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4240749970

K1-929

ALL OUR KIN

Carol Stack

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*Dedicated with respect and admiration to my
parents, Ruth and Isadore Berman, to my friend
"Ruby Banks," and to the other people of The
Flats*

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The table on pp. 102, 103, appears in the author's essay, "The Kindred of Viola Jackson: Residence and Family Organization of an Urban Black American Family," pp. 303-312, in *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by N. E. Whitten and John F. Szwed, copyright © 1970, used with the permission of The Free Press, a division of Macmillan and Company.

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Designed by Janice Stern

First HARPER PAPERBACK published in 1975. Reissued by Basic Books, 1997.

ISBN: 0-06-131982-1

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work define that individual's personal kindred. The personal kindreds described in Chapter 4 are ego-centered networks. Even the personal kindreds of half siblings differ slightly, each half sibling shares some kin, but relates uniquely to others. Personal kindreds are not a category from which individuals are recruited, but a selection of individuals mobilized for specific ends (Goodenough 1970; Keesing 1966).

In the process of exchange, people become immersed in a domestic web of a large number of kinfolk who can be called upon for help and who can bring others into the network. Domestic networks comprise the network of cooperating kinsmen activated from participants' overlapping personal kindreds. Domestic networks are not ego-centered; several participants in the network can recruit kin and friends to participate in domestic exchanges. Similar to personal kindreds, domestic networks are a selection of individuals mobilized for specific ends and they can be mobilized for extended periods of time.

Many descriptions of black American domestic life by both Blacks and Whites (Frazier 1939; Drake and Cayton 1945; Abrahams 1963; Moynihan 1965; Rainwater 1966) have overlooked the interdependence and cooperation of kinsmen in black communities. The underlying assumptions of these studies seem to imply that female-headed households and illegitimacy are symptomatic of broken homes and family disorganization. These studies fail to account for the great variety of domestic strategies in urban black communities. Whitten and Wolfe (1972, p. 41) suggest that one of the advantages of network analysis is that the researcher can avoid mere categorizing of social systems as "disorganized." The network model can explain a particular web of social relations from several points of view. Throughout this study a network perspective is used to interpret the basis of interpersonal links between those individuals mobilized to solve daily domestic problems.

PERSONAL KINDREDS

"All Our Kin"

Billy, a young black woman in The Flats, was raised by her mother and her mother's "old man." She has three children of her own by different fathers. Billy says, "Most people kin to me are in this neighborhood, right here in The Flats, but I got people in the South, in Chicago, and in Ohio too. I couldn't tell most of their names and most of them aren't really kinfolk to me. Starting down the street from here, take my father, he ain't my daddy, he's no father to me.¹ I ain't got but one daddy and that's Jason. The one who raised me. My kids' daddies, that's something else, all their daddies' people really take to them—they always doing things and making a fuss about them. We help each other out and that's what kinfolks are all about."

Throughout the world, individuals distinguish kin from non-kin. Moreover, kin terms are frequently extended to non-kin, and social relations among non-kin may be conducted within the idiom of kinship. Individuals acquire socially recognized kinship relations with others through a chain of socially recognized parent-child connections (Goodenough 1970). The chain of parent-child connections is essential to the structuring of kin groups.

Although anthropologists have long recognized the distinction between natural and social parenthood (Malinowski 1930; Radcliffe-Brown 1950; Goodenough 1970; Carroll 1970), until recently most ethnographic data has not clarified those

social transactions involving parental rights. This omission has led to the persistent belief that each person is a kinsman of his natural mother and father, who are expected as parents to raise him (Scheffler 1970). Much of the controversial and misleading characterizations of kinship and domestic life can be attributed to this assumption and to the lack of ethnographic data that interprets the meaning people give to the chain of parent-child connections within a particular folk culture.

At birth a child in any society acquires socially recognized kinship relations with others. Who is socially recognized as kin depends largely upon the cultural interpretation of the chain of parent-child connections. Young black children in The Flats are born into personal networks that include some "essential kin,"² those people who actively accept responsibility toward them, and some "relatives" who do not actively create reciprocal obligations.

My experience in The Flats suggests that the folk system of parental rights and duties determines who is eligible to be a member of the personal kinship network of a newborn child. This system of rights and duties should not be confused with the official, written statutory law of the state. The local, folk system of rights and duties pertaining to parenthood are enforced only by sanctions within the community. Community members clearly operate within two different systems: the folk system and the legal system of the courts and welfare offices.³

MOTHERHOOD

Men and women in The Flats regard child-begetting and childbearing as a natural and highly desirable phenomenon. Lottie James was fifteen when she became pregnant. The baby's father, Herman, the socially recognized genitor, was a neighbor and the father of two other children. Lottie talked with her

mother during her second month of pregnancy. She said, "Herman went and told my mama I was pregnant. She was in the kitchen cooking. I told him not to tell nobody, I wanted to keep it a secret, but he told me times will tell. My mama said to me, 'I had you and you should have your child. I didn't get rid of you. I loved you and I took care of you until you got to the age to have this one. Have your baby no matter what, there's nothing wrong with having a baby. Be proud of it like I was proud of you.' My mama didn't tear me down; she was about the best mother a person ever had."

Unlike many other societies, black women in The Flats feel few if any restrictions about childbearing. Unmarried black women, young and old, are eligible to bear children, and frequently women bearing their first children are quite young.

A girl who gives birth as a teen-ager frequently does not raise and nurture her firstborn child. While she may share the same room and household with her baby, her mother, her mother's sister, or her older sister will care for the child and become the child's "mama." This same young woman may actively become a "mama" to a second child she gives birth to a year or two later. When, for example, a grandmother, aunt, or great-aunt "takes a child" from his natural mother, acquired parenthood often lasts throughout the child's lifetime. Although a child kept by a close female relative knows who his mother is, his "mama" is the woman who "raised him up." Young mothers and their firstborn daughters are often raised as sisters, and lasting ties are established between these mothers and their daughters. A child being raised by his grandmother may later become playmates with his half siblings who are his age, but he does not share the same claims and duties and affective ties toward his natural mother.

A young mother is not necessarily considered emotionally ready to nurture a child; for example, a grandmother and

other close relatives of Clover Greer, Viola Jackson's neighbor, decided that Clover was not carrying out her parental duties. Nineteen when her first child, Christine, was born, Clover explains, "I really was wild in those days, out on the town all hours of the night, and every night and weekend I layed my girl on my mother. I wasn't living home at the time, but Mama kept Christine most of the time. One day Mama up and said I was making a fool of her, and she was going to take my child and raise her right. She said I was immature and that I had no business being a mother the way I was acting. All my mama's people agreed, and there was nothing I could do. So Mama took my child. Christine is six years old now. About a year ago I got married to Gus and we wanted to take Christine back. My baby, Earl, was living with us anyway. Mama blew up and told everyone how I was doing her. She dragged my name in the mud and people talked so much it really hurt." Gossip and pressure from close kin and friends made it possible for the grandmother to exercise her grandparental right to take the child into her home and raise her there.

In the eyes of the community, a young mother who does not perform her duties has not validated her claim to parenthood. The person who actively becomes the "mama" acquires the major cluster of parental rights accorded to the mothers in The Flats. In effect, a young mother transfers some of her claims to motherhood without surrendering all of her rights to the child.

Nothing in the conception of parenthood among people in The Flats prevents kinsmen of a child's socially recognized parents from having claims to parenthood (Goodenough 1970, p. 17). Kinsmen anticipate the help they may have to give to young mothers and the parental responsibilities they may have to assume toward the children of kinsmen. The bond between mothers and children is exceedingly strong, and the majority of mothers in The Flats raise their own children. Statistical

data on residence patterns and kin relationships of 1,000 AFDC children in Jackson County was gathered from AFDC case histories (see Appendix B). Of the 188 AFDC mothers surveyed, 30 percent were raising their own children, 5 percent were raising younger siblings, and 7 percent were raising their grandchildren, nieces, or nephews.

Just how a "mama" provides a child with concerned relatives can best be viewed in terms of Fischer's (1958) notion of sponsorship.⁴ Fischer, in his discussion of residence, calls attention to the question of who is an individual's immediate sponsor in a residence group. This term refers to the sponsorship of individuals rather than of couples, a flexible means of providing information on residence over an individual's lifetime. The term can also be applied to the creation of personal kinship networks for the newborn child. Determining who becomes one of the immediate sponsors of a child's network clarifies its initial formation, the kinship links that are effective, and the shape of the network.

In The Flats the recognized mother, the "mama" (80 percent are the natural mothers), determines the child's kinship affiliations through females. She is one of the immediate sponsors of a child's personal kinship network. A black child's "mama's" relatives and their husbands and wives are eligible to be members of the child's personal kinship network. How the relationship between a child's natural mother and his or her socially recognized genitor determines a child's kin affiliations through males is described below. When a child is raised by close female relatives of his mother in a more-or-less stable situation, the immediate sponsor of the child's personal network is the "mama." This reckoning of relatives through the immediate sponsor is especially useful when a child's residence changes during his lifetime. Even if a child is raised by a person who is not a blood relative (described below), he usually becomes a part of the network of his "mama."

FATHERHOOD

People in The Flats expect to change friends frequently through a series of encounters. Demands on friendships are great, but social-economic pressures on male-female relationships are even greater. Therefore, relationships between young, unmarried, childbearing adults are highly unstable. Some men and childbearing women in The Flats establish long-term liaisons with one another, some maintain sexual unions with more than one person at a time, and still others get married. However, very few women in The Flats are married before they have given birth to one or more children. When a man and woman have a sexual partnership, especially if the woman has no other on-going sexual relationships, the man is identified with children born to the woman. Short-term sexual partnerships are recognized by the community even if a man and woman do not share a household and domestic responsibilities. The offspring of these unions are publicly accepted by the community; a child's existence seems to legitimize the child in the eyes of the community.

But the fact of birth does not provide a child with a chain of socially recognized relatives through his father. Even though the community accepts the child, the culturally significant issue in terms of the economics of everyday life is whether any man involved in a sexual relationship with a woman provides a newborn child with kinship affiliations. A child is eligible to participate in the personal kinship network of his father if the father becomes an immediate sponsor of a child's kinship network.

When an unmarried woman in The Flats becomes pregnant or gives birth to a child, she often tells her friends and kin who the father is. The man has a number of alternatives open to him. Sometimes he publicly denies paternity by implying

to his friends and kin that the father could be any number of other men, and that he had "information that she is no good and has been creeping on him all along." The community generally accepts the man's denial of paternity. It is doubtful that under these conditions this man and his kin would assume any parental duties anyway. The man's failure to assent to being the father leaves the child without recognized kinship ties through a male. Subsequent "boyfriends" of the mother may assume the paternal duties of discipline and support and receive the child's affection, but all paternal rights in the child belong to the mother and her kinsmen. The pattern whereby black children derive all their kin through females has been stereotyped and exaggerated in the literature on black families. In fact, fathers in The Flats openly recognized 484 (69 percent) of 700 children included in my AFDC survey.

The second alternative open to a man involved in a sexual relationship with a mother is to acknowledge openly that he is responsible. The father can acknowledge the child by saying "he own it," by telling his people and his friends that he is the father, by paying part of the hospital bill, or by bringing milk and diapers to the mother after the birth of the child. The parents may not have ever shared a household and the affective and sexual relationship between them may have ended before the birth of the child.

The more a father and his kin help a mother and her child, the more completely they validate their parental rights. However, since many black American males have little or no access to steady and productive employment, they are rarely able to support and maintain their families. This has made it practically impossible for most poor black males to assume financial duties as parents. People in The Flats believe a father should help his child, but they know that a mother cannot count on his help. But, the community expects a father's kin to help out. The black male who does not actively become a "daddy," but

acknowledges a child and offers his kin to that child, in effect, is validating his rights. Often it is the father's kin who activate the claim to rights in the child.

Fatherhood, then, belongs to the presumed genitor if he, or others for him, choose to validate his claim. Kinship through males is reckoned through a chain of social recognition. If the father fails to do anything beyond merely acknowledging the child, he surrenders most of his rights, and this claim can be shared or transferred to the father's kin, whose claim becomes strengthened if they actively participate as essential kin. By failing to perform parental duties the father retains practically no rights in his child, although his kin retain rights if they assume active responsibility.

By validating his claim as a parent the father offers the child his blood relatives and their husbands and wives as the child's kin—an inheritance so to speak. As long as the father acknowledges his parental entitlement, his relatives, especially his mother and sisters, consider themselves kin to the child and therefore responsible for him. Even when the mother "takes up with another man," her child retains the original set of kin gained through the father who sponsored him.

A nonparticipating father also shares some of his rights and duties with his child's mother's current boyfriend or husband. When a man and woman have a continuing sexual relationship, even if the man is not the father of any of the woman's children, he is expected by the mother and the community to share some of the parental duties of discipline, support, and affection.

A child's father's kin play an active role in the nurturing of children, and as a result they have the right to observe and judge whether a woman is performing her duties as a mother. If a young woman is unable to care for her child, nothing prevents a father's close female relatives from claiming parental rights. When 188 AFDC mothers listed in order of rank who

they would expect to raise each of their children (total of 1,000 children) if they died, one-third of the women listed their own mother as their first choice and one-third listed either their child's father or the father's mother as the first choice. The remaining one-third (second through fifth choice) were close kin to the mother (her mother's sister, her own sister or brother, and her daughter). In crisis situations, such as a mother's death or sickness, a child's kin through his mother and father are equally eligible to assume responsibilities of jural parenthood.

The chain of sponsored parent-child connections determines the personal kindreds of children. Participants in active units of domestic cooperation are drawn from personal kinship networks. How a particular individual, say a mother, works to create the active networks which she depends upon for the needs of her children, depends largely on sponsorship or parental links. Commonly, the mother's personal domestic network includes the personal networks of her children, who are half siblings with different fathers. Each child will grow up into a slightly different personal network from his brothers and sisters. Mothers expect little from the father; they just hope that he will help out. But they do expect something from his kin, especially his mother and sisters. Mothers continually activate these kin lines, and since the biological father's female relatives are usually poor, they too try to expand their network. The exchanges and daily dependencies get very complicated, but they constitute the main activity of daily life for these women.

Daily life is also complicated as individuals expand their own personal networks, in part by recruiting friends into their own domestic networks. When friends live up to one another's expectations, they are identified as kin. Friends often participate in the personal networks of others within the idiom of kinship, and some kin exhibit the interactive patterns of friends.

Domestic arrangements and strategies among the black poor

in The Flats usually assure that children are cared for and that kin and friends in need will be helped. Participants in cooperative networks are primarily drawn from personal kindreds. R. T. Smith (1970, p. 68) has stated that although there is a tendency among "lower classes" to keep kin links open, this does not mean that large cooperating groups of kinsmen are found among the "lower classes." But I found, to the contrary, stable domestic networks of cooperating kinsmen among the poorest black people. These kinship networks have stability because the needs of the poor are constant. Friendships, on the other hand, change more often, and friends drop in and out of one another's networks while assuming a stable position in their own kinship network. From the individual's viewpoint, he is immersed in a domestic circle in which he can find help (Stack 1970).

Similar to patterns found in The Flats, American middle-class children are born into a network of relatives which in principle is infinite. Relatives on both sides of the family are kin, and there is no clear-cut limit to the range of one's kinsmen. But cognatic reckoning by itself cannot distinguish between essential kin and others within the system.⁵ The choice of which relatives an individual draws into her personal kindred is by no means mechanical.

How individuals cast their net to create personal kinship networks depends upon the culturally determined perceptions of jural parenthood: the rules and criteria for including and excluding persons connected by blood and marriage to a particular kinsman, and the interpersonal relations between these individuals. These criteria determine which individuals acquire socially recognized kinship relations with others.⁶

Personal kindreds of adults are ego-centered networks of essential kin. These networks are not residential units or observable groups, and they change participants, for example, when friends "fall out" with one another. From the individual's

viewpoint personal kindreds comprise the people who are socially recognized as having reciprocal responsibilities. These people become acting and reacting participants for some focal purpose (Fox 1967, p. 167).

Young children exercise little choice in determining with whom they have kinship relations. They are born into a network of essential kin which is primarily the personal kindred of the kinfolk responsible for them. As children become adults they expand, contract, and create their own personal networks.

Geographical distance, interpersonal relations, or acknowledgment of paternity discourage some relatives from actuating claims of responsibility. These relatives effectively drop out of the individual's personal kinship network, and all of the people linked through them also tend to drop out. Thus, an important criterion affecting the size and shape of the personal kinship network of adults is whether the relative who drops out of the network is genealogically close or distant. Sometimes close kinship links, like that of a parent, are broken. A father, for example, may claim that he doesn't "own the baby," thereby refusing to acknowledge paternity. When a close link such as that of a father is broken, it has a profound effect on the shape of the personal kindred.

The following chart shows the genealogical categories in American kinship (consider the "child" as EGO). If a child's grandparents through his father, for example, break a link, all those individuals related through the grandparents effectively drop out of the child's personal kinship network. Chart B shows the shape of a network in which a father has broken a kinship link.

Because any relative can break a link, personal kindreds can take any number of shapes. But the networks are skewed roughly in proportion to the nearness of the kinship links which are ineffective. In principle, the dropping of a father from a network affects the shape of the network in the same way as if

CHART A: GRANDPARENTAL LINK BROKEN

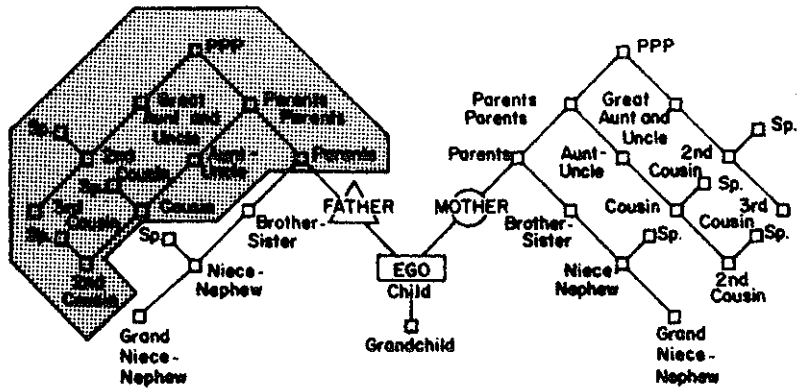
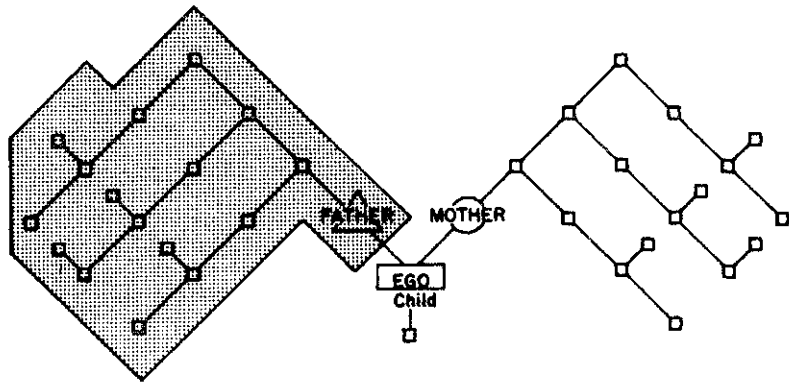


CHART B: PARENTAL LINK BROKEN



other more distant relatives on either side were to drop out. But the effect of dropping a close relative is obviously much more profound.

FRIENDSHIP

Men and women in The Flats know that the minimal funds they receive from low-paying jobs on welfare do not cover their monthly necessities of life: rent, food, and clothing. They must search for solutions in order to survive. They place their hopes in the scene of their life and action: in the closed community, in the people around them, in kin and friends, and in the new friends they will make to get along. Friendships between lovers and between friends are based upon a precarious balance of trust and profit. Magnolia describes this balance, "I don't have nothing great and no more than nobody else. It doesn't matter. I'm happy with my kids and I'm happy with the friends that I got. Some people don't understand friendship. Friendship means a lot, that is if you can trust a friend. If you have a friend, you should learn to trust them and share everything that you have. When I have a friend and I need something, I don't ask, they just automatically tell me that they going to give it to me. I don't have to ask. And that's the way friends should be, for how long it lasts. But sometimes when you help a person they end up making a fool out of you. If a friend ain't giving me anything in return for what I'm giving her, shit, she can't get nothing else. These days you ain't got nothing to be really giving. You can't care for no one that don't give a damn for you."

Even in newly formed friendships, individuals begin to rely upon one another quickly, expecting wider solutions to their problems than any one person in the same situation could possibly offer. As a result the stability of a friendship often depends upon the ability of two individuals to gauge their

exploitation of one another. Everyone understands that friendships are explosive and abruptly come to an end when one friend makes a fool out of another. Life, therefore, as Abrahams shows, is "conceived of in terms of a series of encounters with a large number of individuals" (1970, p. 120). As Ruby says, "You got to go out and meet people, because the very day you go out, that first person you meet may be the person that can help you get the things you want."

Individuals in *The Flats* continually evaluate their friendships by gossip and conversation. They talk about whether others are "acting right" or "doing right by them." They define personal relationships in terms of their dual expectations of friends and kin. When friends more than adequately share the exchange of goods and services, they are called kinsmen. When friends live up to one another's expectations, their social relations are conducted as kin. For example, if two women of the same age are helping one another, they call their friend "just a sister," or say that "they are going for sisters." Anyone in the community with whom a person has good social dealings can be classified as some kind of kin. When a friendship ends because individuals "let one another down," this concludes both their expectations of one another and their kin relationship. In addition, a person defined as a kin, for example, a "sister," does not usually bring to the relationship her own personal genealogical entailments. Her mother is not necessarily her "sister's" mother and her father's father is not her "sister's" grandfather. Losing a fictive relative, therefore, does not dramatically affect the shape of personal networks as does the dropping of a close kinship link.

The offering of kin terms to "those you count on" is a way people expand their personal networks. A friend who is classified as a kinsman is simultaneously given respect and responsibility.

When a mother has a boyfriend, the community expects

that he will assume some parental duties toward her children. This is especially true if the couple are "housekeeping," sharing their domestic tasks. A father surrenders many of his rights and responsibilities to the mother's husband or current boyfriend. The attitude and behavior of the boyfriend toward the children defines his relationship to them. Clover compares her last two boyfriends and how they dealt with her children. "I stopped going with Max because he took no time for my kids; he just wanted them out of our way. I took it for a while, 'cause I got things from him, but when he hit my boy I called it quits. If he can't care, he can't bully my kids. But Lee, he was something else. He was so nice to my kids that the babies cried when he left the house. Sometimes I had to yell to keep the kids from bothering him and get some time for myself. After we was housekeeping for about six months, Lee said to the boys that they should call him their 'play daddy.' Lee and I quit last year and I'm sorry we did, 'cause the kids really miss him. But he still comes over, especially when I'm out, and they still call him their 'play daddy.'"

Fictive kin relations are maintained by consensus between individuals, and in some contexts can last a lifetime. If Lee maintains his interest in Clover's boys, he may remain their "play daddy" throughout their adult life.

Children very often establish close and affectionate ties with their aunts and uncles, for example, with their mother's sister's "old man" and their mother's brother's "old lady." These aunts and uncles, on the basis of their original consensual relationship, can remain in a child's personal network for a long time. Personal kinship networks are enlarged by the inclusion of these affines who may keep the relationship active. Ruby recently visited her Uncle Arthur, one of her Aunt Augusta's "old men," in the hospital. "Uncle Arthur and I was always good friends," says Ruby, "even when he and Aunt Augusta weren't getting on. He was staying with Augusta, my grandmother, and me

when I was just a kid, and he always treated me like something real special. Now he is just as nice to my kids when he comes over to see them. I really feel sad that he's old and sick; he has high blood, and I think he may die." Ruby is also attached to her Uncle Lazar, who started going with her mother's youngest sister when her aunt was just fifteen. "My aunt has been married twice since, but Uncle Lazar just remained a part of our family. He's fifty-eight now and he's been a part of our family ever since I can remember. He always has been staying with our family too. Right now he's staying in the basement below Aunt Augusta's apartment and she cooks for him and her old man. He'll always be my uncle and he and my aunt never did get married."

Just as these "aunts" and "uncles" remain in the personal kinship networks of their nieces and nephews, best friends may remain in each other's domestic network on the basis of original friendship even if the friendship has ended. Sometimes when non-kin become a part of a family and are given a fictive kin term, no one remembers just how the tie began. Billy tried to remember how cousin Ola became a part of her family. "My mama once told me," said Billy, "but I hardly remember. I think cousin Ola was my mama's oldest sister's best friend and they went for cousins. When my mama's sister died, Ola took her two youngest children, and she has been raising them up ever since."

In the above examples, social relations are conducted within the idiom of kinship. Members of the community explain the behavior of those around them by allowing behavior to define the nature of the relationship. Friends are classified as kinsmen when they assume recognized responsibilities of kinsmen. Those kin who cannot be counted upon are severely criticized. Harsh evaluation of the behavior of others accounts for some of the constant ups and downs in the lives of friends and kin. Expectations are so elastic that when one person fails to meet

another's needs, disappointment is cushioned. Flexible expectations and the extension of kin relationships to non-kin allow for the creation of mutual aid domestic networks which are not bounded by genealogical distance or genealogical criteria. Much more important for the creation and recruitment to personal networks are the practical requirements that kin and friends live near one another.

Members of domestic networks in The Flats are drawn from kin and friends. Of the two, the kin network is more enduring because all of an individual's essential kin are "recognized as having some duties toward him and some claims on him" (Fox 1967, p. 167). Friendships end and that is to be expected; new friendships can be formed. But the number of relatives who can be called upon for help from personal kinship networks is limited. As a result a cluster of relatives from personal kinship networks have continuing claims on one another. Some observers of daily life in black communities regard the friendship network as the "proven and adaptive base of operations" in lower-class life (Abrahams 1970, p. 128). But the adaptive base of operations of the poorest black people can be attributed to personal kindreds as well as to networks of friends.

kinship system of Afro-Americans. His suggestions which lend support to hypotheses in this study are the following: (1) lower-class kinship lacks the ideological and normative emphasis upon the isolated nuclear family; (2) lower-class persons continue to be involved with other kin even if they live in a nuclear family; (3) household boundaries are elastic; (4) there exist clusters of close-female kin constituting cooperating groups; (5) there is a tendency to keep as many kinship links open as possible; (6) transactions of mutual help are not confined to the bounds of a nuclear family unit.

Smith has suggested the existence of cooperative groups extending beyond the nuclear family. I expressed a similar view of the black family (Stack 1970, p. 311), suggesting that participants in domestic units of cooperation align to provide the basic functions often attributed to nuclear family units. Smith's work is a fundamental step toward our understanding of the normative structure of lower-class families, but his analysis does not shed light on how the structure works in daily life. Although he recognizes that kin help one another, he concludes that "this is not to say that one finds large, co-operating groups of kinsfolk among the lower class (1971, p. 68). . . ." In contrast, this study demonstrates the stability and collective power of cooperative kinsmen even among the poorest black families in The Flats.

3. Swapping: "What Goes Round Comes Round"

1. Foster's (1963) model of the dyadic contract includes two types of dyadic contractual ties: colleague ties between individuals of approximately equal socio-economic positions and patron-client ties between individuals of unequal social position. The underlying principles of exchange transactions discussed in this chapter approximate features of the dyadic model of colleague ties. According to Foster's model, colleague ties are expressed by repeated exchanges; they are informal and exist as long as participants are satisfied; they are usually of long duration; and exact or perfectly balanced reciprocity between partners is never achieved.

2. "Essential kin" refers to members of the culturally specific system of kinship categories and others who activate and validate their jural rights by helping one another, thereby creating reciprocal obligations toward one another (see Chapter 4). Firth (1970) distinguishes between "effective kin" (those kin with whom one maintains social contact) and "intimate kin" (those kin with whom contact is purposeful, close, and frequent—members of the immediate family circle).

4. Personal Kindreds: "All Our Kin"

1. Schneider (1968) maintains that distinctions between terms of reference (father) and terms of address (pa, pop, daddy) increase ethnographic error because they are synonyms which are equally referential and are equally names of categories. Schneider's observation clearly is not adequate for dealing with the terminology from the above passage. The kinship term *father* in the passage refers to the *socially recognized genitor*. "Daddy," which informants themselves put in quotations by intonation, refers to an essential kin such as the man who raises a child. Black people in The Flats, then, distinguish between the "pater" (essential kin), the jural father (the socially recognized genitor), and the "genitor." This perception of fatherhood does not fit into the long-accepted dichotomy between "pater" and "genitor" (Radcliffe-Brown 1950).
2. The following distinction between relatives, kin, and essential kin will be used throughout the study: (a) *relatives*: in cognatic reckoning the universe of cognates is in principle unlimited in the number of genealogical categories (not persons) it contains. A relative is any person who is genealogically defined within the cognatic web; (b) *kin*: some relatives (at least) and some others who are members of the culturally specific system of kinship categories which have behavioral entailments with respect to one another; (c) *essential kin*: at least some of the above kin and others who activate and validate their jural rights by helping one another, thereby creating reciprocal obligations toward one another.

kinship system of Afro-Americans. His suggestions which lend support to hypotheses in this study are the following: (1) lower-class kinship lacks the ideological and normative emphasis upon the isolated nuclear family; (2) lower-class persons continue to be involved with other kin even if they live in a nuclear family; (3) household boundaries are elastic; (4) there exist clusters of close-female kin constituting cooperating groups; (5) there is a tendency to keep as many kinship links open as possible; (6) transactions of mutual help are not confined to the bounds of a nuclear family unit.

Smith has suggested the existence of cooperative groups extending beyond the nuclear family. I expressed a similar view of the black family (Stack 1970, p. 311), suggesting that participants in domestic units of cooperation align to provide the basic functions often attributed to nuclear family units. Smith's work is a fundamental step toward our understanding of the normative structure of lower-class families, but his analysis does not shed light on how the structure works in daily life. Although he recognizes that kin help one another, he concludes that "this is not to say that one finds large, co-operating groups of kinsfolk among the lower class (1971, p. 68) . . ." In contrast, this study demonstrates the stability and collective power of cooperative kinsmen even among the poorest black families in The Flats.

3. Swapping: "What Goes Round Comes Round"

1. Foster's (1963) model of the dyadic contract includes two types of dyadic contractual ties: colleague ties between individuals of approximately equal socio-economic positions and patron-client ties between individuals of unequal social position. The underlying principles of exchange transactions discussed in this chapter approximate features of the dyadic model of colleague ties. According to Foster's model, colleague ties are expressed by repeated exchanges; they are informal and exist as long as participants are satisfied; they are usually of long duration; and exact or perfectly balanced reciprocity between partners is never achieved.

2. "Essential kin" refers to members of the culturally specific system of kinship categories and others who activate and validate their jural rights by helping one another, thereby creating reciprocal obligations toward one another (see Chapter 4). Firth (1970) distinguishes between "effective kin" (those kin with whom one maintains social contact) and "intimate kin" (those kin with whom contact is purposeful, close, and frequent—members of the immediate family circle).

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3. I wish to thank Ward Goodenough for clarifying this point, and for other valuable suggestions.
4. I am grateful to Jan Brukman for suggesting this idea.
5. On this point in particular, and many others throughout this chapter, I wish to thank F. K. Lehman.
6. Professor Charles Valentine and Betty Lou Valentine provided extensive comments on this chapter at an early stage in the writing. I am extremely grateful for their generous help and criticism.

5. Child-Keeping: "Gimme a Little Sugar"

1. Child-keeping corresponds to the general characterizations of fosterage (Carroll 1970; Goody 1966; Keesing 1970a; Sanford 1971). Keesing (1970a) and Sanford (1971) have defined fosterage as the housing of a dependent child in a household which does not include the mother or father. Carroll (1970) views fostering in more specific terms as a temporary obligation of kinsmen to take care of one another's children. Goody (1966) contrasts kinship fostering in crisis situations with the rights of kinfolk to take children and rear them apart from their own parents.
2. Residence life histories are detailed chronological accounts of the residence changes from birth to the present. For each residence change or change in household composition, I gathered data on: (1) the age of the person at the time of each residence change; (2) the situation which precipitated the move (context); and (3) the kinship links between members of each newly formed household (see Appendix B).
3. This section reflects theoretical advances in the analysis of transactions in parenthood (Goodenough 1970) and role analysis (Goodenough 1965; Keesing 1969, 1970a, 1970b), and stimulating discussions with Douglas Midgett and Norma Linton who are both engaged in research on patterns of child exchange.
4. Rivers (1924) makes a strikingly similar statement in his book *Social Organization*. He says that "A child born into a com-

munity with societies or clans becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense."

6. Domestic Networks: "Those You Count On"

1. Charles and Betty Lou Valentine have noted the existence of long-enduring networks composed of families (kindreds) and domiciles (households) in their recent study in Blackston, an Afro-American community in the Northeast (personal communication). What I have chosen to call domestic networks in this study, they call "inter-domicile, multi-family networks." Both terminologies appear to appropriately define the kin-structured domestic networks described in this study. Occasionally in this book I have synthesized the terminology and referred to "networks linking multiple domestic units."

7. Women and Men: "I'm Not in Love with No Man Really"

1. I wish to thank Professor Louise Lamphere and Professor Robert Weiss for helpful suggestions in the analysis and organization of this chapter.

8. Conclusion

1. See a report to the Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress. The report, entitled "The Concept of Family in the Poor Black Community," was co-authored by Professor Herbert Semmel (Visiting Professor of Law, University of Texas School of Law) and myself.