

7-1-1933

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CHILDREN IN BLACK AND MULATTO FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Although the belief in the hereditary inferiority of the mulatto has been slowly dissipated by the accumulation of scientific knowledge, it is still echoed occasionally in scientific studies. In order to determine how far this belief is substantiated or refuted by census data, the writer has analyzed the 1910 and 1920 statistics for children in over 13,000 Negro families for each enumeration in three cities and three rural counties in the South. On the whole, the mulattoes have a smaller proportion of families without children and there is on the average a larger number of children in the mulatto families. Further analysis of the 1910 statistics for the number of children born and living in 10,921 families showed: (1) mulattoes and blacks had about the same proportion of families in which no children were born; (2) on the whole, the mulattoes and blacks in the same community had the same average number of children born; (3) for the entire group a larger proportion of black families had one or more children dead; (4) the blacks had lost on the average a larger number of children; (5) the mulattoes had about 7 per cent more of all their children living than the blacks. Differences in the socio-economic status of these two groups as reflected in literacy and home-ownership seemed to point to cultural rather than biological causes for the differences between them.

In 1860 a physician who contributed monthly articles on the Negro to the *American Cotton Planter* gave considerable space in the December issue to a comparison of the physical qualities of pure Negroes and mulattoes. From that article, which was presumably supported by the best contemporary scientific opinion, we cite the following observations.

. . . mulattoes are generally much shorter lived than negroes of unmixed blood. The pure African, when judiciously managed, has a reasonable prospect of reaching his three score and ten; and instances of much greater longevity abound. Not so with mulattoes; from want of congeniality in the mixture of white and black blood, or from some unexplained, and perhaps inexplicable cause, they die early as a general rule. . . . Dr. Cartwright and other learned men might say "the offspring is a *tirtium quid*, unlike either father or mother, and incapable of perpetuating its existence beyond a few generations." We think it would be much better to say at once, it is so, because God made it so; and that he made it so because it was not pleasing to him that the fruits of such an unnatural and unholy commerce should remain long on the earth. But whatever the explanation, there can be but little doubt of the *fact* for it seems to be established by the concurrent testimony of numerous observers. . . .

Prof. Dugas, of the Medical College of Georgia . . . forcibly taught in his lectures that mulattoes are short lived; . . . The testimony of Dr. Merrill, of Memphis, is . . . that the amalgamation alluded to, exercises important physi-

ological and pathological influences, one of the tendencies of which is, to impair the energies of the vital forces, predispose to a dynamic (low, typhoid) diseases, and to shorten life. These conditions, it is natural to suppose, must have a tendency, also, to the impairment of the procreative powers, and thus to retard increase; while the congenital debility and disordered innervation resulting, give rise to a still greater sacrifice of infant life, than with the full-blooded negro . . . if active, intelligent, house-servants are a prime consideration, and if planters have sufficient means to consult pleasure and convenience before interest, it may do to rest in this mongrel race; but if stout hearty, durable, long lived slaves are wanted, and if pecuniary interest is a permanent consideration, the pure African should be chosen in preference to the mulatto; and *the blacker the better*. The jet black, shiny, unadulterated, greasy-skinned, *strong-smelling* negro is the best every way, after he has been in the country long enough to undergo proper training, and to get rid of some of his native, African notions.¹

Although the writer was fearful at the time that "the truth that mulattoes are short lived is not as extensively known, and as firmly established in the minds of the southern people as it should be," during the following half-century the beliefs expressed in his article not only became the foundation of popular opinions concerning the mulatto but characterized supposedly scientific studies. In 1896 Hoffman, who concluded that mulattoes were "physically the inferior of the white and pure black," based his opinion largely on the testimony of physicians who examined recruits during the Civil War. The following is a typical testimony: "Although I have known some muscular and healthy mulattoes, I am convinced that, as a general rule, any considerable admixture of white blood deteriorates the physique and impairs the powers of endurance, and almost always introduces a scrofulous taint."²

The small lung-capacity of the mulatto, according to Hoffman, was responsible for the low vital capacity of the mixed blood and was "without question the most serious fact affecting the longevity of the mixed races, and one which explains the lower vitality and less resistance to disease than is found in the negro of pure blood."³

¹ Jno. Stainback Wilson, M.D., "The Peculiarities and Diseases of Negroes." Dr. Cloud's Southern Rural Magazine, *The American Cotton Planter and Soil of the South* (Montgomery, Ala., 1860), pp. 558-60.

² Quoted in Frederick L. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, Publications of the American Economic Association, XI, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (New York, 1896), 182.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

Some years later Tillinghast, after an examination of extant materials on the physical qualities of the mulatto, concluded that "the Negro-Teutonic hybrid is more or less degenerate in physical vigor and fertility."⁴ One source of his conclusions was the opinion of Broca that mulattoes issuing from primary crossings between the Anglo-Saxon race and African Negroes were inferior in fecundity and longevity to individuals of the pure race. Moreover, Broca thought that it was doubtful "whether these mulattoes, in their alliances between themselves, are capable of indefinitely perpetuating their race;" and "that they are less prolific in their direct alliances than in their recrossing with parent stocks."⁵ Tillinghast also found what he regarded as scientific authority for his conclusions in the opinion of J. C. Nott, a southern physician, that "mulatto women are delicate, distinctly infertile, and have weak children; that when mulattoes went to marry they were less prolific than when crossed with either pure race."⁶

Boas' statement in 1909 that "notwithstanding the oft-repeated assertions regarding the hereditary inferiority of the mulatto, we know hardly anything on the subject,"⁷ was an appraisal of the opinions which we have traced as well as an indication of a new critical attitude toward the question. Two years later this attitude was expressed in a paper by Finch who reviewed the situation of mixed populations in various parts of the earth, and used the significant increase from 1870 to 1890 in the percentage of mulattoes in the United States as evidence of the fertility of the mulatto.⁸ Not long ago Dunn summed up the situation in regard to our knowledge of hybrids as follows:

With regard to fecundity, the evidence is fragmentary and difficult of interpretation. There is a lack of good biological evidence on human fecundity in general, in the absence of which it is impossible to say how much of the often-noted differences in this respect between races and their hybrids rest on a biological basis and how much is due to economic and social causes. The birth-rate itself is an expression of the interaction of these several factors and of another

⁴ J. A. Tillinghast, *The Negro in Africa and America* (New York, 1902), p. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶ Quoted in Tillinghast, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁷ Franz Boas, "Race Problems in America," *Science* (N.S.), XXIX (1909), 848; quoted in *Anthropology* by A. C. Haddon (London, n.d.), p. 69.

⁸ Earl Finch, "The Effects of Racial Miscegenation" in *Papers in Interracial Problems* (edited by G. Spiller) (London, 1911), p. 110.

item by no means negligible, i.e., the amount of mortality among the unborn offspring. The last may be somewhat lower in mixed than in pure matings. Little, for example, found a greater proportion of still births from intraracial or intranational matings than from matings of different race or nationality. There is some evidence from animals which shows that crossing tends to prevent the expression of factors having an adverse effect on embryonic development, while pure matings allow greater scope for the combination and expression of such factors. In regard to fecundity itself, or the number of potential offspring produced in the absence of social and economic checks, we can draw no conclusions. A lowered gross fecundity has not been established for cross-matings, and the hybrid groups considered are experiencing no difficulty from biological causes in reproducing and increasing in number.⁹

But in spite of the more critical attitude generally toward the question of the character of the human hybrid, it seems that the belief in the hereditary inferiority of the mulatto still persists; for we find as recently as 1929 that Gini attributes the low nuptial fecundity of the American Negro to his mixed blood.¹⁰ In this paper we shall present the results of an attempt to determine what light could be shed on the full-blooded Negro and mulatto by an analysis of the 1920 and 1910 census data on Negro and mulatto families in selected urban and rural communities in the South.¹¹

Perhaps something should be said about the selection of these communities, which were chosen originally for a study of the Negro family against a variety of economic and social backgrounds in the

⁹ L. C. Dunn, "A Biological View of Race Mixture," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, XIX (1925), 54.

¹⁰ Corrado Gini, "The Birth and Revival of Nations," *Population* ("Lectures on the Harris Foundation, 1929" [Chicago, 1930]). In accounting for the low nuptial fecundity of the American Negro, Gini writes: "When we remember that most American Negroes are really of mixed blood (only 22 per cent are pure-blooded, according to the researches of Hershkovits, *The American Negro*, p. 9), we may conclude that there is some truth in the impressions of those who declare that the unions of Negroes with Whites are not very fertile." Notes, pp. 134-35.

¹¹ The writer is not unconscious of the criticism which can be brought against the use of the census classification of blacks and mulattoes as an index to the extent of mixed bloods among the Negroes. At the census of 1910 the term "black" included all persons who were "evidently full-blooded Negroes," while the term "mulatto" included "all other persons having some proportion or perceptible trace of Negro blood" (*Negro Population, 1790-1915*, p. 207). The same definition of mulattoes and of full-blooded Negroes was used in 1920. While the census bureau admits the uncertainty of the classification since the distinction "depends largely upon the judgment and care employed by the enumerators," the classification probably contains on the whole as much accuracy as one could obtain.

South. Charleston, South Carolina, and Birmingham, Alabama, both in the Black Belt, offer not only the contrast between a seaport and an inland city, but more especially the contrast between a relatively stationary Negro population with a long history of urban experience and one that has grown by leaps and bounds through migration from the surrounding rural area to a rapidly growing industrial center. From 1890 to 1920 the Negro population of Charleston remained close to 30,000, while Birmingham's Negro population grew from 11,269 in 1890 to 70,230 in 1920. The increase from 16,575 in 1900 to 52,305 in 1910 amounted to 215 per cent. The Negro population of the city of Nashville, Tennessee, which stands on the edge of the Black Belt and has no heavy industry to attract Negroes in large numbers from the rural areas, was about the same as Charleston for 1890 and 1900 but increased to 36,523 in 1910. During the following decade there was a slight decrease, probably due to the northward migrations, so that in 1920 the Negro population numbered 35,633.

The three counties which were also selected for study—Hertford County, North Carolina; Macon County, Alabama; and Issaquena County, Mississippi—offer contrasts in rural areas equally striking as those in the three cities. Hertford County, located in the northeastern part of the state of North Carolina, is, on the whole, outside of the area of the plantation and cotton culture. In 1910 about one-third of the Negro farmers, who constituted about 60 per cent of the entire population, were owners. According to the same census, around 40 per cent of them were mulattoes and less than a third were illiterate. On the other hand, the Negro farmers in the counties in Alabama and Mississippi were working under the plantation system. In Macon County the majority, or about 90 per cent, of the Negro farmers, who constituted about five-sixths of the population, were tenants. The Negroes in Issaquena County constituted a larger percentage—about 95 per cent—of the total population. The illiteracy of the Negroes in both of these counties in 1910 was about 43 per cent, or 13 per cent higher than in Hertford County. Moreover, only one-eighth of the Negroes in Macon County and about a tenth of those in Issaquena County were classified as mulattoes.

We shall begin our analysis with a comparison of the number of children present in Negro and mulatto families when the enumera-

tions were made in 1910 and 1920.¹² But let us note first the striking differences between these families (Table I) in respect to the proportion of families in which no children were present. In all three cities at both enumerations, except Birmingham in 1920, there was a significantly larger proportion of black families than mulatto families in which there were no children.¹³ The differences in the proportion of childless families in these two types of families range from 5.4 per cent in Charleston in 1920 to 14.0 per cent in the same city for 1910. The mixed families, i.e., those families in which the husband and wife were of different color, showed on the whole a smaller proportion of childless families than the black families; but the number of mixed families was probably too small for comparison except in Birmingham where the proportion of families without children was comparatively small for the families in which the husband was black and the wife mulatto.¹⁴

¹² The families used in our analysis were taken from the original census returns. They were not the "families" or households as defined by the census, but included the following types of relationships: (1) a married couple and their own, adopted, and step-children, if any; (2) a married person whose spouse is not living at home, and the children of that person, if any; (3) a widowed or divorced person and the children, if any; (4) a single man and woman who, from the information in the "relation to the head of the house" column, or from other information on the schedule, appear to be living as man and wife; (5) a single girl who has an illegitimate child where this was clear. These families have been classified according to the four combinations of Negro and mulatto men and women in the marriage relation.

¹³ These families were selected at random from enumeration districts in all sections of these cities and show approximately the same proportion of blacks and mulattoes as the entire Negro population in each of these three cities. The proportion of mixed blooded Negroes given in the census is much smaller than the estimate made by Dr. Herskovits. (See *The American Negro*, New York, 1928, p. 10.) However, it should be remembered that Dr. Herskovits' study was based largely on selected groups of Negroes in which mulattoes were relatively numerous. As we consider the areas which have been selected for the comparison of black and mulatto families, we find that the proportion of these two elements in the Negro population given in the census confirms what we know of the relative isolation of the Negro in these areas. First-hand observation of Negroes in two counties—one in North Carolina and the other in Alabama—forces one to accept the proportion of mulattoes and blacks given in the census as a closer approximation to the facts than Dr. Herskovits' estimate.

¹⁴ The proportion of mixed families—where husband and wife are of different color—as shown by these census figures confirms what we know of intermarriage between these two elements in the Negro population, namely, the tendency for a considerably larger proportion of black men to marry mulatto women than for mulatto men to marry black women. (See E. B. Reuter, "The Superiority of the Mulatto," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXIII, 103-5.)

TABLE I
 PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN NEGRO FAMILIES
 CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE COLOR OF THE PARENTS, IN THREE SOUTHERN CITIES: 1910 AND 1920

COLOR OF HUSBAND AND WIFE	1920				1910			
	Total Number of Families	Percentage of Families without Children	Average Number of Children		Total Number of Families	Percentage of Families without Children	Average Number of Children	
			All Families	Families with Children			All Families	Families with Children
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE								
Husband Black, Wife Black	1031	56.8	0.8	1.9	1150	49.6	1.0	2.0
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	65	52.3	1.0	2.1	94	40.4	1.4	2.3
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	10	70.0	0.8	2.6	37	29.7	1.3	1.8
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	503	45.1	1.1	2.2	345	41.1	1.2	2.1
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA								
Husband Black, Wife Black	3864	50.2	1.0	2.1	3575	48.3	1.1	2.1
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	259	47.5	1.0	1.9	259	45.5	1.2	2.3
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	73	45.2	1.3	2.5	73	52.0	0.8	1.8
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	869	51.5	1.0	2.1	353	38.5	1.5	2.4
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA								
Husband Black, Wife Black	1398	50.4	1.0	2.0	1368	47.6	1.0	2.0
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	18	38.8	1.1	1.9	39	36.0	1.4	2.1
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	13	38.4	1.4	2.2	17	17.6	2.3	2.8
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	250	36.4	1.5	2.4	303	42.2	1.3	2.3

When we consider the average number of children in these families we find the advantage to be on the side of the mulatto families. For example, in Charleston in 1920, there was on the average in the mulatto families one-half a child more than in the black families. Or if we take into account only those families in which children were actually present the mulatto families had on the average four-tenths of a child more than the black families. In this same city the difference in 1910 for families with children was three-tenths of a child in favor of the mulatto families. The other two cities, with the exception of Birmingham in 1920, also showed variations for both census enumerations in favor of the mulattoes.

The black and mulatto families in the three counties (Table II) show, on the whole, the same differences which are observable for the three cities.¹⁵ We find for both enumerations, with the exception of Macon County in 1920 and Hertford County in 1910, a smaller proportion of families without children among the mulatto families than among the blacks, and the average number of children higher, with the exception of Macon County in 1920, in the mulatto families.

So far our comparison of these families in the six communities indicates that, for both census enumerations, the mulattoes with few exceptions had a smaller proportion of families without children and a larger average number of children in their families. Our figures, of course, give no clue to the comparative fecundity of these families nor the survival rates of their children. The small differences in the average number of children in the mulatto and black families could have been due to chance, although this fact considered along with the significantly larger proportion of families without children among the blacks may indicate fewer broken families among the mulattoes. In both the case of Birmingham and Macon County, Alabama, in 1920, where the differences which were observable in 1910 have disappeared, the migrations during the war period may have operated to wipe out these differences.

Let us now see what these families show in respect to the number

¹⁵ Our comparison of the mulatto and black families in the three counties is based upon approximately 100 families from each of the ten precincts in Macon County and practically all the Negro families in Issaquena County and Hertford County.

TABLE II
 PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN NEGRO FAMILIES,
 CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE COLOR OF THE PARENTS, IN THREE SOUTHERN COUNTIES: 1910 AND 1920

COLOR OF HUSBAND AND WIFE	1920				1910			
	Total Number of Families	Percentage of Families without Children	Average Number of Children		Total Number of Families	Percentage of Families without Children	Average Number of Children	
			All Families	Families with Children			All Families	Families with Children
HERTFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA								
Husband Black, Wife Black	1220	19.0	2.7	3.3	1049	18.2	2.8	3.4
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	174	14.3	3.1	3.6	131	16.0	2.8	3.8
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	50	10.0	2.9	3.2	44	22.7	3.2	3.6
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	622	15.9	2.9	3.6	657	20.1	2.9	3.6
MACON COUNTY, ALABAMA								
Husband Black, Wife Black	900	31.7	2.1	3.1	890	29.1	2.2	3.7
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	37	13.5	2.3	2.5	47	14.9	3.1	3.6
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	39	25.6	2.3	3.1	40	22.5	3.1	3.9
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	64	34.3	2.0	3.0	63	17.5	2.9	3.6
ISSAQUENA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI								
Husband Black, Wife Black	1893	48.8	1.3	2.6	2504	45.1	1.4	2.6
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	48	50.0	1.4	2.9	135	37.0	1.7	2.7
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	47	38.3	1.6	2.6	91	38.4	1.6	2.7
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	46	34.8	1.9	2.9	196	42.3	1.6	2.8

of children born and living according to the 1910 enumeration.¹⁶ We note, first, that for the three cities (Table III) the percentage of families in which no children were born was practically the same for the black and the mulatto families in each city. Moreover, the black and mulatto families show no differences in the average number of children born, except in Birmingham where the black families had given birth to three-tenths of a child less than the mulatto families. Although in most instances the number of families in which the husband and wife were of different color was probably too small for comparison, they show on the whole a larger proportion of families with no children born than the families in which husband and wife were of the same color. Except in Birmingham the average number of children born in these families was higher for those families in which the husband was mulatto and the wife black than for the families in which the color of the parents was the reverse.

Significant differences between the black and mulatto families appear when we compare them in respect to the percentage of their children surviving. In Charleston and Birmingham, where the average number of children dead for the families which have lost children is the same, the proportion of families losing children is higher—8.5 per cent in Charleston and 6.4 per cent in Birmingham—for the black families. On the other hand, in Nashville, where both types of families have about the same proportion with children dead, the black families have lost on the average one child more than the mulatto families. The cumulative effect of these differences appears in the percentage of all children living in these families. (See Chart I.) In all three cities a larger percentage of the children born in the mulatto families are living. These differences range from 5.9 per cent in Charleston to 7.4 per cent in Birmingham. Moreover, the effect of the differences in the survival rates of children in these two types of families is shown in the average number of children living. On the basis of either the families that had children born or only those that had children living, the mulatto families in each of the three cities had living at least three-tenths of a child more than the black families.

¹⁶ The number of families used in this comparison is necessarily smaller than in the first comparison since the information on the number of children born and living was omitted in some families.

TABLE III
BIRTH AND SURVIVAL RATES OF CHILDREN IN NEGRO FAMILIES, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE COLOR OF THE PARENTS, IN THREE SOUTHERN CITIES IN 1910

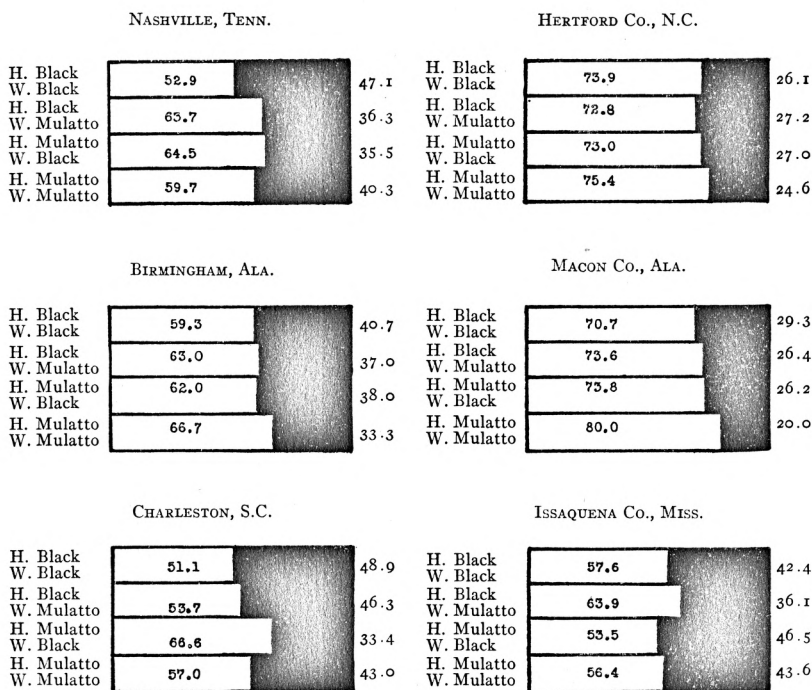
COLOR OF HUSBAND AND WIFE	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH NO CHILDREN BORN	AVERAGE NUMBER CHILDREN BORN		PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN BORN LOSING ONE OR MORE CHILDREN	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN DEAD WITH CHILDREN	PERCENT-AGE OF ALL CHILDREN LIVING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING		
			All Families	Families with Children Born				All Families	Families with Children Born	Families with Children Living
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE										
Husband Black, Wife Black	951	20.8	3.3	4.1	57.1	3.9	52.9	1.7	2.2	2.5
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	90	27.7	2.6	3.5	55.3	2.3	63.7	1.6	2.3	2.4
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	37	25.9	3.3	4.5	60.6	2.4	64.5	2.1	2.9	3.2
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	296	20.2	3.3	4.2	58.0	2.9	59.7	2.0	2.5	2.8
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA										
Husband Black, Wife Black	2965	23.5	2.9	3.9	57.4	2.7	59.3	1.7	2.3	2.6
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	249	34.1	2.4	3.6	61.0	2.2	63.0	1.5	2.3	2.7
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	71	32.3	2.0	3.0	52.1	2.2	62.0	1.2	1.8	2.1
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	399	22.6	3.2	4.2	51.0	2.7	66.7	2.1	2.8	3.0
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA										
Husband Black, Wife Black	1028	18.3	3.4	4.3	63.9	3.3	51.1	1.8	2.1	2.4
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	33	6.0	3.6	3.9	61.3	2.9	53.7	1.9	2.1	2.2
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	16	18.8	3.9	4.8	61.6	2.4	66.6	2.6	3.2	3.2
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	238	18.8	3.4	4.2	55.4	3.3	57.0	1.9	2.4	2.7

Somewhat similar differences between the black and mulatto families in the three counties (Table IV) appear when they are compared in respect to children born and living. In the two Black Belt

CHART I

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN LIVING AND DEAD IN 10,921 NEGRO FAMILIES, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE COLOR OF THE PARENTS, IN THREE CITIES AND THREE RURAL COUNTIES IN THE SOUTH: 1910

□ Living ■ Dead H=Husband W=Wife



counties the percentage of families with no children born was slightly smaller for the mulattoes than for the blacks, while in the North Carolina county the reverse was true. Likewise, the mulatto families in the Black Belt counties unlike those in Hertford County show a higher number of children born on the average—about one-half a child—than the black families. Although the black and mulatto

TABLE IV
 BIRTH AND SURVIVAL RATES OF CHILDREN IN NEGRO FAMILIES, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE COLOR OF THE PARENTS, IN THREE SOUTHERN RURAL COUNTIES IN 1910

COLOR OF HUSBAND AND WIFE	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH NO CHILDREN BORN	AVERAGE NUMBER CHILDREN BORN		PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN BORN LOSING ONE OR MORE CHILDREN	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN DEAD PER FAMILY WITH CHILDREN DEAD	PERCENT-AGE OF ALL CHILDREN LIVING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING		
			All Families	Families with Children Born				All Families	Families with Children Born	Families with Children Living
HERTFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA										
Husband Black, Wife Black	829	6.0	5.3	5.6	54.8	2.7	73.9	3.9	4.1	4.3
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	123	8.1	5.1	5.5	59.3	2.7	72.8	3.6	3.9	4.0
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	41	12.2	5.1	5.8	61.1	2.6	73.0	3.7	4.3	4.6
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	577	7.8	5.1	5.5	55.8	2.4	75.4	3.9	4.2	4.3
MACON COUNTY, GEORGIA										
Husband Black, Wife Black	603	6.9	4.9	5.2	56.1	2.7	70.7	3.4	3.6	3.9
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	40	7.5	5.4	5.8	62.1	2.5	73.6	4.0	4.3	4.5
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	32	9.3	5.5	6.0	62.0	2.5	73.8	4.0	4.5	4.0
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	51	5.9	5.4	5.7	54.1	2.2	80.0	4.3	4.6	4.7
ISSAQUENA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI										
Husband Black, Wife Black	1882	15.2	3.7	4.6	66.2	3.4	57.6	2.6	3.0	3.4
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto	121	19.8	3.7	4.6	74.9	1.8	63.9	2.3	2.9	3.4
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black	83	21.7	4.4	5.6	80.7	2.5	53.5	2.3	3.0	3.4
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto	106	13.8	4.5	5.2	66.4	3.4	56.4	2.5	3.0	3.2

families did not show any marked difference in respect to the proportion that had lost children in Hertford County and Macon County, the blacks had lost on the average—three-tenths of a child in the first county and five-tenths of a child in the second—more than the mulatto families. The effects (see Chart I) of these differential survival rates of children are shown in the percentage of all children living. Whereas in Issaquena County there was a slightly higher proportion of the children of the blacks living, this was more than compensated for by the higher survival rate of the children of mulattoes in the other two counties.

In Table V we have a composite picture of each of the four types of families in the six communities. In this composite picture the differences which we have noted for the individual areas become better defined. It appears that while the black families have only a slightly larger proportion of families in which no children were born than the mulattoes, the families in which the husband and wife are of different complexion have a significantly greater proportion of childless families than either of the other two types of families. The mulatto families have had born on the average a larger number of children—about one-fourth of a child—than the blacks,¹⁷ and have a smaller proportion of families with children dead. In addition, the mulatto families which have lost children have a smaller number dead on the average than the same families among the blacks. Consequently, we find a higher survival rate of children, amounting to 7.1 per cent, for the children of the mulattoes. This higher survival rate among the children of the mulattoes is equivalent to about one-half a child on the average for families that have had children born, and slightly less than one-half a child if we take into account only the families with children living.

Although it is not our purpose to undertake to explain the differences, which our analysis has revealed, between the black and mulatto families, it should be pointed out that in two respects at least the mulatto families were of superior socio-economic status. In the first instance the mulattoes in all the six communities, as is true

¹⁷ This might have been due to the fact that mulatto women had been married longer on the average than the black women. In Birmingham the mulatto women in each five years age group had been married longer than the black women.

TABLE V
SUMMARY OF BIRTH AND SURVIVAL RATES OF CHILDREN IN 10,921 NEGRO FAMILIES IN SIX SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES IN 1910

COLOR OF HUSBAND AND WIFE	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH NO CHILDREN BORN	AVERAGE NUMBER CHILDREN BORN		PERCENT-AGE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN BORN LOSING ONE OR MORE CHILDREN	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN DEAD PER FAMILY WITH CHILDREN DEAD	PERCENT-AGE OF ALL CHILDREN LIVING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING		
			All Families	Families with Children Born				All Families	Families with Children Born	Families with Children Living
Husband Black, Wife Black.....	8348	17.6	3.81	4.62	59.6	3.05	60.6	2.30	2.80	3.12
Husband Black, Wife Mulatto.....	656	22.7	3.43	4.43	66.2	2.27	66.0	2.26	2.93	3.28
Husband Mulatto, Wife Black.....	280	22.1	3.86	4.96	72.4	2.48	63.8	2.46	3.17	3.49
Husband Mulatto, Wife Mulatto.....	1637	15.0	4.16	4.89	56.3	2.81	67.7	2.81	3.31	3.55
Total.....	10,921	17.6	3.84	4.66	59.8	2.95	62.1	2.38	2.89	3.21

for the country as a whole, have a lower illiteracy rate than the blacks.¹⁸ For example, in 1910 in Macon County both parents were illiterate in 39.2 per cent of the black families as compared with 23.4 per cent of the mulatto families. For the same census in Hertford County 35.3 per cent of the black families and 24.4 per cent of the mulatto families had both parents illiterate. The same was true in the cities. In 1910 in Birmingham 24.2 per cent of the black families had both parents illiterate, while among the mulattoes in only 16.4 per cent of the families were both parents unable to read and write. Moreover, we find differences in the rates of home ownership for the black and mulatto families which indicate more stable family life among the mulattoes.¹⁹ In Nashville, for example, our figures show that 7.5 per cent of the black families at both censuses owned homes, while the home owners among the mulatto families increased from 17.4 per cent in 1910 to 19.3 per cent in 1920. In Birmingham the differences between the blacks and mulattoes were much smaller, while in Charleston the disparity between them was most pronounced. For 1910 and 1920 home ownership among the black families in Charleston was 2.2 per cent and 5.8 per cent, respectively, while among the mulatto families it amounted to 7.5 per cent and 24.4 per cent. In the counties we can observe the same differences. In Issaquena County in 1910 where there was scarcely any difference between the two types of families with respect to the survival rate of children, home ownership for the mulattoes and blacks was only 8.1 and 5.4 per cent, respectively. While both black and mulatto families in Hertford County had a comparatively high proportion of home owners, here too the advantage was on the side of the mulattoes. Our figures for this county in 1910 show that 23.5 per cent of black and 37.6 per cent of the mulatto families were home owners. Finally, it should be noted that the families in which the husband and wife were of different color had a relatively high rate of ownership in conjunction with the high survival rate of children shown in our analysis.

¹⁸ *Negro Population: 1790-1915* (Washington, 1918), p. 217.

¹⁹ See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Chicago, 1932), pp. 100, 127, where literacy and home-ownership rates within the city varied with the proportion of mulattoes in the Negro population.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Our analysis of 1910 and 1920 census data for over thirteen thousand Negro families in three cities and three rural counties in the South has shown first that, with three exceptions, for both enumerations there was a significantly smaller proportion of mulatto families without children than black families; and with two exceptions included in the three referred to, the average number of children present in the mulatto families was higher than in the black families. Further analysis of the 1910 data on the number of children born and living in 10,921 of these families showed that in each community the blacks and mulattoes had practically the same proportion of families with no children born. Moreover, with the exception of the Black Belt counties and Birmingham the average number of children born was the same for the black and mulatto families. But in regard to the survival of children differences between these families were found to be as follows: where the mulattoes and blacks had the same proportion of families with children dead, the mulatto families had lost on an average fewer children; but where the mulattoes had a smaller proportion of families with children dead, both types of families had lost on the average the same number of children. As the result of these differences, the percentage of the total children surviving was higher for the mulatto families in each community except the Mississippi county. These differences in the survival rates of children was reflected in the higher number of children on the average in the mulatto families.

Although one might question the accuracy of the census classification as an index to the proportion of mixed bloods in the Negro population, the group classified as mulattoes is undoubtedly of mixed blood. This group from our analysis is differentiated from the group supposedly of unmixed blood. Although our data do not warrant generalizations concerning the whole Negro population, much less speculation on the causes of the differences and absence of differences between the black and mulatto families in particular communities, we cannot forego pointing out certain economic and social factors which have a bearing on these differences. In Issaquena County, Mississippi, where there was practically no difference in the survival rate of black and mulatto children, the black and

mulatto families were on nearly the same economic and social level. Moreover, the population in this county dwindled between 1890 and 1900 and remained almost stationary during the next decade. It is probable that many mulattoes, more especially the thrifty and ambitious, migrated. On the other hand, in Hertford County where the blacks show a relatively high rate of home ownership and approach the social and economic level of the mulattoes, their children show a higher survival rate than the blacks in Mississippi and Alabama and come close to that of the mulattoes. In the case of both Birmingham and Macon County, Alabama, where the differences which were apparent in 1910 did not appear in 1920, the migrations into the city as well as those to the North during the war might have effaced the differences between the two groups. Likewise, although our analysis might lead some to a conclusion directly opposite to that generally held—that mixed-bloods have a lower survival rate than pure-bloods—at least two socio-economic differences between the blacks and mulattoes indicate that cultural rather than biological factors are responsible for the higher survival rate of mulatto children. Both in respect to literacy and home ownership, which may be taken as an index of more stable family life, the advantage was found to be on the side of the mulattoes.

Finally, so far as our statistics afford an answer, the higher proportion of children which has been observed in the mulatto population seems to be due not to a higher birth-rate or other causes, but more especially to the higher survival rate of mulatto children.²⁰

²⁰ In commenting upon the higher proportion of children in the mulatto population, the census states: "While the higher proportion of children in the mulatto population might result from a higher birth rate in this element, as compared with the black element, or from a higher mortality in the adult population among mulattoes, as compared with blacks, the more probable explanation is to be found in the mixed marriages of mulattoes with blacks. The children of such marriages will in a majority of cases be classified as mulattoes, although only one-half of the parents are in this class. In other words, to the extent that blacks marry mulattoes they are in a majority of cases estopped from any natural increase whatever since their children are credited to the mulatto element." *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*, Washington, D.C., 1918, p. 213.