

# THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI NEGRO

This paper is a report published by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. It is general and extensive in scope rather than specific and detailed. The report's purpose is threefold:

1. to give SNCC's Mississippi field workers a handy reference source detailing statistically some of the general facts relating to the status of the Negro in Mississippi,
2. to indicate the dire necessity for COFO's proposed community centers and county workers, and
3. to serve as a guideline for more detailed studies to be made in the near future.

In this study, the term "nonwhite people" is used instead of the term "Negro" in many instances. Because of the high proportion of Negroes in the nonwhite category, it is not a distortion to use data that refers to "nonwhites" as data that refers particularly to Negroes. In 1960, in Mississippi, 99.6 percent of the total nonwhite population was Negro, and 99.7 percent of the nonwhite farm operators were Negroes.

This report is being distributed by:

THE COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS (COFO)  
1017 Lynch Street  
Jackson, Mississippi

ONE MAN - ONE VOTE

Report for Miss. Field Staff

PERTINENT BACKGROUND DATA

Growth in the Population, 1940-1960

Number and Proportion - 915,722 Negroes constituted, in 1960, roughly 42% of the total 2,178,000 population in Mississippi. Between 1940 and 1960, the total population remained nearly the same (per cent change: -0.2), with a more than 7% decrease in the Negro population compared with an increase of more than 6% among the non-Negro population. (See Chart I and Table I.)

Although birth rates among Negroes have been consistently higher than those among whites, mortality rates are higher, average life expectancy is lower and migration out of the state is considerably higher among Negroes than among whites.

Birth Rates - The higher birth rates among Negroes, in comparison with whites, are shown in Table 2. In 1949, the rate per 1,000 among the Negro population was 34.8, compared with 21.8 among whites. Since 1945 there has been a significant rise in the birth rate for Negroes. During the depression 30's, sharp declines in birth rates occurred among both Negroes and whites. (Chart 2)

Death Rates - Death rates among Negroes continue to be higher than the rates for whites, though the difference in the rates has consistently narrowed. (Table 3) It is still a fact, however, that the death rate among Negroes today is not as low as it was for whites in 1913, the first year for which we have death rate data. This is largely a reflection of the continued low standard of living Mississippi Negroes exist under, in addition to a lack of access to adequate hospital care (See Chart III.)

Infant Mortality - Infant mortality rates since 1920 for both races have generally gone downward. The rate for non-whites, however, swung upward in 1957 and continued upward until 1961 when it started downward again (Chart IV). It takes no statistical genius to understand what the figures reflect: In Mississippi the chances of a Negro baby dying within the first year of life are at best twice those of a white baby. Though most babies of both races do survive, Negro babies have a greater chance of starting life with a health handicap. In communities where Negroes are subject to major segregation and discrimination, the Negro baby is much more likely to be born prematurely. Premature babies may get excellent care if they are born in or near a hospital with a modern center for premature infants, but Negroes in Mississippi are largely denied this. (Table 4)

Significant Population Characteristics, 1950-1960

Age Distribution - Table 5 compares the changes in the Negro and white population which have occurred among different age groups between 1950 and 1960. During this decade the total population of Mississippi remained almost the same. There was a net increase in the white population and a net decrease in the non-white population. Most significant for Negroes is the large decrease in the group aged 20 to 34. Because workers in this age group are traditionally

CHART 1 Population, 1940 and 1960  
In thousands:

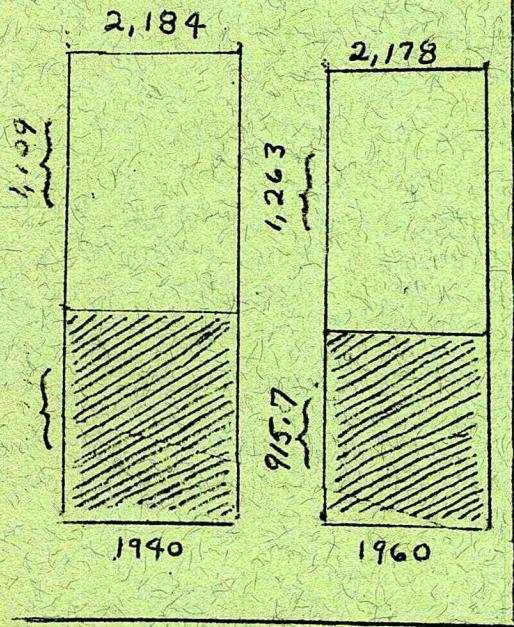


CHART 2, Birth RATES, SELECTED PERIODS  
Rate per 1000 population

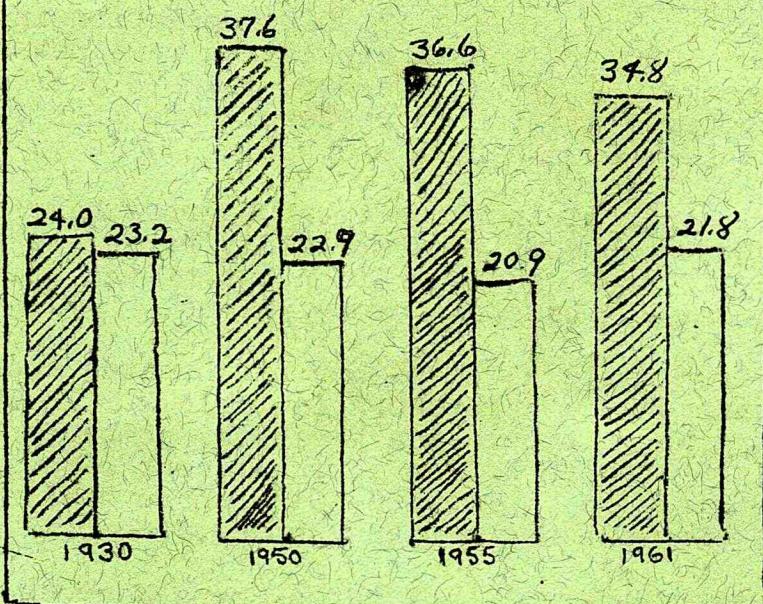


CHART 3. DEATH RATES  
RATE per 1000 population

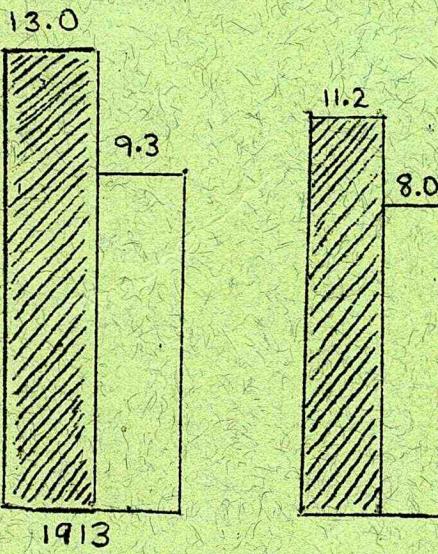
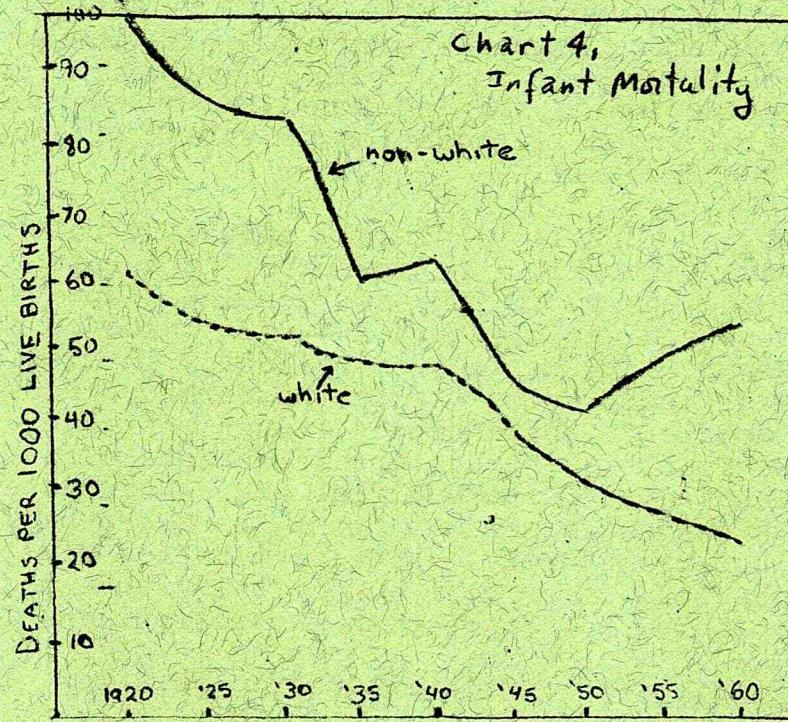


Chart 4,  
Infant Mortality



Source: U.S. Bureau of the  
CENSUS and Miss.  
STATE Bd. of Health

NEGRO  
 WHITE

Report for Miss. Field Staff,

preferred in hiring for new employment, this change in age composition of the population may contribute to increased employment opportunity for younger Negroes. The situation may also add to the dilemma of employers whose hiring policies continue to favor white workers and workers under 35 years of age. (Chart 5.)

Urban-Rural Distribution - In 1960, the Negro population was largely rural, there being over two-thirds of the Negroes in the State living in rural areas. Of the 79,545 persons who migrated from rural areas into Mississippi cities, only 5 percent were non-white. There obviously has been no significant rural-urban redistribution of the non-white population within the state during the last decade. This is largely a reflection of the fact that employment opportunities for rural non-whites in the state's towns and cities are poor. (Table 7)

County Variations - Table 8, showing the Negro and white population in 1950 and 1960 for each county, reveals the high percentage of Negroes in some counties and the considerably high out-of-state migration taking place. There are 29 counties wherein Negroes constitute more than 50% of the population. Hinds, Calhoun and Coahoma are the counties with the largest numbers of Negroes. Tunica, Clairborne, and Jefferson have the largest percentages of Negroes. The area commonly referred to as the "Gulf Coast" has shown the only consistent increases in population during the last decade. This is the most affluent economic area or region in the state, significantly.

Cities of 10,000 or more - Table 9 shows the 18 cities in Mississippi that have a population of greater than 10,000. In all of these cities, with the exception of Biloxi, Negroes constitute 20 per cent or more of the total population.

#### Educational Attainment

As shown in Table 10, in 1960 all Negroes aged 25 and over had completed an average of only six years of school. This is five years less than the average for whites. The average is even less in the rural-farm areas where a high proportion of Negroes live.

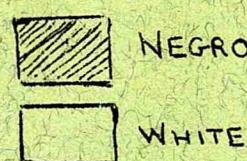
### RECENT LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

#### Negroes in the Labor Force

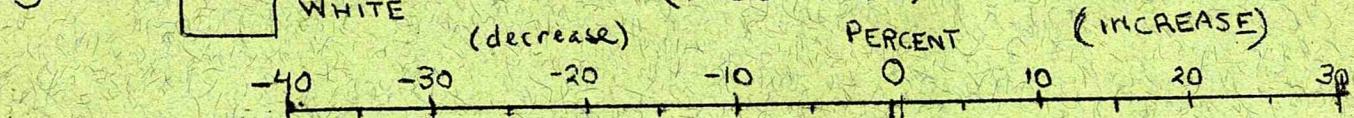
Proportion in the Labor Force - The proportion of Negroes in the labor force is very similar to the proportion for whites. There is a noticeable difference in the proportions when the races are divided into sexes, however. There is a greater per cent of Negro women, particularly urban married Negro women, in the labor force, than white women. The proportion of Negro men in the labor force is noticeably lower than the proportion of white males. (Table 11 and Chart 7)

Unemployment - Table 12 shows that in 1960 the average unemployment rate for Negroes was more than 50 per cent greater than that of whites. Changes in the rates for the two races from 1950 to 1960 were relatively the same. This change has been an unfavorable one; resulting in an unemployment rate for Negroes of 7.1 percent. (Chart VIII)

CHART  
5



### % CHANGES IN NEGRO AND WHITE POPULATION BY AGE (1950-1960)



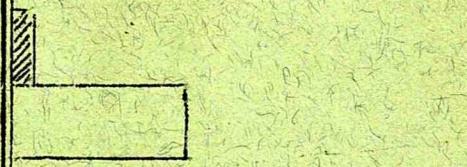
Total, all ages



Under 10



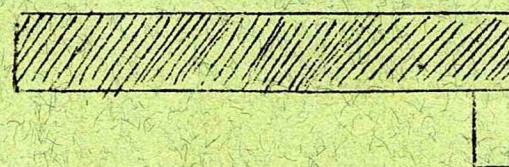
10-19



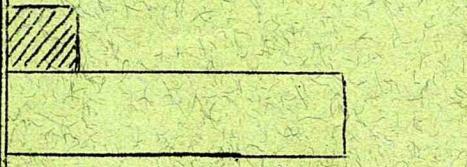
20-34



35-44



45-64



65 years and over



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Status among different Age Groups - Table 13 shows, for 1960, the variations at different ages in the labor force status of Negroes in comparison with white men and women. About 67% of all Negro men ages 14 or over were in the labor force compared to roughly 75% of all white men. A significantly higher proportion of Negro men under age 24 and over age 65 were in the labor force. For both Negro men and white men between the ages of 20 and 64, the rates of labor force participation were comparable. The pattern among women shows some significant contrasts. The proportion of Negro women in the labor force was higher than for white women in every age group except ages 14-19 and 20-24. Among white women, the rate of labor force participation drops after age 24 (about the average age of marriage), whereas for Negro women the rate increases through the 45-49 age group.

Industry Distribution - In Table 14, it is apparent that of the roughly one-half million employed Negroes in the State, more than a third are employed in agriculture with more than another third employed in service industries. Unbelievable as it may seem, though Negroes comprise almost 40% of the total employed labor force, only about 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ % are employed in manufacturing and even less than that in construction employment.

Pattern of Unemployment - Table 15 reveals that of those Negroes unemployed, not more than 8% can be categorized as skilled workers. Though 21.1% of those unemployed were previously semi-skilled operatives or kindred workers, 31.9% were non-agricultural laborers and 21.55% were farm laborers. Thus, over 50% of the unemployed Negroes were unskilled laborers.

#### INCOME

Income of families, 1950-1960 - Table 16 and Chart 9 present the median income of all Negro and white persons for the years 1950-1960. In 1960 Negroes had an average annual income of \$606, only 29% of the average income of \$2,023 among whites. The difference seems particularly wide in view of the fact that a higher proportion of Negro family members are in the labor force. The data in the previous section on labor force and employment show that a higher proportion of Negro males under age 24 and women over age 24 are in the labor force than is the case among whites.

There is a relatively smaller differential between Negroes and whites for urban as compared with rural persons. In 1960 the average income of urban Negroes was 33% of the average among whites, a decline from 38% in 1950. The urban Negro family in 1960 had an average income of \$871, compared with an average of about \$2600 for whites. Between 1950 and 1960 the average income of urban whites increased some \$800, whereas among Negroes it increased less than \$200. Among rural persons the median income of Negroes increased from #390 in 1950 to \$474 in 1960 when it was about 31% of the average for white persons. This represented a relative decline from the \$390 average of 1950 when the rural Negro's average income was 41% of the average among rural whites. The money income of both Negro and white persons living on farms remained low and increased relatively less than that of rural non-farm and urban families in the years 1945-1949.

# CHART 6

NEGR0 PER  
OF EACH COUN  
POPULATION  
(1960)

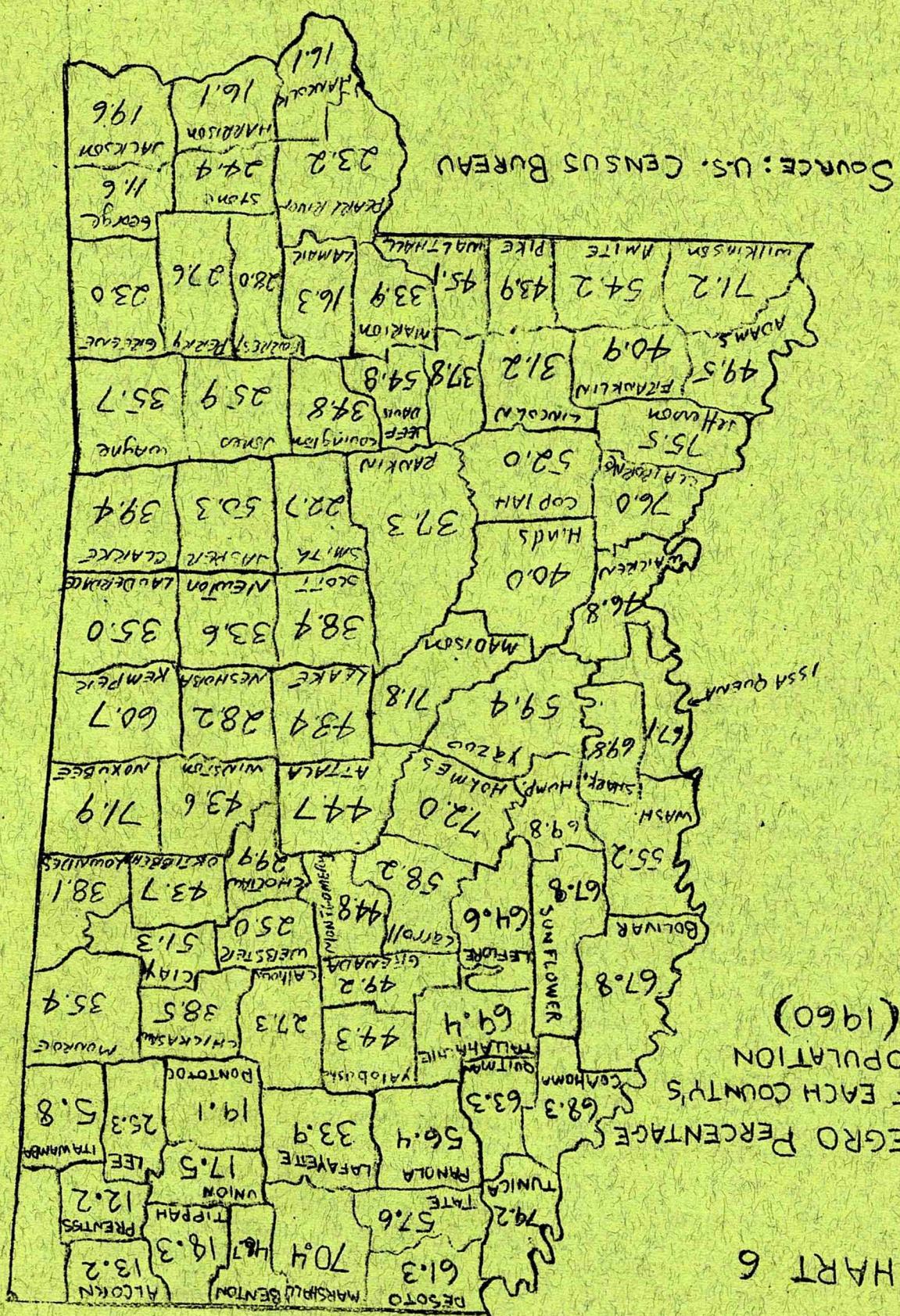


CHART 7. Percent of Negro and white Population in the Labor Force, 1960

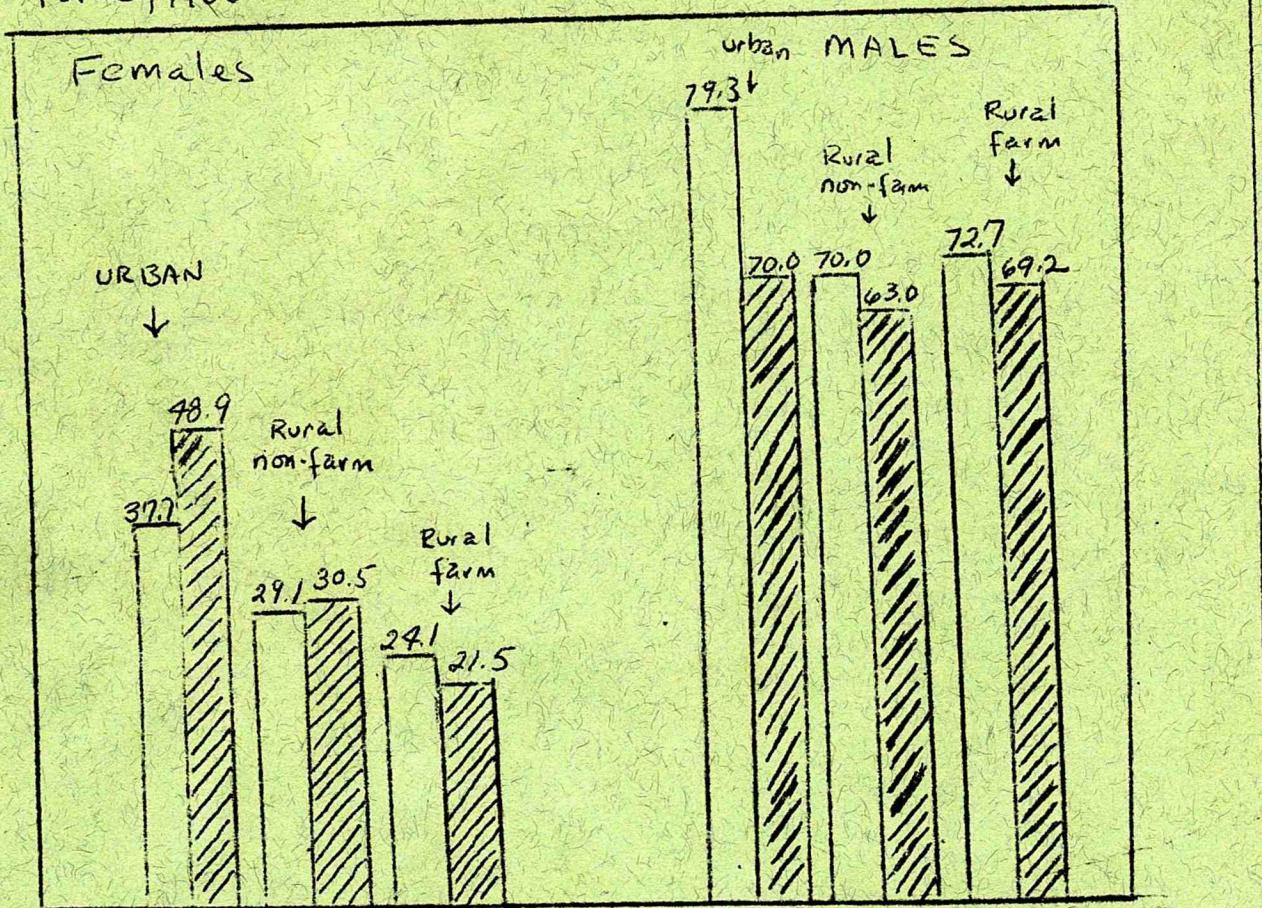
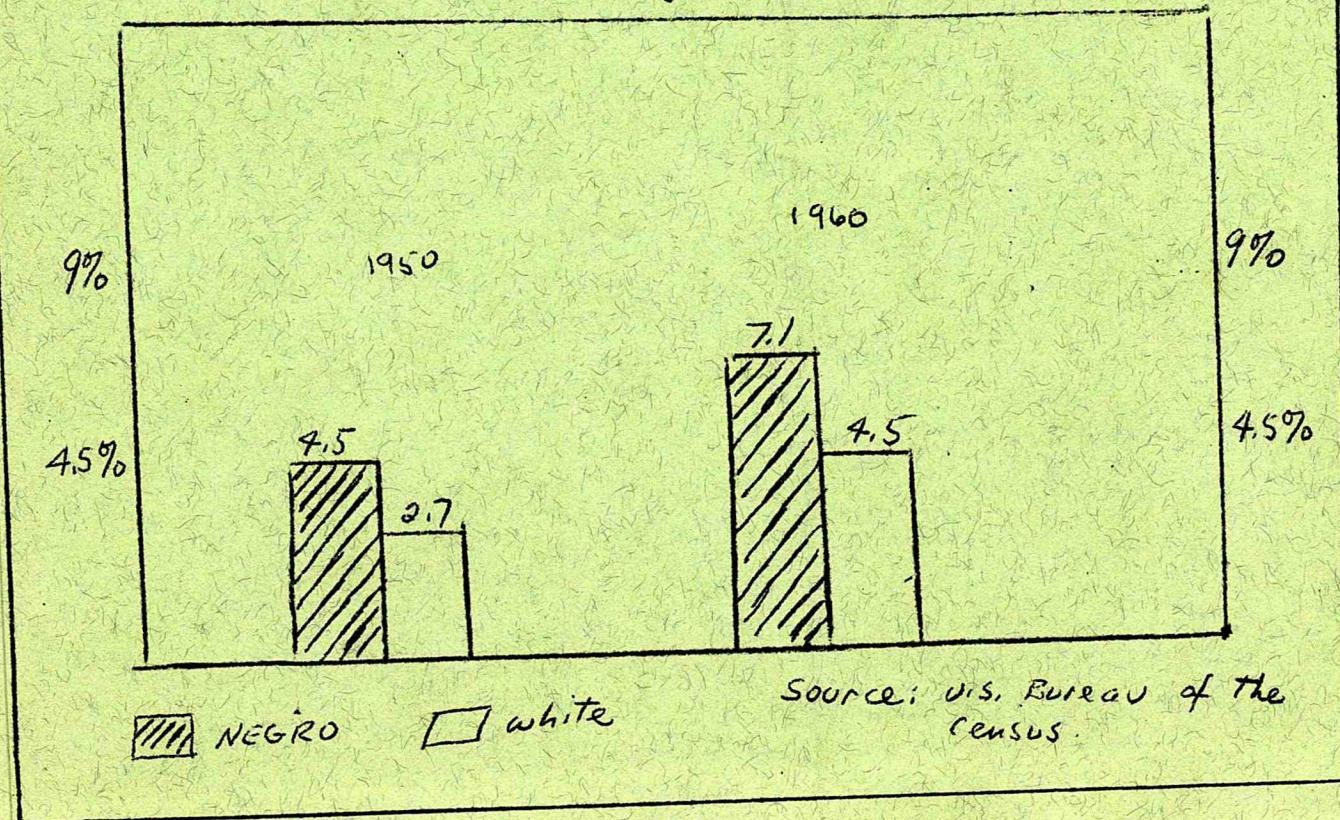


CHART 8. Percent of Negro and white workers in the Labor Force unemployed, 1950 and 1960.



Report for Miss. Field Staff continued

#### HOUSING CONDITIONS

Statistics revealing housing conditions for Mississippi Negroes are somewhat shocking. In 1960 there were 207,611 housing units for Mississippi Negroes. Of these, 38.1% were owner-occupied, and 61.9% were renter-occupied (significantly out of line with the national proportion of owner-and renter-occupied housing). Of the 207,611 houses, only one-third can be classified as being in sound condition; the others have been classified as either deteriorating or dilapidated. Of the homes in rural areas, over 75% are without any piped water at all, and over 90% of these rural homes had no flush toilets, no bathtub and no shower. (see table 18)

(Source: Mississippi State Board of Health)

Year	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	Year
1961	8.8	11.0	11.4	11.0	1959
					1955
					1950
					1940
					1935
					1930
					1925
					1920

Deaths per 1,000 population

Table 3 -- Death Rates, by Color, selected years, 1920-1961

(Source: Mississippi State Board of Health)

Year	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	Year
1961	21.8	34.8	36.6	36.6	1959
					1955
					1950
					1940
					1935
					1930
					1925
					1920

Births per 1,000 population

Table 2 -- Estimated birth rates, by color, selected years, 1920-1961

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(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Year	Total	Nonwhite	Percentage	Number	Year
1960	2,178,141	920,595	44.4	990,282	1950
					1940
					1930
					1920
					1910
					1900

Table 1 -- Population of Mississippi, by color, 1900-1960

#### APPENDIX TABLES

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Table 5 -- Population of Mississippi, by color, age, and sex, 1950-1960

(Source: Mississippi State Board of Health)

Deaths per 1,000 population

Table 4 -- Deaths under 1 year, rates for selected years, 1920-1961

Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Table 6 -- Population of Mississippi, by color and urban-rural residence, 1960

Residence	Native-born White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Urban	245,006	266,507	134,907	158,765
Rural--non-farm	243,385	243,131	156,597	167,778
Rural--farm	124,265	118,988	149,137	148,588

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Table 7 -- Urban and rural migration, by race, in Mississippi, 1950-1960

Area	Population 1950	Population 1960	Net Migration Number	%	Natural Increase	Net Change-%
State	2,178,914	2,178,141	-424,158	-16.3	19.4%	-0.03
White	1,188,632	1,257,546	-108,470	-7.9	14.9	5.8
Nonwhite	990,282	920,595	-315,688	-25.5	24.8	-7.0
Urban	607,162	820,805	79,545	10.7	22.1	35.2
White	374,320	525,853	75,476	16.8	20.3	40.5
Nonwhite	232,842	294,952	4,069	1.4	24.9	26.7
Rural	1,571,752	1,357,336	-503,703	-27.1	18.4	-13.3
White	814,312	731,693	-183,946	-20.1	12.4	-10.1
Nonwhite	757,440	625,643	-319,757	-33.8	24.8	-17.4

(Source: Mississippi State Board of Health)

Table 8 -- County Breakdown of Population and Migration

County	Population	No. Nonwhite	% Nonwhite	Net Change of Negroes, 1950-1960
Adams	37,730	18,695	49.5	-16.1
Alcorn	25,282	3,333	13.2	-14.6
Amite	15,573	8,443	54.2	-19.1
Attala	21,335	9,546	44.7	-17.5
Benton	7,723	3,609	46.7	-6.3
Bolivar	54,464	35,943	67.8	-14.4
Calhoun	15,941	4,346	27.3	1.3
Carroll	11,177	6,500	58.2	-26.4
Chickasaw	16,891	6,511	38.5	-22.7
Choctaw	8,423	2,520	29.9	24.3
Clairborne	10,845	8,245	76.0	-7.7
Clarke	16,493	6,492	39.4	-17.6
Clay	18,993	9,719	51.3	-3.7
Coahoma	46,212	31,582	68.3	-11.4
Copia	27,051	14,059	52.0	-13.7
Covington	13,637	4,741	34.8	-9.1
Desoto	23,891	14,643	61.3	-11.4
Forrest	52,722	14,752	28.0	13.

Table 8, continued

Report for Field Staff, continued

County	Population	Number Nonwhite	% Nonwhite	Net Change 1950-1960
Franklin	9,286	3,800	40.9	-11.7
Gregg	11,098	1,287	11.6	4.5
Greene	8,366	1,923	23.0	27.9
Grenada	18,409	9,057	49.2	-7.9
Hancock	14,039	2,255	16.1	10.6
Harrison	119,489	19,256	16.1	43.5
Holmes	27,096	19,501	72.0	-20.3
Humphreys	19,093	13,335	69.8	-17.2
Issaquena	3,576	2,400	67.1	-28.3
Jackson	15,080	874	5.8	-6.7
Jasper	16,909	5,073	33.9	-12.5
Jones	10,142	7,653	75.5	-9.1
Kemper	12,355	7,245	59.9	-10.4
Lamar	67,119	2,232	16.3	6.0
Lauderdale	13,675	23,484	35.0	0.4
Lee	40,589	10,289	25.3	-3.5
Leflore	47,142	30,443	64.6	-13.8
Lincoln	13,759	8,352	31.2	-9.1
Loudes	46,639	17,768	38.1	-3.5
Madison	32,904	23,637	71.8	-5.2
Marietta	23,293	7,885	33.9	-3.5
Marion	24,503	17,239	70.4	-2.8
Montgomery	13,320	5,971	44.8	-4.1
Neshoba	20,927	5,901	28.2	-11.5
Newton	19,517	6,567	33.6	-16.4
Oktibbeha	26,175	11,448	43.7	-2.6
Panola	28,791	16,226	56.4	-7.2
Perry	22,411	5,190	27.6	15.5
Pike	8,745	2,412	27.6	9.1
Pontotoc	17,232	3,286	38.4	-13.2
Prentiss	17,949	2,186	38.4	-13.2
Railroad	21,019	13,304	63.3	-15.3
Rankin	34,322	12,818	37.3	-6.2
Scott	21,187	8,137	74.9	-4.2
Sharkley	10,738	7,491	69.8	-18.5
Simpson	20,454	7,200	35.2	-1.0
Smith	14,303	3,247	24.4	2.2
Stone	7,013	1,711	67.8	25.3
Sunflower	45,750	31,020	75.0	-20.1
Tate	18,138	10,442	69.4	0.7
Tishomingo	13,889	2,756	18.3	-15.8
Tippah	15,093	10,428	67.9	4.9
Union	24,081	15,501	67.8	2.5
Walthall	18,138	10,442	67.8	0.7

Place	Total Population			(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)		
	White	Nonwhite	Nonwhite	Male	Female	Female
Tunica County	16,826	13,321	79.2	18,904	13,512	17.5
Union	-24.8	-8.9	-14.9	42,206	19,759	46.8
Warren	42,206	6,100	45.1	43,399	43,399	45.2
Washington	78,638	19,759	46.8	76,258	5,809	35.7
Wayne	76,258	5,809	66.6	10,580	2,642	25.0
Weberster	13,235	9,428	54.2	19,246	9,428	43.6
Wilson	12,502	5,540	44.3	8,393	71.2	3.4
Yalobusha	31,653	18,791	59.4	12,502	4,719	43.7
Zapoo	-16.8	-14.9	-14.9	5,540	5,540	5.4

Table 9 -- Urban Places of more than 10,000 persons, 1960

(Sources: United States Bureau of the Census and Miss. State Board of Health)	Population			Net Change		
	Number	Nonwhite	% Nonwhite	of Negroes	of Negroes	1950-1960
Wallula	13,512	17.5	45.1	6,100	45.1	-14.9
Warren	42,206	19,759	46.8	43,399	43,399	-1.7
Washington	78,638	19,759	46.8	42,206	13,512	17.5
Wayne	76,258	5,809	66.6	13,512	13,321	79.2
Weberster	10,580	2,642	25.0	13,321	13,321	79.2
Wilson	13,235	9,428	71.2	19,759	19,759	46.8
Yalobusha	12,502	5,540	44.3	8,393	71.2	-3.4
Zapoo	31,653	18,791	59.4	12,502	4,719	43.7

Table 8, concluded

Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Table 10 -- Years of school completed by persons 25 or older, 1960

Race	Number 25 and over	Years completed					high schoo	
		none	1-4	5-6	7	8	1-3	4
Nonwhite								
number	383,017	24,318	92,063	61,525	37,729	67,239	42,547	16,273
percentage		8.4	31.3	20.2	9.1	12.4	11.1	4.2
White								
number	681,959	8,444	40,274	51,865	38,450	98,287	156,554	168,058
percentage		1.2	5.9	7.6	5.6	14.4	23.0	24.6

Median grade: Nonwhite - grade 6 (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)  
White ---- grade 11

Table 11 -- Employment status of the civilian, noninstitutional population in Mississippi, by color and sex, 1960 (% distribution)

Employment status and sex.	White			Nonwhite		
	urban	rural non-farm	rural farm	urban	rural non-farm	rural farm
Both sexes:						
Total, 14 years and over	100	100	100	100	100	100
In labor force	57.6	49.3	48.9	58.1	45.7	45.1
Not in labor force	42.4	50.7	51.1	41.9	44.3	44.9
In labor force employed unemployed	96.0 4.0	94.6 5.4	96.3 3.7	91.2 8.8	92.9 7.1	95.3 4.7
Females:						
Total, 14 years and over	100	100	100	100	100	100
In labor force	37.7	29.1	24.1	48.9	30.5	21.5
Not in labor force	62.3	70.9	75.9	51.1	69.5	78.5
In labor force employed unemployed	95.3 4.7	95.0 5.0	95.0 5.0	92.0 8.0	91.7 8.3	90.2 9.8

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Age	Total, 14 years up			
	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite
14-19	100	100	100	100
20-24	16.5	40.8	39.4	42.6
25-29	25.2	39.5	43.4	47.2
30-34	30.2	41.2	43.3	47.2
35-39	35.2	41.2	43.9	48.8
40-44	35.3	41.9	46.6	44.0
45-49	35.3	41.9	46.6	45.3
50-54	35.9	45.4	49.1	46.3
55-59	36.4	45.9	50.1	49.1
60-64	36.8	47.4	51.0	50.7
65-69	37.8	49.0	54.2	49.0
70+ up	38.8	51.2	57.2	50.9

Table 13 -- Total in Labor Force (percentage), by ages, 1960

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

white	nonwhite	white	nonwhite	7.1
1950	1960	4.5	4.5	2.7

Table 12 -- Rate of unemployment, 1950-1960

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Table 11, continued Nonwhite White

## Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Report for Miss. Field Staff, continued

Table 14 -- Industry grouping of employed persons, 1960 (percentage distribution)

INDUSTRY	NONWHITE				WHITE			
	State	Urban	Rural non-farm	Rural farm	State	Urban	Rural non-farm	Rural farm
Agriculture	34.9	3.1	36.0	76.5	12.8	1.2	8.4	47.1
Manufacturing	4.6	6.7	4.4	2.0	23.3	20.1	29.1	20.2
Wholesale trade	1.3	2.4	1.1	0.2	3.2	4.6	2.5	1.1
Mining	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.8
Transportation, Communications and other public utilities	4.0	3.6	3.3	1.5	4.8	6.1	3.3	2.8
Retail Trade	8.5	14.4	7.4	1.7	16.9	20.9	16.9	7.5
Service industries	35.9	55.1	31.7	12.4	26.1	31.1	23.0	10.8
Industry not reported	2.1	2.6	1.9	1.5	1.9	2.2	1.7	1.8

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Table 15 -- Major group occupation of the experienced unemployed, 1960 (%)

Group	Male		Female	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite
Professional	2.4	0.6	5.5	1.2
Farmers and farm managers	3.2	3.5	0.4	3.2
Managers, officials, proprietors	3.5	0.2	2.5	0.1
Clerical and kindred workers	4.4	0.9	18.6	0.6
Sales workers	4.0	0.2	10.9	0.5
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred operatives	28.5	10.4	1.2	0.1
Operatives and kindred workers	29.1	21.1	35.2	5.6
Private household workers	0.1	0.7	2.4	39.8
Service workers, except private household workers	3.0	6.1	12.5	12.8
Farm laborers and foremen	4.8	21.5	2.4	31.5
Laborers, except farm and mine	13.3	31.9	0.7	1.0
Occupations not reported	3.7	3.0	7.6	3.7

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Table 16 -- Median income for persons, 1950 and 1960

	1950			1960		
	state	urban	rural	state	urban	rural
	Nonwhite	\$440	\$693	\$390	\$606	\$474
White		\$1,236	\$1826	\$973	\$2,023	\$2,622
						\$1,605

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Report for Miss. Field Staff, Continued

Table 18 -- Negro housing in Mississippi, 1960

	State Total	Urban	Rural
Total Housing Units	207,611	77,824	129,787
owner-occupied (#)	79,059	32,913	46,146
owner-occupied (%)	38.1	42.3	35.6
renter-occupied (#)	128,552	44,911	83,641
renter-occupied (%)	61.9	57.5	64.4
Condition			
Owner-Occupied:			
sound	36,656	17,677	18,979
deteriorating	27,545	10,005	17,540
dilapidated	14,858	5,231	9,627
Renter-Occupied			
sound	33,168	15,294	17,874
deteriorating	52,629	15,937	36,692
dilapidated	42,755	13,680	29,075
Water Supply			
Hot and Cold Water, piped inside	40,870	33,181	7,689
Only cold Water, piped inside	39,101	30,376	8,725
Piped water outside	27,502	10,229	17,273
No piped water	100,138	4,038	96,100
Toilet Facilities			
Flush Toilet, exclusive use	62,160	52,481	9,679
Flush Toilet, shared use	7,570	6,965	605
None	137,881	18,378	119,503
Bathing Facilities			
Bathtub or shower, exclusive use	44,991	36,333	8,658
Bathtub or shower, shared	2,207	1,807	400
No bathtub or shower	160,413	39,684	120,729

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)