

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HARRY H. JONES OVER RADIO STATION
W W V A, WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA, ON PROGRAM OF RACE
RELATIONS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1936 - TIME 7 MINUTES.

"WHEELING'S TWENTIETH MAN."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

About one out of every twenty persons living in Wheeling is of African descent. This twentieth man is not a new comer nor an alien, for his ancestors were settled by force in Virginia one year before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Nationally, our colored population knows but one country - The United States; it swears allegiance to but one flag - the stars and stripes; it acknowledges but one capitol - Washington.

A brief survey of our local colored population shows: that the group has six churches of three denominations; that it owns real estate worth about \$500,000; that it manages one fraternal corporation worth nearly \$130,000; one drug store, one tailor shop, two restaurants, two billiard parlors, and two beauty shops. In the professions, business, trades and personal service, the group is represented by: four physicians; two dentists; twelve clergymen; one lawyer; twenty two school teachers; one chiropodist; two undertakers; two social workers; three tailors; four beauty parlor operators; two master hat cleaners, and a large number employed as cooks, maids, waiters, messengers, porters, bootblacks, janitors, elevator operators, chauffeurs, and

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and barbers. Our city government employs three firemen and one patrol driver. The county government has no man of color in its employ.

Generally, the relations between the two races in this community have been peaceful and helpful. No serious bi-racial clash has ever taken place in the city's history; due largely to the liberal attitude of the whites and the splendid conduct of the colored people.

But justice and candor require attention to the handicaps suffered by Wheeling's twentieth man. He has been denied equal school facilities as intended by law; he has been discriminated against in industry by both employer and organized labor; he has no representation on any voluntary or governmental agency concerned with social service; he has been refused employment in civil affairs by both our city and county governments; he has practically no recreational facilities provided by public taxation, though he pays his ^{proportionate} ~~proportionate~~ share, and our public parks, with respect to certain facilities, are denied to him.

The three pressing major injustices endured by our local colored people have to do with school facilities, jobs and recreation. The only public school in the city which colored children may attend is Lincoln. It was built forty three years ago as an eight room elementary school, to house about 252 pupils. Today, it furnishes accomadations for 494 pupils, and serves as both an ele-

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mentary and high school. This school has sent out 327 graduates, who have gone into the professions, civil service, trades and personal service. The school is undoubtedly a fire hazard; its location on the National Highway makes it a danger to life and limb of pupils, teachers and patrons. The injustice of the whole situation is brought home when we are reminded that if a white parent is dissatisfied with the school facilities offered to his child, he can move into another school district, but if a colored parent is so dissatisfied, he must send his child to the same antiquated, dangerous school building, regardless of where he moves in this county. Plain justice demands that this community should provide equal school facilities for its colored children to prepare them to live and make a living.

In industry, the color line has been drawn ~~to~~ against local colored workers with a maximum degree of thoroughness. The group as a whole, has been barred from employment in our local factories, mills, shops and stores. The group generally has been restricted to personal and domestic service and coal mining. Employers and organized labor are largely responsible for the Negro's industrial plight. A reading of the "job want" columns of our local papers will verify this complaint of discrimination. Apparently, the test is COLOR of the worker; not his or her training, experience and character.

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It is therefore urged, that both employers and labor leaders assume a more tolerant and just attitude toward their colored neighbors in this community in the matter of filling vacancies or newly created jobs, to the end that our colored group as a whole may have "a man's chance in our industrial life." By so doing, our colored citizenry will be able to contribute more largely to community wealth and welfare. For, out of every dollar a local colored person earns, his local merchant, butcher, baker and others in business, are bound to get a portion of it. He has no other place to spend it; he has no relatives in foreign lands to send it to, nor any property outside of this country to pay for.

For amusements and recreation, our local colored group is restricted to one theater; one inadequately provided and inaccessible playground; a branch of the Y. W. C. A., and a temporary recreation center provided by Federal funds. This is a hardship not only felt by the adults, but also by the children. For the only colored school here has no gymnasium, no swimming pool, and no auditorium.

If you will give our local colored citizens an equal chance, you will have nearly six thousand of hands to aid you in pulling the community load upward; if you do not, they will pull against you the community load downward. They shall constitute one twentieth of ignorance and crime in Wheeling; or, one twentieth of its intelligence and progress; they shall contribute one twentieth more to business and industrial progress of Wheeling, or they shall constitute a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance our local social order.

