—The evolution

(Continued from D-1)

duolocal pattern of residence. Still more rarely, they established and maintained their own home following a unilocal pattern of residence.

The determining factor in patterns of residence was the basic conditions of life, the history of the region, and the traditions of a particular people. Thus, living close to the soil and close to nature, the African people were able to adapt to the prevailing conditions and to maintain viable forms of instrumental and expressive family relationships despite these differing conditions. Indeed, it was their ability to adapt to the various conditions of life which enabled African families to continue to survive in this country and adopt new forms of life where the conditions were vastly different from what they had known in Africa. Even so, many of the distinctive features of African family life were carried out in modified forms in the early African settlements in this country. Thus, the importance of the extended family, the communalism, the important role of the grandmother, the collective responsibility for the care of the children and the adaptability of family structures are prominent features of Afro-American family life even today.

Of the five major and distinctive features of African family life pointed up by National Urban League Research Director, Robert Hill, each has its antecedents in the African traditions. Thus, the adaptability of family roles, strong kinship bonds, patterns of informal adoption, strong orientation toward work and strong religious orientation are all part of what Leopold Senghor terms the African elan which persists wherever Africans go in all parts of the world.

Robert Hill concluded that, "although these (five) traits can be found among white families, they are manifested quite differently in the lives of black families because of the unique history of racial oppression experienced by blacks in America." He concluded, "the particular forms that these characteristics take among black families should be viewed as adaptations necessary for survival and advancement in a hostile environment."

The African Continuum

It has often been said by historians and sociologists that all the vestiges of African influence and all the elements of organized family life were destroyed and prevented by the European - American slave system. Indeed, many of the most prominent features of slavery were antithetical to the condition of viable forms of family life among the African people. Even so, however, a number of modern historians including John Blassingame, George Rawick and Eugene Genovese, together with the Cliometricians, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, have provided overwhelming empirical support for the continuance of family life among the African people even during the slave era. Thus, both in the slave states and the free states, among enslaved and free Africans, and in the South and the North, organized black family life survived and was a prominent feature of life in the black community.

Despite the controversial nature of their findings and conclusions, Fogel and Engerman have argued that, "both moral convictions and good business practice generally led planters to encourage the development of stable nuclear families." (Ref. 12) Even so, however, they state that, "during the relatively infrequent instances when economic forces led the planter to destroy, rather than to maintain slave families, the independent striving of slaves to maintain their families came into sharp focus."

Genovese has pointed out that slave children did have important role models in the black men even under those harsh conditions. "A positive male image existed even in those cabins without resident fathers," he found.

"Critical scholars have made the mistake of measuring the slave family by middleclass norms; naturally, they have found it wanting. Even when a slave boy was growing up without a father in the house, he had as a model a tough, resourceful driver, a skilled mechanic or two, and older field hands with some time for the children of the quarters. Some of these men devoted themselves to playing surrogate father to all the children. They told them stories, taught them to fish and trap animals, and instructed them in the ways of survival in a hostile white world. The norm in the quarters called for adults to look after children whether relatives or not. Every plantation had some men who played this role."

The extent to which black men held strong ties to their families is eloquently illustrated by the last words of Peter Poyas, Denmark Vesey's chief lieutenant, when the judge sentenced him to death, "I suppose you'll let me see my wife and family before I die."

Rawick has pointed out: "While it is true that slaves were not allowed to make legal marriage contracts, it is also true that men and women under slavery did not simply breed promiscuously. There were a variety of socially approved and culturally sanctioned relationships between sexual contacts which led to the birth of progeny."

When we realize how essentially human were the Africans, and resist the temptation to view them as simple reactors to the oppression which they experienced, it is possible to appreciate the extent to which they were able to develop among themselves and instill in their children many of the human qualities which are so important in Afro-American life today.

Free Black Families

Our own studies of family life among the African population in America also provides support for the theory of continuity. It is our view that the years between 1700 and 1800 represent a critical period in the study of black family life in America. It was during this period that the nation was formed. It was during this period that the basic values of white Americans toward black Americans were established. Finally, it was during this century that the basic structure of black family life in America was developed, the board outlines of which have continued to the present day. Patrilocal residence, nuclear family forms, small family size, husband-wife families with a small relatively stable and enduring pattern of female-headed families, and dual breadwinners are all features of Afro-American family life which took root and form during the 18th Century and are still with us today in only slightly modified form.

The first census of the United States, taken in 1790, enumerated 5,192 free black families. Six New England states, Massachusetts, Rhodes Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont reported 1,605 free black families. Two other northern states, New York and Pennsylvania listed 1,177 free black families and four southern states which were later to become part of the Confederacy, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina contained 2,410 free black families. A major observation which may be drawn from this data is that in each of the 12 states the overwhelming majority of these families had both husbands and wives as family heads. Altogether 85 per cent had male & female heads and approximately 15 per cent had female heads.

The Family Surname. - Dating back to the African origins, among free blacks the use of the family or surname has been a sign of respect and status. It has been such a strong feature of African family life that many women who marry continue to use this maternal family name as a symbol of belonging and respect. The absence of a surname which most blacks experienced during slavery and the reluctance of many whites to recognize black family or surnames long after slavery, are among the indignities long suffered by a proud people. In our analysis, therefore, we were interested to know the prevalence of family or surnames used for the free heads of households enumerated in the 1790 census. As might be anticipated, consistent with other findings above, this practice was most common in New England and relatively less common in the South. Even so, however, most free black family heads had their surnames recorded in the 1790 census. Male heads were more likely to have surnames than female heads.

The highest incidence of surnames was in the northeastern region. In Maine all of the 36 free black heads of households had surnames; 98 per cent of the free black families in Rhode Island and 96 per cent in Vermont had surnames. The other states show less, with Connecticut showing only 35 per cent of free black family heads with surnames. Among the Southern states, Virginia had the highest incidence with 98 per cent and Maryland had the lowest with 62 per cent.

Enslaved Blacks in Free Black Families. One of the more intricate aspects of family life among the free black population is the degree of interaction and relationships they had with enslaved blacks. There are several ways in which this interrelatedness was structured. First, it must be observed that despite their legally free status, free blacks were generally viewed and treated by the white community with something less than complete acceptance. This was true not only in the slave states where they often were presumed to be slaves unless they proved their free status, but also in the North where they were sometimes assumed to be runaway slaves and treated with less respect and provided less opportunity than white families experienced. Secondly, free blacks often lived and worked in close proximity to enslaved blacks, in part because of cultural affinity and in part because of limited opportunities and common oppression. Thirdly, free blacks often married enslaved blacks. Finally, free blacks sometimes owned slaves by purchase, inheritance, or because a free man was the father of children by an enslaved wife.

Thus, slave-owning existed among free black families, but involved very few families and relatively few enslaved persons. In 1790, altogether 156 free black families in seven states owned a total of 668 enslaved blacks or an average of 4.3 per family. It seems highly likely that these enslaved persons were relatives, coworkers, household servants and the like rather than the more typical field slaves. They were also much less likely to be exploited and oppressed. Indeed, by belonging legally to free blacks who had a special relationship to them, they were provided a measure of care and protection not known to black slaves owned by white persons.

Dr. L. D. Reddick, in his forthcoming book, **Search for the Black Family in America**, found very stable patterns of marriage and family life among free blacks in Boston as early as the beginning of the 18th Century. The official marriage register of the early 1700s contained actual names, dates and names of marriage officials for hundreds of black families.

Thus, we see that black families always maintained patterns of family life even during slavery. These patterns often diverged, but not always from the dominant patterns prevalent among the Europeans.

The Limits of Legality

A great deal of attention has been drawn to the question of legality and illegality of marriage and family life among the African people during slavery. Indeed, much of the almost unanimous scholarly conclusion that family life did not exist among the enslaved Africans turns implicitly and sometimes explicitly on the question of legal status. Legal status is a very important conditioner of marriage and family life, but as modern students of society are becoming increasingly aware, legality is one among many conditions which help to define family. Being defined by the state as legal is neither necessary nor sufficient to determine existence of the viability of family life. In our studies we have given considerable attention to the variety of factors which help to define family. Chief among the realities which define and condition family life are legal sanctions social functions and psychological meaning.

The Concept of Family

Like all concepts referring to human aggregations, the concept of family is itself culturally determined and culture-bound. In those societies whose cultural heritage emanated from the European peoples, particularly northern European peoples, the concept of family refers to two or more individuals who are related to each other by legally recognized marriage or by legally recognized lineage or ancestry and who live in contiguous relationship with each other in patterns of intimate interaction over sustained periods of their lives.

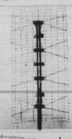
According to this conception, a man and a woman become a family after they get married by the state and-or the church, but not before, and if they become legally separated or divorced, they are no longer a family.

A child who is born to this union or is legally adopted by both parents

(Continued on D-5)

MR. AND MRS. SAMUEL H. JOHNSON belong to one of Montgomery County's oldest families. In this photo, taken at AFRO offices, they hold the family Bibles which helped them to trace their respective family trees. Both Bibles are nearly 100 years old.

THIS IS ONE WAY TO WATCH UHF TV



This is a "4-way bow tie" UHF antenna. You might be able to pick up UHF with an indoor loop antenna, but an outdoor antenna sure makes reception better!

The antenna shown above is just one of several kinds. It's not expensive, and you can put it up yourself.

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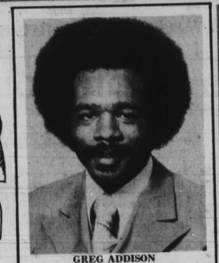
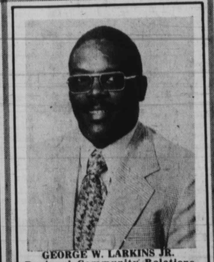


GREG ADDISON
Assistant Manager, Gino's

THOMAS RANDALL
Manager, Rustler's Steakhouse

LINDA TURNER
Assistant Manager, Rustler's Steakhouse



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Meat Supervisor

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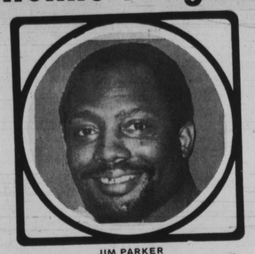
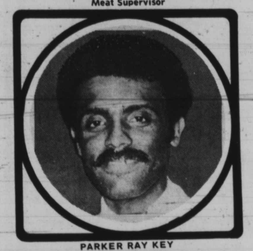
Delicatessen Manager



JIM PARKER
Manager

HATTIE E. GREEN
Head Cashier



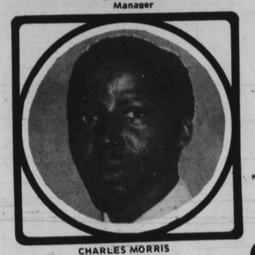
PARKER RAY KEY
Assistant Manager

BROWN'S B SUPERMARKETS

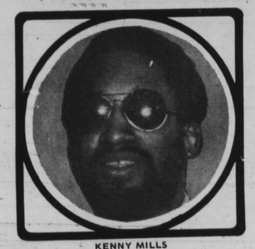
JOHN WILLIAMS
Meat Manager

BILL JAMES
Manager

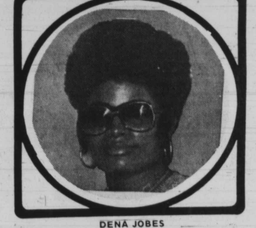
HERMAN JOHNSON
Manager



CHARLES MORRIS
Assistant Manager

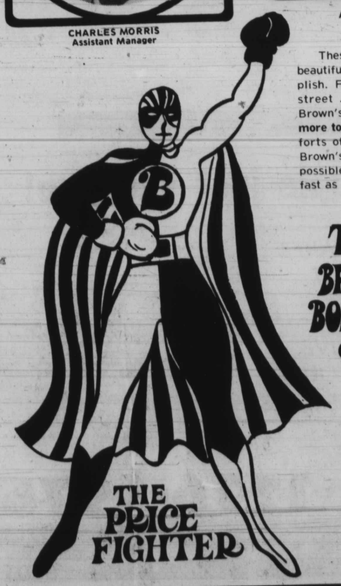


KENNY MILLS
Assistant Manager



DENA JOBES
Head Cashier

THEODORE R. GILES
Captain, Security



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