white families rose to $6,191 or 63 percent of whites. While the incomes of black families jumped 91 percent during this period, white family incomes increased by 68 percent.

This improvement was accompanied by a marked erosion of poverty among blacks between 1960 and 1969. In 1960 there were 11.5 million non-whites in poverty, according to the government's definition of the poverty-line—representing 56 percent of the black population. The number of impoverished blacks dropped to 7.5 million in 1969, or 31 percent of the non-white population.

For the most part the rise of middle-income status has been largely concentrated among young blacks who have been the primary beneficiaries of rising educational opportunities and occupational upgrading. In 1972 the average income of black families with male heads between the ages of 25 and 34 was 80 percent of white families in the comparable age group. But the 35 to 44-year-age-group earned 71 percent of white counterparts and 55 to 64 year olds earned only 58 percent.

The increasing number of multi-worker families has also contributed significantly to the rising affluence of many black families, especially in the northern and western states where income levels are the highest. For northern black families, whose head was under 35 years of age and where both husband and wife worked, average family income in 1972 was slightly greater than the average for similar white familes.

In 1972, 47 percent of non-white families in the western states had incomes of $10,000 or more, 43 percent in the north central states and 39 percent in the northeast compared to 24 percent in the south.

The national economy's troubles since 1969 have had a greater adverse effect on black Americans than on the population as a whole. Between 1969 and 1973, the general level of unemployment rose from 3.5 percent of the labor force to 4.9 percent. Among blacks, the jobless rate jumped from 6.4 percent to 8.9 percent.

While black income gains greatly outpaced those of whites during the 1960's, black families' median income from 1969 to 1973 crept upward at an annual rate of only 4.7 percent compared to 5.6 percent for whites.

Since 1969 poverty among blacks has begun to increase, again, inching up from 7.5 million to 8.3 million in 1972.

There are sectors of the black population that were by-passed during the 1960's. Despite the sharp drop in the number of blacks below the government-defined poverty-line from 1960 to 1969, this progress did not perceptibly affect the condition of black families, headed by women. In 1960, when poverty among blacks was widespread, about one-third of all poor black families were headed by women. By 1972, this proportion grew to two-thirds.

The status of black teenagers has remained unimproved. The unemployment rate of black youths—who make up 9 percent of the black labor force—persists at an incredible 30.2 percent. There are also many older black workers who have been left underemployed, in low-income, frequently part time, dead-end jobs. While the educational boom has proven to be a significant factor in raising the social and economic status of younger blacks, many black workers are of an older generation, mostly with little education and training.

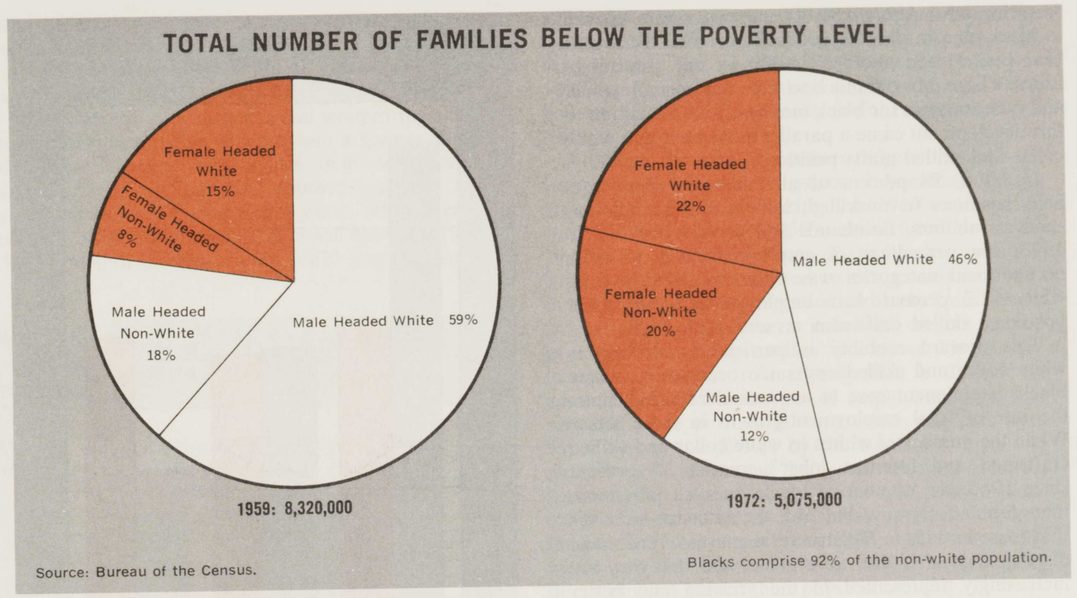
The overall statistics demonstrate that blacks make their greatest gains in employment during periods of rapid economic expansion. But they do not reveal the drastically different experiences of various groups within the black labor force. The tremendous improvement in the employment picture between 1960 and 1969 is due essentially to the impressive advancement of black adult men. Employment among blacks in this group rose at twice the rate of their total labor force growth. For white male adults employment rose more slowly, while their labor force growth rate was the same as blacks. Consequently, the unemployment rate for black male adults dropped from 9.6 percent in 1960—a rate 2.3 times that of whites—to 3.7 percent in 1969, a rate 1.9 times their white counterparts.

These encouraging developments were reversed in 1970-72, when unemployment rose at the same pace for blacks and whites. Recovery for blacks lagged far behind in the 1972-73 economic upswing. Despite this setback it remains clear that male blacks, 20 years and older, made impressive gains in employment over the past decade both in absolute numbers and in relation to whites.

Only 50 percent of the black labor force however, consisted of adult males in 1973. The remaining half were adult women (41 percent) and teenagers (9 percent). The statistics for these groups reveals much of the black employment problem.

During the 1960-69 period, the number of employed black adult women rose 28.5 percent (a rate of 2.8 percent annually), while their numbers in the labor force rose 25 percent (2.5 percent annually). These rates of change produced significant results in absolute terms, lowering the jobless rate for black women from 8.3 percent to 5.8 percent. But with their high rate of entrance into the labor market the unemployment situation among adult black women, as a group, has not improved at the same rate as black men.

The availability of jobs during the economic expansion of the 1960s lured many women into the labor force who ordinarily did not work or were previously discouraged by the lack of opportunity. As educational levels rose and the number of family dependents declined, more and more black women became interested in working careers. By the mid-1960's, changing social attitudes helped swell the number of women job-seekers. Despite the fact that black women were being employed at a much faster rate than males — black or white — their jobless rate



never went below 5.8 percent. The rapid entrance of inexperienced, unskilled black women workers into the labor market continued to make them most vunerable to layoffs during economic slowdowns.

Unemployment among teenagers 16-19 has remained at disasterously high levels for the past 13 years. Among teenage whites, the unemployment index has ranged from 13.4 percent in 1960 to a low of 10.7 percent in 1969, and back to 12.6 percent in 1973. During this period, the unemployment situation among white teenagers was aggravated by a rising labor force participation rate which helped swell the civilian labor force by 77 percent since 1960. For the most part, however, the labor market has been able to absorb white teenagers at a comparable rate and their unemployment level remained at a relatively constant rate in the past several years.

For black teenagers, despite the promising rise in the number of years spent in school and corresponding decline in labor force participation, unemployment skyrocketed from 24.4 percent in 1960 to a high of 33.5 percent in 1972 and back to 30.2 percent in 1973. Even during the years of rapid economic expansion, a large number of black youths remained unemployed. When unemployment for the total labor force dropped to 3.5 percent in 1969, black teenagers were 24 percent unemployed—the same as in 1960. The situation was even worse for black teenage women with an unemployment rate of 38.5 percent in 1972.

The relatively high jobless rates of black youths reflects the general economic problem of many urban blacks. The jobs traditionally available to black teenagers in urban centers have been of a casual nature in services and retail trade activities. Over the past several years, however, retail centers have migrated outward to middle class suburbs. Along with the mushrooming shopping malls and plazas have grown the hotels and restaurants attracted by the increasing affluence of suburban families. While white teenagers are being employed in the suburbs at increasing rates, blacks are left stranded in central cities faced with an eroding number of low-skilled, part-time jobs.

The jobless rate of teenagers exaggerates the critical nature of teenage economic welfare to the extent that they are usually not primary family breadwinners. Indeed, about a third of all unemployed black teens are students who are able and willing to accept only part-time work. But even after the number of part-time job seekers are excluded, the unemployment rate of teenage blacks in 1973 was 19.5 percent. Add these numbers to those young blacks who have dropped out of the labor force in discouragement, and the unemployment situation among young blacks 16 to 19 years of age looms as a serious threat to stability in the black community.

In the early months of 1961 there was a general rise in sales and production from the bottom of the 1960-61 recession. As companies boosted their working hours toward full workweeks, those on layoffs were the first to be recalled; those with work-experience were the first to be hired. For blacks this meant that initial employment would be highly concentrated among skilled workers with previous working experience.

When general economic activity began to pick up steam—given impetus by the tax cut of 1964 and the accelerated Vietnam military expenditures after 1965—new jobs opened up in manufacturing industries, construction and related activities. Not surprisingly, the largest job gains among black men between 1963 and 1970 were in semi-skilled durable goods manu-