

A STUDY OF ASSORTATIVE MATING IN
A NEGRO POPULATION IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

A STUDY OF ASSORTATIVE MATING IN
A NEGRO POPULATION IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

BY

EDWARD AARON GASTON, Jr.

Bachelor of Arts

East Central Teachers College

Ada, Oklahoma

1937

Submitted to the Department of Sociology and Rural Life

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1940

OKLAHOMA
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL
COLLEGE
ADA, OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE
LIBRARY

OCT 25 1940

APPROVED:

O. S. Muncie

In Charge of Thesis

O. S. Muncie

Head of the Department of Sociology and Rural Life

W. W. Wood

Dean of the Graduate School

CONTENTS

PART I. INTRODUCTION	Page
Assortative Mating and Its Importance.....	1
Findings of Assortative Mating Studies	5
The Problem of the Present Study	11
Location of the Population Studied	12
Factors and Techniques Used	13
 PART II. ASSORTATIVE MATING IN A NEGRO POPULATION	 17
Age at the Time of Marriage	17
Likeness of Environment Before Marriage	21
Place of Residence	22
Place Reared	24
Place of Birth	25
Residential Propinquity	26
Miscellaneous Factors Considered in the Study	28
Number of Siblings	28
Civil Status at Time of Marriage	29
Education	31
Church Membership	32
Biophysical Factors in Assortative Mating	34
Height at Time of Marriage	34
Weight at Time of Marriage	35
Racial Stock	35
Complexion	36
 PART III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	 39
Appendix, The Schedule	45
Bibliography	47

INDEX OF TABLES

<u>TABLE NO.</u>		Page
I	Distribution of Mates by Age at Time of First Marriage	18
II	Distribution of Difference in Age at Time of First Marriage	19
III	Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Place of Residence at the Time of Marriage	23
IV	Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Places Reared	24
V	Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Place of Birth	26
VI	Matings by Civil Status at Time of Present Marriage..	30
VII	Distribution of Matings by Church Membership Status..	33
VIII	Distribution of Matings by Racial Stock	36
IX	Distribution of Matings by Complexion	37

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. Assortative Mating and Its Importance

The amount of sociological literature dealing with the family as an institution and its various functions is great and is increasing. While this is true there has been comparatively little research dealing with the introductory stage of family life. The marriage itself has been relatively neglected. Anderson reports that in 1938 a hundred odd reports included the existing studies of marriage selection.^{1/} Since that time, however, there seems to have been a growing interest in this field. Reports and studies are appearing with greater frequency than in the past.

A classification of marriage into two types as given by Karl Pearson^{2/} has been adopted generally. These classifications are preferential mating and assortative mating. By the term preferential mating is meant the tendency for certain types of persons, within one sex, to be selected for mating to the exclusion of other types. This is to say that persons within the sex with given characteristics, such as good health or beauty, will be chosen as mates in preference to those with other characteristics, such as poor health or physical deformities. Assortative mating, on the other hand, means the tendency for males possessing a given attribute or trait to mate with females having the same attribute or trait. If the correlation between characteristics of the husband and wife is found to be

^{1/} C. A. Anderson, "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating," Rural Sociology, Vol. III, 1928, p. 297.

^{2/} Karl Pearson, "Regression, Heredity, and Panmixia," Philosophical Transactions, Vol. 187, pp. 253-318, 1896.

positive, the term homogamy is applied; if negative, heterogamy. It is possible that Pearson intended these terms to refer to inherited traits. Later writers, particularly those dealing with mate selection from a sociological point of view, have tended to extend the meanings to all traits.

There are a number of very good reasons for the study of mate selection. The study of assortative mating is of particular importance. There has been a great deal of subjective speculation and enough research study to support the assumption that there is a relationship between the degree of similarity or dissimilarity of the characteristics of the mates and the ability of the family to continue to exist unbroken and to carry out its functions successfully. For instance, McKain and Whetten ^{3/} have made a study, using five factors as test of similarity between the mates, to see if, as the number of characteristics in which the mates were similar increased, the number of children born into the family increased. These factors were place of birth, national origin, age difference, religion, and education. The results of this study indicate that such a relationship is found. From the application of a greater knowledge of assortative mating in studies such as this, would come an enlarged understanding of the family. A more thorough and a more objective study of the existing practices in mate selection might prove to be a logical point of entry into a better understanding of the problems which must be dealt with in regard to divorce and the supposed failure of the family to carry out its functions successfully by providing a more concrete body of knowledge and would leave less to speculation and conjecture. Not only

^{3/} W. C. McKain, Jr. and N. L. Whetten, "Size of Family in Relation to Homogeneity of Parental Traits," Rural Sociology, Vol. I, 1936, pp. 20-28.

would the thorough study of assortative mating afford a greater knowledge of the family, but it has been suggested also that it would throw light upon many other social processes such as the relative role of similarity and dissimilarity in the formation and solidarity of groups and in social mobility.

It might be added that, among the other reasons for the need of greater attention to the study of mate selection, the study of assortative mating among racial and ethnic groups would be conducive toward a larger understanding of their cultures and a wider insight into their problems. This in turn throws light upon the problems of conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. The range of difference in mate selection and the part it plays in the fulfillment of the family functions in an ethnic or racial group in contrast to the assimilated portion of the population in so important and primary a group as the family should be useful in the understanding of these processes.

Since the Negro constitutes our second largest racial group in the United States and in Oklahoma, its marriage pattern should not be neglected.

There are at present two different points of view in regard to the present and future position of the Negro in the United States in relation to the white portion of the population. One group of those interested in interracial problems, composed principally of Negro leaders, contend that there is among the Negro a growing race consciousness and pride. They hypothecate that this condition, coupled with economic independence, is causing the growth of an independent Negro culture and a widening of the gulf between the two races. ^{4/} The other point of view is that as he has

^{4/} G. B. Johnson, "Negro Racial Movements and Leadership in the United States," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. VLIII, 1937, pp. 57-71.

done in the past, the Negro at present and in the future will continue slowly to adapt himself to and to follow more closely the cultural pattern of the white population until at last he is thoroughly assimilated.^{5/} Some who adhere to this last point of view believe that after assimilation the way will be clear for an accelerated rate of amalgamation which will eventually become complete.

If it is true that within recent periods a strong feeling of race consciousness and pride have begun to develop among Negroes, that the white and Negro races have fewer and fewer contacts because of a growing economic and intellectual freedom of the Negro as he migrates north and engages in the impersonal pursuits of an industrial world and as he is isolated from white influence in segregated Negro areas of the city with a resulting wider difference between the general culture patterns, the study of the Negro marriage will become increasingly important. If this is true, and if the two races are to continue to live geographically side by side at an increasing social distance, there must be an increased effort made to understand the institutions and problems of the Negro in order that racial competition shall not grow into conflict. If, on the other hand, the Negro race is yet in a process of assimilation and amalgamation, a better understanding of the cultural pattern as it exists would aid in speeding the process and making it less difficult for both races.

Any group going through the slow and emotion laden process of substituting one pattern of non-material culture traits for another is in need of sympathetic and enlightened aid from those who are more familiar

^{5/} G. B. Johnson, "Factors in Development of Negro Social Institutions in the United States," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XL, 329-337.

with the pattern he is seeking to make his own. Because of his slave culture background and because of racial prejudice he must always encounter, this is particularly true of our Negro population.^{6/} If it may be assumed that a greater similarity in culture patterns would tend to eventually lessen conflict and the waste which results from it and would stimulate the growth of cooperation between the racial groups, then any means by which a more rapid concentration upon common problems might be brought about should be as welcome to the white as to the Negro race.

2. Findings of Assortative Mating Studies

From the facts which have been tested in regard to assortative mating for various population groups it is possible to make some fairly accurate generalizations. It is the purpose here to make a resume of these results.

Age at the time of marriage has been recognized as one of the most important factors in the study of assortative mating. An easy access to a fairly reliable and massive body of data, through the use of such public documents as the records of marriage licenses issued, has enabled students to give attention to this factor to such an extent that more is known concerning it in its relation to mate selection than is known of any other one factor. Since it has been found that correlation coefficients range upward from + .50 for this factor it may be said that in regard to age at marriage matings tend to be homogamous. This is true irrespective of class or periods of prosperity or depression. There is some variation in the degree to which the mates are alike in this respect from class to class, yet the results of tests of the extent of age similarity of mates are

^{6/} Donald Young, American Minority Peoples, Ch. X, pp. 344-388.

sufficiently significant statistically to indicate that there is a high degree of homogamy in every class. That there may be a greater inclination towards similarity in which the age at marriage declines for both mates during depression periods is suggested in a study made by Anderson.^{7/}

As is to be expected the majority of matings take place between persons in their early twenties. The rural population mate somewhat earlier on the average, about 3 years, than do those of urban areas. In general the principal difference in the rural and urban populations in regard to age at marriage is that the modal age for both sexes in the rural areas tend to be lower than those for urban matings. There is a tendency for rural marriages to bulk closer to the age of twenty with a larger proportion of the total before this age than is true in the urban areas.^{8/}

Persons in the upper socio-economic groups tend to marry later than those in other groups. The mean age of marriage decreases as we go down the social ladder until we reach the unskilled labor class where we find some increase in mean age. This is true in both rural and urban areas. Those classes in established positions marry on the average, however, somewhat earlier than those who are in a position to promote themselves. The real difference in age at time of marriage between social classes is not, however, particularly great. The mean age of one class is rarely more than a year or a fraction greater or less than the next

^{7/} C. A. Anderson, "The Pattern of Marriage Selection in Prosperity and Depression," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. XX, pp. 125-139.

^{8/} O. D. Duncan, et al, "The Factor of Age in Marriage," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 39, pp. 469-482.

lower or higher class. ^{9/} To find this difference it is necessary to divide the populations into only four or five broad classifications. Further division would fail to show significant differences between the resulting classes.

Broadly speaking the number of marriages of persons reporting the same age at the time of mating is 10 percent or less. Bossard found 10.5 percent giving the same age in an urban study. Duncan reported 7 percent being of the same age in a rural study. About the same proportion of matings were found in which the wife was older than her mate as was found of those being of the same age (Bossard 10.1 percent, Duncan 7.3 percent). In these and other studies matings in which the husbands were older obviously dominated. ^{10/}

There is a tendency for the difference in age between the mates to decline steadily and become very similar after thirty until the age of forty is reached. The difference between the mean age of men at each designated year and the mean age of women they marry increases as men grow older. ^{11/} This inclination is particularly marked when remarrying men choose previously unmarried women. There is greater similarity in age if both parties are remarrying. Persons marrying for the first time, however,

^{9/} F. W. Notestein, "Differential Age at Marriage According to Social Class," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 37, pp. 22-48, and C. A. Anderson, "The Pattern of Marriage Selection in Prosperity and Depression," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. XX, pp. 125-139.

^{10/} J. H. S. Bossard, "The Age Factor in Marriage: A Philadelphia Study, 1931," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 38, pp. 536-547, and O. D. Duncan, et al., Op. cit.

^{11/} Ibid., also, C. A. Anderson, "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating," Rural Sociology, Vol. III, pp. 296-302.

are younger than those remarrying irrespective of whether their mates are single or previously married. ^{12/}

Study has amply demonstrated the tendency for matings to be between parties living in close proximity of one another at the time of marriage. In both rural and urban areas, in spite of more rapid means of transportation and wider contacts, the number of marriages declines rapidly as the distances between the contracting parties increases. ^{13/}

There is a rather marked tendency for matings to be between persons of the same social class. This tendency extends even into occupational classes to a noticeable but less marked degree. The chances of a man going into a lower social class for a mate, and so raising her status, is much greater than it is for a woman to marry in a class below that to which she belongs in an unmarried state. This is probably due to fewer such contacts and the fact that the wife tends to be placed socially on the same level with her husband. ^{14/}

Even stronger than the inclination to marry within one's own economic, social, or ethnic group is the tendency for mates to be homogamous in regard to religion. In particular is this true when we consider Christian and non-Christian marriages. In the past, since the World War and before the present riot of prejudice in Europe, many European countries,

^{12/} C. A. Anderson, "The Pattern of Marriage Selection in Prosperity and Depression," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. XX, pp. 125-139.

^{13/} J. H. S. Bossard, "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 38, pp. 219-224.

^{14/} C. A. Anderson, "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating," Rural Sociology, Vol. III, pp. 296-302.

particularly Germany and Switzerland, reported an increasing number of Christian and non-Christian marriages, i.e., between Jews and Christians. This was not, to be sure, the dominant condition even then. Within the Christian faith there is more likelihood of protestant-protestant and Catholic-Catholic marriages than between mixed matings. In fact the inclination is for the matings to be more like than unlike even in regard to protestant denominations. ^{15/}

With reference to education as a factor in assortative mating studies have revealed a statistically significant positive correlation to exist between the mates in the populations studied. Correlation coefficients for this factor between husbands and wives have usually given results of + .50 and more. (For instance Duncan has found a coefficient of + .572 \pm .029 to exist for the last grade in school completed by the husband and wife in the matings of a rural farm population in Oklahoma. ^{16/})

Marriages in regard to race is dominantly endogamous. Most out-group marriages are made between men of the "superior" race with a woman of the "inferior" race. This takes place more often under conditions where there is a scarcity of women of the dominating race. ^{17/}

Low yet significant degrees of likeness have been found between mates in regard to such factors as intelligence, personality, and temperament. Many early studies dealing with such factors were handicapped by lack of objective psychometric instruments for measurement. The concepts

^{15/} Ibid, also, U. Z. Engelman, "Intermarriage Among Jews in Switzerland, 1888-1920," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 34, pp. 516-523.

^{16/} Unpublished study.

^{17/} C. A. Anderson, "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating," Rural Sociology, Vol. III, pp. 296-302.

have not always meant the same thing from study to study even in recent periods. ^{18/}

Due either to better facilities for study or of greater interest to anthropologists and biologists than to sociologists, judging from the amount of study devoted to them, have been factors having to do with physical measurements and physical defects in assortative matings. Early studies by Galton, Pearson, Boas, and others indicating that matings tended to be like in respect to these factors have been further tested and verified by later students. In most cases of physical measurement low but significant coefficients of correlation and coefficients of mean square contingency have been found. Harris in an early article (1912) cites Pearson's findings of the following coefficients of correlation for various physical characteristics: stature, $+ .2804 \pm .0189$, span $+ .1989 \pm .0204$, and forearm $+ .1977 \pm .0205$. Pearson also found a coefficient of mean square contingency of $+ .26 \pm .03$ for eye color. Galton reported a coefficient of correlation of $+ .54$ for hair color. A mean coefficient of correlation of $+ .2233$ for the length of life of mates has been found for several populations. ^{19/}

A decided inclination for deaf to mate with deaf and the blind to seek blind mates has been shown. This is true not only for persons so afflicted who have been trained in special schools where greater numbers of both sexes would be thrown together but also is true for those never attending such institutions. Significant indications have been found for the matings to be measurably more like than unlike in good health as well as infirmities. ^{20/}

^{18/} J. A. Harris, "Assortative Mating in Man," Popular Science Monthly, Vol. LXXX, pp. 476-492.

^{19/} Ibid.

^{20/} Ibid.

It may be concluded from the results of reported studies dealing with these various factors in regard to assortative mating generally speaking, that matings tend to be homogamous rather than heterogamous. This, in the main, breaks down the age old popular belief that mate selection is largely an attraction between opposites.

3. The Problem of the Present Study

The primary problem to be dealt with in the present study is to find if, in a given rural Negro sample population, the tendency is for the matings to be relatively homogamous, and so, measurably more like than unlike with respect to the criteria selected. In doing this it will be necessary, and of value in a further understanding of Negro marriage selection, to point out in connection with some of the factors studied a few of the characteristics of mate selection found in the matings studied.

In so far as the size of the sample and the nature of the data obtained in the field would allow, an attempt was made to make the results as comparable with the results of studies of matings in white populations as possible and yet remain close to the primary problem of testing the matings of Negroes for similarity of the mates. It was felt that a better understanding of the mate selection pattern of the Negro sample would be had if a contrast with the findings of studied white mate selection characteristics could be made with those of this study. It is to be expected that some of the factors such as color and race mixture cannot be compared since they apply only to the Negro race.

As has been pointed out, the sociological literature dealing with assortative mating, while growing in volume, is yet relatively meager in comparison with its possible importance in the understanding of the family and its problems. Since the study of assortative mating in the Negro/^{population} has

been particularly neglected it is hoped that the present study will, in some way, add to the negligible amount of knowledge concerning this racial group in its pattern of mate selection.

The task, then, of this particular study will be to test by appropriate statistical means the extent of likeness and unlikeness which exists between the mating of a given rural Negro population in regard to thirteen selected factors.

4. Location of the Population Studied

The Negro population from which the sample was taken is located in three townships in Okfuskee county, Oklahoma. These three townships; Paden, Lincoln, and Weleetka townships; contain approximately 65 percent of the total rural Negro families in the county as the number is given in the Fifteenth Census of the United States.

As closely as could be determined, there were 746 rural farm and rural nonfarm Negro families in the area in 1930. ^{21/} The sample used in this study contains 124 families or 16.62 percent of all Negro families in Okfuskee county at the time of the 1930 Census. Since the Fifteenth Census was taken, however, in the opinion of those who use Negro labor, in the opinions of the Negroes themselves, and as indicated by abandoned houses and house sites in Negro communities, there has been a substantial decline in the Negro population. ^{22/} This indicates that the size of the sample in comparison to the actual number of rural farm and rural nonfarm families still remaining in the townships in 1930 may be larger than the nearly 17 percent of the total as of 1930.

^{21/} Fifteenth Census of the United States.

^{22/} The 1940 Census data are not yet available for verification of this opinion or for comparison with the size of the sample used.

It is believed that the sample is a representative cross section of the Negro population contained in the townships. The data were gathered on the basis of rather extensive personal knowledge and direct observation of the general conditions under which the Negro population studied had lived for many years. This intimate knowledge of the situation proved to be a decided advantage in gaining the confidences of the subjects of the study at numerous points.

5. Factors and Techniques Used

The data which comprise the basis of this study were gathered during the month of August 1939, by means of a uniform schedule and personal interviews with the male heads of the families or their wives or, preferably, both. An attempt was made to induce both mates to give the information concerning themselves and, when it was possible, to interview each of them either separately or together. A copy of the schedule which was used in these interviews will be found in the Appendix.

Thirteen factors were used as bases of comparisons between the mates in this study. The factors selected were: age at the time of marriage, place of residence at the time of marriage, place reared, place of birth, distance mates lived apart at time of marriage, number of siblings, civil status, education, church membership, height, weight, mixture of racial stock, and skin color. While this obviously does not by any means exhaust the list of possible factors it was felt that each is important in an understanding of assortative mating and that they are such that they could be gathered with a fair degree of objectivity with the means at hand.

For instance, the assumption is made concerning these factors that if both mates were reared on the farm they are measurably more like than are

mates of diverse origin, i.e., persons of a mating in which the individuals are of farm-nonfarm origin, and that if the proportion of those matings having the same characteristics is relatively high it may be said that such matings tend to be more like than unlike. The significance of the difference between the percentage distribution of like and unlike matings is tested more concretely by the use of a statistical technique known as the "critical ratio." This is the ratio between a difference and its standard error and shows whether or not an obtained difference may be explained in terms of chance factors. ^{23/} Usually critical ratios of 2 are accepted as significant since such a ratio would rarely occur due to chance factors alone and critical ratios of 3 or greater are considered highly significant since they would occur very rarely due to chance factors alone. ^{24/} Thus in the present problem if the difference between the percentage distributions of like and unlike matings is to be considered significant it must be at least 2 times larger than its standard error and would have to be 3 times larger to be considered highly significant.

The extent of similarity or dissimilarity of the mates was further tested by the use of coefficients of correlations and coefficients of mean-square contingency (coefficient of contingency). Those characteristics which readily lend themselves to such treatment were compared for the mates by use of coefficients of correlation. Such factors were age, last grade in school completed, weight, height, and others/^{for} which measurements could be made. The "data totals" formula was used in making these

^{23/} R. A. Fisher, Statistical Methods for Research Workers, pp. 112-129. The formula used for determining the standard error of the percentages was $\sqrt{\frac{pq}{n}}$. The standard error of proportions was obtained from a table of standard errors and probable errors of percentages developed by H. A. Edgerton and D. G. Paterson. See "Table of Standard Errors and Probable Errors of Percentages for Varying Number of Cases," The Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. X, No. 3, 1926, pp. 378-391.

^{24/} The chances are 454 and 27 in 10,000, respectively.

calculations. ^{25/} Its chief value lies in that it is not necessary to reduce the data to deviations from the mean to calculate the correlation. The data totals formula for the coefficient of correlation is:

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X \cdot \sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2] [N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

The significance of these coefficients of correlation is tested in terms of their standard deviations (standard error of the coefficient of correlation). The formula for the standard error of the coefficient of correlation is: $\sigma-r = \frac{1 - (r)^2}{\sqrt{N}}$. A value of r greater than 3 times its standard error will arise rarely due to chance factors alone. If, therefore, the computed r is more than 3 times its standard deviation, it is considered significant.

It is not always possible to use quantitative measurements for various characteristics. Some of the qualitative characteristics used in this study were of such a nature that they were not amenable to quantitative measurements. For instance, such qualitative classifications as light, dark, and medium as are used in connection with complexion, and farm and nonfarm used in connection with place of birth are examples. However, the association between such characteristics may be determined by cross classifying and the computation of a coefficient of association; in this case, the coefficient of mean-square contingency.

The coefficient of contingency has two disadvantages neither of which, however, prevents its being useful in this study. The first of these is that, in general, no sign may be attached to the root. In some cases, as

^{25/} For a discussion of this formula, see M. M. Blair, Elementary Statistical Theory and Methods, Chapter V, p. 41.

was true in the case of the characteristics studied in the present investigation, a conventional sign indicating a positive or negative association may be used if the cross classification distribution indicates the nature of the association. The second disadvantage is that the largest possible value of C never reaches 1 or unity. The largest possible value of C varies with the number of characteristics which are cross classified. Strictly speaking, the coefficients for different systems of classification are not comparable. This lack of comparability need not be of concern in this study since no attempt is made to compare the results other than in places where the systems of classifications are of the same system.

Classifications used in this study were 2 x 2, 3 x 3, and 5 x 5. When a table of 2 x 2 classification is used the value of C cannot exceed .707, when 3 x 3 the maximum value is .816, and when 5 x 5 it cannot exceed .894. ^{26/}

In calculating the coefficient of contingency for the characteristics used in this study Yule's simplification of Pearson's formula for the coefficient of mean-square contingency was used. Yule's formula for the coefficient of contingency is as follows:

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{S - N}{S}}$$

where

$$S = N \sum \frac{N^2 r c}{N_r N_c}$$

It is believed that the use of these statistical procedures are sufficient to demonstrate amply the degrees of likeness or unlikeness which exist in the matings contained in the sample.

^{26/} G. U. Yule and M. G. Kendall, An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics, Chapter V, p. 69.

PART II

ASSORTATIVE MATING IN A NEGRO POPULATION

1. Age at Time of Marriage

A great deal of attention has been given to age as a factor in the study of assortative mating. A listing of the family functions and problems in which similarity or dissimilarity of the age of the mates may act as a conditioning factor makes it apparent that it has merited all of the attention which has been given to it and is worthy of further, more intensive study.

Because of their relationship to age of probable parenthood the facts concerning the similarity and dissimilarity of the age of the mates are important in the study of birth control, marriage counseling, and various welfare problems. Disparity in age is regarded by many students as a causative factor in the creation of family tension and maladjustments. ^{27/} There has been much speculation and interest in finding what age combinations are the best for marriage success. Age at the time of marriage is considered of vital importance by gynecologists. It is obvious that before these problems can be given careful scientific consideration a basic knowledge must be had about age at marriage in general.

The primary purpose here will be to point out some of the mate selection characteristics of a given rural Negro population and to discover the extent to which the matings are measurably more like than unlike in regard to age.

In the rural Negro population used in this study the correlation between the ages of the husband and wife at the time of the first marriage

^{27/} Hornell Hart and Wilbert Shields, "Happiness in Relation to Age at Marriage," Journal of Social Hygiene, Vol. XII, 1926, pp. 403.

was found to be high. The correlation coefficient between these variables is $+ .77 \pm .0439$.

The correlation between the age of husband and wife at the time of marriage in those matings in which the husband or both mates had had previous marriages was, in this Negro population, relatively low. The correlation coefficient for the ages of these matings is $+ .35 \pm .1428$.

This low correlation is probably due, as will be further illustrated, to the fact that there seems to be a tendency on the part of older Negro men with previous marriages to choose as later mates women much younger than themselves. This tendency is in keeping with the findings in studies made by Bossard of a white population in Philadelphia and other studies of white populations as has been cited.

Table I. Distribution of Mates by Age at Time of First Marriage

Age at marriage	Total		Cumulative	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Both under				
20	18	21	18	21
21	11	13	29	34
22	11	13	40	47
23	6	7	46	54
24	3	4	49	58
25	10	12	59	69
26	2	2	61	72
27 or over	24	28	85	100

There is a tendency for both mates to be relatively young at the time of first marriages. Here again we find a similarity of tendency between this Negro population and the tendency discovered in white population studies. As is shown in Table I, 21 percent of these first marriages were those in which the mates were both 20 years of age or younger. In 54 percent

of the first marriages both mates were 23 years of age or younger. Seventy-two percent of the matings in the sample were those in which both mates were 26 years of age or younger in contrast with the remaining 28 percent of the cases in which both mates were 26 years of age or over.

To investigate further the similarity of age between the mates at time of first marriage the distribution of the sample population in regard to the difference in age at the time of mating will be examined.

As is revealed by an examination of Table II the modal difference in age at the time of first marriage both for those matings in which the husband was older and in those in which the wife was older is one year. It is shown that in 6 percent of the matings there was less than one year's difference between the age of the husband and wife. In 26 percent of the cases there was a difference of less than 2 years between the ages of mates. In over one-half, 57 percent, of the cases the difference in age was less than 5 years while in 78 percent of the cases there was less than 7 years.

Table II. Distribution of Difference in Age
at Time of First Marriage

Years older	Husband older		Wife older	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0	5	6	-	-
1	15	16	4	4
2	7	8	4	4
3	9	10	-	-
4	7	8	1	1
5	6	7	-	-
6	6	7	6	7
7	5	6	-	-
8	6	7	-	-
9	1	1	-	-
10 or over	8	9	-	-
Total	70	84	15	16

It should be of interest to notice that in this sample population, as was found in previous studies of white populations, there is an overwhelming inclination for the matings to be those in which the husband is older than the wife. ^{28/} It may be seen in Table II that in 84 percent of the matings this is the case.

For marriages in which the husband or both mates had been previously married no such similarity of the ages of the mates at the time of marriage was found. The modal difference in age was 6 years, and the average difference in age was 13 years. The range of difference in age for these marriages was from 1 to 47 years. The dissimilarity in age as shown in these matings may be due in part to a lack of a representative distribution of ages in the sample, but it is at the same time in keeping with the tendency, as has been found in studies of white populations, for there to be a greater and greater difference in age between the husband and wife as the man gets older. There is the possibility, also, that in this Negro population the tendency is towards greater exaggeration in the difference than is found in the white population. This point should be subjected to further investigation before a definite conclusion is drawn with respect to the question it raises.

In regard to similarity of age at first marriage the matings may be said to be measurably more like than unlike since, as has been shown, the high coefficient of correlation of $+ .77 \pm .0439$ exists between the ages of the mates at the time of first marriage, and since in 55 percent of the cases there was less than 5 years' difference in age. Even though no such degree of similarity in regard to the age factor is found between those matings in which the husband or both mates had had previous marriages it

^{28/} O. D. Duncan, et al., "The Factor of Age in Marriage," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 39, p. 469-482.

must not be assumed that these matings tend to be heterogamous. The relatively low yet positive coefficient of correlation ($+ .35 \pm .1428$) which exists between the ages of the persons in these marriages reveal them to be homogamous and more like than would be the case if the matings were purely at random.

2. Likeness of Environment Before Marriage

The similarity of the type of locality in which the members of the matings have spent their lives before marriage should be an important consideration in the prediction of the success of the family life to come. A good deal of attention has been given by students of the family to the divergency of the family patterns to be found in the rural and urban populations. ^{29/} These differences in the concept of the family as an institution and as to the degree of its responsibility in carrying out many functions may be the bases of much family tension and maladjustment if the mates have been led to dissimilar understandings of their responsibilities and functions because of a difference in background of experiences and cultural conditioning before marriage. On the other hand a similar cultural background with the greater probability of like attitudes and values in regard to the place and duties of the individual within the family group will tend to give greater freedom to make the other personal adjustments necessary in married life. Such a similarity in the concept of family life would seem to make the prediction of a successful marriage life more probable.

It may be true that in the population being studied the family pattern would not vary greatly since the sample population both farm and non-farm is rural. It may be assumed, however, that there is a degree of

^{29/} Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin, Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology, Chapter X, pp. 3-41.

difference in the family pattern as conditioned by the closer associations with persons outside the family and the greater number of institutions as found in the nonfarm rural community than in the more isolated condition of the farm family.

In order to ascertain the degree of likeness in the type of locality in which the mates within the sample population had spent their lives before marriage the following factors are given attention: (A) place of residence at the time of marriage, (B) place reared, and (C) place of birth. An attempt will be made to show that in regard to these factors the mates tend to be measurably more like than unlike.

Closely related to these factors and following them in consideration under the same title is the factor of residential propinquity at the time of marriage.

A. Place of Residence as a Factor in Assortative Mating

There is, in the sample of the population studied, a strong tendency for mates to be of the same rural type place of residence. (See Table III.) That is to say that those residing on a farm at the time of marriage tend to mate with another living on a farm, and those living in nonfarm communities mated with another living in a nonfarm community. The farm-farm matings accounted for 41 percent and the nonfarm-nonfarm matings comprised 46 percent of the total matings. Together these like matings made up 87 percent of the sample population. The remaining 13 percent of the matings represented in the sample are farm-nonfarm matings. The difference between these percentages of like and unlike matings in regard to this factor is highly significant as is revealed by the critical ratio of 24.73.

A further indication of the tendency in the sample for like to marry like is found in the high coefficient of contingency of + .596 which exists

between the rural type place of residence at the time of marriage for the mates.

Of the matings in which both mates lived in rural nonfarm communities it was found in the sample population that 57 percent were living in the same rural nonfarm community at the time of marriage while the remaining 43 percent were living in different nonfarm communities. The percentage of those living in different rural nonfarm communities loses some of its significance when it is considered that in many cases the mates had previously lived in the same rural nonfarm community at some time before marriage.

TABLE III

Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Place of Residence at the Time of Marriage

Place of residence		Number and Percentage	
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent
All residences		124	100.00
Total same		108	87.10
Farm	Farm	51	41.13
Nonfarm	Nonfarm	57	45.97
Total different		16	12.90
Farm	Nonfarm	6	4.84
Nonfarm	Farm	10	8.06

Because, then, of the high critical ratio (24.73) which exists between the two percentages of the sample as they are distributed in like and unlike matings in connection with this factor, and because of the high coefficient of contingency which is found it is very obvious that within the sample the tendency is for matings to be measurably more like than unlike in regard to rural type of residence at the time of marriage.

B. Place Reared as a Factor in Assortative Mating

The tendency for mates to be of the same rural type place reared, while not so strong as the tendency to be of the same rural type place of residence at the time of marriage, was found to be quite dominant. As is shown in Table IV the matings of persons reared in the same rural type places, i.e., farm-farm and nonfarm-nonfarm combinations of places reared, was 77 percent of the sample. Sixty percent of the total matings were farm-farm combinations and 16 percent were nonfarm-nonfarm matings. In only 23 percent of the cases were the matings those of mates reared in different rural type places, or of farm-nonfarm combinations. This distribution results in a high difference of percentage (53) between the proportion of like and unlike matings according to this factor. That this difference is quite significant is shown by a critical ratio of 14.02.

TABLE IV

Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Places Reared

Place reared		Number and Percentage	
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent
Total, place reared		124	100.00
Total same		95	76.67
Farm	Farm	75	60.48
Nonfarm	Nonfarm	20	16.13
Total different		29	23.39
Farm	Nonfarm	14	11.29
Nonfarm	Farm	15	12.10

A further comparison of the place reared of the mates revealed a coefficient of contingency of + .385. ^{30/} Since a high critical ratio

^{30/} It is to be remembered that where a 2 x 2 classification is used C cannot exceed .707.

(14.02) was found to be present for the difference in the percentage distribution of like and unlike matings according to this factor along with a coefficient of contingency of + .385 between the places reared of the mates here again was found a rather decided tendency for the mates to be measurably similar and so the matings tending to be measurably more like than unlike in this regard.

C. Place of Birth as a Factor in Assortative Mating.

Similarity between the place of birth of the two mates would not logically be expected to be as great as is the case with place reared or particularly with place of residence at the time of marriage since the mobility of the parents of the children and their own mobility would have an influence here. It must be remembered, also, that no single factor is free of the condition^{ing}/force in mate selection of other factors. Yet the percentage of those mates in the sample who were born in the same rural type place remains high though less than for the two factors considered previously.

Those of the sample who were born in the same rural type places, combinations of farm-farm matings and nonfarm-nonfarm matings constitute 72 percent of the sample. (See Table V.) Of these like matings 59 percent were of farm-farm matings and 12 percent were of nonfarm-nonfarm matings. The remaining 28 percent were of farm-nonfarm place of birth matings. The critical ratio measuring the significance of the difference between these two percentage distributions is 10.77.

Even though the measurement of coefficient of contingency for the place of birth of the two mates is smaller than the results shown for the factors of place of residence at the time of marriage and place reared it is still large enough to be of considerable importance in indicating a

TABLE V

Mates of Same and Different Rural Type Place of Birth

Place of birth		Number and Percentage	
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent
Total, place of birth		123	100.00
Total same		88	71.54
Farm	Farm	73	59.34
Nonfarm	Nonfarm	15	12.20
Total different		35	28.46
Farm	Nonfarm	17	13.82
Nonfarm	Farm	18	14.63

tendency for matings to be between like individuals in connection with this factor. The coefficient of contingency found in this case was + .240.

With this factor also we find the tendency for the mates to be, for the most part, measurably similar, since the critical ratio of the difference between the percentage distribution of the like and unlike matings is 10.77 and the measure of the coefficient of contingency for this factor is + .240, though in a somewhat less degree than in the place of residence at the time of marriage or place reared as factors.

D. Residential Propinquity

It has been pointed out that it is logical to assume that there is some difference between the marriage pattern found in the rural nonfarm community and that which exists in the open country, because of the presence of conditioning factors found in the nonfarm places which are relatively absent from or less often experienced in the more isolated conditions of the open country. Study has shown that a wide difference exists in the culture pattern of the urban area and the rural area and that these

patterns tend to differ in some degree from one urban or rural area to another. ^{31/}

For these reasons, then, it may be concluded that if the mates are from widely distant rural farm or nonfarm places there may be some degree of difference in their attitudes and values. This will serve to enlarge the scope and make more difficult the adjustments which must necessarily be made in the family life if it is to be stable and successful in carrying out its functions. It is not unreasonable, then to conclude that residential propinquity is an important part of the study of mate selection.

It should also be interesting to notice if frequent contacts, which would be more liable to take place between persons dwelling close to one another, tend to ripen into interest, operating with other factors, and lead to marriage. The present study cannot consider this problem, however, because of lack of required data.

When the place of residence at the time of marriage was considered as a factor in assortative mating it was pointed out that a small majority of the matings in the sample, which were of nonfarm-nonfarm type, lived in the same nonfarm rural community at the time of marriage. It was not practical to attempt to get the distance lived apart at the time of marriage for these matings because of the virtual lack of, or disappearance of, systematic block layouts in the strictly Negro communities, and because the Negroes themselves were in the habit of thinking in miles or parts of miles rather than in blocks. In no nonfarm community included in the study, however, would it have been possible for the couple to have lived more than a fraction more than one mile apart. It seems, then, that it would be safe to say that all of these mates lived less than the relatively short rural distance of two miles apart.

^{31/} Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin, Op. cit., pp. 3-41.

Thirty-one percent of the matings in the sample lived less than one mile apart at the time of marriage, and in 60 percent of the cases the distance was less than 4 miles. In 76 percent of the cases the distance was less than 7 miles. A factor which probably enters in here and which must be considered is that Negro settlements in Oklahoma are rather spotted in distribution. This would enter in as a circumstance which would force the mates to be of residence either within relatively short distances or of fairly great distance apart. The tendency for matings in this sample population to be predominantly those in which the mates place of residence were of relatively short rural distances apart is in keeping with the findings of white studies which have been reported.

Since the distance distribution of farm-farm and farm-nonfarm matings show that the distance lived apart for the majority of the mates is not great, it is reasonable to believe that they have been for this reason influenced by many folkways, mores, and associations found within the same neighborhood and community and are thus more similar than would be the case were the distance greater with even slightly different neighborhood and community organizations.

3. Miscellaneous Factors Considered in the Study

The next group of factors having to do with assortative mating to which we give attention are (A) number of siblings (B) civil status at the time of marriage (C) education, and (D) church membership.

In connection with each of these factors an effort will be made to demonstrate a tendency for the matings to be measurably more like than unlike.

A. Number of Siblings as a Factor in Assortative Mating

The number of other brothers and sisters in a family is reasonably

supposed to be an important factor in shaping the personality of an individual. It may have much to do with the person's ability to make necessary social adjustments. This should be of important consideration in stabilizing the family life. It is probably true, also, that it would tend to shape an attitude towards family life and its functions such as the desirability of children and the optimum number of them.

Correlations between both the number of siblings alive at the time of the first marriage and for the total number of siblings born into the families of the parents of the husband and wife resulted in both cases in only small coefficients. The coefficient for the correlation of the number of siblings alive at the time of the first marriage for husband and wife is $+ .21 \pm .0886$. The correlation of the total number of siblings born into the families of the parents of the mates resulted in a correlation coefficient of $+ .24 \pm .0455$. While the correlation coefficients are both positive they are both small. This indicates that as a factor in assortative mating in this sample the factor of number of siblings in the families of both the husband and wife is of small importance in the present pattern of mate selection, yet indicating to this degree a tendency for the matings to be homogamous rather than heterogamous and so, on a whole, to be measurably more like than unlike in respect to this factor.

B. Civil Status as a Factor in Assortative Mating

It would be interesting to know and of some aid in an effort to understand the present pattern of mate selection to ascertain to what extent the marriages were between individuals of the same or different civil status at the time of marriage. The relatively large number of both husbands and wives who have had previous marriages in the sample may indicate that among the Negro this factor may be of very real importance.

It may be observed in Table IV that there is in the sample a dominant tendency for like to marry like in regard to civil status. In 77 percent of the total number of cases in the sample the mates were of the same civil status at the time of marriage. This includes both those matings in which both mates were single at the time of marriage and those in which both mates had been previously married at the time of the present marriage. Only 23 percent of the matings were of mixed civil status at the time of the present marriage. It will be noticed that the number of cases in which previously married husbands married single women is slightly larger than in the cases in which previously married husbands marry previously married women. But when it is considered that 51 percent of the

TABLE VI

Matings by Civil Status at Time of Present Marriage

Civil status		Number and Percentage	
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent
Total		124	100.00
Total same status		95	76.61
Single	Single	76	61.29
Previously married	Previously married	19	15.32
Total different status		20	23.39
Single	Previously married	9	7.26
Previously married	Single	20	16.13

husbands in the sample had been previously married and only 23 percent of the wives had been, a strong tendency for like to marry like may still remain. A critical ratio of 14.01 indicates that the difference between this percentage distribution of like and unlike matings by civil status is highly significant. A correlation of the civil status of the mates at the time of marriage resulted in a significant coefficient of contingency of + .390.

Keeping in mind the high critical ratio of the difference in the percentage distribution of like and unlike matings and the high coefficient of contingency which exists between the civil status at the time of marriage for the mates it is obvious that here again we find a factor which points to a dominant tendency for like to marry like in the sample.

C. Education as a Factor in Assortative Mating

The objectives of formal education have been variously defined. It is generally agreed, however, that its principal function is to pass on to a growing generation the accumulated knowledge, folkways and mores of the dominant group as the best way of life. This involves the instilling of attitudes and values towards various institutions and a knowledge of their functions as well as the drill in given means of response to given stimulus situations. It would seem, then, that if the mates had been subject to the conditioning force of formal education a similar length of time they would tend to be more like than if the period of conditioning for one had been longer than that for the other. That is to say that a longer period of exposure to a formal presentation of socially accepted means of adjustments would tend to give a somewhat different set of attitudes and values to an individual than would be the case where a shorter period of the experience had been undergone. For such reasons it may be assumed that a similarity or dissimilarity of the mates in regard to the number of grades completed in school at the time of marriage would be of importance in the study of the pattern of mate selection in any group. ^{32/}

As would be expected from a knowledge of the Negro rural school situation in Oklahoma and over the South both at the present and in the past the modal number of grades of school completed was not particularly

^{32/} Clifford Kirkpatrick, "Factors in Marital Adjustment," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIII, 1937, pp. 270-283.

high for either husband or wife. ^{33/} The modal grade completed for the husbands was 6 and 10 for the wives. It should be kept in mind when considering these grades completed that in many cases instead of a "grade" consisting of the work done in a school year of 8 or 9 months it may have been for a "term" of 6 weeks or 2, 4, or 6 months. Since these terms varied in length within the same community from year to year and in some few cases nearly approached the regular 8 or 9 month school year it was impossible to give them their real weight. Since, in most cases, the husband and wife had gone to school under much the same system of schooling the data are still useful for the purpose of correlation.

Because of a fairly high correlation between the education of the husband and wife in the sample it may be said that this factor also shows a tendency for like to marry like. The correlation between the grade in school completed for the husband with that of the grade in school completed for the wife was found to be $+ .57 \pm .0636$. This result compares very favorably with the results found in studies of white rural populations in Oklahoma cited in Part II of the Introduction.

D. Church Membership at the Time of Marriage as a Factor in Assortative Mating

The church among the rural Negro population still maintains its place of importance as a focal point of community and neighborhood organization, and for this reason church membership or the lack of it should be an important measurement of likeness or unlikeness between the mates in this rural Negro population.

It was found in the sample that there was a strong tendency for church members to marry church members and for non-members of the church

^{33/} E. B. Reuter, The American Race Problem, Chapter XIII.

ONTARIO
LIBRARY
OCT 25 1940
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE

to marry non-members. This may be due to a greater number of contacts growing out of church work and attendance, a similarity in attitudes and interest, and a possible fairly high degree of social value attached to membership in a church or of a particular church.

In Table VII it is shown that in 69 percent of the total cases the mates were of church member-church member and non-member-non-member combinations. Breaking this down it is found that 39 percent of the total cases were members of the same church at the time of marriage, 20 percent were church members but members of different churches, and 11 percent were non-member-non-member matings. Thirty-one percent of the matings were cases in which either the husband or the wife was a church member while the other mate was a non-member at the time of marriage. That the difference between the percentage distribution of like and unlike marriages according to church membership is significant is shown by a critical ratio of 9.22.

TABLE VII
Distribution of Matings by Church Membership Status

Membership Status	Number and Percentage	
	Number	Percent
Total	124	100.00
Total same: members and non-members	86	69.36
Both members same church	47	37.91
Both members different church	25	20.16
Both non-members	14	11.29
Total different: members and non-members	38	30.64
Husband member Wife non-member	1	.80
Husband non-member Wife member	37	29.84

A correlation of association between the membership in a particular congregation or non-membership in any church for the husband and wife resulted in a coefficient of contingency of + .721. ^{34/} The resulting critical ratio testing the significance of the difference between the two percentage distributions of like and unlike matings in regard to church membership or the lack of it and the high coefficient of contingency resulting from the correlation testing the significance of similarity within the sample of membership in the same congregation and lack of membership indicates that in this regard the tendency is for like to marry like.

4. Biophysical Factors in Assortative Mating

Here the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between the mates in regard to some of their physical characteristics will be considered. An effort will be made to test the extent to which value is attached to similarity in the matings according to the following factors as is indicated by the distribution of like and unlike matings: (A) height (B) weight (C) racial stock, and (D) complexion.

A. Height

The results of the comparison of heights at the time of marriage show that within the group there was, in this respect, no tendency for like to mate with like. A correlation coefficient of only + .013 ± .039 was found to exist between the heights of the mates. The results, however, are highly unreliable since no exact method was possible in getting the height of the mates at time of marriage. It was necessary to take the estimate given. Several factors entered into making it difficult to get true figures, and to have been reliable the measurement of heights would have had to be very accurate. A mistake of an inch or two in the estimate of

^{34/} This was a 5 x 5 classification and C could not have exceeded .394. See Part I, Section 5 for discussion on this point.

height would make a considerable difference since the range in difference is so very narrow.

B. Weight

The results of the correlation between the weights of the mates at the time of marriage was much higher and probably much more reliable since there seemed to be a much greater certainty on this point. Also it is easier to estimate weight with a greater degree of accuracy since the range of variation is greater and a few pounds in weight does not have the same ratio of error as the same number of inches in an estimate of height. The correlation coefficient between these variables of height was $+ .62 \pm .0523$ and shows rather strong tendency for like to mate with like in this respect.

C. Racial Stock

Considering the racial stock of the mates the matings were predominately homogamous. Where the term "mixed blood" is used here in connection with racial stock it indicates those members in the sample who knew they were of a mixture of African stock with either white or Indian stock or both. It was not taken for granted that a brown skin of a fairly light shade or one of a coppery-brown color indicated a mixture of stock other than African, since it was known that all those slaves imported from Africa were not without mixture of blood, unless the skin coloring was accompanied with other characteristics such as blue or gray eyes and straight, that is, unstraightened or nearly straight hair. The term "full blood" was applied to those who knew of no mixture of racial stock in their direct line of descent and whose body characteristics were such as to support this belief. This means of determining racial stock mixture or its absence is arbitrary, but it was the only means at hand. From Table VIII it may be seen that in

68 percent of the matings the mates were considered to be of the same blood. That is, they were of mixed-mixed and full blood-full blood combinations. In the remaining 32 percent the mates were doubtless of mixed blood-full blood matings. A critical ratio of 8.45 indicates that the difference in these percentage distribution of like and unlike matings by racial stock mixture or lack of it is of significance. This measurement and a coefficient of contingency of + .298 existing in the matings according to this factor indicates matings to be measurably more like than unlike in regard to racial stock within the sample.

D. Complexion

In regard to complexion the rather arbitrary divisions of dark, medium, and light were used. The gathering of data here had to be to a great extent subjective. The person being questioned was asked his or her opinion as to which one of these complexion color divisions he or she belonged. This knowledge of the conception of the classification was essential since it was necessary to have the person interviewed classify his or her mate in case of their absence. This gave a subjective check

TABLE VIII

Distribution of Matings by Racial Stock

Racial stock		Number and Percentage	
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent
Total		124	100.00
Total same		84	67.74
Mixed	Mixed	58	46.77
Full	Full	26	20.97
Total different		40	32.26
Mixed	Full	17	13.71
Full	Mixed	23	18.55

upon the information given. It may be considered, also, that the real complexion color of the mate was not of more importance than that which the other mate believed it to be.

As this division of complexion color into dark, medium, and light gives 9 possible mating combinations there is a fairly strong indication of a tendency for matings to be homogamous since, as is revealed in Table IX, 42 percent of the mates were of the same complexion, i.e., dark-dark, medium-medium, and light-light. Fifty-eight percent were of the dark-medium, dark-light, and so on, or the remaining 6 possible mating combinations. It is of interest to notice that in the case of dark Negro men there was a greater inclination towards heterogamy in mating than towards homogamy since the dark husbands mated with women lighter than themselves in a greater number than with dark women. This tendency is in keeping with the findings of another study cited by Anderson.^{35/} A coefficient of

TABLE IX

Distribution of Matings by Complexion

Complexion		Number and Percentage		
Husband	Wife	Number	Percent	
Total		124	100.00	
Total same		52	41.93	
Dark	Dark	12	9.68	
Medium	Medium	26	20.97	
Light	Light	14	11.29	
Total different			58.07	
Dark	Medium	72	24	19.36
Dark	Light	11	8.87	
Medium	Dark	5	4.03	
Medium	Light	11	8.87	
Light	Dark	8	6.45	
Light	Medium	13	10.48	

^{35/} C. A. Anderson, "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating," Rural Sociology, Vol. III, 1928, p. 297.

contingency revealed the association between this characteristic in these matings to be + .225.

In this group of four biophysical factors, three have been found which indicate that mating tends to be measurably more like than unlike within the sample population being studied. In the other factor, Height, the lack of a more significant correlation is probably due to faulty data as has been pointed out. The results of studies on white populations in connection with height leads to a questioning of the reliability of the results of the finding. Particularly since many of the studies of matings of white persons had been made with more objectively obtained data.

PART III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Briefly summarizing the results of the study made of the husband and wife to determine likeness or unlikeness in relation to 13 selected social and physical characteristics, the following tendencies for mating in the rural Negro sample population studied were found to exist.

In the case of age a high positive correlation coefficient was found between the ages of the husband and the wife at the time of first marriage. A positive, but rather low, correlation was found in those matings in which either one or both of the mates had been previously married. In the light of the factor of age, then, since both correlations are positive, the tendency of mating in the sample population was homogamous and for mates to be measurably more like than unlike.

The tendency for mates to be measurably like in respect to rural-type place of residence at time of marriage, rural-type place of birth, and place reared is reflected in the high percentage of the cases in which the mates are of the same rural type place and in the high coefficients of contingency in regard to these factors.

The distribution of the mates in distance lived apart shows that for the majority of cases the distance was small and since the pair would be subject to the same neighborhood or community social conditions and institutions they would be measurably more like in these respects than would be the case if the distance were greater.

The total number of siblings and the number of siblings living at the time of marriage were so distributed in the matings that the resulting correlation coefficients when these factors were each correlated

shows that there was no general tendency for the mates to be either like or unlike in these respects.

There was a marked dominant tendency for the mates to be of the same civil status at the time of marriage. Individuals whose first mating it was, in a large percent of the cases, married others who had not been previously married. This would be expected in those of first marriage, but since the number of those of both sexes who had had previous marriages was relatively large a chance distribution would have had a tendency to make the proportion of like matings less significant. As was pointed out there might seem to be at first notice a tendency for previously married husbands to choose mates who had not been previously married, but when the number of previously married men and previously married women are compared a tendency is easily seen for like, in this case, to marry like.

The correlation coefficient resulting from the correlation of the grades completed in school for the wife with those grades completed for the husband was fairly high and positive indicating the matings were homogamous and so measurably more like than unlike.

In the case of church membership or the lack of it, it was the dominant practice for mates to be like in that both mates were either both members or both non-members in a large percent of the cases.

The result of the correlation between the heights at time of marriage was of such nature as to indicate that no tendency existed for mates on the whole to be measurably like or unlike in this respect. As was pointed out, this lack of tendency may have been due to faulty data.

A fairly high positive correlation was found to exist between the weight at the time of marriage for the matings.

The percentage distributions and the coefficients of contingency for those matings of the same racial stock and complexion indicated that for the sample the practice was for like to mate with like. While the proportion (42 percent) of those having the same complexion does not include half of the matings it is still high since those who were like in this respect were only three out of a possible nine combinations of complexions.

Thus it is found in the sample that in the case of eleven of the factors used in comparing the mates the tendency is for mates to be, in the majority of matings, measurably more like than unlike. While in the remaining two factors, total number and total number of living siblings, and height at the time of marriage, gave no indication of a general tendency for mates to be either like or unlike.

It has been pointed out that the factors used in this study were selected with the means to be used in gathering the data in mind. Since the reliability of the data would have to depend upon the ability of the person interviewed to answer with a marked degree of assurance and upon their willingness to answer at all, many factors which have been used in the study of white populations had to be left to further investigation. Such a comparison for the matings as the Intelligence Quotient and other biologically inherited characteristics should not be ignored in assortative mating studies since they indicate the degree of social stimulus value placed upon such traits in the choice of a mate. No means of gathering the required data for such study was available since the data were procured by personal interviews.

The unreliability of the correlation coefficient for height at the time of marriage in the present study is an example which indicates

that the field schedule method of gathering data in regard to physical characteristics when used alone has serious limitations unless the characteristics are quite obvious and there is no need for exact objective measurement. Such physical characteristics are few. Since so little is known concerning mate selection among the Negro, either rural or urban, all phases of the pattern are in need of further study and verification.

It need not be assumed that there are no other factors of importance in regard to assortative mating among the Negro than those which exist among the white population. A cultural or physical trait among the Negro which may be found to be of major importance in mate selection may be non-existent among white populations or of so small import that it does not warrant study, provided it is safe ever to make such an assumption regarding any untested factor. The results of any factor used in such a study need not give comparable results with the findings of white studies using the same factor. The discovery of widely different results between white and Negro mate selection need not mean that either data or method are at fault. It may merely indicate that in this factor Negro and white populations differ. It indicates that further study is needed, not that the work should be discarded. It is not the whole task to discover if the Negro pattern is similar to that of the white. It is of importance to find out just what the Negro pattern is in order to widen the insight into his culture and to aid him in the solution of his problem even though, or if, it differs from our own.

It is possible that among no other group could the study of the effect of rural-urban migration upon the cultural patterns of a people be studied with more success than among the Negro. Its effects upon so basic an institution as the family and its beginning in the selection of a mate

are of primary significance. It should be profitable to discover what effect a relatively short period of urban life has had upon the conscious and unconscious social attitudes and value attached to similarity or dissimilarity in matings. This would demand a much more extensive knowledge of the mate selector's pattern as it exists among both the urban and rural Negro.

In the study of assortative mating in general there is need of more numerous technical aids. One phase in particular which deserves attention and which would be of great value is a knowledge of the distribution of a culturally determined trait within a universe. Sufficient study has long ago been given to demonstrate that biologically determined attributes follow a "normal" curve in distribution. This knowledge makes it possible to test a sample with greater accuracy and also to figure probability with a degree of exactness.

Work upon the distribution of culturally determined traits has been done by Floyd H. Allport.^{36/} It is his hypothesis that such traits tend to conform in distribution to a "J-curve." Such work is in the right direction and is worthy of attention. The testing of the "J-curve" hypothesis should be basic to further work in many branches of sociological study.

Another helpful phase of investigation would be to determine for some of the factors used in mate selection studies, what degree of difference may exist between the mates and yet be considered similar. The difference in age between the mates may be an illustration. Are mates whose difference in age is 6 years similar? Are they similar if the difference is 10 years? It needs to be determined under what conditions the

^{36/} F. H. Allport, "Rule and Custom as Individual Variations of Behavior Distributed upon a Continuum of Conformity," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 44, 1939, pp. 897-921.

mates are generally similar in age and under what conditions they would not be considered so. It seems that such a knowledge of factors to be used in mate selection studies would throw greater light upon the meaning of the results and make them more useful in practical application.

A STUDY OF ASSOCIATIVE MATING IN A
NEGRO POPULATION IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

1. Age at present marriage: Husband _____ Wife _____
2. Date at marriage _____
3. Place of residence at time of marriage
 - (a) Husband: Farm () Village () City ()
Post office: County _____
Town _____ State _____
 - (b) Wife: Farm () Village () City ()
Post office: County _____
Town _____ State _____
4. Place of birth
 - (a) Husband: Farm () Village () City ()
Post office: County _____
Town _____ State _____
 - (b) Wife: Farm () Village () City ()
Post office: County _____
Town _____ State _____
5. Place reared
 - (a) Husband: Farm () Village () City ()
 - (b) Wife: Farm () Village () City ()
6. Distance lived apart at time of marriage
Miles _____ Blocks _____
7. Length of acquaintance before marriage
Years _____ Months _____
8. Length of engagement before marriage
Years _____ Months _____
9. Siblings: a) Husband: No. _____ Live births _____
Brothers _____ Sisters _____
Living at time of marriage _____
- b) Wife: No. _____ Live births _____
Brothers _____ Sisters _____
Living at time of marriage _____
10. Birth order in family: Husband _____ Wife _____
11. Civil status at marriage
 - a) Husband: Single () Widowed () Divorced ()
Previous marriages: None _____ No. _____
 - b) Wife: Single () Widowed () Divorced ()
Previous marriages: None _____ No. _____

12. Education at time of marriage - Last grade completed
 Husband _____ Wife _____
13. Religious affiliation at time of marriage
 Husband _____ Wife _____
14. Occupation of male parent at time of marriage
 Husband _____ Wife _____
15. Occupation at time of marriage
 Husband _____ Wife _____
16. Employment status at time of marriage
 (a) Husband: Emp. () Unemp. () Part-time ()
 (b) Wife: Emp. () Unemp. () Part-time ()
17. Height at time of marriage
 Husband _____ Wife _____
18. Weight at time of marriage
 Husband _____ Wife _____
19. Kinship
 None () Degree of kinship _____
20. Percentage of Negro blood
 (a) Husband: Full () Mixed ()
 (b) Wife: Full () Mixed ()
21. Complexion (Negroes only)
 (a) Husband: Dark () Medium () Light ()
 (b) Wife: Dark () Medium () Light ()
22. Complexion (whites only)
 (a) Husband: Blond () Brunette ()
 (b) Wife: Blond () Brunette ()
23. Eye color
 (a) Husband: Blue () Grey () Brown () Black ()
 (b) Wife: Blue () Grey () Brown () Black ()

Name _____

Location _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allport, F. H. "Rule and Custom as Individual Variations of Behavior Distributed Upon a Continuum of Conformity." American Journal of Sociology, 44:897-921, 1939.
- Anderson, C. A. "Our Present Knowledge of Assortative Mating." Rural Sociology, 3:296-302, 1928.
- _____. "The Pattern of Marriage Selection in Prosperity and Depression." Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, 20:125-39, 1939.
- Blair, M. M. Elementary Statistical Theory and Methods. Crossman Multilith and Printing Company, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1939.
- Bossard, J. H. S. "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection." American Journal of Sociology, 38:219-24, 1932.
- _____. "The Age Factor in Marriage: A Philadelphia Study, 1931." American Journal of Sociology, 38:536-47, 1933.
- Duncan, O. D., et al. "The Factor of Age in Marriage." American Journal of Sociology, 39:469-82, 1934.
- Edgerton, H. A. and Paterson, D. G. "Table of Standard Errors and Probable Errors of Percentages for Varying Number of Cases." The Journal of Applied Psychology, 10:378-91, 1926.
- Engelman, U. Z. "Intermarriage Among Jews in Switzerland 1888-1920." American Journal of Sociology, 34:516-23, 1928.
- Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. "Population", Vol. III, Part 2, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1932.
- Fisher, R. A. Statistical Methods for Research Workers. (5th edition) Oliver and Boyd, London, 1934.
- Harris, J. A. "Assortative Mating in Man" Popular Science Monthly, 80:476-92, 1912.
- Hart, H. and Shields, W. "Happiness in Relation to Age at Marriage" Journal of Social Hygiene. 12:403-410, 1926.
- Johnson, G. B. "Factors in Development of Negro Social Institutions in the United States." American Journal of Sociology, 40:329-37, 1934.
- _____. "Negro Racial Movements and Leadership in the United States". American Journal of Sociology, 43:57-71, 1937.

- Kirkpatrick, Clifford. "Factors in Marital Adjustment." American Journal of Sociology, 43:270-83, 1937.
- McKain, W. C. Jr. and Whetten, N. L. "Size of Family in Relationship to Homogeneity of Parental Traits." Rural Sociology, 1:20-28, 1936.
- Notestein, F. W. "Differential Age at Marriage According to Social Classes." American Journal of Sociology, 37:22-48, 1931.
- Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin. Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology, Vol. III, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1930.
- Young, Donald. American Minority Peoples. Harper and Brothers, New York and London, 1932.
- Yule, G. U. and Kendall N. G. An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics. C. Griffin and Company, London, 1937.

Margie C. Hawk