

## Books about Blacks

# Where Did they Come From?

By RICHARD M. M. McCONNELL

Washington — (NC) — Two years ago, it was next to impossible to assemble an adequate popular library on black culture, Afro-American history and similar topics related to the life of the Negro in America.

True, Negro music has been studied, anthologized and Negro folklore has a place in every survey course of American folk-life. But books that took a broader view were hard to find.

The situation has changed considerably. Now there are histories, biographies and sociological studies pouring from the nation's printing presses.

Many of them are polished graduate school theses, others are competent books prepared by scholars to fill an obvious need for black studies texts, and many too are hackwritten volumes carried along in a flood of higher-quality studies.

Many of the best, and most interesting, are reprints: books prepared years ago by black scholars that in their day got little critical acclaim and wound up being published privately for a limited black audience.

A classic study of racial prejudice The Philadelphia Negro based on years of careful re-

### MEETS WITH POPE

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI received Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, in a lengthy private audience. No details of the meeting were disclosed, but a Vatican spokesman did not deny that they discussed the problem of appointing resident Polish bishops to the territories which Poland acquired from Germany after World War II.

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search came out shortly after the turn of the century over the signature of W. E. B. DuBois, a black holder of a Harvard Ph.D.

It was published and promptly put aside.

Reissued a half-century later, it proved to be one of the most comprehensive studies of the causes and effects of racial prejudice ever published.

The book outlined the effect of geography on housing patterns, the reasons behind the collapse of Negro family life and the decreasing Negro prosperity that afflicted urban blacks after the Civil War.

DuBois also prepared chapters on community-police relations and the effects of their breakdown; on unemployment among minority groups; on educational prejudices and the vicious circle created by inferior schools.

He found evidence too that black prosperity—limited as it

was — created a white backlash that led to steps barring further black prosperity. He showed how black business initiative frequently became a signal of business opportunities. If blacks succeeded in a given field — catering is one enterprise studied in depth — whites soon moved in to force blacks out.

Similarly, black historian Kelly Miller's Radicals and Conservatives outlined patterns of racial prejudice in the nation's courts, schools and newspapers. It too was ignored when published.

Expect the present flood of books on Afro-American life and culture to continue for a while. The gap America's white culture left in the study of the nation's black minority will take a long time to fill.

And until it is filled, readers will have to pick and choose among books of varying quality.

But at least now, they can pick and choose.

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