

**SOCIAL AND MENTAL TRAITS OF THE
NEGRO; RESEARCH INTO THE
CONDITIONS OF THE NEGRO RACE IN
SOUTHERN TOWNS, A STUDY IN RACE
TRAITS, TENDENCIES AND PROSPECTS**

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Social and Mental Traits of the Negro; Research into the Conditions of the Negro Race in Southern Towns, a Study in Race Traits, Tendencies and Prospects by Howard W. Odum

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SOCIAL AND MENTAL TRAITS OF THE NEGRO

Research into the Conditions of the Negro Race in Southern Towns

A STUDY IN RACE TRAITS, TENDENCIES
AND PROSPECTS

BY

HOWARD W. ODUM

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE
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PREFACE

THIS work has three purposes. First, it is an effort to contribute something toward a scientific knowledge of the Negro. It aims to describe the conditions of negro life in Southern communities and to analyze the essential qualities of the race. Second, it is presented, not as a final treatment of the entire subject but as a beginning, along with other special studies,¹ for a scientific but practical study of the Negro in the South. Third, it tries to interpret the Negro Problem and to some extent to suggest means by which the heart of the problem may be reached. It seeks to avoid generalities and to present qualitative, specific, concrete results. The suggestions made look toward the improvement and development of the negro race and to the establishment of relations between the races which shall be permanently satisfactory.

In the prosecution of the investigation assistance has been received with varying degrees of co-operation from many persons throughout the South. Much encouragement has been offered by a large number of those interested in the study of the Negro and in the Southern problem. It is hoped that the results of the study will repay to some extent all those who have assisted in various ways.

¹ See "Religious Folk-songs of the Southern Negroes" by the author in *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, July, 1909, vol. iii, pp. 265-365. It is the purpose of a companion work on *Negro Folk-songs and Folk-thought*, to be published, at an early date by the American Folk-lore Society, to study something of the social psychology and folk-ways of the Southern negroes and to present some aspects of the Negro's mental imagery, style and habits.

Special thanks are due to Professor David H. Bishop of the University of Mississippi and to President W. L. Weber of the Centenary College of Louisiana for valuable suggestions and criticisms, to Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University for important critical suggestions and aids, to President G. Stanley Hall of Clark University for his personal interest, encouragement, and assistance, and to Professor Franklin H. Giddings and Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman of Columbia University for invaluable criticisms, suggestions, and co-operation in making it possible for the work to appear in its present form.

Special acknowledgment is also due Dr. Thomas P. Bailey, Superintendent of the Memphis City Schools, formerly Professor of Psychology and Education in the University of Mississippi, under whose direction the special studies were begun. Throughout the work his suggestions and co-operation have been helpful. The best results of the studies herein presented will be only a meagre testimonial to his discriminating study of the Negro and to his scientific interest and enthusiasm in promoting original research into many important problems.

Perhaps the more natural arrangement of chapters would be in the order: Home Life and Morals, The Negro Offender, Social Status, Fraternal Organizations, Churches and Religion, The Emotions, Education, and The Negro Problem, with a summary of discussions. The plan on which the results are presented in this book, however, is to pass from the more external conditions, through the special religious and social activities of the Negro, to his more private life; then, to proceed from the more general social life and traits to the discussion of the total problem and to the conclusions. In this way it is hoped that each chapter will be carefully correlated with all the other chapters.

H. W. O.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, APRIL 1, 1910.

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