

# WASHINGTON THE MECCA OF NEGROES

**Capital Contains More Blacks Than  
Any Other Community Even  
in the South.**

## RACE FEELING THERE GROWS

**Despite Laws Proclaiming Equality,  
the Prejudice of the Whites  
Rapidly Increases.**

Special to the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 26.—There are more negroes in the city of Washington than in any other city of the Union. According to the census of 1900 the District of Columbia, coextensive with the city of Washington, then contained more negroes than any county in the United States. Since then one county has probably passed Washington, but Washington still leads among the cities.

In Washington, the negroes comprise, however, less than one-third of the total population, while in 55 southern counties and one southern city they form at least three-fourths of the total population. The excess of negroes over whites is greatest in Issaquena County, Mississippi, with more than fifteen negroes to each white person. But in Issaquena County there were in 1900 only 9771 negroes, while in the District of Columbia there were more than 56,000.

There is no prospect that the census figures of 1910 will cause Washington to lose its position as the city having the largest negro population. In every other city whose negro population is anywhere near that of the capital the rate of increase among those of African descent is higher than it is in Washington, but even in these circumstances there can hardly be a change in the relative position of this city.

### Comparison of Southern Cities.

Baltimore, the most populous southern city, with 508,357 inhabitants, nearly double the population of Washington, contained 79,253 negroes in 1900, while Washington with 278,234 inhabitants, contains 86,702 negroes. Thus Baltimore is second. The third city on the list is New Orleans, with 77,714 negroes out of a total population of 257,104. This is a surprising showing, for New Orleans is in the region generally designated as the black belt, while Washington is several hundred miles north of it.

The city of Memphis, Tenn., contained in 1900 only 49,910 negroes, but as Washington, Baltimore and New Orleans embrace the entire counties in which they are situated, another comparison between them and Memphis may be given by considering the figures for Shelby County, of which Memphis is the county seat. The total population of Shelby County in 1900 was 153,557, and the negroes numbered 84,773. This comparison places Shelby County second on the list with 1929 fewer negroes than the District of Columbia.

In Memphis city the white population outnumber the negro by 2470, but in Shelby County, including Memphis, the negroes outnumber the whites by 15,989. In percentages of the races Memphis stands first among large American cities as having the greatest proportionate population, with 48.8 per cent of residents of black blood; Washington being second with 31.1 per cent; New Orleans third with 27.1 per cent; Louisville fourth with 19.1 per cent, and Baltimore fifth with only 15.6 per cent.

### Opportunities in Washington.

The negro of Washington has free common and high schools operated on exactly the same basis as free schools for whites; he has colleges; his color is no legal bar to appointment to public office; he is as eligible as a white lawyer to practice before the courts; the law requires that he shall be permitted, if he can afford to do so, to eat in the best restaurants, sleep in the best hotels and be admitted to the best theaters patronized by the whites, and he is not compelled to ride in a separate compartment of a street car or steam railway coach. Altogether, his opportunities, from a legal and educational standpoint, are ideal.

Whatever may have been the feeling toward the black man by those Northerners and Westerners who settled in Washington after the close of the civil war, most of them to become office holders, their children share the popular feeling against the negro.

This feeling has become intensified within recent years. It is contended by many Washingtonians that the people of the North and West who believe that negroes should be treated as equals by the whites become bitterly anti-negro after living in Washington, more so than Southerners who understand the race and are prone to look leniently on its failings.

The antipathy to the negro prevailing here among the whites does not extend to former slaves—the old "mammy" and "uncle" class. These aged persons are respected by most people and regarded with affection by many. It is against the colored man known as the "new" negro that the prejudice is greatest.