THE SCIENTISM OF DR. SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON,
FORMER QUAKER

Samuel George Morton
The Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith (1750-1819) issued his influential *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*... in which he argued that the intellectual and moral condition to which black people had been reduced in America was due entirely to “the humiliating circumstances in which they find themselves,” and was thus merely temporary, just as the color of their skin was due to their long exposure to the tropical sun and thus eventually could be expected to fade into a civilized and comely whiteness. Race, in other words, was mutable, rather than being an inflexible biological category. This sort of thinking would be prevalent in the USA right up into the 1830s. The Reverend Smith’s treatise would be republishable, for instance, in 1810, without great controversy. The initial challenge would come from Dr. Charles Caldwell (1772-1853) in a treatise entitled *Thoughts on the Original Unity of the Human Race*, and then the environmentalist position would be demolished in 1839 by the craniological analyses of Professor Samuel George Morton’s *Crania Americana; Or, a Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America: To Which is Prefixed an Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species. Illustrated by Seventy-eight Plates and a Coloured Map* (Philadelphia PA: J. Dobson).

June 25, 1852: What a mean & wretched creature is man by & by some Dr Morton may be filling your cranium with white mustard seed to learn its internal capacity. Of all the ways invented to come at a knowledge of a living man — this seems to me the worst — as it is the most belated. You would learn more by once paring the toe nails of the living subject. There is nothing out of which the spirit has more completely departed — & in which it has left fewer significant traces.

January 26, Saturday: Samuel George Morton was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a birthright Quaker. He would be educated in the strictest school of orthodox Friends (which is to say, the anti-Hicksites) but in mid-life would turn Episcopalian (we don’t know whether he turned Episcopalian before, at the same time as, or after he turned racist).
Dr. Richard Harlan was appointed a physician in the Philadelphia Almshouse, where he would remain in practice until he would decide, in 1838, to relocate to France.

A Colored Orphan Asylum was created in Philadelphia. Of course, no such faculty would be needed in Boston.¹

A student of Dr. Joseph Parrish, Samuel George Morton, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. After earning an advanced degree from Edinburgh University in Scotland in 1823, he would begin the practice of medicine at Philadelphia in 1824. From 1839 to 1843, he would be the Professor of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania.

In Philadelphia, construction began on the foundations and walls of the Eastern State Penitentiary. William Strickland was fired from his job overseeing the construction and John Haviland, the architect who had created the design for the building, was hired to replace him.

Samuel George Morton received a degree in medicine at Edinburgh University in Scotland.

Dr. Samuel George Morton began the practice of medicine at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He became a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Dr. Samuel George Morton’s initial medical essay, on the user of cornine in intermittent fever, appeared in the Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences.

¹. In 1838 a mob of Philadelphians, persuaded that “nigger charity” was not different from throwing money away, would torch this orphanage. We don’t know whether Dr. Morton would have agreed with this sort of sentiment, but we do know that he supposed black people to be essentially and necessarily inferior to white people — and therefore somewhat less entitled to consideration.
September 24, Thursday: James St. Clair Morton was born, a son of Dr. Samuel George Morton (he was not a Quaker; he would graduate at the United States Military Academy on 1851, enter the Corps of Engineers, be an assistant professor of Engineering at the academy in 1855-1857; he would publish in 1856 “An Essay on Instruction in Engineering,” in 1857 “An Essay on a New System of Fortifications,” in 1858 “Memoir on Fortification,” in 1859 “Dangers and Defences of New York City,” and in 1860 “Life of Major John Saunders, of the Engineers”; he would explore the Chiriquin country of Central America for a railroad route across the isthmus in 1860 by authority of the federal Congress, and after that take charge of the work on the Washington aqueduct; he would superintend the fortifying of Tortugas during March 1861, be promoted to captain, and during May 1862 report to General Don Carlos Buell as chief engineer of the Army of the Ohio; he would become during October 1862 the chief engineer of the Army of the Cumberland, and command its bridge brigade, becoming Brigadier-General of Volunteers on November 29, 1862; he would construct the intrenchments about Murfreesboro, Tennessee, participate in the capture of Chattanooga, be wounded at Chickamauga Creek, and superintend engineering operations under General William S. Rosecrans; he would be promoted to Major of Engineers during July 1863, be chief engineer of the 9th Army Corps during the Richmond campaign of 1864, and participate in the battles of North Anna, Tolopotomy, and Bethesda Church; he would be killed in the lead of an attack during the Union assault on Petersburg, Virginia on June 17, 1864 and, posthumously, be awarded the brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel).

Four schools opened in Baltimore — separate schools for boys and girls in the east end, and separate schools for boys and girls in the west end.

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

5th day Attended the Monthly Meeting in Newport which was a season of some exercise to me - feeling it my duty to enter a good deal into the concerns of business before them & withall my own Certificate of removal to Providence was granted. - There is that existing in R I Moy [Monthly] Meeting that excites real fear in my mind that things are getting into a dangerous state among them
Oh this naughty Spirit of striving to be the greatest & of the most account in the World or society – Dined with Br David Rodman
— Spent 6th & 7th days at Newport visiting my friends & attending to some business I had there & in the time went to Portsmouth to visit my Uncle & Aunt Stanton who were very glad to see me. John went to Providence on 6th day & I staid till First day morning when I got on board the Steam Boat & got to the Institution so as to attend the Afternoon Meeting. — Found John & his Mother Well & enjoying the company of each other very sweetly...
Dr. Samuel George Morton began to collect human skulls, as illustrations for a lecture “The Different Forms of the Skull as exhibited in the Five Races of Man.” Eventually he would own a collection of some 1,500 specimens, some 900 of them human (his collection is now at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and is of value to every student of hat sizes).

1830

1044 Embalmed head of a Theban lady of 30 years. Mr. Gliddon.
This head, with its long oval cranium, receding forehead, gently aqualine nose, retracted chin, and long, fine hair, may serve as a type of the pure Egyptian stock; a people indigenous to the valley of the Nile; Caucasian in physical lineaments and philological relations, and constituting one of the several primordial centres of that widely-extended race. See Crania Ægyptiaca, page 17, 37; and Transactions of the Ethnological Society of New York, Vol. 2, p. 219.
Dr. Samuel George Morton’s SYNOPSIS OF THE ORGANIC REMAINS OF THE CRETACEOUS GROUP OF THE UNITED STATES, and his ILLUSTRATIONS OF PULMONARY CONSUMPTION.

August 8, Saturday: Penny Magazine:

http://www.history.rochester.edu/pennymag/215.htm

From this day until the 14th, David Lee Child and Lydia Maria Child accompanied George Thompson to New-York, intending to travel with him to England to work for British anti-slavery societies. Before they could depart, David was arrested for debt and thus they would need to spend the following six months boarding with the Quaker family of farmers, Joseph and Margaret Carpenter, in New Rochelle. “David’s partner on the Massachusetts Journal and Tribune, George Snelling, not content with leaving the whole burden of the newspaper’s debts to his associate, had filed suit against him and procured an injunction against letting David leave the country. Overcome with humiliation and disappointment, Child had sat down and wept on the quay.”

Thomas George Morton was born in Philadelphia, a son of Dr. Samuel George Morton.2

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

7th day - Met with the Meeting for Sufferings & Trustees of O B Fund - dined at Wm Jenkins’s & after attending to a little buisness in the Town I returned to the School House- & lodged there. -

2. He seems not to have been a Quaker. He would be educated at the University of Pennsylvania and graduate in the medical department there in 1856. He would practice general surgery in Philadelphia for the next three years, actively engage during the Civil War in the establishment of military hospitals, and be a surgeon at Satterlee hospital, and consulting surgeon to the United States army hospital, Chesnut Hill, Pennsylvania. He would hold offices in numerous other hospitals, including the Orthopedic, of which he would be the originator. In 1876 he would be appointed a commissioner to erect a branch of the Pennsylvania Insane Asylum for the state’s southern district, and be chairman of its committee on plans and buildings. He would be chosen president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Restriction of Vivisection in 1880, and vice-president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children the same year, be appointed a Commissioner of Pennsylvania Public Charities in 1883, and chairman of the Committee of Lunacy in 1886. He would introduce the ward-carriage into the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1866, the bed-elevator and carriage in 1874, and in 1876 receive the Centennial medal awarded for hospital ward dressing-carriage. He would publish numerous professional papers in the American Journal of the Medical Sciences and Pennsylvania Hospital Reports. He would publish LECTURE ON THE TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION (New York, 1877); he and Dr. William Hunt would prepare SURGERY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL (Philadelphia, 1880); and he would publish TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION (New York, 1887).
1327 **Australian** of Port St. Philip, New South Wales.
This man, whose name was Durabub, was killed in a fray after having himself killed two savages of a hostile tribe, A. D. 1841. His skull is the nearest approach to the Orang type that I have seen. Ælat. 40. I. C. 81.

![Australian Skull](image)

**Australian, No. 1327.**


![Calapooyah Skull](image)

**Calapooyah, No. 574:**
The Phrenological Association met in Birmingham.

Hiram Powers finished his white marble bust of President Andrew Jackson, for which Jackson had sat to be modeled from life while at the White House at the age of 68. “Make me as I am,” the old man had instructed, which pretty well excluded carving the bust out of ebony, perhaps even out of hickory! The bust is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It would be interesting to determine how craniologically PC or non-PC this bust is, in consideration of contemporaneous phrenological theory.

Dr. Charles Caldwell, a racist who was a professor at a university in Kentucky, had at this point become the most popular phrenologist in America partly by pandering to the American need for a scientific legitimation of genocide.

Who knows what the white man knows?  
— The white man knows.

However, the mainline American scientific establishment—under the leadership of the American school of ethnology based in Philadelphia—would over the course of the next ten years take this cudgel away from phrenology, by developing their own scientific legitimations for genocide that could not so easily be dismissed as a sideshow-tent fad. You may have been exposed, in your early schooling, to some of this ethnological material, in the strange scientific case study called “the Dukes versus the Kalikaks” — in which the names of two Appalachian families were changed in order to protect innocent victims of scientific study and in order to protect guilty perpetrators of scientific fraud. In this day and age, to be against slavery was to be antiscientific. In this year Alexander Kinmont’s TWELVE LECTURES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MAN and Professor...
Samuel George Morton’s *Crania Americana: Or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America; To Which Is Prefixed An Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species. Illustrated by Seventy-Eight Plates and a Coloured Map* (Philadelphia: J. Dobson) changed the American focus for such theorizing, by supposedly demonstrating that the inferiority of the Native American race was based on breeding rather than on environment, a conclusion supported by detailed scientific examination of the world’s largest collection of human skulls (world’s largest in pre-Nazi times, that is).

The intellectual faculties of this great family appear to be of a decidedly inferior cast when compared with those of the Caucasian or Mongolian races.

*CRANIA AMERICANA*

Henry David Thoreau would read and make notes on Professor Morton’s *Crania Americana*, including in his notes the professor’s remark that the American Indians “have made but trifling progress in mental culture or the useful arts.”

“Scientists have power by virtue of the respect commanded by the discipline. We may therefore be sorely tempted to misuse that power in furthering a personal prejudice or social goal — why not provide that extra oomph by extending the umbrella of science over a personal preference in ethics or politics?”

— Stephen Jay Gould

*BULLY FOR BRONTOSAURUS*


The prevailing viewpoint in America had for many years been that attitude enunciated by the Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith (1750-1819) in his influential 1787 treatise, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*... in which he had argued that the intellectual and moral condition of black people in America had been produced by “the humiliating circumstances in which they find themselves” just as the color of their skin had been produced by their long exposure to the African sun and thus eventually could be expected under better conditions to fade to whiteness. Race, in other words, rather than constituting an inflexible biological category, had been considered to be mutable. This presumption was apparently being demolished at this point by the “objective” craniological analyses being presented in such great detail in Dr. Morton’s treatise.

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your cranium with white mustard seed to learn its internal capacity.
Of all the ways invented to come at a knowledge of a living man — this seems to me the worst — as it is the
most belated. You would learn more by once paring the toe nails of the living subject. There is nothing out of
which the spirit has more completely departed — & in which it has left fewer significant traces.

In CRANIA AMERICANA Professor Morton divided humankind primarily into four races with the following
racial characteristics:3

- **Europeans:** “The Caucasian Race is characterized by a naturally fair skin, susceptible of every tint;
hair fine, long and curling, and of various colors. The skull is large and oval, and its anterior
portion full and elevated. The face is small in proportion to the head, of an oval form, with well-
proportioned features.... This race is distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest
intellectual endowments.... The spontaneous fertility of [the Caucasus] has rendered it the hive of
many nations, which extending their migrations in every direction, have peopled the finest portions
of the earth, and given birth to its fairest inhabitants....”

- **Asians:** “This great division of the human species is characterized by a sallow or olive colored
skin, which appears to be drawn tight over the bones of the face; long black straight hair, and thin
beard. The nose is broad, and short; the eyes are small, black, and obliquely placed, and the
eyebrows are arched and linear; the lips are turned, the cheek bones broad and flat.... In their
intellectual character the Mongolians are ingenious, imitative, and highly susceptible of cultivation
[i.e. learning]....So versatile are their feelings and actions, that they have been compared to the
monkey race, whose attention is perpetually changing from one object to another....”

- **Native Americans:** “The American Race is marked by a brown complexion; long, black, lank hair;
and deficient beard. The eyes are black and deep set, the brow low, the cheekbones high, the nose
large and aquiline, the mouth large, and the lips tumid [swollen] and compressed.... In their mental
character the Americans are averse to cultivation, and slow in acquiring knowledge; restless,
revengeful, and fond of war, and wholly destitute of maritime adventure. They are crafty, sensual,
ungrateful, obstinate and unfeeling, and much of their affection for their children may be traced to
purely selfish motives. They devour the most disgusting [foods] uncooked and uncleaned, and seem
to have no idea beyond providing for the present moment.... Their mental faculties, from infancy to
old age, present a continued childhood.... [Indians] are not only averse to the restraints of
education, but for the most part are incapable of a continued process of reasoning on abstract
subjects....”

- **Africans:** “Characterized by a black complexion, and black, woolly hair; the eyes are large and
prominent, the nose broad and flat, the lips thick, and the mouth wide; the head is long and narrow,
the forehead low, the cheekbones prominent, the jaws protruding, and the chin small. In disposition
the Negro is joyous, flexible, and indolent; while the many nations which compose this race present
a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of
humanity.... The moral and intellectual character of the Africans is widely different in different
nations.... The Negroes are proverbially fond of their amusements, in which they engage with great
exuberance of spirit; and a day of toil is with them no bar to a night of revelry. Like most other
barbarous nations their institutions are not infrequently characterized by superstition and cruelty.
They appear to be fond of warlike enterprises, and are not deficient in personal courage; but, once
overcome, they yield to their destiny, and accommodate themselves with amazing facility to every
change of circumstance. The Negroes have little invention, but strong powers of imitation, so that
they readily acquire mechanic arts. They have a great talent for music, and all their external senses
are remarkably acute.”

3. Professor Morton claimed to be able to evaluate the intellectual capacity of a race as a function of its skull volume. A large skull
meant a large brain and high intellectual capacity, and a small skull indicated a small brain and decreased intellectual capacity.
Of course, since female skull sizes are smaller than male skull sizes ... but I don’t know that Professor Morton went there.
In this year Dr. Samuel George Morton was made Professor of Anatomy at Pennsylvania College (later to be known as the University of Pennsylvania).

Professor Samuel George Morton’s *Crania Aegyptiaca; or, Observations on Egyptian Ethnography, Derived from Anatomy, History, and the Monuments* (Philadelphia: J. Penington) was principally based on a collection of 98 heads provided by George Robins Gliddon from the tombs and catacombs of Egypt.4

Dr. William T.G. Morton of Farmington, Connecticut studied dentistry under Horace Wells.

4. Professor Morton concluded from his study of the ancient Egyptian skulls that they had been not Africans, but white people.
1327 Australian of Port St. Philip, New South Wales.
This man, whose name was Durabub, was killed in a
dray after having himself killed two savages of a hostile
tribe, A. D. 1841. His skull is the nearest approach
to the Orang type that I have seen. Ætat. 40. I. C.
81.

Australian, No. 1327.

574 Indian of the Calapooyah tribe of Oregon: artificially
Dr. J. K. Townsend. Crania Americana, plate 47 and
page 212.

Calapooyah, No. 574.
In this year the *Phrenological Journal* announced that among nations, as among individuals, force of character is determined by the average size of head; and that the larger-headed nations manifest their superior power, by subjecting and ruling their smaller-headed brethren — as the British in Asia, for example.

Ever careful of the sensitivities of its subscribers, who might for some reason have tender feelings toward their wives, this journal forbore to belabor the obvious, that their average reader’s manly brain was considerably more massive and ponderous than that of his sweet little wife. Their point, after all, was “We can dominate foreigners,” and they all already knew “We can domesticate domestics.” And in Europe, Louis Agassiz, a professor at Neuchâtel, declared, in regard to the collection of human skulls that Samuel George Morton had created in Philadelphia in order to demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt the basic differences between human races, that

(It’s worth a journey to America because it reassures us that we white people are inherently superior to any and all other people, irregardless of whether we comport ourselves with decency.)
“Scientists have power by virtue of the respect commanded by the discipline. We may therefore be sorely tempted to misuse that power in furthering a personal prejudice or social goal — why not provide that extra oomph by extending the umbrella of science over a personal preference in ethics or politics?”

— Stephen Jay Gould

BULLY FOR BRONTOSAURUS

When Louis Agassiz emigrated to the USA to become professor of zoology and geology at Harvard College, Asa Gray promptly escorted him to Philadelphia to meet the famous scientific racist Professor Samuel George Morton.

(In this year Professor Morton’s “Observations on the Ethnology and Archaeology of the American Aborigines” appeared in Silliman’s Journal.)

Professor Agassiz would found the American Association for the Advancement of Science as a vehicle for advancing his covert agenda of favoring the laboratory scientist over the field scientist and the technician/specialist over the generalist5 and would then condemn Charles Darwin’s development theory as not only “mischievous” but also “unscientific.” He would also enact his overtly declared agenda to preserve the racial purity of our nation’s schools, starting with his own elementary school in which the Emerson children were

5. To his credit, Henry Thoreau would suspiciously decline to become involved with this group of people.
being educated, and with the sacred halls and classrooms of Harvard.

Not strangely, this scientist was a follower of the theory of the progressive development of types associated with the name of Jean-Baptiste de Monet de Lamarck, or “Lamarckism,” which was merely a 19th-Century adaptation of the old doctrine of the “great scale of being” (Scala Natura) according to which all of nature reflects human society, some obviously being worth more than others. As an illustration of how such belief systems functioned at that time, Elias Hicks had asserted in a sermon of December 1, 1824 in Philadelphia that “We are on a level with all the rest of God’s creatures.” After theories of evolution had become current, an adherent of a Lamarckian theory put on the hat “objective scientist” to attack such “leveller” allegations as being not only theologically pernicious, but also scientifically false. As a mere lay person, a nonscientist, Friend Elias did not understand, this scientist declared, that some current forms of life have been shown by science to be more advanced, and others more primitive, on the great scale of being! It is not amusing, but profoundly saddening, to see professed scientists oppose the trends that would become established in their own disciplines, and watch them lump Waldo Emerson together with Friend Elias as unscientific thinkers — in order to legitimate social agendas of viciousness such as black slavery. And, likewise, it is notable that some gifted amateurs like Henry Thoreau were able to get past this scientistic smoke screen. What was it in Thoreau’s spirit that enabled him to be a better scientist than some of the most accredited scientists of his day?

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I asked what it was in Friend Elias’s spirit, and then in Henry’s spirit, that enabled them to be better scientists than some of the most accredited American scientists of their day. Yes, I do have a theory — can you figure out what it is?

Lola Montez fled her situation as countess of Landsfeld and mistress to King Ludwig I in the midst of riotous demonstrations against her; the furor she had helped to create by her liberal and anti-Jesuitical influence upon him then forced his own abdication.

Hermann Ludwig von Helmholtz (1821-1894) articulated a doctrine that would later travel under the rubric “Conservation of Energy,” in his Über die Erhaltung der Kraft (“ON THE CONSERVATION OF FORCE”). The heat generated by muscles can be accounted for as the result of a complex chemical reaction that is more similar to than dissimilar from any of the very simple heat-producing chemical reactions that might occur when a chemist pours some one non-organic chemical into some other non-organic chemical in a test tube in a lab. There is therefore no need for any inventive or elaborate or special “vitalistic” explanation. In this same year, using a device that continuously measured blood pressure, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm found that the circulation of the blood was a mere fluidic process that could be fully explained in ordinary physical terms.

Benjamin Disraeli, future prime minister, proposed in Tancred, or the New Crusade that All is race; there is no other truth.
In other words, white is right and (–oh, incidentally, you must know that) Jews are Caucasians rather than Semites.

Professor Louis Agassiz accepted a professorship of zoology at Harvard College. In this year, also, appeared his *An Introduction to the Study of Natural History, in a Series of Lectures Delivered in the Hall of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York. By Professor Agassiz. Illustrated with Numerous Engravings. Also, a Biographical Notice of the Author* (New-York: Greeley & McElrath, Tribune Buildings).

His former student Charles Frédéric Girard followed Professor Agassiz to Harvard, as an assistant.

In this year, also, the German traveler Johann J. von Tschudi was offering in his *Travels in Peru, During the Years 1838-1842 on the Coast, and in the Sierra, Across the Cordilleras and the Andes, into the Primeval Forests*, just then being published in London in English translation, racist remarks which would subsequently be brought forward in such accounts as Dr. Josiah Clark Nott’s and George Robins Gliddon’s foundational textbook of the new racist American anthropology, to be published in London in 1854, *Types of Mankind: Or, Ethnological Researches, Based Upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and Upon Their Natural, Geographical,*
Professor Samuel George Morton’s “Hybridity in Plants and Animals considered in reference to the Question of the Unity of the Human Species” appeared in Silliman’s Journal. The author concluded that from the standpoint of the science of biology, all members of our species needed to be considered to be parts of the same human family — regardless of race.

Professor Samuel George Morton’s AN ILLUSTRATED SYSTEM OF HUMAN ANATOMY, SPECIAL, GENERAL, AND MICROSCOPIC (Philadelphia).

Professor Samuel George Morton became President of the Academy of Natural Sciences.

George Robins Gliddon, the American vice-consul to Alexandria, Egypt in 1832, had organized a small
shipment of mummies from a friend in Egypt.

In this year this collection of antique desiccated human corpses was placed on exhibit in Boston, and would be viewed by, among others, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the Reverend Professor Jared Sparks, Doctor Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Professor Louis Agassiz.

George Robins Gliddon’s INDIGENOUS RACES OF THE EARTH (in conjunction with Dr. Josiah Clark Nott and others). Also, his ANCIENT EGYPT.

While at the AAAS meeting of scientists in Charleston arguing on behalf of the idea that the races of man were separately created, Professor Agassiz found he was much, much more welcome than the Hoars of Concord had been in 1844, when they had visited this port to protest the systematic imprisonment of innocent free northern black sailors. The good people of Charleston knew a kindred white soul when they saw one. Agassiz was trustworthy, he was a friend, they knew what conclusions he would arrive at after seeing the evidence: he was invited to visit their plantations and to inspect their black slaves. He commissioned a series of daguerreotypes of type specimens, and then these shockingly invasive and unsettling photographs lay in a box at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology for many, many years, until they were rediscovered in 1977 — long after the Harvard institution had conveniently forgotten all about the rabid “scientific” racism of one of its illustrious father figures.

THE HOARS
CONCORD’S “ROYAL FAMILY”

EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS
"Scientists have power by virtue of the respect commanded by the discipline. We may therefore be sorely tempted to misuse that power in furthering a personal prejudice or social goal — why not provide that extra oomph by extending the umbrella of science over a personal preference in ethics or politics?"

— Stephen Jay Gould

BULLY FOR BRONTOSAURUS


Coincidentally, this was the year in which the astronomer Maria Mitchell was installed as an honorary member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.6

Subsequent to the death of his 1st wife, Professor Agassiz remarried with the writer Elizabeth Cabot Cary of Boston, a promoter of education for females. During this year he prepared his volume LAKE SUPERIOR.

6. How could she, not only as a woman but also as an abolitionist, have been acceptable to these good ol’ white racist boys? — Did they maybe notice that she wore a skirt but neglect to notice that she was wearing nothing made of cotton cloth because such cotton cloth was a product of the slave system? No, that wasn’t what it was, what it was was that she was not becoming a member, but only an honorary member. On her printed certificate, signed by the scientist Asa Gray, the salutation “Sir” had needed to be struck through and above it penned the substitute “Madam,” which is not particularly problematic, but also, the word “fellow” had needed to be struck through — and what had been substituted for this was the invidious descriptor “honorary member.” — There’s a big difference between an honorable member and an honorary member, and the difference is that a woman is not a real human being because an honorary member is not a real member. The lady scientist has eyes and can see a comet and a tongue and can report a comet, but she lacks a penis and therefore cannot interfere with processes of reality formation.
Wendell Phillips, who was noticeably reluctant and uncomfortable when it came to sharing quarters with black abolitionists while on lecture tours, knew very well that the abolitionist struggle, for white abolitionists, had nothing whatever to do with a desire to improve the conditions of life available to black Americans. At this point he gave his game away by declaring to his white friends:

“My friends, if we never freed a slave, we have at least freed ourselves in the effort to emancipate our brother man.”

Obviously, the name of Wendell’s game would be Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother’s-Keeper. (Let the names of our favorite games be accurately descriptive! :-)

It is to be noted that this was the game that was being played in Virginia as well during this year, for there was a new law being put in effect which would oblige free blacks to leave that State of grace within a year — or be reduced again to slavery. The local version of Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother’s-Keeper, being played down south, was Go-Be-Free-Somewhere-Else, and the local version being played up north was At-Least-We-Tried-And-Are-Now-Therefore-Among-The-Righteous — but these slightly differing versions amount to very much the same sort of stupid racist bag of tricks of What-Is-Of-The-Last-Importance-Is-The-White-Man’s-Righteousness.
7. Has it become clear to you, in view of the above, why, when in 1842 the surviving 35 of the black privateers of the Amistad mutiny had been sent back to Africa aboard the bark Gentleman, they had been sent home as mere charity wards with nobody ever thinking to return to them their prize schooner La Amistad admittedly worth $70,000 — which they had won fair and square with their blood, sweat, and tears? For sure, had it been 35 surviving free white privateers, they would not have been denied this booty which belonged to them, but because they were instead free blacks, it never even occurred to any of the white players in this legal drama to give them their prize schooner back! One of the open issues of this drama, therefore, is: what happened to the La Amistad? Where did this valuable piece of property go? Which white men were allowed to profit from it? Our history books are, of course, silent. This is a question which, due to the ingrained nature of our race prejudice, it has never occurred to us to pose:

“In those parts of the Union in which the negroes are no longer slaves, they have in no wise drawn nearer to the whites. On the contrary, the prejudice of the race appears to be stronger in the States which have abolished slavery ... and nowhere is it so intolerant as in those States where servitude has never been known.”

— Alexis de Tocqueville
Surprise surprise! It was a white man’s game in which the person of color was but a pawn.8

Here the executive committee of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society position themselves around Robert Purvis during this year. I don’t mean to suggest that all of these folks would have totally agreed with Phillips or with his white-man’s-game of Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother’s-Keeper. I only mean to insist that that was in fact the predominant, most influential white attitude:

During this year was published in Philadelphia PA by the firm of Campbell & Powers John Campbell’s NEGRO-MANIA: BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE FALSELY ASSUMED EQUALITY OF THE VARIOUS RACES OF MEN; DEMONSTRATED BY THE INVESTIGATIONS OF CHAMPOLLION, WILKINSON AND OTHERS, TOGETHER WITH A CONCLUDING CHAPTER, PRESENTING A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE

8. Maybe you don’t agree.
Negroes in the West Indies Before and Since Emancipation.

Surprise surprise! Black people are inferior to white people.²

The first complete gorilla skeleton reached England. Previously, all that had been seen by Europeans had been a few skulls. Clearly, gorilla people were also inferior to white people.

Publication of Dr. Josiah Clark Nott’s An Essay on the Natural History of Mankind, Viewed in Connection with Negro Slavery, Delivered Before the Southern Rights Association, 14 December, 1850.⁹

Professor Samuel George Morton’s Additional Observation on Hybridity.

9. The attitude of the Southern Rights Association seems to have been that black slaves had no Southern rights. The attitude of Dr. Nott seems to have been that one sufficient reason for the appropriateness of such a political fact had been revealed by the science of biology — according to the advice of the most prominent of the learned white practitioners in that field.
May 15: Father Isaac Hecker, CSSR wrote to Orestes Augustus Brownson, Esq.

In approximately this timeframe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sophia Peabody Hawthorne were returning to Concord.

Samuel George Morton died in Philadelphia.

June 13: Charles Wesley Slack wrote from Baltimore, Maryland to Evelina E. Vannevar Slack in Boston, about travel plans, giving an account of relatives.

Henry Thoreau obtained, from the library of the Society of Natural History in Boston, Professor Samuel George Morton’s CRANIA AMERICANA; OR, A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE SKULLS OF VARIOUS ABORIGINAL NATIONS OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA: TO WHICH IS PREFIXED AN ESSAY ON THE VARIETIES OF THE HUMAN SPECIES. ILLUSTRATED BY SEVENTY-EIGHT PLATES AND A COLOURED MAP (Philadelphia: J. Dobson).

He registered a negative impression as to the actual amount of usable information that might be extrapolated from Jonathan Carver’s extensive writings about his travels:

June 13. Sunday. 3 P.M. —To Comantum.

A warm day. It has been cold, and we have had fires the past week sometimes. Clover begins to show red in the fields, and the wild cherry is not out of blossom. The river has a summer midday look, smooth to a cobweb, with green shores, and shade from the trees on its banks. The Viburnum nudum. The oblong leaved sundew, but not its flower. Do the bulbous arethusas last long?

What a sweetness fills the air now in low grounds or meadows, reminding me of times when I went strawberrying years ago! It is as if all meadows were filled with some sweet mint. The Dracæna borealis (Bigelow) ( Clintonia borealis (Gray)) amid the Solomon’s-seals in Hubbard’s Grove Swamp, a very neat and handsome liliaceous flower with three large, regular, spotless, green convallaria leaves, making a triangle from the root, and sometimes a fourth from the scape, linear, with four drooping, greenish-yellow, bell-shaped (?) flowers. Not in sun. In low shady woods. It is a handsome and perfect flower, though not high-colored. I prefer it to some more famous. But Gray should not name it from the Governor of New York. [It was named by Rafinesque.] What is he to the lovers of flowers in Massachusetts? If named after a man, it must be a man of flowers. Rhode Island botanists may as well name the flowers after their governors as New York. Name your canals and railroads after Clinton, if you please, but his name is not associated with flowers. Mosquitoes now trouble the walker in low shady woods. No doubt woodchucks in their burrows hear the steps of walkers through the earth and come not forth. Yellow wood sorrel (Oxalis stricta), which, according to Gray, closes its leaves and droops at nightfall. The woolly aphides on alders whiten one’s clothes now. What is that palmate(?)-leaved water-plant be the Corner causeway, The burl-bean grows in Conant’s meadow. Lambkill is out. I remember with what delight I used to discover this flower in dewy mornings. All things in this world must be seen with the morning cew on them, must be seen with youthful, early-opened, hopeful eyes. Saw four cunning little woodchucks nibbling the short grass, about one third grown, that. live under Conant’s old house. Mistook one for a piece of rusty iron. The Smilax herbacea, carrion-flower, a rank green vine with long-peduncled umbels, with small greenish or yellowish flowers just opening, and tendrils, at the Miles swamp. It smells exactly like a dead rat in the wall, and apparently attracts flies (I find small gnats on it) like carrion. A very remarkable odor; a single minute flower in an umbel open will scent a whole room. Nature imitates all things in flowers. They are at once the most beautiful and the ugliest objects, the most fragrant and the most offensive to the nostrils, etc., etc.
compound-racemed convallaria, being fully out, is white. I put it down too early, perhaps by a week. The great leaves of the bass attract you now, six inches in diameter. The delicate maidenhair fern forms a cup or dish, very delicate and graceful. Beautiful, too, its glossy black stem and its wave-edged fruited leaflets. I hear the feeble plaintive note of young bluebirds, just trying their wings or getting used to them. Young robins peep.

I think I know four kinds of cornel beside the dogwood and bunchberry: one now in bloom, with rather small leaves with a smooth, silky feeling beneath, a greenish-gray spotted stem, in older stocks all gray (Cornus alternifolia? or sericea?); the broad-leaved cornel in Laurel Glen, yet green in the bud (C. circinata?); the small-leaved cornel with a small cyme or corymb, as late to be [sic] as the last, in potter’s hedge and on high hills (C. paniculata); and the red osier by the river (C. stolonifera), which I have not seen this year.

Mosquitoes are first troublesome in the house with sultry nights.

Orobanche uniflora, single-flowered broom-rake (Bigelow), [or] Aphyllon uniflorum, one-flowered cancer-root (Gray). C. found it June 12 at Clematis Brook. Also the common fumitory (?), methinks; it is a fine-leaved small plant.

Captain Jonathan Carver commences his Travels with these words: “In June, 1766, I set out from Boston, and proceeded by way of Albany and Niagara, to Michillimackinac; a Fort situated between the Lakes Huron and Michigan, and distant from Boston 1300 miles. This being the uttermost of our factories towards the northwest, I considered it as the most convenient place from whence I could begin my intended progress, and enter at once into the Regions I designed to explore.” So he gives us no information respecting the intermediate country, nor much, I fear, about the country beyond.

Holbrook says the Emys pitta is the first to be seen in the spring.

(While at that library Thoreau had consulted Volume IV of the 2d edition of Dr. John Edwards Holbrook’s NORTH AMERICAN HERPETOLOGY: OR A DESCRIPTION OF THE REPTILES INHABITING THE UNITED STATES.)

June 25: Henry Thoreau was written to by Horace Greeley in New-York.10

New York
June 25, 1852
Dear Thoreau[
I have had only
bad luck with your
manuscript. Two
Magazines have refused it on the ground of its length, saying that articles ‘To be continued’ are always unpopular, however good. I will try again.

Yours,
Horace Greeley
H. D. Thoreau, Esq.

June 25, 1852: I observe that young birds are usually of a duller color and more speckled than old ones, as if for their protection in their tender state. They have not yet the markings (and the beauty) which distinguish their species, and which betray it often, but by their colors are merged in the variety of colors of the season.

June 25, 1852: What a mean & wretched creature is man by & by some Dr Morton may be filling your cranium with white mustard seed to learn its internal capacity. Of all the ways invented to come at a knowledge of a living man — this seems to me the worst — as it is the most belated. You would learn more by once paring the toe nails of the living subject. There is nothing out of which the spirit has more completely departed — & in which it has left fewer significant traces.

10. William M. White’s version of a journal entry is:

The bullfrogs are of various tones.
Some horse in a distant pasture whinnies;
Dogs bark;
There is that dull, dumping sound of frogs,
As if a bubble
Containing the lifeless sultry air of day
Burst on the surface,
A belching sound.
When two or more bullfrogs trump together,
It is a ten-pound-ten note.
July 9, Friday: Henry Thoreau was extrapolating much invaluable information about antique porcelain inscriptions by reading about the racist skull collection of Professor Samuel George Morton of the University of Pennsylvania, a collection from which over the years we have been able to extrapolate so very much vital data about hat sizes in various parts of the world in various epochs of the human existence (it’s too bad the professor hadn’t thought to make a similar collection that would inform us of variations in corresponding shoe sizes and glove sizes).

Such porcelain objects were not made in China prior to the creation of the 1st porcelain furnace on record, which was in the Kiang-si province at about the beginning of the 7th Century, and presumably had been at some point been brought to Egypt from Nang-chang-fu by Arab traders along the Great Silk Road.
Snuff bottles containing the inscription *hoa kai yu yi nien* or “The flower opens, and lo! another year,” the initial line of a well-known ode to the new year, were common enough in China in that early period. Here are the Chinese characters, to the left in a plainer form, and to the right as the sort of brush strokes that presumably would have appeared on such porcelains:

July 9, Friday: 4 Am– to Cliffs– No dew– no dewy cobwebs– The sky looks mist like not clear blue. An aurora fading into a general saffron color– At length the redness travels over partly from E to W before sunrise & there is little color in the E. The birds all unite to make the morning quire– sing rather faintly not prolonging their strains– The crickets appear to have received a reinforcement during the sultry night. There is no name for the evening red corresponding to aurora. It is the blushing foam about the prow of the sun’s boat– & at eve the same in its wake. I do not often hear the blue bird [Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*] now except at dawn. Methinks we have had no clear winter skies– no skies the color of a robins egg– and pure amber around for some months. These blue berries on Fair Haven have a very innocent ambrosial taste as if made of the ether itself as they plainly are colored with it

I hear the chicadee’s [Black-capped Chickadee *Parus atricapillus*] two wiry notes– The jays [Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*] note resounding along a raw woods side suggests a singular wildness– I hear many scarlet tanagers– the first I have seen this season– which some might mistake for a red eye. A hoarse rough strain comparatively– but more easily caught– owing to its simplicity & sameness. Something like here chip-er-way– here chory chay.

A bobolink. How handsome the leaves of the shrub oak– so clear & unspotted a green so firm & enduring like fame– glossy uninjured by the wind– need for mighty conquerors– and also lighter on the under side which contrast is important. The wood thrush [*Catharus mustelina*] sings on a dead treetop. There is an insect in the froth on the vaccinium vacillans. I see the cistus still. The Amelanchiers is a handsome berry– purplish when ripe, though handsomest when red & inkish next the stem. It must be the cuckoo that makes that half throttled sound at night for I saw one while he made it this morning as he flew from an apple tree when I disturbed him. Those white water lilies– What boats! I toss one into the pan half unfolded & it floats upright like a boat– It is beautiful when half open & also when fully expanded. Methinks I have found the Asclepias obtusifolia– which has long horns & is quite fragrant.

Morton in his *Crania Am.* says –referring to Wilkinson as his authority –that “Vessels of porcelain of Chinese manufacture, have of late been repeatedly found in the catacombs of Thebes, in Egypt” some as old as the Pharaonic period. And the inscriptions on them “have been read with ease by Chinese scholars, and in three instances record the following legend: –The flower opens, and lo! another year.” There is something sublime in the fact that some of the oldest written sentences should thus celebrate the coming in of Spring. How many times have the flowers opened and a new year begun! Hardly a more cheering sentence could have come down to us. How old is spring –a phenomenon still so fresh! Do we perceive any decay in Nature? How much evidence is contained in this short & simple sentence respecting the former inhabitants of this globe! It is a sentence to be inscribed on vessels of porcelain. Suggesting that so many years had gone before. An observation as fit then as now.

3 Pm to Clematis Brook The heat today (as yesterday) is furnace-like– It produces a thickness almost amounting to vapor in the near horizon. The RR men cannot work in the deep cut but have come out onto the cause-way where there is a circulation of air. They tell with a shudder of the heat reflected from the rails.– Yet a breezy wind –as it were born of the heat –rustles all leaves. Those drifting piles of clouds –in the north assuming
interesting forms—of unmeasured rocky Mts—or unfathomed precipices light colored & even downy above but with watery bases—portend a thunder-shower before night. Well I can take shelter in some barn or under a bridge. It shall not spoil my afternoon.

I have scarcely heard one strain from the telegraph harp this season—Its string is rusted & slackened—relaxed, and now no more it encourages the walker I miss it much—So is it with all sublunary things. Every poet’s lyre looses its tension. It cannot bear the alternate contraction & expansion of the seasons.

The lactuca elongata 4 or 5 feet high with its small pale yellow flowers now closed

How intense & suffocating the heat under some sunny woodsides—where no breeze circulates! I go by Well Meadow Head. The tephrosia which still lingers—is remarkable perhaps for the contrast of its bright or clear purple with its cream colored petals. The veratum viride in the swamp is already turned yellow & decaying—and half prostrate. Its fall is already come.

I observe that the feverbush here as on conantum died down last winter. The red-lily with its torrid color & sunfreckled spots—dispensing too with the outer garment of a calyx—its petals so open & wide apart that you can see through it in every direction tells of hot weather—It is a handsome bell shape—so upright & the flower prevails over every other part. It belongs not to spring. It grows in the path by the town bound. It is refreshing to see the surface of Fair Haven rippled with wind. The waves break hear quite as on the sea shore & with the like effects. This little brook makes great sands compositively at its mouth which the waves of the pond wash up & break upon like a sea. The ludwigia palustris water purslane on mud in bottom of dry ditches

Bathing is an undescribed luxury—to feel the wind blow on your body—the water flow on you & love you—is a rare physical enjoyment this hot day. The water is remarkably warm here especially in the shallows—warm to the hand like that which has stood long in a kettle over a fire. The pond water being so warm made the water of the brook feel very cold—and this kept close on the bottom of the pond for a good many rods about the mouth of the brook—as I could feel with my feet—and when I thrust my arm down where it was only 2 feet deep—my arm was in the warm water of the pond, but my hand in the cold water of the brook. The clams are if possible more numerous here, though perhaps smaller than at the shore under the Cliffs. I could collect many bushels of them.

The sandy shore just beyond this is quite yellow with the Utricularia cornuta—the small ranunculus—and the gratiola—all growing together. They make quite a show—A black snake on the sand retreats not into the bushes but into the pond amid the Pontederia. The Rhus glabra is out. At Clematis Pond the small arrowhead in the mud is still bleeding where cows have cropped—In some places the mud is covered with the Ilysanthes gratiolioides False pimpernel—I think it is this—the flower shaped somewhat like a skull-cap (Lindernia of Big)

The bottom of this pond now for the most part exposed—of dark virgin mud soft & moist is an invigorating sight. It is alive with hundreds of small bullfrogs? at my approach which go skipping into the water—Perhaps they were outside for coolness. It is also recently tracked by minks or muskrats in all directions, & by birds. (I should have said that the sand washed down by the brook at Pleasant Meadow covered the muddy bottom of the pond—but where the sandy covering was thin I slumped through it into the mud. I saw there some golden or brownish golden winged devils needles & was struck by the manner in which they held to the tops of the rushes when they alighted—just on one side you would perhaps confound them with the spike? of flowers.) The corylus rostrata beaked hazel with green fruit by Clematis Brook. The milkweeds—syriacas chiefly are now in full flower by the ditch just beyond—and fill the air with a strong scent—5 or 6 feet high—The A. obtusifolia has a handsome waved or curled leaf—and methinks more fragrant flowers. By this ditch also grows the Sisymbrium amphibium amphibious cress of Big (apparently Nasturtium palustre of Gray though the pods are tipped with a conspicuous style and are not to be compared for length with the pedicels) It has the aspect & the taste of mustard. A rather high plant in water.

That large Galium—Can it be the Cardinal flower here in bud a coarse plant with a leaflike red tipped envelope to its united stamens?

Now adays I scare up the woodcock? by shaded brooks and springs in the woods. It has a carry-legs flight & goes off with a sort of whistling. As you walk now in wood paths your head is encompassed with a swarm of buzzing ravenous flies—It seems almost too hot for locusts. Low hills or even hillocks which are stone capped—have rocky summits as that near James Baker’s—remind me of mts which in fact they are on a small scale.—The brows of earth—round which the trees & bushes trail like the hair of eye brows—outside bald places—temples—primitive places where lichens grow—I have some of the same sensations as if I sat on the summit of the rocky mts. Some low places thus give a sense of elevation. Sleeman says that no boy in India ever robs a bird’s nest. Are they heathenish in that? Walden & White Ponds have a brimful look at present—though the former is not quite so high as when I last observed it. The bare hills about it are reddened in spots where the pine leaves are sere on the ground. The vaccinium vacllans small glaucous blueberry bears here & there a ripe one on the hills—and the rubus Canadense low blackberry bears already a few ripe ones on sandy banks like the RR causeway exposed to the sun. Portulaca oleracea purslane just in flower—bright yellow—in the garden—Observed in the river yesterday a potamogeton with leaves 1/2 inch wide and 4 or 5 long. The white spruce shoots when wilted have the same raspberry fragrance with those of the fir balsam, but not so much of it. Galium asprellum pointed cleavers.

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
July 14, Wednesday: It was after the Hawthornes completed their move from Lenox, Massachusetts to West Newton that The Blithedale Romance appeared.11 This novel had, in the judgment of Henry James, Margaret Fuller as Zenobia, a major character who commits suicide from unrequited love.

The novel also mentioned her by name in a most disconcerting manner, as a friend of the narrator:

As I did not immediately offer to receive the letter, she [Priscilla] drew it back, and held it against her bosom, with both hands clasped over it, in a way that had probably grown habitual to her....it forcibly struck me that her air, though not her figure, and the expression of her face, but not its features, had a resemblance to what I had often seen in a friend of mine, one of the most gifted women of the age. I cannot describe it. The points, easiest to convey to the reader, were, a certain curve of the shoulders, and a partial closing of the eyes, which seemed to look more penetratingly into my own eyes, through the narrowed apertures, than if they had been open at full width. It was a singular anomaly of likeness co-existing with perfect dissimilitude....

"Priscilla," I inquired, "did you ever see Miss Margaret Fuller?"

"No," she answered.

"Because," said I, "you reminded me of her, just now, and it happens, strangely enough, that this very letter is from her!"

Priscilla, for whatever reason, looked very much discomposed.

"I wish people would not fancy such odd things in me!" she said, rather petulantly. "How could I possibly make myself resemble this lady, merely by holding her letter in my hand?"

"Certainly, Priscilla, it would puzzle me to explain it," I replied. "Nor do I suppose that the letter had anything to do with it. It was just a coincidence—nothing more."

Rufus William Griswold appeared in The Blithedale Romance as “Doctor Griswold.”

In this year Nathaniel also authored a campaign biography of Franklin Pierce that would make him deserving of a political plum. In this writing he did not name a cow after Fuller or suggest that she might commit suicide, or vent any of his other pet peeves, but he did something far worse: this writing was utterly condemnatory of the sort of abolitionist anti-slavery activities of which his neighbor Henry Thoreau, among others, had been

11 A claim of copyright has been made for The Scarlet Letter in 1962, for Fanshawe and The Blithedale Romance in 1964, for The House of Seven Gables in 1965, and for The Marble Faun in 1968, by Ohio State UP. (We presume that those ostensibly appropriative and global copyright claims could actually have covered not more than whatever value was added to the works by that press at that time, such as their reformatting and pagination and suchlike.)
guilty, and yet it was not an honest or sincere piece of writing.

President Franklin Pierce was in fact a proslavery drunkard whose qualification to be President was that he had been a totally undistinguished general in the war upon Mexico. Horace Mann, Sr. commented in regard to the writing of this campaign biography that if Hawthorne could make out Pierce to be a great man or a brave man, “it will be the greatest work of fiction he ever wrote.” Hawthorne handled the hot matter of slavery in this campaign biography by suggesting that, for the present, slavery seemed to be in accord with God’s great plan, and that if we simply let it be, eventually in God’s good time—if indeed it was his will that it should be vanquished—human slavery would “vanish like a dream.”

And, the creative writer insisted, this was not mere puffery, it was what he really believed, those “are my real sentiments.” The opportunistic careerism of Pierce, it seemed, had been founded upon the highest moral principle, that of getting results, that of satisfying one’s lust to leave one’s mark upon the world which one has habited. So conveniently, these cronies had overseen the entire course of human history and had observed globally the fact that:

There is no instance, in all history, of the human will and intellect having perfected any great moral reform by methods which it adopted to that end.

Thoreau was continuing his reading in the racist volume about human skulls by Professor Samuel George Morton of the University of Pennsylvania, and making notes in his Indian Notebook #6 and his Fact Book.¹²

 STATESMAN CHUM AND PRETTY BOY

CRANIA AMERICANA

¹². Note carefully here, how our guy’s spirit seems incapable of being harmed by the toxic nature of these racist materials! Isn’t that simply marvelous? Can that be described by any other word than “marvelous”?

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
better to plow the ocean than the land? In the former case the plow runs further in its furrow before it turns. You may go round the world before the mast, but not behind the plow.

Morton quotes Wafer as saying of some albinos among the Indians of Darien that “they are quite white, but their whiteness is like that of a horse, quite different from the fair or pale European, as they have not the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion.... Their eyebrows are milk-white, as is likewise the hair of their heads, which is very fine, inclining to a curl, and growing to the length of six or eight inches.... They seldom go abroad in the daytime, the sun being disagreeable to them, and causing their eyes, which are weak and purging, to water, especially if it shines towards them yet they see very well by moonlight, from which we call them moon-eyed.”

In Drake’s “Collection of Voyages.” Neither in our thoughts in these moonlight walks, methinks, is there “the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion,” but we are, perchance, intellectually and morally albinos, children of Endymion whose parents have walked much by moonlight. Walking much by moonlight, conversing with the moon, makes us, then, albinos. Methinks we should rather represent Endymion in colorless marble, or in the whiteness of marble, than painted the ruddy color of ordinary youths.

Saw to-day for the first time this season fleets of yellow butterflies dispersing before us, [as] we rode along berrying on the Walden road. Their yellow fleets are in the offing. Do I ever see them in numbers off the road? They are a yellow flower that blossoms generally about this time. Like a mackerel fleet, with their small hulls and great sails. Collected now in compact but gorgeous assembly in the road, like schooners in a harbor, a haven; now suddenly dispersing on our approach and filling the air with yellow snowflakes in their zigzag flight, or as when a fair wind calls those schooners out and disperses them over the broad ocean. How deep or perhaps slaty sky-blue are those blueberries that grow in the shade! It is an unexpected and thrilling discovery to find such ethereal fruits in dense drooping clusters under the fresh green of oak and hickory sprouts. Those that grow in the sun appear to be the same species, only to have lost their bloom and freshness, and hence are darker. [Vide page 283]

The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or perchance a palace or temple on the earth, and at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a wood-shed with them.

Trees have commonly two growths in the year, a spring and a fall growth, the latter sometimes equaling the former, and you can see where the first was checked whether by cold or drouth, and wonder what there was in the summer to produce this check, this blight. So is it with man; most have a spring growth only, and never get over this first check to their youthful hopes; but plants of hardier constitution, or perchance planted in a more genial soil, speedily recover themselves, and, though they bear the scar or knot in remembrance of their disappointment, they push forward again and have a vigorous fall growth which is equivalent to a new spring. These two growths are now visible on the oak sprouts, the second already nearly equaling the first.

Murder will out. Morton detects the filthiness of the lower class of the ancient Peruvians by the hair of old mummies being “charged with desiccated vermin, which, though buried for centuries in the sand, could not possibly be mistaken for anything else.”

(Thoreau would use the material about the albino “tribe” of native Americans, which he had obtained from Drake’s “Collection of Voyages” and mentioned in the above journal passage, in his essay “Night and Moonlight.”)
Charles Pickerig Gerrish, son of a Concord teacher, graduated from Harvard College. He would become a merchant.

In 1796, Dr. John Crawford had written a series of reports contradicting the bad-air theory “malaria,” asserting that the illness that went under that name was not being occasioned by the nature of the air of marshes and swamps but instead by tiny “eggs insinuated, without our knowledge, into our bodies” during mosquito bites, tiny eggs that were hatching within the puncture and migrating through the host’s body, and were producing the manifestations of the disease.

This notion had been considered so entirely absurd, by Dr. Crawford’s American contemporaries, that the local medical journals summarily rejected all Dr. Crawford’s articles. He was disparaged so vehemently that his medical practice began to suffer, and so he desisted from this effort. We had lost, for fully half a century, an opportunity to deal with this disease. However, in this year Lewis Daniel Beauperthy, a “traveling naturalist,” published a theory that malaria, and the yellow fever (or black vomit) as well, were being “produced by venomous fluid injected under the skin by mosquitoes like poison injected by snakes,” that marshes and swamps were made treacherous not by their miasmic vapors, but by the mosquitoes that proliferated within...
them.

**WALDEN:** It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. The traveller who stops at the best houses, so called, soon discovers this, for the publicans presume him to be a Sardanapalus, and if he resigned himself to their tender mercies he would soon be completely emasculated. I think that in the railroad car we are inclined to spend more on luxury than on safety and convenience, and it threatens without attaining these to become no better than a modern drawing room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sunshades, and a hundred other oriental things, which we are taking west with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be ashamed to know the names of. I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way.
Dr. Josiah Clark Nott would come to embrace this theory, and eventually would be credited as among the 1st to apply the insect vector theory to yellow fever.

Dr. Josiah Clark Nott, George Robins Gliddon, and Louis Ferdinand Alfred Maury’s INDIGENOUS RACES OF THE EARTH; OR, NEW CHAPTERS OF ETHNOLOGICAL INQUIRY; INCLUDING MONOGRAPHS ON SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS.

Few of the scientists of Professor Samuel George Morton’s day would have challenged his thesis that the race concept is a physical reality, or his assumption that cranial volume was a prime indicator of human mental
capability or intelligence.

In this year such views were incorporated, for instance, into Dr. Josiah Clark Nott’s and the former diplomat George Robins Gliddon’s textbook *TYPES OF MANKIND: OR, ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCHES, BASED UPON THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS, PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES, AND CRANIA OF RACES, AND UPON THEIR NATURAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND BIBLICAL HISTORY: ILLUSTRATED BY SELECTIONS FROM THE INEDITED PAPERS OF SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M.D., (LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AT PHILADELPHIA,) AND BY ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PROF. L. AGASSIZ, LL.D., W. USHER, M.D.; AND PROF. H.S. PATTERSON, M.D. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co.; London: Trübner & Co.), which would go through ten editions offering the unaltering scientific knowledge that the mental superiority of the white man over the colored man was a proven fact. The “Negro-Races” had “ever been Servants and slaves.”

The book in fact incorporates a letter from Professor Louis Agassiz of Harvard, who supported such a view without any qualification whatever. The book asserts as an unchallengeable scientific finding that the Negro can exist alongside the white race only as a tributary either in name or in fact. The book quite ignores in all its editions Frederick Douglass, who, in one of his speeches during this year, in no uncertain terms denounced it: “Perhaps, of all the attempts ever made to disprove the unity of the human family, and to brand the negro with natural inferiority, the most compendious and barefaced is the book, entitled *TYPES OF MANKIND*, by Nott and Glidden [sic].”

13. And guess what? Subsequent developments have demonstrated that Frederick Douglass the nonscientist was right, and the scientists were wrong — and not merely on moral but on strictly evidentiary grounds!
environments to which they had accommodated.  

But race is a very great reality.... Any analysis of a great creative period ... must have this chaotic spot in its centre: the incalculable fact of racial intermixture. — Percy Wyndham Lewis, The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1951 [1927], page 298)

Today’s reviewer of the evidences marshalled in this volume may marvel at the easy manner in which the authors interpolated their own views inside the context of quotations ostensibly from the work of others. Certain of the “quotations” placed between the covers of this work are said now to have been “half made-up.”

Clearly, from the standpoint of Nott and Gliddon, there was more at stake here than mere accuracy. In the introduction to this textbook, on page 49, Nott and Gliddon indicated that their understanding of this new science ethnology was that it was not only to pose, but also to provide a definitive answer for, the $64,000 question of who had to do whose laundry, “what position in the social scale Providence has assigned to each type of man?”  

Although this was a quite expensive volume, by 1871 it would have gone through fully ten editions. This scientific treatise declared that

We have had too much of sentimentalism about the Red-man. It is time that cant was stopped now.

Also, this detailed scientific argument for the separate creation of the differing human races and the inherent inalienable superiority of some of these races over other of these races pointed out, by “supplanting inferior types” the Caucasian race rather than incurring shame and guilt would be merely “fulfilling a law of nature.”

“Scientists have power by virtue of the respect commanded by the discipline. We may therefore be sorely tempted to misuse that power in furthering a personal prejudice or social goal — why not provide that extra oomph by extending the umbrella of science over a personal preference in ethics or politics?” — Stephen Jay Gould

BULLY FOR BRONTOSAURUS


15. Nott’s attitude was that “The time must come when the blacks will be worse than useless to us. What then? Emancipation must follow, which, from the lights before us, is but another name for extermination.”

16. Beware. Revisiting these measurements, by tracking down and re-measuring some of the actual skulls that Morton had measured, has since demonstrated that the original measurements by the use of lead shot, which Professor Gould derogated, actually had been more accurate than his own re-analysis.
June 7, day: The article was published that tabulated the errors allegedly committed by Professor Stephen Jay Gould in his 20th-Century re-evaluation of the 19th-Century cranial measurements of Samuel George Morton:

A MISMEASURE OF SCIENCE

(This article examines Gould’s initial 1978 report of his studies in an article in a scientific journal. It also makes reference to the 1981 1st book edition. It makes no mention, however, of the 2d “revised and expanded” edition that Gould published in 1996 on the subject.)

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"It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens" in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: April 29, 2013
This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone’s request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.
Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.