

Many Roads to Extinction

Early AEA Economists and the Black Disappearance Hypothesis

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I The Willcox School

Walter Willcox, a professor of economics at Cornell University between 1891 and 1931 and one of the leading figures in the formative years of the American Economic Association (AEA), played a central role in the development of American social science research on the nature of race and racial difference.¹ In 1900, thirty five years after emancipation, Willcox “handpicked the members of the [the AEA’s] Committee to Investigate the Condition of the Negro”².

Willcox also served as a statistician for the Census Bureau between 1899 and 1931, constructing a career that brought together the unholy trinity of the early professional phase of American economics--statistics, eugenics, and racism with ideological progressivism. Indeed, the development of modern statistics on both sides of the Atlantic bore intimate links to the interests of the eugenicists.³

In the context of the American Economic Association, Willcox was instrumental in getting the organization to publish Frederick Hoffman’s *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* in 1896 and his student Joseph Tillinghast’s volume *The Negro in Africa and America* in 1902, both of which Mark Aldrich has described as “thoroughly racist works”.⁴ Moreover, the AEA Publications series, predating the *American Economic Review*, also issued a volume in 1897 by Columbia trained economist Matthew Brown Hammond entitled *The Cotton Industry* that took up in more limited fashion some of the same themes that occupied Hoffman’s and Tillinghast’s works.⁵ Brown’s study denigrated the productivity of blacks engaged in agricultural pursuits. Not only were these race-related AEA publications vetted by Willcox but they were actually printed close at hand in Ithaca, New York, the location of Willcox’s professional base, Cornell University.

Willcox also had a close association with the demographer of Southern black economic life, the Mississippi aristocrat and planter Alfred Holt Stone.⁶ In 1908 Stone gathered several of his own previously published papers, as well as three by Willcox in a volume called *Studies in the American Race Problem*.⁷ The dedication from Stone at the volume’s start tellingly reads “To my father and mother, connecting links with the old regime”. The intention of Stone’s investigations, similar to Hammond’s, was to establish the comparative economic inefficiency of black laborers in farming activities.

There was, *de facto*, a “Willcox School” on the American race question of which Willcox’s own work, at first blush, appeared to be the most temperate. Apparently, even W.E.B. DuBois initially thought Willcox was an honest, disinterested, even sympathetic investigator of the condition of black America, but his perception changed.

The members of the Willcox School focused their attention on “the Negro problem”. Willcox himself had been a student of Richmond Mayo-Smith at Columbia--as was Hammond subsequently. Mayo-Smith brought the “empiricism of the German Historical School to American Economics”.⁸ Willcox believed that statistics--or as Aldrich puts it “objective statistical facts”--would provide truth and hence solutions to all social problems, including the American race problem.

Concomitantly, a central feature of the Willcox School’s inquiries was the marshalling of relevant statistics. Tillinghast’s book appears at first glance to be an exception to this rule, but

only because statistical data on blacks in Africa was not available. He used instead what he viewed as the next best thing, ethnological reports from various Euro-American travelers to Africa, and he criticized the black historian, George Washington Williams, for his failure to make use of such reports.⁹

Tillinghast's argument can be summarized succinctly as follows: the intermixture of African climate and African heredity predisposed blacks to constitutional and mental inferiority. Therefore blacks were more susceptible to diseases and more inclined toward indolence. Such characteristics were not the consequence of slavery, but found their origins in the pre-slavery climatic and genetic history of the Africans. If anything, Tillinghast contended, in the high style of the apologist, slavery was a "school for industry" for blacks.¹⁰

Since blacks were members of a constitutionally inferior race, any prospect of their increased presence in the American population was potentially dangerous to the well-being of the polity. A representative statement of such fears can be found in the writings of the Virginia postbellum planter Philip Bruce. Bruce, while harping on the physical and mental defects of blacks, also argued that moral weaknesses led to excessive procreation and the possibility for blacks to gain a favorable numerical disproportion throughout the South. White Southerners were faced with the horror of being overrun by "morally and intellectually deficient" blacks.¹¹

But the members of the Willcox school dissented. While embracing the notion of the constitutional inferiority of blacks, they argued that it was highly unlikely that blacks would become progressively more numerous in American society. They advanced instead the opposite proposition--what will be referred to here as "the disappearance hypothesis"--that the black presence would diminish over time in American society. Whites--North or South--need not fear being overpopulated by the black race.

II The Black Disappearance Hypothesis

Francis Amasa Walker, a leading figure in the founding of the AEA and the organization's first president, was one of the first economists to express this hypothesis.¹² Walker not only observed, more or less correctly that, had it not been "for the slave trade as, with all its horrors, it was carried on between 1620 and 1808, there would not be 75,000 Africans in the United States, whereas now we have 7,500,000", but he also observed that blacks would have concentrated in quite different parts of the country had they "been left free to place themselves according to their own tastes and industrial aptitudes".¹³

Walker adopted the notion that each race group had a "natural range of residence". Of course, in Walker's schema the "natural range" of the European was much wider than that of the African. In a manner similar to Tillinghast's slightly later monograph, Walker combined climate and nature to define racial destiny. And the role of slavery was central not only in raising the numbers of blacks in the United States, but in maldistributing them with respect to their "natural range". Such a maldistribution was due not only to the locational preferences of the slaveowners but was also due to the efforts of blacks to flee from slavery: "In his effort to escape from bondage, the black man made his way into regions whose climate and prevailing industries were, in almost the last degree, alien to him".¹⁴

Walker then asserted that the researcher could place special confidence in statistics that described "the colored" population in the United States from the censuses taken throughout the nineteenth century. The slave trade had ended in 1808 and no significant immigration of blacks had occurred since then, forced or otherwise. Walker contended that "Substantially all of the 7,500,000 colored persons in the United States to-day are descended from the 700,000 women of the race found in the United States in 1810".¹⁵ Even this statement is problematic. It presumes that there were not significant numbers of liaisons between black men and nonblack women that resulted in children being born after 1810. It also presumes that the line of racial distinction could be drawn clearly enough for the census takers to correctly assign racial status after 1810. After all, what is decisive in Walker's discussion is the U.S. style of race classification which contrasts sharply with, for example, the Latin American tradition:

A man or a woman who is one quarter French or German, or even one half English, Irish, or Scotch, may not be known as such except by family friends; but a man or a woman who has a quarter, perhaps even only an eighth of negro blood is still recognized as belonging to that race, and is so classed, not only in popular speech but in the enumerations of the census.¹⁶

In the vernacular, "one drop makes you whole", i.e. wholly black. In contrast, the Latin American emphasis is on physical appearance rather than ancestry—skin color, facial features, hair quality—leading to an intricate gradational concept of racial identification between black and white that reaches its apogee in Brazil.¹⁷

This led, in turn, to the most provocative aspect of Walker's paper. He made direct use of the decennial census to construct a century long time series from 1790 through 1890. While the black population had grown continuously in absolute size across the century from 760,000 persons in 1790 to 7,500,000 in 1890, since the census of 1810—two years after the legal closure of the slave trade to the United States—the share of blacks in the total U.S. population had fallen steadily. So, although the black population had undergone a tenfold increase, it rose at a declining rate relative to the nonblack population which had increased sixteenfold over the same interval. In 1810 blacks were 19 per cent of the U.S. population; by 1890 blacks were 12 percent of the U.S. population.¹⁸

An earlier paper of Walker's presented the obvious explanation, rapid nonblack immigration.¹⁹ But in the 1891 paper, "The Colored Race in the United States", a quite different story was advanced. Walker predicted that the trend of black decline in population share would continue well into the future. The inference, then, was that, in the limit, the share would approach zero:

... the movement ... seen to have been so steadily in progress, during eighty years, toward reducing the relative importance of this element in the population of the country will go on, at least through a considerable future, before it can be arrested; the strongest improbability that this movement will ever, in our future course as a nation, be reversed.²⁰

The inappropriate distribution of blacks in the United States would contribute to their retarded rate of growth since "... there is much reason to believe that a race that is limited in its range becomes, by that very fact, subject also to important restrictions upon its capabilities of sustained increase within that range".²¹ Blacks were best suited, ostensibly, for "the low, hot regions bordering the Gulf of Mexico".²² The exclusive compatibility of blacks with this particular region was given a quasi-epidemiological foundation by Walker in the following passage:

The malarial diseases, so destructive to Europeans in this climate and on this soil have little power over him. At the same time the industrial *raison d'être* of the negro is here found at its maximum. In the northern States that *raison d'être* wholly disappears. There is nothing there aside from a few kinds of personal service, which the negro can do, which the white man cannot do as well or perhaps better. Even upon the high lands of the old slave States in the upper parts of Alabama or Georgia, for instance, or in the mountain districts of Tennessee and North Carolina, there is little which the negro can do which the white man cannot do equally well. Nay in the upland cultivation of the cotton crop, I entertain the conviction that the vigorous, resolute white element, free from the incubus of human slavery, will more and more assert itself, large plantations being subdivided into small cotton farms.²³

Whether Walker viewed the practice of slavery itself as irrational even in the upper South—an "unnatural" region for blacks—is not made explicit in either of these papers. But clearly he outlined a version of the disappearance hypothesis with his pessimistic demographic expectations as the black population became more dispersed throughout the United States.

Oddly, such reasoning—even if devoid of an overt racial slant—still finds its way into the pages of the *American Economic Review*. As recently as the June 1990 issue an article appeared in which the authors examined the dynamic outcome for group survival of "two families, or 'clans,' all members of the first prone by heritage to indolence and immediate consumption and all members of the second with stronger heritable tendencies to work and save".²⁴ The economic anthropology of the late 19th century persists a full century later as legitimate science.

The disappearance hypothesis really came to full fruition in the work of the actuary Frederick Hoffman. Hoffman (1865-1946) worked for many years as a statistician for the

Prudential Insurance Company of America.²⁵ His studies on black longevity and disease patterns served as a direct justification for Prudential's refusal to offer policies to black Americans.²⁶

Hoffman put forward the most comprehensive statement of the disappearance hypothesis in an 1892 paper published in a journal called *The Arena*.²⁷ Hoffman, as the voice of reason, took a stance in direct counterposition to those fearful that the United States would become a black country, for example "census alarmists like E.W. Gilliam, whose figures indicated that the Negro population in the United States during the 1880's was growing at a faster rate than the Caucasian".²⁸ According to Hoffman, the error in Gilliam's work was Gilliam's sole focus on birth rates, which were higher among blacks, without paying attention to death rates, which also were markedly higher among blacks.²⁹

In his *Arena* paper Hoffman made the following dramatic prediction:

... the colored population of the United States is an isolated body of people, receiving no addition in numbers by immigration, and in consequence present conditions essentially different from those of other races and nationalities that have settled on American soil. The Indian is on the verge of extinction, many tribes have entirely disappeared; and the African will surely follow him, for every race has suffered extinction wherever the Anglo-Saxon has permanently settled.³⁰

No doubt numerous indigenous peoples had been exterminated in the face of "Anglo-Saxon" settlement, but the precedent was unclear for peoples who had been forcibly imported into "Anglo-Saxon" settlements. Moreover, extermination had been engendered by genocidal practices—a point to be taken up again below—not an inherent constitutional weakness in the peoples who had "entirely disappeared". But Hoffman's case for black disappearance from America was based on a claim of innate black inferiority. The case was made in detail in his *Race Traits and Tendencies*.³¹ The conclusion also was drawn bluntly in the earlier *Arena* article:

For some generations the colored element may continue to make decennial gains, but it is very probable that the next thirty years will be the last to show total gains, and then the decrease will be slow but sure until final disappearance.³²

The high mortality rates among blacks were of particular significance to Hoffman in making his case. Blacks were exceptionally susceptible to disease because of their unsanitary dwellings, their "ignorance of laws of health", their "general poverty", their "gross immorality, early and excessive intercourse of the sexes, premature maternity, and general intemperance in eating and drinking", the latter leading to high incidence rates of venereal diseases. Deaths from "consumption" (tuberculosis) demonstrated that the disease was "becoming more and more a constitutional disease of the negro".

The incidence of fevers and malaria—the latter a disease to which blacks customarily were viewed as possessing a unique immunity—was at least as high among blacks as whites; Hoffman demonstrated this by presenting a table indicating the occurrence of "Zymotic" diseases among whites and blacks in the cities of Richmond, Washington, DC, Charleston (S.C.), New Orleans, Knoxville and Nashville.³³ Indeed, this finding contradicted Walker's claim that blacks were better suited for "the low, hot regions bordering the Gulf of Mexico" in part because they were unlikely to contract malaria, but it reinforced both of their beliefs that blacks were on the road to extinction. Blacks were, after all, inherently more predisposed to illness and death:

If it is argued that, granted the same conditions and the same opportunities as the white race, the colored race would prove itself to be of a more enduring vitality, the proof can be furnished that even if he be placed on equal grounds he still will exhibit what an eminent writer calls "his race proclivity to disease and death".³⁴

What was the "proof" that Hoffman advanced to make his case? He made special use of data that had been assembled by military physicians, gathered both during the Civil War and thereafter.³⁵ Hoffman asserted, based upon his reading of the data, that "The experience of the army during the war and its twenty years' experience of peace and normal condition since 1870 will furnish the proof that the colored race, even under its most advantageous conditions, will fail to hold its own against the white race".³⁶ Data taken during the Civil War demonstrated that

among the soldier population the "liability of the negro to death" from four principal diseases was evident--most prominent of which was "consumption" for which the black incidence was two times as high as that for white soldiers and for which the disease was invariably fatal. Blacks died in 91 per cent of the cases in which they contracted tuberculosis.³⁷

Since the war the death rate for blacks had been uniformly higher than that for whites living in the same general area. Hoffman referred to a report issued by the surgeon-general in 1889 that said that the difference in black and white death rates was not solely environmental but due to a greater black propensity "for disease and death". Concluded Hoffman, "... we reach the conclusion that the colored race is showing every sign of an undermined constitution, a diseased manhood and womanhood; in short, all the indications of a race on the road extinction".³⁸

Hoffman's position was challenged by M.V. Ball, a physician serving the State Penitentiary population for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.³⁹ Ball already had engaged in an exchange with an Alabama surgeon and gynecologist, R.M. Cunningham, over similar issues.⁴⁰

Cunningham had examined comparative racial statistics from the Alabama penitentiary system. According to Cunningham approximately 2500 convicts were in the Alabama prison system from March 1883 to October 1884 and from March 1887 to October 1890. Out of these 2500 convicts, about 85 percent were black and about 15 percent were white. The differential presence of blacks in the Alabama convict population was due, in Cunningham's words, to "something in or about the negro, some inherent principle or acquired property (the former being a part of his original creation, or from long-continued hereditary influences--the latter from environment, religious, social or political), that prompts him to acts of crime, or that there is a deficiency of that restraining power that limits the action of the universal depravity of the races".⁴¹

Of direct relevance to the disappearance hypothesis, though, were Cunningham's observations about the racial disparity in mortality among the convict population. Over the interval of nine years and seven months that Cunningham considered, over 20 percent of the convict population died--or 553 deaths out of the 2500 convicts. Out of these 553 deaths, 37 were white convicts and 516 were black convicts; the death rate was two and a half times as high for black convicts than white convicts. While one-third of the white deaths were due to violence (of an unspecified nature), mortality due to diseases was almost four times as likely among the black population in the penitentiary system.

The types of diseases leading to death were more varied among blacks as well. While white convicts displayed a greater susceptibility to meningitis and "the essential fevers", black convicts displayed a greater susceptibility "to tuberculous disease, the various forms of pneumonia, pleurisy, and organic heart-disease; in other words, to thoracic diseases generally".⁴²

What accounted for this? Cunningham speculated that it was due to "in the negro race, as compared to the white, a lesser cranial and thoracic development"; "the negro" only possessed advantages in "a greater abdominal and genital development". While "general muscular development, taken as a whole is good in the negro; ... the chest-muscles and those below the elbow and knee, are deficient", so that, Cunningham surmised, "the negro, as a whole, is inferior to the white in anatomic development and in the symmetric arrangement of systems and organs". Therefore, blacks necessarily will manifest "a correspondingly weakened function and predisposition to disease".⁴³

Prison life ostensibly provided a similar environment for black and white convicts. For Cunningham, then, the differences in mortality outcomes had to be due to intrinsic differences in the races, not a gap in the conditions to which they were exposed:

... Have the white and negro convicts the same environment? I answer emphatically that they have. This is certainly true at the places whence the foregoing statistics were obtained. Hence the difference in mortality cannot be explained by a difference in environment.⁴⁴

Cunningham readily conceded that "[t]he effects of prison life, however well ordered, are, regardless of race, beyond all doubt detrimental to both mind and body". The adverse effects are greater on the mind of the white convict and on the body of the black convict, according to the Alabama doctor. But the more drastic effects of a disease-producing environment--like a

penitentiary—would be more apparent in blacks given their general “physical inferiority”.⁴⁵ Concluded Cunningham:

Given the same environment, the white man will have much the greater longevity. If the environment be bad, then the negro mortality will increase much more rapidly than the white.⁴⁶

Ball's reply to Cunningham paralleled his later response to Hoffman. He pointed out the relevant environment for comparison is not solely the penitentiary setting, but the entire set of circumstances black and white convicts were exposed to prior to incarceration. Even if the claim that the health conditions in Alabama prisons were much the same for convicts of both races was valid, the environments of childhood and adolescence need not have been:

The negro, as is well known, usually occupies the poorest quarters of a town or city. The “shanties” of the colored man constituted the slums before the advent of Italian and Russian emigration. With miserable homes are combined ignorance and poverty—a trio responsible for a multitude of diseases, and among them the most fatal ones.

In the early years are sown the seeds of tuberculosis, which require but the confinement of prison to mature and develop. Glands that were affected in early life enlarge and break down under confinement, and this is but an instance of the latency of the bacillus tuberculosis. The early infection requires some exciting cause, be it a prison, a disease outside of prison, or fatiguing work—whatever depresses the general bodily vigor—and it is fanned into action and lights up into an acute process. If this early environment is responsible for the greater mortality of the negro, as compared with the white, then we should expect to find an increased mortality among the whites who are subject to the same environment.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, Ball wrote, the statistics were not available in medicine “that take into account social distinctions”. Preliminary evidence from a study conducted by the New York Board of Health on mortality rates by tenement districts appeared to support Ball's hypothesis:

The few figures I have been able to obtain indicate a similar condition among the Italians as among the negro; a mortality-rate among their children of 150 per 1000, while the average death-rate among children under five years of age for the city generally is 93 per 1000.⁴⁸

Ball then made two charges: First, “[m]ake the conditions favorable for the negro from childhood up, and then can we say that he is less capable of withstanding disease than the white man”. His own speculation was directly at odds with that of Cunningham when he wrote “the differences commonly found in the death-rates of the colored race as compared with the white, [are due] to differences in the environment, to the social differences which surround the children, and not to any physical distinctions; at least until this sociologic factor is studied and taken into account the so-called hereditary and racial characteristics as witnessed in the adult are liable to lead to wrong conclusions”. Second, new types of statistics needed to be gathered that would provide the capacity to correlate social and health outcomes with “social distinctions”; in short, said Ball, “[W]e must compare individuals of the same class, in order to obtain proper statistics for medicine as well as for sociology”.⁴⁹

Hoffman entered the debate with a negative reaction to Ball's criticism of Cunningham's study. However, he never joined with Ball's central point. He neglected to address the hypothesis that adult differentials in mortality could be attributed to environmental conditions persons experienced in childhood, although he offered additional comparative data on longevity of native and foreign whites and longevity of blacks. Only the Irish displayed any apparent similarity with blacks. Hoffman remained adamant that “the differences are physical and permanent”. His only fig leaf of hope was the prospect that “education” and the “first principles of everyday morality” could bring about some closure in the differential in black and white mortality rates.⁵⁰

The core of Hoffman's argument was shifting toward the notion that there always would be a residual, unalterable remaining racial difference, not subject to closure by improved environmental conditions.⁵¹ He could present no new evidence to this effect, and his exchange with Ball was conducted some 70 years before the widespread academic popularization of multiple regression techniques, which would have afforded him the opportunity to impose this interpretation on such a heretofore unexplained residual.

Ball wondered in his own response to Hoffman why one would bother with education or any other intervention if the differences are "physical and permanent".⁵² Apparently he did not entirely grasp the new drift of Hoffman's argument: some closure in the racial mortality gap was possible and could be aided by interventions but there was a genetic floor on how much of the gap could be removed. However, Ball did go on to argue persuasively that Hoffman's finding of similarity in mortality data for blacks and the Irish whites and his own finding of similarity between blacks and Italians in slum conditions constituted *prima facie* evidence for the environmentalist explanation of the race gap in mortality:

... foreign-born whites and the children born of foreigners have the same death-rate as the colored because they often dwell in the same surroundings and under the same economic conditions.⁵³

Russian Jews were exceptional on this score. Although they lived in the same tenements with Italians and blacks they tended to have lower mortality rates. Ball said this was due to their superior hygienic practices:

... the Jew, no matter how filthy he may appear, has some knowledge of hygienic laws and takes care of his children; the more ignorant he is, the more orthodox in his observance of these Mosaic laws.⁵⁴

It was the previous environment, inclusive of faulty traditions in hygienic practices, that would make the adult black unequal in health with the adult white. The possibility that deaths due to tuberculosis might be attributable to latent effects from childhood was further support for Ball's position.⁵⁵

Although Tillinghast's study could not draw upon vital statistics from the African continent, Hoffman was able to investigate vital statistics for blacks in the British West Indies. The primary message of a paper he published in the journal *The American Statistical Association*, the precursor to JASA, was a demonstration of the disastrous nature of black governance ("the negro rules, and rules to ruin" wrote Hoffman).⁵⁶ The stated motivation for his study, however, was comparative in nature, to illuminate further the nature of the conditions confronting blacks in the United States.⁵⁷

Several islands had fairly complete vital statistics at that time--Bermuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, and Jamaica. The Jamaican and Trinidadian statistics were the most complete. While black mortality rates were on the upswing in the United States between 1860 and 1890, they were falling in Jamaica and Trinidad. Kingston, Jamaica in particular displayed a consistent pattern of decline in the black death rate. There was a higher death rate from the ubiquitous "consumption" in Kingston than elsewhere on the island, but even in Kingston there was evidence of a falling death rate. Hoffman's rhetoric indicates that he was quite surprised at this finding: "The decrease in mortality from this cause is remarkable in view of the constant increase in the mortality from consumption among the colored population of the United States".⁵⁸ Indeed, while "the negro was ruling to ruin," his health statistics were improving dramatically.

Did the Jamaican evidence lead Hoffman to retreat from his prior belief in a "race proclivity to disease and death"? Not at all. In fact, the most perverse twist on Hoffman's endeavors to establish a scientific basis for black inferiority and eventual extinction was yet to appear. In the pages of Hoffman's intended *magnum opus*, the AEA volume *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, he documented the low incidence of suicides among blacks. Instead of treating this as exemplifying the fortitude of blacks in the face of difficult circumstances, Hoffman argued that this was indicative of a lower plane of psychological and emotional development! "The Negro", according to Hoffman, was too happy-go-lucky, too carefree, and too present-oriented to possess the complexity of mind and the sense of anxiety that would lead an individual to contemplate and commit suicide. Such complex thought was only a characteristic of persons from the superior races.⁵⁹

In the context of Hoffman's general vision of black inferiority, a much later paper of his, published in 1926 in the National Urban League's journal *Opportunity*, when the evidence had become unequivocal that black death rates had fallen between 1900 and 1920, is of special note.⁶⁰

Here Hoffman can be found observing that in his 19th century publication, *Race Traits and Tendencies*, he had "laid down the principle that the mortality disparity [between blacks and whites] was primarily a matter of race and not of environment". But, he admitted, the black death rate had declined during the first twenty years of the 20th century and the decline was due to "improved social and economic conditions of the Negro population". While cancer rates among blacks were on the rise--rates that had been increasing since slavery time--the white rate was even higher and this was the exceptional case. Even mortality from pulmonary tuberculosis which Hoffman once had described as "a constitutional disease of the Negro" had fallen significantly, although the black incidence was still more than three times as high as the white incidence.⁶¹

Ultimately, Hoffman was driven more explicitly to the claim that there was an irreducible minimum gap between black and white mortality rates, although he acknowledged that the minimum gap may not yet have been reached in the mid-1920s. Blacks were achieving "progress" with respect to health conditions; the race, evidently, was not dying out.

Hoffman even was willing to admit that further improvements in "social and economic conditions" would bring more reductions in black mortality and called for such improvements, including better medical care, more black nurses, etc. But the differential was likely to persist indefinitely since whites were reducing their mortality rates even faster: "... the Negro is making progress in health and disease resistance but the progress as yet falls far short of the corresponding progress made by the white population".⁶² No evidence seemed sufficient to dislodge Hoffman altogether from his belief in the "constitutional inferiority" of black Americans.

At least one black intellectual countenanced the disappearance hypothesis in a serious manner. Early in 1904, W.E.B. DuBois published a paper entitled "The Future of the Negro Race in America" in the journal *The East and the West*.⁶³ DuBois posited four possible futures for American blacks: "first, his present condition of serfdom may be perpetuated; secondly, his race may die and become extinct in this land; thirdly, he may migrate to some foreign land; and fourthly, he may become an American citizen".⁶⁴

DuBois did not dismiss the second possibility as nonsensical. He observed that "[i]t is the expectation of many Americans, and Americans too of honesty and integrity, that gradually but inevitably the negro will die out before degeneration sets in to such an extent as to make him a menace to the land". For these Americans, DuBois argued, the outcome--the vanishing of "the Negro"--was not an expectation that arose from any "especial dislike or prejudice against the negro" but was "the practical and unemotional way in which the Darwinian doctrine of survival is applied in America to the negro problem".⁶⁵

While DuBois considered the outcome--extinction--to be a real possibility, he did not accept the causal explanation for the outcome, the innate inferiority of blacks, that pervaded the work of the Willcox School. Quite the contrary the extermination of blacks from American society would be the consequence of an active social policy of deprivation and neglect:

Turning, then, to the second possible future of the negro in America--namely, that he may die out--it must be candidly acknowledged that this is quite possible. If the negro is given no voice in his own government and welfare, if he continues increasingly to be shut out of employment, if his wages become lower and lower, and his chances of justice and consideration less; if, in consequence of this, he loses hope and lets himself sink deeper and deeper into carelessness, incompetence, and crime; if, instead of educating his brains, we get increasing pleasure and profit in making him simply a useful instrument of labour--a mere hand--if his common school system continues to be neglected, if his family life has no respect in custom and little in law, it is quite possible--I might say probably--that the American negro will dwindle away and die from starvation and excess. This will simply add a few million more murders to the account of civilization. But it would, of course, prove nothing as to the stamina and capabilities of the negro race.⁶⁶

DuBois had raised the question of genocide of American blacks in 1904!

DuBois also sent a copy of the paper to Willcox. Willcox's reaction in a letter dated March 13, 1904 to DuBois is self-explanatory:

The fundamental difficulty I feel in accepting your position is that it is impossible for me to judge how far the present condition of the American Negro is due to persistent characteristics of the people and how far it is due to the heavy economic and social pressures upon them, resulting from drawing the color line in society, in politics and in industry. You seem inclined to attribute almost all of it to the latter. I confess that I do not see that the evidence warrants one in holding either opinion with confidence and therefore for the present I am agnostic on the subject.⁶⁷

In short, Willcox was "agnostic" about the matter of black inferiority. Furthermore, in a comment reminiscent of Hoffman's approach to confounding evidence, Willcox observed that he did not see how any "convincing evidence" could be marshalled to resolve the issue.⁶⁸

DuBois reached his limit, dashing off the following angry reply to Willcox:

The fundamental difficulty in your position is that you are trying to show an evaluation of the Negro problem—only from inside of your office. It can never be done. You have simply no adequate conception of the Negro problem in the South and of Negro character and capacity. When you have not as I have ten years in intimate soul contact with all kinds and conditions of black men you will be less agnostic. I have my prejudices but they are backed by knowledge if not supported. *How on earth any fair-minded student of the situation could have stood sponsor for a book like Tillinghast's and actually praised it is simply beyond my comprehension.* If you must [go] on writing about and promising judgment on this problem why not study it? Not from a car-window and assembled dispatches as in your pamphlet on crime but get down here and really study it at first hand.⁶⁹

At this stage the correspondence between the two principals in this portion of the DuBois Collection breaks off until the 1930s when Willcox writes to DuBois from the Century Club in New York City and the Cosmos Club in Washington D.C., inviting DuBois to meet with him if and when DuBois comes to town.⁷⁰ Of course, DuBois could not have entered either of these clubs except through the servants' entrance. Indeed, had the Willcox School's scientific racism had a basis in fact, it was unlikely that there would have been a W.E.B. DuBois to potentially enter either club in the 1930s.

While Willcox still was vetting papers for the Census, DuBois went on to prepare "a very careful study of the sharecropping system in Lowndes County, Alabama—at considerable personal risk".⁷¹ The study was both acknowledged by and "modest[ly] fund[ed]" by the Census Bureau.⁷² But the eventual outcome was the following:

The study was never published ... despite the persistent questioning and prodding of DuBois; finally, he discovered that the manuscript had been destroyed. He always believed that this was due to the radical nature of its findings and its condemnation of the then dominant system under which the vast majority of Black people—and many white people—lived in the South.⁷³

III The Efficiency of "Negro Labor"

The comparative productivity of black and non-black labor and the comparative productivity of black labor under slavery and under "freedom" also occupied much of the attention of the economic writers at the turn of the century. While there was a literature that grew, particularly around the slightly later period of World War I when black labor was brought into Northern factories, on the comparative "industrial efficiency" of blacks, writers associated with the AEA at its earliest phase were concerned primarily with the productivity of black labor in agriculture. The work of Alfred Holt Stone, Matthew Brown Hammond, and Katherine Coman is notable in this regard. The two former "authorities" were, as noted above, associates of Willcox's.

Stone, a Mississippi planter himself, had concrete reasons for being interested in determining what conditions would lead to the highest performance of black laborers in cotton production. At the December 1901 meeting of the American Economic Association he presented a paper where he mentioned Dunleith Plantation in Washington County, Mississippi, a plantation in which he had both financial and managerial interests where he was conducting an "experiment with negro labor".⁷⁴ Stone sought to compare the performance of black workers in farming under conditions

where they rented the land versus conditions where they cropped on the share system. As he explained in a subsequent report on the "experiment", it was his "desire and hope [to build] up some 'assured tenantry'".⁷⁵

Stone was far from enthused about the outcome of his experiment. On the whole his conclusion was that there was too great a propensity for "restlessness" on the part of the blacks on his plantation, that they would not settle in for the long term, and would move to other plantations or farms—even if they were doing well—for a reduction of land rent of one dollar per acre elsewhere.⁷⁶ This was not to be construed as rational behavior on the part of the tenants; on the contrary:

Upon its face such action cannot be criticized. As a matter of fact, it emphasized the operation of an unfortunate racial trait,—the thoughtless failure to distinguish between the simplest forms of real and fictitious advantage, the heedless pursuit of the shadow for the substance. The property to which these removed was run down, its houses were scarcely habitable, its drainage was poor, and there was not another family on it at the time. The reduced rent was a concession to necessity, yet the bait was seized as eagerly as though the hook were not visible to the foresight even of a child. Within a few weeks, whether prompted by characteristic vacillation or by the operation of returning common sense, I do not undertake to say, some of these families wanted to return to us.⁷⁷

Indeed, this pattern of irrational "removal" was simply an instance of the normal erratic and unreasoning actions of members of the darker race. Wrote the paternalistic Stone:

In saying that I have long since abandoned the hope of fathoming the processes of the plantation negro's mind, I have "a conscience void of offence" toward these people, to whom I have never knowingly been guilty of an unjust act or word. I mean simply to give expression to the conviction, speaking of the average, of course, and not of the rare exception, that their actions have no logical or reasonable basis, that they are notional and whimsical, and that they are controlled far more by their fancies than by their common sense.⁷⁸

Blacks simply could not be expected to behave as if they had the calculating powers and stick-to-it-ness of *homo economicus*. Stone would not go so far as to say that "the motives of self interest do not operate with the negro at all", only that he "simply and emphatically [asserted] they do not at all intelligently control him".⁷⁹ Where blacks achieve any demonstrable efficiency in working the land it is only when, like monkeys, they would have access to "the example of the white man" as "a model to follow and to imitate".⁸⁰

Stone also devoted substantial attention to the question of whether or not black laborers could hold their own in competition with white laborers. Blacks, ostensibly, had acquired an occupational niche in the south in cotton production. But even the South was experiencing foreign immigration. Stone wondered if they would displace black workers from the one arena that appeared to "belong" to blacks. He then endeavored to examine this issue by evaluating the relative productivity of black and Italian immigrants in cotton production.⁸¹

As one might expect, Stone had no doubt about the superiority of the performance of the Italian immigrants. The proximate causes were twofold. First, Stone wrote, "The Italian works more constantly than the negro". Second, the Italian's capacity to learn quickly was greater. After only one or two years the Italian "cultivates more intelligently" than "the negro". At base the differential in productivity was grounded in long-standing race traits of "the negro": "It seems difficult to escape the conclusion that back of all this lie the characteristics that have always been a curse to the race—whether in Africa, the Southern states, or the West Indies—shiftlessness and improvidence".⁸²

Matthew Brown Hammond's slightly earlier study in the economic history of cotton production in the United States also invoked the inherent shortcomings of black agricultural workers, observing that "The freedmen and their descendants are generally lacking in ambition ... [possessing] none of the qualities which are found in all progressive workers".⁸³ Black labor only could be pushed to acceptable levels of productivity under dint of "constant supervision".⁸⁴ Hammond added that there were "to be found in every southern community negro farmers who are

prosperous, respected citizens, and whose agriculture is fully on a par with that of their white neighbors ... [b]ut these men are only the notable exceptions to the general rule of negro idleness and shiftlessness".⁸⁵ Blacks would stick with cotton growing even when prices were softening because "cotton ... bears neglect better" than other crops.⁸⁶ If the choice was to be posed between blacks as owner-operators of farms versus blacks as tenant farmers, Hammond unequivocally endorsed the former arrangement saying that "The negro's cultivation of the land as a tenant is even worse than as an owner".⁸⁷

It is the latter issue that occupied Katherine Coman's paper "The Negro as Peasant Farmer" some eight years later.⁸⁸ Coman's personal story is of interest on its own terms. She was a professor of history and political economy at Wellesley College who taught courses on socialism using Marx's *Capital* and courses on the industrial history of England and America. She was the author of the two volume *Industrial History of the United States and Economic Beginnings of the Far West: How We Won the Land Beyond the Mississippi*. Coman was largely responsible for bringing Emily Greene Balch, an eventual Nobel Peace Prize recipient, to Wellesley. The two were colleagues from 1896 to 1915, when Coman died.⁸⁹ Balch went on to teach at Wellesley for three more years before being terminated for her "outspoken pacifist position and her radical economic views".⁹⁰

Coman's essay "The Negro As Peasant Farmer" perhaps was, in a purer technical sense, more sophisticated than all the others discussed above. She demonstrated a facility with agency problems and selection bias, advancing an extremely modern style of argumentation. But her essay was no more devoid of the assumptions of black inferiority than the others, again despite (due to?) her broad outlook and affinity for Progressive causes.

Coman opened "The Negro As Peasant Farmer" with the observation that "it is forty years since Lee's surrender at Appomattox, yet the presence of the Ethiopian is our most serious national problem".⁹¹ In Coman's estimation the persistence of this "most serious national problem" was attributable to the "unscientific" content of the discussions and analyses of the status of "the Ethiopian":

The abolitionists made the mistake of thinking the negro a fully developed man, capable of responding to the ideals that sway European races. Southerners often make the even more serious mistake of regarding him as an undevelopable brute, with no more capacity for civilization than a dog or a horse. Both parties have ignored the patient processes of evolution and the efficacy of slow time.⁹²

Coman contended that in recent years the scientific approach to "the Negro problem" had begun to emerge. Without specifying precisely what constitutes the criteria for "science", Coman referred to new knowledge that was being made available from the methods of biology and sociology--the study of heredity and environment--as well as the "search-light of statistical inquiry". From these sources she wrote, "... we are beginning to accumulate a mass of important data".⁹³

The major studies and materials Coman cited that met her unstated criteria for being scientific were the following, including her annotations: (1) "Hoffman's 'Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro' [which] represents the negro in *status quo*. His physical and intellectual inferiority, his vicious habits, his industrial inefficiency, are unflinchingly exposed". (2) "Tillinghast's 'Negro in Africa and America' relates his present failings to inherited traits". (3) "DuBois in the Atlanta University Publications demonstrates the latent capacity of the negro, when given education and opportunity". (4) Local studies by the Department of Labor. And, lastly, (5) the Twelfth Census.⁹⁴ Thus Coman placed on the same footing the two major monographs of the Willcox school, given the imprimatur of expertise by the American Economic Association, with the studies generated under DuBois's direction at Atlanta University.

Evidently, Coman considered the disappearance hypothesis to bear some plausibility. But she also viewed the vanishing of "the Negro" to carry with it destructive consequences for whites:

It is evident that physical and moral deterioration threaten the [black] race. The future of the negro and the communities in which the negro predominates are in jeopardy, for a wholesome

social order cannot be based upon a decaying substratum. The elimination of the negro by poverty and disease may possibly be the outcome, but a population of eight million blacks cannot rot out from under without dragging down the white race in common ruin.⁹⁵

Coman took the evidence of absolute growth in the black population as indicative of the more likely prospect of the permanent presence of blacks in the United States, especially in the Southern states. Migratory patterns were sorting blacks and whites into rural and urban sections of the South consistent with their respective natural racial inclinations:

The 'crackers' are going to the towns to find employment in the mills. The negro is far more likely to remain upon the land. There is slowly being evolved a differentiation of habitat and employment, each race selecting the environment best suited to its *inherited capacity*.⁹⁶

Consequently, blacks "must, for an indefinite period to come, remain, the labor reliance of the Southern planter".⁹⁷ Thus, the efficiency of black labor took on a special importance for Southern agriculture, more so than in slavery times.⁹⁸

The relative productivity of black labor versus white labor circa 1900 versus antebellum black labor under slavery was hard to assess; according to Coman "opinions vary so widely that it is impossible to arrive at a settled conclusion". She refers here to reports from James M. Blodgett for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, George Holmes' study published in the fifth volume of the third series of AEA publications, and F.L. Olmsted's book *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*.

Blodgett's report offered a "qualified indorsement" of the qualities of black farm laborers. Although there were some regions where reports were given of "neglect, instability, [and] lack of thrift" on the part of black workers and where black workers were not desired, other regions provided "numerous reports" of the superiority of black labor over white. This was especially true according to Blodgett in the rice producing regions, where, ostensibly, white labor did not adapt to the climate.

Holmes said that the data showed evidence of deterioration in black labor in the postbellum period and that black productivity actually was higher under slavery than under freedom. This led Holmes to question the standard belief of the economists, from Adam Smith on, that free labor was superior to slave labor.

Olmsted, however, suggested that the reverse was the case. He referred to "[a] pro-slavery journalist [who] estimated that the day's labor of a slave was only half that of a free man". Olmsted also relied upon testimony from "practical planters" who informed him "that the free laborer of the North was worth four negro slaves at farm work". Olmsted added that it was his impression that there were more complaints about the inefficiency of black labor under slavery than there were in the years following emancipation.⁹⁹

But Coman warned that the various generalizations made on the comparative efficiency of slave versus free labor and black versus white labor were attributable to selection bias on the part of the commentators:

The slave whose docile efficiency is remembered by contemporary Southerners is the house servant, the fond old "mammy", the deferential and devoted "uncles" and "aunties" who belonged to the "big house". The field hands, male and female, were far from the ken of childhood. Their brutish stupidity and sullen viciousness no novelist has cared to depict. At present, as DuBois has pointed out, we have precisely the converse situation. The better type of negro is self-employed. The wage-paid laborers, whether house servants or field hands, are exactly the most inefficient and shiftless of their race.¹⁰⁰

Coman, as an economist, sought to resolve matters by looking at wage rates as an index of differential productivity between the races. Generally black laborers were paid a bit less than whites:

If the rate of wages be an accurate test of efficiency, the present showing is slightly against the negro laborer. Throughout the old South, where more than half the field hands are negroes, the wages paid for white laborers are higher by an average of \$1.48 per month. The excess varies from four cents a day in Tennessee to fifteen in South Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana.

In Kentucky alone does the colored laborer receive more than the white, the excess amounting to five cents per day.¹⁰¹

Coman did not address the matter of the exclusion of blacks from a host of better paid occupations outside of farm labor. Nor did she intimate that the racial wage differentials for field hands could be attributable to discrimination. Foreshadowing the modern argument about the instability of pure discriminatory wage differences, Coman argued that Jim Crowism in agriculture production could not persist because it was not profitable:

Some part of this wage discrepancy might be explained by the negro's lower standard of living, some part by his failure to make an organized demand for better pay, some part again by sentiment and custom; but it can hardly be supposed that planters throughout the Southern States would usually pay higher wages to white laborers unless that labor was worth more in harvest returns.¹⁰²

True, "many planters prefer colored help" but only because, as Tillinghast had demonstrated to Coman's satisfaction, "he is cheaper, more docile and contented, or ... he is physically better suited to a subtropical climate and monotonous field labor". With intense supervision "approaching, indeed, the rigor of the slave overseer", black laborers can perform large amounts of work with less rest than white workers would need; after all, "As roustabouts or stevedores they are unexcelled". Unfortunately, concluded Coman at this stage of her paper, "the negro does not give in exchange for money wage the zealous, intelligent, reliable service expected from the best type of European laborer."¹⁰³

The most ingenious part of Coman's discussion came next--ingenious *and* bizarre--although entirely logical within the context of the racial theory that imbued Coman's analysis. Coman already had embraced the Walker position that particular racial groups were best suited for particular regions and, further, that groups would tend under normal circumstances to allocate themselves in the regions natural to them. In "The Negro As Peasant Farmer" she introduced the argument that each racial group also had a compensation scheme that was natural for it. In short, Coman argued that there were race-specific optimal compensation schemes. The failure of a race to display high productivity under "the wage system" did not necessarily mean it invariably would be a low productivity race. There may be alternative compensation schemes that elicit superior effort from that racial group.

Coman referred to evidence from sugar planters in the Hawaii "who have had experience with field laborers of many races--Polynesian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, negroes, Porto Ricans" who said that the wage system was "the least satisfactory of any of the forms of labor employment, 'since it does not stimulate the ambition of the laborer and reduces the standard of performance to the product of the least efficient and most thriftless'".¹⁰⁴ Thus, the solution to the effort-elicitation problem for black laborers on Southern farms had to be one of finding the incentive scheme that was appropriate for them as a racial group.

The schemes that had been tried thus far were not the best. Tenant labor arrangements, inclusive of the widespread share system, led to agency problems that would be articulated by modern pure contract theorists in much the same fashion as Coman:

The negro tenant farmer makes a good showing in the crop returns, but his annual yield is often secured with unnecessary wear for land, tools, and draft animals. The soil is exhausted and the mules worn out because the cultivator is not the owner and has no concern for the conservation of the capital he uses.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, "Neither the wage system nor the metayer system can be regarded as the ultimate solution of the Southern labor problem".¹⁰⁶

What, then, was the answer? Black Southern farmhands should be transformed into peasant proprietors, said Coman, making explicit reference to John Stuart Mill's advocacy of such an arrangement in rural England. After all, "The African is endowed with a land hunger like that of the French peasantry"; indeed, "the Ethiopian" possessed a veritable "peasant instinct".¹⁰⁷

An empirical counter-argument already had been made by Frederick Hoffman, who pointed out that Southern states with larger black populations in their agricultural regions had lagged behind those with larger white populations in terms of output.¹⁰⁸ Coman had a well-considered response:

The facts cited [by Hoffman] can hardly be regarded as conclusive. There is no evidence as to the number of cultivators represented in each element of the population in the districts and at the dates compared. Moreover, Hoffman takes no account of the condition of the soil. It is evident that the 'dead lands' of Virginia would not yield as good returns as the comparatively new soils of Kentucky, no matter how intelligent the laborer. Nor can a fair comparison be instituted between the rice production of South Carolina and Louisiana or the cotton crop of Mississippi and Texas with taking the relative fertility of the soil into consideration.¹⁰⁹

Most important, Coman observed, "Hoffman had no data by which to estimate the productivity of the negro farmer as distinguished from the negro laborer".¹¹⁰ Data from the Twelfth Census would facilitate such a comparison. She found an overall discrepancy of 200 pounds of tobacco per acre that went against the black farmer, but also notes that the productivity gap is smaller in the North Central and the South Central regions of the country than in the older Atlantic states. In two regions, the North Atlantic and North Central sections, black farmers actually raised more tobacco per acre than white farmers in the South. Black rice farmers in Louisiana raised a larger crop than white farmers in South Carolina. She concluded that the ultimate source of the productivity gap had to be differential access to quality soil:

Probably ... the determining reasons for the inferior productivity of the negro owner is found in the fact that he can purchase only the unfertile or exhausted lands. In Arkansas, where he has no difficulty in getting possession of fertile soils, the colored land-owner produces more cotton to the acre than the white.¹¹¹

And, moreover, said Coman, it really was not fair to compare blacks with "the Anglo-Saxon". The more suitable comparison would be "with [other] undeveloped races, such as the Indian and the Hawaiian". Such a comparison based upon the Twelfth Census (1900) showed, "... the negro farmer expends less per acre than any other agriculturist in the United States except the Indian and the Hawaiian, and gets a higher return than any but the Chinese and the Japanese", and "[t]he Chinese and Japanese farmers represented in the census returns are cultivating gardens with great inherited skill".¹¹²

So blacks were not doing all that badly, for an "undeveloped race". And the adoption of a policy of conversion of Southern black farm hands into peasant proprietors would spur blacks along the preferred path of race improvement.

IV Conclusion

Many of the early AEA economists were active social reformers who believed that government involvement in the social problems of the day was essential, even if such involvement meant interference in market processes. Indeed, the founders of the AEA were seeking an organizational structure to counteract the wide-spread ideological attachment to the premises of *laissez faire* among their fellow economists. Among the early AEA members Richard Ely was the voice of Christian Socialism, Francis Amasa Walker mounted numerous defenses of market intervention, Edward A. Ross favored free silver, but also sought restrictions on the importation of coolie labor and public ownership of the railroads, and Frank Fetter wanted market intervention on a wide scale, ranging from immigration restrictions to a national eugenics policy.

The disappearance hypothesis advanced by the Willcox school was convenient in the event that no legitimate government policy could redeem the most potentially irredeemable "element" of the American population, the blacks. Policies to assist blacks in improving their status might have the perverse effect of making matters worse, anyway, so that at the turn of the century the keynote theme of the Willcox school, especially Hoffman, was black self-help as the only route to race improvement for a people who were doomed to extinction.¹¹³ Some blacks sounded similar arguments, such as the quasi-nationalist stance of Henry Kletzing and William Crogman, who accepted the position that blacks would be driven closer to destruction even if humanitarian efforts

were put forth on their behalf because the acceptance of such humanitarianism only could signal the intrinsic weakness of the race.¹¹⁴

There were no intellectual defenders of "the Negro" among the economists. Of course, there were no black academic economists during the Progressive era, anyway. Only W.E.B. DuBois contested the Willcox School's hegemony on matters of race in America. Abram Lincoln Harris, Jr. was the first black Ph.D. in economics (Columbia 1930) to stake out a career in academia and although he wrote extensively on race relations in the U.S., his work never addressed the content of the early AEA economists on "the Negro problem".¹¹⁵

There was a hiatus in published work on "the Negro problem" in economics journals after 1910 or so, not reversed until the late 1950s with the acceleration of the civil rights movement. But at the start of the American Economic Association "the Negro problem" was a major theme of scholarly activity. And the great debate centered on whether "the problem" would evaporate as blacks simply followed a natural course toward extinction.

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Notes

- ¹ See Mark Aldrich, "Progressive Economists and Scientific Racism: Walter Willcox and Black Americans, 1895-1910," *Phylon*, Vol. 40:1, Spring 1979, pp. 1-14 and Robert Cherry, "Racial Thought and the Early Economics Profession," *Review of Social Economy*, Vol. 34:2, 1976, pp. 147-62.
- ² Aldrich, op. cit., p. 1.
- ³ The careers of Hugh Dalton and Karl Pearson in England are striking in this regard. See the discussion in Harold Perkin *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880*, London: Routledge 1989, pp. 53-61. V.S. Huzurbazar's important paper that introduced the theory of maximum likelihood estimation to advanced regression analysis, "The Likelihood Equation, Consistency, and the Maxima of the Likelihood Function" was published in the *Annals of Eugenics*, Vol. 14, 1948, pp. 185-200 shortly after World War II. The journal is now known as the *Annals of Human Genetics*. While Huzurbazar's paper was strictly technical, the technical issues were prompted by inquiries into genetic phenomena attributable to the thrust of the eugenics movement.
- ⁴ Aldrich, op. cit., p. 2. See Frederick L. Hoffman *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, American Economic Association Publications 11, 1896, and Joseph Alexander Tillinghast *The Negro in Africa and America*, American Economic Association Publications III, May 1902.
- ⁵ Matthew Brown Hammond *The Cotton Industry: An Essay in Economic History*, AEA Publications, Ithaca, NY, 1897.
- ⁶ For more on Stone's relationship with Willcox, including Willcox's sponsorship of Stone for membership in the Cosmos Club and the American Economic Association as well as Willcox's selection of Stone to join the AEA Committee to Study the Negro, see Aldrich, op. cit., p. 9. Intellectual historian John David Smith's examination of pro-slavery ideologies in the postbellum era also includes several mentions of Stone as a defender of the paternal benefits of slavery for blacks. See John David Smith *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865-1918*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985, pp. 167-68, 180-81, 235 n. 54, 286.
- ⁷ Alfred Holt Stone, *Studies in the American Race Problem*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, reprint of 1908 original.
- ⁸ Aldrich, op. cit., p. 2.
- ⁹ Tillinghast, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 138 especially.
- ¹¹ Philip Bruce *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889, a publication in the "Questions of the Day" series. Bruce (p. 256) expressed grave concern about an emerging numerical disproportion favoring blacks who "have the strength of numbers that are multiplying with startling rapidity". Even where Bruce identified an area in which blacks displayed positive attributes he turned it into another marker of inferiority. For example, in his comments on black parents encouraging their children to attend school, Bruce (pp. 7-8) went on to say, "The

- Negro attaches an almost superstitious value to such instruction; he exults in the idea as if it were that of a fetish; it calls up a vague conception to his mind that is pregnant with manifold but ill-defined benefits".
- ¹² Francis Amasa Walker, "The Colored Race in the United States," *The Forum*, Vol. 11, July 1891, pp. 501-9. On Walker's general application of a twisted mix of Darwinism and Teutonism to American labor force demographics see Dennis Hodgson's excellent paper "Ideological Currents and the Interpretation of Demographic Trends: The Case of Francis Amasa Walker," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 28, January 1992, pp. 28-44.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 501.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 501-2.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 502.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 503-4.
- ¹⁷ The U.S. approach is more economical and proved quite useful for black nationalists in the late 1960s, since being black was not tied to actual skin complexion.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 503-4.
- ¹⁹ Francis Amasa Walker, "Statistics and Economics," *American Statistical Association* (?), 1888, p. 24.
- ²⁰ Walker, "The Colored Race", op. cit., p. 504.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 507.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 507.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 507. A similar position was taken by Frank Fetter in his text *Economic Principles* (Vol. 2, New York: The Century Company, 1918), where he made his own drumbeat case for black inferiority. Fetter (pp. 367-8) said that the relative number of blacks had fallen but the absolute number had risen since 1800, rather than 1810. But if European immigration had been stopped, blacks would have migrated to the North and West to take immigrant places. In 1915 when World War I led to limited European immigration, blacks had in fact migrated to those parts of the United States. At a sufficiently large scale this could mean a fall in the black population in the U.S. South, the region for which blacks were best suited according to Fetter. Blacks were bound to experience negative population growth rates in the incompatible epidemiological environments of the North and West. The eventual outcome would be a fall in the absolute number of blacks in the United States.
- ²⁴ Ingemar Hansson and Charles Stuart, "Malthusian Selection of Preferences," *American Economic Review* Vol. 80:3, June 1990, pp. 529-44.
- ²⁵ Joseph S. Haller, Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971, p. 60.
- ²⁶ I am grateful to Dr. Vanessa Gamble at the Department of the History of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin at Madison for pointing this out to me.
- ²⁷ Frederick L. Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," *The Arena*, Vol. 29, April 1892, pp. 529-42.
- ²⁸ Haller, op. cit., p. 60.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.
- ³⁰ Hoffman, "Vital Statistics", op. cit., p. 531.
- ³¹ Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies*, op. cit., passim.
- ³² Hoffman, "Vital Statistics," op. cit., p. 531.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 534-5.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 536.
- ³⁵ See Haller *Outcasts* op. cit., pp. 40-68. Haller aptly titled his book's second chapter "The Physician Versus the Negro".
- ³⁶ Hoffman "Vital Statistics" op. cit., p. 536.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 536-7.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 537.
- ³⁹ M.V. Ball, "The Mortality of the Negro," *Medical News*, April 7, 1894, pp. 389-90.
- ⁴⁰ R.M. Cunningham, "The Morbidity and Mortality of Negro Convicts," *The Medical News*, Vol. 64:5, February 3, 1894, pp. 113-17 and M.V. Ball, "Correspondence: The Mortality of the Negro," *The Medical News*, April 7, 1894, pp. 389-90.
- ⁴¹ Cunningham, op. cit., p. 113.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 113-5.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- ⁴⁷ Ball, "The Mortality of the Negro," op. cit., pp. 389-90.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 390.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

- ⁵⁰ Frederick L. Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," *Medical News* Vol. 65:12, September 22, 1894, pp. 320-4.
- ⁵¹ This is similar to Jerry Weaver's attempt to unpackage the modern black-white infant mortality differential, where Weaver argued that some part of the differential may be due to genetic differences between the races. See his paper "Policy Responses to Complex Issues: The Case of Black Infant Mortality," *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, Winter 1977.
- ⁵² M.V. Ball, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," *Medical News*, Vol. 65:4, October 6, 1894, pp. 392-3.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 392.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 392.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 392-3.
- ⁵⁶ Frederick Hoffman, "The Negro in the West Indies," *American Statistical Association*, New Series No. 30, Vol. 4, June 1895, p. 187.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-4.
- ⁵⁹ Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies*, op. cit., pp. 140-1. Also see the discussion in Haller, *Outcasts*, op. cit., pp. 63-64. Elsewhere Hoffman also examined cross-national and national statistics on the incidence of suicide by gender but was silent about the causes of the variation. See Frederick L. Hoffman, "The Sex Relation in Suicide," *American Statistical Association*, 1895, pp. 20-7.
- ⁶⁰ Frederick L. Hoffman, "The Negro Health Problem," *Opportunity*, April 1926, pp. 119-21, 138.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-21.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- ⁶³ W.E.B. DuBois, "The Future of the Negro Race in America," *The East and the West*, January 1904, pp. 4-19.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13. If this was to be the fate of American blacks DuBois did not expect it to occur instantly; instead he (p. 13) wrote "If extinction comes, it will be a long and tedious process covering many decades, accompanied by widespread crime and disease and caused by unusual race bitterness and proscription". Contemporary observers who have argued that American social policy is geared toward physical and/or cultural genocide for the black population include Sidney Willhelm, *Who Needs the Negro?*, Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970, as well as this author. See my paper: William Darity, Jr., "Racial Inequality in the Managerial Age: An Alternative Vision to the NRC Report," *American Economic Review* Vol. 80:2, May 1990, pp. 247-51. Was DuBois merely foreshadowing the onslaught of AIDS, drugs, homicide, poverty, malnutrition, poor schooling, etc., on the black community in the U.S.?
- ⁶⁷ DuBois Collection, Archives and Manuscripts Department, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ Herbert Aptheker, "Introduction" in H. Aptheker (ed.), *Contributions by W.E.B. DuBois in Government Publications and Proceedings*, Millwood: Kraus-Thomson Organisation Ltd., p. 1.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 1. Aptheker (p. 1) adds that Lowndes county, Alabama "served as the main locale of [DuBois'] novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*".
- ⁷⁴ Stone's paper was reprinted as "The Negro in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta" in Alfred Holt Stone (ed.), *Studies in the American Race Problem*, op. cit., pp. 81-124. It originally appeared in the Papers and Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, Vol. 3: No. 1, Publications of the AEA, February 1902, pp. 235-78.
- ⁷⁵ Alfred Holt Stone, "A Plantation Experiment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 19, February 1905, p. 271. This paper also was reprinted in *Studies in the American Race Problem*, op. cit., pp. 125-48.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 283.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 283-4.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- ⁷⁹ Alfred Holt Stone, "The Negro in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta," op. cit., p. 260 (AEA publications).
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- ⁸¹ Alfred Holt Stone, "The Italian Cotton Grower: The Negro's Problem," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 4, 1905, pp. 42-7.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ⁸³ M.B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry*, op. cit., p. 186.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

- ⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 189-90.
- ⁸⁸ Katherine Coman, "The Negro As Peasant Farmer," *American Statistical Association*, New Series, No. 66, June 1904, pp. 39-54.
- ⁸⁹ Mercedes Randal, *Improper Bostonian: Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1946*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, pp. 103-105.
- ⁹⁰ Mercedes Randall (ed.), *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972, p. xxvi.
- ⁹¹ Coman, "The Negro As Peasant Farmer," op. cit., p. 39.
- ⁹² Ibid., pp. 39-40.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p. 40.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 40.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 40-1.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 42, emphasis added.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 42-3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 43-4.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 44.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., p. 44.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 44-5.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 45.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 46.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 46.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 46-7.
- ¹⁰⁸ F.L. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies*, op. cit., p. 297; pp. 305-6.
- ¹⁰⁹ Coman, "The Negro As peasant Farmer," op. cit., pp. 50-1.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 51.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 52.
- ¹¹² Ibid., pp. 52-3.
- ¹¹³ Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, op. cit., p. 65.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 207.
- ¹¹⁵ See, e.g. the essays in Abram Harris, Jr., *Race, Radicalism and Reform* (edited by William Darity, Jr.), New Brunswick: Transaction 1989.