I am very pleased for your kind invitation to make a few remarks. I presume I have been asked to speak before you because of the publicity given me through the book "LOST BOUNDARIES", and the proposed moving picture of the same title on which production begins next Monday. I am afraid you will be disappointed if you expected an experienced platform speaker, or an authority on race relations.

There are millions of negroes like us (or like we were until we publicized our identity) but very few make known their secret for obvious reasons. In our own families there are about as many passing for white as remain negroes. Some of our relatives who have never been told their racial identity by their parents, do not know that they are negroes. In one instance this relative of ours is married and has two children. I would like to read you this letter we received from her husband who does not sign his name.

Dear Mrs. Johnston:

Forgive me if I do not sign my name to this letter; I am sure you will understand why. I am addressing you instead Dr. Johnston, because I believe you will more fully understand the family problems.

I am a white man, happen to be married to a relative of yours—again please forgive names. My wife, who has been proud of your grandfather—her great grandfather—I am sure it would kill her to know the truth, if it is the truth about him. Her mother, who is dead, has always told her that he married a CHINESE girl, not a colored girl. I love my wife, and her family. Tragedy would certainly result should she find out what I have read in the Reader's Digest.

I cannot believe that any concerned with this story meant it to be harmful or malicious. That would be criminal, hence, I am appealing to you and to those whom you might know to correct the impression as indicated above, or leave OUT the name of the gentleman entirely in the forthcoming book. It is rather unfortunate that your son was told all the facts before he had matured. I hope no harm comes to your family because of this publicity.
My wife has a written history of the family, and I think she mentioned your mother's name as Nettie. We have a girl baby, and another on the way. You can understand my concern in the matter, I hope. Personally I have no prejudices in the matter, but you can readily understand my interest. If good can result from your actions, it might rectify any harm that might already have resulted. Others connected in the family might not be as broadminded as I am. Surely you would wish no harm or tragedies to enter into their lives, especially since it will certainly do no harm to omit certain passages in the forthcoming book.

I am hoping to be in the East this summer, and will look you and your husband up. Inasmuch as I cannot tell into whose hands this letter might fall, I again ask your forgiveness in not signing my name.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. ABC

On my side, I have several cousins who only found out they were negroes after reaching adolescence. Now, I know some of you will say my wife and I have only a small amount of negro blood. This is not so.

For instance, I am 37.5% negro, 37.5 english 12.5 scotch and 12.5 Indian. I was born in Chicago of negro parents, both of whom were very light. I lived in the black belt of Chicago, until I came East.

My wife was born in New Orleans, La. under similar conditions and lived there until she was eight years old, at which time her family moved to Boston where her father was Asst. Cashier of the Boston Post Office for many years.

What does it feel like to be a negro? Just like being an Englishman, Chinese, or any other race or nationality. We are proud of our race which has undergone so many humiliations, brutalities, injustices and suppression, with such patience and fortitude and still is unequalled in its ability to be happy and joyous in the presence of fear, humiliation--and for the most of us, poverty.
First, what is a Negro? In most parts of the world and some parts of the U.S. a negro is a person who has very dark skin and negroid features, in other words, a predominance of physical characteristics. In many parts of our country, especially in the south, any one who has a single drop of negro blood is a negro, on the other hand if he had quarts of white blood he is still a negro. In other parts of the world, including so called white countries, this latter definition is seldom used. It might be interesting for those of you who remember Marcus Garvey and his Back to Africa organization just after World War I, that his definition of a negro, eliminated all, except those of pure and almost pure African lineage. I, for instance would not be acceptable in that movement.

Now, what is the significance of being a negro in America? This an old story to most of you, but it means lack of a fair opportunity of employment, fear of bodily harm, injustice, abuse and insults in a great many public places, restriction in your choice of residence, and in many places denial of the right to vote, the right of a fair trial, and the lack of educational opportunities. Except for denial of the right to vote, all foreigners, even aliens, have access to these other rights which are denied to the so called negro citizens. In other words, the vast majority of American negroes are denied the rights of citizenship in practice. This oppression of the largest minority in America because of their color, constitutes a potential source of danger. The rising deep seated resentment of the negro toward his treatment by many of his countrymen, and especially by his government, will sooner or later disrupt the harmony of this nation. The least that can result is an indifferent attitude on the part of the negro toward his country, and at worse, hostility and hatred. If this resulted, it would not be because he favors other people or other systems of government, but because he is
so abused and brutally mistreated. The U.S. stands branded before the entire world as a hypocrite because of the racial equality it preaches, and the arrogant bigoted white racial superiority it practices. The enemies of America are quick to exploit this vital weakness and it is easy to convince most of the rest of the world, which is predominantly colored, by our own definition that if we are hypocrites in regards to this question, we are hypocrites in all of our actions. I assure you from my small acquaintances with people from other lands, practically no one believes us, and even an imbecile doesn’t believe the tommy-rot about racial equality as practiced by the U.S. government. Unfortunately, for the U.S. in the last war, the armed forces in its globe-circling activities, gave all the races of the world an opportunity to see, at first hand, the practices of segregation and discrimination. These practices as decreed by the armed forces, did not portray the views of the enlightened portions of the North, but those of the most prejudiced portion of the South. With wide-spread radio audiences, even among many so-called primitive people who cannot read or write, our enemies are able to spread this truth about the insincerity of America. No amount of propaganda can counteract the iniquities imposed on the American Negro as observed at first hand by many peoples in the last war. It can only be counteracted by a genuine abolition of segregation and discrimination by the government of the U.S. and all State and local governments. I think that it is quite apparent to all of you, as it is to me, that the U.S. government is very cognizance of and very much worried about this glaring defection, that is, racial inequality. Never in my life time have I seen so many resolutions and propaganda to placate the proponents of true racial equality. I assure you that the Civil Rights Bill, as drawn up by the illustrious committee, and championed by Pres. Trueman, and which will be submitted for consideration by the American
Congress, is of vital importance. Shall the U.S. bow for political expediency to the minority of racial bigots and therefore leave ourselves vulnerable to our enemies because of our double dealing on racial issues? Or will the Patriots of this country really conscientiously support such vital legislation in the interest of national security? The honor and integrity of our government is at stake in the eyes of the world. In my opinion those adherents of white supremacy, the most vocal and influential of which, are mostly, but not all, in the south,--we do have our Jerald K. Smiths in the North,--are a far greater danger to the security of America, and a far more subversive element in our government than the so called followers of ideologists now being so thoroughly ferreted out and prosecuted by our governmental agencies. 

In my opinion, the passage of the Civil Rights Bill would not change the thinking or the actions of the racists of this country unless enforced by the 14th and 15th amendment. I would like to call to your attention, right here, that I do not dislike the South or its people, and that I do not believe that a great many or even a majority of southerners approve of the racial laws and practices of that section of the country. It so happens, however, that these people do not have the power or desire, or the courage, to use their combined strength to abolish this very unamerican racial persecution.

As many of you know there is considerable racial strife and hatred going on all the time in various parts of America. Certain employers of labor benefit tremendously by this strife, and labor loses proportionately. The C.I.O. has already done this. 

Crow laws permit, even President Roosevelt at the height of his power was compelled to sign the laws of the South.
For instance—in localities with large negro populations at the bottom of the economic ladder, they are used as a club to whip non negro labor into line. This creates still more friction between white and negro workers. Labor would benefit tremendously if they would whole heartedly take in the negro worker on the same basis of equality as any one else. The strength of any nation depends on the sum total of the abilities and contributions of its citizens running the gamut from the lowliest manual laborer to the great scientists and inventive geniuses. Nature does not give talents according to color, and the lord only knows how many Edisons or Einsteins have spent their life mopping floors because of the lack of opportunity to develop latent talents. No country can present their full strength without using the labor, the genius, and culture of all its people.

The segregation of large groups of minority in large communities, results in excluding social contact with other groups and racial animosities on both sides are intensified. Prejudice is based on ignorance, fear, and lack of understanding. You will notice that one person is rarely prejudiced against another person; it is usually, one race against another, or one nation against another nation, or one religion against another religion. When one person through intimate social contact understands another, his weaknesses, and virtues, prejudice breaks down.

In my unique relationship, I have had a very excellent opportunity to know what the white person really thinks about racial relationships. In the small N. H. communities, where I had the intimate confidence of many people who were unaware of my racial identity at the time, I have found that those natives who had not come in contact with negroes for any sustained length of time, or with any large groups,
had no conception of the problem, and if the subject was broached, as it rarely was, they were about evenly divided, between true liberalism and a disaffection, but no real bitterness or rabid prejudice. I have also many friends from the deep South, nearly all of whom were of the educated and intelligent strata, most of whom would welcome greater opportunities and limited degree of equality, for negroes, although very few expressed any desire to associate with negroes on a social basis. A few otherwise intelligent, well educated friends from the deep South, were violently anti-negro. As far as I could determine they were not born with this prejudice, but acquired these prejudices by indoctrination by their parents, friends, and the laws and environment of the South.

What can the liberal white people of the country contribute toward the abolition of prejudice based upon color? They can educate through discussion groups, such as this, they can influence their friends and associates, they can support all political candidates whom they know are honest and true liberal Americans, and who have an honest conviction that a racial equality is an American idea, but not those demagogues who will profess anything to attain office. They can associate with negroes of their own social standing and who have common interest in their cultural or professional pursuits. They can use their influence to secure better economical opportunities in their own businesses, or through their friends. They should be willing to stand up and be counted as opposed to segregation and discrimination and in favor of true equality and use all the influence you possess to force passage of the Civil Rights Bill which will soon be considered by the 81st Congress.

I thank you.