ESSAY REVIEW

RACIAL SCIENCE AND EARLY AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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The United States, particularly the South, was not a hospitable place for African Americans during the 19th century. Paternalistic slave owners claimed enslaved African Americans were happy, content, and better off than white immigrant factory workers in the North who had no “father-figures” to look after them. If this were true, why did so many enslaved African Americans resist their unjust oppression and thousands take flight every year seeking their freedom in Canada, Mexico, and the Indian territories in Florida and the Far West?1 Slavery’s inhumane practices and other forms of racial oppression were justified by “scientific” arguments that people of African descent were a different species of humanity. In *Delia’s Tears*, Molly Rogers documents another 19th-century ideological example of “man’s inhumanity to man.”2

In 1976 in a remote corner of the attic of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, fifteen daguerreotypes were discovered, carefully preserved in wood, leather, and metal cases, with each image sealed under glass. Seven people were represented, five African American men and two young women, and all were naked or only partially clothed. Curators and publicists for the museum were excited about their findings. Who were these people? Where were they photographed and for what purpose? Clearly the photographs were unusual and must have been made over 120 years earlier, yet they appeared to have a message, one fraught with pain.

Shortly after the discovery, William Sturtevant, director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, visited the museum and suggested that, “they had been made for someone interested in physical anthropology.”3 Elinor Reichlin, chief cataloguer for the Peabody, noted, “Each subject was positioned parallel to the picture plane and photographed frontally and in profile, with [one subject] also photographed from behind” (17–18). From notations on labels attached to velvet linings inside the case, Reichlin identified the people as “slaves.”

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In 2003 independent scholar Molly Rogers joined the search for answers as to why and for what purposes the images were made. But she wanted to understand more, as much as she could, about the lives and feelings of the seven people in the photographs. *Delia’s Tears* is the first narrative history of the daguerreotypes. The two women in the collection, Delia and Drana, were enslaved on plantations owned by Thomas Taylor, and located just outside Columbia, South Carolina. Renty, a male worker on Taylor’s plantation, was Delia’s father and a native of the Congo in Central Africa. Jack, another of Taylor’s bondmen, was Drana’s father and was from Guinea in West Africa. Jack was a “slave driver,” a person given special privileges in return for keeping the enslaved people working. Three other men were photographed: Alfred, a Fulani, from West Africa, enslaved by “I. or J. Lomas,” about whom little is known; and Jem, a Gullah, the legal property of F. W. Green, a cotton factory owner in Lexington, South Carolina, suggesting to Rogers that Jem lived in the city rather than on a plantation. The third was George Fassena, a Mandingo carpenter and descendent of the great Mali Empire which, according to Rogers, “flourished from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries in present-day southern Mali and northern Guinea” (xiv–xv). Owned by Wade Hampton, Jr., Fassena is thought to have remained near Columbia in Lower Richland County after the Civil War. Rogers identified a man named “Renty Taylor” who lived not far from Fassena after the war, but his birth date was listed as 1852. This meant he was much too young to have been the “Renty” in the newly discovered daguerreotypes. Rogers speculates that the younger Renty may have been the son since two men named “Renty Taylor” appear in Thomas Taylor’s will, bequeathing them to Wade Hampton, Jr. Rogers could find nothing further on Delia and Drana, whose names would have changed had they married, nor on Alfred and Jem.

The photographs would be disturbing to many. The naked bodies are stiff and the figures of some of the men are slightly bent. Their faces seem to express agony. Delia appears to be crying, and Drana appears to be angry. These daguerreotypes are in direct contrast to those of the white notables such as Dr. R. W. Gibbes, surgeon general of South Carolina, and the “Swedish Nightingale” Jenny Lind, whose portraits displaying fine clothes and poised and cheerful facial expressions also appear in the book. Rogers wanted to know what the experience of being photographed in a strange studio “belonging to a world not their own” might have meant to them. “Did they share the experience with other people. . . . Or was the experience perhaps so bizarre and traumatic, that they never fully lived it in the first place?” (227). It was not possible for Rogers to document what Delia and the others saw and felt; thus, she imagines what research cannot reveal, gaining her inspiration from Tony Morrison’s novel *Beloved* (1987), considered the best fictional portrayal of the African American experience under slavery. Vignettes in *Delia’s Tears* introduce each chapter, written about each of the
people photographed, and reveal, in addition to Rogers’s sensitive imagination, the few facts known about them as well as details about the institution of slavery in the United States that Rogers acquired from the “slave narratives,” autobiographies, and other sources (xxv).

Her extensive research gives the vignettes an aura of authenticity. For example, in the section about Jack, the slave driver, Rogers conveys the working conditions.

They had not yet finished the row; and it was nearly midday. Soon the overseer would pay them a visit. They would have to quicken their pace. Calling out, using words familiar to them alone, he urged them on; the strength of his voice a reminder that those who fell behind would see the lash come nightfall. But this was not enough, and so with his hoe in hand—perhaps carried as a reminder that he was one of them after all—he walked the length of the row offering words of encouragement (50).

Each vignette is poignant and offers the perspective of those forced to sit to have their picture made. Delia complains:

This was no place for a slave. . . . The sun beat down on her through the skylight, making her warmer than she had been outside in the sunshine a moment ago. The light in this place was not less harsh, but more so. She longed to move from the chair where they had told her to sit, to seek refuge from the sun, but she had been told to hold still. Don’t move. Do not move (3).

As the narrative unfolds, Rogers describes aspects of the 19th-century world of Delia, Drana, Renty, Jack, Alfred, Jem, and George Fassena, where travel was generally by horseback, riverboat, or stagecoach, but no railroads were found. The town of Columbia was South Carolina’s newly established capital, located in the wilderness on lands owned by wealthy plantation owners Thomas Taylor and Wade Hampton, Sr. But even in these remote farming areas, people looked to the new sciences to provide answers to mysteries they could not explain: Why had Henry Moss changed from a black man to a white man in a matter of four months? Was the “Feejee Mermaid” an example of crossbreeding between a human being and a fish, or just another hoax perpetrated by P. T. Barnum and his traveling museum of exotic creatures? Could science explain the origin of human beings and provide another justification for the racial slavery found throughout the Americas? Rogers offers slices of history that provide a setting or backdrop for the daguerreotypes and the people pictured therein.

Rogers discovered that the daguerreotypes were made in 1850 at the request of the Swiss naturalist Louis Agassiz, internationally known for his scientific research in geology, paleontology, and ichthyology. In 1846 Agassiz came to the United States from Neuchâtel, then part of Prussia, now a Swiss canton, where he was a professor at the newly established College of Neuchâtel. His original intention was to collect samples of plants and animals in North America, but he soon
became a professor of zoology and geology at Harvard University and was much in demand on the lecture circuit. He began his lectures in Boston at the Lowell Institute with the presentation of his “Plan of Creation,” announcing to his audience, “Through the careful study of God’s creation, a naturalist can know the design and wisdom of that Almighty Being who controls all things in the Universe” (106).

Agassiz believed that God had made and destroyed living matter over time in successive epochs, each ending with a catastrophe, and beginning with the creation of new species. Human beings had been created after the last greatest catastrophe and were the “highest group in creation” and that the animals, vegetables, and minerals in the world had been created for them. However, over the course of his U.S. lecture tour in 1850 he revised his “Plan of Creation.” Rogers examines the many “theories of creation” that existed in this pre-Darwinian era, thus helping the reader to understand how science was gradually gaining preeminence over Christian teachings.

In Philadelphia, Agassiz met Dr. Samuel G. Morton, author of *Crania Americana*, published in 1839. Morton claimed that “inhabitants of every extended locality have been marked by certain physical and moral peculiarities,” drawing conclusions from his collection of more than a thousand human skulls (124). Measuring the cranial dimensions of various skulls, Morton concluded that “the races of mankind had been separately created as distinct and unequal species” and whites possessed the “highest intellectual endowments.” American Indians, he asserted, “were slow in acquiring knowledge, restless, revengeful, and fond of war”; and “Ethiopians” (black Africans) were joyous, flexible, and indolent, representing “the lowest grade of humanity.” Thus, Morton totally ignored the social or cultural bases for human behavior and sought to prove through anatomical analysis his theory of white supremacy. Rogers and other historians have referred to Agassiz’s encounter with black hotel servants in Philadelphia as the incident that inspired his racial prejudice. Agassiz was distressed and repulsed by their physical appearance and told his mother, “I experienced pity at the sight of this degraded and degenerate race....I t i s  impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us” (118).

Rogers suggests that Agassiz might have come to a different conclusion had he, instead, met Robert Douglass, an affluent barber and his wife, Grace, members of Philadelphia’s free black population, the largest in the country. Douglass’s son, Robert Douglass, Jr., was an accomplished artist and daguerreotypist, and his sister, Sarah Mapps Douglass, was a teacher, president of a literary society, and active in the abolitionist movement (121). Morton and his *Crania Americana* and the encounter with the black hotel servants had a strong influence on Agassiz, but not a positive one.
The following year, Louis Agassiz visited Charleston, South Carolina, the scientific capital of the South and spoke before the Charleston Literary and Philosophical Society, where he made his ignoble declaration: “Africans had been created separately from Europeans and were sufficiently distinct physiologically and anatomically to constitute separate species” (129). This idea, known as polygenesis, was posited in direct contrast to monogenesis, or the original human unity, as described in the Bible. As Rogers notes of polygenesis, “[I]f black people were physiologically distinct from whites, then slavery was not a moral abomination, as the abolitionists claimed, but a reflection of the natural order of society as God had intended it” (19).

To people who believed in one human race, these ideas were outrageous since all humans could interbreed; however, most southerners, especially slave owners, upheld this pseudoscientific argument to justify their inhuman treatment of bondpeople. They promoted those who argued that enslaved Africans and African Americans were biologically fit for heavy, white-supervised labor in hot sun-drenched fields and did not have the capacity to live independently.

Who were the outspoken critics of these ideas? Rogers mentions William Lloyd Garrison of Boston and Benjamin Lundy of Baltimore, both white abolitionists who demanded the immediate end to the inhumane institution in the United States. Even more outspoken was David Walker, a free black living in Boston, who believed that “whites and blacks could one day live together in harmony, but so long as slavery persisted and black people were regarded as inferior beings, no such thing was possible” (148). In his famous Appeal of 1829, Walker attacked polygenesis at its root: “It is an insupportable insult to claim that Africans were not of the human family” (149).

By the early 1850s polygenesis had become a heated topic. Frederick Douglass, former slave turned famous orator, author, and publisher of his own abolitionist newspaper, made this observation to the 1854 graduating class at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

The heart of the matter was whether a black man was truly a man or some other kind of creature. . . . So long as intellectuals compared uneducated black people with whites who had every opportunity and privilege, so long as unjust comparisons were made to prove an inherent difference between people, it would be necessary to expose such claims as absurd. . . . Common sense itself is scarcely needed to detect the absence of manhood in a monkey, or to recognize its presence in a Negro (264).8

Douglass particularly attacked Types of Mankind: Ethnological Researches (1854), a book by George Morton, a follower of Dr. Josiah Nott and George Gliddon.9 Josiah Nott, a physician who treated enslaved workers on the Wade Hampton plantation in Columbia, eventually moved to Birmingham, Alabama,
where he built a similar medical practice. George Gliddon, the nation’s premier Egyptologist who had supplied Morton with many of his Egyptian crania, became infamous for his claim that ancient Egyptians were not black, but white; and black Africans, like the ancient Hebrews, had served as slaves in ancient Egypt, as in the Americas. 

Hosea Easton, pastor of two African Methodist Episcopal churches in Hartford, Connecticut, where church members were constantly terrorized by whites and one of the churches was eventually burned to the ground, came to the defense of monogenesis, making it clear that he, like most Christians, took the unity of human beings for granted. Rogers quotes Rev. Easton’s most effective argument: “Variation among all living things, was simply a function of natural law. . . . Were I asked why my hair is curled, my answer would be, because God gave nature the gift of producing variety. . . . Why this was so would always remain a mystery: God’s plan was ultimately inscrutable.” This statement was in direct contradiction to Agassiz’s “Plan of Creation.” 

Outspoken critics of polygenesis living in the South were hard to find, but Rogers identified two members of the all-white Charleston Literary and Philosophical Society who unconditionally opposed Agassiz’s arguments. Both were members of the clergy: Rev. John Bachman, pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Charleston; and Rev. Thomas Smyth, pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston. Rogers noted that Rev. Bachman was so disturbed by Agassiz’s support for polygenesis that he attempted to adjourn the society’s meeting on 16 March 1850. Before the meeting ended, Rev. Smyth remarked, “The original unity of the human race was beyond question, and any other view of the subject would tend to overthrow the authority and defeat the objects of Divine Revelation” (206). Rogers is to be commended for including in her narrative the statement by southern whites in opposition to the ideas of polygenesis.

During his visit Louis Agassiz met with Dr. Robert Wilson Gibbes, a physician from Columbia with an interest in science who had traveled to Charleston specifically to meet Agassiz. Gibbes cared for the planters’ families and enslaved workers. At Gibbes’s invitation Agassiz went to Columbia for the purpose of examining enslaved African American workers. There he chose Joseph Zealy, a professional daguerreotypist with an elegant studio, to make the photographs Agassiz believed would support his theory of polygenesis.

On 27 September 1850, Agassiz presented his daguerreotypes to promote his ideas on human diversity to the members of the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Scientific Club. However, the images were never shown again or even used to illustrate an article Agassiz contributed to a book by Josiah Nott. Rogers suggests that perhaps he lost interest in the project, or the members of the scientific club did not see in them what Agassiz saw. Perhaps the images were considered porno-
graphic in an age when public nudity was considered highly immoral, or the members of the scientific club may simply have been horrified by what they saw and did not accept Agassiz’s theory. Agassiz may have decided that the photographs could not be used to represent an entire race of people, or even specific groups such as the Mandingo, Guinean, or Gullah; or perhaps the images were repugnant to his bride, Elizabeth Cabot Cary, whom he married in Boston on 25 April 1850. Whatever the reason, the daguerreotypes were packed away and not seen again until 1976.

Among other people mentioned in Rogers’s narrative were the slaveholders Wade Hampton, Sr. and Jr., and Thomas Taylor and his son B. F. Taylor, owners of Delia, Drana, Renty, and Jack. Not much was revealed about B. F. Taylor other than at his death, he bequeathed his human property to Wade Hampton, Jr. Rogers, however, makes good use of the famous narrative of Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains* (1837) to indicate the desperate condition of enslaved African Americans in Columbia. Ball was separated from his wife and children in Maryland and sent to South Carolina, considered “the seat of slavery’s most cruel practitioners,” where field hands received minimal food sustenance. Ball saw young children naked while working in the fields and described the terrible punishment meted out to a slave foreman who stole a sheep to help feed his malnourished family members. The foreman was tied to a post and left overnight. The next day he was whipped across the back and stinging hot tea pepper was poured on the wounds. It took months for his back to heal, but he was forced to continue working. In 1806 Ball was purchased by Wade Hampton, Sr., who fed his enslaved workers a diet of cottonseed mixed with corn. When Hampton decided to increase the amount of cottonseed, he mentioned to friends at a social gathering, “they died like rotten sheep” (46). Rogers included W. E. B. Du Bois’s description of southern planters as “arrogant, strutting, quarrelsome kinglets; they issued commands; they made laws; they shouted their orders; they expected deference and self-abasement; they were choleric, and easily insulted. Their honor became a vast and awful thing, requiring wide and insistent deference” (46).

The idea of using “scientific evidence” to justify white domination did not end with the Civil War. In *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914*, first published in 1971, George M. Fredrickson explained that these racist theories were still prevalent at the beginning of World War I. Race hatred and violence against non-white people continued and extended to those living outside the nation’s borders. This was the age of “social Darwinism” when many believed that the weakest members of society had to be sacrificed in order to ensure the “survival of the fittest.” Most white racists believed that a great moral “retrogression among the blacks” had transpired in the aftermath of the Civil War, which only lynching and white mob violence could subdue.
Mia Bay’s *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830–1925* (2000) can be viewed as a response to Fredrickson’s book. She records how African American spokespersons, and the freedpeople in general, responded to white supremacist ethnologies. Bay provides much information not included in Molly Rogers’s *Delia’s Tears*. For example, during the same year that Agassiz was displaying his daguerreotypes to the scientific club in Cambridge, James W. C. Pennington, a former slave, was telling the Young Men’s Christian Association in Glasgow, Scotland, “When the proud and selfish Anglo-Saxon seized upon the Negro to be used merely as a beast, he was soon alarmed to find that he must undertake the difficult task of forging chains for a mind like his own.” The abolitionist James Pennington viewed slavery as a “battle of the minds,” with the slave owners attempting to put chains on the black mind as well as the black body.17

Adam Carman, a free black in New York State, declared in 1811 in elegant prose, “All such censures we have long labored under are the firstborn of absurdities, for our mental facilities are as capacious and just as open to impression from precept and example as any nation that ever breathes the vital air.”18 Two free blacks in New York City, Samuel Ennels and Philip Alexander Bell, argued similarly in 1831: “There are different colors among all species of animated creation. A difference in color is not a difference of species. Our structure and organization are not distinct from other men; in what respects are we inferior?”19 John Russwurm, co-editor of *Freedom’s Journal*, reminded his readers in 1827 that Herodotus (c. 484–425 BC), the “father of Western history,” observed that the Egyptians he visited had “black skins and frizzled hair,” undercutting George Gliddon’s idea that they were “white” (195).20 At the same time, Bay makes it clear that unlettered African Americans were just as outspoken about enslaved workers’ degraded condition. “We [are] treated more like farm animals than human beings,” and “[We are] human flesh.”21 Most African Americans comforted themselves in the belief that all people, white and non-white, “would ultimately answer to the same God” for their sins.22

Historian Gregory Michael Dorr revealed that beginning in 1915, Dr. Ivey Foreman Lewis, professor of biology at the University of Virginia, taught “scientific racism” and white supremacy and argued that “through government action in support of eugenics, the nation’s population would become racially and democratically homogenous.”23 In 1920 President Woodrow Wilson appointed Hugh Smith Cummings, a University of Virginia alumnus and eugenics promoter, as U.S. Surgeon General. In 1932, Cummings and two other University of Virginia alumni, Taliaferro Clark and Raymond Vonderlehr, were the ones who launched the infamous “Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Male Negro,” which condemned the African American victims of syphilis to death.24
James G. Hollandsworth’s 2008 biography of Alfred Holt Stone (1870–1955) of Mississippi documented his long career as a planter, government official, and racial theorist who consistently denigrated African Americans to justify racial segregation. Hollandsworth reports that Stone developed a disgust for African Americans after the failure of his tenancy experiment at Dunleith, his 2,506-acre cotton plantation in the Mississippi Delta, when the African American tenants left, dissatisfied with the financial arrangements. In an article in the Atlantic Monthly in May 1903, Stone claimed their leaving his plantation was a reflection of “a migratory instinct” stemming from their ancient past on the African savannas and an indication of a shiftless character. Following the publication of the article, Stone was identified nationally as a “Negrophobist,” “embittered by race prejudice,” and “a Negro hater.”

Why should we recall these shameful episodes of white supremacy and the agonized responses of African Americans? Certainly, it makes us realize the evil and brutal injustice perpetrated during the eras of slavery and legal segregation and how improvements were made step by step, ache by ache. At the same time one would expect that in the year 2000, when the Human Genome Project revealed all human beings, regardless of “race,” to be more than 99.9 percent identical, the pseudoscience of polygenesis would finally be put to rest. Professor of law Dorothy Roberts, in a recent book, Fatal Invention: How Science and Big Business Recreate Race in the Twenty-First Century points out that medical researchers and police departments have seized the 0.1 percent variation to argue that black people are more prone to certain diseases and criminal behavior than white people, even though white people have defined what is “criminal behavior.” Roberts cites assertions by medical researchers that “black” children are more susceptible to asthma than “white” children; that “Nigerians, Jamaicans, and African Americans are all genetically prone to high blood pressure”; that black women are more susceptible to breast tumors than white women; that young black men are more at risk for becoming gang members and for using weapons than young white men; and similar views. Roberts argues that these “flawed ideologies” promoting human inequality do not take into account environmental and sociological causes for diseases and behaviors, and are leading to deep cuts in health and human welfare programs, thus, putting the United States “on a course of social inhumanity.”

But Molly Rogers’s intention in Delia’s Tears was not merely to expose the fallacy of polygenesis, but to say to seven people who were photographed: “You are NOT a different species; you are fully human with souls, minds, feelings, and visions. If given opportunities, you are capable of great accomplishments. It is not fair that you had to suffer this painful humiliation.”

In February 2011, at a discussion of Delia’s Tears at Yale University, Tamara Lanier and her sister Cynthia Lanier-Fitzpatrick of Norwich, Connecticut, made the claim that they were the great-great-granddaughters of Renty Taylor, one of the
people in the Peabody Museum daguerreotypes. Although their claim has not yet been accepted by Molly Rogers or the curators of the Peabody Museum, Tamara Lanier has persisted and gathered much evidence that “Papa Renty, the African,” whose story was passed down to her by her mother and grandmother, and the “Renty” in the daguerreotypes are one and the same person. Lanier is writing a book about Papa Renty, who was enslaved on the Taylor Plantation in South Carolina, and had a son named Renty Taylor, who took the name “Renty Thompson” after being sold south to the Thompson Plantation in Alabama. Papa Renty was remembered as a man of great accomplishment who taught himself to read and then educated others. Lanier told a reporter for the New London Day (CT), “I was shocked when I saw the pictures—how piercingly painful it was—you can see the burdens of slavery in their eyes, and posturing . . . but a lot was familiar about those pictures. There was a striking family resemblance.”

Lanier’s quest to prove her heritage has taken her to the village of Grindenwald in the Swiss Alps where there is a mountain named for Louis Agassiz. A group of European anti-apartheid activists have been attempting to change the name of “Agassizhorn” to “Rentyhorn.” In July of 2012, permission was granted to the group for an exhibition to honor Renty that will also expose Louis Agassiz’s racial past. Lanier and her family attended the exhibit, but for all concerned there was one great disappointment: Harvard University’s Peabody Museum would not allow the daguerreotypes to be displayed. In response, the exhibition team displayed silhouettes based on the images with captions saying in essence, “Harvard didn’t want you to see the real thing.”

The Boston Globe defended Agassiz, stating that his racist views were “not extraordinarily different from the racism displayed by many of his contemporaries. . . . In 1873, Agassiz was considered America’s leading scientist.” Hans Barth, a philosopher and journalist from Fribourg, Switzerland, who arranged for Lanier’s visit, passionately responded to the Globe:

But who could have condemned Louis Agassiz? . . . Can one expect the Euro-Americans who held millions of Africans in slavery to condemn a man who tells the world that those Blacks do not have the same biological origin and will be forever inferior to Whites? . . . Agassiz was able to dress up in scientific and even religious clothing the basis of U.S. policy at that time . . . the genocide committed on the First Nations and the immensely profitable racial exploitation of millions of Africans. . . . I don’t know if there is any unquestionable evidence for the filiations from Renty to Tamara. . . . But I feel the tremendous symbolic value of saying: yes. Those enslaved people are our family. . . .

In Grindenwald, Lanier met two Congolese families who invited her to travel with them to the Congo where she can further trace the roots of Papa Renty. The publication of Delia’s Tears and individuals such as Tamara Lanier can inspire
others to trace their ancestry even though the research may unearth more examples of “man’s inhumanity to man.”

NOTES

2 From a poem by Robert Burns, “Man Was Made to Mourn: A Dirge.”
3 Molly Rogers, Delia’s Tears: Race, Science and Photography in Nineteenth-Century America. (New Haven, CT, 2010), 17. Page numbers for quoted material are placed in parenthesis in the text.
4 Moss, who served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, underwent his change of complexion in 1792. There was great speculation on the cause of his transformation and Moss made a great deal of money by displaying himself to the public. Rogers suggests, “Henry Moss’s transformation was probably due to vitiligo, or leukoderma, a condition related to albinism that today affects about 1 to 2 percent of the world’s population” (60).
5 Few people accepted the authenticity of the Feejee Mermaid. The Reverend Dr. John Bachman of Charleston, South Carolina, a Lutheran pastor and also a zoologist and ornithologist, decided emphatically in a letter published in the Charleston Mercury, “The mermaid is a clumsy affair. . . . The seams are not sufficiently covered to conceal the point of union between Fish and Monkey even through a glass case.” Bachman, however, had a hard time proving his case because Barnum refused to allow the mermaid to be examined outside of her glass case (79).
6 Dorothy Roberts, Fatal Invention: How Science and Big Business Recreate Race in the Twenty-First Century (New York, 2011), 33. Roberts includes these details about Morton’s findings. Rogers indicated that it took many years before Morton would admit to a theory of separate species. William H. Tucker noted that George Morton in Types of Mankind (1854) based his conclusion that Africans were less intelligent on the finding that they had smaller skulls. According to Tucker, Morton’s conclusion was flawed: “For example, at one point Morton used a female sample of ‘Hottentots’ and a male sample of Englishmen to support the superiority of the latter. Larger people have larger skulls, but certainly body size is no indicator of intelligence.” William H. Tucker, The Science and Politics of Racial Research (Urbana, IL, 1994), 19–20.
7 See also Roberts, Fatal Invention, 32.
9 Of Types of Mankind, Rogers writes, “[It] was a compendium of practically everything that had ever been said on the subject of race” (261). In Types of Mankind, Nott wrote, “No two distinctly-marked races can dwell together on equal terms. Each race had its destiny, and the destiny of the white race was to lord over all others” (261).
10 Of Nott, Rogers writes, “Nott believed that Africans were inherently inferior to light-skinned peoples and that they were incapable of elevation. . . . His approach, however, was anything but scientific, at least by current standards. Nott never conducted research . . . ” as others had done (181–182).
12 In 1837, shortly after the burning of his church, Easton wrote, A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the U. States and Prejudice Exercised Towards Them, indicating how white people were indoctrinated from early childhood to hate and fear black people. He argued, “Whites would have to recognize the causes of their prejudice and accept black people as fellow Americans.” God and nature, for Easton, were different entities, one was the Supreme Being, the other his creation and variation was simply a function of natural law, Hosea Easton, Treatise (Boston, 1837), in Price and Stewart, To Heal the Scourge of Prejudice: The Life and Writings of Hosea Easton (Amherst, MA, 1999), 105–106, quoted in Rogers, Delia’s Tears, 151–152.
13 Rogers bases her supposition that Elizabeth Cabot Cary may not have shared Agassiz’s belief in polygenesis upon letters written to him just prior to their marriage (210–211).
15 Ibid., 258.
16 Ibid., 260. Fredrickson’s book came out in 1971 and reflected the concern of historians with extreme racism prevalent in American society in response to the emerging new black militancy. He apologized in the introduction to the 1987 reprint for not giving “greater tolerance for past white efforts to better the situation for blacks.”


20Russwurm’s testimony is from *Freedom’s Journal* and is quoted in Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind*, 29.

21Ibid., 39.

22Ibid., 8.


24Ibid.


26Alfred Holt Stone, “The Mulatto Factor in the Race Problem,” *Atlantic Monthly* 91 (May 1903): 658–63, quoted in Hollandsworth, *Portrait of a Scientific Racist*, 67, 122. Stone’s experiment at Dunleith in the Mississippi Delta was compared by Booker T. Washington to an experiment on a 4,500-acre plantation in Macon County, Alabama, managed by William V. Chambliss, a Tuskegee graduate. “The property was owned by the Southern Improvement Company, a group of northern investors interested in supporting Booker T. Washington’s effort to demonstrate that African Americans could succeed as independent farmers if provided with decent land and affordable financing.” The land was divided into tracts averaging forty to eighty acres and sold to black farmers on a lease-purchase arrangement. Under this arrangement, the farmers would pay rent, either as a share of the crop or cash, and after seven years, the farmers would own the land. Unlike Stone’s experiment, this project proved very successful, Hollandsworth, *Portrait of a Scientific Racist*, 264.

27Ibid., 128.


