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ARE THERE TOO MANY
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By Bill Veeck

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VOL. XV NO. 10

EBONY

AUGUST, 1960

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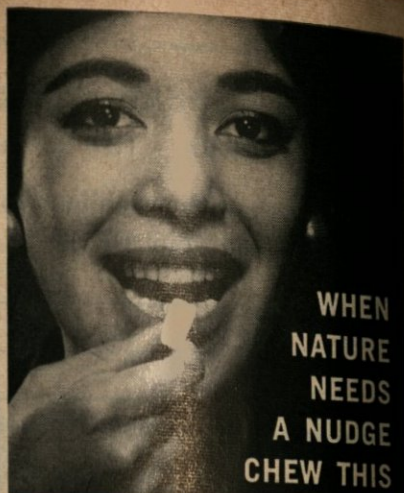
The Summit Meeting of the entertainment world, a somewhat historical event in itself, has been held in such plush settings as Las Vegas and Miami Beach, and will be repeated to an extent in the upcoming film *Ocean's Eleven*, released this summer by Warner Bros. The easily-recognized summiteers: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop. Their nightclub shows were, in the words of both summit leader Sinatra and the crowds that saw them, "a gas." For more on "The Summit" see page 59. Photo by Warner Bros.



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Dr. Angella Ferguson is a scientist.



Gwendolyn Williams is a housewife.



Romae L. Turner is married professional.

NEGRO WOMAN

Crumbling matriarchate poses new problems

By LERONE BENNETT JR.

"ONE IS not born a woman," Novelist Simone de Beauvoir has said. "One becomes it . . . by ensemble of civilization."

The ensemble of American civilization and its peculiar racial problem have produced in the Negro woman a unique work of art. Her physical attributes have been praised in Hollywood, on Madison Avenue and at the Cannes Beauty Festival. Her independence, her verve and her vitality have been detailed by sociologists and anthropologists. What distinguishes the Negro woman, however, is her spirit, which stems from a long tradition of female dominance.

This tradition, which influences every Negro female, grew out of the slave social system which devaluated the role of the Negro male. Negro women, as a result, have been as free, powerful and expressive vis-à-vis their men as any group of women in history. On the slave plantations, they ruled their cabins, their children and sometimes their men. "In fact," writes Professor Maurice R. Davie (*Negroes In American Society*), "so dependent upon the women were the men of the plantation that they regarded freedom from female domination as one of the gains from emancipation."

Unfortunately for the self-esteem of Negro males, female domination of the family continued after Emancipation. A rare combination of social and economic factors conspired to prevent Negro males from playing normal masculine roles. E. Franklin Frazier, the authority on the Negro family, has said: "Neither economic necessity nor tradition has instilled in her (the Negro woman) the spirit of subordination to masculine authority. Emancipation only tended to confirm in many cases the spirit of self-sufficiency which slavery had taught . . ."

In view of these facts, it is not surprising that Negro women played a crucial role in the fight for freedom. Harriet Tubman slipped into the South 19 times and led out 300 slaves. During the Civil War, she shouldered a rifle for 30 months as a scout for the Union Army. Ida B. Wells kept her newspaper free by walking the streets of Memphis, Tenn., in the 1890s with two pistols on her hips. Within recent years, this militant tradition has been carried on by Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, Rosa Parks, Daisy Bates and Diane Nash.

The female who becomes a Negro woman today inherits the problems and the possibilities inherent in a tradition of independence and self-reliance. The possibilities, as detailed by playwright Lorraine



Bachelor girl, Norma Lewis, hangs picture in New York apartment. She is social worker.



Tradition of strong women is symbolized in this powerful painting by Negro artist Charles White. Painting now hangs in apartment of Harry Belafonte.



This Complex Of Womanhood

Lorraine Hansberry
Playwright

THE African woman who first reached the shores of the New World in the 17th century was already part and parcel of the fabric of history. She was descended from women who had birthed some of the great militarists of antiquity and from whose number had come some of the most famous queens to sit upon the thrones of ancient Egypt and Ethiopia. Her exploits and beauty were remembered by Semitic writers and fused into Greek mythology.

But for three centuries in the New World she was to cut cane, pick coffee and chop cotton in the fields of the Indies and the plantations of Brazil and the United States. For three centuries she was to endure and wrestle against the fiercest oppression of modern history. For three centuries she moved in stealth beside and, sometimes, in advance of black men who wrought havoc against the slave system with musket, machete and petition. For three centuries she was the special victim of the lust of brutes. For three centuries she stood, poised against the landscape of the Americas, dark madonna with child, welding together family, tradition, culture and giving to a whole people a sense of survival.

That is the barbarity and nobility of a history which has resulted in a modern product which is regarded today with two grossly differing viewpoints—both romantic. On the one hand the Negro poet has created the image of a figure of supreme tenderness and humanity and dignity; a splendid rock-like foundation of a people. She is saluted as a monument of endurance and fortitude, in whose bosom all comforts reside. And, at the same time, another legend of the Negro woman describes the most over-conversational, uncooperative, overbearing, humiliating, deprecating creature ever placed on earth to plague the existence of the male. She is seen as an over-practical, unreasonable source of the destruction of all vision and totally lacking a sense of the proper "place" of womanhood.

Either image taken alone is romance; put together they embrace some truths and present the complex of womanhood which now thrusts forth professors; political leaders; jurists; trade unionists; chemists; athletes; Pulitzer prize winners; dramatists; novelists; actresses; entertainers and some of the world's most famous beauties.

And it is this complex of womanhood which now awakens, with varying degrees of consciousness thus far, to find itself inextricably and joyously bound to the world's most insurgent elements: the peoples of Africa and Asia. For bound we are, by color, history and lingering oppression, to braceleted and graceful Kikuyu women advancing in anger on a compound (read *concentration-camp*, British style) somewhere in Kenya where African men are imprisoned for activity in behalf of freedom. At the same time, in the United States, a seamstress refuses one day, simply refuses, to move from her chosen place on a bus while an equally remarkable sister of hers ushers children past bayonets in Little Rock.

It is indeed a single march, a unified destiny, and the prize is the future. In the ascent we shall want and need to lose some of the features of our collective personality for which we are justly ill famed; but it is also to be hoped that we shall cling just as desperately to certain others for which we are not less harshly criticized. For above all, in behalf of an ailing world which sorely needs our defiance, may we, as Negroes or *women*, never accept the notion of—"our place."

New Role Of The Negro Woman

Dr. E. Franklin Frazier
Author-Sociologist



THE Negro woman in the United States has always played an important role both in race relations and in the social organization of Negro life in general. One might almost say that the Negro woman has occupied a strategic position from the standpoint of race relations. During the period of slavery the biological tie between the Negro mother and her offspring was the only human relationship among the slaves that could not be disregarded altogether. Moreover, despite the guilt-ridden Puritan conscience of the white males, they were attracted to the Negro females and created a race of mixed-bloods who provided a channel of acculturation if not the basis of moral solidarity between the two races. Then, from the standpoint of the Negro's revolt against slavery, the Negro woman was a conspicuous figure in the Underground Railroad.

After Emancipation when the whole social fabric of life crumbled and the very economic basis of Negro existence was destroyed, it was the Negro woman, often alone with her children but always aiding her husband when there was one, who made the survival of the Negro possible. Even when the Negro men began to assert themselves for a brief period in politics but more especially in the Negro's independent church organizations and lodges, the Negro woman became the main support of the institutional life of the Negro. During the years of strife and struggle of Negroes for rights as citizens or even to be treated as mere human beings, when Negro men were lynched and not permitted to play the normal masculine role in an American culture, the Negro woman achieved a position of dominance and dignity.

As Negro men have gained increased economic emancipation and security by becoming part of the army of industrial workers of the country and have entered professional and technical positions, Negro men have played a more important role in family life and their relation with the Negro woman has changed. Nevertheless the traditional spirit of independence and self-assertion of the Negro woman has not been lost. It has provided generally a pattern of equalitarian relationship between men and women for Americans. From the standpoint of race relations, as white Americans lose their guilt feelings about sexual relations with Negroes they are recognizing the beauty of the Negro woman. Today as the younger Negroes, especially the students, are revolting against the complacent and hesitant leadership of the respectable bourgeois leadership, the young Negro women, who are imbued with the spirit of self-assertion and self-reliance of their mothers and grandmothers, are fighting alongside their brothers and going to jail with their male classmates. Therefore, it appears that as the Negro woman gains a real education and true sophistication, she will no longer be a mere symbol of bourgeois sentimentality pleading a cause. For she is breaking down racial barriers by gaining true distinction as an artist, singer, dancer, actor, sculptor—and promises in the not too distant future to become an independent thinker as well. Therefore, if she is true to her tradition of independence and self-assertion, she will not be satisfied with mere acceptance by white America but will join with the women of the world in the revolution which is creating a new world which will be free of colonialism, racial distinctions, and economic exploitation.

THE NEGRO WOMAN *Continued*

Hansberry (above), author of *A Raisin In The Sun*, are enormous. And so are the problems. Independence, as many white women have recently discovered, is not an unmixed blessing. In fact, some students claim that one result of the traditional independence of the Negro woman is that she is more in conflict with her innate biological role than the white woman.

What, then, is the role of a woman?

How have Negro women filled that role?

According to the latest census figures, there are 6,246,000 Negro females 14 years and over in America. In this age group, there are 571,000 more females than males. As a matter of fact, Negro females have outnumbered males in every census since 1840. Sociologists have inferred from this fact that there is more competition for mates among Negro women than among white women. This competition is said to be particularly pronounced in the relatively-small professional class.

One of every five Negro females 14 years and over is single and slightly more than three out of five are married. A disproportionately large number of Negro women are widowed and more than a million are either divorced, separated or living apart from their husbands. The proportion married is higher among white women.

Negro women are on the whole better educated than Negro men, but the gap is closing fast. Some 980,000 Negro women are high school graduates, as compared with only 655,000 Negro men. Some 115,000 Negro women have graduated from college as compared with 93,000 men. But the median school year completed by Negro females 14 years and over (8.9) and Negro males (8.2) is not far apart.

Most Negro women are city-dwellers, and many of them work. The

proportion of Negro women in the labor force has traditionally exceeded that of white women, but the difference has been diminishing as white women have entered the labor force in increasing numbers.

Since 1940, Negro women have made striking gains in the employment field. By 1959, the number of Negro women in the clerical field had risen to almost 200,000, more than 12 times as many as in 1940. The number of professional and technical workers doubled. There was, contrawise, a strong trend away from domestic work. Negro women, however, are still concentrated in low-paying, unskilled jobs. Three out of every four Negro women workers are service workers and operatives in factories and laundries. Two out of every five are domestic workers. Only 15.8 per cent of Negro women are in the professional, managerial, clerical and sales fields as compared to 59.1 per cent of white women. The average annual wage for Negro women (\$1,019 in 1957) compares unfavorably with the annual wage of white women (\$2,240) and Negro men (\$2,436).

Economic advances by Negro men, as the last figure shows, have made them influential forces in Negro families, but Negro women are still undisputed powers in the home. Dr. Frank G. Davis, market research specialist, estimates that Negro women spend at least \$12 billion a year. He adds: "In deciding on housing, Negro wives in the \$4,000-and-over income class are more likely than the white wives to decide which house or apartment the family will occupy. Negro wives are twice as likely as white wives to decide where the family will go on a vacation. In selecting life insurance, the wife in the Negro family is more important than is her white counterpart. This greater involvement of Negro wives in the family's economic decision has sociological overtones that are peculiar to the family life of the Negro."



Modern career girl, Norma Lewis, rides to work on the subway.

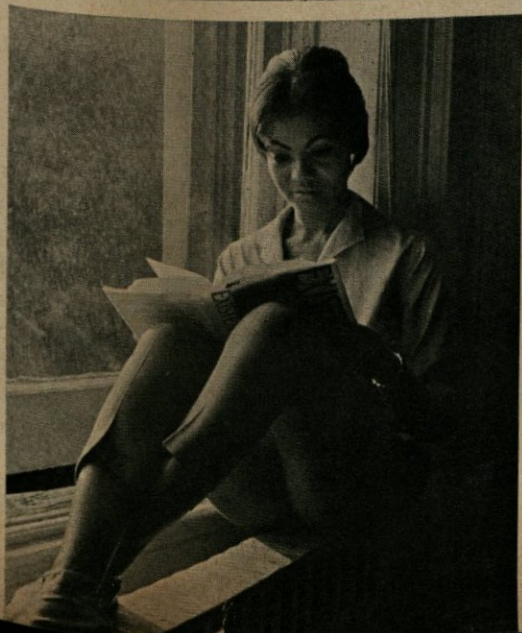
CAREER GIRL

HARRIET Tubman would not recognize the modern emancipated Negro woman. There is reason to believe, however, that she would applaud the freedom of New Yorker Norma Lewis. Norma is a psychiatric social worker in the Bureau of Child Guidance of the Board of Education. The 28-year-old career girl plans to marry eventually, says: "This is far from an ideal life; it has its drawbacks and lacks but it does give one an opportunity to express oneself creatively and to experience personal freedom and growth in a responsible way."



In field, she visits school, consults with guidance counsellors.

Spending quiet afternoon at home, she selects book (left), reads at window. Her apartment overlooks the Hudson river.



In field, she visits school, consults with guidance counsellors.

Spending quiet afternoon at home, she selects book (left), reads at window. Her apartment overlooks the Hudson river.



In her office, social worker interviews a parent.



On her console sewing machine, Norma makes dress.

On date at Penthouse Club, she selects pastry for dessert. Escort is Keith Sadler, a teacher.





Indiana housewife, Gwendolyn Williams, feeds children (l.), cleans house (r.), relaxes (above) by chatting on telephone. Chicago-born mother, 31, has been married ten years.

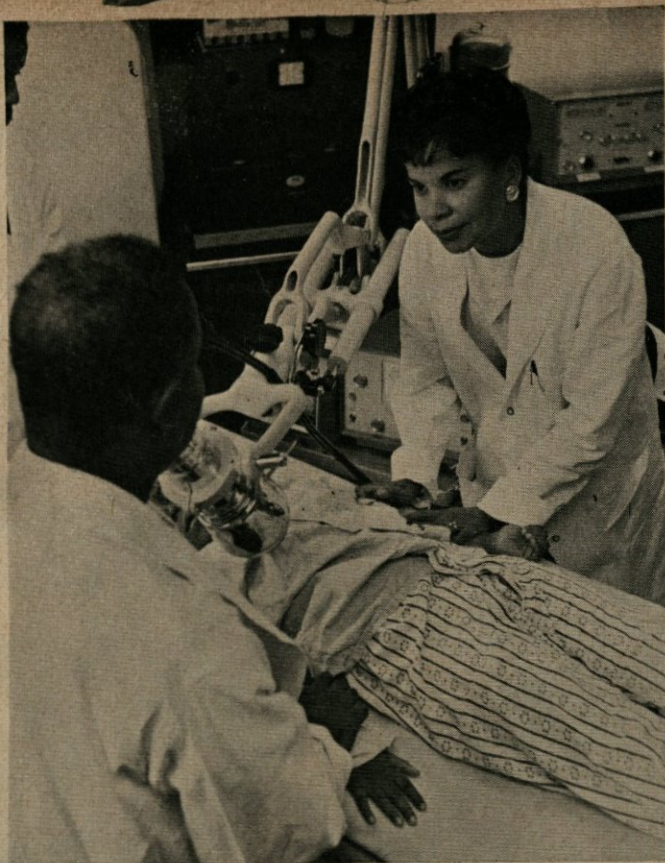
HOUSEWIFE

GWENDOLYN WILLIAMS lives in a three-bedroom house in the huge Tarrytown development in Gary, Indiana. Her husband, Elias (Bill), commutes to Chicago where he drives a bus. While he is absent, she runs the house, cares for the children (Elise, 6, and Donna, 10 months). A spit-and-polish housekeeper, she says: "There is not much to do in a house, if you do a little every day." Unlike many American women, she finds the "just-a-housewife" category challenging and fulfilling. "A woman's place," she says, "is in the home, unless it is absolutely necessary to work. Trying to take care of a home and keeping your children and husband happy is a full-time job."



On busy day, she shops at supermarket, gives daughter "TLC" (Tender loving care), works in yard and shares quiet music hour (r.) with husband. They share household duties. He handles budget.





Dr. Angella Ferguson makes a test on a child for sickle cell anemia.

SCIENTIST

ANGELLA FERGUSON is a woman scientist who can handle a hammer and screwdriver. She lives in a big, two-story house in Washington, D. C., with her six-year-old daughter, Carla, and her husband, Dr. Charles M. Cabaniss. Dr. Ferguson, who uses her maiden name professionally, heads the Research Section of the Pediatrics Department at Freedmen's Hospital. The 35-year-old pediatrician, who is doing special research work on sickle cell anemia, does her own

cooking, washing, ironing, has help with heavy cleaning.



In Washington, D. C., home, she washes dishes (l.), and relaxes with husband, Dr. Charles M. Cabaniss, and daughter, Carla. She has been married for nine years. Dr. Cabaniss shares some household tasks with wife. She handles budget. Scientist is 35.



At work in addressing section of Spiegel (above), she supervises flow of orders. She directs work of 42 people. At home (left, below, right), she cleans up spilled pop, checks report card of son, John Jr., 10, and helps daughter Venice, 8, with her homework.



Los Angeles Artist Priscilla Mills, who uses professional name of P'lla, says, "If there are no children to consider, a woman should do what she wants to do and is capable of doing, as long as she doesn't hurt anyone or herself by doing it." She has 24-year-old son in the Army.



'MAN OF THE HOUSE'

SEVEN years ago, Almedia Hunt found herself in a frightening but fairly common situation. She was alone, her marriage was shattered and she was responsible for two small children. What did she do? "I said a little prayer. I told God there's nobody but you and me and I know you can help."

Almedia Hunt and God have done remarkably well. She is unit supervisor in the order addressing section of Spiegel, Inc. She shares an apartment on Chicago's West Side with her sister. "When a woman is by herself," she says, "she has additional problems. Unless she has special drive or some special talent, she may end up on ADC. Fortunately, I have been able to manage without going out for that. We have never had any aid. We have never had any handouts."

Although a strong woman, she adds: "Deep down inside, you realize a family is not complete without a father."



At end of day, she washes hose (above), then sprawls on bed and talks to sister, Onita Harris, who also works at Spiegel. She is a native of Monroe, Louisiana.



Hard-working mother is one of 904,000 Negro women who head families. She worries about overcrowding at son's school and cramped living conditions, says: "I think woman has been so taken out of her role that it is hard to say what her role is. She can no longer be the woman she used to be. The environment won't let her."



In studio home, she shows customer her work. She paints (l.) on the patio, welds sculpture (r.) as husband, Tommie Mills Jr., looks on. "I'm not a very good housekeeper," she says, "so I try to make everything bright and unusual, then my husband doesn't notice the dust and muss."

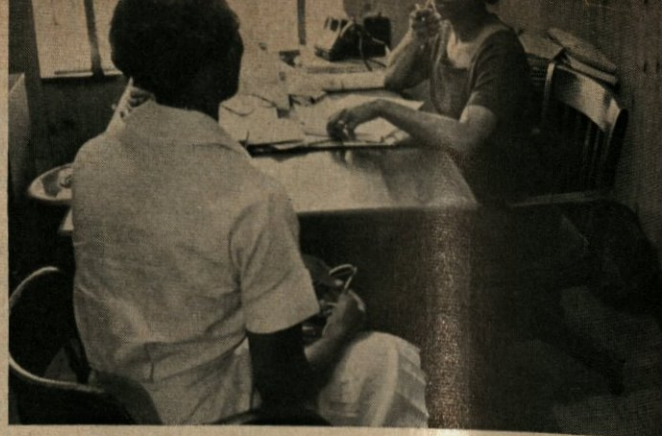
ARTIST

PRISCILLA MILLS is an artist. She often paints or sculptures all day, stopping only to prepare dinner for her husband, who works for Los Angeles Maintenance Department. Artist, 42, once lived in Chicago, studied at the Art Institute. She signs work P'lla, pronounced "Pela."





Attorney Romae L. Turner leaves courthouse (l.), with fellow lawyers, searches records (above), counsels client (above, right), spends evening at home with husband, Dr. Clayton Powell, son, C. C. Powell Jr., 5, and baby daughter Rometta.



LAWYER

ROMAE L. TURNER is a lawyer, the wife of an optometrist and the mother of two children. She shuttles between her law office on Atlanta's Auburn Avenue and her home on Rosser Street. She cooks, but has a woman to come in once or twice a week to do heavy cleaning. Combining the roles of mother, wife and professional woman is hard work, she says. "You do not have time for frivolities. You have to make every minute of the day count."



THE NEGRO WOMAN *Continued*

The emotional life of the Negro woman reflects her dominant position in the family. Her social and economic status has had profound repercussions in the sexual domain. As a result, sexual antagonisms between Negro women and Negro men run at a fever heat. In their classic study, *The Mark Of Oppression*, Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey, said: "The female tends to regard the male as irresponsible and as an exploiter. There is a great deal of protest against his failure as a provider and protector . . . Hence, men are seen as dangerous. The males, on the other hand, tend to confuse the sexual and social roles and see explicitly female figures as masculine and authoritative. Therefore, their attitudes to women are mistrust, hostility, and a resentful dependency . . ."

Role confusion, Kardiner and Ovesey say, has seriously affected the sexual life of both Negro women and men. They added: Lower-income females "are inducted into first intercourse earlier than whites, but even here, in the lower class, the impact of the Victorian indoctrination is surprisingly effective. Fidelity to husbands runs higher than would be expected from the frequency of family disruption, and sexual disturbance, i.e., frigidity, is quite frequent. . . . The middle-class female is much like her white sister. Sex education is rigidly puritanical, masturbation not frequent, and sex as an expression of love is highly stressed. The same is true of continence as a virtue . . . Fidelity to one man is very common. Sexual disorders are likewise common, as are virgins at marriage. . . ."

"The most surprising fact about the sex life of the Negro—of all classes—lies in its marked deviation from the white stereotypes that exist on the subject. The Negro is hardly the abandoned sexual hedonist he is supposed to be. Quite the contrary, sex often seems relatively unimportant to him. The factors that weigh heavily . . . are the uniformly bad relations with females on an emotional level . . ."

Dr. Kermit T. Mehlinger, a Chicago psychiatrist who has done extensive marriage counselling among Negro and white couples, makes a similar observation. He believes that Negro women receive less sexual fulfillment in marriage than white women. He adds: "There are these general myths about the sexual potency of Negro males and the desirability of Negro women. The truth is that there is great sexual disturbance among the Negro population. Repressions and inhibitions utilize psychic energy. With so much energy tied up in hostilities and conflicts, it is only natural that there would be disturbances in the sexual sphere. The unconscious knows no color bar."

Another important factor in the emotional life of the Negro woman is beauty. The Negro woman, Dr. Mehlinger says, is under more pres-

sure than her white counterpart. "We live in a society," he says, "where the standards of beauty are white standards. Negro women generally put a high premium on this standard, but the genes just won't go along with them. The net result is that a great number of Negro women are bent on achieving impossible standards of beauty. And this puts certain exaggerated restrictions on their lives. They cannot be seen in public at certain times, because the hair is not done. And a very large part of the family budget is spent on beauty preparations. Many women will keep a beauty appointment before they will keep a medical appointment."

Some of this pressure is being relieved. The rise of African nationalism and the increasing acceptance of brown-skinned beauties have stimulated new pride in both Negro men and Negro women. Dr. Mehlinger says, however, that parents should be particularly careful in the formative years when the personalities of many Negro girls are warped by impossible beauty standards.

The Chicago psychiatrist also urges Negro organizations and social engineers to address themselves to the problems of family disorganization. Any improvement in the economic status of the masses of Negro men will lead, he believes, to an improvement in the Negro family and a consequent improvement in the emotional life of the Negro woman.

Recent economic advances by Negro men lends substance to this thesis. In the new industrial workers class and in the ballooning middle-class, a large number of Negro men are assuming dominant family roles. E. Franklin Frazier believes the Negro woman is taking the lead in pioneering for America a new type of partnership marriage in which there is a "division of labor in management of the household and a spirit of democracy in the family."

What does the future hold for this new Negro woman?

Few Negro women believe that a woman's place is in the home. Most women interviewed for this study echoed the sentiments of Dr. Angella Ferguson, a medical research specialist (page 44), who says the role of the American Negro woman is a family life of home and marriage and some outside interest. "Those who want a career should have the opportunity for one," she adds, "Those who do not want a career outside the home, should participate in some civic or community activity in order that they may continue to grow throughout their married life."

Dr. Ferguson's statement reflects the dominant motif in the history of the Negro woman. Women, this motif insists, are people.

Having proved that women are people, the Negro woman now faces a greater task. In an age when Negroes and whites, men and women, are confused about the meaning of femininity, she must prove that women are also women.