



The Frontiers of America, Inc.



"LEADERSHIP IN AREAS OF GREATEST NEED"

This publication has been made possible by the Baton Rouge Chapter of the Frontiers of America, Incorporated, a service club composed of business and professional men dedicated to better the achievement of the Christian democratic ideal through understanding and cooperation.

ALL BATON ROUGEANS HAVE A STAKE IN BATON ROUGE

East Baton Rouge Parish, located on the East Bank of the Mississippi River, has the enviable distinction of being one of the nation's greatest industrial centers. This community, with a population of approximately 220,000, is one of the world's largest petroleum refining areas and a leading producer of petro-chemicals: produces over half of the world's supply of tetraethyl lead and large quantities of synthetic rubber.

Contributing to the phenomenal growth of this community, the hub of the state's government, are the presence of excellent transportation facilities, including the farthest inland port on the Mississippi River; a great supply of natural resources; nationally recognized educational centers; and men who are capable of wise industrial management and leadership.

The record verifies that East Baton Rouge has enjoyed an expanding and healthy economy. However, the community's future progress will fall far short of full realization of its potential if all Baton Rougeans are not extended equal opportunities, not only to make contributions consistent with their capacities, but also to share the fruits therefrom. As the material to follow will indicate, approximately one-third of the Baton Rougeans were being denied these opportunities at the time of this inquiry which was made in 1960.

LIMITED HEALTH FACILITIES FOR NEGROES

A HEALTHY, VIGOROUS ECONOMY REQUIRES HEALTHY, VIGOROUS PEOPLE

The degree to which any group contributes to the maintenance and improvement of community living is dependent in large measure upon the health status of that group. The health status of the group in turn is directly related to the health services and facilities available to it.

HIGHER DEATH RATE AMONG NON-WHITES

The crude death rate is one measure of the health of a population. It represents the number of registered deaths from all causes during a year per 1,000 persons alive at the middle of that year.

In 1958, the crude death rate for East Baton Rouge Parish was 7.96 per 1,000 population. For the white population, the crude death rate was 6.7 per 1,000 population and for the non-white population, (99.8 per cent of whom were Negroes) in 1950, the crude death rate was 10.6 per 1,000 population. The percentage of non-whites who were 60 years of age and over in 1950 in East Baton Rouge Parish, however, was slightly higher than that of the corresponding white population—8.6 per cent for non-white as compared to 6.3 per cent for white. In the U. S. as a whole, the crude death rate was 9.6 per thousand of enumerated population.

LIMITED HOSPITAL SERVICES

The two general hospitals had a total of 540 beds with 470 beds for the white population and 70 beds for Negroes. The 70 beds for Negroes represented 12.9% of the total bed capacity in general hospitals while Negroes represented approximately 27% of the total population in East Baton Rouge Parish.

General Hospital Beds Available in East Baton Rouge Parish by Race

Whites:



470

Negroes:



(One figure represents 50 beds)

There were six nursing homes in the Parish, all private — five for the white population and one for Negroes. These homes had a total bed capacity of 155 beds for whites and 12 for Negroes.

NUMBER OF PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS

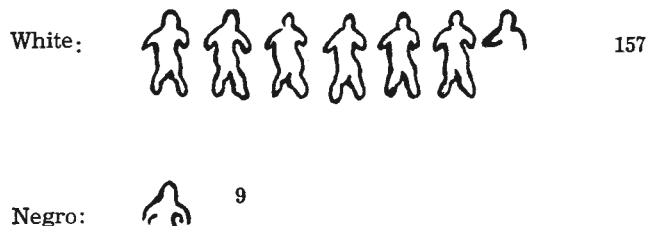
Of 166 physicians in East Baton Rouge Parish, 157 were white and 9 were Negro. The 157 white physicians represent twenty fields of medical specialization. The Negro physicians were engaged in general practice.

DENIAL OF MEDICAL PRIVILEGES

Negro physicians are denied membership in the Baton Rouge Medical Society and are denied the privilege of practicing in the hospitals of the Parish.

There were 83 dentists in the Parish—77 whites and six Negroes.

Physicians in East Baton Rouge Parish by Race



(One figure represents 25 physicians)

MEDICAL SCHOOLS CLOSED TO NEGROES

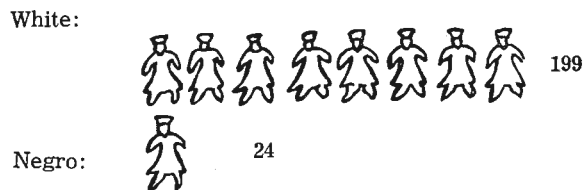
In Louisiana, the opportunity to pursue medical education does not exist for members of the Negro community which constitutes about one third of the state's population. Obviously, the fact that all of the Negro physicians and dentists in Louisiana received their training in medical schools outside of the state contributes to the shortage of needed medical personnel.

NO TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NEGRO NURSES

The approximate number of registered nurses in the Parish is 223, twenty-four of whom are Negroes. Two programs exist for the training of white nurses, one at each of the general hospitals. There is no local program for the training of Negroes to become registered nurses.

There were 324 practical nurses in the Parish—207 whites and 117 Negroes.

REGISTERED NURSES IN EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH BY RACE



(One figure represents 25 registered nurses)

The health facilities for Negroes in East Baton Rouge Parish fall short of that which should be provided if facilities were allocated on the basis of population distribution. Moreover, denial of membership in the local medical society and the refusal to allow Negro physicians to practice in the hospitals probably account partly for the small number of Negro physicians in the Parish. In all probability, these factors also contribute to the lack of Negro medical specialists in the area. Likewise, the lack of facilities for the training of Negro nurses is probably related to the scarcity of Negro registered nurses in the Parish.

Increased opportunities for the training and for the professional growth of medical personnel doubtless would result in greater availability of medical services for the population of East Baton Rouge Parish. Such improvement should help to bring the population-physician ratio nearer the national average and should make for a healthier community for all.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REFLECTS THE DEPRIVED SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF NEGRO FAMILIES

Emerging from the present drama of human events have been an unprecedented interest in education and a growing need for men with technical skills and social imagination.

As is true for the nation, the parish's most valuable resource is trained manpower. Hence the city loses when a significant proportion of its youth fail to develop its capacities. The attendance and drop-out rates for Negroes in East Baton Rouge Parish reflect the deprived socio-economic status of a large proportion of Negro families. This plight suggests the need for a higher standard of living for deprived families — better jobs and better housing.

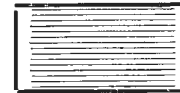
There were 55,570 children of school age in East Baton Rouge Parish during the 1957-58 school year of which 65 per cent were white and 35 per cent were Negroes. Of this group, 90 per cent of the whites and 88 per cent of the Negroes were enrolled in public schools.

There was an average daily absence in the schools of 7 per cent for whites and 10 per cent for Negroes. The 1956 state study entitled *Housing Power of Louisiana Schools* points out that whereas only 46 per cent of the white, only 14 per cent of the Negro youth who enter the first grade finish high school.

Differentials in High School Graduation in Louisiana Schools

Percent Graduated 1957:	%	20	40	60	89	90	100
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White:



Negro:



LIBRARY SERVICES INADEQUATE

East Baton Rouge Parish youth had access to 269,151 library books during 1957-58. This more than meets the criterion of 5 books per average daily membership. A total of 199,778 of the books was located in the white schools, leaving the Negro schools a total of 69,373. This was 14,332 books short of the total of 93,705 needed to bring Negro school libraries up to the minimum requirements. This is a shortage of almost 700 books per school and almost one book per pupil. The \$38,546 valuation of library furniture and equipment for white schools was almost 5 times the \$8,956 valuation for Negro schools while there was a 2:1 ratio in pupil population.

Differentials in Library Books Per Pupil



Negro



White

WEAKNESSES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM REFLECT THE PROBLEMS OF A DUAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

East Baton Rouge Parish has done a commendable job of providing improved educational opportunities for Negro youth as evidenced by the excellent physical facilities that have been erected in recent years and by the quality of the teaching personnel. In spite of these noteworthy efforts, glaring discrepancies continue to exist between the kind and quality of educational programs for Negroes and whites. These differences are no more than reflections of the weaknesses and problems inherent in a dual educational system.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

THE NEED FOR SOCIAL SERVICES IS NOT A RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC

Presently there appears to be an unprecedented display of interest in the proportion of Negroes who are recipients of welfare services. Unfortunately, motivated by political motives, the unenlightened fails to see that this condition results from the adverse socio-economic status that a disproportionate number of Negroes are experiencing. The informed, however, see this condition as one of the imperfections in the nation's economy, and they realize that to correct this social phenomenon will require shifting attention from the symptoms to the causes.

It is interesting to observe that the social case-work agencies of this community do not employ Negro caseworkers. Approximately eight professionally trained white persons are employed as caseworkers in the East Baton Rouge Parish Department of Public Welfare (2 public assistance caseworkers and

6 child welfare caseworkers) and approximately 34 additional persons are employed as public welfare visitors.

THE NEGRO COMMUNITY IS UNTRAINED IN CIVIL DEFENSE

With the exception of Florida Street, all evacuation routes pass through sizeable Negro communities. How effective would the city's civil defense program be in an emergency situation in the absence of trained civil defense manpower in the community?

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL EXCLUDE NEGROES

The personnel policies of the offices of the city police and the parish sheriff are lagging behind the practices in several leading cities and parishes of the state. Negroes are serving as law enforcement officers in Orleans, Caddo, Calcasieu, and Jefferson parishes and in Monroe, Lake Charles, Lafayette and Opelousas, but not in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Approximately 115 persons are employed as deputy sheriffs in East Baton Rouge Parish, but none are Negroes. In spite of a rising rate of juvenile delinquency, the "Junior Deputies" program sponsored by the sheriff's office does not include Negro boys. Likewise, no Negroes are among the 227 employed members of the Baton Rouge City Police Department.

LIMITED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DENIAL OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IS AN ECONOMIC WASTE

In East Baton Rouge Parish, the occupational pattern tends to reflect a racial division of labor.

Employment statistics indicate that Negroes are concentrated in the occupations of agriculture and domestic and personal services.

In public transportation, communication, and other public utilities, a preponderance of Negroes are employed as porters, elevator operators, and in other low wage categories. Employment is denied Negroes in city and state jobs, except in menial capacities. It is common knowledge that Negroes are not employed in white-collar jobs. Few Negroes are listed in skilled work classifications or in apprenticeship or on-the-job training programs. The majority of Negro laborers in manufacturing industries are employed as common laborers or unskilled laborers.

Although a few Negroes are employed in professional occupations, far too many are employed at jobs that rank below their training, ability, and experience. In the Parish, unemployment due to technological advances tends to have a severe impact on Negro employment. When this technological transition occurs, a high proportion of Negro unskilled laborers may become displaced. The higher proportion of Negroes in unskilled jobs is related in part to the lack of adequate training programs available to all workers.

Essential to a strong economy and to the nation's survival of present international involvements is the extension to all individuals within the labor force the opportunity to work at their highest skills. Trained Negroes leave the state because of the lack of employment opportunities commensurate with their training and ability. Baton Rouge cannot afford the waste which results from under utilization of its labor force—unemployment and underemployment.

Maximum utilization of manpower leads to increases in purchasing power in demand for goods, and in production.

HOUSING SHORTAGE

GOOD HOUSING CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTE TO MORE RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS

Numerous Negro families residing in Baton Rouge have been subjected to displacement as results of the construction of an Expressway, an Interstate Highway, and the enforcement of local sanitation and fire codes. Negroes in Baton Rouge are experiencing difficulty in locating housing because of the limited number of sub-divisions open to Negro occupancy and the few desirable sites available for residential development.

Upon local request for low-cost financing, 810 units of F.H.A. Section 221 Housing were certified for the City of Baton Rouge by the Housing and Home Finance Agency in the Fall of 1958. Of the 810 lowcost units, approximately 425 were planned for Negro occupancy.

Low cost dwellings for Negroes (F.H.A. Section 221) are under construction by private industry at the present time in the following approved sub-divisions:

Beechwood Place — approximately 196 homes located approximately four miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge on Thomas Road.

Jenkins Place — approximately 29 houses, located two miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge on Elm Grove Garden Drive, between Progress Road and Blount Road.

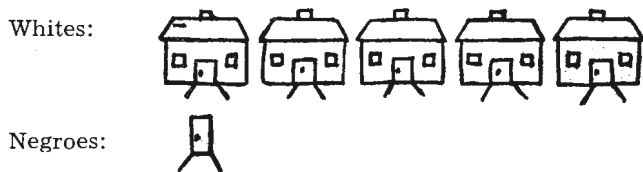
Additional low-cost dwellings (F.H.A. Section 221) are scheduled for future construction in the following sub-divisions:

Miles Place — approximately 26 houses, located 2½ miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge in an area east of Scotland Avenue and south of Blount Road.

Stewart Place — approximately 59 houses, located two miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge, east of Scotland Avenue and north of Progress Road.

Although approximately one-half of the low cost units in Baton Rouge are planned for Negroes, adequate housing still remains unavailable for many of the low-income Negroes who constitute the majority of the Negro population of the city. The unavailability of adequate housing for local Negroes is strikingly brought to light when it is noted from the figure below that only approximately 13 out of 1,038 low and middle-income sub-divisions approved in East Baton Rouge Parish during the period from 1953-1958 were available for Negro occupancy.

*Subdivisions in East Baton Rouge Parish
Approved During Period, 1953 Through 1958*



(Each figure represents 200 Subdivisions)

Moreover, a neighborhood analysis made by the City-Parish Planning Commission in February, 1956, revealed that in residential areas inhabited by Negro persons, more than 30 per cent of the occupied houses were without bath or were dilapidated.

Other Housing: Other housing for Negroes, not approved for F.H.A. Section 221 low-cost financing is scheduled for future construction in the following subdivisions:

Pryce Place—approximately 65 houses, located approximately two miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge on Elm Grove Garden Drive, between Progress Road and Blount Road.

Spark Vista—approximately 350 houses, located approximately 2½ miles north of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge between Progress Road and Blount Road in a north-south direction, and between Baker Road and Scenic Highway in an east-west direction.

Mayfair Park—approximately 20 houses, located approximately four miles south of the corporate limits of Baton Rouge on Hyacinth Avenue, and south of Starring Lane.

Negro housing proposed for construction in the Miles place, Stewart Place and Pryce Place sub-divisions may be seriously affected, and, in fact, cancelled if the newly proposed east-west jet runway at the Ryan Airport is constructed. The proposed jet runway would displace 44 Negro families and add these persons to the hundreds of low-income Negroes already subject to displacement and in search of homes.

Unfortunately, a too large a proportion of Negroes, being in the low income bracket, do not qualify for housing in existing subdivisions. Moreover, it is to be noted that subdivisions which are located too far from centers of employment and shopping are not attracting buyers. *It seems that public housing is the answer.*

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY ESSENTIAL TO POLICY MAKING IN A DEMOCRACY

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY, POLITICAL
EQUALITY, AND POPULAR CONSULTATION
ARE CHERISHED ELEMENTS OF OUR
DEMOCRACY

In East Baton Rouge Parish, as is characteristic of modern-day government, there exists the practice of assigning to boards, councils, and committees the task of determining policies and making decisions which affect the lives of all the members of the community. Although these decisions and policies influence the behavior of all citizens of the rapidly growing East Baton Rouge Parish, the opportunity to share in their formulation by the Negro segment of the community is practically non-existent. This denial often leads to decisions which do not serve the common interest of the community in employment, public safety, health services and practices, education, and in other areas of living. Negroes are not represented on:

- The East Baton Rouge Parish Board of Health
- Library Board of Control
- The East Baton Rouge Parish Bar Association
- Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board
- The East Baton Rouge Parish Medical Association
- Plumbing Board and Electrical Board
- Board of Health
- The Recreation and Parks Commission
- Airport Commission
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Planning and Zoning Commission

"There is no defence or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand per cent interest."

There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:—

*"The laws of changeless justice bind
oppressor with oppressed;
And close as sin and suffering joined
we march to fate abreast."*

—Booker T. Washington