

THE TAYLORS OF MILWAUKEE

By Marguerite Cartwright

CORNEFF R. TAYLOR

One of the foremost experts in the now highly professional and specialized science of inter-group relations is Corneff R. Taylor of Milwaukee.

An attractive man, with a quiet, scholarly manner, his very presence is the soundest argument for racial equality. His poise and obvious refinement point to the fact that segregation and racial discrimination is unjust and illogical, that people must be judged as individuals. In Milwaukee the story is told—though it may be apocryphal—a husband and wife were arguing over the acceptability of Negroes as neighbors. The husband said it would bring property values down, etc. etc. The wife insisted that she knew Negroes who'd be most desirable neighbors. Weary, the husband demanded, "Would you want our daughter to marry one?" The wife's reply was—"Yes, if he were like Corneff Taylor?"

Taylor's belief is in education and persuasion as a means of decreasing intolerance, rather than violence or other aggressive means. As the leader of one of the pioneer efforts in this field of human endeavor, employed by a large municipality, the preservation of law and order is appropriately of major importance to him.

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, to Sallie and Aaron Taylor, his mother died when he was only two years old. His father was an exceptionally able scholar who for nearly twenty years was librarian in the Supreme Court,—the only Negro in history to hold such a position.

Corneff was sent to Fisk with other upper-class young men of the time. Then he attended Northwestern University, where he took a graduate degree in social work. Later he did further graduate work at Loyola and the University of Chicago.

In great demand as consultant and guest speaker, he is well known throughout the country. He is the treasurer of NAIRO (National Association of Inter-Group Relations Officials) and also holds membership in the American Society for Public Administration, the NAACP, and the



Corneff Taylor, Mrs. Corneff Taylor and friends

Urban League. In all he has played an active role.

His wife is an attractive and able practicing C.P.A.—one of the very few Negro women in this line of work. When asked about his hobby, he said that is was going fishing, but when this question was followed by one asking what he enjoyed most, he said, "Going on fishing excursions with my wife." He says he also enjoys serious music, the legitimate theatre, and meeting interesting people. Judging from his hosts of friends, he appears to succeed in his desire.

Corneff Taylor has a deep sense of responsibility for making democracy "exist for all," as he believes that "human relations are the crucial issue in the question of world peace or world destruction."

His personal philosophy, clearly set forth in his most recent report: "In relations among people, cooperation rather than standardization must be the pattern. . . ." "Democracy demands that we provide for all "an opportunity for developing talent in each individual and group of individuals so they can grow to their fullest stature."

ELVERA TAYLOR

Milwaukee is a city of surprises. Three navigable rivers wind thru its urban and residential districts, leading into the very heart of the city and emptying into the bay cre-

ating what the guide-book writers call a "quiet charm." There is also its age—the first settlement dates from around 1673, which the Jesuit Farther Marquette founded while traveling north toward Montreal. Of interest, also, are its size, (population: 637,392, nearly 30,000 of them Negro), economy, and industry. The latter consists not solely of the brewing of beer (which is not even its largest industry), but it is a world center for the manufacture of heavy machinery.

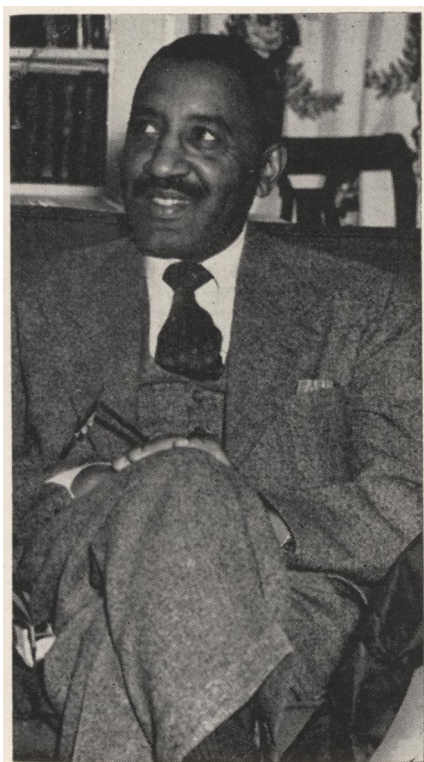
But the most interesting surprise of all is the people, including promising, gifted, Negro leaders,—who have in every sense,—"achieved."

Many of them have come from other places, like Elvera Taylor, inelegantly, but affectionately, called "Shorty" by her famous husband, Corneff Taylor, executive secretary of Milwaukee's Mayor's Commission on Human Rights.

Born in Augusta, Georgia, she was taken to Chicago when she was quite young, where she attended school. She has an older brother and sister, and her doting, seamstress mother's ambition was that they all should have careers. Most of the family's finance went into the medical training of her big brother Joe, now a physician in North Carolina. But when it came time for her to go on to higher education, she entered junior college and her brother stayed



Elvera Taylor



Corneff Taylor

out of school a year so that she might remain. She recalls "There I received my first business experience, as I made and sold artificial flowers to help pay for my education . . . I insisted that my brother, who was an excellent student, return to school, and we all worked to help keep him there. It was a very warm family relationship. When one had some money, we all had money. . . ."

Elvera Taylor, herself, went on to Loyola, and then to Northwestern, where she studied business administration, majoring in accounting. She

attended night classes for several semesters while during the day, working for the Theodore A. Jones Co., an accounting firm in Chicago with which she is still connected. The U. of Illinois awarded her the coveted C. P. A. certificate, and she is one of the two or three Negro women possessing such, in the entire U.S.

In Milwaukee she has her own office, and her clients are both white and Negro. She has not felt race to be a handicap. "As a matter of fact, I think that being a woman in business is more of a barrier," she says.

Negroes Believe

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segregation, state and city fair employment practice laws and commissions on race relations have brought about breaches in the wall of opposition to equality under law. There are many indications that there is a rapidly growing public opinion in favor of civil rights for the Negro as well as for the white man, in spite of recent delays of action by the Congress of the United States. These changes may contribute only in indirect ways to the Negro's belief in himself and to the belief of others in him. Our programs of human relations are making progress, but they must be more than the probing of prejudice, for as one author says, "*feelings are facts.*"

Pride of self and of one's people has been the touch-stone of advancement and success for nations and people throughout all history. From the ancient periods to the present day, this has been the background of the story of the development of peoples. The father of history, Herodotus, stated in his famous history that he was writing this study, "In order that the great and wonderful deeds of the Greeks may not be deprived of renown and the reasons why the Greeks made war on the Barbarians." Distinctions were made between the Greeks and the Barbarians and Greeks were proud of themselves by the very distinction itself. The Jewish historian, Josephus, states that he wrote his *History of the Jews* because "Others perverted the truth of those actions in their

writings." Classical teachers and historians could never forget the contrast between themselves and others and, as the ages passed, the same developments were continued. As the sense of nationality developed in one people after another, this background was kept alive. Baron Von Stein, the German historian, declared that he was writing German history "To keep alive a love for our common country and for memoirs of our great ancestors." Lavisse, the French historian, stated that he was writing, "To give a conception of himself as a Frenchman and as a man" to his readers. The result is that history's touch-stone has been used to build pride in peoples.

As the years have passed this touch-stone was obviously exaggerated. False traditions, false pride and the concept of a chosen people and the salt-of-the-earth people have arisen and have prevented the rise of brotherhood and equality among men. Through two World Wars we have seen the development of these concepts. This fact is analyzed more fully by the constitution of UNESCO which states "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed; that ignorance of each others ways and lives have been a common cause throughout the history of mankind of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have too often broken into war."

In a world of people who differ or are different in appearance and in background, peoples who are brought closer by industrialization, urbanization, scientific techniques, mass production and economic organizations, and are yet far apart due to ignorance of each others ways and of each others selves, the basis is laid for misunderstanding, suspicion, hatred and continued separation. With the approach of integration in the schools and in other areas of life there are some persons who are questioning the desirability of the continuation of the study of Negro life and history. They would study the improvement of human relations without such factual historical study. These persons tend to