it necessary to find out from the office that the girl had failed in her four subjects and had been requested to leave. She resented being corrected for this. In her fourth year she found herself disliked by almost every student because of her superior attitude.

The girl is bright and could be a leader for good. The home bitterness has reaped a harvest in her and what she will be on graduating from college, remains to be seen.

If the mother could have been kinder to an only child and spared her this bitterness, a sweet girl would have resulted. She loves her faith and wants to be guided by it, but she is facing a strange future. Will her
love for the Blessed Sacrament tower over her hatred for the white people? The school was very satisfactory when she was a victim of racial prejudice. Today, because the school graduated her on her honest rating, we find the mother disappointed because her prodigy did not graduate first in her class. From the bitter words that reached the Sisters, one wonders if the mother has really accepted the Catholic Church, or is she only using her membership to benefit her child.

The mother has always felt herself above the other parents. Is her "mis-education" going to be the cause of her daughter's "mis-education"? Intellectual pride is very different from human frailties. Will Lucy remain a Catholic or join the "Reds" for her belief seems to be "you have a right to do anything you think is right." Time alone will tell. At the present moment she is an ardent member of the Catholic Club of the college.

CASE NO. 9.

George attended our school for two years; his marks were very poor, in fact, he failed completely.

The boy entered our school from a neighboring high school. The mother and father brought him some weeks after school had opened. It has not been our custom to admit students from other high schools, but the mother told us that George had been baptized as an infant. The father, a graduate from a Catholic Law School, was a fallen-away Catholic. The mother was an Episcopalian and well educated. They had been married by a minister. As we are a missionary order we felt it a duty to admit the
boy for his soul's sake and that of his parents.

For weeks the boy had a very hard time. He had "cut" classes many times in the past. Our enrollment is small so each child is well supervised and George found it impossible to be absent from class even ten minutes.

An instruction class was formed in the Spring. George was very irregular in attendance. He was told that he would be suspended from school if he missed another instruction. George missed instruction and the next morning he was suspended. The mother arrived on the scene at the opportune moment. In her quiet way she told George to come home with her and for two days George painted walls and ceilings. He found it easier to attend instructions and school after that punishment.

Today George is a Catholic, the mother became a Catholic and the demands of the Church relative to the marriage ceremony were satisfied.

Three souls were the reward of the immense amount of patience shown by the Sisters.

CASE NO. 10.

Cerine attended St. Elizabeth's High School for two years; she was an average student; she received a certificate from the two years' Commercial Course; she entered our school from a public grammar school, as a Methodist.

We hear much about the influence of environment. Perhaps Cerine
is an exception. Her mother was not true to her, her father was a drunkard, and the poor grandmother did her best to train her grandchild. The home was always clean but she was forced to live in a frightful neighborhood. Cerine became a Catholic during her second year. Her grandmother died shortly before she finished school, so the poor girl was forced to live alone with her father, a man she feared and did not love.

She became interested in one of the students of the class, a non-Catholic. They were married shortly after graduation. Life has been hard for them, but love seems to soften the poverty. They live in two basement rooms with four babies, the oldest four years and the baby, three weeks. The young father, after obtaining work, was run down by an auto and has been confined to the home for eight months. During his days of sickness, he found time to think of God and the first place he "hobbled" to on his crutches was to church to be baptized.

The young parents show beautiful resignation, the fruit of their good Catholic faith. They are poor, but they are not sitting back and moaning the fact. The young father, cane in one hand and paint brush in the other, was doing his best the other day to make the dingy rooms look cheery. The father is doing the lion's share in bearing the burdens of a young family.

In visiting families like this one, we realize the beauty of the Catholic faith and we are grateful that our school has been able to show them the way.
CASE NO. 11.

Jim attended a Catholic boarding school for two years, becoming a Catholic at the school; graduated from St. Elizabeth's Grammar School after attending one year; attended St. Elizabeth High School, four years, graduating as a "B" student.

He attended Loyola University for one year - owing to financial conditions, he transferred to the University of Illinois where he can earn money serving meals. Each summer he returns to Chicago and works the entire period.

He lives at the Colored fraternity house where he has a splendid opportunity of showing how strong his faith is. The boys play pranks on him and set the alarm at unusual hours on Sunday, but Jim has never missed Mass. Many times he has been tempted on Fridays, but no steak or chicken dinner has made him forget his obligation as a Catholic.

He has never been asked to join the Newman Club, so he contacts no Catholics. He attends Mass at the little church in the town.

His ambition is to get his B. A. degree and no amount of hardships swerves him from obtaining his goal.
CHAPTER V.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The story of St. Elizabeth Parish and the Negro has shown an attempt to adjust a people who have come from rural districts with their Southern manners, habits and traditions to a Northern urban community; to a city where "inferior economic circumstances, inadequate housing, artificial restriction of residential area, difference in application of the public health program, and facilities" make it very difficult to improve their status.

St. Elizabeth's Church is furnishing an educational environment of her Sacraments, "divinely efficacious means of grace" and her schools are supplying a "literary, social, domestic and religious education." She is making every effort to develop strong convictions and sound principles while establishing correct moral habits.

The church and schools have been and are criticized because of their so-called "Jim Crow" attitude. No one, because of color or creed,

39 A Preface to Racial Understanding, p. 10
41 Ibid., p. 63.
has been refused a welcome in the church or in the schools. Our district is almost entirely inhabited by Colored people, hence our congregation is largely of one race except at the noon day Mass on holydays when we find many white worshippers kneeling in harmony beside their darker brothers of the faith. During the sixteen years the high school has been functioning only one white student has sought admission and she was not refused.

Colored students may be admitted in other schools but they are not always welcomed. "The mixed school is the broader, more natural basis for the education of youth - but Sympathy, Knowledge and the Truth outweigh all the mixed school can offer." 42

In the high school are found teachers of both races who have not "made judgments on the basis of their own culture." 43 They are firm believers in the findings or conclusions of Charles Thompson of Howard University, namely:-

1. Doctrine of an inherent mental inferiority of Negro a myth unfounded by the most logical interpretation of the scientific facts on the subject produced to date.

2. That the mental and scholastic achievements of Negro children, as with white children, are in the main a direct function of their environmental and school opportunities rather than a function of some inherent difference in mental ability.

3. That a philosophy of education based upon the current unwarranted interpretations of achievement differences between white and Negro children as due to inherent racial mental inferiority of the Negro is not only

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43 Preface of Racial Understanding, p. 5.
unjust, but a little short of disastrous, especially in view of the many other disabilities the Negro has to undergo in this connection after analyzing tests and survey.44

The school has been criticized because the curriculum does not offer a Home Economics Course. It is claimed few of the students pursue higher education. Many of our students start their college work but failure to continue is a result of financial conditions in almost every case. One look at the August edition of Crisis will show that the Negro is anxious for a college education. According to the Crisis, 3467 Negroes received degrees from higher institutions of learning.45 This number, though large, is not accurate, for the graduates of Xavier University of New Orleans were not listed.

The school recognizes the necessity of a Home Economics Course but financial conditions prevent any course except sewing. When the new high school becomes a reality the course will have due recognition.

The work of St. Elizabeth's cannot be measured by her church and school buildings. It can be measured by her people. Her belief in education is the same as that of Booker T. Washington who says, "Any education is to my mind 'high' that enables the individual to do the very best work for the people by whom he is surrounded. Any education is 'low' which

45 Crisis: 46:1939, pp. 234,38
does not make for character and effective service."  

The work done has been pioneer work and her difficulty has been to educate the people of Chicago who did not know the Negro. "It was necessary to make him actually see that education makes the Negro not an idler or a spendthrift, but a more industrious, thrifty, "law-abiding citizen than he otherwise would be. It has been necessary to make them see that education which did not, directly or indirectly, connect itself with the practial daily interests of daily life could hardly be called education."  

The pioneer work has been successful. The Catholic education has and is having a tremendous and far-reaching influence on the Negro.

\[46\] Lyman Beecher Stowe, Booker T. Washington, Builder of Civilization, p. 66

\[47\] Ibid., pp. 60-66
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The thesis, "St. Elizabeth's Parish and the Negro", written by Sister Mary Robert Dennis, S.B.S., has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form; and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

John W. Scanlan, A.M.  
November 11, 1939

Paul Kiniery, Ph.D.  
October 26, 1939