5-1955

Corpus Christi: a Sociological Analysis of a Catholic Negro Parish in New Orleans

Charles Santo Palazzolo
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/8301

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
CORPUS CHRISTI: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
OF A CATHOLIC NEGRO PARISH IN NEW ORLEANS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in
The Department of Sociology

by
Charles Santo Palazzolo
Ph.B., Loyola University, 1953
May, 1955
MANUSCRIPT THESES

Unpublished theses submitted for the master's and doctor's degrees and deposited in the Louisiana State University Library are available for inspection. Use of any thesis is limited by the rights of the author. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may not be copied unless the author has given permission. Credit must be given in subsequent written or published work.

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its clientele is expected to make sure that the borrower is aware of the above restrictions.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

119-a
DEDICATION:
To Mother and Dad
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The interest of the author in the field of Sociology, and more specifically, in the Sociology of Religion, was initiated by Father Joseph H. Fichter, S. J. of Loyola University of the South in New Orleans, Louisiana, to whom the writer gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness.

The patience and encouragement which Dr. Vernon J. Parenton of the Louisiana State University Department of Sociology has shown during the writer's two years of study at Louisiana State University have been of no small consequence. As the writer's Major Professor, Dr. Parenton has willingly offered guidance and constructive criticism in the preparation of this thesis. For these important contributions to the author's academic training, particular citation of indebtedness is here gratefully given.

It is the desire of the writer to thank also Dr. Homer L. Hitt, Head of the Department of Sociology, and Dr. Roland J. Pellegrin of the same department, for their assistance given during the last two years of study and in the preparation of this thesis.

It would have been impossible to perform the present task without the kind consent and assistance
of the four Corpus Christi Parish priests with whom the writer has had contact. For their assistance in the preparation of this thesis, the writer wishes to sincerely thank Fathers George Hanks (Past Pastor), Gilbert Demers (Present Pastor), Earle Newman (Assistant), and James Walsh (Assistant), of the Society of Saint Joseph.

For assistance in compiling historical facts about Corpus Christi Parish, the writer wishes to thank Mr. A. P. Tureaud, Lawyer of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Father James F. Benedict, who has kindly aided in the printing of the interview schedules. The photographic work which Mr. Nicholas J. Gagliano has contributed to this study is deeply appreciated.

The writer wishes to thank, also, Dr. George A. Hillery of the University of Georgia, Atlanta Division, for his interest and stimulation during the early phases of this work.

The writer wishes to indicate his particular debt of gratitude to Miss Nettie Jean Smith who has not only patiently typed this thesis but who has also been a close and considerate friend.

Finally, the author is aware of his indebtedness to his fellow graduate students whose names are too numerous to list here. For every assistance given in the preparation of this thesis, the author is deeply grateful. It
must be understood, however, that the writer, himself, is completely responsible for the statements contained in this study.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Problem: Background and Objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Scope of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The Study Area: Criteria for Selection of the Area and Area Delimitation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART ONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SOCIAL HISTORY OF CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CORPUS CHRISTI</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. New Orleans Negro Missions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Legal Establishment of Corpus Christi</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Building the Parish Plant</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Leakage in the Parish</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE PEOPLE OF CORPUS CHRISTI</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The First People of Corpus Christi</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Josephite Fathers: Priests of Corpus Christi</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament: Teachers at Corpus Christi Parochial School</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Territorial Limits of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish and Smaller &quot;Core Area&quot; Used for Determination of the Sample Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Spatial Distribution: Negro Missions in New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Charter of Corpus Christi Congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Deed of Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Frequency of Infant Reception of the Sacrament of Baptism in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Age-Sex Pyramid for the Sample Population of Corpus Christi &quot;Core Area.&quot; 1954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE                        PAGE
I.  Catholic Negro Missions in New Orleans, Louisiana  22
II. Mission Territorial Boundaries by Letter and Name  23
III. Reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony and the Number of Conversions: 1925-1954.  56
IV. Corpus Christi Parish Organizations and Membership  73
V.  The Relationship of French and Non-French Ancestry to Skin Color in Corpus Christi Parish  91
VI. Size of Household for Sample Population of Corpus Christi "Core Area"  103
VII. Years of Schooling Completed for the Total Sample Population of Corpus Christi "Core Area" 15 Years of Age and Over  107
VIII. Major Periodicals Read, by Frequency, for the 100 Sample Families of Corpus Christi "Core Area." 1954  111
IX.  Occupational Groupings for the 100 Heads of Households Involved in the Sampling of Corpus Christi "Core Area." 1954  121
X.  Items Present in Dwellings of 100 Sample Families of Corpus Christi "Core Area." 1954  126
XI. Recreational Activities of the Total Sample Population of Corpus Christi "Core Area" by Families. 1954  135
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze a community of predominantly light-skinned Catholic Negroes as members of the parochial organization of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish. Utilizing both the socio-historical and institutional approaches to the study of community, the objectives of the study were: (1) to present a history of the parish since its establishment in 1916; (2) to define the social organization of the parish; (3) to present a general view of the involvements of the parish membership in the familial, educational, economic, political, and recreational institutions; (4) to indicate the attitudes of each interviewee concerning residence and race; and (5) to indicate the implications rising out of such a study.

The evidence presented suggests that Corpus Christi is a fairly well-functioning Catholic parish having adequate means to realize its most important goal: the spiritual direction of its membership. The main conclusions of the study are: (1) the people of Corpus Christi are generally of light skin, this factor exerting an influence upon the many phases of each member's life situation; (2) economically, the Corpus Christi membership is, roughly, of the middle class category; (3) these
people are uncertain of their position, especially as Negroes; and (4) the two most problematic situations in parochial activity are the lack of priests to staff the parish and leakage from the parish.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem: Background and Objectives

This is a study in the Sociology of Religion: a new area within the field of Social Relations relatively untouched by the social scientist. Although community studies today are numerous and common food for the modern researcher, their impact upon the Sociology of Religion has scarcely been felt. It is true, and it must necessarily be stated, that within most community studies an analysis of the religious institution has been often included. This, however, is not the issue at hand. The sparsity alluded to by the author is within the field of study which places emphasis upon the religious institution; studying the community as a religious group holding religious values, emphasizing interaction within the religious framework of the community. This area has witnessed a definite lack of empirical material. As far as this writer has been able to discover, few studies of this kind have been published.¹

¹One such work, pioneering in the field, has been the study by Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, S. J., Southern Parish: Dynamics of a City Church, Vol. I. See also, Abbe Michonneau, Revolution in a City Church (Oxford: Blackfriars, 1949).
This study arises out of the need for research within the aforementioned field and out of the interest of the author in the Negro race, which has contributed much to the American heritage.

No person can escape the salient aspects of the society in which he lives. The many patterned uniformities and nonconformities which revolve within a social system envelop, in some way or other, each individual as he moves about in the social milieu. Man is a social being and the influences exerted upon him are of no little consequence.

The fact of differences in skin color (and recognition of these by all members of society) is no exception to the above-mentioned observation. Since 1619 when the first Negroes were transported to the United States from the African continent, the observable physical and cultural differences have been marks of distinction which, to the present day, have wrought conflict and differential treatment. This aspect of society is hardly one to be ignored or to escape.

The author became interested in this field during his last years as an undergraduate. During these years

---


3The author's undergraduate studies were taken at Loyola University of the South, New Orleans, Louisiana.
and those following as a graduate student, the feasibility of producing a thesis which might in some way aid in the study of the Negro as an American was actuated when, after a series of conferences with Dr. Vernon J. Parenton, the author decided to study a Catholic Negro community in his "home town." The decision to study a Catholic community was made easy by (1) the author's previous experience in studying Catholic parochial structures, and (2) the realization that, because of close affiliation with this formal religious organization, rapport and access to pertinent information would be more easily obtainable.

The possibility of such a study becoming a reality was given final approbation when the pastor of Corpus Christi Parish admitted the author into the parish and approved the plans for study that were laid before him.

The objectives of this work are four in number:
(1) to present adequate historical background material for Corpus Christi Parish since its incorporation into

---

4 At Loyola University, in the capacity of Assistant in the Department of Sociology, the author worked with the Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, S. J. in the completion of the first of a four-volume work entitled Southern Parish: Dynamics of a City Church.

5 When the study was initiated in July, 1954, Rev. George Hanks, S. S. J. held the position of pastor. He was replaced in September of the same year by the Rev. Gilbert Demers, S. S. J., present pastor.
the Negro parochial structure of Metropolitan New Orleans; (2) an analysis of the present-day community by families using the interview method; (3) to attempt a report of the attitudes of the families involved concerning the concepts of race relations and racial equality; and (4) to indicate the need for and possibilities of further research of this type within the general area of the Sociology of Religion.

B. **Methodology**

A sample was immediately taken in order that the field work involved in the project could be completed before the end of the summer. This, however, involved some difficulties. The parish boundaries enclose some 11,887 parishioners. Sampling this large population would have been in excess of the scope of the study as planned and would have eliminated completely the time schedule necessary for the completion of the project. It was decided that the "core area" of the parish could be sampled without hindrance to the objectives of the study. The 500 families included in this newly delineated area were extracted from the 1950

---

6In this case, the "core area" was interpreted as the 500 families surrounding the parish Church and School squared off for purposes of sampling by four streets. (See Figure 1.)
Figure 1. Territorial Limits of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish and Smaller "Core Area" Used for Determination of the Sample Population
Parish Census Revised. The outer limits of the streets in the "core area" were obtained and listed on one sheet of paper. This formed the basis for extracting the families residing within this smaller parochial area.

The sample of the "core area" population was set at 100 families. In choosing these units from the 500 "core area" units, the following sampling technique was used: From the already alphabetized parish census cards, every fifth card was "pulled" in order of its occurrence. Kept in the order of selection, these 100 cards were used in the field interviewing. Nearing the end of the family interviews, the writer noted that due to two refusals by heads of households the sample could not be completed. It remained to reconstruct from the remaining families in the "core area" another sample of 100 families (using the same method as before) from which the two needed interviews were taken. This completed the necessary sample. The names and addresses of the potential interviewees were placed on 3 x 5 index cards and kept on the interviewer's person during the period of interviewing.

7Each year the Parish Dicennial Census is "worked" by the parish clerics. This involves eliminating parishioners no longer residing in the parish and adding new arrivals into the parish.
When "out in the field," an accurate account was made of the number of calls to each house. It was decided that after a third visit to the potential interviewee's house, the card would be eliminated from the sample cards and replaced. Fortunately, this was never the case. Except in the case of the two refusals, all families required no more than a third visit.

The schedule was designed to include three types of information of Negro families residing in Corpus Christi Parish: (1) determination of general information regarding the head of household and spouse; (2) general information about all members of the family unit; and (3) attitudinal information regarding relations within and without the Negro race. (See Appendix A for schedule.)

The first type of information sought was included in questions concerning the parental origin of head of household and spouse, the economic status of the family unit, and occupation of both mates as well as the political behavior of both parties (and other members if of voting age). This general information also included the discovering of opinions of both parties regarding the education of their offspring and church attendance of the total family unit. Within the framework of membership in Corpus Christi Parish this section of the
interview schedule also attempted to discover the Sacramental Reception practices and active membership in parish organizations of the head of the household and spouse.

The information concerning the entire family unit was, generally, obtained by a chart drawn up and included in the schedule to obtain the following factual information: Religion, Age, Sex, Years of School Completed, Occupation (of all working members of the family unit), Voting Behavior, and Marital Status. Attempting to determine activity of all family members in the organizational and sacramental structures of Corpus Christi Parish, charts were constructed and included in the schedule to obtain for all family members the frequency of sacramental reception and membership in parochial organizations.

The third area of information with which the interviewer was concerned involved an attempt to determine the attitudes of the interviewee through straightforward statements, to which the respondent could reply Yes, No, or No Opinion.

An attempt was made here to determine the amount of interaction on a cultural level existent within the parish. Statements such as the following were involved: "I do not mind my children playing with white children," "I think lots of other Negroes are not as well off (are
better off) than I," "If I had a choice, I would rather be white," "I think white people are O. K. in their place," "Dark-skinned Negroes should stay to themselves," "All in all, I think Negroes should have equality with whites."

More practically, it was hoped that information could be obtained concerning the amount of interaction occurring between the Negro and white races in everyday activity. In order to obtain this type of information, questions such as the following were asked of the interviewee: "I patronize a Negro (or white) doctor, lawyer, grocery, restaurant, jewelry store, department store, clothing store, drugstore," "Where would you rather live—in an all-Negro community, a mixed community, or a predominant white community?"

Two questions were asked in order to ascertain self-placement within the Negro community and the interviewee conception of the predominant socio-economic status of the area in which he resides: "How do you rate yourself in the Negro community—upper class, middle class, working class, lower class?" and "What percentage of Negroes in this area are in the upper class, middle class, working class, and lower class?"

The overt expression of the socio-economic status of each family unit logically could not be discovered from the questions asked to heads of households and
their spouses. It became necessary, therefore, to include, both by questions to the interviewees and observation by the interviewer, certain concrete aspects of the "home situation" which would give credence to the status as defined by the previously-stated questions and answers. These facts were realized in a list of Housing Facilities either present or absent in the home. The list included such facilities as Electricity, Radio, Television, Sewing Machine, Electric Refrigerator, Automobile, Telephone, Electric Fan, Air Conditioning, and Number of Rooms.

This is the extent to which the writer conducted the "field work" involved in data collection. It became evident, however, that the sparse contemporary knowledge of the community obtained from "working" the schedule would not be sufficient in understanding the total interactional situation within the parish. Neither could the sparsity of such information afford the writer an opportunity to delve into the socio-historical aspects of Corpus Christi Parish. The need immediately arose for a division of the methodology into two parts: (1) an extensive report on the social history of the parish from its incorporation into the total parochial framework of the Metropolitan New Orleans area to the present day; and (2) the empirically-oriented community analysis. The reasons for the inclusion of this more theoretical
approach into the over-all methodological approach to the structures and functions within Corpus Christi Parish have been well expressed in an article by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. entitled "Some Logical and Methodological Problems in Community Research":

To say that the social sciences are historical seems almost trite. It is of frequent iteration and is accepted with apparent indifference. We might nonetheless ask ourselves why is there such an apparent neglect of the time dimension in community study although community is a space-oriented phenomenon of social reality? A community has a continuity beyond that of the life of any participant, it transmits a cultural heritage, etc. We shall ignore the contention that the data are not available for analysis in a time dimension. For this contention, while not without merit, seldom is a conclusion which is derived from an exhaustive investigation of what facts are available for studying the time dimension. Rather, we assume there is a sizeable body of information available for such studies, although the representativeness, completeness, reliability, etc. of these data pose special problems. 8

Two authors, in a study of Puerto Rican contemporary societies, give force to the above citation when they state:

...we concluded that we needed as much documentary, historical and institutional study at the insular and supra-insular

---

levels as was practicable and necessary to illuminate and to frame the findings of the community research.9

This area of analysis involved the conduction of numerous and lengthy interviews with the parish clerics and with prominent members of Corpus Christi Parish. From the parish files and from the files of offices connected with the parish,10 the author obtained information dating back to the incorporation of Corpus Christi into the total New Orleans Negro parochial framework.

It is believed that with the use of this two-fold methodological approach to the study of Corpus Christi Parish the information collected and analyzed, concerning the present-day structure and functioning of the parish, will be re-enforced by the additional information on "how the community came to be what it is...."11 In other words, the social history of Corpus Christi Parish becomes a prerequisite to the full understanding of social change within the parish and the interactional elements which exist today within


10One example of such offices is that of Mr. A. P. Tureaud, Lawyer. He is the legal representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) in New Orleans.

11Reiss, op. cit., p. 55.
the parish boundaries. Albert J. Reiss has stated that, "To some extent the descriptive emphasis of the structure-functionalist approach in community research ignores these problematic aspects of change." The author hopes that this is not the case in the present paper. He also hopes that the addition of the socio-historical approach has in some way or other aided the presentation of this report.

C. Scope of the Study

This study is not concerned mainly with racial relations as the term is popularly understood. In other words, a discovery of the ways in which the members of Corpus Christi Negro Parish interact with the white members of other parishes is not the primary aim of this work. It must be understood, however, that no paper which attempts to study either of the two races can completely detach itself from the fact that there is necessarily a relationship of race which cannot be easily overlooked. Only to this extent is the study of Race Relations involved here.

Neither is this study attempting to show Corpus Christi Parish and its members in the light of the total parochial structure within Metropolitan New Orleans. Such a work would become voluminous and much beyond the

\[12\] Ibid.
scope of this present attempt. Once again, however, this aspect cannot be completely dismissed from the interests of this study. Corpus Christi Parish is one of fourteen Negro parishes imposed upon the Metropolitan area of New Orleans. It is in this sense only a part of the larger parochial structure. Although part of this larger organizational structure, Corpus Christi works as an independent establishment with its own organizations, etc. It is in this context that Corpus Christi Parish will be viewed.

This study does attempt an explanation of the total parochial framework in which the members of the parish are presently involved. It will try to indicate the religious habits of the parish members, their economic and political organization and their attitudes toward the more abstract interactional elements which exist in any community. This, it is hoped, will present to the reader an adequate verbal picture of the community as it exists in the present.

Important to a realization of the above intent is the incorporation of a social history of the parish. Moving away, in a sense, from the more empirical approach

---

13 This information was obtained from the 1955 Annual Catholic Directory for Louisiana and Mississippi.

14 See Chapter II of the present study.
to community analysis, this theoretical analysis will attempt to place Corpus Christi Parish in clear perspective. This section of the present work will aim to give a "historical analysis of (Corpus Christi Parish) through time."\(^\text{15}\)

There is no doubt that membership in a formal religious organization such as the Catholic Church imposes upon each member certain moral responsibilities and obligations which cannot be so easily "rubbed off." There are certain rules and regulations laid down by Catholic authority\(^\text{16}\) which define active church membership. Among these are observance of the Ten Commandments of the Church, reception of the Holy Communion at least once a year, and attendance at Holy Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation. In order to remain a practicing Catholic, these regulations must be observed. This paper, therefore, will attempt to indicate the extent of religious observance among the members of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish.

\(^{15}\)Reiss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 56.

\(^{16}\)The highest source of authority in the Catholic hierarchical structure originates in Rome, Italy where the Papacy is situated. Through a well-defined line of authority, the pronouncements made by the World Head of the Catholic Church reach every member throughout the entire world.
With the realization that continual and participatory activity within any formalized religious organization is a cohesive element within the social order, and necessary to the normal functioning of a member of society, this area of analysis gains added significance. Herein lies the scope of the present study.

D. The Study Area: Criteria for Selection of the Area and Area Delimitation

In locating the general area of study five considerations were taken into account: (1) there had to be, necessarily, a heavy concentration of Negroes since the importance of the study lay not in the fact of race relations, but in the amount of cohesion existing within the Negro community with prime consideration placed upon the religious and parochial organization of that community; (2) the area had to be predominantly residential. This aided in determination of the sample; greater ease was provided in the interviewing situation itself. The neighborhood ("core area") even more so than the general area of study had to have this characteristic since the impact of the study was concerned with the relationships of family to family and of family to parish. Attempting to study an industrial or commercial area would have changed the entire facade of the study; while heightening the economic organization of the community, the loss of family-family and family-parish relations would have been disproportionate, rendering the study, as it was
conceived, less significant; (3) since the study involved a considerable amount of field work, facility was provided here by selecting an area territorially close to the author's place of residence. New Orleans was chosen for this reason and also because of the author's personal acquaintance with the finally-chosen area; (4) after realizing the necessity of the above criteria, it remained for the writer to journey "into the field" for observational purposes on four consecutive week ends having preliminary conferences with the Assistant Pastor, meeting as many of the parishioners as possible, and visually surveying the area; (5) final acceptance into the parish by the Pastor and his Assistants was the last and deciding factor in selection of the area.

Bordered on the North by Gentilly Boulevard and N. Dorgenois Street, on the East by London Street and Almonaster Avenue, on the South by N. Villere Street, and on the West by Esplanade Avenue and Gentilly Boulevard, the parish is centrally located in the

---

17 These observations were executed during the months of May and June.

18 Although the Pastor was called upon for formal permission to study the parish, the more detailed conferences were handled by his First Assistant, Rev. Earle Newman, S. S. J.
Northeastern part of Metropolitan New Orleans. The parish boundaries enclose 217 city blocks, of which are within the "core area." The "core area" is centrally located within the parish boundaries. The Northernmost limit reaches to N. Tonti Street; Eastward the limits extend to Annette Street and Southward to N. Derbigny Street; on the West the "core area" ends on Laharpe Street. The above boundaries for the parish and for the "core area" were decided upon before the project was formally begun and were not changed or revised during any phase of the study.

19Previous to 1919 the parish boundaries extended as far North as Lake Pontchatrain, to the City Limits Eastward, Southward to Canal Street, and on the West to City Park Blvd. and Bayou St. John.
PART ONE

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH
CHAPTER II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CORPUS CHRISTI

A. New Orleans Negro Missions

The Roman Catholic parochial structure of New Orleans can be roughly divided into two sections: (1) the white parishes which are seventy-seven in number; and (2) the Negro missions of which there are fourteen. The over-all parochial and mission structure is under the direction of the Archbishop of New Orleans. The actual workings of the parishes and missions are directed by the Office of the Chancery. Highest authority and direction, therefore, are outside the smaller parishes and missions. This is in conformity to the hierarchical organization of the Roman Catholic Church, the absolute authority of which emanates from the Papal Seat in Rome, Italy.

1The official term designating such an area as Corpus Christi is "Mission." The term "Parish," however, is generally used to mean exactly the same since the structure of each Negro Mission is typically parochial; this holds true also for the organizational and sacramental activity of each Negro Mission. The two terms, therefore, may be used interchangeably.

2This information was obtained from the 1955 Annual Catholic Directory for Louisiana and Mississippi.

3Ibid.
The fourteen Negro Missions include all of Metropolitan New Orleans except for a Northwest area from Lake Pontchatrain on the North, Bayou St. John on the East, Metairie Road and City Park Avenue on the South, and the Orleans Parish Line on the West.

The Negro parishes are generally large in comparison to the white parishes, and in the outlying areas of the city proximity to the Negro parish plant is difficult to achieve. This problem has caused a constant revision of parish boundaries and addition of new parishes.⁴ Although the conditions and facilities are still inadequate, three moves have caused an alleviation of this situation: (1) the reorientation of the parochial school system; (2) extended rebuilding within present parochial boundaries; and (3) the 1954 statement by the Archbishop of New Orleans allowing for integration of Negroes into the white parishes.

These Catholic Negro areas vary in territorial size. St. Raymond's and St. Paul's in the Northeast, St. Joan of Arc in the Southwest, Blessed Sacrament in the South, and All Saints' (Algiers) in the Southeast are the five largest, St. Paul's being the largest of all. St. Katherine's, situated Southwest of central New Orleans, is next in order of size. Epiphany, Holy

⁴See Figure 2 for the most recent account of the spatial distribution of Negro Parishes and Tables I and II for an explanation of Figure 2.
SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION:
NEGRO MISSIONS IN NEW ORLEANS

Figure 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Identification of Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All Saints' (Algiers, Louisiana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blessed Sacrament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Epiphany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Holy Ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Holy Redeemer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>St. David's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>St. Joan of Arc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>St. Katherine's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>St. Monica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>St. Paul's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>St. Peter Claver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>St. Philip's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>St. Raymond's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>(New Orleans Area Not Mission Territory)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table II
Mission Territorial Boundaries by Letter and Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Identification of Boundaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Almonaster Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Bayou St. John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>S. Carrollton Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Center Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Chef Menteur Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>City Park Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>S. Claiborne Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>N. Dorgenois Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Esplanade Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Florida Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>France Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>N. Galvez Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Gentilly Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gulf Intercoastal Waterway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Hamilton Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Hayne Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Howard Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Jefferson Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Lafitte Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Lakeshore Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>London Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Mazant Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>North Mississippi River Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>South Mississippi River Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>East Orleans Parish Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>South Orleans Parish Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aa</td>
<td>West Orleans Parish Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>Palmetto Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Peoples Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad</td>
<td>Pontchartrain Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ae</td>
<td>N. Rampart Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Af</td>
<td>N. Roucheblave Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>St. Charles Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah</td>
<td>Toulouse Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai</td>
<td>N. Villere Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aj</td>
<td>Walnut Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ghost, Holy Redeemer, St. David's, St. Monica's, St. Philip's, and Corpus Christi are approximately of equal size. St. Peter Claver's is the smallest New Orleans Negro parish.

The year of establishment of each of these parishes ranges from 1895 to 1949. The first New Orleans Negro parish is St. Katherine's, established in 1895. In 1909 St. Joan of Arc became the second oldest Negro parish in Metropolitan New Orleans. Three additional parishes were incorporated into the New Orleans Negro parochial structure in 1916: Blessed Sacrament, Holy Ghost, and Corpus Christi. All Saints' and Holy Redeemer Negro parishes were established in 1919 followed by St. Peter Claver in 1920. In 1924 St. Monica's was added followed by the incorporation of St. Raymond's in 1925. It was not until 1937 that a new Negro parish, St. David's, was established. St. Paul's, Epiphany, and St. Philip's were established in 1944, 1948, and 1949 in that order.

The center or plant of each Negro parish is the same. The focal point of spiritual activity, where the duties of all parishioners are discharged, is the Church building. Each parish has a school building usually directed and activated by some religious Order.

---

5 Annual Catholic Directory for Louisiana and Mississippi.

---
of nuns. This fact is in conformity to the Church's definitive statement on the absolute necessity of every young Catholic's receiving a Catholic education. Details of parochial activity, financial transactions and personal spiritual direction are generally conducted at the parish Rectory; residence for the parish clerics. These three buildings are at the core of every parish plant. Additional to these, other buildings such as a Convent for the Order of nuns teaching at the school, and a gymnasium where the parish members can find recreational and relaxation facilities, may round out a parish center.

The parish priests are the "dischargers" of the sacraments. Their work is directed toward the spiritual and temporal welfare of their parish members. In one sense, they are the interpreters of the mind of the Catholic Church to each parishioner. The details of the functioning and upkeep of the parish plant are under the jurisdiction of the parish priests. Regarding the number of priests assigned to each parish, the ideal has been placed at a number in direct proportion to the number of parishioners. This is generally not the case. It is an unusual situation to find more than three priests (one Pastor, two assistants) in any one parish. Here is, at least, one practical reason for the Church's constant cry for more and more priests to care for the ever-increasing membership within the Catholic Church.
The Negro parish under study, Corpus Christi, fits into this general orientation to New Orleans Negro Parishes very well. It is generally admitted by most people that Corpus Christi Parish is from an over-all point of view, one of the best, if not the best Negro parish in New Orleans. This statement, however, needs qualification. Such is true when it indicates that the parish plant is a beautiful and well-built set of buildings; that the size of the population of the parish is not completely disproportionate to the actual practice of Catholicism within the parish boundaries; that the economic status of Corpus Christi is relatively high; and that there is a total absence of any slum area within the parochial territory. These and other salient points of interest and significance will come into their own during the course of this paper. It remains now to explain the origin and movement of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro parish through time to its existence in the present.

B. The Legal Establishment of Corpus Christi Parish

The official incorporation of Corpus Christi Parish into the Negro parochial structure of Metropolitan New Orleans was realized with the passing of an Act of Sale of Real Estate to be henceforth owned by the Congregation of the Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church,
Incorporated, passed before Charles I. Dennechaud, Notary Public, April 19, 1916. The Act of Sale reads as follows:

Beginning at a point 150 feet, 6 inches, 4 lines from the corner of Galvez and D'Abadie streets, said property measures as follows:

Continuing on D'Abadie street 1 foot, 7 inches, 21 lines, thence in an oblique line parallel to and fronting on St. Bernard avenue and running towards Johnson street 97 feet, 3 inches, 6 lines, thence on line extending on Onzaga street and parallel on with Onzaga street 59 feet, 6 inches, 7 lines, thence on a line parallel with and fronting on Johnson street and extending to Onzaga street and turning towards Galvez street to the point of beginning, a distance of 315 feet, 11 inches, 0 lines.

Being the same property acquired by Samuel J. Kelly from M. Perry Bouslog, as per act before Chas. I. Dennechaud, notary public, in this city on the 22nd day of April, 1916, registered in Conveyance Office book 282, folio 45.

To have and to hold the above described property unto the said purchaser, its successors and assigns forever.

This sale is made and accepted for and in consideration of the price and sum of $11,600 cash, which the said purchaser has well and truly paid in ready and current money to the said vendor, who hereby acknowledges the receipt thereof and grants full acquittance

---

6This is the legal title of the "corporation created under the laws of the State of Louisiana and domiciled in the City of New Orleans...." The Charter of Corpus Christi Congregation: United States of America, notarized on August 21, 1917. See Figure 3.

7Ibid.
CHARTER OF CORPUS CHRISTI CONGREGATION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
State of Louisiana,
Parish of Orleans,
City of New Orleans.

Be it known that on this 21st day of the month of August, in the year of Our Lord, 1917, and of the Independence of the United States of America, one hundred and forty-second, before me, Charles I. Dennechaud, a notary public, duly commissioned and qualified in and for this city and the Parish of Orleans, therein residing, and in the presence of the witnesses hereinafter named and undersigned personally came and appeared Samuel J. Kelly, of lawful age and a resident of this city, who declares that he does by these presents grant, bargain, sell, convey, transfer, assign, set over, abandon and deliver with all legal warrant and with full substitution and subrogation in and to all rights and action of warrant which he has or may have against all preceding owners and vendors unto the Congregation of Corpus Christi, Roman Catholic Church, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Louisiana and domiciled in the city of New Orleans and appearing herein through Right Rev. Jean M. Laval, its vice-president, who is appearing and acting herein by virtue of a resolution of the Board of Directors of said corporation, held in the city of New Orleans on the 20th day of August, 1917, a duly certified copy whereof hereinto attached and forming part hereof, here present, accepting due delivery and possession thereof all and singular the following described property to wit:

The following lots of ground in square bounded by Galvez, Onzaga, St. Bernard, formerly D'Abadie, and Johnson streets, lots 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, measuring each 29 feet, 6 inches, 6 lines front on Onzaga street, by a depth of 125 feet, as per plan by L. Bringler, dated February —, 1917, deposited in the office of A. Mazureau, notary public; lots 11 and 12, according to the said plan, measured each 32 feet, 5 inches, 4 lines front on Johnson street, by 148 feet, 7 inches 7 lines depth between parallel lines.

Lots 6, 7, 8, as per plan made by L. H. Pilie, dated March 8th, 1859, deposited in the office of E. Bouny, notary public, which said lots are contingent and measure each in American measure 29 feet 8 in. 6 lines in D'Abadie street, by 129 feet deep between equal and parallel lines.

Exempting from the above triangular piece of ground which commences at a distance of 150 feet, 6 inches, 4 lines, from the corner of D'Abadie and Galvez streets, and measures thence 86 feet, 2 inches, 4 lines front on D'Abadie street, 95 feet 8 inches, 2 lines in width in the rear on an oblique line by a depth on the side towards Johnson street of 36 feet, 11 inches, 3 lines, sold to the city of New Orleans.

Which foregoing property has been more recently surveyed and defined in its entirety and measures in accordance with a certain plan made by Walter J. Seghe, Deputy City Surveyor, on April 12, 1916, attached to an act of sale passed before Chas. I. Dennechaud, notary public, on April 19, 1916, as follows:

Beginning at a point 150 feet, 6 inches, 4 lines from the corner of Galvez and D'Abadie streets, said property measures as follows:

Continuing on D'Abadie street 1 foot, 7 inches, 21 lines, thence in an oblique line parallel to and fronting on St. Bernard avenue and running towards Johnson street 97 feet, 3 inches, 6 lines, thence on line extending on Onzaga street and parallel on with Onzaga street 59 feet, 6 inches, 7 lines, thence on a line parallel with and fronting on Johnson street and extending to Onzaga street and turning towards Galvez street to the point of beginning, a distance of 315 feet, 11 inches, 0 lines.

Being the same property acquired by Samuel J. Kelly from M. Perry Bouslog, as per act before Chas. I. Dennechaud, notary public, in this city in the 22nd day of April, 1916, registered in Conveyance Office book 282, folio 45.

To have and to hold the above described property unto the said purchaser, its successors and assigns forever.

This sale is made and accepted for and in consideration of the price and sum of $11,600 cash which the said purchaser has well and truly paid in ready and current money to the said vendor, whom hereby acknowledges the receipt thereof and grants full acquittance and discharge therefor. Clear mortgage conveyance and United States certificate attached.

All State and city taxes up to and including the taxes due and eligible in 1915 are paid, as per certificate attached to an act of sale passed before the undersigned notary on April 19th, 1916, vendor has produced tax receipt 1916, purchaser assumed the tax for the year 1917. Samuel J. Kelly, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he has never been married.

Thus done and passed in my office at the city of New Orleans on the date, month and year first above written in the presence of D. D. Montoro and E. L. Rabin, competent witnesses, who hereunto signed their names with the said appearers and me, notary, after due reading of the whole.

Originaly signed—

SAMUEL J. KELLY,
Corpus Christi Corporation.
per J. M. LAVAL, Vice-President.

Witnesses:
D. D. Montoro.
E. L. Rabin.

CHAS. I. DENNECHAUD, Notary Public.

A true copy registered in Conveyance Office book 291, folio 531.
This deed is guaranteed for the full calum by the Louisiana Abstract and Title Guarantee Co. for the amount of eleven thousand, six hundred dollars.

Figure 3
and discharge therefor. Clear mortgage conveyance and United States certificate attached.

All State and city taxes up to and including the taxes due and eligible in 1915 are paid, as per certificate attached to an act of sale passed before the undersigned notary on April 19th, 1916, vendor has produced tax receipt 1916, purchaser assumed the tax for the year 1917. Samuel J. Kelly, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he has never been married.

Thus done and passed in my office at the city of New Orleans on the date, month and year first above written in the presence of D. D. Montoro and E. L. Babin, competent witnesses, who hereunto signed their names with the said appearers and me, notary, after due reading of the whole.8

With the above Act of Sale, the existence of Corpus Christi Congregation Parish was permanently established. This property, upon which the parochial plant was to be built, is today territorially unchanged.

The Act of Sale being notarized, it remained for the transaction to become formally a Deed of Property,9 that document signed once again by Charles A. Dennechaud, Notary Public. This official document included a description of: (1) the official title of the corporation and giving it power to and authority in its corporated name to contract, sue and be sued, hold, receive,

8Ibid.

9Corpus Christi Parish Corporation, Deed of Property: United States of America. See Figure 4.
DEED OF PROPERTY.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

State of Louisiana,
Parish of Orleans,
City of New Orleans.

Be it known that on the 16th day of the month of August in the year of Our Lord, 1917, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and forty-second.

Before me, Charles J. DeMenuch, duly commissioned and qualified in and for this said parish and State, therein residing and in the presence of the witnesses herein after named and undersigned, personally came and appeared Very Rev. Jules B. Jeanmard, administrator S. V. of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of New Orleans, La. Right Rev. Jean M. Lavall, Vicar General of the Roman Catholic Church for the said Diocese of New Orleans, La. Rev. S. S. Kelly, pastor of the congregation of the Church of Corpus Christi of the Parish of Orleans, La., and Louis Chambonnet, Ruby E. Felton, Alphonse Hopkins and John H. Pratts, members of the said congregation and residents of the Parish of Orleans, who severally declared that they, availing themselves of the provisions of the law of the State of Louisiana relative to the organization of corporations for literary, scientific, religious, charitable, and other purposes, they have covenanted and agreed and do by these presents covenant and agree and bind themselves as well as such persons as may hereafter become associated with them and succeeded them to form and constitute a corporation and body politic in law for the purpose and stipulations set forth in the following articles which they hereby adopt as their charter, to-wit:

Article 1. This corporation shall be known, designated and styled "Congregation of the Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church," of the Parish of Orleans, State of Louisiana, and its domicile is hereby fixed in the said Parish of Orleans, State of Louisiana, and said corporation shall have power to and authority in its corporate name to contract, sue and be sued, hold, receive, purchase and convey as well as mortgage and hypothecate, lease and pledge property, both real and personal, and shall also have power to receive by donation and by bequest money and property of all kinds as provided for by law, and generally to enjoy all the privileges granted by the laws of this State to corporations of this nature.

Article 2. The objects and purposes for which this corporation is formed are hereby declared to be the holding and administering of property, real, personal and mixed, for the religious purposes so the same may be devoted to religious use or for the benefit of those who attend the Roman Catholic Church belonging to this congregation.

Article 3. Said corporation shall be managed, administered and controlled by a Board of Directors, which said first Board is hereby declared to be composed of Very Rev. Jules J. Jeanmard, Administrator S. V., as aforesaid, of the Right Rev. J. M. Lavall, V. G., as aforesaid of the Rev. S. J. Kelly, pastor as aforesaid; Louis Chambonnet, and Ruby E. Felton, members of said congregation.

The officers of said corporation shall be a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, whose duties shall be such as their respective offices imply, and as may be prescribed in the by-laws of this corporation.

Very Rev. Jules H. B. Jeanmard, A. N. S. V., as aforesaid, his successor the Archbishop of the diocese, and administrator or such other persons as may be appointed according to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church, administrator of the diocese for the time being shall be ex-officio president, and the said Very Rev. Jean M. Lavall, V. G., as aforesaid, his successor or such other person as may be appointed according to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church to perform the duties of the V. G. of the diocese for the time being, shall be the vice-president and the said Rev. S. J. Kelly, or his lawful successor as long as he shall be recognized as pastor, as aforesaid, by the Archbishop or Diocesan administrator, shall be secretary and treasurer, and the said Louis Chambonnet and Ruby Felton, two laymen members of the said Board, shall be and remain in office as such directors as aforesaid for the time of two years from and after the second Tuesday in August, 1917, until their successors are chosen, and at the expiration of the term of office of said two laymen on the second Tuesday in August, bi-annually thereafter or whenever a vacancy shall exist, the office by the said two laymen as directors, or either of them, whether caused by the expiration of terms of office, death, resignation, migration, disability or in any manner whatsoever the office or officers of directors as aforesaid shall be filled by the Archbishop or administrator of the diocese aforesaid.

The other three members of the said Board are as follows, to-wit: The Most Rev. Archbishop or administrator of the diocese V. G. and pastor of said congregation shall be and remain members of this corporation and members of the Board of Directors thereof as long as they respectively remain Archbishop or administrator of the diocese and the pastor of said congregation of the diocese and aforesaid and whenever either or all of them shall cease to be Archbishop or administrator of the diocese or past as aforesaid then in case their representatives, successors as said Archbishop or administrator of the diocese V. G., or pastor shall be and become their respective successors as members of this corporation and as may be as of the Board of Directors thereof and have respectively said offices of president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer, and in like manner they shall have uninterrupted succession.

The said Board of Directors alone, as aforesaid, and their respective successors in office shall have power to transact all business of this corporation of whatsoever nature, but no debt ex-
ceasing $250 shall be contracted by this corporation without the consent of the Archbishop or Diocese Administrator, and no real estate belonging to it shall be sold, mortgaged or disposed of in any way without the vote and consent of all the five directors.

The Board of Directors shall have the power to make and pass such by-laws for the regulation of the affairs of this corporation as they may deem fit, not inconsistent with the Constitution and By-laws of the State or of the United States of the discipline and authority of the Roman Catholic Church and to alter, repeal and amend same in whole or in part at pleasure.

Article 1. This corporation is formed without capital stock and is to exist for 500 years.

All citations and other legal process shall be served on the secretary of this corporation, and in the event of his absence of inability to act from any cause whatever then upon the president thereof.

Article 5. The names and postoffice addresses of the signers of these articles of incorporation are as follows:


Ruby E. Felton, 1819 Allen street, New Orleans, La.

Alphonse Hopkins, 1361 N. Claiborne avenue, New Orleans, La.


Thus done and passed in my office at New Orleans, La., on the day, month and year therein first above written, in the presence of Anthony J. Rossi and D. D. Montero, and me, Notary, after the due reading of the whole signed as above.

CHARLES A. DENNECHAUD.
Notary Public.


A true copy of the original.

Figure 4 (Continued)
purchase and convey as well as mortgage and hypothecate, lease and pledge property, both real and personal, and shall also have power to receive by donation and by bequest money and property of all kinds as provided by law, and generally to enjoy all the privileges granted by the laws of this State to corporations of this nature.10

(2) the objects and purposes involved in formation of the corporation. These include holding and administering of property, etc.; (3) the number and kind of officers within the corporation and stimulation of the rights and duties of the officers and Board of Directors;11 (4) the existence of the corporation for a period of five hundred years; and (5) the names and addresses of the signers of this said document.

The Congregation of Corpus Christi being legally established, it remained for the first priests and parishioners to begin work immediately in the construction of a parish plant from which the activity of the parish could originate and continue.

C. Building the Parish Plant

The immediate problem confronting the first Pastor12 of Corpus Christi Parish was the erection of a place of

10Ibid.

11The first officers and members of the Board of Directors are as follows: The Most Reverend John W. Shaw, D. D., President; The Right Reverend J. M. Laval, D. D. Vice-President; Rev. S. J. Kelly, S. S. J., Secretary-Treasurer. Directors: Louis Charbonnet, Alphonse Hopkins, Ruby E. Felton, and John Prates.

12The Rev. S. J. Kelly, S. S. J. assumed the initial Pastorship of Corpus Christi Parish.
worship and a priest's residence. Two dwellings on the purchased property were converted to meet the existing housing need: one into a temporary chapel, the other into a rectory.

The legal processes within the Roman Catholic Church necessitated the publication of a canonical decree of erection for the new parish. The decree for Corpus Christi parish was issued by Archbishop James H. Blenk, then Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The canonical decree was "read and published at the archiepiscopal residence in the presence of the Reverends Jules B. Jeanmard (then Chancellor of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, now Bishop of Lafayette), and J. A. Petit, S. M., on September 23, 1916."13 The first public pronouncement of the official decree of establishment and erection occurred on September 24 in the temporary chapel of Corpus Christi.14

The next step in the process of formally establishing the parish of Corpus Christi was the delineation of the territory over which the parochial organization was to have jurisdiction. Officially,
these limits were settled on September 24, 1916. The first and largest area assigned to the Corpus Christi Congregation Parish was the entire area of Metropolitan New Orleans northward from Canal Street.

With the completion of a new school building in 1919 the temporary chapel was moved to the School Auditorium. The Dedication Mass for the new chapel was held on October 12, 1919. The school auditorium housed Corpus Christi Chapel until 1930 when the third and present church building, facing St. Bernard Avenue in the 2000 block, was erected. The dedication of the new Church was conducted in 1930 by Archbishop John W. Shaw.

The temporary building occupied in 1916 as the parish rectory lasted until 1923 when the rectory building burned to the ground. In 1924 the new priest's rectory was completed. In 1927, the Order of Teaching Nuns then occupying a home within the parish plant area was forced to vacate upon the arrival of the owner of the house who decided to reoccupy the dwelling. Upon being forced to vacate, the nuns moved into the three-year-old rectory, forcing the construction of the third and presently-existing rectory for Corpus Christi Parish. With a permanent rectory becoming a reality, plans were begun for the new permanent church, established in 1930. Finances within the parish and the problem of a
"spiritual rebuilding" of the parishioners postponed the feasibility of future constructions until 1955. Early in this year plans were begun for the construction of an Auditorium-Gymnasium which has been estimated at a cost of $300,000.00. The structure is to include auditorium facilities which will seat twelve hundred people, gymnasium facilities seating between seven and eight hundred observers, shower and locker rooms for home and visiting sport teams; and a cafeteria for the school children. The addition of this building to the parish plant will complete the necessary construction involved within any parochial structure. In review, Corpus Christi parish plant is physically adequate to attend to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social needs of most of its parishioners. Following a Spanish Colonial style of architecture, Corpus Christi plant includes a Church building, School, Rectory, Convent, and Auditorium-Gymnasium.

Any Catholic parochial plant must provide adequate facilities for the general needs of all the parishioners and for the personal needs of each parish member. In the case of Corpus Christi, the completed parish plant must adequately function for its presently existing membership of 11,887.\textsuperscript{15} This figure is somewhat lower

\textsuperscript{15}This total is in conformity with the 1950 Parish Census revised for this year.
than in previous years. A steady increase in membership characterized Corpus Christi from 1916 to 1947 when the parish experienced its largest membership: 13,117 members. The decline in membership from that date to the present goes not without cause although lacking in solution. The territorial limits have been narrowed somewhat causing an obvious decrease in the membership of Corpus Christi. This, however, does not stand alone as the single cause of membership decline.

D. Leakage in the Parish

Membership in a Roman Catholic Parish such as Corpus Christi varies constantly. Any positive increase in membership is attributable to one of three causes: (1) new membership due to reception of sacramental Baptism; (2) through the process of conversion from one faith to that of the Roman Catholic Church; or (3) migration from another parish (this, of course, is defined by territorial boundaries). There is no real difficulty in the analysis of the positive increase in parish membership. The problem lies in trying to discover the causes which account for the constant loss of members: in other words, leakage from the Catholic parish.

\[16\] In 1948, Epiphany Parish, bordering on the Northern boundary of Corpus Christi, was incorporated into the New Orleans Negro Parochial structure.
This problem, which is universally acknowledged within Catholic circles, exists inside Corpus Christi.17 The complexity of probable causes which surrounds this problem has not as yet facilitated final solution. The parishes are still plagued by "leakage," some probable causes for which are included in the following listing: (1) institutional categorization; (2) failure to integrate religious values and activity into the many phases of life activity; (3) predominance of an areligious role or status; (4) personal difficulties with fellow parishioners or members of the parish clergy; (5) lack of formal religious training and background; (6) lack of a parochial esprit de corps; (7) participation in "mixed marriages"18 leading to religious laxity within the parish; (8) deviation from the normally prescribed laws and regulations of the Church; (9) loss to other formally organized religions or to a complete lack of religious involvement; and/or (10) the constant need for more parish priests.

The problem of institutional categorization involves the sociological statement that an individual

17The listings in this text concerning "leakage" are the products of conversations with members of the Catholic hierarchy of Corpus Christi Parish and within the city of New Orleans.

18A marriage involving a Catholic and a non-Catholic.
during the course of his life holds membership in numerous social institutions; the economic, religious, political, familial, recreational, etc. In itself, institutional categorization does not result in leakage from parochial membership. Combined, however, with the failure on the part of an individual to integrate religious practice into his total institutional framework, an over-emphasis of some phase of activity over the religious with a corresponding de-emphasis of the religious functions necessary to maintain active participating membership within the parish can result. At best, the seeming result would place the individual into nominal membership within the parish making him by name a member of the parish, but functionally excluding him from the network of parish activity. With the predominance of an areligious role or status, the individual possibly may tend toward placing his activity within his parish secondary to that which he conceives as uppermost in his maintaining social status within his community.

Social relationships (member-member or priest-member) within the parish can become strained. Disagreement on a major issue involving some phase of parish life or some dogma or opinion of the Catholic Church may sometimes lead to a complete break on the part of a parishioner with a fellow parishioner, one of the priests, and possibly with his parish. Although
one cannot speculate on the frequency of such an occurrence, the probability of its existence cannot be denied. Such a "break" with one's territorially prescribed parish can result in one of two plans of action: (1) complete detachment from parish activity; or (2) movement into the activity of another parish. Either situation is thought of by the parish in question as leakage, since, in the case of the second plan of action, no system has been devised to account for membership in a parish territorially outside of the individual members' bounds.

Ignorance of the major and minor precepts of the Catholic Church and of the fact of necessary membership in a parochial structure may sometimes lead to movement away from parochial membership and possibly away from membership in the Roman Catholic Church. The difficulty here is deciding where the problem lies: with the individual, with his family, with the individual's formal training or with the parish. To maintain membership in any institutional framework implies at least a working knowledge of the involvements which accrue from membership therein. The lack of such an awareness

\[\text{---}\]

\[1^9\] In the case of movement to another parish, connection with the Catholic Church itself is not resultant. The census of the parish moved away from, however, still accounts for this loss.
is probably a major predisposition toward movement out of the organizational system in question. In other words, understanding the precepts of the Catholic Church and the role an individual plays as a member of a Catholic parish are requisite to formal acceptance of Church and parish membership. Logically, then, this may be stated as a probable cause for leakage from the parish and Church.

Conceptualization of the function of a parish in the life situation, and more specifically, in the religiously oriented individual, is necessary for active participation in the "life" of the parish. Membership in a parish must involve, on the part of an individual, a realization of fulfillment of needs. In other words, parochial membership must be thought reasonable. Integration into parish life and a feeling of esprit de corps is seemingly, then, necessary to the full cooperation of a parish member in the total parochial situation. The case is psychological. Being accepted as part of the parish and, on the part of the individual, the feeling of acceptance as part of the operative whole, are requisite to constant and active participation within the institution.

As an institution within the total cultural situation, the Catholic Church works to retain and, if possible, increase membership. Any incident, therefore, which might be detrimental to this goal must be considered
and counteracted. Problems of this nature must be solved on a parochial level since this is the part of the total world structure of the Roman Catholic Church closest to its individual members. A major difficulty here is the fact of mixed marriages. Although the Church has not defined against them, the parish church teaches their inexpediency. A mixed marriage, from the point of view of Church and parochial membership, is reciprocal. Such a union can lead to the non-Catholic partner's acceptance of the Faith. Conversely, the same type of union can lead to falling away from the Church on the part of the Catholic partner. Although this reciprocity be the case, the Church, through parish organization, teaches the greater efficacy of a totally Catholic marriage. As previously stated, leakage from the parish cannot be measured. This, however, is seemingly one of the more predominant factors contributing to its existence.

Probably the most definite and problematic causal situation contributing to leakage is the individual's deviation from the normally prescribed laws and regulations of the Church functioning through its parochial organizational network. In this context, membership in one's territorial prescribed parish is parallel to membership in the Roman Catholic Church. The historical-Scriptural laws (the Ten Commandments) and the regulations
forwarded by the institutional Church must be observed strictly. Laxity on the part of any individual involving any one of these is matter for refusal of further membership within the Church body. Common cause within this framework accrues from such factors as: (1) practice of artificial birth control; (2) marriage outside of the Church; (3) active and constant participation in requisite Church functions such as the Mass and the Sacraments, etc.20

Movement of individuals from membership within one formal religious organization to another is a continual social process. The increment in Church and parochial membership is partially accounted for by this fact. On the other hand, leakage within the parish is partially resultant from this situation. It is impossible, here, and not at all within the scope of this analysis, to delve into the causes for acceptance of another formal religion. The causes are much too numerous and complex. The fact remains, however, that leakage from the parish itself can be accounted for partially by a realization of this type of movement.

20 The fact of participation in the sacramental practice of Penance will ultimately determine, however, the time element involved in the individual's remaining outside of the Church body. Unconditional acceptance of the terms of Penance (confession of sins, sorrow for them and avowment to discontinue their practice) facilitates a return to active participation within the Church and within the parish.
The final probable cause listed above is one existing within the Church itself. The lack of a sufficiency of priests to care for the spiritual and temporal needs of all parishioners is a difficulty which increases proportionately with any increase in total Church and parish membership. Two results may be stated which occur due to lack of priests: (1) loss of Church members who have not the facility of contact with and direction of duly ordained ministers of the Church; and (2) this fact hinders a great number of conversions to the Catholic Faith. This is especially true when viewed from the total world situation. The greatest effects of this sparsity may be noted within any parish. The parish under study, for example, comprises a membership of 11,887. Three priests have been formally assigned to care for the spiritual and temporal welfare of these thousands of people. This situation becomes problematic when one realizes the ideal of the Church: namely, that the Pastor and his Assistants should have no less than personal contact with each parishioner within some expedient period of time.

It must be understood here that the problems raised regarding leakage in Corpus Christi Parish and in every Catholic parish are not problems unique to a Roman Catholic Church as an institution. Every framework within society that is institutional in nature faces similar problems of membership. The realization and
statement of such problems cannot be dismissed from a study of this type. If one is to understand the total situation (historical and contemporary) of any community, every aspect involved in the dynamics of that community must be incorporated into the analysis. Membership increase and decrease are essential to the type of organizational facade any community will take on. In this sense, the above analysis of leakage in the parish has its place.
CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE OF CORPUS CHRISTI

A. The First People of Corpus Christi

The early establishment of Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish was more than the placement of priests and nuns within certain territorially prescribed boundaries caring for the spiritual welfare of a stipulated number of people. On a broader scale, the erection of Corpus Christi was the concrete expression of the church's desire to bring the Gospel and teachings of its dogmas to the oftentimes neglected people of color. This religious theme is, from a sociological point of view, an expression of the fact that:

"...religion is part of society. It is common to the group; its beliefs and practices are acquired by each individual as a member of the group.... (The functional significance involved here is that religion) creates a more cohesive society."

The need for the "evangelization of the Negro" and for the partial fulfillment of that goal is well expressed in a publication on Corpus Christi; additionally, the

following is an expression of the roles played by a few people of Corpus Christi in the first days of formation:

Among the noble works of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, that stand out pre-eminently as great and important in bearing upon the future religious, educational and moral progress, not only of this city and State, but of the nation itself, is the work of the Catholic Church in behalf of the colored race.

The thought of the evangelization of the negro, which found expression in the efforts of every Bishop of Louisiana from the Colonial era to our own, lay asleep upon the heart of the late Most Rev. Archbishop of New Orleans. The unfailing interest of Msgr. Blenk in the spiritual and educational advancement of the race and his earnest efforts to bring the blessed light of the true faith to every one of this most helpless portion of his flock, was faithfully evidenced throughout his administration; in the last three years of his eventful career, when plans that he was laying so carefully for their benefit and uplift had matured, sick unto death as he was, the Archbishop created in New Orleans, alone, four new parishes for the exclusive use of the colored people. The last of these parishes was erected in September, 1916, below Canal Street, in the vicinity of the St. Bernard Market, and was placed under the direction of the Josephite Fathers, who had already shown their great adaptability for the work of colored missions in New Orleans, by the success which had attended their efforts in the parishes of St. Dominic and the Blessed Sacrament, above Canal Street.

The new parish below Canal Street was erected under the beautiful title of "Corpus Christi," and the Rev. Father Samuel Joseph Kelly, S. S. J. was placed in charge.

Those first weeks and months of the organization of Corpus Christi Parish were days of strenuous and heroic labors. Father Kelly had the earnest cooperation of the Sisters of the
Blessed Sacrament, who came to aid him in the education and instruction of youth, who assumed charge of the parochial school. The first year that the mission was opened, the church register showed 350 infant baptisms, 185 marriages, 145 funerals, 395 sick calls, 24,000 Communions, 800 children in the Sunday School and 300 in the parochial school. This was Corpus Christi Parish after three years of activity. The success experienced during these formative days had set the stage for what was to come. The people of Corpus Christi—the first people, those through the years and those of the present—are an integral part of the history of the parish. A knowledge of these and what they did as part of Corpus Christi is a knowledge necessary in understanding the parish today and through the years.

B. The Josephite Fathers: 
Priests of Corpus Christi

Since the establishment of Corpus Christi Parish in 1916, the Pastors and their Assistants have always been members of the Society of St. Joseph. The Rev. Dr. Herbert Vaughan, at a later date Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, founded the Josephite Community of secular priests at Mill Hill, England in 1866. The major reason for their establishment was for foreign mission work.

2Corp

Corpus Christi School: 1912, pp. 31 and 33.
The movement of the Josephite Fathers from England to the United States has been outlined in a publication of Corpus Christi Parish. Late in the nineteenth century the movement began:

In 1871, the first priests of the Society, four in number, were ready for service and the Superior, Father Vaughan, offered them to Pius IX for assignment. The Holy Father had but shortly before received the plea of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, which said, "By the bowels of the mercy of God, we beg and implore priests to consecrate their thoughts, their time and themselves, wholly and entirely, if possible, to the service of the colored people." The Pope answered the cry of distress of the American Bishops by sending those first Josephites to the United States. They began their work in Baltimore, at St. Francis Xavier Church, the first parish in our country to have the better care of the Negro as the prime reason for its existence. The humble start was followed by others of a like nature in Richmond, Norfolk, Louisville, Charleston.

After the Josephites had established themselves in the Negro communities of a few United States cities; after they had established American houses for training of new vocations to the Josephite priesthood; in 1871, they decided to separate from their English foundations and begin an independent community of priests within the United States. With independence a reality for the American Josephites, headquarters were established in Baltimore, Maryland.

---

3Commemorating Twenty-five Years of Service, Corpus Christi Church, New Orleans, La., p. 11.
Since 1916, the Josephite Fathers have provided seven Pastors to direct the activity of Corpus Christi Parish. The first Pastor, Reverend Samuel J. Kelly, S. S. J., held the position of Pastor until 1926. He was succeeded by the Reverend Michael O'Neil, S. S. J., who held the same office until 1931. In the same year the Reverend Harry F. Kane, S. S. J. assumed the post until his replacement in 1937: the Reverend Edward V. Casserly, S. S. J. In 1942, the Reverend Thomas McNamara, S. S. J. replaced Father Casserly as Pastor and served in that capacity until 1948. The Reverend George Hanks, S. S. J. assumed the position from 1948 to 1954. In September of that year, the present Pastor, the Reverend Gilbert Demers, S. S. J. was appointed Pastor of Corpus Christi. During the same period of years, numerous members of the Society of St. Joseph served as first and second Assistants to the Pastor, or as substitutes for shorter periods of time. The two

---

present Assistants are the Reverend Earle A. Newman, S. S. J. and the Reverend James J. Walsh, S. S. J. A fourth priest residing at Corpus Christi Rectory is the Reverend Michael Caffey, S. S. J.⁵

Generally, the activity of the Pastor and his Assistants revolve about the following listing:
(1) disposition of the Sacraments and religious Church functions; (2) the physical upkeep of the parish plant; (3) the conduction of religious classes in the parochial school; (4) spiritual direction of individual parishioners; (5) attendance to the financial status of the parish; and (6) holding the position of spiritual director or Moderator of every parish organization.⁶

This meager listing, it must be understood, does not give a full view of the daily activity of a Pastor and his Assistants. Although comprehensive enough, it does not lend itself to an inclusion of the "incidentals" involved in the direction of a Catholic parish.

C. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament: Teachers at Corpus Christi Parochial School

Even before the establishment of Corpus Christi Parochial School, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament taught

⁵Father Caffey, although "in residence" at Corpus Christi, is a professor at St. Augustine's Negro High School in New Orleans.

⁶A list of the organizations of Corpus Christi Parish and analysis of each may be found in the latter part of this chapter.
Sunday School classes for the children of Corpus Christi. This Order of Religious has assumed the duty of educating the children of Corpus Christi from its establishment to the present day. Five duties within the parish have been allocated to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament: (1) conducting classes in the parochial school; (2) principalship of the parochial school; (3) direction and upkeep of the convent; (4) running the school cafeteria; and (5) assisting in the physical upkeep of the parish plant.

The Order of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, all the members of which are white, was established for work among the Indian and Negro peoples of America. Teaching in Corpus Christi Parish, then, is in conformity with their prime purpose. There are presently seventeen members of the Order residing in Corpus Christi Parish.

In the past, the following sisters have served in the capacity of school principal and/or religious Superior of the convent: Mother M. Anselm, Mother M. Pierre, Mother M. Felicitas, Mother M. Camilla, Mother M. Benedict, Mother M. Raymond, Mother M. David. Since 1916, numerous Sisters of the Order have served as classroom teachers in Corpus Christi School.

7Three religious performed these duties: Mother Mary of the Visitation (in 1941 Superior-General of the whole community), Sister M. William, and Sister Barnabas.
D. Participation at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

The Roman Catholic Church has defined the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as "the Sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine." The Church has proclaimed that attendance at Mass on Sunday is absolutely requisite to the continuance of active membership in the Church. The rules and regulations which surround attendance at Mass have been, undoubtedly, one of the greatest incentives for Catholics to fulfill their obligation to "hear Mass on Sunday." The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most significant and important function within the parish.

The erection of a church building within the territorially prescribed boundaries of each parish has facilitated this practice. Such is the means whereby every parish conforms to the edict of the Catholic Church concerning participation at this religious function.

Corpus Christi Parish Church, in order to accommodate its 11,887 potential attendants, has set up the following Sunday Mass Schedule: in the morning—6:00, 7:00, 8:00 (Children's Mass), 9:00 (Children's Mass), 10:00

---

(High Mass), and 11:15; in the afternoon and evening—12:15 and 7:00. On weekday mornings the three Masses scheduled are at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:15. The last Mass each day is for the parochial school children.

The parish church has a seating capacity of 1,000. In 1954, the average number of people attending Mass per Sunday reached 7,800, or 65.62 per cent of the total number of parishioners. The figures, however, can be misleading. One should not conclude that the 34.38 per cent discrepancy is due to the fact that 34.38 per cent of the parishioners did not attend Mass on Sunday. At least two reasons may account for the lack of total parish attendance: (1) failure or inability to attend Mass; and (2) attendance at some other parish church. Conversely, the total attendance at Sunday Mass may be an overstatement due to the fact that people other than Corpus Christi parishioners may comprise part of the total attendance.

In 1954, the average attendance at daily Mass was approximately 1,200, or 10.10 per cent of the total number of parishioners. The major portion of this percentage accrues from the 1,000 school children who attend Mass daily as part of their daily school curriculum. The remaining 200 are adults in the parish. The lack of attendance of more adults at daily Mass is at least partially due to obvious economic and familial difficulties.
E. Sacramental Reception

The concept of grace in the Catholic Church has been and continually is a source or incentive for members to retain close association with the Church rituals and to frequent the Sacraments of the Church. On a parish level, the reception of the sacraments of the Church is one of the best indices to the degree of religious adherence and participation by parish members. As defined, "...a Sacrament is a visible sign instituted by Christ, signifying and producing sanctifying grace in the soul."\(^9\)

According to the Roman Catholic Church there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. It is possible, although improbable, that a person will receive all seven during life. Normally, however, any Catholic will receive five or six of the total, depending upon his choice of the religious, married, or single state as a vocation in life.\(^{10}\)

Baptism. In order to gain membership in the Roman Catholic Church, one must receive the sacrament of Baptism. This sacrament "...gives our souls the new


\(^{10}\)A female can never receive all seven of the sacraments because of her sex, which excludes her reception of Holy Orders to the priesthood.
life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven. There are two types of people who may receive this sacrament: (1) infants whose parents wish that they have membership in the Church; and (2) adults who, by their own choosing, receive the sacrament and thereby gain Church membership.

From 1925-1954 (see Table III) in Corpus Christi Parish there were 11,149 infant baptisms or an average of 371.6 baptisms per year. During the same period there were 721 adult baptisms, or an average of 24.0 such baptisms per year. The total number of baptisms during this period reached to 11,870, or an average of 395.7 baptisms per year. Although the infant baptisms are high in number and well thought of by the parish priests, the fact of adult conversions is deplored.

The problem in Corpus Christi is that there is no well-developed convert program through which the priest may schedule conferences and in the process maintain close contact with potential converts.

The trend of infant baptisms (Figure 5) for thirty years since 1925 indicates a constant increase in numbers

11 Conway, op. cit., p. 254.

12 Accurate figures were not obtainable for the 1916-1925 period of the parish's existence. This statement will apply to most of the statistics concerning Sacramental Reception.
### TABLE III
Reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony and the Number of Conversions: 1925-1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptism</th>
<th>Holy Eucharist</th>
<th>Confirmation</th>
<th>Matrimony</th>
<th>Conversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1925-1954</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>38,350</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>47,900</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>58,100</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>59,700</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>77,400</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>71,700</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>73,100</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>64,400</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>70,600</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>68,700</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>68,900</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>65,100</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>71,290</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>72,290</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>68,870</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>76,943</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>92,400</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|      | 11,149   | 721    | 6,870 | 1,814,763 | 7,747 | 2,364 | 505 | 2,869 | 712 |

*Note: All conversions are rounded to the nearest whole number.*
Figure 5. Frequency of Infant Reception of the Sacrament of Baptism in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.

Figure 6. Frequency of Adult Reception of the Sacrament of Baptism in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.
per year although, since the peak year of 1947, there has been a definite decline. The recent decline in positive numbers of infant baptisms is most probably due to the fact that part of the territory of Corpus Christi Parish was cut away in order to form a new parish: Epiphany. With this natural decrease in total population, the number of infant baptisms would also naturally decrease. The constant movement of people into the city causing a concentration of population would be the most probable factor contributing to the steady increase until 1947.

The erratic behavior exhibited in the numbers of adult baptisms from 1925 through 1954 (Figure 6) is further validation of the conditions which the parish priests deplored regarding a program for conversions. In other words, there is no organized effort within the parish to "pull in" potential converts and follow through with adult baptisms.

The fact that the priests indicated favor toward the number of total baptisms through the years must be taken on "face value." In order to validate parish opinion on this matter, an extensive comparative analysis of all the parishes in the New Orleans area would be involved. Such research, although worthy of note, is not the subject of this work.
Penance. The means whereby individuals fallen away from the Church may regain membership is through the Sacrament by Penance: "by which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest." According to the Church's teaching, although Penance is the medium through which sin is removed, Church members may participate in it solely for reception of the grace which Penance imparts.

The sacrament of Penance is received by the individual through the Confessional. Within the Church the priest, unseen by the penitent, hears the sins or the "confession" and in return gives Absolution.

In Corpus Christi Parish the schedule for Confessions is as follows: Saturday--4:00-5:30 and 7:00-9:00 p. m.; Wednesday morning (for parochial school children) and Thursday afternoon (for public school children) and Thursday night (for adults) before every First Friday of the month.

Accurate statistics on reception of this sacrament are difficult, if at all possible, to obtain. On a yearly basis in Corpus Christi, however, Penance is received about 34,800 times. These figures are constantly in flux. They constitute an overestimation when one considers that numerous non-Corpus Christi parishioners participate in this sacrament at Corpus Christi Church.

---

13 Conway, op. cit., p. 300.
The above approximation constitutes an underestimation because many members of Corpus Christi attend to their sacramental needs at other parish centers.  

_Holy Eucharist._ The logical follow-up after reception of the sacrament of Penance is participation in Holy Communion (reception of the Holy Eucharist). Based on the Church Doctrine that the wafer of bread (after being consecrated by the priest) which members of the Catholic Church receive is more than a symbol of Faith and belief in the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ, the Holy Eucharist constitutes "a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, the Lord Christ is contained, offered and received."  

Reception of the Holy Eucharist is probably one of the best indices of full participation as a practicing Catholic in any parochial structure. The strict and rigorous prerequisites which the Church imposes upon this sacrament forces the recipient to remain in a state of complete conformity with the rules and regulations forwarded by the Church hierarchy and Doctrine. If

---

14 Since many members of Corpus Christi work in the New Orleans business district, they receive this sacrament during convenient hours at the downtown Jesuit Immaculate Conception Church.

15 Conway, _op. cit._, p. 273.
a person is in the state of sin (this implies breakage from the Church and refusal of active participation therein), he may not receive the sacrament. Reception under these conditions is sacrilegious which action is heavily sanctioned by the Church. The sacred character of this sacrament is highlighted by the fact that one must fast from the midnight before until after its reception. Added to these prerequisites, the Church rules that every Catholic must receive Holy Communion at least once a year during Eastertide (time of observance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ). Commonly referred to as one's Easter Duties, neglect in observing this rule results in a committal of serious sin, the effects of which must be removed by reception of the sacrament of Penance.

During the thirty-year period from 1925-1954, there was a total of 1,814,763 Communions distributed at Corpus Christi Parish Church (Table III). Over the years there has been a general increase in reception of the Holy Eucharist; the initial impetus beginning in 1927, just two years after the incorporation of Corpus Christi. The five years following 1927 experienced a sharp rise in Communions; the rise continuing with less intensity until the peak year 1951 when 92,400 Communions were distributed (see Figure 7).
Figure 7. Frequency of Reception of the Holy Eucharist in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.

Figure 8. Frequency of Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.
For any one year it would be possible to indicate the average number of receptions per person using the total parish membership as a basis for computation. In this case, during 1954, it may be said that each parishioner received the Holy Eucharist on an average of 7.77 times. This figure is subject to misinterpretation since one must take into account migration into and out of the parish for attendance at Sunday Mass and Communion. The people of Corpus Christi, on a weekly basis, received the sacrament 1,776.9 times in 1954. Over the indicated thirty-year period, the number of Communions per year averaged 60,492, the high being reached in 1954 (92,400) and the low in 1926 (25,000).

**Confirmation.** To be confirmed in the Catholic Church is, in one sense, to give a definitive credence to the fact of Catholicism in any one individual. Through the reception of this sacrament "the Holy Ghost comes to us in a special way and enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ."\(^{16}\) In New Orleans, only those children who have reached the sixth grade in school are allowed to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.\(^{17}\) In any parish the recipients of this sacrament are gotten mainly from the parochial school.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 266.

In Corpus Christi, the average number of confirmations per year for the period 1925-1954 was 258.2. Ranging from a low of 115 confirmations in 1927 to the 354 high in 1944 (Table III), the trend shows no phenomenal or consistent increase or decrease in numbers (Figure 8). One sharp decline in 1947 is inconsistent with the years previous and following. A probable cause for this deviation is the lowering of the parish membership with the incorporation of Epiphany Parish which delimited the territorial space once occupied by Corpus Christi.

Within the thirty-year span under discussion Corpus Christi had a total of 7,747 confirmations. The majority of these were children of normal confirmation age. Some, however, were adults who had previously been baptized. The area of conversion has been at least somewhat significant in the discussions involving two sacraments: Baptism and Confirmation. Neither of these, however, give indication of the final figures which the parish records have compiled for each year since 1925. It may be well, then, to discuss here briefly the fact of converts of Corpus Christi.

Conversions. During the 1925-1954 period in Corpus Christi there were 712 conversions. The largest yearly amount (48) occurred in 1947; the year before the incorporation of the then new Epiphany Parish (Table III, Figure 9). The yearly number of conversions until 1945
Figure 9. Frequency of Conversions in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.
were fairly consistent, the following years being characterized by marked fluctuations from year to year.

The psychological and individual nature of the process of conversion makes it difficult to analyze the facts of conversion from a socio-causal standpoint. Active effort on the part of parish priests can only take the form of availability for instruction of one already decided upon a plan of conversion. This cannot be misunderstood, however. Social forces do act upon the individual in such a way that his mind-functioning becomes predisposed to inquire into the many-sided aspects of Catholicism; for example, movement inside Catholic circles. But the fact remains that the individual must decide for himself. Parochially, the process of conversion begins after the individual has come to a decision.

Holy Orders. The choice of a vocation in life is ultimately limited to a choice of one of three states: the single state, the married state, or the religious life. The Church, although condoning to a high degree all three states, views the religious life as the highest vocation of all. The culmination of this last state is the reception of Holy Orders which is restricted to the
male members of the Church. The sacrament of Holy Orders is one "through which men receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church."  

Figures on vocations to the priesthood from Corpus Christi Parish are sparse. In interviews with the parish priests only a few single facts could be discovered. Whether or not the movement of parishioners into the religious life is more extensive than is indicated here could not be discovered. At any rate, there are presently two members of the parish studying for the priesthood: one at St. Augustine's Seminary in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and a second at St. Benedict's Abbey near Covington, Louisiana. To the knowledge of the writer, one member of the parish has actually received Holy Orders.

Matrimony. A more frequent vocational choice for the members of Corpus Christi Parish is the state of Matrimony. As defined by the Catholic Church, the sacrament of Matrimony is one "by which a baptized man and a baptized woman bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge

---

18 The female counterpart is the reception of vows of religious life which falls short of the sacred privileges which accrue from the reception of Holy Orders.

19 Conway, op. cit., p. 345.
their duties." The ideal situation implied in the above definition is not always the case as the following discussion will show. The fact of "mixed marriages" (the union of a Catholic and non-Catholic), although not predominant, is factual. The validity of such a marriage occurs only when the non-Catholic partner contractually promises not to hinder the religious practices of his marriage partner and promises to place no obstacles in the way of rearing their offspring as Catholics.

In Corpus Christi Parish, during the years 1925-1954, there were 2,869 marriages (Table III). Of these, 2,364, or 82.4 per cent, were Catholic and 505, or 17.6 per cent, were "mixed marriages." The Catholic marriages show a normal and constant process of increase and decrease during the first fourteen years of the above-mentioned period. A sharp increase in 1940 set another trend similar to the first but involving more people. This normal activity was ended in 1947 (probably due once again to the establishment of Epiphany Parish) after which there was a sharp and continued decline with only minor increases until 1954 (see Figure 10). The fact of larger numbers of Catholic marriages in Corpus Christi can well be attributed to

---

20 Ibid., p. 355.
Figure 10. Frequency of Catholic Marriages in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.

Figure 11. Frequency of "Mixed Marriages" in Corpus Christi Parish: 1925-1954.
the parish's constant population growth (although accurate figures cannot be found to substantiate this claim).

"Mixed marriages" (Figure 11) give indication of a constant increase in number, reaching a peak in 1946 when the highest number of "mixed marriages" were recorded (51) for a one-year period. A sharp decline from 1946 to 1952 was followed by a sharp rise during the next two years. From an over-all point of view, "mixed marriages" have been constantly increasing. The "why" of this behavior on the part of the Catholics involved is difficult to answer. Could there be internal parochial factors such as a decrease in the realization of parish cohesion, or lack of training and instruction by the Church on The Christian Marriage, or the preoccupation with matters non- or areligious resulting in a tendency to hold membership in the Church as secondary, or are the teachings of the Church on marriage becoming less practical and applicable to every-day living? These are a few of the many questions which might be asked.

**Extreme Unction.** The last rites of the Catholic Church for any member of it is the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Ideally, this prepares the individual for death, and the state of his soul by reception of this sacrament is well ordered. "Extreme Unction is the
sacrament which, through anointing with blessed oil by
the priest, and through his prayers, gives health and
strength to the soul, and sometimes to the body when
we are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or
old age."

There are no available statistics on the number of
times Corpus Christi parishioners received the sacrament
of Extreme Unction. Another Church function, however,
is somewhat related to this sacrament. During the
years 1925-1954 Corpus Christi Church witnessed 2,958
burials. One might suspect that in this instance
movement across parish lines into and out of the parish
is not so great. Another point in case is that the
establishment of part of Corpus Christi as Epiphany
Parish did not have the effect of lowering the number
of burials. On the contrary, in the years following
Epiphany Parish's incorporation, there was an increase
from 96 burials in 1946 to 103 in 1947. Although
1948 and 1949 experienced a lowering in the number of
burials, the figures (101 and 92 respectively) show no
great drop in burials at Corpus Christi.

F. The Parish Organizations

Within the parochial structure of Corpus Christi
there is, as in all parishes, a network of organizations
in which the parishioners may participate more directly

21 Ibid., p. 340.
in the life of the parish and in one way or another contribute to the well-functioning of inter-parochial activity. The many groups are selective according to such criteria as sex, age, and type of activity. Although some groups do not hold sex as a criterion of membership, others do. Adulthood or children of school age oftentimes distinguish who is to be a member of one or more groups. The differential involved in reference to the type of parochial activity is also a factor involved in selection of one group above any other.

There are fourteen such groups in Corpus Christi which form the organizational network of the parish. Ranging from student groups to adult clubs the list of organizations is as follows: The Children of Mary, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Acolyte Society, the Boys' Choir, the St. Dominic Savio Club, the League of the Sacred Heart, the Daughters of St. Elizabeth, the Holy Name Society, the Senior Sodality, the Ladies' Sodality, the Altar Society, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Ushers' Society (see Table IV). Collectively, the membership in all these organizations as of the end of 1954 reached a total of 985. The membership in most of these organizations will constantly change with the loss and addition of members from year to year. Although figures were not available for all the parish organizations during the years previous to 1954, the rise in
TABLE IV
Corpus Christi Parish Organizations and Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Organizational Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daughters of St. Elizabeth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League of the Sacred Heart</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul Society</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acolyte Society</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies’ Sodality</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altar Society</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushers’ Society</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Dominic Savio Club</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Scouts</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys’ Choir</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Mary</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Sodality</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Name Society</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
parish membership has been accompanied by a constant rise in the membership of the parish organizations.

The activity of these societies ranges from aid to poverty-stricken families to the personal sanctification of the group membership. Some are concerned with increasing devotion to prominent figures of the history of the Catholic Church such as the Blessed Mother of God and certain saints. The Ladies' and Senior Sodalities and the Children of Mary, for example, are dedicated to increasing devotion to the Blessed Mother, whereas such clubs as the St. Dominic Savio Club have a special devotion to their titular Saint. The League of the Sacred Heart has a special mission of increasing devotion to Christ, Redeemer of the World. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is preoccupied with giving material aid to members of poor families as is the Society of the Daughters of St. Elizabeth.

Some of the groups have a more or less civic character. Exemplary of this end are the Boy and Girl Scout Troups of the parish. These parish groups form part of the larger city-wide Boy and Girl Scout Organization.

The Holy Name Society for men is involved in no specific tasks although much of its activity is directed to the support of the parish. This group is also connected with the larger structure under the direction of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
Many of the organizations are directly connected with the upkeep and maintenance of the religious and material aspects of the parish plant. Indicative of this type of activity are the Altar Society, the Altar Boys' Club (Acolyte Society), the Boys' Choir, and the Ushers' Society.

G. The Institutional Nature of Corpus Christi Parish

There are numerous sociological aspects to the organizational network which involves members of Corpus Christi in activity closely connected with the functioning of the parish. The additional role which a person takes on as part of one of these organizations and the additional status which he acquires by virtue of his participation as a member of one or more of these societies will increase the force of the roles and statuses which he has assumed as part of the parochial community. The ramifications from such organizational involvement are two-fold: (1) if the individual becomes known as a "worker" for the group and as one of the group leaders, his status in the community will be increased; however, (2) if his relationship to the group is purely nominal and remains so over a period of time, his membership in the larger community structure will either remain the same or will be hampered. The problems and workings of group relations within any community are as applicable here as in any other type of community. Within the religious framework
of a parish the interrelations of people have well-defined boundaries; an evolved normative system of values which cannot or should not be violated. The hierarchy which exists within the parish—from Pastor to nominal member—sets up a type of unwritten handbook of rules of behavior which serves to define relationships and to place restrictive evaluations upon the many relationships which membership in a parish implies.

The above relations and interrelationships which exist within Corpus Christi Parish are institutional in nature. According to J. O. Hertzler: "Institutions are standardized, accepted, and usually enforced systems of social behavior (which) order, regulate, and correlate the activities and relationships of all individuals and subgroups of the culture area as they carry on the operations necessary to satisfy the wants and needs."22

The religious institution, then, as part of a "cultural system" becomes "a body of attitudes, ideas, and techniques—whereby he (man) explains and adjusts himself to the unknown, the mysterious, and the mighty."23

---


For Catholicism, the structural form for the realization of the institutional processes involved becomes the parish. There must be certain criteria, therefore, which designate the parish as the "operative area within the total social structure and hierarchy of the Church." One author sets up four "elements" which are necessary to constitute a parish: "(a) an appointed pastor, (b) a church or rectory, (c) certain territorial limits, and (d) a designated group of persons." Structurally, then, Corpus Christi exists as a social unit. Additionally, Corpus Christi, as part of the large Catholic parochial structure, adheres to a set of distinguishable Catholic values. These values become concrete in the observable amount of parochial solidarity which the members of Corpus Christi exhibit in their roles as parishioners.

The sum-total of the above criteria settles, in this writer's mind at least, the fact that Corpus Christi Parish (or any Catholic parish) is a social group. This idea has been succinctly stated by John Donovan: "The Catholic parish must be conceived of as a real social group composed of the Catholic clergy, religious, and laity within certain territorial boundaries who share a


25 Ibid.
unity founded on common beliefs and who participate in socioreligious relationships defined by the parent-organization of the Church."²⁶

The more specific attachment to the parish as a social structure takes the form of organizational activity. The members of Corpus Christi, as do the members of any Catholic parish, use the organizational structure within their parish as a means to conscious linkage with the physical structure of the Catholic church closest to its individual members: the Catholic parish.

PART TWO

THE DYNAMICS OF CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH
CHAPTER IV

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Introduction

The major purpose of this work is to view the members of Corpus Christi Parish as parishioners. This, however, is not exclusive to the extent that one need not consider the fact that each of these parishioners is bound with additional institutional roles revolving about the family unit. The importance of educational, economic, recreational, and political involvements is not to be underestimated. Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Corpus Christi are participants within the parochial structure, they are also members of the civic community and their revolvements within this sphere may be treated as parts of the total complex of institutions in which these people hold membership. The usefulness of an institutional approach to social research is well stated by Talcott Parsons:

....A structural category in its significance for a structural-functional system must be treated as a relatively stable patterning of the relationships of the parts, which in this connection may be treated either as component actors or as the roles in terms of which they participate in social relationships. One aspect of the structuring of the system must be what is conveniently called "institutionalization"; that is, the organization
of action around sufficiently stable patterns so that it may be treated as structured from the point of view of the system.¹

Part II of this study deals with the institutional dynamics in which the people of Corpus Christi find themselves. The fact of their membership in this Catholic parish adds another section to their total social framework. It is part of the many-sided lives of these people who find themselves, because of their race, or despite it, still human, and still part of a human society in which their needs must be satisfied and in which their sociality must necessarily exist and actively function.

More specifically, this Part attempts to outline: (1) the general population data of the "core area" of Corpus Christi; (2) facts and attitudes about the educational involvements of these people; (3) the economic aspects of this Negro community; (4) types of individual and family recreation; and (5) voting and political behavior.

An attempt to report the attitudes of the Corpus Christi families involved in this study concerning race relations and racial equality, although not absolutely

necessary to the completion of this work, could not be dismissed entirely. The people of Corpus Christi define their behavior in numerous ways: (1) as Americans adhering to the "American Creed"; (2) as Catholics judging their behavior according to the normative system of the Roman Catholic Church; and (3) as Negroes, behaving necessarily according to a value system which has evolved out of the bi-racial nature of American Society. Because of the conflict which arises out of this complex pattern of behavior for the Negro, he has developed a definite and different set of attitudes which affect him as an American, as a Catholic, and as a member of the Negro race.

One can easily see the importance of touching upon the racial attitudes of the people of any Negro community whether the basic approach is religious or otherwise. With this realization, the author will also attempt in the second part of this analysis to deal with the "mind" of the people of Corpus Christi as it relates to their value-determined outlook regarding the situation of race, and also, attitudes concerning the area of Corpus Christi.

This last phase of analysis will complete the scope of this study. It is hoped that the reasonableness of every part of this work will come to the fore as the study progresses and ends.

\[2\] For the specifics involved in this concept, see Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p. xlvif.
B. Age-Sex Composition

There were 448 people involved in the 100 family units decided upon as the "sample" of Corpus Christi "core area." These people represent: (1) the heads of households; (2) the children of the married couples around which the family is centered; and (3) other members of the larger family of orientation, predominantly parents of the younger married couples. The ramifications which accrue from this fact of a rather heterogeneous family unit will be discussed as this analysis develops. It is sufficient here to say that there is a definite fact of complexity within each family unit involving head of household (male or female), children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relations.

An analysis of the sex composition of these 100 family units indicated that there is a predominance of females in the Corpus Christi community. The sex ratio in 1954 was set at 77.8. This result was obtained from the fact that the male portion of the 448 people involved in the study was numbered at 196 and the female portion at 252. Relating the sex of this sample population to age categories, the age-sex pyramid showed abnormal instances. (See Figure 12.) The fairly normal distribution observable in the age categories under 5 and 5-9 is immediately offset by the great increase on the part of the males and slow increase on the part of females in the 10-14 and 15-19 age categories. There was a definite sparsity
Figure 12. Age-sex pyramid for the sample population of Corpus Christi "core area." 1954.
of members of the young, productive age groups (20-29 years of age), the lack being evidenced more in the females than in the males. The same general trend continued through the next age group (30-34 years). There was a continued decrease--on the part of the males--during the following ten-year period. This same period, however, witnessed a very pronounced increase in females. It might be noted here that this gives partial account for the low sex ratio evidenced in the Corpus Christi community. The age groups 35-39 and 40-44 compose 5.2 and 5.4 per cent of the total female population respectively. This can be compared to the same age groups for males where only 2.9 and 3.1 per cent respectively of the total male population occurs.

The next age group (45-49), while witnessing a sharp but fairly normal decrease in the female population, also indicates a rise in the male population from 3.1 for the previous five-year age group to 3.6 in the age grouping 45-49. The 50-54 and 55-59 age groups evidenced a fairly normal decrease in both males and females. This decrease continues through the remainder of the age groups. Proportionately, however, the decrease is more predominant in the males than in the females. This is evidenced by the 0.2 per cent of total male population and the 1.1 per cent of total female population in the 70-74 age group. This disproportionate decrease continued through the 75 and
over age category, where there is witnessed only 0.2 per cent of the total male population and 1.0 per cent of the total female population.

C. Parental Origin

At the outset of each interview an attempt was made by the interviewer to discover the rural or urban background of the sample population of Corpus Christi "core area." In order to obtain this information, the question "Where were your parents born?" was asked. The unsubstantiated suspicion of the interviewer that there was a definite urban orientation within Corpus Christi was realized\(^3\) and factualized when it was discovered that the majority of parents of interviewees were from the New Orleans area. Over half (55.5 per cent) of the parents of interviewees were from New Orleans proper. The percentage of parents from out of town (this was connoted as rural origin) totaled 31.5 per cent. The remaining 13.0 per cent of the interviewees had no knowledge of the origin of their parents. This lack of knowledge on the part of 13 respondents (the number thirteen refers to family units in which the parental origin of both husband and wife was not known) may have colored the validity of the remaining 87.0 per cent of responses. However, the

\(^3\)Informal talks with the parish priests and a few members of the parish precipitated this suspicion. An urban influence seemed predominant.
trend is seemingly upward toward the fact of urban origin. The breakdown of parental origin by sex of interviewees is interesting. The urban origin of the husband's parents totaled 52.0 per cent and that of the wife was 59.0 per cent. The out-of-town or rural parental origin reached 35.0 per cent for the husband and 28.0 per cent for the wife. The "don't know" answers were equally distributed for male and female at 13.0 per cent each. The fact that there was a higher percentage of out-of-town parental origin for the males of each sample family indicated a higher rate of male in-migration.

The extent to which there was migration into the urban area of New Orleans also indicated that the out-of-state movement was very slight. The predominant movement has been within the boundaries of Louisiana. This, however, would not indicate the rural or urban character of these people's background. The pertinent fact here is that there was a lack of any type of migration. The present population had neither rural nor "other urban" background; the parents were New Orleans dwellers who remained to rear their offspring within the New Orleans area.

This fact was further reinforced when it was discovered that 51 (or 11.3 per cent) of the total 448 people involved in the interviewing were parents of the younger married members of the 100 sample family units. There were 20 (or 4.4 per cent) "fathers" of the younger married
couples and 31 (or 6.9 per cent) "mothers" of the younger married couples still living as members of these Corpus Christi family units.

D. Skin Color in Corpus Christi "Core Area"

An immediately-observable feature of the members of Corpus Christi Parish is their skin color. During the preliminary observations the interviewer observed a definite trend of light skin in the territory. Most of the people about the parish center itself were generally of light skin as were the parishioners in attendance at Sunday Mass. The school children, upon observation, had lightened skin, some with very definite Nordic features.

There are numerous points of speculation which surround observations of this type: (1) Could it be that Negroes of light skin tend to concentrate themselves within relatively well-defined territorial limits? (2) Can the cause of such concentration be attributed to the fact of being ostracized not only from the white community but from the darker-skinned communities as well? (3) Is the fact of miscegenation present today to any extent? or (4) Is past miscegenation still manifesting itself in the characteristics of the present people of Corpus Christi? These questions are difficult to answer. At any rate, the face of light skin color in this Negro parish does exist.

It must be mentioned here that the facts which this author forwards are valid only to the extent that they
be accepted as his personal interpretation of the "skin type." No other means were used to determine the category in which every interviewee was placed other than the author's own personal observations and interpretations. As far as this is a valid means of determining placement of people in categories of skin color, the following factual analysis may become meaningful.

The author decided to use the following scale in which to place each interviewee: very dark, dark, brown, light brown, and white. One last explanatory note must be made here. The category "light brown" was interpreted as meaning "ability to pass into the white race but with possibilities of suspicion." This scheme decided upon, the following facts were observed.

Of the 100 interviewees which the author contacted, none were classified as being "very dark." Moving down the scale, the author classified six people (or 6.0 per cent) as "dark." The highest percentage in any one category occurred in the "brown" classification: 41.0 per cent. It is interesting to note that the number placed in the "light brown" category is not much less than that of the "brown" category, or 39.0 per cent. The remaining 14.0 per cent were classified as "white."

The discernment of any positive causal factors for this percentage classification is not entirely within the scope of this study. It might be well to say, however,
that the possibility of attributing such a distribution only to chance is perhaps an oversimplification. One cannot deny the fact of miscegenation or the fact of discriminatory relationships within the Negro race. These seem likely causes for the predominance of light skin color in Corpus Christi.

Although one may be inadequate in stating all the possible causes for the concentration of light skin color within the limits of Corpus Christi Parish (53.0 per cent of the 100 interviewees were either "light brown" or "white"), the fact itself becomes no less significant. The strain which skin color exerts upon people of light skin became evidently problematic for the people involved in the 39th interview by the author. During the course of completing Schedule 39, the interviewee, light skinned, aided by other members of the family, explained the place of light-skinned Negroes as being "right in the middle: not accepted by the real dark Negroes, and not really accepted by the white people." The possibilities of white people suspecting some Negro blood did exist. Continuing, the interviewee stated: "We decided not to have to worry about the others liking us or not, so we stay to ourselves and mix with our own." When asked whether or not they would want to be able to mix with Negroes of darker skin, the interviewee replied: "Yes, we would, but they don't want to be with you." In the above reconstruction of what transpired during the course of the interview, it is
seemingly evident that the presence of light skin for Family 39 precipitated problem situations, their solution resolving itself in departure from any type of "mixed" relations.

In attempting to touch the "fringe" of causation encircling the fact of light skin, miscegenation and the fact of French ancestry became pertinent factors. (See Table V.) The surnames of 43.0 per cent of the total sample population was French. Of this total, 18 interviewees (or 41.9 per cent) were classified as "light brown," and 8 interviewees (or 18.6 per cent) were classified as "white." In other words, a total of 26 interviewees (or 60.5 per cent) could "pass" as members of the white population. The remaining 17 interviewees (or 39.5 per cent) were distributed within the "dark" and "brown" categories; 4 interviewees (or 9.3 per cent) were classified as "dark" and 13 (or 30.2 per cent) as "brown."

The predominance of light skin in the families of French origin becomes more significant when compared with the percentages of skin classifications for the non-French segment of the total sample population. Here a total of 27 (or 47.4 per cent) of the non-French families could pass. This may be compared with the 60.5 per cent of families of French origin who were of "light brown" or "white" skin. More specifically, 21 interviewees (or 36.9
TABLE V

The Relationship of French and Non-French Ancestry to Skin Color in Corpus Christi Parish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-French</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
per cent) were classified as "light brown" and 6 (or 10.5 per cent) were classified as "white." Within the non-French segment of the sample population, the remaining interviewees (52.6 per cent) were distributed as follows: 2 (or 3.5 per cent) were classified as "dark" and 28 (or 49.1 per cent) as "white."

In other words, the total sample population showed that 53.0 per cent of the interviewees were either "light brown" or "white" skinned. Those interviewees of French ancestry placed in the "light brown" and "white" categories totaled 60.5 per cent, while interviewees of non-French ancestry having "light brown" or "white" skin totaled less than 50.0 per cent (47.3 per cent). The emergence of French ancestry as a factor contributing to the light skin color of the people of Corpus Christi indicated that this concentration of light skin is partially due to the observation that past miscegenation is still manifesting itself within the territorial limits of Corpus Christi Parish.

E. Neighborhood Relations in Corpus Christi

The possibilities of Corpus Christi Parish being a highly integrated community of people are numerous. The lack of commercial activity and the almost complete residential nature of the parish are factors seemingly in favor of relatively intense community activity. Such factors as the above are not, however, definitive means
for ascertaining the "type of contact" family units have with neighboring ones. How these people really feel toward their neighbors and how close they feel their relationships are cannot be judged by ascertaining the industrial or non-industrial nature of the territory in which these people find themselves.

During the interview time taken with each of the 100 families, three questions were asked in an attempt to determine the type of contact families had with neighboring families, the residential preference of each of these families, and the actual fact of relations with members of other races predominantly white. Two of the three questions were adaptable to the use of simple scaling techniques which the writer used as follows: (1) What type of contact do you have with your neighbors? Very Close, Close, Casual, or None at All; and (2) Do you have any white friends? Very Close, Close, Casual, or None at All. The third question took the following form: Where would you rather live? in an all-Negro community, a mixed community, or a predominantly white community. These three questions, it was hoped, would give some indication of the degree or intensity of neighborhood relations as they revolve not only about Negroes but also about whites.

The types of contacts each family unit had with neighboring families seemed rather normal. 56.0 per cent
of the 100 families interviewed stated that their relations were "casual." Those families having "close" contact with their neighbors totaled 25.0 per cent. 16.0 per cent of the families interviewed stated that their relations with other neighborhood families were "very close." The remaining 3.0 per cent of the total sample of families indicated no type of contact with neighbors. One might conclude here that although the fact of neighborhood relations is present, there is no indication of above-average intensity.

In trying to ascertain the exact nature of the interviewees' relations within the neighborhood, the interviewer asked the following question: Can you rely upon help from your neighbors when you need their help? Those interviewees who responded affirmatively to "casual" contacts with neighbors defined this relationship for the most part as follows: In answer to the question concerning "help from neighbors," the respondent of Schedule 60 replied: "I guess so—maybe." This response was indicative of most responses in definition of each interviewee's contact with other members of the neighborhood. The interviewee of Schedule 100 replied: "I think they will help." In interviewing the respondent of Schedule 20, the reply given to the above question was: "I think some would." Three other interviewees (Schedules 24, 41, and 97) indicated how helpful their neighbors
would be by responding: "I don't know." These selective responses all indicate some doubt on the part of the interviewees as to whether or not they could expect aid from their neighbors in any type of situation. The "casual" category in which 56.0 per cent of the interviewees placed themselves, therefore, can be thought of as no more than a relationship calling for "biding the time of day." This doubtful relationship observed in those interviewees who placed themselves in the "casual" category are not peculiar to them alone, however. Those interviewees who responded affirmatively to "close" relationships with their neighbors also indicated doubt as to the amount of assistance they might expect from their "close" neighbors. The respondent of Schedule 13 showed some doubt in answering: "I suppose they would help." This same doubt was expressed by the interviewee of Schedule 62 who replied: "They probably would." The respondent of Schedule 3 followed the same trend in the reply: "I imagine they would help, but I'm not so sure."

Although this relationship of doubt concerning "helping" one's neighbor permeated the majority of interviews, some interviewees who placed themselves in the "very close" category of neighborhood contacts responded in conformity to that placement. The interviewee of
Schedule 73, for example, epitomized the responses of this group with the reply: "Oh, yea, they do help."

Generally, one might conclude from the above discussion that much of Corpus Christi family activity occurs outside the home and oftentimes outside the neighborhood. This generalization is reinforced by the fact that the members of Corpus Christi—a predominantly Negro community—are not completely void of relations with the white population of New Orleans.

It is inevitable that there will be contact across racial lines. This fact need not be studied for its validity. The intensity of these relationships, however, are much more subject to invalidation and misinterpretation. For the people of Corpus Christi, the majority of relations with members of the white race are "casual." This category included 42.0 per cent of the total sample of families. The second largest number of families (36.0 per cent) fell in the "none" category. 10.0 per cent of the families interviewed replied that their relationships with members of the white race were "close." The remaining 12.0 per cent of the 100 sample families responded as part of the "very close" category.

Difficulty arises in an attempt to explain these relations across racial lines. It would seem that the "casual" relations to which 42.0 per cent of the families alluded were primarily service and occupational relations
having no basis in the family life of the people of Corpus Christi. One indication of this type of "casual" relationship appeared in the statement of the interviewee of Schedule 8 who said: "I have casual white friends. I work with them. They're alright." Another interviewee (Schedule 62) reinforced the economic aspect of Negro-white relations in the statement: "The grocery people are white, and they're nice." A third interviewee (Schedule 17) gave further indication of an economic relationship with white people by stating: "My doctor is white. I have confidence in my family doctor."

The importance of the economic aspect in Negro-white relations was carried over into those interviewees who indicated their relations with members of the white race as "close." One interviewee (Schedule 43) stated: "I would prefer to be white for a position." The "close" relations of another interviewee (Schedule 46) with members of the white race indicated an attitude of racial equality: "It don't make any difference who I'm around, white or Negro. White people don't have any place. People are people." This same attitude was forwarded by another interviewee (Schedule 30) who stated: "I like to be around both kinds."

The fact of "very close" relations, on the other hand, shows that the relations across racial lines are not only economic or extra-familial, but social--taking
place within the family residence. One interviewee (Schedule 71) expressed this point of view in the statement concerning whites: "I like them. We play cards together all the time." This same interviewee also gave what may be an indication of displeasure with his own race: "The only time I get in trouble is when I am around Negroes." The interviewee of Schedule 80 stated the family's "very close" relations with whites in the following statement: "Our white friends are in Opelousas. They're plain O. K. I see no difference in being around Negroes or whites."

The type of contact which the people of Corpus Christi Parish have with their neighbors and with members of the white race outside their immediate neighborhood may be influenced, unconsciously, if not otherwise, by the preference of each of these families regarding the "type of residential area" in which they choose to live. This conscious or unconscious preference for a certain "type of place of residence" was extreme in the case of the 100 families interviewed. 92.0 per cent of the total sample of families preferred living in a "mixed community." Preference for residence in an all-Negro community was indicated by 7.0 per cent of the total 100 respondents. Only one family (classified as white) responded in favor of residing in a predominantly white community.
The Corpus Christi area is predominantly an all-Negro community. The fact that 92.0 per cent of the families interviewed responded in favor of residence in a "mixed community" may be indication that, although their presence in Corpus Christi seems stable enough, there is, at least, some desire to reside elsewhere. The fact that the majority of relations within the neighborhood are "casual" and the relatively significant incidence of contact with members of the white race are factors which give credence to a certain amount of unrest within the neighborhood and a desire to live within the territorial limits of a mixed community.

The personal and social factors involved in the choice of residence of each of these families are numerous. Their implications to the well-being of the entire community are important and not without effect upon the types of social relations which exist within the neighborhood.
CHAPTER V
THE INSTITUTIONS

A. The Corpus Christi Family and Household

The 100 families interviewed within the "core area" of Corpus Christi Parish each constitute an average of 4.5 people. As previously stated, the composition of these families by blood relations involves male and female heads of households, children of married couples, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. It may be said that the complex of relationships within each family unit has had a definite bearing upon the marital status of each family member. The first and most overt example giving basis to the above observation involves the number of divorced persons occurring within the 100 family units. Of the 8 (or 1.8 per cent) divorcees living within this sample population, only one divorced person was the head of a household. The remaining seven divorcees accrue from the "remnant" parts of the family units which include grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

43.5 per cent of the total 448 people included within the 100 family units (or 195 people) were married and living with spouse. This category, however, does not
comprise the largest percentage in one status grouping: 213 people may be placed in the "single" category. This category comprises 47.5 per cent of the sample population. Of these 213 people of "single" status, 167 (or 37.3 per cent) were under 20 years of age. Within the sample population a total of 24 persons (or 5.4 per cent) were "widowed." There is a definite relationship here with the age of the population both male and female. Only 2 of the 24 people "widowed" were males. This is in direct proportion to the higher death rate among males than among females. Within the age category 75 years and over, 0.2 per cent of the total male population remained, while the same category involved 1.0 per cent of the total female population. A fifth category of marital status is "separated." These people who do not live together and have no official divorce include only 8 members (or 1.8 per cent) of the sample population.

The status distribution of the members of the Corpus Christi "core area" families has had a definite effect upon the fertility ratio of the population. Recall that the largest percentage of individuals fell within the "single" category; 45 (or 37.2 per cent) of the 121 single females fall within the age limits 15 to 44. This factor may indicate the lack of fertility in the female population of the ages 15 to 44. The fertility ratio of the "core area" population is 378. Although the sex ratio
of the "core area" (77.8) is strongly in favor of the female population, the predominance of single, widowed, and divorced females has significantly lowered the potential fertility of the sample population.

The heads of households for the 100 families interviewed were predominantly male. In all but 12 families the male remained the "head." In 11 of the 12 remaining families, the death of the male spouse caused the female replacement as "head of the house." The remaining family had lost its male "head" because of divorce. The family had remained intact, the husband moving out of the family unit.

The complex character of the individual family unit becomes interesting from another point of view. The addition of "remnant" parts to the normal family unit of husband, wife, and offspring had contributed a cause to the fact of a 4.5 person per family average. Table VI indicates the proportional membership in family units ranging from families of one to thirteen members. Over half (or 51.0 per cent) of the 100 families had four, five, or six members. In families having one, two, or three members, 36.0 per cent of the sample families are included. Thirteen families of the total 100 had seven or more members. The largest family in the sample included thirteen members. Of the 448 people involved in the sampling, 251 (or 56.0 per cent) fell in the family units
TABLE VI

Size of Households for Sample Population of Corpus Christi "Core Area"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Members in Household</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative Totals</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of four, five, or six members. This large concentration begins a decline in the family units of seven members and over. The total number of people included in families of seven to thirteen members is 111, or 24.8 per cent of the total number of people of Corpus Christi "core area." In the family categories of one, two, or three people there were 96 family members (or 21.3 per cent of the total number of people sampled). One might conclude, then, that there is a significant concentration of people in the family categories of four, five, or six members. The fact of being "single" and holding membership in the family unit as a "remnant"; the presence of persons of widowed and divorced status; these incidents within the family units may have significance here.

These Corpus Christi households may be said to have some general degree of permanence. Territorially, the movement "out of the neighborhood" has been slight. 12.0 per cent of the 100 sample families have lived in the Corpus Christi neighborhood 42 years or more, the oldest family having remained within the neighborhood 74 years. 57.0 per cent of the families have remained in the neighborhood 20 years or more. The remaining number of families have lived near Corpus Christi less than 20 years; all except three of these families for one year or more. This degree of permanence on the
part of the people of Corpus Christi is highlighted by the amount of permanence exhibited in the fact of remaining in one residence for any number of years. 23.0 per cent of the total number of sample families have lived in the same house for twenty years or more. Living in one house ten years or more included 45.0 per cent of the total sample of families. The remaining families have lived in one house less than ten years; none of them occupied one residential structure for less than one year.

If the above facts are at all indicative of territorial mobility or the lack of it, it would seem that the people of Corpus Christi Parish have held membership therein for some time. Each family has resided within Corpus Christi Parish in the same residential structure for an average of approximately ten years; each family has lived in the Corpus Christi neighborhood for an average of twenty-one years.

B. Educational Institutions

One author has stated that "A complex, technologically advanced society, greatly dependent upon science and rapidly changing, requires an elaborate system of instruction and indoctrination if it is not to regress to simpler levels."¹ This system which has a twofold

character of learning—formal and informal— influences, as in all cases, the people of Corpus Christi Parish. The informal process, conducted by way of socialization in the home and peer groups, is combined with the formalized education acquired outside the home in schools of learning.

This section will deal with three areas of the general educational system: (1) the years of schooling completed by the people of Corpus Christi; (2) the reading habits within the home; and (3) attitudes on the formal educational system.

**Years of Schooling Completed.** The 321 people fifteen years of age and over within the total sample population of Corpus Christi "core area" had a median of 8.3 years of schooling completed. Broken down by sex, the median years of schooling completed for the 140 males fifteen years of age and over was 8.2. This may be compared to the median years of schooling for the 181 females fifteen years of age and over. Their median years of schooling was 8.4. In other words, the median years of schooling completed was slightly higher for the female part of the total sample population fifteen years of age and over.

1.1 per cent of the total female population fifteen years of age and over received no schooling whatsoever. (See Table VII.) The percentage of males fifteen years
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Schooling Completed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years and over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medians</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of age and over receiving no schooling was .7. There was a predominance of females fifteen years of age and over for the first four years of grade school; 6.6 per cent of the females fell in this grouping as compared to 2.2 per cent of the males who fell in the same group. The last four years of grade school saw a larger percentage of males (40.7 per cent) than females (33.7 per cent) completing five, six, seven, or eight years of schooling. The first two years of high school witnessed a predominance of females (17.7 per cent) over males (14.3 per cent). The larger concentration of females over males was less marked during the third and fourth years of high school where 22.7 per cent of the total female population fifteen years of age and over received three or four years of high school education and 22.1 per cent of the total male population fifteen years of age and over completed the same.

The trend was reversed during the first two years of college where 5.7 per cent of the total sample male population completed one or two years of college as compared to only 2.2 per cent of the total sample female population. 5.5 per cent of the total female population completed three or more years of college education whereas the percentage of males completing three or four years of college was 4.3 per cent. Only one female member of the total sample population fifteen years of age and over completed more than four years of college.
Grouping the percentages for grade school, high school, college and over, Table VII shows that 42.9 per cent of the total sample male population fifteen years of age and over completed no more than the last year of grade school. A smaller percentage of females (40.3 per cent) completed less than eight years of grade school. More females (40.4 per cent) than males (36.4 per cent) completed no more than four years and no less than one year of high school. 10.0 per cent of the total male population completed one or more years of college as compared to 8.3 per cent of the total female population receiving the same amount of schooling.

In general, the 181 females fifteen years of age and over dominated the 140 males fifteen years of age and over only in the years of high school completed. Although the males fifteen years and over are smaller in number, percentage-wise they overshadowed the female sample population fifteen years of age and over in both the years of grade school completed and years of college completed.

Reading Habits. The reading of periodicals—a form of communication which requires only a slight degree of formal education—can be one factor in judging the amount of communication the people of Corpus Christi have with the world and in determining the degree of utilization of educational achievement these people have reached.
Since the basic approach in this work is parochial—looking at these people as members of their parish—it will also be interesting to determine the degree to which these people read Catholic and non-Catholic literature.

The 100 sample families were fairly constant and intense readers of the five major Negro and white newspapers. (See Table VIII.) The *Times-Picayune* newspaper (white) ranked highest in number of regular readers. Another white newspaper, the *New Orleans Item*, held second place for newspapers read regularly by this Negro population. A Negro newspaper, *The Louisiana Weekly* (Louisiana Edition of the *Pittsburgh Courier*), ranked third for newspapers read "regularly," followed by the *New Orleans States* newspaper (white). The *Pittsburgh Courier*, an out-of-town Negro newspaper, placed fifth as a newspaper read "regularly."

This predominance of white newspapers fell somewhat in ranking for those who read certain newspapers "sometimes." The highest ranking newspaper read "sometimes" was *The Louisiana Weekly*. In second rank was another Negro newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Two New Orleans white newspapers tied for third ranking in the "sometimes" read category: the *Times-Picayune* and *New Orleans Item*. Taking fourth and last ranking in the "sometimes" category was the *New Orleans States* newspaper.
# TABLE VIII

Major Periodicals Read, by Frequency, for the 100 Sample Families of Corpus Christi "Core Area" 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th>Regularly No.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Sometimes No.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Never No.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Catholic newspapers:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Courier</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans States</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Louisiana Weekly</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times-Picayune</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans Item</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholic newspapers:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Action of the South</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Sunday Visitor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Catholic magazines:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Housekeeping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholic magazines:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother of Perpetual Help Extension</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Anthony Messenger</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Digest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Augustine Messenger</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The high ranking of white newspapers "regularly" read by the Corpus Christi Negro population could be thought of as one overt expression of the desire of this concentration of light-skinned Negroes to think of themselves, or to be thought of by others, as white. By taking on some semblance of the white population, these light-skinned Negroes perhaps gain added prestige and, if nothing else, satisfy themselves more in their precarious position between the darker-skinned Negroes and the white New Orleans population. This fact, however, has at least one ramification. Although there is white predominance in "regular" or subscribed reading of newspapers, the contact and necessary affiliation of these light-skinned people with the Negro race has its expression in the reversed predominance of Negro newspapers being read "sometimes."

Two Catholic newspapers, the Catholic Action of the South and Our Sunday Visitor, were read "regularly" by 34 and 27 sample families respectively. The rankings remained the same in terms of the number of families who read these newspapers "sometimes." The Catholic Action of the South was read "sometimes" by 10 of the 100 sample families and Our Sunday Visitor was read "sometimes" by 8 sample families.

The case for non-Catholic newspapers is not the same for non-Catholic magazines that are read in the
homes of the 100 sample families. The highest ranking magazine read "regularly" was Life magazine (white). Second in rank for magazines read "regularly" was the Negro magazine Jet. Another Negro magazine, Ebony, took third ranking for magazines "regularly" read. Good Housekeeping (white) and Look (white) magazines took the fourth and fifth ranks of magazines which the 100 sample families read "regularly."

The first ranking "regularly" read magazine, Life, took first place in terms of the number of families who read the magazine "sometimes." Ebony magazine took second ranking for magazines read "sometimes." The white magazine Look gained two ranks, reaching third place for magazines which these families read "sometimes." Fourth and fifth rankings were given to Jet and Good Housekeeping respectively.

Non-Catholic magazines are more often "regularly" read than Catholic magazines. A total of 65 families subscribed "regularly" to the five above-mentioned non-Catholic magazines. This figure may be compared to the total of 50 "regular" subscriptions given to the following five Catholic magazines: Mother of Perpetual Help, Extension, St. Anthony Messenger, Catholic Digest, and the St. Augustine Messenger. In terms of "regularly" read Catholic magazines, Mother of Perpetual Help took first rank, followed by Extension in second place. The St. Anthony Messenger held third ranking, with the
Catholic Digest and the St. Augustine Messenger holding fourth and fifth ranks respectively.

One might conclude from the above discussion on reading habits in Corpus Christi "core area" that the predominant printed means of communication is the newspaper to which the largest "regular" subscriptions were given. Also, one might generalize that although interest in news may be a cause for the predominance of newspaper subscriptions being to white newspapers (since the white newspapers are more adequate in this area of reporting), another possible factor involved is the desire of these light-skinned Negroes to think of themselves or have others think of them as having some connection with the white population of New Orleans.

A third conclusion concerns the reading of Catholic newspapers and magazines. Generally, these families are in no way consistent with the incessant plea of the Catholic Church that every home should have Catholic literature within its walls. The reading of Catholic printed material is, on the whole, poor, less than the reading of non-Catholic literature, and completely inadequate.

**Attitudes Toward Education.** All children within Corpus Christi attended parochial school. In an attempt to discover the attitudes of the people of Corpus Christi concerning the education of their children, four questions were asked, the answers to which could be Yes,
No, or No Reply. The four questions asked were: (1) Are you satisfied with the education your children are receiving?; (2) Do you think Negro schools have adequate facilities for the pupils?; (3) Do you think your children would be better off attending schools with white children?; and (4) Do you think the recent Supreme Court decision was a good thing regarding de-segregation of public schools?

The general results which these questions received indicated that although the people of Corpus Christi were satisfied with the education their children were receiving, they believed that the facilities of the schools were inadequate and that they did not know whether or not their children would be better off attending schools with white children. The idea of their children attending white schools with white children was obviously appealing as the results of the fourth question concerning the Supreme Court's 1953 decision on de-segregation showed. 88.0 per cent of the 100 sample families believed that the recent Supreme Court decision was a good thing. Only 8.0 per cent believed that such a decision was not good, while the remaining 14.0 per cent gave no definite answer.

Concerning the question "Are you satisfied with the education your children are receiving?" 69.0 per cent of the total sample population replied "yes."
5.0 per cent of the total sample replied "no." Two interviewees in this category gave as the reason for their negative answer the fact that the schools today are "too crowded." Another interviewee was dissatisfied with the present education of the children because "they get no 'brakes'." The remaining 26.0 per cent gave no reply to the question.

Although more than half of the 100 sample families believed that their children were receiving a good education, 75.0 per cent of the families replied negatively to the question "Do you think Negro schools have adequate facilities for their pupils?" Affirmative answers were given by 19.0 per cent of the total sample of families, while 6.0 per cent either did not know or refused to answer. 5.0 per cent of these did not know enough about the facilities to answer the question and 1.0 per cent refused to answer the question.

There is not much doubt that the majority of these people feel that their children would profit by a non-segregated school system. To the question: "Do you think your children would be better off attending schools with white children?" 71.0 per cent of the total sample of families replied "yes." 24.0 per cent gave a "no" reply while 4.0 per cent of the total sample responded "I don't know." Once again only 1.0 per cent of the sample population refused to answer.
C. Economic Institutions

This discussion of the economic activity of the people of Corpus Christi Parish will be divided into four areas of analysis: (1) how these people think of themselves economically, by classes; (2) satisfaction with the type of employment in which the heads of households are presently involved; (3) type of occupation and weekly remuneration of heads of households; and (4) the level of living of the 100 sample families in terms of the kinds of goods possessed by them.

These analyses will attempt to portray, at least, a side glance into the position of these people in terms of their economic productiveness, how they think of themselves, economically, and more specifically, into their actual occupational and remunerative involvements.

Economic Class Self-Placement. In order to determine where these people placed themselves, economically, by classes, the following question was asked: How would you rate yourself in the Negro community (according to your economic standing)?: Upper class, Middle class, Working class, Lower class. Only 1.0 per cent of the 100 sample families refused to answer the question, leaving 99.0 per cent of the total sample to be placed in one of the four economic class categories. Five interviewees (5.0 per cent of the sample) placed themselves in the "lower class" category. Thirteen interviewees (13.0
per cent) placed themselves in the "upper class" category. The remaining 81.0 per cent of the total sample were fairly equally distributed between "middle class" and "working class" categories, the "working class" taking the upper hand: 39.0 per cent placed themselves in the "middle class" category while the "working class" category included the remaining 42.0 per cent of the total sample.

The class categories in which the 100 interviewees placed themselves are seemingly not well defined and are subject to much misinterpretation. The author decided that the following explanations of each category would suffice (these explanations were called to the attention of each interviewee): upper class—completely stable economically, with a goodly amount "in the bank" and home ownership; middle class—economically stable with some savings sufficient for above-average medical care and home rented or being bought; working class—high enough income to support family adequately, small amount of savings or none at all, no home ownership; lower class—no sufficient income to adequately provide for basic needs of the family, no savings and no home ownership.

The validity of these self-placements by the 100 sample Corpus Christi families cannot be judged here. Self-placement in any one of the four economic class categories does serve, however, to indicate, to some
degree, how these families choose to think of themselves economically. To the extent that these economic class
categories are related to the occupations of these
people, one might conclude that the majority of the
people of Corpus Christi are happy, or at least
satisfied, with their own conception of their class
status.

This statement seems evident when 94.0 per cent of
the 100 heads of households answered affirmatively to
the question: "Are you satisfied with your present
job?" The remaining 6.0 per cent expressed dissatisfac-
tion with their present occupation, two of whom pre-
ferred to their present laboring position a "government
job." Others expressed their desire to have "civil
service jobs." These figures seem to indicate—to the
extent that they have meaning when related to the
economic class self-placements—that there is a
seemingly static character to these people's desire
to move into the economic classes above those in which
they presently find themselves.

Occupations of Heads of Households. The types of
occupations for the 100 heads of households involved in
the interviewing were numerous, ranging from waterfront
laborers to school teachers. Each of the interviewees'
occupations were placed into one of the following
groupings (based upon those used by the United States
Bureau of the Census): Professional, Managers and
Owners, Clerks and Salesmen, Foremen and Craftsmen, Service workers, Domestics, and Laborers. Table IX will indicate the distribution of the occupations of the 100 heads of households according to the above-mentioned categories. The three most important categories according to numbers are "Clerks and Salesmen," "Service workers," and "Laborers." These three groupings comprised 63.0 per cent of the total 100 heads of households. The next most predominant category was that of "Foremen and Craftsmen" where 14.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households' occupations fell. The "Professional" and "Managers and Owners" categories composed 11.0 per cent of the total heads of households; 5.0 per cent were occupied professionally and 6.0 per cent held managerial positions or owned their place of business. The lack of female heads of households was reflected in the slight percentage (1.0 per cent) placement in the "Domestic" category. 4.0 per cent of the heads of households were unemployed; 6.0 per cent were retired. Only one interviewee gave no reply regarding occupational position.

Weekly Income of Heads of Households. The above information on occupational groupings is in conformity with an analysis of the wages these 100 heads of households receive weekly. The predominance of service workers and laborers (43.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households) are the major contributors to the fact that
TABLE IX

Occupational Groupings for the 100 Heads of Households Involved in the Sampling of Corpus Christi "Core Area." 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Grouping</th>
<th>Number of Heads of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and Owners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks and Salesmen</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen and Craftsmen</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households receive a salary less than $55.00 per week. The income category $15.00-34.00 included 8.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households. The largest income category, in terms of numbers of heads of households included, was $35.00-54.00, in which 29.0 per cent of the total number of heads of households were placed. The following income grouping ($55.00-74.00) was second largest in which were included 27.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households. 16.0 per cent of the total heads of households occurred within the income grouping $75.00-94.00. This category and the one next in line (income grouping $95.00-114.00) in which 7.0 per cent of the 100 heads of households were placed) include, most probably, the 14.0 per cent of heads of households who compose the "Foremen and Craftsmen" occupational category. Also, this occupational grouping probably includes the one interviewee whose weekly wage was placed in the last and highest income grouping of $135.00-154.00.

The major concentration of the sample population in the lower income groupings is in conformity with the concentration of interviewees in the lower-paid occupational groupings. The point arises that even though the general trend of wages is toward below average for the average size of the 100 sample families (4.5 people per family), the majority of interviewees (94.0 per cent) were satisfied with their present jobs.
If there is any overt expression of desire on the part of these people to move into the higher economic classes, there is no indication of it in the actual occupational involvements or in the remunerative capacities of these people. The people of Corpus Christi are seemingly caught within an economic category from which they have not deviated in the past; neither have they any expectations for moving out of it in the future. From a common sense point of view, these people have known no way of life other than the one in which they presently find themselves. Furthermore, the fact that such a predominance of the interviewees expressed satisfaction with their present jobs seems to indicate that, for the immediate future, at least, they have no hope of increasing their economic status.

**Level of Living.** The purpose of this section is to show, by the amount and type of goods possessed, the economic conditions of the people of Corpus Christi "core area." Many of the items will show the "comfort" level of these people whether or not the items conform to the actual economic situation of each family. Such an analysis may also serve to indicate the level of aspiration of the families involved. One cannot overlook the desire of most people to give an indication of wealth or of "comfortable means" even though such indications are above the actual level of living dictated to occupation and weekly income.
The average size of the 100 sample families has possibly influenced the size of the house in which each family resides. Over half (55.0 per cent) of the total sample of families lived in houses of five rooms or more. No family resided in a house having more than ten rooms. The largest percentage of families (33.0 per cent) lived in houses of five rooms. The above statements should not overshadow the fact that a significant portion of the total sample of families (32.0 per cent) lived in houses of four rooms. Therefore, 87.0 per cent of the 100 sample families occupied houses of four or more rooms. The remaining 13.0 per cent of the total sample of families lived in houses of three rooms or less. No family lived in a one-room dwelling. On an average, the size of the dwelling for each family is seemingly adequate for the size of the family involved. The average number of people per family is 4.5. The median number of rooms per dwelling is 5.8. This fact becomes more significant when one considers the fact that Negro housing in the Metropolitan New Orleans area is oftentimes deplored. One might conclude from the adequacy of dwelling space for these sample families that residence inside Corpus Christi Parish is neither congested nor inadequate. These residential features of Corpus Christi exclude the possibility of this area being considered a "slum district."
The dwellings in which the members of Corpus Christi Parish reside are seemingly well equipped with more than the necessary items needed in any house. (See Table X.) All the dwellings which the author entered except one had running water. Every dwelling was equipped with electricity. This item was the source of 96 of the 100 sample families possessing electric refrigerators, 91 possessing electric fans, 86 possessing electric washers, 7 possessing electric dryers, and 3 possessing electric stoves. The most popularly used gas stove was found in 93 dwellings. An electric sewing machine—an item not common to most homes—was found in 69 of the 100 dwellings. The telephone is today considered one of the necessary items in every home. This being the case, 85 dwellings possessed such. More than half of the families (56.0 per cent) possessed phonographs, while a much larger percentage (97.0 per cent) of the total sample of families possessed radios.

A logical conclusion following the discussion on weekly wages (which were seemingly inadequate for the large average size of each family unit) is that items such as television sets would not be predominant in most of the homes. Such was not the case. 82.0 per cent of the 100 dwellings were equipped with television sets. There are three possible causes for the predominance of this item inside the homes of these low or
TABLE X

Items Present in Dwellings of 100 Sample Families of Corpus Christi "Core Area." 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. of Dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running water</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric washer</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric dryer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric refrigerator</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice box</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric stove</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas stove</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air conditioning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonograph</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric sewing machine</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric fan</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relatively low income families: (1) the possession of such an item provides, for the families, a large amount of their home recreation and enjoyment; (2) for low and relatively low income family units, the acquisition and possession of such an item is an index of status to others of the same group; and (3) the fact that such an item can be bought on reasonable terms. It is seemingly valid to forward the generalization that the more intense these low and relatively low income families feel the need for social and economic status higher than what is actually theirs, the more frequently will such home items appear.

Another possible index of status striving is the possession of an automobile. This fact is considerably lessened by the ever-increasing necessity of city dwellers to have an automobile. Of the 100 families involved in the sampling, 47.0 per cent possessed an automobile. Although home air conditioning could very easily become an expression of these people's desire for higher status, the expense involved in procuring one or more of these is often greater than the desire to achieve status. This being the case, only two of the 100 sample families utilized this item in their dwellings.

The people of Corpus Christi, therefore, are not wanting in adequately equipped dwellings. Every family interviewed had the necessities for "homemaking" and
many had items which indicated that they lived not only adequately, but somewhat better, within the confines of their homes.

D. Political Institutions

One author has inferred that the Negro in the United States holds the power to vote high among his values of equality. In other words, one important area of inequality which the Negro resists is political disfranchisement. The right to vote, along with the "need of jobs and bread," is "more urgent even than better schools and playgrounds, or, rather, they are primary means of reaching equality in the use of community facilities."²

²Gunnar Myrdal has forwarded the following "white man's rank order of discriminations" which, in order of importance, are as follows: (1) the bar against intermarriage and sexual intercourse involving white women; (2) several etiquettes and discriminations, which specifically concern behavior in personal relations; (3) segregations and discriminations in use of public facilities such as schools, churches, and means of conveyance; (4) political disfranchisement; (5) discriminations in law courts, by the police, and by other public servants; and (6) discriminations in securing land, credit, jobs, or other means of earning a living....

According to Myrdal, "the Negro's own rank order is just about parallel, but inverse, to that of the white man. The Negro resists least the discrimination on the ranks placed highest in the white man's evaluation and resents most the discrimination on the lowest level." This observation, of course, places political disfranchisement in the upper half of the "rank order" of the Negro, and, therefore, more important to him than those things which the white man conceives as important to the Negro. See Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), pp. 60-61.
The importance of political equality for the Negro, then, is not to be underestimated. Two aspects of this situation seem of special importance here: (1) How well will the Negro fare in his attainment of political equality? and (2) Does the Negro use his political rights? The first question would involve a lengthy discussion: mainly a discourse into the field of racial relations. It will not be treated here. More important to this work, however, is the second and, in a sense, more realistic aspect of the political situation of the Negro.

Data on the political activity of the Negro are of no great volume. The political involvements of these people are oftentimes difficult to discover; in an interview situation any discussion on the political behavior of the interviewee can become strained, causing an uneasy experience for both interviewee and interviewer. In interviewing the sample population of the people of Corpus Christi Parish, an attempt was made to discover their political activity and associations by use of the following questions: (1) Are you a registered voter? (2) Did you vote in the last election? and (3) Have you any party preferences? If so, have you any party affiliations? By use of the above questions, the interviewer hoped to gain some knowledge of the political habits of the 100 interviewees.
Over half (60.7 per cent) of the total sample population twenty-one years of age and over were not registered voters. This percentage might be compared to the 34.9 per cent of the total sample population of voting age who answered affirmatively to the question, "Are you a registered voter?" The remaining 4.4 per cent gave no reply to the question. When broken down by sex, the figures for the number of registered voters of requisite age are as follows: 53.0 per cent of the total sample male population were registered voters, 42.7 per cent answered "no," and the remaining 4.3 per cent did not reply; less than one-fourth (21.5 per cent) of the total sample female population twenty-one years of age and over were registered voters, 74.1 per cent had not registered to vote, and the remaining 4.4 per cent refused to answer the question.

According to these figures, the number of male registered voters in Corpus Christi "core area" was double the number of female registered voters. This fact becomes more significant when related to the sex ratio of the "core area." There were 77.8 males per 100 females. The larger percentage of male registered voters gains in size when one realizes that the sex ratio is comparatively low. The fairly equal percentages of male registered (53.0 per cent) and non-registered (42.7 per cent) voters are significantly reduced in the female category. Here the disparity between female registered
and non-registered voters is quite clear. Whereas 21.5 per cent of the females twenty-one years of age and over were registered voters, 74.1 per cent were not. The small percentage of females who gave no reply—4.4 per cent—, if added to the "yes" per cent or the "no" per cent, or if distributed between the two, would cause no appreciable difference in the observed disparity. Generally, the male population, as a total group and as compared to the female population, shows a greater incidence of registered voters.

It must be understood that the above figures do not show how many people actually vote. The fact that an individual might register to vote when arriving at voting age or at some time thereafter, does not mean that that individual will exercise his or her right to vote. In order to gain more pertinent data on the actual number of voters within the "core area" of Corpus Christi Parish, the interviewer asked the question: "Did you vote in the last election?" Here less than half of the total sample population twenty-one years of age and over (41.0 per cent) participated in voting in the last presidential election. This voting behavior on the part of the members of Corpus Christi "core area" is somewhat distant from the American ideal. If one would judge the voting behavior of these people, relating it to the ideal of total participation of all those of voting age, one might be inclined to value—judge the activity as
"poor" and "nowhere near what it should be." One factor, however, would tend to invalidate such a conclusion. The importance of the Negro population as a political group is increasing. This fact is reinforced with a view of the Negro and the role he plays as part of the Louisiana political scene. One writer has expressed this fact in discussing "political tendencies in Louisiana": "The most significant phenomenon in 1952 was the increased Negro participation in the political battle. Registered in large numbers in the urban areas, the Negro became once more an important factor in political success."3 Continuing: (in Louisiana) "Over 100,000 Negroes had registered prior to the November presidential election, and all indications point to a unified Negro vote, and with a high participation."4

Although relatively small in numbers, one cannot underestimate the importance of the Negro vote. "... the key to the elections of 1952 lay in aligning the support of elements of the 'urban frontier.' .... The re-emergence of the Negro in Louisiana politics was also an urban phenomenon, and although his number was relatively

---


4Ibid., p. 252.
small, it represented a block vote large enough to influence the outcome of the (gubernatorial) elections.  

A most difficult aspect of the political involvements of the Negro (especially in an interview situation) is the procurement of data on "how" the individual votes. In answer to the question: "Which way did you vote in the last election?" the 41 interviewees who had voted then replied: Democrat--58.5 per cent; Republican--7.3 per cent; and Refused to Reply--34.2 per cent. Because of the large number of refusals which this question received, the figures are not accurate. One thing is indicated here, however. The field of political behavior is not one of the more "open" areas of these people's activity. Large-scale refusal to state a party preference shows, in some cases, suspicion of the interviewer or a feeling of uneasiness on the part of the interviewee. It might also be true that these respondents conceived of their participation in the political area suspect and subject to misinterpretation and misgivings by the interviewer. Some might feel that their "right" to private political predispositions is the necessary "rule" of their expression on the subject. Although the percentages on "how" individuals of Corpus Christi voted in the last election may be statistically non-significant,  

5ibid., p. 272.
they do serve to present another glance into the totality of these people's political experiences.

E. Patterns of Recreation

The recreational activity of the members of Corpus Christi "core area" can be divided into three types (see Table XI) according to "who" participates: recreation by (1) parents alone; (2) children alone; and (3) parents and children.

This threefold distinction will afford the opportunity of observing not only the types of activity in which these people engage, but also how well these people hold the family as a unit to the extent of recreating as a unit.

The most popular recreational activities for these families in all three "types" proved to be the movies and television. Table XI also shows that attending movies predominated in the "children alone" category. Least active of the three participant "types" was "parents and children." The parents alone predominated in the "at home" activity of viewing television. Although twenty-one interviewees stated that the children of the household were allowed to watch television alone, this activity was participated in by twenty-four families as units (parents and children).

Recreational activity by these families as units predominated such "outside the home" functions as
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Parents Alone</th>
<th>Children Alone</th>
<th>Parents and Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile-riding</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing and Hunting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics (Tennis, baseball, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball games (spectator)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church functions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card playing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing around the house</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (going to the lake, operas, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No recreational activity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
automobile-riding and picnics. Although sixteen interviewees stated that the parents within the household went automobile-riding alone, eighteen families indicated that this activity was participated in by both parents and children. None of the parents of the 100 sample families had picnics alone. Although one interviewee stated that the children of the household attended picnics by themselves, twelve interviewees mentioned picnics as a family unit activity.

A major point of interest arises from this discussion on the recreational patterns of the sample families of Corpus Christi "core area." Only two interviewees indicated participation in church functions as part of their recreational habits. These two interviewees also indicated that such activity was participated in only by the parents within the household. From the point of view that a majority of the interviewees "just forgot to mention church functions," one might conclude that the above statistic is valueless. This may or may not be the real case. For just as one might observe that the lack of mention of church functions as part of the recreational habits of these families was due to forgetfulness during the course of the interview, one might also state that another reason for the obvious laxity in taking recreation within the parish center might be due to the fact that these families do
not participate in parochial recreation as a rule. Both these causal citations are seemingly valid.

One possible fault which accrues from this analysis of the recreational patterns of these families involves the large number of families who mentioned no recreational activity within or without the home. Such large numbers falling into this negative category could be attributed to the fact that the interviewer was at fault in not conveying the correct idea to the interviewees, causing them to either misinterpret or misunderstand the question. This, however, is an oversimplification. For the sixteen interviewees who stated that the parents had no recreational activity by themselves, a possible factor involved could be of an economic nature. As previously seen, the income of many of these families is very low, affording the adults of the household no time for recreation. This could also be a partial reason for the forty-three families who stated that the family did not recreate as a unit. Probably the most salient fault was committed in the "children alone" category where thirty-two interviewees placed their families. It is seemingly more logical to place the children of these families as participants in at least one type of recreational activity such as "playing around the house, playing baseball, etc."

These "core area" families, on the whole, take most of their recreation outside the home. Especially
when acting as a family unit is this true. Although a few activities are more widely participated in by the parents alone, cooperation between parents and children is not lacking.
CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDES OF THE PEOPLE OF CORPUS CHRISTI

This chapter attempts to discern the attitudes of the people of Corpus Christi Parish concerning: (1) the area in which they live; and (2) the fact of race. Since the second part of this thesis is attempting to show the dynamics of Corpus Christi as it exists today (how the people live as part of many institutions and most especially as Corpus Christi parishioners), analysis of the attitudes of these people concerning the area in which they live is of some special importance.

Because no work on the Negro in the United States can entirely dismiss the facts of racial conflict and tension and general race relations, a discussion of the attitudes of the people of Corpus Christi concerning this subject takes a significant but secondary place.

A. Attitudes Concerning the Area

In Section A of Chapter V of this work, it was stated that the households of Corpus Christi "may be said to have some general degree of permanence" in the sense that during the last half century there has been rather slight movement of the total sample population
out of the Corpus Christi area. This degree of permanence exhibited by these people in the past exists today and promises to remain in the future. When asked the question: "Would you like to remain in this neighborhood?" 90.0 per cent of the interviewees responded in the affirmative. The remaining 10.0 per cent of the respondents gave a negative reply to the question. It may be said, therefore, that the people of Corpus Christi "core area" are satisfied with the neighborhood, generally. These responses are, of course, only indicative of the attitudes of the respondents and not of the other members of the 100 sample households.

Thus far the information gathered cannot indicate how deep-seated these attitudes of the respondents concerning the area are. It was thought that questioning the interviewees on their desires concerning the area would appear to have greater stability connected with the children of the households. Following this line of reasoning, the following question was asked of every interviewee: "Would you be content having your children live in this neighborhood when they rear their own families?" Although the responses to this question were highly in favor of the Corpus Christi area, they did not measure up to the responses concerning how the interviewees felt about their own desire for future permanence inside the boundaries of Corpus Christi. The percentage
of interviewees who were content having their children remain in the area reached 79.0 per cent. This is somewhat less than the 90.0 per cent of the interviewees who desired to remain in the area themselves. 10.0 per cent of the respondents indicated a desire that their children move out of the neighborhood "to a better section of town." The 11.0 per cent of responses needed to complete the 100 sample interviews could give no definite reply since these interviews included those families having no children present in the household. In order that the conclusions reached concerning the children and the area would be as complete as possible, the 11.0 per cent of respondents having no children in the household were asked the same question but prefixed with the phrase: "If you had children...." Responses to this question by the 11.0 per cent of respondents were totally in favor of the Corpus Christi area.

These figures seemingly indicate that the people of Corpus Christi "core area" have had a fairly high degree of permanence in the past and are seemingly content with the area in which they are presently residing. Looking to the future and for "a better place to live" is seemingly of no great concern to these people. This analysis may be misleading. Looking at the above figures in the light of these people's residential preference by race types of communities, one notices a distinct
nonconformity in the interviewees' responses. Although the above responses indicate satisfaction with the
improbability of measuring how "ideally" the interviewees replied to the statements forwarded during the interview. It would be difficult to determine how often the interviewees replied to the statements in a way which they believed the interviewee expected them to reply.

The following ten statements were presented to each interviewee to which the reply True, False, or No Opinion could be given: "I do not mind my children playing with white children." "I would rather be around Negroes than whites." "I would rather be around light Negroes than dark Negroes." "Dark-skinned Negroes should stay to themselves." "Light-skinned Negroes should stay to themselves." "I think white people are O. K. in their place." "If I had a choice, I would rather be white." "All in all, I think Negroes should have equality." "I think lots of other Negroes are not as well off as I." "I think lots of other Negroes are better off than I."

In ascertaining the responses of the 100 interviewees to these statements, it was hoped that a cross-section of the attitudes of the parishioners of Corpus Christi concerning the fact of race would be received. Mainly, these statements deal with three distinct areas of racial relations: (1) the economic area; (2) the area of social relations; and (3) the area of opportunities. The interviewees as a total group are seemingly
race conscious, and more so than not, believe in racial equality between the white and Negro races.

The first statement, "I do not mind my children playing with white children," was accepted as true by 75.0 per cent of the 100 interviewees. 20.0 per cent of the 100 respondents believed the statement to be false. Whereas 4.0 per cent of the interviewees were without opinion on the statement, only 1.0 per cent refused to reply. The implication here is that, as far as the children in the households are concerned, there should be no distinctions made on the basis of race differences.

The same implication evolves out of the responses given to the second statement, "I would rather be around Negroes than whites." Although 34.0 per cent of the interviewees stated their desire to be around "their own kind," 63.0 per cent of the respondents saw "no difference" in the type of people (by race) they would "rather be around." 3.0 per cent of the interviewees gave no opinion.

The first two questions, therefore, indicate to some high degree the desire on the part of these people for acceptance as people and not as Negroes with differences as the basis for their social relations with whites. This desire for full acceptance regardless of color gained in intensity within the Negro race itself. When presented with the statement, "I would rather be around
light Negroes than dark Negroes," the 100 interviewees indicated, once again, the belief that there is no difference for them. 85.0 per cent of the respondents held this belief toward relations between light and dark Negroes. Those who believed the statement to be true totaled 14.0 per cent of the respondents. One interviewee (1.0 per cent) held no opinion on the statement. This percentage distribution of the 100 interviewees gains added significance when related to the fact that 53.0 per cent of those interviewed were of "light brown" or "white" skin. According to the above figures, it is seemingly true that these people of "light skin" are, for the most part, not discriminatory against Negroes of darker skin. One implication arising from this immediate discussion is that the people of Corpus Christi "core area" think of themselves as part of the Negro race more so than as aspirants toward membership in the white population, or as marginal people whose opportunities to "pass" supersede their desire to be thought of as members of the Negro race. It is logical to conclude that by constant internal and external identity with the darker members of their race, these light-skinned Negroes "lose" their opportunities for movement out of their race into the white race.

This implication that there should be no line drawn between light-skinned and dark-skinned Negroes was
denied by 17.0 per cent of the interviewees who believed that "Dark-skinned Negroes should stay to themselves." It was reinforced, however, by the 77.0 per cent of the respondents who thought that the darker-skinned members of their race should not stay to themselves. The remaining respondents (6.0 per cent) replied "no opinion."

The sample population of Corpus Christi Parish, although significantly adhering to the belief that dark-skinned Negroes should not stay to themselves, were not nearly as definitive along the same lines regarding light-skinned Negroes. Indicating, to some degree, the belief that light-skinned Negroes should have more freedom of movement than dark-skinned Negroes, 52.0 per cent of the interviewees responded negatively to the statement: "Light-skinned Negroes have a better chance of getting ahead." Indirectly, at least, this majority of negative response gives credence to the interviewees' belief that light skin is a factor involved in greater opportunity of movement for members of the Negro race. 42.0 per cent of the 100 respondents believed the statement to be false. The remaining interviewees (6.0 per cent) held no opinion on the statement. Because of the closeness of both "true" and "false" responses, significant conclusions regarding attitudes on the statement in question are negligible, and, if forwarded, would be subject to serious criticism.
The most overt departure from this general "no difference between or within the races" theme was observed in responses to the statement, "I think white people are O. K. in their place." It is possible that this statement was more ambiguous than those preceding it, and because of its ambiguity, became more susceptible to misinterpretation. The responses, nevertheless, indicate that 71.0 per cent of the interviewees believed the statement to be true. 23.0 per cent of the respondents believed the opposite, that there is no "place" for the whites and that they are "just plain O. K." The remaining 6.0 per cent of the interviewees held no opinion on the statement.

It was hoped that the interviewer could find some evidence that the interviewee, when faced with a more definite statement regarding either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the fact of his Negro status, would respond in a majority one way or the other. In order that this might, in some way, be accomplished, the statement, "If I had a choice, I would rather be white," was forwarded to each of the 100 interviewees. Although a predominance of interviewees (67.0 per cent) answered the statement in favor of the Negro race, one cannot dismiss the fact that 24.0 per cent of the interviewees responded in favor of a desire to be part of the white race. Although less than one-fourth of the respondents indicated desire not to hold membership within the Negro
race, there are definite traces of conflict with the responses to the statements heretofore analyzed. Previous to the percentages given for the statement on hand, one might conclude that although the Negro wished equality for the members of his race, he gives no indication that the desire for equality had connections with a desire for full acceptance as part of the white race. The remaining 6.0 per cent of the respondents gave no opinion regarding "desire to be white."

The trend to these people's belief in equality for the members of their race was crystallized in their responses to the statement, "All in all, I think Negroes should have equality." The implications of equality which the 100 interviewees exhibited in responses to the already-analyzed statements were reinforced and became more definite in the fact that 96.0 per cent of the respondents believed that "Negroes should have equality." Negative responses were forwarded by only 3.0 per cent of the interviewees. The remaining 1.0 per cent held no opinion on this statement concerning race relations.

The complexion of these people's attitudes was changed in their responses to the statements regarding their economic position in relation to the total Negro population. The answers given to the statements, "I think lots of other Negroes are not as well off as I," and "I think lots of other Negroes are better off than
I," places the 100 interviewees in a "middle" economic position. Generally, a high majority of interviewees believed their "well-being" to be neither as good nor as bad as "lots of other Negroes." In reply to the first statement regarding the lower position of other Negroes, 95.0 per cent of the interviewees answered "true." 3.0 per cent believed this statement to be false. The remaining 2.0 per cent gave no opinion.

Possibly due to the ambiguity of the two statements involved and because of their similarity in construction, the respondents gave similar responses to "I think lots of other Negroes are better off than I." The responses given indicated that 98.0 per cent of the interviewees believed this statement to be true; 1.0 per cent gave a negative reply. The one remaining interviewee (1.0 per cent) gave no opinion regarding the statement.

It might be concluded here that the people of Corpus Christi "core area" see their socio-economic position included somewhere within a "middle class" category. Relating the results of these statements to the preceding institutional analysis of the people of Corpus Christi "core area," one might presume that the belief of these people regarding their socio-economic position is not too far from the real position which they occupy within the New Orleans Negro class structure.
CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped that the two-fold approach which the author has used in presenting the material gathered on the people of Corpus Christi Parish has been adequate. By its use the author has attempted to give the reader (1) a knowledge of the history of the parish and its people, of those who have contributed to the founding of this parochial structure, and of the events in the past which have influenced the present parochial structure and functioning of Corpus Christi; and (2) a sufficient analysis of a selected sample of the population of the Corpus Christi "core area," including a discussion on these people's attitudes concerning the area and race. This empirical analysis of the institutional activity and attitudes of the sample population attempts to present to the reader some of the interactional elements which exist in the parish today.

Parochial activity is, in a very real sense, unique in American society. The purpose which exists for these people, as parishioners, and for the leaders of the parish, as priests, is (or should be) primarily spiritual. This ideal presents the most immediate and basic conflict. The problem might be stated in question
form: Can Catholic parishioners practice parochialism as they should without such practice conflicting with the many other important and necessary activities which, by their nature, have no formal connection with parish life? This problem and others of a parochial nature will be discussed later in this chapter. It is hoped, however, that the unique nature of parish life has been sufficiently portrayed in the institutional approach used in this study.

More specifically, this thesis attempts to begin at the beginning, with the establishment of Corpus Christi Parish in 1916. In presenting the development of this urban Catholic Negro parish, the following points were discussed: (1) the parish in its larger element: New Orleans; (2) the population of the parish; (3) the development of the parish plant and personnel; (4) the incidence of sacramental reception (1925-1954); (5) the functions and membership of the parochial organizations; and (6) the problem of leakage which has its significance over a somewhat lengthy period of time.

It is logical to presume here that the degree of development which the parish exhibits at present is necessarily connected with the year-by-year development in the past.

The contemporary study of Corpus Christi Parish "core area" involved the use of a schedule used in interviewing the 100 sample parish families. The information received from the interviews included:
(1) general information concerning each member of each household; (2) responses to questions concerning the familial, educational, economic, political, and recreational patterns of each family unit; and (3) an attempt to discern attitudes about the area itself and about the race of the population.

The one consistently unique feature about the Corpus Christi population is the fact of light skin. Whenever possible, an attempt was made to incorporate this fact into the analysis of every phase of life activity in which these people find themselves. The factors of French ancestry and miscegenation gained significance in this context. In this instance, an attempt was also made to discover how influential was the presence of light skin upon the neighborhood and inter-racial relations of these Corpus Christi members. The basis upon which the author based the main body of conclusions concerning light skin was the fact that 53.0 per cent of the 100 interviewees were of "light brown" or "white" skin. This factor has increasing importance in the realization that of the percentage classified as "light brown" or "white," 63.0 per cent of the interviewees had French surnames. It is hoped that the implications and conclusions forwarded regarding this one consistency were not overstressed or overworked.

The author hopes that the present attempt to indicate the worth of socio-historical material and
knowledge in community analysis has not completely failed. The absolute worth of using historical data as preliminary to a contemporary empirical analysis is the subject of some criticism. This author attempts no "apologia" for his incorporation of socio-historical data into the main body of this work. The presumption from the outset has been that the use of historical data would be an aid and not a hindrance to the final presentation of this sociological analysis.

The desire to contribute concretely to the relatively new sub-discipline of the Sociology of Religion has necessarily been uppermost in the mind of the author. The problems of analysis which confront students in this field are new and numerous. The fact of religion itself may be thought of as an obstacle to scientific investigation, especially when given an "air of spirituality" which, because of its purely subjective nature, presents difficulties to the social scientist. The fact of spiritualism existing as part of the religious activity of members of society does not exclude the possibilities of approaching religious affiliations and organizations as a functional unit with at least a relatively well-defined structure. Here the height of the problem is reached: Can the social scientist inquire into the many phases of religious activity (e.g. church attendance, sacramental reception, organizational membership, etc.) and still remain "in sociological boundaries"? It is
the belief of this author that the area of religious activity, when viewed as structural and functional, is valid matter for sociological interpretation. In other words, this thesis attempts to reinforce the contention that empirical research is within bounds when applied to religious organizations and structures. This is not to imply that sociological inquiry has a place in the measurement of individual internal religiosity or spirituality.

The fact that this study involves a Catholic parish holds important considerations for the parochial organization of the Roman Catholic Church. As one author indicates: a practical purpose in studying the Catholic parish is "to assist the local pastor in the work of the ministry by furnishing him as exact statistics as possible concerning his parishioners."¹ The need for keeping a more orderly and up-to-date census of the Catholic population by parishes has often been expressed in Catholic clerical and lay circles. One important consideration here is that a greater amount of sociological inquiry into parochial activity would be beneficial not only to the discipline of Sociology but also to the better functioning of the parish itself.

These statements, of course, are pertinent to any type of religious structure.

On another level, widening the field of the Sociology of Religion (which here may be called "ecclesiastical sociology") will provide important factual knowledge for the larger religious formal organizations. The Catholic Church, for example, would have at its disposal a more intense knowledge of (1) the functioning of Catholic parish life, (2) real patterns of behavior by Church members on a parochial level, and (3) the interaction which exists between priest and parishioner. Sociological inquiry into the nature of religious life could also serve to discover factors of disorganization which contribute to the disruption of harmonious interaction within a religious group.

The elements of disorganization within the parochial structure of the Catholic Church, for example, are numerous and complex. The problem of "parochialism vs. non-parochialism" previously mentioned is only one of the many problems with which the people of parishes are constantly confronted. This one problem has serious implications to the well-being of parish activity. The problem has sociological meaning in terms of "role-conflicts" for both the Pastor and parishioner. How well can a parish priest function in his required role of spiritual director of every member of his parish if
he is beset with the entanglements of playing such roles as parish financeer, public relations man, and head of a corporation? For the parishioner: How well can he or she function as a person of high spirituality in a cultural atmosphere which dictates the acquisition of material goods for material well-being? The heart of the matter may well rest in the question: If the conflict just described does exist, can anything be done to dispel it?

Another difficulty in the functioning of a religious organization involves the movement of members out of the formal religious body. This problem of "leakage" has serious implications. A partial explanation of the difficulty has already been attempted in this work. It is only mentioned here to reinforce the contention that further scientific inquiry into the field may well be a means of gaining more knowledge of the problem and practically, of arriving at some basis for its solution.

In studying a Catholic Negro Parish such as Corpus Christi, another more inclusive problem of values becomes a salient feature for theoretical analysis. A member in such a parish must adhere to three value systems which at one time may or may not be in conflict: (1) the American value system embodied in the "American Creed"; (2) the well-defined determinants of behavior expressed
by the Catholic Church; and (3) a value system evolving out of the fact of race and racial differences. This problem, too, has already been discussed within the body of this work. It is, however, subject for inquiry and as such is mentioned again here.

The many implications of these problems and their possible solutions cannot be expressed here. They were mentioned for two reasons: (1) to show the complexity and problematic aspects of religious organizations and affiliations therein; and (2) to indicate that inquiry into such areas by the social scientist may reap results heretofore impossible to achieve.

Corpus Christi Catholic Negro Parish is thought of by some New Orleans Catholics as probably the best Negro parish in the city. On the whole, this is true. One point, however, must be made clear. Although there are no poverty or slum areas within the Corpus Christi boundaries, neither can one hold that the people of the parish are of the highest economic categories. Although the residential nature of the parish is adequate, one cannot propose that it is the best Negro residential area in New Orleans.

Parochially, however, the author does conclude that Corpus Christi is probably the best Negro parish in the city. This conclusion is forwarded for three major reasons: (1) the parish is ideally constructed, the parish plant being adequate for the necessary
care which it must give its thousands of parishioners. A basic necessity for a well-functioning parish is a well-constructed parish plant which acts as the focal point of all parochial activity. Materially, then, Corpus Christi surpasses every other Catholic Negro Parish in the New Orleans area; (2) The organizational structure of Corpus Christi Parish functions well. The lay organizations and clubs of the parish have sufficient membership to carry out their perspective purposes. The amount of interest which parishioners show by actively participating in the network of parochial organizations is a good index of the degree to which these people are parish members over and above the minimum requirements proposed by Church rule; (3) The data received concerning the degree to which the people of Corpus Christi receive the Sacraments indicate also that the most important function of the parish—caring for the spiritual well-being of its members—is being realized. In attempting to discover how "good" a parish is, this important factor of sacramental reception cannot be overlooked. Even if a parish achieved the ideal in every other facet of parochial life, and failed to realize itself as a medium for imparting the Sacraments to its members, it would necessarily fall into the "poorly functioning parish" category.
A last conclusion of the author—looking at these people as members of the Negro race—is that, regardless of the fact of French ancestry and light skin color, these people of Corpus Christi Parish, on the whole, think of themselves as Negroes, making no large-scale attempt to "pass" as members of the white race or even to think of themselves as white. The attitudes of the people of Corpus Christi do indicate, however, that, for the most part, they desire equality. These people neither want to be white nor to be thought of as white; they do want the same facilities, opportunities, and privileges which members of the white race have.

It is seemingly true, in some instances at least, that the predominance of light skin among these people has been a factor in placing them in a position between the white population and dark-skinned Negro population. The position is "middling" and precarious, causing these people to be more race conscious than the normal discriminations and prejudices call for.

Because this study is within the relatively new field of the Sociology of Religion, its implications are necessarily limited. It proposes no lengthy analysis of the many facets of parochial life; neither does it propose to fully explain the numerous parochial and racial problems which may have been forwarded in the body of this work. It is hoped, however, that this study will be the basis (1) for further research within the Negro
parochial structure of the Catholic Church, and (2) for comparison of the Catholic parochial structure as distinguished by race.

The Catholic parish is the most important structure of the Church for its individual members. As such, knowing its structure and functions as a social institution is of great import both to the social scientist and to the Catholic Church.


*The works listed are only those which were used in the preparation of this thesis.


APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
I GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Person interviewed: head ____________
   wife ____________
   other ( ) ____________

2. Place of parental origin (birth): out of town H W in city H W
   If out of town, when did you move to New Orleans? H ____________ W ____________

3. Are your parents living? Head: Y N; Wife: Y N

4. How many people are there in this household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II THE NEIGHBORHOOD

1. How many years have you lived in this house? ____________________________

2. How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? _______________________

3. Would you like to remain in this neighborhood? Y N Explain: ______________ 

4. Would you be content having your children live in this neighborhood when they rear their own families? Y N Explain: ________________________________

5. ______________
5. Are your immediate neighbors friendly toward you and your family?  Y  N

Explain:

6. What types of contact do you have with your neighbors?  very close  close  casual

7. Can you rely upon help from your neighbors when you need their help?  Y  N

Explain:

III Occupation and ECONOMIC STATUS

1. Head of household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>How long?</th>
<th>No of wks. emp. in '53</th>
<th>Wkly. pay 1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present occu.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past: 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Are you happy in your present job?  Y  N  Explain:

If NO: Where would you like to work?  Doing what?

3. Members of household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member &amp; Occupation</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>How long?</th>
<th>No of wks. emp. 1953</th>
<th>Wkly pay 1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Do you belong to a union? No AFL CIO INDEP.

5. IF UNEMPLOYED? Do you receive unemployment compensation or a pension? Y N Type received: 

IV Political

1. Did you vote in the last election? Y N Party? 

2. Was there any unpleasant incident involved in registering or voting? Y N Explain: 

V EDUCATION

1. Are you satisfied with the education your children are receiving? Y N Explain: 

2. Do you think your Negro schools have adequate facilities for their pupils? Y N Explain: 

3. Do you think your children would be better off attending schools with white children? Y N Explain: 

4. Do you think the recent Supreme Court decision was a good thing regarding de-segregation of public schools? Y N Explain: 

VI RELIGION

1. Church attendance and Sacramental Reception:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>Communion</th>
<th>Confession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On big feast days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do you belong to any church organizations? Do your children belong to any?

- Parent-Teachers Club
- Knights of P.C.
- Altar Society
- Ushers Society
- Others

- Children of Mary
- C.Y.O.
- Altar Boys Club
- Boy Scouts
- Others
### VII RECREATION

1. What forms of recreation do you and your husband (wife) have alone?

movies  card games  riding  other: ____________________________

2. What forms of recreation do your children have alone?

movies  swimming  playing round house  other: __________________

3. What forms of recreation do you two have with your children? ______________________________

4. What clubs, fraternities or organizations do you belong to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What newspapers do you read?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburg Comrrier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Weekly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.O. States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times-Picayune</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.O. Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What magazines do you read?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro Digest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Even. Post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Housekeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. What Catholic magazines, periodicals or newspapers do you read?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Sun. Visitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Maria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cath. Digest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonweal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Color Status of Negro interviewees:

very dark  dark  brown  light brown  white
VIII  HOUSING FACILITIES

Number of rooms
Running water
Electricity
Electric wash. machine
Electric clothes dryer
Phonograph
Radio
TV
Daily Paper

Sewing machine
Electric refrig.
Ice box
Automobile
Telephone
Electric stove
Gas stove
Electric fan
Air conditioning

ATTITUDE STUDY

1. Do you have any white friends?  very close    close    casual friends

2. What do you think of the following statements?

a. I do not mind my children playing with white children.
b. I think lots of other Negroes are not as well off as I.
c. I think lots of other Negroes are better off than I.
d. A good education will give my children a better chance in life.
e. I am going to send my children to college:
   Xavier
   Dillard
   Loyola
   L.S.U.
   Southern
   Others:
f. If I had a choice I would rather be white.
g. I would rather be around Negroes than whites.
h. I would rather be around light Negroes than dark Negroes.
i. I think white people are O.K. in their place.
j. Dark skinned Negroes should stay to themselves.
k. Light skinned Negroes have a better chance to get ahead.
'l. All in all, I think Negroes should have equality with whites.

3. I patronize a Negro doctor, lawyer, grocery, restaurant, jewelery store, dept. store, clothing store, drug store.  (Circle YES answers)


5. How do you rate yourself in the Negro community?  (Circle one)
   upper class    middle class    working class    lower class

6. What percentage of Negroes in this area are in the
   upper class    middle class    working class    lower class  %
Holy Name Society,
First Church in Background, 1916

Interior of First Church
Interior of Second Church (now the School Auditorium) Dedication Mass, October 12, 1919

Third and Present Church, 1930
Gathering of Children in the Parish,  
First Rectory in the Background,  
October, 1916

Present Parish Rectory, 1927
Corpus Christi School, 1919

Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Convent
Proposed Corpus Christi Gymnasium-Cafeteria (Architect's Drawing)
VITA

Charles Santo Palazzolo was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 29, 1932 of Jerome John and Helen Arthur Palazzolo. He attended St. Vincent de Paul and St. James Major Grammar Schools. The writer's last year of grammar school and four years of high schooling were taken at Holy Cross High School in New Orleans.

He began his undergraduate studies in September, 1949 at Loyola University of the South in New Orleans. In June, 1953 he received his Ph.B. degree in the College of Arts and Sciences having a Major in Sociology and a Minor in Philosophy.

In September, 1953 the writer was awarded a Graduate Assistantship in the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He is at present a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charles Santo Palazzolo

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: CORPUS CHRISTI: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF A CATHOLIC NEGRO PARISH IN NEW ORLEANS

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

May 3, 1955