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Being married to a Negro is--just different

Eva Hodges

Citizens' Councils of America

MISS- CITIZENS COUNCILS

'Being married to a Negro is...

"BEING married to a Negro is . . . just different."

The pretty Denver housewife who groped gingerly to express her thoughts, might have said something similar if she had been married to a Frenchman or a Brazilian.

But honey-haired Mary Louise, 27, is married to a slim Negro transportation worker, aged 36, who is as dark as she is fair.

Mary Louise was born and reared in a small town in Missouri where prejudice—all kinds of prejudice—was as native as the southern drawl.

Jim grew up in Lawrence, Kan., where, he recalls, he attended integrated schools.

They met and fell in love in Kansas City, Mo., where mixed marriages are unlawful. In fact, to discourage any such "hanky panky," the police of the area were apt to pick up any white-colored couple which appeared to be courting.

WHEN THEY decided to marry, they moved to Denver. ("Denver's good — California's better," they agreed.)

The couple sat in the attractive living room of their East Denver home and considered 4½ years of marriage.

On the rug their son, Jim Jr., 3, knelt, absorbed in plaiting wriggly figures out of pipe cleaners.

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I just told them that was what I was going to do.

"Actually, mother is reconciled to it now. I took the baby back to visit, and she loves him dearly. She calls us—Jim talks to her on the telephone—and we hope that sometime she'll come to visit us."

"I tell her that our door is always open to her," Jim said.

Jim and Mary Louise were working in the psychiatric department of the hospital when they met.

"We seemed to get along," Jim said. "We had a lot of fun on the job."

Jim liked her so well that one afternoon he asked her for a date.

"I agreed to go out for cocktails," Mary Louise recalled.

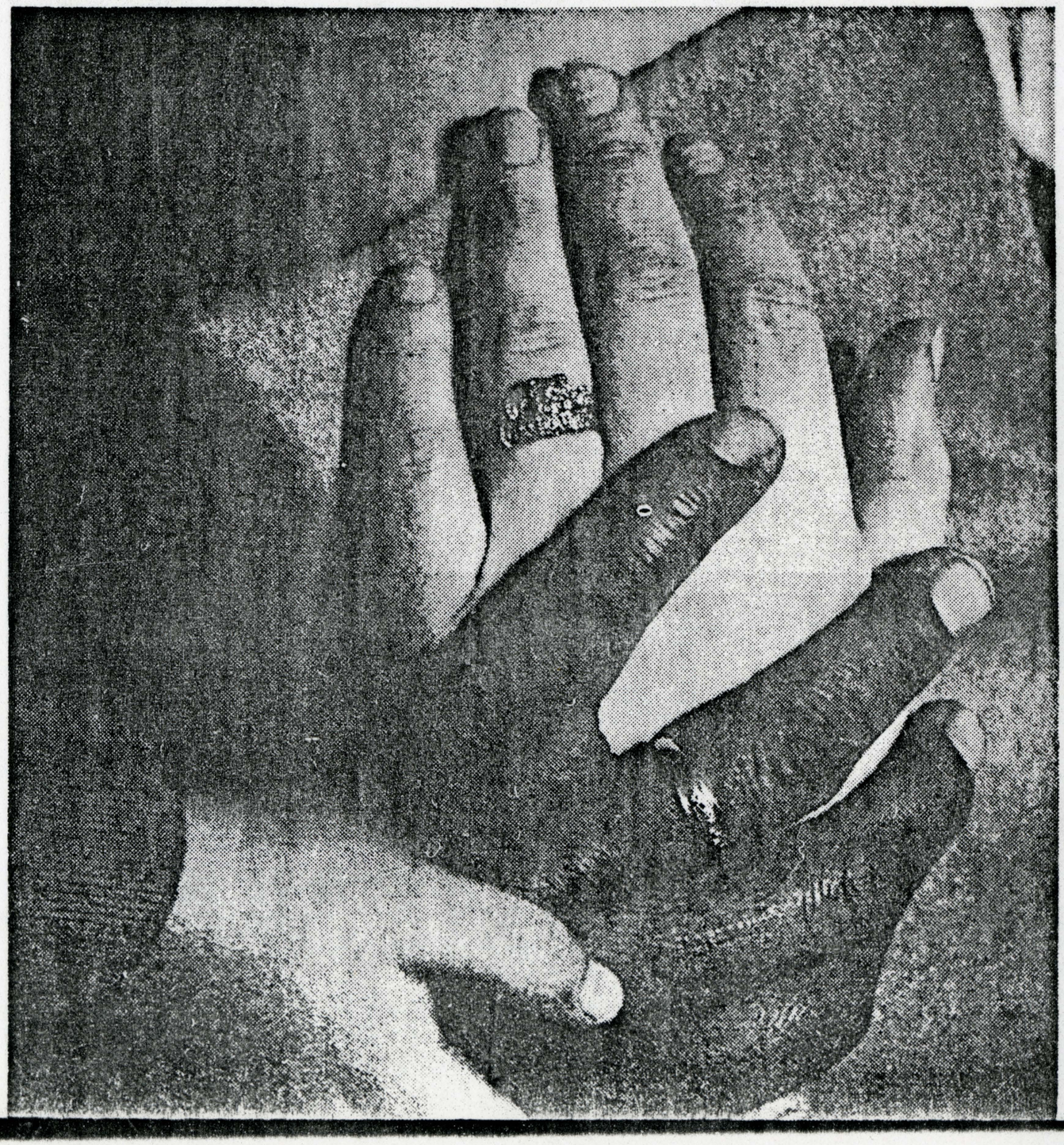
"Then you changed your mind," Jim added.

"Did I?"

"Then you changed it again," he reminded her.

THAT WAS 1956. Soon they were seeing each other once a week, then oftener. They went to movies, an occasional nightclub, to friends' houses.

"She'd always drive her car, and I'd drive mine. Then we'd meet somewhere," Jim said. "We were especially careful about it if we were crossing the Kansas border (to visit Jim's parents), because it would have been very easy to pick me up on a trumped-up white slave charge."



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"Whenever friends ask us about our marriage, we try to take the time to answer," he said. "We feel we have a job of education to do."

What was the reaction of their parents to their marriage?

Jim's parents welcomed Mary Louise warmly the first time he took her to Lawrence to meet them. It's always been that way.

Mary Louise paused. "My parents have never recognized my marriage," she said.

"There were no Negroes at all in Liberal, Mo., where I grew up," she continued.

"But I remember that my father—after all, he was a southern Missourian—had a lot of prejudices. And not just against Negroes.

"When I went to Pittsburg, Kan., to take my nurses' training—it was a town with a large Italian population — he was afraid I'd marry an Italian."

MARY LOUISE completed her training without losing her heart to a "foreigner." Then she met Jim in the fall of 1956 at the Veterans' Hospital in Kansas City, where they were both employed.

"It was kind of rough," she recalls, telling her parents she was going to marry Jim. "But he reminded her.

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By the summer of 1957 they knew they wanted to be married.

"In a marriage like ours it has to be out-and-out love," Jim said. "It can't be an infatuation or a plaything."

He came to Denver that August to look for a job. Mary Louise joined him here a few days later on her vacation.

"I'd wanted to come to Denver to live since I first visited it in the '40s," Jim said "Then I did feel we'd have a better outlook here. Friends I talked to here thought so too."

THREE MONTHS later, in November, the Rev. Walter Lang, former pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, married them.

No more separate drives to a rendezvous or holding hands in dark corners. Mr. and Mrs. Jim Andrews took an apartment. They remember their first landlords—white—as being "awfully nice," and still count them among their friends.

"Actually, for a man, I don't think it makes so much difference," Mary Louise said. "I mean, being married to someone of another race."

"Well," Jim explained, "I knew all the time I was a Negro. But a lot of this I had to teach her."

All newly married couples must make adjustments, and the Andrews were no exception.

At first Mary Louise felt self-conscious in a crowd in which she was the only white person.

"There are a lot of slang words we use," Jim said. "I'd explain them to her, because I didn't want her feeling left out."

"Now color means nothing to me," Mary Louise shrugged. She is in her second year as president of her Negro women's social club. (The women meet twice a month for bridge and hold one major social event each year.)

MARY LOUISE had always loved to go to the movies "every time they changed."

She found that her new husband was wary of attending downtown theaters with his attractive blonde wife.

"In Kansas City our activities were restricted," Mary Louise explained. "He couldn't get used to the idea that there weren't any restrictions here."

Or were there?

"We could go to the big clubs downtown," Jim agreed. "And they might serve us because they legally have to. But that doesn't alter the fact that they don't want to.

"It's just a feeling that's born into you . . ."

Jim learned something, too, from a chapter basic to all brides: Bringing Up Husbands.

"I used to spend money as it came along," he remembered. "She got after me about it. I've got real conscious about saving."

(Jim Jr. is learning thrift, also. He has untold pennies and nickels in his piggy bank, and $40 in his own bank account.)

"THINGS SHE doesn't particularly care for, I don't do," Jim continued.

"I used to have a drink with the boys after work because I enjoyed it. She didn't like it so now I don't."

"He did something nice, I don't know how many husbands would do," Mary Louise said.

"When the baby was a few months old, I went back to work part-time. Jim cared for the baby all day. He did an excellent job, and he cleaned house and did the washing too."

Jim had grown up as a Baptist, but he "got out of the habit of going to church" because he worked Sundays.

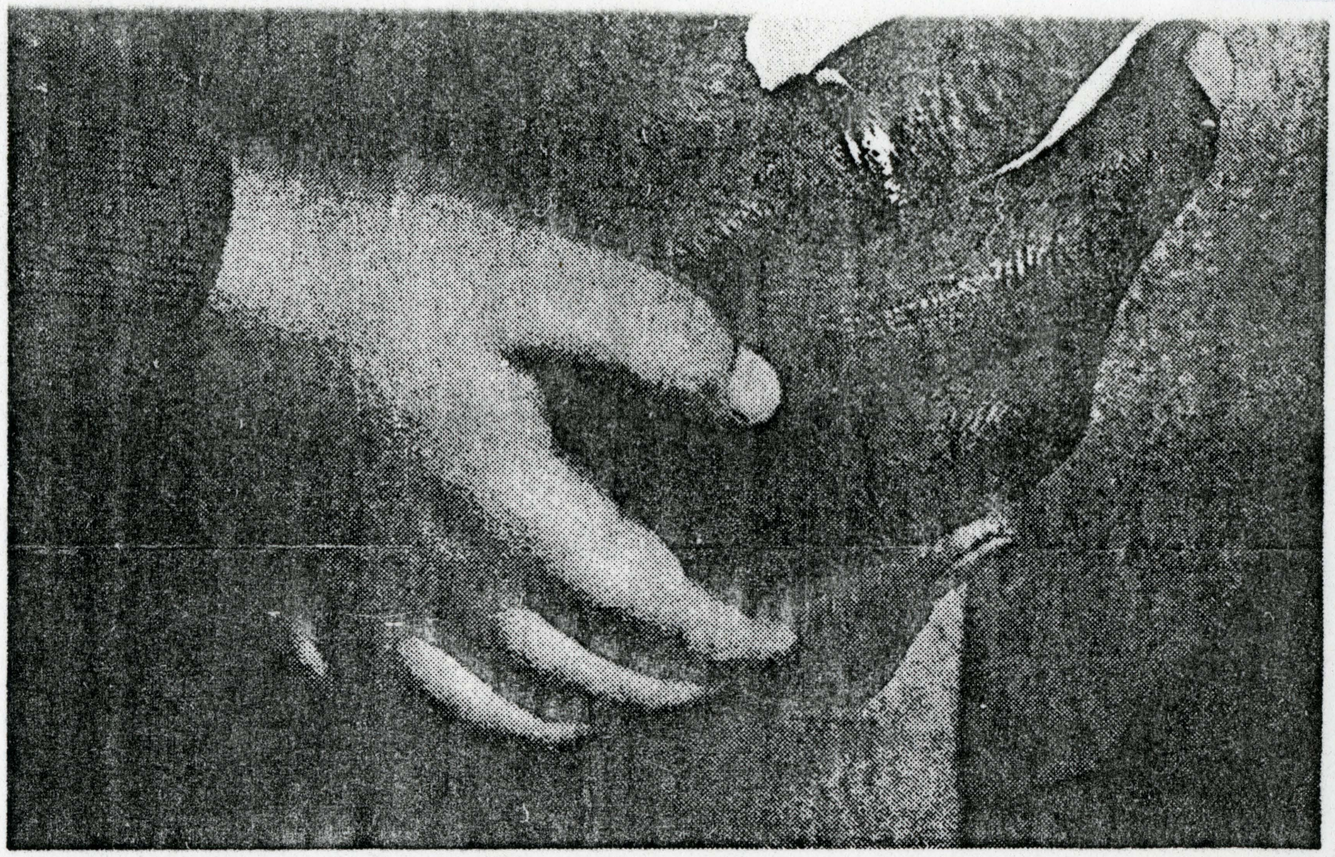

Photo by DAVID MATHIAS

Jim and Mary Louise Andrews and their son live in a world neither black nor white.

Denver Post, Colorado

(OVER)

BRAINWASHING

The diabolical propaganda campaign to seduce Americans into accepting racial amalgamation is now well under way.

Here from the "liberal" Colorado Post is an illustration. Note the thinly veiled attempt to make racial suicide seem appealing or at least not too painful.

Since it is impossible to eliminate the sources, we must teach our young people to recognize such trash as false propaganda.

just different'

By EVA HODGES

Pastor Lang, who married the couple, "rode herd on me till he got me into the (Lutheran) church," he said. "I'm a member of the Laymen's League now."

"We've both worked very hard at our marriage," Mary Louise said. "When we have a problem, we sit down and discuss it. I don't have my mother to run to . . ."

THEY BELIEVE their marriage—like other mixed marriages they know—is an especially healthy one.

"We found out very early in our marriage what a home is for," Mary Louise said. "Some couples don't learn to appreciate that for several years."

When the Andrews decided to buy a house in East Denver, the real estate dealer sold them one they liked in preference to two other clients—one a white, one a Negro couple.

(The neighborhood, once predominantly white, is now mixed.)

The "new" house was run down, the back yard a junk heap. (The previous tenants were white, "but you don't need to say that," Mary Louise cautioned.)

They busied themselves with paint and brushes. Jim built a carport, cleared away the trash, curbed the driveway and planted shrubbery. Mary Louise dug dandelions and created flower beds.

"When it gets too cold to work in the yard, we wash and paint inside," Jim said.

THEY DO THESE things because they enjoy their home. But the Andrews are also conscious of their unique position.

"We always try to appear in public neatly dressed," Mary Louise said. "Even though the people we see may not know us, we do want them to have a good opinion of us. It's all too easy for people to use the term 'white trash'."

"We go shopping together — for groceries, furniture, appliances," Jim said. "We're never shunned or walked over. People are just real nice to us."

Their friends are both Negro and white. Most of their entertainment is home-centered, and they enjoy it that way.

By looking ahead for pitfalls, the Andrews believe they have been able to avoid some of the minor unpleasantness friends of similar mixed marriages have encountered.

They learned that "you don't throw your marriage in people's faces"—particularly if the people are employers.

They agreed, apologetically, that it would be better not to use their real names in telling this story.

"Some guy might get to drinking in a bar, and decide to get sore about it . . ." Jim suggested.

THE ANDREWS believe they have something of particular value to pass on to their child.

"In a mixed marriage like ours, you get to know the whole people," Mary Louise said. "Not just your people and their ideas and way of life; you learn about the whole America."

And what about the future of golden-skinned Jim Jr.?

"All back in history, there were races and nationalities people looked down on," Jim Sr. points out. "During World War II, a lot of soldiers married foreigners. Their children are accepted.

"And while it may take longer, I think this type of child" —he nodded at his son—"will be accepted too.

"He's not aware of his color yet," Jim Sr. added.

The father looked at the little boy playing on the rug, and his eyes softened as he contemplated the small miracle of absorbed innocence.

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OVER the years—since the introduction of slavery in colonial days—some 40 states have declared interracial marriages illegal, and these laws are still in effect in 22 states.

All of the laws forbid the marriage of Caucasians to Negroes, and some bar also the marriage of whites to members of other races, described variously as American Indian, Cherokee, Chinese, Ethiopian, Hindu, Japanese, Malayan, Mongolian, half-breed and brown race.

Colorado is among the six states which have repealed such laws in the last decade.

ALTHOUGH MANY persons consider interracial marriage immoral, even un-Christian, no major denomination specifically bars the sacrament of marriage to communicants of different race or color.

In recent years the churches have recognized that as they lower barriers to mixed worship, they cannot deny the sacrament of marriage to racially mixed couples.

The growing willingness of church leaders to assert the acceptability of interracial marriage was evident in the responses of Presbyterian clergymen and lay leaders to a question posed not long ago by a church publication:

"Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro (or a white man, if the respondent were colored)?"

Although nearly all the respondents recognized the acute difficulties, nearly all said they would accept a son-in-law or daughter-in-law of the other race.

A LAY CHURCH worker in Nashville gave a typical answer: "My own faith, which calls for seeing all men first as children of God . . . would help me over any final reservation that I might have against my daughter's marriage."

The most emotionally charged aspect of the race issue today is racial amalgamation.

In the past it was widely held that the offspring of racially mixed parents were biologically inferior. A Georgia court reflected this view when it said in 1869: "The amalgamation of the races is not only unnatural but . . . offspring of these unnatural connections are generally sickly and effeminate, and they are inferior in physical development and strength to the blood of either race."

Helen B. Shaffer, in her book, "Mixed Marriages," asserts that modern scientific findings show the Georgia court view to be false and indicate that there may be some biological advantages in mingling of races.

There has already been a great deal of race mixing, chiefly as the result of matings between Negro women and their white masters during the slavery period, she asserts.

Robert E. T. Roberts, in a study entitled "Stratification and Intermarriage in Multi-Racial Societies," said geneticists now estimate that one-fourth of the genes of American Negroes are of white origin.

He said a study of Negro-white couples five years ago disclosed that all of their offspring had very light skins, even when one of their parents was very dark.

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