

Library

N

323.3
Work

Negro in America 1866-1922

M. N. Work

Copy 2

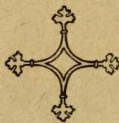
A Half Century of Progress

A Contrast

The Negro in America in 1866 and
in 1922

By MONROE N. WORK

Department of Records and Research
Tuskegee Institute

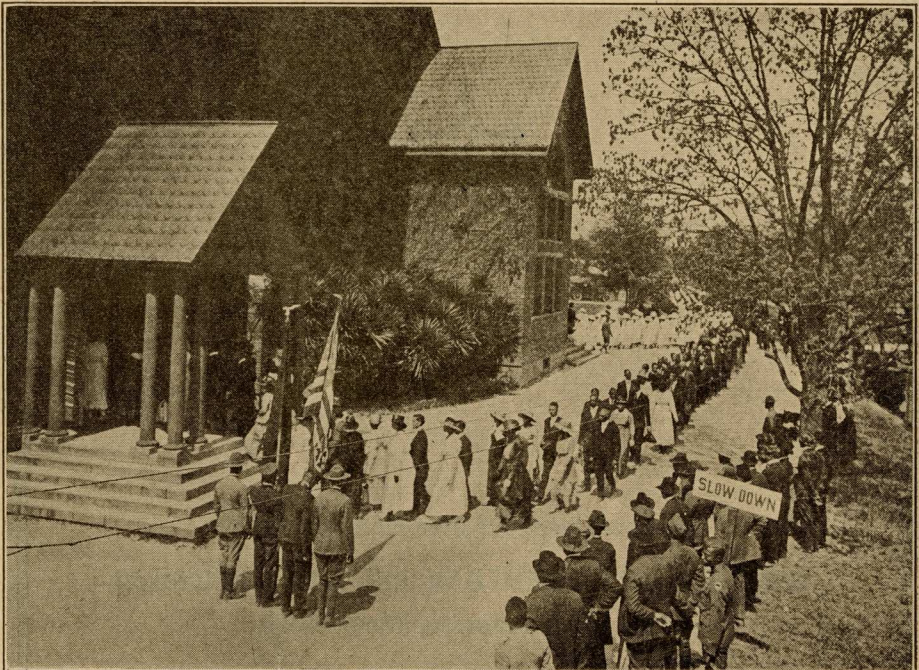


Reprinted from the June Number of the
MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD
156 Fifth Avenue, New York

(Copyrighted)



A TYPICAL OLD-STYLE NEGRO CABIN IN AMERICA



A RECENT COMMENCEMENT AT TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

The sign at the right refers to automobiles, not to Negroes

The Negro in America Yesterday and To-day

A Half Century of Progress

The Negro in America in 1866 and in 1922

BY MONROE N. WORK, TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA

Director of Department of Records and Research, Tuskegee Institute and Editor of the "Negro Year Book"

TO a very large extent January 1, 1866 was the beginning of the opportunity for the Negro in every part of the nation to make progress. Thirteen days before this time—that is, on December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment declaring slavery abolished in every part of the country was adopted. In 1866 there were five million Negroes in the United States; there are now eleven million. This is a population three million greater than that of Belgium; it is greater than that of Holland and Switzerland combined or of Norway, Sweden and Denmark combined.

The progress which the Negroes have made since their emancipation is remarkable and worthy of consideration. It is for convenience summarized in the following table under three heads, economic, educational and religious.

Some Lines of Progress	1866	1922	Gain in Fifty-six Years
ECONOMIC PROGRESS—			
Homes Owned,	12,000	650,000	638,000
Farms Operated,	20,000	1,000,000	980,000
Businesses Conducted,	2,100	60,000	57,900
Wealth Accumulated,	\$20,000,000	\$1,500,000,000	\$1,480,000,000
EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS—			
Per Cent Literate,	10	80	70
Colleges and Normal Schools,	15	500	485
Students in Public Schools,	100,000	2,000,000	1,900,000
Teachers in all Schools,	600	44,000	43,400
Property for Higher Education,	\$60,000	\$30,000,000	\$29,940,000
Annual Expenditures for Education, ...	\$700,000	\$28,000,000	\$27,300,000
Raised by Negroes,	80,000	2,000,000	1,920,000
RELIGIOUS PROGRESS—			
Number of Churches,	700	45,000	44,300
Number of Communicants,	600,000	4,800,000	4,200,000
Number of Sunday Schools,	1,000	46,000	45,000
Sunday School Pupils,	50,000	2,250,000	2,200,000
Value of Church Property,	\$1,500,000	\$90,000,000	\$88,500,000

Moral Progress.—Although there is no concrete way of measuring moral progress, the question can well be raised whether any people can make substantial and continued development unless this development has a moral foundation. If this is true, then it can be said that although not admitting of actual demonstration, the Negro

has nevertheless made moral progress. It can also be said that this moral progress has expressed itself concretely in the economic, educational and religious improvement of the race, particularly in the improvement in home life. One of the most significant features in the progress of the Negroes is that starting with no well defined family life they have established in a half century over two million homes.

Home Owning.—It is estimated that the Negroes started in 1866 with about twelve thousand homes owned. It was found in 1890 when the first census of proprietorship of homes was taken, that the Negroes had acquired ownership of 264,288 homes. The number of these homes on farms was 120,738. The number of city homes owned was 143,550. The Census of 1910 recorded that the Negroes owned 506,590 homes. Of these 221,535 were farm homes and 285,055 were town homes.

The report on home owning by Negroes from the 1920 Census is not yet available. It is estimated, however, that they now own over six hundred thousand homes; that is, one home out of every four which they have established is owned. This is a remarkable showing and has great significance for the future of the race. It is safe to say that any people, starting with a handicap of poverty and ignorance, who can in fifty years become owners of one-fourth of all the homes which they have, are making progress along those lines which make for a high degree of citizenship.

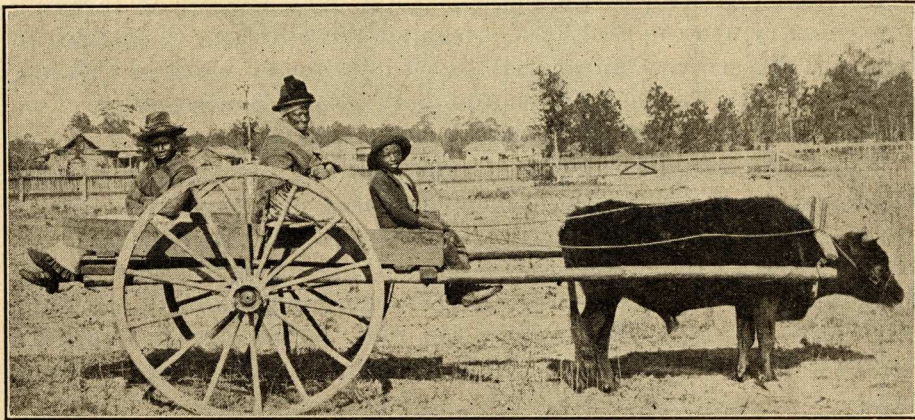
Religious Progress.—Fifty years ago religious denominations were just beginning to be organized in the South. In a few places, as Savannah and Augusta, Georgia, the Negroes owned church buildings. In many instances as at Beaufort, South Carolina, they worshiped with the white congregations. In most cases, however, they worshiped in rude praise houses, which were often nothing more than bush arbors. After emancipation they immediately began to replace these rude places of worship by more respectable churches.

No other people have given a larger percentage of their earnings for religious work. Over eight per cent of the total wealth of the Negroes is in church property. Fifty years ago the value of all the church property which they owned was only a few thousand dollars. Now they own church property to the value of about \$90,000,000. The progress of the work carried on by Negro religious denominations during the past few years has been notable for the erection or purchases of large church buildings costing in many instances more than one hundred thousand dollars each. The tendency is to make of these churches social centers and to carry on many activities other than the formal church service. This would appear to be a new and distinct advance in the development of church work by Negroes.

Negro Ministers.—Fifty years ago it was difficult for a Negro minister to obtain a competent training anywhere in the United

States. Only three institutions of higher learning, the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, and the Oneida Institute, Whitesboro, New York, were open to them. In contrast with that time, there are now for the training of Negro ministers 35 theological schools and departments. Fifty years ago the only demand made of Negro ministers was that they should have good lung power and be able to put on the "rousements." Now, everywhere the demand is for a trained and efficient ministry.

More and more the General Conferences and other ruling bodies of Negro denominations are placing emphasis upon the importance of having trained and efficient ministers. The educational qualifications for persons to enter the ministry are constantly being raised. Negro ministers have developed sufficiently in strength and education to have high honors conferred upon them by white denom-



A SYMBOL OF NEGRO PROGRESS IN AMERICA FIFTY YEARS AGO

inations. The Theological Seminary of Virginia, a white Protestant Episcopal institution located at Alexandria, at its 1917 commencement conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity on a Negro, Archdeacon James S. Russell. The Protestant Episcopal Church has recently elected three Negro bishops in that denomination as suffragan bishops. They are Edwin T. Demby, Theodore M. Gardiner, and Henry B. Delaney.

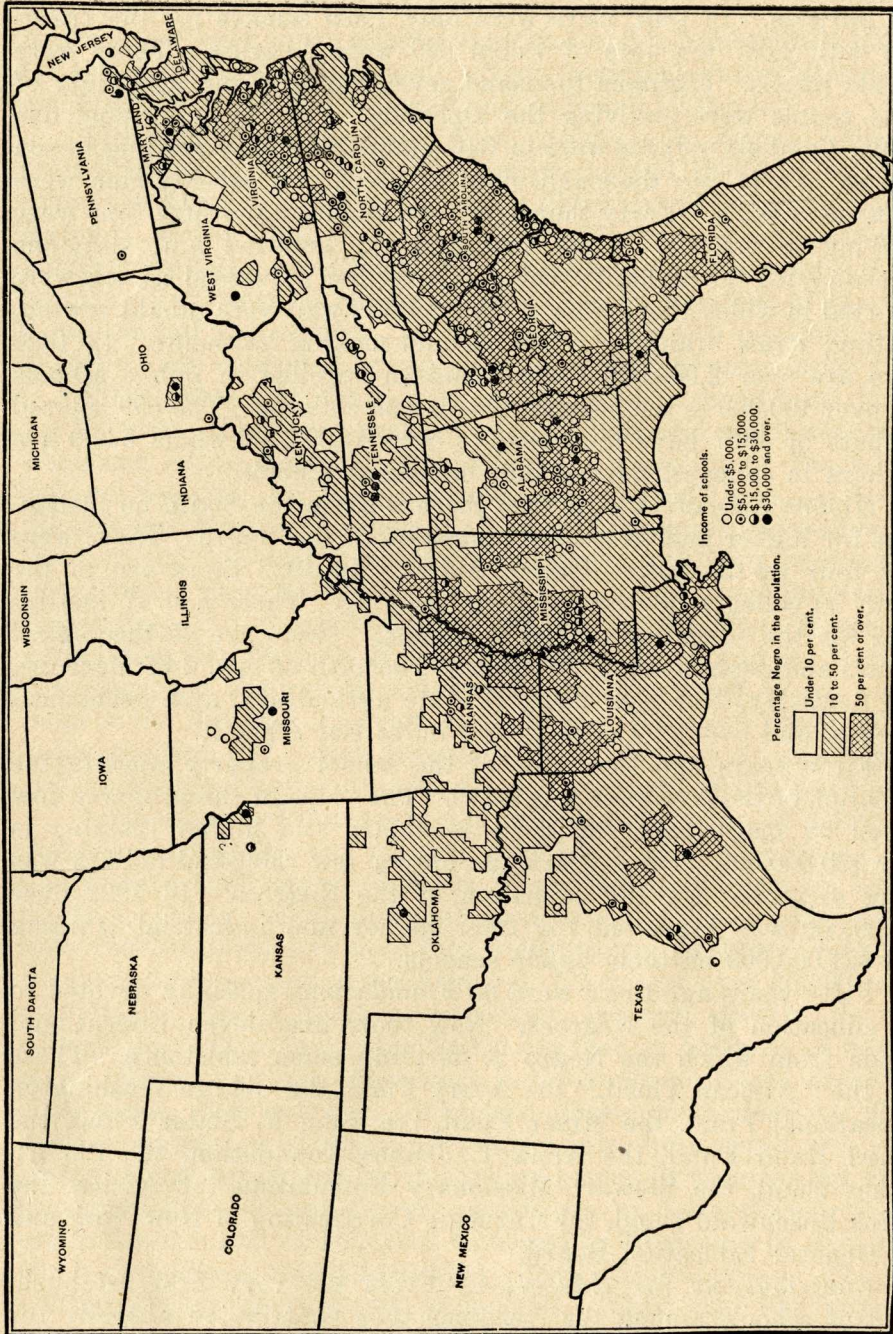
At the 1920 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the largest of all Methodist bodies, two Negroes, Matthew W. Clair and Robert E. Jones were elected with full ecclesiastical powers and prerogatives to the Board of Bishops of that denomination. It is worthy to note in this connection that the founder of mission work of the Methodist Episcopal denomination was a Negro. As a preliminary to the celebration in 1919 of the 100th anniversary of the beginning of missionary work of that denomination, a tablet was unveiled to this Negro at Upper Sandusky, Ohio, with the inscrip-

tion, "John Stewart, Apostle of the Wyandotte Indians, Father, Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Missionary Work.—All of the important Negro denominations now maintain home and foreign missionary departments. As early as 1847 the African Methodist Episcopal Church organized missionary societies. It was not, however, until after Emancipation that Negro churches had opportunity to do aggressive missionary work. Negro churches are contributing every year over \$250,000 for home missionary work. They are supporting some 200 home missionaries and giving aid to more than 350 churches. This is a larger number of churches and ministers than there were in regularly organized Negro denominations in 1866. Negro churches are contributing annually over \$150,000 to foreign missionary work. The Negro Baptists are carrying on missionary work in Central, South and West Africa. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is carrying on missionary work in South America and West Africa. The African Methodist Episcopal Church carries on missionary work in Canada, the West Indies, South America and in West and South Africa. This denomination keeps two bishops stationed in Africa.

Sunday Schools.—Fifty years ago the organization of Sunday schools among the Negroes of the South was just beginning. There was at first not much difference between the day schools and the Sunday schools; for in each the people had to be taught the rudiments of learning. In 1863 there were in the Southland probably less than 100 Negro Sunday schools with less than 10,000 pupils. In 1922 there were more than 46,000 of these schools with over 2,250,000 pupils.

In June, 1912, just fifty years from the time that the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation was made, the Sunday School Congress of the National Baptist Convention met at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. In those parts of the country where fifty years before, the Negroes in Sunday schools were being taught to read and write, these Sunday school workers traveled in special Pullman cars and met in a national organization. They had their own Sunday school literature and singing books, with songs and anthems written by Negroes, who themselves had either been slaves or were descendants of slaves. At this Sunday School Congress there were 17 editions of song books which had been written by Negroes and published in Negro publishing houses. There are now four large publishing houses which devote the larger part of their output to supplying the demand for Negro church literature. These houses are the A. M. E. Book Concern of Philadelphia; the A. M. E. Sunday School Union Publishing House of Nashville; the National Baptist Publishing Board of Nashville, and the A. M. E. Zion Publishing Board of Charlotte, North Carolina.



DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICAN NEGROES AND LOCATION OF IMPORTANT PRIVATE AND HIGHER SCHOOLS FOR NEGROES

Education.—Fifty years ago the education of the Negro in the South had just begun. There were less than 100 schools devoted to this purpose. In 1867 there were only 1,839 schools for the freedmen with 2,087 teachers of whom 699 were Negroes. There were 111,442 pupils. Eighteen thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight of these people were studying the alphabet. Fifty-five thousand one hundred and sixty-three were in the spelling and easy reading lesson classes. Forty-two thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine were learning to write. Forty thousand four hundred and fifty-four were studying arithmetic. Four thousand six hundred and sixty-one were studying the higher branches. Thirty-five industrial schools were reported in which there were 2,124 students who were taught sewing, knitting, straw braiding, repairing and making garments. In 1922 there are over 2,000,000 Negro children enrolled in public schools and over 100,000 in the normal schools and colleges. The 699 colored teachers of 1867 have increased to over 44,000, of whom 5,000 are teachers in colleges, normal and industrial schools.

Higher Education.—In 1863 there were in the South no institutions for higher and secondary education of the Negro. There were only four in the entire United States. In 1922 there are in the South 50 colleges devoted to their training. There are 17 institutions for the education of Negro women. There are 35 theological schools and departments. There are 2 schools of law, 2 of medicine, 2 of dentistry, 2 of pharmacy, 17 state agricultural and mechanical colleges, and over 400 normal and industrial schools.

Fifty years ago the value of the school property used in the education of the freedmen was small. The value of the property now owned by institutions for their secondary and higher training is over \$30,000,000. Fifty years ago only a few thousand dollars was being expended for the education of the Negroes. In 1922 over \$7,000,000 was expended for their higher and industrial training and \$21,000,000 on their public schools.

Fifty years ago there were no Foundations specially devoted to the education of the Negroes. Now there are eleven Educational Funds from which the Negro is deriving some assistance. These are, the "African Third," the Avery Fund, the George Washington Educational Fund, the Miner Fund, the John F. Slater Fund, the Daniel Hand Fund, the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, the Stewart Missionary Foundation for Africa, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the General Education Board.

Contributions for Education.—From the very first establishment of schools among the freedmen they contributed liberally for their support. In 1867 there were 555 schools which were supported entirely by them and 501 in part. It is estimated that from 1866 to 1870, out of their poverty, the freedmen contributed over \$700,000

for school buildings and the support of teachers. After fifty years their interest and self-help in education has in no wise abated. The Negroes are each year raising over two and a half million dollars for the support of their schools. Negro religious denominations are maintaining about 175 colleges and industrial schools.

Although there has been great progress in Negro education during the past fifty years, the equipment and facilities in Negro schools are, on the whole, far below those in white schools. The majority of the rural schools in the South are still without school buildings, and the average length of their terms is from three to five months. The Negroes constitute about eleven per cent of the total population of the country. A little more than two per cent of the \$1,288,000,000 expended annually for education is spent upon them.

Fifty years ago there were no national organizations among the Negroes. There are now for their educational advancement the American Negro Academy, the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools; for their economic advancement there are the National Negro Business League, the National Bankers' Association and the National Ass'n of Insurance Companies; for their professional advancement there are the National Medical Association, the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, the National Negro Bar Association, the National Negro Press Association and the National Association of Colored Musicians. In the interest of Negro women there is the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. There is also the National Urban League for Social Service Among Negroes and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Occupations.—Fifty years ago, with the exception of a few carpenters, blacksmiths and masons, practically all the Negroes in the South were agricultural workers. Freedom gave them an opportunity to engage in all sorts of occupations. The census reports show that there are now very few, if any pursuits followed by whites in which there are not some Negroes. There are over 60,000 in the professions, that is, teachers, preachers, lawyers, doctors, dentists, editors, etc. There are some 50,000 engaged in business of various sorts. Fifty years ago there were in the South no Negro architects, electricians, photographers, druggists, pharmacists, dentists, physicians or surgeons; no Negro owners of mines, cotton mills, dry goods stores, insurance companies, publishing houses or theatres, no wholesale merchants, no newspapers or editors, no undertakers, no real estate dealers, and no hospitals managed by Negroes. In 1922 there are Negroes managing all the above kinds of enterprises. They are editing 450 newspapers and periodicals. They own 100 insurance companies, 700 drug stores and over 40,000 grocery and other stores. There are 500,000 or more Negroes working in the trades and in other occupations requiring skill: blacksmiths, carpenters, cabinet makers, masons, miners, engineers, iron and steel workers, factory operators,

printers, lithographers, engravers, gold and silver workers, tool and cutlery makers, etc.

Inventors.—Fifty years ago it was unlawful to issue a patent to a slave, and the Attorney General of the United States had just ruled that in spite of the “Dred Scott” decision patents might still be issued to free persons of color. Since that time over 2,000 patents have been granted to Negroes. These have been chiefly for mechanical appliances and labor-saving devices. Some of the things which Negroes have recently invented are, a telephone register, a hydraulic scrubbing brush, a weight motor for machinery, aeroplanes, an automatic car switch and an automatic feed attachment for adding machines.

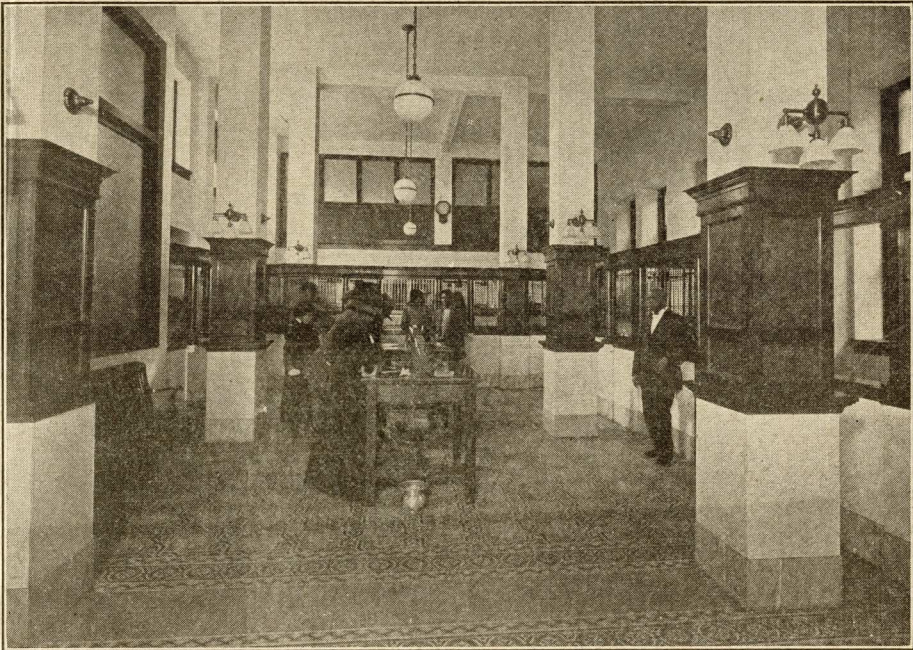
In Business.—In 1866 it was not in the imagination of the most optimistic that within fifty years Negroes would be making good in the field of finance, be receiving ratings in the financial world, and be successful operators of banks. When in 1888 the legislature of Virginia was asked to grant a charter for a Negro bank, the request was first treated as a joke. There are now 14 Negro banks in that state and 78 in the entire country. They are capitalized at about \$100,000,000. Another evidence of the progress of the Negro in business is the buying of property in which hundreds of thousands of dollars are involved, as for example the Strand Theater Building on Broad Street in Richmond, Virginia, was sold to a group of Negroes for \$113,000 cash. The United Investment Corporation of Atlanta, Georgia, bought property on Auburn Avenue at an expenditure of approximately \$100,000. The Jesse Binga Banking Firm of Chicago purchased property on South State Street for which \$200,000 was paid. In almost every city where there are any considerable number of Negroes, they have either purchased or erected substantial and commodious buildings to house their business enterprises. The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company has erected a seven story office building at Durham.

In Agriculture.—Great progress has been made in agriculture. In 1866 there were in all the United States only a few farms controlled by Negroes. They now operate in the South, 915,595 farms which are 243,282 more than there were in this section in 1866. Negro farm laborers and Negro farmers in the South now cultivate approximately 100,000,000 acres of land, of which over 40,000,000 acres are under the control of Negro farmers. The increase of Negro farm owners in the South in the past fifty years compares favorably with the increase of white farm owners.

Before 1866 there were no Negroes controlling farms in the South. There were on the other hand in this section, 672,000 whites operating farms, practically all of whom owned their farms. In fifty years the number of farms operated by whites in the South increased by 1,168,000. Of this increase, 729,000 or 45 per cent were

of owners and 889,000 or 55 per cent were of tenants. During this same period 915,595 Negroes acquired control of farms; of this number 212,365 or 23 per cent were owners.

When the great difference in the condition of white and Negro farmers fifty years ago is taken into account, the progress of the Negroes compared with that of the whites makes a commendable showing. For when at the close of the Civil War the Negroes started on their career as farmers they had no land and no experience as farm owners or tenants; none of them became farm owners by inheritance, nor did any of them inherit money with which to purchase



INTERIOR OF A NEGRO SAVINGS BANK IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
The cashier for over 20 years is a Talladega College graduate

land. Of the million and a half white farmers added since 1866, a large number were the children of land owners.

Property.—During the past fifty years there has been a rapid increase in the wealth of Negroes. According to the most recent reports concerning property owning, it is found that in 1920, Negroes in North Carolina paid taxes on \$53,901,018 worth of property. In Virginia, Negroes in 1921 owned 1,911,443 acres of land valued at \$17,600,148. The total assessed value of their property in that state was \$52,505,951. In Georgia where there has been a continuous report on Negro property owning for a half century, it is found that in 1875, the Negroes of that state had acquired almost four hundred thousand acres of land, (396,658), valued at \$1,263,902. The total

value of the property on which they were then paying taxes was \$5,293,885. In 1920, forty-five years later, the Negroes of Georgia owned 1,838,129 acres of land valued at \$20,808,594. The value of their total property in that state had increased from \$5,293,885 to \$68,628,514. Through purchases and increases in values, property holdings of Negroes of the country increased during 1921 by probably 50 million dollars. It is estimated that the value of the property now owned by Negroes of the United States is over one billion five hundred million dollars. The lands which they now own amount to more than twenty-two million acres or more than thirty-four thousand



A NEW TYPE OF HOME OF THE THRIFTY SOUTHERN NEGRO

square miles, an area greater than that of the five New England States, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

No other emancipated people have made so great a progress in so short a time. The Russian serfs were emancipated in 1861. Fifty years after it was found that 14,000,000 of them had accumulated about \$500,000,000 worth of property or about \$36 per capita, an average of about \$200 per family. Fifty years after their emancipation only about 30 per cent of the Russian peasants were able to read and write. After fifty years of freedom the eleven million Negroes in the United States have accumulated over \$1,500,000,000 worth of property, or over \$100 per capita, which is an average of \$350 per family. After fifty years of freedom 80 per cent of them have some education in books.