

**Wayne County: Its Negroes Its Politicians**

By Muri H. DeFos (In Charlotte (Mich.) Republican-Tribune)

In the Chase S. Osborn regime this writer served as executive clerk, the duties having to do largely with the work of the pardon board, such officers serving as secretary of the board. In the executive offices for this same period, a young colored boy, Charles A. Roxborough of Detroit, served as messenger, the title best explaining his work. In the fifteen years since Governor Osborn stepped back into private life the writer has seen Mr. Roxborough occasionally, usually at state con-

ventions but through many years he has begun in the executive office has been continued to the mutual pleasure and satisfaction of all concerned. In fifteen days last a latest model Packard stopped before the editorial household and the leading colored lawyer of Detroit stepped out. It was Charlie Roxborough who at the close of the Osborn administration returned to Detroit and finished his law course at the University of Michigan. In fifteen years he has reached his present respected place in Detroit legal circles. Roxborough is a careful personality and splendidly fitted for her station, accompanied her husband and added greatly to the day's enjoyment. In a visit of only a few minutes with a person of his training and experience one will hear many interesting statements. Not in the sense of personal opinion does not need, but entirely on the presumption that sections of the population might carry an additional item of information if not actual public interest, the following paragraphs are submitted.

There are slightly more than one hundred thousand colored people in Detroit, but despite this potential voting strength the race has never been able to assert itself politically. The new congressional apportionment, being urged by Senator A. H. Vandenberg, which will follow the next federal census, will likely give Detroit four or five congressmen instead of the present two. New York City with a heavy colored population, larger than any single southern state, has thus far prevented the election of a colored congressman by dividing the city into long narrow "show string" districts which does away with the bulk threat of the colored vote. Last fall elected Oscar DePriest, a colored man to succeed the late Martin B. Madden. The colored people have long had the voting strength in this Chicago district but Mr. Madden had always been so generous and fair with them that the leaders saved him from any serious opposition during his long career at Washington. As in all large cities the colored people of Detroit are confined to a limited district, from choice as well as sense. For example the third state senatorial district includes most of the Detroit colored population, but to insure against sending a negro out to Lansing, Polish intranck was added to the district although it is no way physically connected with the balance of the territory. The present senator is George J. Kolowich, a Hamtramck Pole. Another Pole, Cass J. Jankowski, represents the second senatorial district (Detroit) showing the potential strength of foreign voters when left in the "bulk." Politicians will have to be pretty smart when the new congressional reapportionment is made to successfully eliminate this great bloc of negro

strength and growing steadily while all the white population is slipping numerically, due to a lower birth rate. Negroes are being recruited into the political importance since for the first time in many years three negro boys have been known to take the entrance examinations at the U. S. Naval and Military academy at Annapolis, Md., Chicago's negro congressman. This action by DePriest has brought a check from the race value of supporting their own people.

Three negroes have graduated from the Unit-4 States Military Academy at West Point, while one has graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis. The first negro to graduate from the U. S. Military Academy was Henry O. Flipper, in the year of 1877. The last negro graduate from the U. S. Military Academy was Charles Young, in 1889, who was retired in 1917 with the rank of the West Point school but did not graduate.

The last legislature increased the circuit court judges in Wayne county from 14 to 18; two new circuit judges will work in connection with the present recorders court judges while a new probate judge, making four, was created. Circuit judges in Detroit draw \$13,500 each; while the new traffic bench jurists will receive \$200. Sid A. Erwin, former A. B. Collins drug clerk and later a druggist in Battle Creek is a candidate for one of the new circuit court places. Judge Clyde L. Webster, formerly of Eaton Rapids, is on the circuit bench; Judge Donald Van Zile, son of the late Judge P. T. Van Zile of Charlotte, Detroit, is on the recorders' bench.

Harry B. Keidan, who went to the recorder's bench from the Wayne prosecuting attorney's office, first by appointment of Governor Grosbeck, was the first Jewish boy graduated by Eastern High; Mr. Roxborough was the first cold boy to have this honor from Eastern. Mr. Keidan is a popular citizen and jurist. The strongest character, in Mr. Roxborough's opinion, of the many Jewish leaders in Detroit, is Fred Stutz, a lawyer by profession but in practice a philanthropist of generous discrimination and incisive worth. Mr. Stutz wields a tremendous influence in Detroit affairs and is almost the spokesman for his race on questions of policy. Leo M. Butzel, a lawyer and a top notcher, is a brother.

The wealthiest colored man in Detroit is Mike Parks who did a stretch at Jackson for murder. He shot a man by the name of Johnson and was released on parole after ten years' confinement. Back in the good days he operated a club which started his fortune. The club site is now the home of a bag corner Beacon and St. Antoine streets, the heart of the black belt. Parks is reputed to be worth upwards of \$300,000.

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"Can't beat him around Detroit," was Roxborough's comment as to the likelihood of defeating Senator Censens next year. He thinks any opposition brought out in that sector against the senator will fall flat.

Judge Donald Van Zile has named Roxborough to defend John Lewis (colored) alleged to have set fire to a house on Catharine street, in an effort to kill his former wife who had spurned him, in which conflagration six persons met their death in attempting to escape from the home. Four helpless toddlers failed to escape the flames and died in their beds the night of the tragedy. The trial, which starts Tuesday, is expected to create high interest in the city because of the heinousness of the crime and the developments which followed its occurrence. The woman Lewis was attempting to reach left the ill fated house, it is claimed, the day before the fire. The prosecution, it is claimed, will bring Lewis within four doors of

the destroyed home shortly before the fire.

Johnny Smith, former mayor, will make another start this fall. Judge C. F. Bowles is another possible entry and little is known as to what Mayor John C. Lodge intends to do. Smith has made a comfortable fortune in investing, with tips given him by powerful friends like the Fishers and the Hooks.

The Fishers, all Catholics, are now the biggest givers in Detroit and never discriminate between races or creeds in their wide and constant benefactions.

Chicago negroes a few years ago established a summer resort, Idlewild, on a lake near Baldwin. Today there are 700 homes at this place; many quite palatial, owned by the most part by successful Chicago and Detroit negroes from the professional classes. Mr. Roxborough paid \$40 a lot for nine lots when the idea was conceived but today the property is hard to buy at any price. This colony, it develops, pays better than ninety per cent of the taxes of Lake county and the township officers

and one or two of the county officers are year around negro residents.

L. W. McClear, a well known Democratic lawyer, who held a federal appointment during Wilson's administration, bought a home on Second avenue near the present Masonic Temple, twenty years ago saying \$11,500 for the property. McClear went into that district for a site for his administration building and the five and ten cent mortgage handed Mr. McClear a check for \$92,700 for his home, just one example of the way Detroit real estate has pyramided in value since Henry Ford started operations.

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M. P. Coolbaugh, president of the Colorado School of Mines, expelled his son Jack, for "drinking and exceedingly disorderly conduct."

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in the evolutions of social life," writes William Jennifer, "we find the colored people straightening their curly hair and the white people curling their straight hair. This is a beautiful illustration of the competence of nature in our social customs."

Judge Harry J. Dingeman is perhaps the strongest individual republican in Detroit. He has a great personal following. Arthur Dingeman, councilman, is a brother. This shows the value of a strong name in a large city. Some foreigner awhile back changed his unpronounceable name to Nagel and came within an eyelash of being elected to an important office. Murphy is a strong name politically in Detroit. Another foreigner figured "Jefferson" was not so bad and he made a record run for something, showing that the primary has done one thing—emphasized the political importance and worth of a good name. Judge W. F. Connelly is easily the outstanding democrat in Detroit.

The leading colored church in Detroit is the second Baptist church with a membership of 4000. The preacher's salary is \$3000. Rev. R. L. Brady is the pastor.

Thomas Chawke is the leading lawyer in town on the criminal side. Louis Colombo is a runner up and by some might be placed first. On the civil side Win. Henry Gallagher is the leader. He had the damage suit against Henry Ford. Dohoney & Dohoney have been very successful in damage litigation. Gallagher is a profound student of the law and an orator. He has an organization of twelve lawyers, all on salaries. No lawyer in Detroit is hired by other lawyers for "of counsel" purposes like Mr. Gallagher. Judge Alfred D. Murphy of the circuit bench and president of the Federal Bond and Mortgage Co., a Detroit's lease-trustor, Mr. Roxborough made no studied effort to name persons from any particular creed or school but strangely enough it develops that all these five men are Catholics and received their education at the University of Detroit.

Racketeers will make a list of stills in a certain district and then call and "cut themselves in" for a fixed amount the price. If whatever is agreed upon is not paid cheerfully and honestly (as to call some one on will go for a ride.) It is a coarse game and wholesale killings in cities result when gangs conflict as to operating territory. This plan does not even infer or carry police protection, to the law breaker it is just a "smart" fellow making a living