

'New Negro' New Physical Type, Says Herskovitz

Writing in the September number of Current History Magazine, Melville Herskovitz of the Anthropology Department of Columbia University, reports that a new physical type of Negro is being developed in the United States. Mr. Herskovitz arrived at his conclusion after an examination of 2,000 individuals in Harlem and at Howard University.

The results indicate that the U. S. Census figures which state that only 20 per cent of American Negroes are mulatto, understate the amount of mixture which has gone on, and the results obtained by Mr. Herskovitz indicate that probably 80 per cent had mixed ancestry. This figure might be slightly reduced, Mr. Herskovitz states, because his measurements were undertaken in the North.

The new type disclosed by the measurements is tending to become a stable one, he believes, since there is increasing social pressure against associating with members of opposite groups among both Negroes and the whites, North and South. Mr. Herskovitz instances a recent investigation of illegitimate children conducted in Harlem which showed that in only 7 cases out of 500 were the fathers alleged to be white.

Mr. Herskovitz, who finds that the "New Negro" in his physical measurements occupies a position between the African and the white man, concludes as follows:

"On the face of the results which have been obtained from this study—which, it must be confessed, barely scratches the surface of this field—it seems that from now on we shall have to think of the American Negro not as an African type in which there has been mixed a small amount of white blood, a mixture which is still continuing and that will continue long enough finally to achieve the absorption of the Negro into the dominant white population. We must think rather in terms of this New Negro, with his relatively homogeneous form and relatively stabilized type, who has solved the business of living in this American culture, and who, with his start fairly won, will press on in the American community as a full-fledged member of it."

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