

2012

Strange Fruit: Images of African Americans in Advertising Cards and Postcards, 1860-1930

Meghan Brooke Holder
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [African History Commons](#), [American Studies Commons](#), and the [Marketing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Holder, Meghan Brooke, "Strange Fruit: Images of African Americans in Advertising Cards and Postcards, 1860-1930" (2012). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539626680.
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-5kg9-9y81>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

Strange Fruit: Images of African Americans in Advertising Cards and Postcards,
1860-1930

Meghan Brooke Holder

Richmond, Virginia

Bachelor of Arts, University of Virginia, 2008

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

American Studies Program

The College of William and Mary
January 2012

APPROVAL PAGE

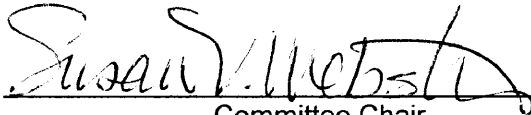
This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts




Meghan Brooke Holder

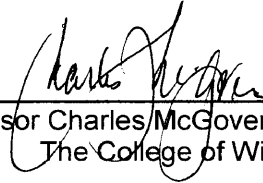
Approved by the Committee, November 2011



Committee Chair
Professor Susan Webster, Art History and American Studies
The College of William & Mary



Professor Susan Donaldson, English and American Studies
The College of William & Mary



Associate Professor Charles McGovern, History and American Studies
The College of William & Mary

ABSTRACT PAGE

“Strange Fruit: “Images of African Americans in Advertising Cards and Postcards, 1860-1930” studies nineteenth- and early-twentieth century advertising cards and postcards as works of art, an approach that is equally useful as it is rare. The imagery that I analyze depicts African Americans as being from, part of, and sustained by the land. By rendering the black body as a sort of strange fruit itself, the images suggest that blacks were innately and justifiably linked to land and its labors. From the anxiety-riddled days of Reconstruction America emerged depictions of blacks as hybrid plant matter—as a human sub-species trapped within a liminal realm where watermelons, chickens and cotton were the only necessities.

My work employs historical, literary, and pseudo-scientific material from the times as a means of framing the narrative by which advertising cards and postcards widely disseminated a very specific, racially-charged agenda. I examine the cards as artifacts of a visual culture highly charged by social, economic and political concerns about order and, at the most basic level, survival. By creating food-centric representations of the black body as half-human, always in pursuit—and production—of foodstuffs, and even as consumable products, whites strove to control and contain African Americans within a marginalized landscape of agricultural labor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	ii
Strange Fruit: Images of African Americans in Advertising Cards and Postcards, 1860-1930.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Changing Realities in Reconstruction America.....	6
Pseudo-Science and the Classification of Race.....	11
Advertising Cards and Postcards: The Spread of American Race Ideologies...	26
Evolutionary Images and the Body as Fruit.....	30
Hybridity and the Marginalized Black Body.....	37
Images of Reliance and the Concept of Consumption.....	47
Tied to the Land: White American Efforts to Control Black Freedom and Mobility.....	57
Eating the Black Body / The Black Body Eating.....	64
Conclusion.....	68
Archival Sources.....	71
Works Cited.....	72
List of Figures.....	75

I am forever indebted to a number of people who have motivated my academic journey and sustained me throughout its course. My thanks go to Professor Charlie McGovern, whose gracious confidence and encouragement have been my stalwart support from the start. You are an invaluable mentor and have taught me some of life's most important lessons. Thank you to Professor Susan Donaldson, for inspiring me in the classroom and helping my thesis take shape. I am grateful for your enthusiasm and your ceaseless devotion to carefully reading and passionately responding to my work. I am incredibly indebted to Professor Susan Webster, who has generously served as my advisor for the past year and a half. Thank you for being my steadfast partner throughout this process, despite geographical distance and all of life's many unexpected twists and turns. I cannot thank you enough and I certainly could not have accomplished this without you.

Thank you to Professor Melvin Ely and Professor Chandos Brown, as well as the many other mentors who have taken an interest in my academic journey and have generously given of their time and energy along the way.

Thank you to the Department of American Studies at the College of William and Mary for funding my graduate work. Thanks also to the staff of the Archives Center at the Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution; the staff at the John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History, Duke University; the Virginia Historical Society; and the Valentine Richmond History Center, where my work began.

I must also thank Professor Maurie McInnis, Dr. Beth O’Leary and Dr. Sylvia Yount, who have been dear friends and invaluable teachers for several years now and who continually inspire me to forge onward.

Finally, thank you to my friends, who keep me laughing. Most importantly, thanks to my parents, who are my foundation.

INTRODUCTION

From 1860 until 1910 Americans enjoyed a new kind of printed media: the advertising card. Advertising cards (also known as trade cards) were small paper documents—averaging about 4 inches by 3 inches—which used a combination of text and visual imagery to promote a variety of products. The cards featured both original illustrations and stock images, which large companies and small business owners alike tailored to their uses by stamping their names onto the cards' faces and graphics. The cards were the ideal size for carrying in one's hand, stuffing into a purchased package, and pasting into a scrapbook. For these and other reasons, trade cards are often studied as collectibles and as indicators of American conceptions of consumerism and definitions of class and gender. I am interested, however, in studying these cards as artifacts of visual culture that articulated and propagated ideas about African Americans and their positions within the economic, political and social systems in Reconstruction America.

Despite the frequent lack of provenance information, I intend to analyze the cards as artistic modes of expression intended to communicate opinions and objectives to a national audience. Indeed, scholars have examined these cards rather topically, often remarking on their depictions of gender and race in terms of reinforcing particular norms and popular stereotypes. As one scholar put it, “the

image of blacks in trade cards is somewhat ambiguous.”¹ Yet in the year I have spent looking through thousands of advertising cards and related ephemera, I have concluded that the racial imagery on these cards is anything but ambiguous. In fact, my research has led me to two observations that are critical to my project of providing a more analytical and systematic study of advertising cards and their function within nineteenth- and very early twentieth-century American businesses and households. First, African Americans are a predominant subject of the cards’ imagery. Second, blacks are often shown in scenes that have nothing to do with the product being advertised. Furthermore, more than merely relying on familiar racist tropes, many images on advertising cards—I would go so far as to say the majority—depict African Americans in intimate relationships with food or agricultural products. Nineteenth-century trade cards evidence a fascination not just with the black body but the black body as it relates to food and the land. I argue that images depicting African Americans as being from, part of, and motivated (and sustained) by the land were a critical part of a larger effort by whites to figuratively and literally re-enslave African Americans to the very land from which they were newly freed.

Images such as the one featured on a page from a late nineteenth-century advertising calendar demonstrate the notion that African Americans were sensuous beings motivated by base impulses (particularly hunger) and basic needs (particularly food) (Figure 1). In this image, a group of schoolchildren looks on as their teacher

¹ Robert Jay, *The Trade Card in Nineteenth-Century America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 68.

chastises a classmate for not knowing how to spell the word “pork.” The child wears a dunce cap on his head and a vacuous expression on his face, thereby making a spectacle for his fellow pupils. The caption highlights the teacher’s astonishment at discovering that one of his charges, despite “eighteen months” of instruction, cannot seem to spell “pork” correctly. The implications of this image and its text are numerous, but the main point to be made is that the illustration suggests that black children’s education centers on foodstuffs. The best thing an African American child can learn in an “academy,” it seems, is the spelling of words such as “pork”—and even those pursuits are hopeless. This and other images in both trade cards and postcards pictured blacks as individuals whose bodies and minds were constantly relating to food; in fact, according to this type of imagery, the daily activities of black life comprised planting, harvesting, cooking, eating, seeking, and stealing food. African American men, women, and children’s happiest moments took place when they were eating (cf. Figure 6); their dreams were of endless quantities of victuals (cf. Figure 20); and they would stop at nothing—indeed, they would try to take the bird from a woman’s hat—in order to obtain food (cf. Figure 5).

Illustrations on advertising cards and postcards disseminated ideas about African Americans being naturally—and justifiably—linked to the land, its labor, and its products. An 1889 card promoting Walker, Stratman & Co.’s “pure bone fertilizers” pictures a black woman from whose head buds a boll of cotton (Figure 2). The woman grins, holding up her dress to reveal her feet, which move about in dance.

The visual cues indicate that she is coy and submissive; she looks off to the side of the image rather than at the viewer, and her demeanor appears contented rather than confrontational. The illustration's connotations are tri-fold: the woman is biologically and permanently linked to the plant (it grows from the woman's body, being part of *her* rather than part of her outfit); she is linked to the principal agricultural product that blacks were forced to cultivate before emancipation; and her facial expression, coupled with the movement of her feet, suggests that she is neither startled nor concerned by the cotton sprouting from her head—instead, she seems happily unaware that any other (or better) human condition could exist for her.

Representations such as this one communicated the idea that African Americans were inherently inferior and were meant to slavishly work the land upon whose fruits white society relied. The graphics convey fascinations with agricultural hybridity as a process or condition that could apply to humans; images of half-humans/half-plants picture black figures sprouting plant heads and limbs as a possible means of both signaling African Americans' seemingly natural relation to land and hinting at amalgamation's threat to the purity of the white race (cf. Figure 2, 21 and 23). Furthermore, they illustrate an oral fixation with black bodies and the food that nourished them by elaborating upon white socio-cultural anxieties regarding subsistence, racial cleanliness, and social order.

Reconstruction, in one way or another, challenged everything that had seemingly justified centuries of enslavement. In particular, the sudden shifts in white

Americans' relationships to staples and provisions—particularly the production, sale, and consumption of agricultural goods—disturbed the food chain and, in turn, unsettled notions of economic, political and social stability. Ultimately, the images featured on advertising cards and postcards served to narrate and promote the ideological re-association of blacks with land and labor. My contribution to the current scholarship is a study of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century advertising cards and postcards as visual equivalents of the socio-political and legal methods white Americans employed in their attempts to re-enslave African Americans by limiting them to roles of agricultural laborers. Rather than mere reflections of the conditions and ideologies of Reconstruction America, advertising cards and postcards were visual performances of the anxiety-riddled efforts to define and contain blacks' places within both the American landscape and society.

My study begins with a look at the ways in which life for both black and white Americans changed post-emancipation, as well as the conversations taking place regarding race and the origins of man. I then analyze trade cards and postcards' illustrations as representations of African Americans as beings evolved from, bound to, and sustained by the land, directly engaging the imagery with discussions of evolution and the classification of race, hybridity and hierarchy, and consumption. In the final two sections I study whites' endeavors to define and limit African Americans' places—and roles—within society and the physical landscape; in particular, I examine obsessions with the black body and food as manifested in oral

fixation. By employing historical, literary, and pseudo-scientific material from the times as a means of framing the narrative expressed in advertising cards and postcards, I interrogate their imagery as artifacts of a visual culture highly charged by social, economic and political concerns about order and, at the most basic level, survival.

CHANGING REALITIES IN RECONSTRUCTION AMERICA

The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed vast changes in the lives of both white and black Americans. While blacks were adjusting to their newfound freedom, asserting their rights to paid employment, and trying to ensure just treatment on the job, whites sometimes found themselves adhering to rules set forth in part by those who used to work as their slaves. The men and women who formerly worked without pay and under a master's scrutiny were now hourly, paid employees. Although many returned to the land to work, numerous men and women who used to plant, grow, harvest, and cook whites' food were no longer a forcibly fixed part of the workings of the plantation landscape. Indeed, a growing minority of blacks had the ability to work their own land, sell their own products, and thereby create competition for the white plantation master. What once seemed an impossible nightmare now threatened to become a terrifying reality: white families not only faced competition but also had to meet their own physical needs and—if that proved impossible—cope

with impoverishment. Suddenly, the very system that had provided for whites' sustenance was undone.

Reconstruction brought about great and constant uncertainty for blacks; their status as free people, their place within society, and their liberties were ever in flux, ever-adjusted, contested, refuted and challenged. Efforts to establish order started early. At the closing of the Civil War, the Freedmen's Bureau was established; the Bureau was responsible for leasing land to blacks, managing the freedmen's labor contracts with employers, and ensuring former slaves' access to legal rights, education, and healthcare.² Though the Freedmen's Bureau had power to improve the livelihood of free people, much of the responsibility fell to the African Americans; in fact, it was often up to them to acquire land, erect buildings, and hire instructors for schools.³ "To African-Americans, freedom meant independence from white control," which they exercised by holding meetings and religious services without white supervision, obtaining "dogs, guns, and liquor," and refusing to vacate sidewalks for white pedestrians.⁴ Perhaps most importantly, blacks *moved*, leaving plantations in search of jobs, friends and family members, and the simple feeling of freedom.⁵ They also wielded power in their family and religious lives; in fact, family was a crucial stronghold of black freedom. In addition to traveling countless miles to find loved ones, free men and women "strenuously resisted efforts by many planters to force

² Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney, *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 23.

³ Ibid, 44.

⁴ Ibid, 37-38.

⁵ Ibid, 38.

their children into involuntary labor.”⁶ Controlling their family units and protecting their children from danger seems to have given African Americans a sense of independence, agency and unity. In addition to protecting their families, blacks took religious participation into their own hands; free men and women formed their own groups and places of worship and, before long, religious institutions led by whites were devoid of black participants. African American churches served as sanctuaries for schools, social affairs, political meetings, and the like and therein literally sheltered black freedom.⁷

Despite the freedom to move, gain education, and practice religion without whites’ supervision, African Americans struggled to secure economic freedom. The key to this form of liberation was simple: owning land. Debates raged, with blacks arguing that their centuries of unpaid labor had earned them the right to own part of their former masters’ acreage, and whites refusing to hear of their land being divvied up and run by former slaves.⁸ Furthermore, violence against African Americans was often rampant and—particularly in 1865 and 1866—fueled by “disputes over the control of labor.”⁹ Though it was hardly uncommon for African Americans to be attacked for no reason at all, whites brutalized blacks for quitting plantations, “challenging contract settlements, and attempt[ing] to buy land.”¹⁰ Land, like every other mode of freedom, was a source of both liberty and oppression for freedmen.

⁶ Foner, *America’s Reconstruction*, 39.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 39; 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Labor became the prominent concern among Americans and—for blacks especially—working land often meant being indebted rather than enriched. Similarly, blacks’ involvement in politics did not necessarily result in measures of legal equality. Indeed, while 1,500 African Americans held political positions in the Reconstruction South and “blacks were represented at every level of government,” legal codes withheld a variety of rights from free blacks.¹¹

The American economy was greatly marred by panics and depressions during the latter part of the nineteenth century, with depressions occurring in the years 1873-1878, 1883-1885, and 1893-1895.¹² I believe it is no coincidence that these depressions coincided with a profuse production of racist advertising cards. Drastic social and economic changes resulted in pervasive anxieties about African Americans’ potential for success; their freedom to move, socialize, buy and sell goods, and work for pay was considered perilous to white society. Indeed, economic changes and the anxieties they created generated an ever-increasing animosity toward blacks and “intensified whiteness as a potent political ideology.”¹³ It was during these times that tropes such as the “old mammy” became overwhelmingly popular, even nearly unavoidable; her unthreatening complacency in serving whites seemed to “[clear] up tensions between white men and women, between masters and servants,

¹¹ Foner, *America’s Reconstruction*, 93-94.

¹² Jay, *Trade Card*, 2.

¹³ Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 120.

by clarifying sexual and work roles as well as racial lines.”¹⁴ Whites were hungry for order, and creating images of subservient, laboring black figures satiated that appetite. While the means by which whites coped with these fears were numerous and varied, imagery—particularly in advertising—became a popular propaganda tool whereby ideologies of white supremacy and black subservience were literally marketed to a national audience, reaching homes both black and white, poor and affluent, and spanning both the North and South.

Images in advertising cards, which left artists’ tables, passed through print shops, businesses, and public streets, and ultimately arrived in American households, increasingly featured African American figures. This was true to such an extent that products and their illustrations are often unrelated, as in Figure 3. Even in advertising cards whose illustrations are pertinent to the marketed product, the images often focus on the black bodies rather than the commodity being sold to the viewer. For instance, in an advertisement (c. 1900) for Rising Sun stove polish (Figure 4), the stove—the very subject of the ad—is inside the cabin, behind the woman standing in the doorway. A cat hisses at his reflection in the stove, forming the advertising plug (the stove is so shiny from use of Rising Sun stove polish that the cat mistakes his reflection for a living animal); the viewer’s attention, however, would more than likely focus on the figures rather than search for the stove in the vignette. Framing the figures outdoors and tucking the stove away inside, the artist directs our gaze to

¹⁴ M. M. Manning, *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 23.

the grotesquely caricatured black bodies and the supposed drollness of the scene taking place. The illustrations on postcards, which circulated just as widely, used the same sort of imagery, employing depictions of the black body in relation to food as a pictorial greeting (cf. Figures 5 and 6). Ultimately, the visual components of these ads, which created “a symbolic universe where certain cultural values were sanctioned and others rendered marginal or invisible,”¹⁵ as well as the illustrations emblazoned on postcards, tied the black body back to the land from which it had so recently been emancipated.

PSEUDO-SCIENCE AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF RACE

More than merely attempting to control African Americans’ progress—their physical movement through spaces and their advancement within the economic system—white Americans made great efforts at restricting blacks’ social movements and interactions. The kind of thinking that developed and supported the types of racist imagery seen on advertising cards and postcards was nothing new; indeed, it stemmed from a long history of tensions regarding race, purity, and “whiteness” versus “otherness.” In fact, simmering beneath anxieties about blacks as economic competition was a grave fear of their integration into white society—and this panic had deep historical roots. An earlier and nearby example may be found in Colonial

¹⁵ T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 3.

Mexican *casta* paintings (cf. Figure 7) of the eighteenth century, which graphically express the timeless, universal aspect of white, European colonial concerns with race and hybridity. The art historians Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, in their recent article, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” describe the paintings as such:

[An important element of the] *casta* paintings is their commentary on racial purity and on status. Spaniards, who in this realm of pictorial representation have the highest social standing, usually appear in the first panels of each series; across successive scenes, the pairs become darker and darker until the painter depicts people of the lowest social status—either those of the most multiply mixed blood or those of the “barbaric” and “uncivilized” as to be beyond the realm of mixing. Thus biological mixing is a means to civilization for the savage and a path to barbarity for the civilized. According to the *casta* narrative and imagery, culture is biologically based and demonstrably so in visual terms.¹⁶

Casta paintings illustrate a concept of the presumably visual, predictable consequences of racial intermixing, which continued to be of great concern well into the twentieth century, both in Latin and North America. Yet what is most important for my purposes is that the *casta* paintings visually link race, status, and culture. The paintings’ narratives suggest that people become ‘barbaric’ and ‘uncivilized’ once a certain degree of hybridization has occurred. Furthermore, racial mixing can be a means of movement both upward and downward on the social scale—“a means to civilization for the savage and a path to barbarity for the civilized.” “Culture,” these

¹⁶ Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2003): 9, accessed July 8, 2011, doi: 10.1080/1060916032000084749.

narratives claim, is not only biological but also physically marked and perceived *visually*.¹⁷

Ethnographers and scientists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seem to have picked up this idea and not only expanded upon it but also applied it to people of all races, focusing in particular on the “Negro.” Two scientists in particular, George R. Gliddon, an Egyptologist, and Josiah C. Nott, a physician and surgeon, put the visual narrative characteristic of *casta* paintings into textual, “scientific” terms in their (1854) publication, *Types of Mankind* (Figure 8). Indeed, much like the “pseudo-documentary representations” of the *casta* paintings,¹⁸ the numerous charts and drawings in Gliddon and Nott’s volume illustrate with careful attention the pseudo-scientific representations of various races and ethnicities. Indeed, the *casta* paintings’ suggestion that “the origins of every significant cultural mix will remain traceable and distinct”¹⁹ seems equally resonant in the text and images within *Types of Mankind*.

Dean and Leibsohn study the hybridity of Spanish colonial art and the qualifications of “Spanish” versus “hybrid” creations. Yet one of their assertions seems directly applicable to my study:

...it seems that culture, biology, and the visibility of the mix have had everything to do with how and when hybridity is recognized. What renders an object or work of art hybrid...is our ability to detect and identify traces of pre-Hispanic handiwork. The corollary to this

¹⁷ Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 9-10.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 11.

position implies that when the traces of pre-Hispanic hand-work become invisible, the hybridity of a work will also disappear.²⁰

Though these scholars are addressing the work of a particular ethnic group, it seems to me that we may also apply their notion to renderings of African Americans as hybrid plants. When considering images of blacks as half-human/half-plant, one might question whether, as the subjects' human bodies become less and less visible, their identities as independent, liberated, functioning members of society vanish accordingly. The advertising cards and postcards of the time allude to such a notion as it seems that the fascination with crossing plants to create hybrid species had transformed, in a sense, into a sort of obsession with questioning who—or what—would result from “hybridization” of the races.

The roots of this sort of thinking—the possible correlation between the physical body and the intellectual mind—ran deep into early American history. According to Bruce Dain, “Rationalized languages of race” cropped up in the eighteenth century, when the first systematic attempt was made at a “natural science,” wherein living nature was “[described] and [understood]...on the basis of observation and reason operating upon sense experience.”²¹ By the start of the nineteenth century Americans were rather heatedly engaged in a debate over race and biology, and in particular over the question of whether human races were variations of one type or separate species in and of themselves. A driving concern was whether or not “the various ‘races’”—characterized as Negroes, Hottentots, Eskimos, and Australians—

²⁰ Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 18-19.

²¹ Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 6.

were “really men in the full sense of the term, sharing in the intellectual endowments of the European, or were they half-brutes....”²² Should scientists be able to prove that those races were indeed biologically, physiologically inferior, then it followed that the “superior races” could justly exercise power over them.²³

Two schools of thought developed in the growth of race science and the interrogation of man’s origins: monogenism and polygenism. Proponents of monogenism argued in favor of the Bible, which stated that all human beings shared one origin.²⁴ Polygenism, in contrast, claimed that humans of different races originated from unique lineages; furthermore, it underscored the hierarchy put forth in the “Chain of Being,” which situated Africans between base primates and man.²⁵

²² John S. Haller, Jr., “The Species Problem: Nineteenth-Century Concepts of Racial Inferiority in the Origin of Man Controversy,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 72, No. 6 (Dec., 1970): 1319, accessed August 6, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/672850>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Monogenism comprised three groups—the Adamites, who accepted only the Biblical account of creation; the “rational monogenists,” (among them, Carl von Linnæus) who believed that races were varieties created by environmental factors during man’s migration; and the transformists, who did not believe that any species existed and held that man transformed from the ape very gradually, over time, and was part of “the organic kingdom” (Topinard 1878: 519-520, as cited in Haller, “The Species Problem, 1319-1320). Essentially, however, monogenists did not acknowledge the existence of “pure races, but only the relative permanence of marked varieties suited to different regions and gradually produced by the inheritance of acquired variations through the influence of external, environmental conditions, ‘fixed’ (but not absolutely) through centuries of close breeding” (Haller, “The Species Problem,” 1320).

²⁵ Polygenism also comprised distinct factions—the neotraditional school (of which Louis Agassiz was a part), which held to the Biblical account of creation while also seeking to explain “the various types of mankind” and arguing that “man emerged in several places by several acts of creation, and the various forms were distinct”; a group that embraced the neotraditionalists’ conclusions but more firmly believed that the Biblical time span (assumed to be 5,877 years) was not long enough to produce “the necessary changes in human varieties to occur”; and a third school, which believed that “the various races of men resulted from modification “of some antecedent species of ape—the American from the broad-nosed Simians of the New World, the African from the Troglodyte stock, the Mongolian from the Orangs” (Huxley [1894] 1904: 142, as cited in Haller, “The Species Problem, 1322). As a whole, the polygenists believed in the diversity of man and used the “Negro” and the American Indian as “true autochthones of their respective continents,” and claimed that these races proved that there “was no link between the Old and New Worlds, and any similarity was far outweighed by the multitude of

One of polygenism's leading figures was Dr. Samuel G. Morton²⁶ (1799–1851), who during the 1820s and 1830s “measured hundreds of human skulls” in order to prove that brain size—and, in turn, intellect—was specific to the individual races.²⁷ Two of Morton's publications, *Crania Americana* (1839) and *Crania Aegyptiaca* (1844), served as the “foundational texts” for the so-called “American School” of ethnology, led by Morton and his fellow scientists, George Gliddon, Josiah Nott, and Louis Agassiz.²⁸ His studies and conclusions made Morton “a pioneer of American race science and physical anthropology” and his assertions that the various races belonged to distinct species of separate origins won him much respect.²⁹ In fact, “by 1850...Morton convinced most of the scientists of this time that the multiple origins theory was the most parsimonious way of explaining human variability” and his work made “scientific method and theory” fundamental elements of “any social construct of race.”³⁰

According to Morton, brain size was so specific to particular races that he could measure any skull and accurately distinguish its racial origin. Unsurprisingly,

physical, moral, and mental differences” (Hallowell 1960: 65-66; Steward and Newman 1951: 28; Morton 1842a: 21, 1842b: 6, 1844:66; Hammond 1866: 114-198, as cited in Haller, “The Species Problem,” 1322).

²⁶ Morton did not always consider himself a polygenist; in fact, he did not publicly come out as a supporter of polygenism until 1849. His polygenist beliefs, however, were active in his earlier work (Dain, 198).

²⁷ “Science: 1770s-1850s. One Race or Several Species,” American Anthropological Association, accessed August 6, 2011, http://www.understandingrace.org/history/science/one_race.html.

²⁸ Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 197-198.

²⁹ “One Race or Several Species.”

³⁰ Brendan O’Flaherty and Jill S. Shapiro, “Apes, Essences, and Races: What Natural Scientists Believed about Human Variation, 1700-1900,” Columbia University Department of Economics Discussion Paper Series, Discussion Paper #:0102-24 (New York: Columbia University, 2002): 23-24, accessed August 22, 2011, <http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:113664>.

Morton concluded that English Europeans possessed the greatest brain capacity, followed by the Chinese, the Southeast Asians and Polynesians, the American Indians, and lastly the Africans and Australian aborigines.³¹ A drawing of three skulls (Figure 9) illustrates this idea, showing the crania of a “Caucasian,” a “Mongol” and a “Negro” from above. The Caucasian skull very obviously has a larger cranial size, which Morton’s pseudo-science would define as being superior in allowing greater room for a larger, more advanced brain. The Caucasian skull, furthermore, is symmetrically proportioned, whereas the Mongol skull has a distinctly flat front and seemingly foreshortened back. Meanwhile, the Negro skull clashes with both in its elongated shape, with protruding front and jawline, and a triangular point at the back of the skull. Morton used powerful visual images and an “unsophisticated, simplistically one-sided quasi-biology” to create “an apparently legitimate scientific language” that would substantiate “the idea that human diversity had a biological basis and could not be altered in any foreseeable time span and that racial groups stood in a hierarchy of value, with black people on the lowest rung. In other words, race was a fixed entity and racial inferiority a fact.”³² The goal of this “ethnological racism” was ultimately to substantiate and promote the idea of progress as being a distinctly white phenomenon, one specifically outside of blacks’ realm of experience.³³

³¹ “One Race or Several Species.”

³² Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 198.

³³ *Ibid*, 206.

Morton's acclaim was so substantial that "he used his influence to make the case for black inferiority to bolster U.S. Secretary of State John Calhoun's efforts to negotiate the annexation of Texas as a slave state."³⁴ Morton, in other words, was not merely a scientist publishing articles on a subject interesting the insular academic world; rather, he was a man very much engaged with the political and scientific realms, actively using his beliefs and findings to affect the conversations taking place in both the political and scholarly arenas.³⁵ Frederick Douglass proved to be one of his most heated contenders, taking on the racist claims of Morton, Agassiz, Gliddon and Nott. In 1854, the year *Types of Mankind* came off the press, Douglass gave his address, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," in which he famously stated that "by making the enslaved a character fit for slavery, [slaveowners] excuse themselves for refusing to make the slave a freeman..."³⁶ Racial science was a critical part of the political and social drama of the nineteenth century, and the

³⁴ "One Race or Several Species."

³⁵ John S. Haller, Jr. disagrees with this statement to some degree, claiming in "The Species Problem" that the "anti-Biblical language" made polygenists like Gliddon and Nott notorious while making their audience rather small. According to Haller, "The South was too fundamentalist and New England too moralistic to meet on scientific terms that were un-Biblical and unemotional," and "The stance of both North and South was basically Christian, Biblical, and monogenistic" (1323). While this may be true, the popularity of the debate over man's origin and the overwhelming fascination with race science, as well as the numerous published editions of *Types of Mankind*—not to mention the visual allusions to African Americans' origins in images such as those in my study—indicate that perhaps things were not as clear-cut and exclusive as Haller suggests. In fact, I would argue that the visual renderings of the black and white body as hybrids on advertising cards and postcards points to a very widespread, universal American interest in the biological, geographical origins of race and man's lineal ties to other races.

³⁶ "One Race or Several Species."

polygenists (Morton, Agassiz, Gliddon and Nott in particular) were its leading players.³⁷

Dr. Josiah Clarke Nott (1804–1873) and George Robins Gliddon (1809–1857) published *Types of Mankind* in 1854 as a means of reproducing, substantiating, and diffusing the work of Samuel Morton and Louis Agassiz (1807–1873). *Types of Mankind* put forth the pseudo-science involving among other things cranial measurements, taxonomic charts and diagrams, and the study of ancient bodies and artworks. Gliddon and Nott’s work widely “popularized the polygenist theory,” as it was printed in nine editions and sold numerous copies.³⁸ Their tome was, in fact, “the leading American work on human races at the time”³⁹ and became the foundational text of the American School.⁴⁰ Moreover, a vast array of printed media nationwide, including “books, newspapers, tracts, and stump speeches,” featured Gliddon and Nott’s claims.⁴¹ What most interests me about the polygenists’ arguments and, more particularly, the work of Gliddon and Nott, however, is the evident desire to scientifically link races to certain lands and fauna, and their extensive reliance on the visual to prove their assertions. As they state in their text,

There is one feature in the physical history of mankind which has been entirely neglected by those who have studied this subject, viz., the natural relations between the different types of man and the animals and plants inhabiting the same regions. The sketch here presented is intended to supply this deficiency, as far as it is possible in a mere

³⁷ “One Race or Several Species.”

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ O’Flaherty, “Apes, Essences, and Races,” 24.

⁴⁰ Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 221.

⁴¹ Ibid, 225.

outline delineation, and to show that *the boundaries, within which the different natural combinations of animals are known to be circumscribed upon the surface of our earth, coincide with the natural range of distinct types of man.*⁴²

Studying people in terms of their geographic location and the animals living among them seemed to carry weight, as the “inferior” races were as much a part of a particular natural landscape as were the wild animals roaming their space (Figure 11). It also brings to mind, however, the same sort of assumed link between blacks and the fruits of the Southern landscape.

Much of the emphasis in the scientific study of races, especially for Gliddon and Nott, focused on human skulls and brain capacity, which explains why *Types of Mankind* features so many drawings like Figures 9 and 10, which compare the shapes and sizes of skulls of different races. Yet what Figure 9 demonstrates is a pattern wherein the skulls of various races are strikingly distinct in both contour and size; the “Negro skull” (Figure 10) is shown as a type, a standard—protruding jaw; teeth that angle outward, extending past the jawline; wide, gaping nasal cavity; and a long, slim skull that comes to a point at the back—which stands in stark visual contrast to the ideal English European or “Caucasian” type. The claim, affirmed visually, is that the “Negro” is naturally inferior. More than naturally inferior, however, the “Negro” is a separate species altogether, inferior to the white race and superior only to primates.

⁴² Josiah Clark Nott and George Robbins Gliddon, *Types of Mankind: Or, Ethnological Researches, Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon the Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (London: Trübner & Co., 1854), lviii. Italics in original.

At the same time, these illustrations seem to address whites' oral fixations with representing and legitimizing black labor.

One of their drawings spells out the positioning of blacks and primates in no uncertain terms; in this illustration, each of three skulls is paired with a "match" of sorts (Figure 12). The "Greek" skull is characteristic of the sculpted "Apollo Belvedere"—the Classical ideal. The skull is well-proportioned: the cranial area is almost perfectly rounded, the jaw is square, the teeth aligned, and the eye sockets, nasal cavity, and jawline are in nearly perfect vertical alignment. Apollo features a straight, angular nose, a small mouth, and flowing hair (drawn with careful, almost loving detail). The "Creole Negro" skull finds its match in a "Negro" man with a flat head, swollen lips (accentuated by facial hair), bulging eyes, an enormous neck that makes the face appear almost disproportionately small, and a nose that is so round and curved as to appear nearly disfigured. The skull itself appears entirely misshapen when compared to the "Classical" skull: it is elongated, slanted, angular, and forms no perfect vertical or horizontal axes. The "Young Chimpanzee" skull makes a close comparison with that of the "Creole Negro," which features an elongated shape, a long, exaggerated jawline, and an asymmetrical cranial area. The "Young Chimpanzee" is strikingly similar in appearance to the "Negro;" in each instance, their skin is drawn with the same hatching strokes, giving them identical coloring, and their eyes sit within similarly fleshy sockets. In fact, the "Negro" appears almost as simian as the "Young Chimpanzee" appears human.

The main idea presented in this illustration, however, is that the “Negro” is certainly not related to the “Greek god,” and has his place in some gray area between the superior and inferior physical forms. The authors state in *Types of Mankind* that “a man must be blind not to be struck by similitudes between some of the lower races of mankind, viewed as connecting links in the animal kingdom; nor can it be rationally affirmed, that the Orang-Outan and Chimpanzee are more widely separated from certain African and Oceanic Negroes than are the latter from the Teutonic or Pelasgic types.”⁴³ The authors cite “the very accomplished anatomist of Harvard University, Dr. Jeffries Wyman” to underscore the point, Wyman having stated the following:

The difference between the cranium, the pelvis, and the conformation of the upper extremities, in the Negro and Caucasian, sinks into insignificance when compared with the vast difference which exists between the conformation of the same parts in the Negro and the Orang. Yet it cannot be denied, however wide the separation, that the Negro and the Orang do afford the points where man and the brute, when the totality of their organization is considered, most nearly approach each other.⁴⁴

Were the “Negro” to belong to one species or the other, they argue, he would very evidently join the lower species, being so biologically distinct from the white race.

⁴³ Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 457.

⁴⁴ T. Savage and J. Wyman, External characters, habits, and osteology of *Troglodytes gorilla*; *Boston Journal of Natural History*, 1847, p. 27, as cited in Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 457.

By the 1880s, “coarse, grotesque caricatures began to dominate” the visual realm in representations of African Americans.⁴⁵ Indeed, the visual shift “from human to grotesque...suggests that whites had wearied of the whole Reconstruction question that had wracked the country from 1865 to 1877” and reveals the heavy “impact of the scientific racism that argued that non-whites, especially blacks, were less than human; the result was an increasing emphasis of monkey-like characteristics.”⁴⁶ I would take this one step further, however, to suggest that implicit within this pseudo-science was both a concern with the potential economic consequences of the advancement of the “inferior” races and a fear of racial contamination. Texts like Gliddon’s and Nott’s set the stage for the kind of imagery that, less than a half-century later, would adorn the thousands of trade cards and postcards that circulated among the masses, igniting and spreading fear of blacks’ progress.

Once again, the visual components of *Types of Mankind* suggest that those races—blacks in particular—were more akin to the primates and, in turn, unlikely—or unsuitable—to join white society. One of the charts featured in the book (Figure 13) directly compares blacks to primates, pairing a “Hottentot Wagoner” with an orangutan and a “Hottentot from Somerset” with a chimpanzee. Both the “Hottentot Wagoner” and the “Orang-Outan” appear utterly misshapen; their features are

⁴⁵ J. Stanley Lemons, “Black Stereotypes as Reflected in Popular Culture, 1880-1920,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 1977): 104, accessed August 22, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712263>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 105.

exaggerated, stretched, elongated, and oversized—indeed, they both look like mutations of some sort. The Hottentot, dressed in fine clothing and smoking a pipe, looks absurd, especially when paired with his purported relative, the orangutan. The “Hottentot from Somerset[’s]” similarity to the chimpanzee is almost too exact to imagine people having taken it seriously. Though the chimpanzee in Figure 12 does not have a sagging, protruding lower lip, this one does, suggesting that the drawing was calculated such that the ape would closely resemble the Hottentot woman—or vice versa. The visual narrative echoes the arguments put forth by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) more than six decades earlier, in which Jefferson used the rather popular notion that African women mated with chimpanzees “not as Linnaeus⁴⁷ would have used it, as testimony of human animality and closeness to apes, but as proof of the Negro’s bestial distance from the rationally governed white man. Essential nature, not a history of circumstance, explained differences between black and white.”⁴⁸ The notion that blacks were more closely related to apes, chimps, orangutans, and the like was sadly familiar, but here the idea that blacks were so sexually charged as to mate indiscriminately—with man or ape—took an almost contemporary image in the “Hottentot from Somerset”’s pairing with a chimpanzee, as it seems to suggest that a mating between the two figures could take place even in the modern day.

⁴⁷ See “Monogenism,” Footnote 83.

⁴⁸ Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 13.

As if these comparisons were not explicit enough, Gliddon and Nott include in the same illustration two drawings of “Mobile Negro[es]”; the one on the left side is almost frightening in appearance, with his monstrous features, flared nostrils, snarling mouth, and furrowed brow. These two men in particular, Gliddon suggests, are the types of man he witnessed with his own eyes when he “visited Mobile in April, 1852” and ultimately chose to “devote nearly twelve months of uninterrupted seclusion (in Baldwin County, Alabama) to [his] portion of the labor....”⁴⁹ The claim is that the black man is naturally, undeniably inferior and the “proof” is furnished by first-hand studies, observations, and measurements of the pseudo-scientists.

Laws grounded in racism—and in reaction to and in control of progress—became a national reality. Indeed, “The American School, abolitionists of all kinds, and free blacks themselves ultimately came to see questions of progress and change, stability, anarchy, and decline, in terms of supposed laws of racial entities, especially supposed laws of the benefits or perils of race mixing.”⁵⁰ Nott, especially, voiced his racist beliefs loudly, touting white supremacy and fretting that free labor would result in racial amalgamation, which would in turn result in the extinction of all races.⁵¹ The anxiety pictured in *Types of Mankind*, and even the sort of obsessive collecting and measuring of skulls by Samuel Morton and his fellow scientists, reached the masses in the everyday imagery on advertising cards and postcards. The illustrations used by Gliddon and Nott to support their racist agenda speak in accordance with

⁴⁹ Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, ix; xi.

⁵⁰ Dain, *Hideous Monster*, 227.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

images such as those in an 1876 scrapbook (Figure 16) and an advertising card for fertilizer (Figure 25), in which blacks are physically, somehow inherently different from—and lesser than—whites, and in which they are, even as freemen (the so-called “New Coon”), very much as they were before emancipation. Moreover, their illustrations seem to be a sort of bellwether for the images emblazoned on early twentieth-century postcards, which spread the idea of the African American’s evolution from the watermelon (cf. Figures 18 and 19).

Gliddon and Nott’s work “on ‘niggerology’, as they described it, brought the issue to a broader audience using the voice of science”⁵² and made their text—and their imagery—part of the national racist discourse. The early imagery used as scientific evidence of the black man’s roots in another origin and his belonging to a lower species—even his ties to a specific land—forged the path for nineteenth-century Americans’ marketing of an enduring racial agenda.

ADVERTISING CARDS AND POSTCARDS: THE SPREAD OF AMERICAN RACE IDEOLOGIES

Advertising cards were produced during the latter half of the nineteenth century, reaching their heyday during the 1880s⁵³ and phasing out of popular use by about 1910.⁵⁴ The cards were produced predominantly in large cities along the east

⁵² O’Flaherty, “Apes, Essences, and Races,” 24.

⁵³ Jay, *Trade Card*, 3.

⁵⁴ Many advertising cards are unsigned, and even more are undated. The common lack of information on the cards’ provenance may account for the general lack of scholarship on their imagery.

coast—most commonly in New York, but also in other big cities such as Boston and Philadelphia.⁵⁵ Advertising cards marketed a wide variety of products by employing a textual ad on one side of the card and an illustrated vignette on the opposite side to appeal to the consumer’s eye and make a claim for the seller’s quality goods. These cards reached the masses by way of shopkeepers, who inserted them in purchased packages or handed them out to passers-by,⁵⁶ as well as by way of personal distribution, as trade cards were collected, used as toys for children, and affixed into albums. Indeed, advertising cards entered American homes more than any other medium and they were “saved and cherished” in ways not enjoyed by other print media.⁵⁷ Postcards, while not explicitly marketing a tangible good, also disseminated ideologies. Just as trade cards entered households and reached the hands of consumers on a daily basis, so were postcards regularly transmitted from person to person and home to home; this fact makes them an appropriate inclusion in my study.

Advertising cards in particular became treasured objects, as they were collected, saved, and pasted into scrapbooks; in fact, scrapbooking of all kinds was a fashionable hobby from the 1870s to 1890s (cf. Figures 14 and 15).⁵⁸ Children, girls especially,⁵⁹ often arranged the cards in ways that were meaningful to them, sometimes organizing the cards by advertiser, sometimes by theme, and sometimes as

⁵⁵ Jay, *Trade Card*, 13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 27.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

a narrative entirely unrelated to the advertisers or their products.⁶⁰ Consumption in nineteenth-century America was—and continues to be—very much a social phenomenon, as middle-class families expressed and affirmed their status in buying particular brands and products.⁶¹ Moreover, just as personal calling cards (cabinet cards) were distributed among friends and family, engendering notions of belonging and familiarity, so did trade cards circulate as social currency. Ellen Gruber Garvey has observed that

[while] a child excluded from cliques based on race or based on having the money to buy calling cards might have access to the free trade cards....the seemingly freer realm of commercial interchange had its own restrictions: a poor child's parents might not shop in places where trade cards were given out; the discourse of racist caricature on many trade cards would have conveyed its own message of exclusion from the consumer marketplace to a black child.⁶²

Indeed, while scrapbooks usually featured pages filled with cards picturing animals and children, much like those making up the album in Figures 14 and 15, the cards that decorated them were also frequently racially charged. The scrapbook shown in Figure 16, for instance, illustrates this fact, featuring on one page an assortment of African American figures and monkeys. The comparison between African Americans and apes is not unique, but the fact that the link is made visually, and with images used in advertising products—goods unrelated to blacks or

⁶⁰ Garvey's text, like many other scholars' discussions of scrapbooking in the nineteenth century, mainly deals with constructions of gender and grooming females as consumers. There are numerous works that study consumer culture and gender, but relatively few that tackle race, which is a major impetus for my thesis.

⁶¹ Garvey, *Adman*, 18.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 23.

monkeys—indicates that something complex was taking place in American consumer and visual culture. In fact, “Advertising, both by picturing subservient blacks with products and celebrating whites as sovereign consumers, implicitly and explicitly figured the national consumer as white.”⁶³ More than construing whites as the “national consumer” however, the imagery pictured blacks as perpetual laborers; this is one of the principle dynamics and the focus of my study.

Scholarly analysis of images on American advertising cards and postcards is currently insufficient at best and necessitates more attention. “The study of popular culture is useful for exploring the mass mind because it is aimed at the majority,”⁶⁴ making trade cards and postcards perhaps one of the most representative of American ideologies since they traveled widely and spoke directly to a national audience. I have narrowed down the vast number of images I gathered in my research collection and divided them into three categories: “evolutionary” images; anthropomorphic or “hybrid” images; and “everyday” or “utilitarian” images. The following sections consider these three categories by unpacking the visual representations of African Americans in their relation to food and agricultural goods and reading them as texts within the larger realm of racist dialogue.

⁶³ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 167.

⁶⁴ Lemons, “Black Stereotypes,” 103.

EVOLUTIONARY IMAGES AND THE BODY AS FRUIT

The “evolutionary” images I have found rely on a particular trope, namely the supposed resemblance between a watermelon and a black person’s smile. As we can see in a postcard illustrated by Bernhardt Wall (Figure 17), the trope is used to substantiate the idea of African Americans’ physical evolution from the watermelon. While this particular image plays on the black “dandy,” alluding to his evolution only in its use of a watermelon for his head, two other postcards make more explicit arguments about blacks’ “natural” inferiority and tie them directly to the land. A 1909 postcard marked “Evolution / Watermelon Into Coon” (Figure 18) illustrates a watermelon’s three-step evolution into a black man’s face. The image makes multiple assertions: first that there is a legitimate similarity between a watermelon with slice cut out and the smiling face of an African American; second, that the “evolution” from watermelon to human is simple enough to occur in two mutations; and finally, that because of this mere three-step evolution, African Americans are closely related to the land.

A postcard marked “Evolution of a coon” (Figure 19) makes this “evolution” only slightly more complex. Here the transformation involves an additional step, making a total of four stages. More important, a human hand holds the watermelon in this image. This detail becomes crucial when we consider the image’s narrative more closely. If we read the evolution right to left, we see the familiar transformation

(watermelon evolving into a black man). However, if we read the transformation left to right—which is the standard method of reading evolutionary diagrams—the black man *devolves* into a watermelon. It is, in fact, the very sort of pseudo-scientific idea proposed in *Types of Mankind*, namely that blacks were of a lower biological rank; suggesting African Americans’ evolution from the watermelon works to perpetuate this mentality. Moreover, in this scenario, the black man devolves not merely into a fruit, but into a product for consumption, emphasized by the hand holding the watermelon.⁶⁵ Grown from the land, the black body ultimately returns to the consumer—which is to say that it returns to the consumer’s home and table, where it is devoured. I see implicit within these images a concern on the part of whites with social evolution (à la Gliddon and Nott); more importantly, however, I see them as suggesting that the black body cannot *separate from* the land.

The repercussions of racist imagery bound with agriculture—even the very metaphor of the black body as a product of the land—revealed themselves in daily life and artistic expression throughout the early part of the twentieth century. Billie Holiday first performed “Strange Fruit” in 1939, garnering new attention for Abel Meeropol’s poem about the terrors of lynching:

“Strange Fruit”

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

⁶⁵ The concept of the black body as a consumable good is pictured more literally in images on other cards; I discuss this more in-depth later in the paper.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh!
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Holiday's performance brought Meeropol's words to life in an aching sound, carrying the trauma of racism into households throughout America. The song "forced a nation to confront its darkest impulses" of hatred and brutality.⁶⁶ Meeropol's poem explains the spectacle of lynching in terms reminiscent of the imagery common in earlier advertising cards and postcards; the black body is a "strange fruit," "swinging in the Southern breeze," oddly placed between the blooms of "magnolia sweet and fresh." Holiday's articulation of Meeropol's words made the convergence of body and fruit unforgettably haunting, as one listener described her singing of the last line: "The voice goes up—crah-ah-OP!—like a scream....She leaves the last note hanging. And then—bang!—it ends. That's it. The body drops."⁶⁷ The language merges the tree and the fruit (the black body) as the victim's blood taints both the root and the leaves, nourishing the very site of—and tool for—the body's destruction. In fact the tree seems powerfully emblematic of the vicious cycle that both births and murders the African American, growing from the soil where blacks have died, reaching a height where its fruit will ripen, "rot," and "drop," making for the next "bitter crop."

⁶⁶ David Margolick, *Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society, and an Early Cry for Civil Rights* (London: Canongate Books Ltd., 2001), 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

Such strange fruit was also the subject of popular literature, in which the notion of blacks' "natural" evolution continued to take shape. In fact, "The image of black passivity in the face of white appetite was...contested in nineteenth century literature, as it had been, no doubt, in the micro-encounters of everyday life."⁶⁸ Charles Waddell Chesnutt, a writer, lawyer, and political activist⁶⁹ of mixed racial heritage, penned several short stories, published in magazines during the 1880s and 1890s, and published novels during the late 1890s and into the 1900s.⁷⁰ Chesnutt's fictional short stories, particularly those that Heather T. Gilligan calls the "Uncle Julius tales," boasted a steady esteem within the genre of plantation literature.⁷¹ The genre comprises two-fold tales; the frame is a white, Northern traveler's account of a story told to him—in dialect—by a Southern ex-slave, whose tale forms the second narrative.⁷² I include Chesnutt's short stories in my analysis not only because they were circulating throughout American households during the same time that visual representations of blacks were abundant features on the faces of advertising cards and postcards, but also because a number of the tales echo a concern with African Americans' relation to food and their ties to land both during and post-slavery.⁷³

⁶⁸ Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "'Everything 'Cept Eat Us': The Antebellum Black Body Portrayed as Edible Body," *Callaloo*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2007): 202 accessed April 26, 2011, doi: 10.1353/cal.2007.0175.

⁶⁹ "Charles W. Chesnutt," University of Minnesota Law Library: The Clarence Darrow Digital Collection, accessed August 9, 2011, <http://darrow.law.umn.edu/photo.php?pid=908>.

⁷⁰ Heather Tirado Gilligan, "Reading, Race, and Charles Chesnutt's 'Uncle Julius' Tales," *ELH* 74.1 (Spring 2007): 195, accessed July 21, 2011, doi: 10.1353/elh.2007.0003.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 196.

⁷² In Chesnutt's narratives the white traveler is John and the ex-slave is Uncle Julius McAdoo.

⁷³ Heather T. Gilligan makes the point that tales published as part of the plantation literature genre "were offered, with all of the ugly political entanglements that we find distasteful, for the serious

In one of Chesnut's tales, "Dave's Neckliss," published in 1888 in the *Atlantic Monthly*,⁷⁴ one of Master Dugal's jealous slaves accuses Dave, the hardest working enslaved person on the plantation, of stealing bacon from the smokehouse. Master Dugal gives his overseer permission to punish Dave in any way he pleases; in turn, the cruel overseer chooses to tie the ham planted under Dave's floorboards to a chain and forces the innocent man to wear the contraption all hours of the day, every day. Dave suffers numerous months wearing the ham "neckliss," his whole life turning upside down as a result; his friends disown him, his lover rejects him, and he loses his sanity, believing himself to be turning into a ham. His insanity grows so severe that he becomes almost infantile and harmless enough that the Master frees him of the necklace. Dave's mind, however, fails to recover, leading him to light a fire in a pile of bark inside the smokehouse and hang himself over its flames. Convinced that he had become a ham, Dave strung himself up to cure.

The plot of "Dave's Neckliss" speaks directly to the trauma of slave life and both the physical and psychological warfare used in controlling the minds and bodies of those forced into a life of servitude. The story uses Dave's mental transformation from a man into a ham as a metaphor for slavery's transformation of a man into a thing.⁷⁵ Yet the fact that Dave morphs into a ham is significant, as Chesnut's tale

consideration of nineteenth-century literary audiences" (198). Despite their often sentimental portrayals of the Old South and their sometimes blatantly racist reliance on extreme dialect and stereotypical plot scenarios, the short stories were politically-charged and serious in their intent to join the intellectual literary realm. This makes them all the more important to my study of racial representation.

⁷⁴ Gilligan, "Reading," 206.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

grapples with the notion, not uncommon, that enslaved people were somehow naturally drawn to foodstuffs, so much so that the most extreme measures had to be taken to control their appetites. In stories, when their appetites could not be squelched, blacks became victims to—and part of—the food they ate. Poisoning black men and women (as in “The Goophered Grapevine,” another of Chesnutt’s tales), brutally punishing them, and abusing their psyches were the means of keeping African Americans’ senses in check. The white narrator’s observation of Uncle Julius in “Dave’s Neckliss” reveals the extent to which the black mind—and the senses—was simultaneously a life saver and a burden:

The generous meal he [Uncle Julius] had made had put the old man in a very good humor. He was not always so, for his curiously undeveloped nature was subject to moods which were almost childish in their variableness. It was only now and then that we were able to study, through the medium of his recollection, the simple but intensely human inner life of slavery.... While he mentioned with a warm appreciation the acts of kindness which those in authority had shown to him and his people, he would speak of a cruel deed, not with the indignation of one accustomed to quick feeling and spontaneous expression, but with a furtive disapproval which suggested to us a doubt in his own mind as to whether he had a right to think or to feel, and presented to us the curious psychological spectacle of a mind enslaved long after the shackles had been struck from the limbs of its possessor. Whether the sacred name of liberty ever set his soul aglow with a generous fire; whether he had more than the most elementary ideas of love, friendship, patriotism, religion—things which are half, and the better half, of life to us; whether he even realized, except in a vague, uncertain way, his own degradation, I do not know. I fear not;

and if not, then centuries of repression had borne their legitimate fruit.⁷⁶

The portrait here painted of Uncle Julius is one of a man who, despite his age and experience, is “curiously undeveloped [in] nature” and “childish” in temperament. Yet it is his seemingly feeble mind that provides the only gateway through which the white narrator can experience the days of slavery. At the same time, however, Julius’s authority is undermined by the fact that when he mentions the unsavory elements of oppression, he lacks faith in his “right to think or to feel,” being still mentally “enslaved long after the shackles had been struck from the limbs.” In fact, the narrator considers him to be so beaten down by the “degradation” of enslavement that he doubts that Julius can even conceive of “the most elementary ideas of love, friendship, patriotism, religion,” making him, in turn, the “legitimate fruit” of “centuries of repression.”⁷⁷ Once again the African American is a fruit, a product of a past so heavy and traumatic that it almost seems to grow into the man himself, the days of labor having become overgrown inside the mind and tying down the body.

⁷⁶ Charles Waddell Chesnutt and William L. Andrews, *Collected Stories of Charles W. Chesnutt* (New York: Penguin Group, 1992), 90-91.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

HYBRIDITY AND THE MARGINALIZED BLACK BODY

The fascination with blacks, their physical bodies, their food and their eating habits manifested itself in another, equally troubling way—images of African Americans as hybrids in the form of humans crossed with corn and cotton plants. Discussing images of the amalgamated black body requires some interrogation of the concept of hybridity itself. The term “hybridity,” with its scholarly origins in subaltern studies, tends to “emphasize structures of power that center and marginalize.”⁷⁸ My goal in studying the visual representation of African Americans as tied to, originating from, and crossed with plant and fruit matter is to break this cycle. My attention, in other words, is not merely on the white powers that marginalized and objectified black people, but rather on the ways in which visual culture registered the changes in white and black life that were taking shape during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn describe “hybridity” as a term that was historically used to differentiate between what is “European” in history and what is distinctly non-European or ‘indigenous;’ the result was a word that simultaneously “homogenizes things European and sets them in opposition to similarly homogenized non-European conventions.” In essence, the term “hybridity” created—rather than formed in the clashing of—“an ‘us’ and a ‘them.’” More importantly, Dean and Leibsohn argue that hybridity is a product of both “intolerance” and “the need to

⁷⁸ Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 6.

distinguish and come to terms with unacceptable, conditionally acceptable, or uneasy mixes.” By this definition, hybridity functions as part of an exclusionary system grounded in and sustained by identifications of difference. Although Dean and Leibsohn are discussing an idea or concept more than any one particular manifestation of hybridity, their argument is critically relevant to my project in that the images I have collected vividly illustrate a dialogue centered on exclusion and a sort of desperate “recognition of difference.”⁷⁹

Images of African Americans as hybrids constitute a familiar trope. Often depicted as apelike creatures, with enlarged, cartoonish features, blacks have long been visually represented as inferior and bestial beings; in fact, this sort of imagery abounds in early American trade cards. African Americans are depicted not only as servile creatures, but also as beings that exist in a sort of liminal space, trapped between man and animal. Yet the anthropomorphic images that I study here render the body as part-human, part-plant. The vast majority of these images depict non-black people and many of them ethnically identify the subjects (e.g. an Irishman is half-potato; a Native American woman is half-ear of corn). Clearly these illustrations are part of not merely a racist but also an ethnically biased discourse. Yet there are distinct, crucial differences between images of black and non-black hybrids. First, whites are very often pictured as half-flower or half-butterfly—both allusions to beauty and femininity—while African Americans are hybridized as cotton plants in all but one of the anthropomorphic images I found. Second, and more important for

⁷⁹ Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 6.

my purposes, whereas non-blacks are shown *dressed* in plants, blacks are represented with plants as *part of their physical bodies*.⁸⁰ This group of images renders the black body as *part of the land*. Indeed, non-blacks seem to have the option of removing the plant; blacks, however, have no choice—removing the plants would be to dismember their own bodies.

An ideal example of this imagery appears on a card that dates to about 1880 and shows a dancing black male (Figure 21). The man holds a stick with both hands and raises one leg high as he performs a jig. From the man's head, just above his eyes, sprouts a boll of cotton that dwarfs him in size; indeed, one gets the sense that if the cotton were to grow any larger, it might force him to topple over. The man's eyes emphasize the rather eerie tone of the image, as they are completely white,⁸¹ giving the appearance that the cotton, more than merely sprouting from the man's head, actually fills his entire body and dominates his mind, which—if not filled with cotton—would make him wholly human. Indeed, the recognition of something as being “hybrid” depends upon both that which is visible—in this case, the cotton growing from the black man's head—and that which is invisible⁸²—here, the man's eyes and, arguably, his identity. Cotton constitutes the black man's body and mind,

⁸⁰ Illustrations of the non-black body as *wearing* rather than as *being* vegetative matter are not universal among anthropomorphic images; rather, some non-black figures are shown as having plant bodies or body parts. I have found the imagery (non-blacks as wearing plants and blacks as being plants) to be abundant enough, however, to legitimate my argument.

⁸¹ Numerous advertising cards feature figures with white eyes, which were meant to be transparent, such that the consumer could hold the card up to a light and see an image shine through the paper, filling the void. This does not seem to have been the idea here, however, as the back of the card depicting the dancing man appears to have been a separate page entirely. This also suggests that this image may be from a print advertisement rather than an actual advertising card.

⁸² Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 6.

his performance of vigor of a piece with the thriving boll that fills and bursts forth from his head.

Such renderings of the African American—with cotton head, smiling face and dancing feet—created a visual theme in advertising, spreading the concept of the happy black laborer who is somehow part of the land upon which he or she toils (cf. Figure 2). In stark contrast is an L. P. Griffith & Co. advertising card (Figure 22), created by J. H. Bufford (or Bufford and Sons), the leading producer of advertising cards in the northeast.⁸³ The card pictures a young white woman standing confidently before a field of wheat, delicately holding a scythe in her right hand and gently touching its point with her left. Her form-fitting bodice accentuates her shapely figure, and tufts of wheat frame her neckline. Her legs are clad in red stockings, and a pair of boots covers the young woman's feet. The wheat skirt, however, is the most prominent part of her frock, making a clever play on the product marketed by L. P. Griffith & Co. The young woman's face is cherubic, her red lips are pursed in a grin, and her beauty is enhanced by the red flower placed in her hair. She is both an emblem of beauty and an allusion to fertility and abundance. The field of wheat behind her flourishes, the young woman's sizeable bust pulls at the fabric of her bodice, and the red hue of her clothing—and her lips—suggest that she is just as ripe as the wheat; yet the image is not sexually unwholesome and would not have been considered offensive. Underscoring her representation as a signifier of beauty and quality, the card identifies her as 'A S'wheat Girl.'

⁸³ Jay, *Trade Card*, 27.

Lacking any such positive markers is a card picturing a black woman, whose entire body—besides her face—is a cotton plant (Figure 23). Here, the plant matter is neither accessory nor body part; rather, it is the body itself. The female's face, of course, is smiling, and while the image suggests fertility—cotton bolls dangling from every sprig of her form—it is specific to the cotton rather than to both the plant and the woman, as in the previous L. P. Griffith & Co. card. The print beneath the image boasts, "Grown with Williams, Clark & Co.'s High Grade Bone Fertilizers," leading one to wonder what exactly the fertilizer nourished, the cotton or the black woman. The black body, this image claims, is synonymous with the very crop that African Americans were forced to cultivate only a few decades earlier.

Two other trade cards illustrate the contrast in anthropomorphic imagery especially well. The first is an advertising card for Driscoll & Sheffield, hairdressers in Massachusetts (Figure 24), which shows a young woman wearing a floral dress. She dons a flower hat, and flowers blossom from just under the waistline of her dress. The crucial distinctions here are that the plant is a flower as opposed to a crop, and the flowers grow from her garments rather than from her body. As if underscoring this separation between body and adornment, the artist has chosen to depict her holding a flower, from which a perched bird sips nectar. The young woman has agency and control over the plant; if she wants to remove the flowers, she may, a notion illustrated by her having plucked a bloom and carried it in her hand.

A second card features an advertisement for Walker, Stratman & Co., “Boilers and Grinders of Bones” (Figure 25). The words “Boilers and Grinders of Bones,” printed in all capital letters, provides an unsettling accompaniment to the card’s pictorial vignette. A black male sits in a tree and blows a bugle from which hangs a banner proclaiming, “There’s a New Coon in Town.” The sun hangs over a corn field in the background, and three raccoons dance beneath the tree. The imagery in this card is rich with meaning—the raccoons alluding to the trope of the “dancing coon,” the prominent, single tree branch and the young man’s off-balance, precarious position upon it perhaps recalling the spectacle of lynching—but what is perhaps most important to my study is the banner. The image specifies a “New Coon” who, even post-emancipation, is nothing more than a physical part of the very land he works and the products of the land that he cooks and eats. Indeed this image markets an African American who stands in contrast to the freedman; this new black is not really free at all, and he proves it on his own. Like the subject of the “coon songs” that enjoyed their heyday between 1890 and 1910 (the same heyday as advertising cards), this figure is representative of the “minstrel black,” whom James Dormon defines as a “*safe*” character, one of the happy, music-making “joking buffoons” who, “as the accepted version of what was commonly perceived to be the ‘real’ American black...stood as personifications of a type of humanity not to be taken seriously. Above all, implicitly at least, they were not to be afforded any form of equality in a social order ultimately based in a system of race relations shaped by chattel

slavery.”⁸⁴ That this image circulated after the days of chattel slavery suggests a harkening back to the old order and an implication that, to some degree, it survived even post-emancipation.

These anthropomorphic images narrate a particular storyline contained within the larger racist discourse. By literally rending the black body—parceling it into pieces—whites reattached it to the plantation landscape. The black body was part and parcel of the plantation. These images go beyond affirming African Americans as laborers and portray them as an actual product of that labor. They insinuate that the woman hired to cook in the white kitchen or pick cotton bolls in the fields, for example, is not merely the person who prepares the food or gathers the crop; instead, she is the food and the crop. These visual statements, I would argue, were meant to assuage anxieties about the loss of slave labor in the fields and in the kitchen, making those anxieties a source of laughter at the newly-free black, who—whites hoped—could not possibly be as much of a threat as they feared.⁸⁵

Charles Chesnutt takes on the morphed black body as his subject matter in “The Goophered Grapevine,” which was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1887.⁸⁶ In the story, John, the well-to-do white man, aims to relocate to the South and purchase a plantation with land suitable for viticulture. His plans go well until he

⁸⁴ James H. Dormon, “Shaping the Popular Image of Post-Reconstruction American Blacks: The ‘Coon Song’ Phenomenon of the Gilded Age,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No.4 (December 1988): 451. Accessed October 26, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712997>.

⁸⁵ Certainly concerns and fascinations with hybridity were also sexually-charged, stemming from anxieties about racial purity, fertility, and amalgamation. Advertising cards and postcards illustrate these fears as well; in fact, this subject—and the imagery that accompanies it—is diverse and expansive in scope, and would require another paper all its own.

⁸⁶ Gilligan, “Reading,” 204.

meets Uncle Julius, an older black man who lives on the McAdoo plantation and tells of its troubled past. The plantation is “goophered,” bewitched by a conjure woman who poisoned the grapevines such that any black person who ate the master’s scuppernong grapes would die within a year. The blacks’ urge to devour the scuppernongs is so great that not only do they diminish most of the crop, but also they are so insatiable that only magic—and death—can deter them.

What is striking about this particular tale is that one of the black characters becomes the very sort of hybrid seen in the anthropomorphic images on advertising cards. When Henry, a new slave, arrives at the plantation and (not knowing that they are goophered) eats one of the scuppernongs, the overseer agrees to ask the conjure woman to try to save him. The conjure woman prevents the magic from killing Henry, but her spell joins him with the scuppernong vine, such that when the grapes are in season, Henry is full of youthful vitality, and when they shrivel up, so does he wither with old age: “Befo’ dat, Henry had tol’able good ha’r ‘roun’ de aidges, but soon ez de young grapes begun ter come, Henry’s ha’r begun to quirl all up in little balls, des like dis yer reg’lar grapy ha’r, en by de time de grapes got ripe his head look des like a bunch er grapes.”⁸⁷ Just as a cotton boll sprouts from the head of the black figure in the trade cards discussed earlier (Figures 2 and 21), so does a scuppernong vine grow from the top of Henry’s head. Henry, though saved from death, is ultimately a very part of the plant he ate and was responsible for

⁸⁷ Chesnutt, *Collected Stories*, 8-9.

cultivating.⁸⁸ The fact that images with illustrations of enslaved, anthropomorphic bodies circulated after African Americans' emancipation makes Chesnut's tale all the more resonant and suggestive of contemporary efforts to reaffirm ties between blacks, land, and labor.

The black body's transformation into the very food it consumed was a concept not foreign to nineteenth-century American literature, in which whiteness and blackness were distinguished and reaffirmed in the act of eating. As Kyla Wazana Tompkins explains,

[Whiteness] is revealed in [some nineteenth-century] texts both *in* process and *as* process. Eating is an act through which the body maintains the fictions of its materiality, both discursively and biologically. In nineteenth-century terms, the body *is* what it consumes on a deeply literal level, a belief structure that returns us, somewhat forcefully, to the symbolic status of that which is eaten. Eating in the nineteenth-century text is a performative nexus through which physicality and political subjectivity coalesce in the flesh as it ritualistically constituted through the repetitive ingestion of materials.⁸⁹

The concern with black appetites and the almost perverse fascination with their mouths as they ate indicate the belief that Tompkins points out, namely that what a person ate—and how they ate it—affirmed their racial status. The notion that “the body *is* what it consumes” plays out in both of Chesnut's tales, as the black body

⁸⁸ Kyla Wazana Tompkins points out in her article, “‘Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,’” that Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* features a similar use of the “trope of [a character's] edibility” as Chloe's “physicality comes to essentially embody her labor.” Stowe's narrator describes Chloe's appearance in very visual terms, but more importantly, in terms that echo her duties as a servant. The result, Tompkins argues, is that with “the value of [Chloe's] labor is collapsed into the value of her very flesh.” Furthermore, the whole of Tompkin's article underscores the fact that the notion of the black body as food was very much present in nineteenth-century literature. (211)

⁸⁹ Tompkins, “Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,” 206-207.

becomes physically, literally part of the food it ingests. At the conclusion of “Dave’s Neckliss,” John states that when he sat down to have breakfast the morning after hearing Julius’s tale, his wife told him that there was no leftover ham to eat, saying, “The fact is...I couldn’t have eaten any more of that ham, so I gave it to Julius.”⁹⁰ The fear is that if the white couple eats ham—the ham from which Julius ate and like that which Dave allegedly ate—they, too, may somehow transform; their very whiteness would be jeopardized.

There seems to be space in these narratives, however, for subversion. “The act of telling” is a crucial element of plantation literature, with narration functioning as an emblem of authenticity. In Chesnutt’s tales, the significance of “telling” works to suggest not only that the white narrator is so familiar with the black community that he can speak on its behalf, but its telling also reflects a certain “contentment” on the part of the ex-slave narrator in his subservient status.⁹¹ Yet just as Chesnutt allows for a certain degree of submissiveness in the character of Uncle Julius, so also does he seem to allude to the man’s knowledge of how to engage in acts of subversion. At the end of both “The Goophered Grapevine” and “Dave’s Neckliss,” John alludes to the possibility that Uncle Julius has ulterior motives in telling his tales. He suggests that Julius told him the story about the bewitched vineyard in hopes of keeping the land for himself, mentioning that “Uncle Julius had occupied a cabin on the place for many years, and derived respectable revenue from the product

⁹⁰ Chesnutt, *Collected Stories*, 101.

⁹¹ Gilligan, “Reading,” 201-202.

of the neglected grapevines. This, doubtless, accounted for his advice to me not to buy the vineyard....”⁹² Similarly, when John’s wife states at the end of “Dave’s Neckliss” that she “couldn’t have eaten any more of that ham, so I gave it to Julius,”⁹³ the reader is compelled to speculate as to whether or not Julius’s anecdote was another effort to have the white man’s food for himself. Though John did buy the vineyard and thus gained ownership of the scuppernong grapes, Julius won out in the case of the ham. More than a simple object of desire, food can be an impetus for action. One way to deflect any threat posed by possible connections between food and power was to depict African Americans as reliant upon foodstuffs for every kind of subsistence in everyday life. After all, whereas a black family eating the white family’s watermelon is dangerous, a black family living in a watermelon house is comical and reassuring to white people in search of order.

IMAGES OF RELIANCE AND THE CONCEPT OF CONSUMPTION

The third category of illustrations in my study comprises those that depict African Americans using food products for utilitarian purposes and, in turn, imply that blacks are sensuous beings motivated by—as well as sustained by and dependent upon—the land. These images suggest that, even though they were legally free to purchase goods (and even sell their own), African Americans would rather use

⁹² Chesnutt, *Collected Stories*, 13.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 101.

remnants of the land to which they were bound as their tools and technologies for everyday life. A 1909 postcard shows a black family living in what is identified as “A Kans. [Kansas] Bungalow” (Figure 26). The “Bungalow” is a watermelon. A child leans out of the window, a rotund woman sits in a chair on the porch, and two men stand in the yard. The composition of the scene, paired with the title classifying the watermelon house as a standard “Kansas Bungalow,” suggests that this is a natural or typical reality, despite its being entirely fantastical. Moreover, the postcard’s imagery is double-edged; not only is it demeaning in the obvious sense of implying that blacks would prefer a watermelon for shelter, but also in the sense that the watermelon is so enormous that it makes the African American figures appear diminutive in size, literally and figuratively belittling them. The watermelon, in other words, confines the African American figures, holding them to—and within—the fruits of the land.

Similar imagery illustrates an advertising card for Sanford’s Ginger (Figure 27), in which a jovial black girl holds a baby in a carved-out watermelon. Again the racist implications are two-fold, as the watermelon has a dual purpose—it serves as both a cradle and a meal, for the watermelon slice has a piece missing, showing where the girl has taken a bite from its center. We might imagine this card pasted inside a family album beside a trade card advertising “quality” baby carriages; such a juxtaposition would make the narrative crystal-clear—whites manufacture, sell and purchase quality goods, whereas blacks lack the wherewithal to do any such thing.

Instead, it suggests, they return to the land to which they were bound for both practical and pleasurable goods; even as freedmen, “blacks, trade cards insisted, would never really be a part of the modern world in which white consumers bought the advertised products.”⁹⁴

As Grace Hale explains in *Making Whiteness*, “intended to be humorously entertaining, these advertisements addressed white fears of upwardly mobile blacks by insisting that African Americans could never integrate into middle-class society.”⁹⁵ Furthermore, the watermelon cradle image visually confirms both the notion that “blacks naturally prefer foods that they can eat with their hands” and the idea that black children, especially, can be nourished with “easily accessible crops that grow profusely.”⁹⁶ The idea was that blacks were inherently different and naturally behind, such that even though “respectability was increasingly a matter of appearances, of money, passing could never occur,” since race would always show itself in blacks’ shabby homes, poor clothing, and inability to make adequate use of modern technologies. The visual imagery in advertising cards and postcards resulted in a “new figuration of national belonging [whiteness],” marginalizing blacks who, “after all, would not grow up to be American consumers.”⁹⁷ Despite how comforting this notion may have been, light-skinned blacks and people of uncertain racial

⁹⁴ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 158.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁹⁶ Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), 15.

⁹⁷ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 168.

identity were not featured on advertising cards,⁹⁸ indicating that whites were not so convinced of blacks' inferiority after all.

If we reconsider the 1909 image of the “Kansas Bungalow” (Figure 26), we find that it is meaningful in another sense, namely its very title, which tells us that the black figures are not tied to the land they worked before the Civil War; rather they are linked to a new land. In fact, in the late 1870s to 1880s, blacks made a mass exodus from the Deep South to states in the North and the Midwest, primarily Kansas. This image, with its setting boldly marked, seems to contribute to the evidence that race was gradually becoming more than a southern story, and in every sense a national narrative. More importantly, however, it communicates the idea that blacks, though having escaped to a place of “refuge,” were ever reliant on the fruits of the South—the fruits of their labor—for survival. The Kansas Exodus, led in large part by scores of black tenant farmers and sharecroppers, startled and outraged white Southerners in particular, who were chagrined that black workers would flee rather than acquiesce to their role as “a cheap, compliant labor force.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, whites were surprised that free blacks were competent enough to analyze their situations and act to change them. In the face of African Americans' hope that Kansas would grant them the liberty to “freely exercise their rights as American citizens, gain true political freedom, and have the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency” stood

⁹⁸ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 157.

⁹⁹ Damani Davis, “Exodus to Kansas: The 1880 Senate Investigation of the Beginnings of the African American Migration from the South,” *Prologue*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Summer 2008), accessed September 17, 2011, <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/summer/exodus.html>.

images such as “A Kans. Bungalow,” which argued that no such liberties would change their existence, housed in watermelons and trapped within the labors of their past.¹⁰⁰

Illustrations such as these engage with fears of African Americans not only as economic threats but also as the embodiment of “rampant political corruption.”¹⁰¹ These images underscore the conception shared by many whites that African Americans were “a peasantry wholly untrained in, and ignorant of, those ideas of constitutional liberty and progress which are the birthright of every white voter...they are gregarious and emotional rather than intelligent, and are easily led in any direction by white men of energy and determination.”¹⁰² Rather than freedmen whose own productive talents and political opinions might compete with—or overturn—whites’ economic and political power, blacks are figured as childish, “untrained” people “ignorant of” their own freedoms and opportunities. Postcards, in particular, used “commodity racism and race fetishism” (namely “contrived cultural products” collected as valuables and those that gave “pleasure” by picturing blacks as subservient) as comedic spectacle and thereby making the representation of blacks in precarious or unlikely situations reassuring to the white American public.¹⁰³ Furthermore, in figuring the African American as the national comic personality,

¹⁰⁰ Davis, “Exodus to Kansas.”

¹⁰¹ Jay, *Trade Card*, 68.

¹⁰² Ibid. Statement made by Richard Watson Gilder in *Century* magazine in 1883, as cited in Roy Ginger, *The Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914* (New York, 1965), p. 74.

¹⁰³ Psyche A. Williams-Forsom, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 56.

“popular culture’s treatment of blacks reflected the society’s humiliation of them....The general public tried to render one of its most fearsome problems into a funny one.”¹⁰⁴ The racist imagery featured in trade cards and postcards communicated the idea that blacks did not threaten the economic, political, and social order as white masses feared. Even when given the choice of purchasing household goods, these images seem to claim, blacks would just as soon carve a watermelon.

Furthermore, many advertising card and postcard illustrations suggest that the black body can literally be packaged. This is particularly clear in a postcard featuring an illustration of black children in a “chocolates” box (Figure 28). The claim put forth by such images is that African Americans are consumable products and—perhaps more important—that they are contented as such.¹⁰⁵ In fact, picturing African American children as edible objects seems to be a critical part of this entire discourse. In a photograph on a postcard marked “Southern Products” (Figure 29), a black child is shown seated in a basket filled with cotton. The words, placed at bottom right, identify both the cotton *and* the black baby as literal crops of the South, suggesting that the child—as much as the cotton—is a consumable, even an agricultural, product. Though the black body maintains its integrity in this photo, the parallel to images such as that featured in the Williams, Clark & Co. ad for fertilizer (Figure 23) is uncanny in that the black body is, once again, directly compared to the

¹⁰⁴ Lemons, “Black Stereotypes,” 104.

¹⁰⁵ M. M. Manring argues this point in *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*, stating, for example, that “the ads seem to be saying to white women, you can approximate the lifestyle once created for plantation mistresses by the efforts of female slaves through purchasing the creation of a former slave [Aunt Jemima]” (140).

cotton plant. Ultimately, depictions of younger black generations as products for consumption implied that even those born into freedom would in due course become part of the traditional process of providing for whites' subsistence.

Images of African Americans on advertising cards, particularly those purveying agricultural items (Figure 25, for example) seem to be a blatant attempt to market the freedman as someone not truly free—as someone meant to labor the land he worked as a slave. By the late 1860s, while black men strove to work as paid employees, reject gang labor, and “keep their women at home with the children and out of the fields,” there was a new boom in the use of commercial fertilizers.¹⁰⁶ The surge in use—and advertisement—of fertilizers allowed whites a prime opportunity to spread an image of the African American as not only a compulsive laborer but also a necessary component of agricultural success.

African Americans appear not only in images of the “packaged body,” so to speak, but also in illustrations depicting the black body as being contained *within* food. In an 1882 advertising card for Sapolio soap (Figure 30), an African American boy's head is nestled within a watermelon, which appears to have been cracked open. The boy smiles, looking out at the consumer, making his situation within the fruit seem almost natural. This may in fact be a “stock” trade card, one of many designs mass-produced and sold to various companies, who had their names stamped or

¹⁰⁶ Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 47.

printed onto the image.¹⁰⁷ The fact that the image has no relation to soap supports this possibility. If we assume that it is indeed a stock card, the illustration's implications are even wider-ranging, as the company is selling more than soap; it is selling a particular racist ideology whereby the black body is tied to—and reduced to—a consumable agricultural good. A similar trope illustrates a barber's trade card (Figure 31), in which an African American man's head emerges from within a gourd. Again the figure is smiling, appearing somehow mischievous yet also harmless as he looks out at the viewer. In each case, it seems as though the figures are content with their containment within food products, which we might read as a contentedness with their containment within an oppressive labor system largely based on agriculture.

Perhaps the most explicit image I found, however, is a 1913 postcard (Figure 32) depicting a black boy standing in front of a watermelon, with one foot in and one foot just outside the fruit, as if having just stepped out. Solidifying this pictorial narrative, the artist has included the words "I'se Right In It," emphasizing the idea that the boy was physically contained within the fruit and—once a slice was removed—emerged from its core. His patchwork breeches and torn hat make the boy a sympathetic, clownlike sort of character, someone who is so naïve, so contained within his own world (a fruit), that he is entirely unthreatening. The boy's clothing places him within the poor, rural South, his lazy eyes and finger in his mouth suggestive of a dull intellect—all signals of a black male who poses no menace to white business, politics, or society.

¹⁰⁷ Jay, *Trade Card*, 29.

Also implied in images like this one, however, is the notion that purchasing—and eating—a watermelon is somehow the equivalent of purchasing and consuming the black body. Over time, there was a perceptible change in trade cards, a “movement away from black-figured spectacle toward black-figured embodiments of products.”¹⁰⁸ Though now unable to buy a slave, the white consumer could purchase a cookie jar shaped and painted like a black mammy or buy a fruit which, according to this imagery, essentially embodies the African American. Part of this notion of consuming the African American centers on an oral fixation of sorts, which I will discuss in more detail in a later section of this thesis; yet it is important here to point out Tompkins’s observation regarding “the alimentary, that is, *oral* desire for blackness exhibited by whites in the nineteenth century...[that indicates a] profound ambivalence toward, and ongoing dependence upon blackness, upon which nineteenth-century whiteness relied.”¹⁰⁹ White American reliance upon black labor and skill was simultaneously marked by “ambivalence” and desperation, and this strange sense of urgency manifested itself in equally strange imagery, as exemplified in the images I have discussed to this point. A Cream of Wheat advertisement from 1904 (Figure 33) epitomizes this type of imagery. Here, the black man—“Rastus,” the emblematic face of Cream of Wheat—is mirrored in form, standing on either side of the page, smiling as he holds a large portion of wheat. A white girl with light blonde hair, wearing a white dress, white hair bow, and white socks, sits perched

¹⁰⁸ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 162.

¹⁰⁹ Tompkins, “Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,” 206.

upon the stack of wheat and smiles out at the viewer/consumer. While I could spend pages unraveling the imagery in this advertisement, the crucial point is this: that the concept of black labor—the black body, even—supporting, sustaining, nourishing the white populace was, in instances such as this, literally and visually stated.

This is to say that, despite how laughable the idea may sometimes have appeared in its portrayal, it was nonetheless a real idea—a national mindset that white wellbeing, so to speak, benefitted from (if not depended upon) black labor. “The seemingly benevolent cultural connections between black bodies and food objects”—for example, the “favor” (a “nigger baby”) inside a papier-mâché walnut toy (Figure 34)—emphasize “the violence and ambivalence of American racial politics in which desire and disgust for black bodies commingle intimately and produce representations of market, parlor, and kitchen cannibalism.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, in certain instances, the allusion to foodstuffs as being part and parcel with the black body transpire in “the representation of the black body *as food itself*, and thus in the desire to consume those bodies.”¹¹¹ The consumer market seemed to build upon this association throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, as “black-figured items...became profitable commodities themselves....Anyone with a box top trademark and five cents could acquire an Aunt Jemima doll, and the company boasted that ‘literally

¹¹⁰ Tompkins, “Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,” 201.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

every city child owned one.’ ...Not every child could have a servant but all but the poorest could have her very own pancake mammy.”¹¹²

TIED TO THE LAND: WHITE AMERICAN EFFORTS TO CONTROL BLACK FREEDOM AND MOBILITY

This discourse took place during a time when the tumultuous issue of civil rights for African Americans endured frequent changes in legal status. Only eight years after it passed, the 1875 Civil Rights Act was declared unconstitutional,¹¹³ demonstrating the strong sense of white unrest concerning how freed blacks would join society and what rights they would share with whites. When we consider the fact that advertising in America experienced a tenfold increase between 1870 and 1900,¹¹⁴ the use of advertising cards seems logical as a means of disseminating ideas and engaging in a national (white) conversation about the changing times. Trade cards were both inexpensive to make and widely available to advertisers. In fact, trade cards, though most often produced in northern cities, reached homes on a national level, making their way to consumers in even the most rural areas.¹¹⁵ I argue that the visual representations of African Americans on advertising cards and postcards

¹¹² Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 160-161.

¹¹³ Jay, *Trade Card*, 68.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 36.

during this time were a material part of broader, more literal efforts to return blacks to a subservient and unthreatening status, most notably in relation to the land.

Though the Civil War largely devastated the plantation system, by 1866 “most of the prewar plantations were reestablished....and the work-gang system was reintroduced with only minor modifications from the slave regime.”¹¹⁶ Whites now hired black laborers and provided them with housing and food; yet they still employed the whip as a means of discipline and supplied food and shelter that was similar to—if not the same as—that provided during the period of enslavement.¹¹⁷ The work-gang system in particular used the land to control the freedman’s labor as wages were granted at the conclusion of the season, and the wages—rather than money or material goods—were “a portion of the crop.”¹¹⁸ Whites stood by this system, as it justified their mindset that African Americans were too shiftless to work without being forced to do so:

Charges of “indolence” were often directed not against blacks unwilling to work at all, but at those who preferred to labor for themselves rather than signing contracts with whites. In the strange logic of a plantation society, African-Americans who sought to become self-sufficient farmers seemed not examples of industriousness, but demoralized freedmen unwilling to work—work, that is, under white supervision on a plantation.¹¹⁹

Former masters were not ready to accept the reality of blacks laboring autonomously; in turn, the very concept of independence intensified as blacks strove to argue that

¹¹⁶ Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 57.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

¹¹⁹ Foner, *America’s Reconstruction*, 58.

freedom equated to independence. Eric Foner points out that many white planters believed that if they maintained possession of their lands, then they could rightly work African Americans “on such terms as they please.”¹²⁰ Foner cites Samuel Agnew, a planter in Mississippi, who stated that blacks would eventually “learn that freedom and independence are different things. A man may be free and yet not independent.”¹²¹ White Americans understood that “man was free in large part because he held ‘property in his own labor’. Wage labor could then be a rite of passage on the road to the economic independence of free farming or self-employed craft labor.”¹²² The possibility of blacks attaining such freedom through land ownership and ultimately earning their own success through “free farming” or “self-employed craft labor” rattled those desirous of maintaining white supremacy and control.

In addition to operating under the wage system, whites attempted to control black labor and progress with legal measures. Lurking at the heart of such efforts was “the idea that blackness could be made permanently to embody the preindustrial past they [whites] scorned and missed.”¹²³ After the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, former slave states established the Black Codes, which, while granting blacks rights such as property ownership and freedom to sue in court, also withheld from them the right to “testify against whites, serve on juries or in state

¹²⁰ Foner, *America's Reconstruction*, 59.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 45.

¹²³ Ibid, 97.

militias, or vote.”¹²⁴ Furthermore, the Black Codes forced African Americans “to sign yearly labor contracts,” manipulated blacks’ opportunities to work in certain occupations, restricted their ability to obtain land,¹²⁵ limited their movements and aimed at ameliorating “the impact of competition in the labor market.”¹²⁶ Most importantly, the Black Codes included a “vagrancy” statute whereby any free man or woman who could not provide proof of employment could be arrested and fined, and if the arrestee was unable to pay the fine, he or she could be “bound out to hire.”¹²⁷ In turn, blacks had little if any freedom either to cease working in protest of improper working conditions (and the like) or to attempt to find alternative employment.¹²⁸ The effect for many was essentially re-enslavement.

By 1880 the wage system had been abandoned, largely due to labor shortages.¹²⁹ Among the nine great cotton-planting states, the average “farm” size decreased from 347 acres to 156 acres, while the number of farms increased greatly.¹³⁰ Meanwhile, sharecropping rose significantly and quickly; in the nine cotton-planting states in 1880, a total of 301,738 farms were tended by sharecroppers.¹³¹ Furthermore, although gang labor had been abolished, “the

¹²⁴ Foner, *America's Reconstruction*, 75.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 66.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹³⁰ The great cotton-planting states were Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

¹³¹ *Tenth Census, 1880*, III, *Statistics of Agriculture*, 25, as cited in C. Vann Woodward and Charles B. Dew, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 178.

plantation's concentration of control" remained seated with whites of the planter class; indeed, "a small elite of white landowners controlled the employment opportunities for the majority of black workers."¹³² When whites opted to rent portions of their land to freedmen, it was usually "for a share of the crop."¹³³ Under this sharecropping system, blacks worked their plots as independent units and earned income.¹³⁴ The land secured by free blacks was sometimes part of the plantations they had worked as slaves, and "almost always out of plantations within a few miles of the home place."¹³⁵ Moreover, the laborers lacked choice of what to plant and what methods to use in cultivating the crops, and the white landowners could adjust plot sizes at will so as to decrease the workers' potential incomes.¹³⁶ Ultimately, black laborers benefited only in having shelter and food and in being less closely supervised by whites than under the gang system.

Control, for white landowners, was paramount and, despite African Americans' newfound freedom, the white gaze remained:

Black people's personal lives, their cabins (and the contents thereof), the number of dogs they supported, the number and name of the visitors they entertained, the hours they kept, the food they consumed, even the quantity of wood they burned, would, most planters presumed, remain similarly subject to an ex-master's will.¹³⁷

¹³² Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 80.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Williamson, *Crucible of Race*, 46.

¹³⁶ Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 98-99.

¹³⁷ Susan Eva O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 130.

White employers wanted to monitor, discipline, and pay laborers the way that they saw fit. Indeed, the ways in which free men and women were paid for their work was frequently a source of turmoil. White landowners seem to have used every means possible to both pay as little as possible and secure the black laborer's indebtedness to the white boss—and the land itself. Some white men “considered a few bushels of corn, a gallon or two of sorghum syrup, a pair of shoes—distributed after the potatoes had been dug, corn shucked, grain threshed, and cotton baled—sufficient reward for a year's worth of labor.”¹³⁸ By this view, blacks were not only fit to labor in producing food, but also they were fit to be nourished, sustained, and rewarded with food. It is the very concept illustrated in the advertising cards and postcards of the period—growing, eating, and using a watermelon for material purposes is suitable enough for African Americans (cf. Figure 27).

Debt peonage was perhaps the ultimate bond of blacks with the land. African Americans worked on farms, living as tenants and laboring on the land. Loans were required in order to finance the running of the farms, yet blacks—who seldom owned enough property to provide any sort of incentive to lenders—usually lacked the ability to obtain credit. Cotton, as a cash crop, was the most practical means of securing a loan. White merchants, using this fact to their advantage, required “that a certain quantity of cotton be planted to further enhance the security of his loan,” essentially requiring the tenants to accrue further debt.¹³⁹ This system, referred to as

¹³⁸ O'Donovan, *Becoming Free*, 126-127.

¹³⁹ Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 159-160.

the crop lien, only further restricted black (and white) farmers, whose livelihood increasingly became based on their ability to provide “collateral.”¹⁴⁰ In effect, the tenant became “locked in to cotton production.”¹⁴¹ Debt peonage was a system of perpetual indebtedness, as the tenant farmers’ meager incomes prohibited them from saving; furthermore, crop failures and merchants’ ability to increase their demands often sent the farmers into such debt that they were obligated to sign on for another year of work to the same merchant.¹⁴² Black laborers became, in essence, ensnared within cotton culture, making the images on trade cards—the anthropomorphic illustrations in particular—seem all the more daunting and demoralizing (cf. Figures 21, 23, and 35).

When we consider this cyclical system of bondage, the image featured on an advertisement for Williams, Clark & Co. fertilizer (Figure 35) seems all the more potent in its picturing of black laborers working in a field waist-high with cotton. The African Americans are neatly contained within two delineated vignettes, which appear as glimpses to the white consumer, showing him the background, so to speak, of what he may purchase. A crown is situated above the top bordered scene, and symbolizes Williams and Clark Co. with its words—all capitalized—“Royal Bone Phosphate.” There is a certain hierarchy at work here, with the white business owner promoting his goods from a position of authority and communicating with the white consumer, who is conveniently and comfortably removed from the laborious reality

¹⁴⁰ Foner, *America’s Reconstruction*, 68.

¹⁴¹ Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 162.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 163.

of the work that goes into the sowing and harvesting of crops. The black worker, needless to say, is at the bottom of the hierarchy, visually situated within a sterilized, contained realm devoid of any indicators of the harsh realities of their continually land-bound lives. Other than the tall cotton, which appears almost suffocating—nearly reaching the necks of the workers in the distance—the image lacks any sign of the harsh economic system at work. In fact, the scenes give little indication of whether they illustrate a scene of slavery or of free labor.

EATING THE BLACK BODY / THE BLACK BODY EATING

One of the ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century white Americans distinguished themselves from blacks, who—despite their supposed innate inferiority—were beginning to make a way for themselves in freedom, was to invoke race in everyday practices, particularly eating. Whites began actively to distinguish the black appetite and black eating habits from their own, once again calling upon notions of animalism. An early twentieth-century postcard (Figure 20) illustrates the sort of mindset according to which blacks were entirely sensual beings, picturing the African American's "dream of paradise" as an endless parade of chickens marching into his mouth, even while he sleeps. All that matters to black people, it argues, is that their stomachs are constantly full. Their thoughts—both while awake and asleep—are of food, especially of the racially stereotypical chicken and watermelon.

This postcard, much like Charles Chesnutt's stories, points to the growing conception of food and eating as racial. The nineteenth century saw the "whitening" of "gastronomic habits;" in the process, "distinct, ritualized eating constituted a particularly important objective for powerful whites as it served to alleviate the anxiety inherent in the recognition that the biological necessity of eating 'might reduce all involved to an animal level of appetite and competition.'"143

One of the details in Charles Chesnutt's tale, "Dave's Neckliss," is somehow easy to overlook during an initial reading of the text. The narrator comments that a good meal puts Julius—who has just told an emotionally wrenching, rather traumatizing story—into "a very good humor;"144 this seemingly minor point ushers us toward a larger facet of Chesnutt's stories, namely the notion that the black characters are somehow motivated—and compelled to manipulate others—by food and an insatiable appetite. Chesnutt always seems to find a way to return the reader's attention to the hunger and eating habits of his black characters, particularly Uncle Julius, who narrates the dialect tales. In "Dave's Neckliss," the story opens with John and his wife, Annie, inviting Julius to join them in a meal. Julius's eating habits utterly fascinate John:

[Julius] ate with evident relish, devoting his attention chiefly to the ham, slice after slice of which disappeared in the spacious cavity of his

¹⁴³ Bridget Heneghan ("Whitewashing America: Material Culture and Race in the Antebellum Imagination," 2004: 16), quoted in Itai Vardi, "Feeding Race: Eating Contests, the Black Body, and the Social Production of Group Boundaries through Amusement in Turn of the Century America," *Food, Culture & Society*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (September 2010): 373, accessed August 22, 2011, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/175174410X12699432700944>.

¹⁴⁴ Chesnutt, *Collected Stories*, 90.

mouth. At first the old man ate rapidly, but after the edge of his appetite had been taken off he proceeded in a more leisurely manner. When he had cut the sixth slice of ham (I kept count of them from a lazy curiosity to see how much he *could* eat) I saw him lay it on his plate....¹⁴⁵

Chesnutt's description of Julius echoes the illustrations found on advertising cards and postcards of the time; Julius's mouth is a "spacious cavity" into which food "disappeared," and he eats "rapidly" and with such an "evident relish" that one can rather easily imagine the sort of bulging-eyed, cavernous-mouthed caricature that haunts so many American images from the period. Moreover, John is so mesmerized by Julius's eating habits that he counts how many slices the man eats, stating that he was curious "to see how much [Julius] *could* eat," as if watching to see if the ferocious appetite of a black man evidenced a human ability to consume an inhuman amount of food.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the scene underscores the perceptible difference between the two men; Chesnutt's use of dialect in Uncle Julius's narrations is so elaborate that it highlights the stark contrast between John, the successful white man, and Julius, the freedman who still inhabits the world of the Old South, even after his ties to the McAdoo plantation have been legally severed.

Yet the passage from "Dave's Neckliss" also responds to the American enthrallment with the black mouth and what it consumed. "[The mouth is the cavity] through whose metaphorical properties the porous and fictional boundaries between the races might also be represented. For in examining the alimentary, that is, *oral*

¹⁴⁵ Chesnutt, *Collected Stories*, 89.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

desire for blackness exhibited by whites in the nineteenth century, we further uncover the profound ambivalence toward, and ongoing dependence upon blackness, upon which nineteenth-century whiteness relied.”¹⁴⁷ We can take this one step further by analyzing a popular form of American entertainment in which these stereotypes and ideologies manifested themselves: eating contests. The eating contest became a popular form of entertainment in the mid- to late-1800s, when whites would stage competitions between black people, who raced to consume the most “watermelons, pies, crackers or rice” in the shortest amount of time.¹⁴⁸ “Immersed in the pie or watermelon, his facial features now distorted by the foodstuff, the black contestant appeared as both a repulsing and amusingly attracting sight. This confusion of boundaries between food and body aided in solidifying his position as an essentially different, deviant corporeality in the eyes of the white gaze....”¹⁴⁹

Indeed, the broad grin pictured in the postcard image in Figure 17 and the type of images such as in Figure 23 *work* because, at the surface, they appeal to a predominate stereotype and, at a deeper level, they promote a simultaneous consumption and erasure of blackness. The consumer, in purchasing Williams, Clark & Co.’s fertilizer, is not only using the black body but also participating in its disappearance, as the black body lacks most of its form, its limbs and midsection being plant matter—cotton—marketed to a white community. “[T]he desire to devour blackness”—in this case, the cotton and the person who “grew” it—“also

¹⁴⁷ Tompkins, “Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,” 206.

¹⁴⁸ Vardi, “Feeding Race,” 374.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 376.

indicates the desire to annihilate [blackness], to use it only in terms of its capacity to regenerate whiteness.”¹⁵⁰ The success of images like the one used by Williams, Clark & Co. centers on the connection between black labor, the black consumable body, and white sustenance in a time when black labor and the black body were no longer legally synonymous.

CONCLUSION

“[B]ecause of the persistence of the Old South imagery,” scholars studying the scope of black memorabilia frequently use the term “symbolic slavery” in their discussions of the period including the late 1880s through the first few decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵¹ This “symbolic slavery” took shape in a number of ways, and my goal has been to both untangle the myriad ideas illustrated by images on nineteenth-century advertising cards and postcards and connect them to the larger national discourse concerning race science, the politics of labor, food and agriculture, and the changing American economy.

In this imagery, the black laboring body became synonymous with food and food production. The images I have examined in this study demonstrate a distinct fascination with the African American as being ever tied to food and the land; they illustrate a preoccupation with seeing the black body as always consuming—but also,

¹⁵⁰ Tompkins, “Everything ‘Cept Eat Us,” 213.

¹⁵¹ Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose*, 20, as cited in Williams-Forson, 58.

and perhaps more importantly, as always *producing*. The image on the face of a postcard stamped 1907 (Figure 36a, b) shows several African American men (and possibly women) standing inside a large barn type building. The scene is titled “Negro Oyster Shuckers.” Oyster shells litter the floor, the workers’ coats hang slack along the rafters, and the figures stand—emotionless—looking directly at the camera, as if frozen in their work. The individuals stand corralled in stalls, cattle-like, as they perform the repetitive task of parting the oysters from their shells. The reverse of the postcard reads, “Don’t this postal make you hungry?” The words speak volumes, as they suggest that simply viewing the black body at work shucking oysters—after all it is the black body, not the oysters, which are the visual focus in the image—can engage the viewer’s appetite. Another postcard (Figure 37) reads, “Do you remember [sic] the night we had some melons? Ha Ha.” The writer (whom we may assume to be white) relates to the image, reminding his friend of a time when they ate melons like the one being eaten by the smiling, impish black boy featured in the image. Both the illustration and the inscribed message are comical; although the sender of the postcard associates with the picture, he does so in a laughing manner, going so far as to spell out his humorous sentiment. Even if the sender and his friend shared in a similar episode of mischievous melon eating (the grin on the black figure’s face implies such), the black boy’s tattered clothing and the fact that he almost clumsily sits atop the fruit from which he eats, make him and the scenario itself distinctly other.

The collection of imagery that supports my thesis indicates a trend in advertising cards and postcards produced by and primarily for a white audience wherein African Americans are depicted as having a dynamic relationship with food and agricultural products. This relationship, I believe, is fraught with anxieties about blacks as not only economic competition but also as threats to the purity of the white race, its politics, and its products. I study the visual representations of African Americans in advertising cards and postcards as the illustrative component of a socio-political system by which whites had managed to return blacks to a subservient realm of agricultural labor, including debt peonage and even the convict lease system. Fueled by racism, fascinations with agricultural (and human) hybridity, and preoccupations with both science and social evolution, whites used the imagery on advertising cards and postcards to inscribe and publicly disseminate a complex discourse, making an energetic effort to contain African Americans within both the role of production and a system of consumption.

Archival Sources

Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.

Earl Gregg Swem Library, Special Collections, Williamsburg, Virginia.

John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History, Duke
University, Durham, North Carolina.

Valentine Richmond History Center, Richmond, Virginia.

Virginia Historical Society, Richmond Virginia.

Works Cited

- American Anthropological Association. "Science: 1770s-1850s. One Race or Several Species." Accessed August 6, 2011.
http://www.understandingrace.org/history/science/one_race.html.
- "Charles W. Chesnutt." University of Minnesota Law Library: The Clarence Darrow Digital Collection. Accessed August 9, 2011.
<http://darrow.law.umn.edu/photo.php?pid=908>.
- Chesnutt, Charles Waddell, and William L. Andrews. *Collected Stories of Charles W. Chesnutt*. New York: Penguin Group, 1992.
- Dain, Bruce. *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Davis, Damani. "Exodus to Kansas: The 1880 Senate Investigation of the Beginnings of the African American Migration from the South." *Prologue*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Summer 2008). Accessed September 17, 2011.
<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/summer/exodus.html>.
- Dean, Carolyn and Dana Leibsohn. "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America." *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2003): 5-35. Accessed July 8, 2011. doi: 10.1080/1060916032000084749.
- Dormon, James H. "Shaping the Popular Image of Post-Reconstruction American Blacks: The 'Coon Song' Phenomenon of the Gilded Age." *American Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (December 1988): 450-471. Accessed October 26, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712997>.
- Foner, Eric and Olivia Mahoney. *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.
- Garvey, Ellen Gruber. *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Gilligan, Heather Tirado. "Reading, Race, and Charles Chesnutt's 'Uncle Julius' Tales." *ELH*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Spring 2007): 195-215. Accessed July 21, 2011. doi: 10.1353/elh.2007.0003.

- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.
- Haller, John S. Jr. "The Species Problem: Nineteenth-Century Concepts of Racial Inferiority in the Origin of Man Controversy." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 72, No. 6 (December 1970): 1319-1329. Accessed August 6, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/672850>.
- Jay, Robert. *The Trade Card in Nineteenth-Century America*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987.
- Lears, T. J. Jackson. *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.
- Lemons, J. Stanley. "Black Stereotypes as Reflected in Popular Culture, 1880-1920." *American Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 1977): 102-116. Accessed August 22, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712263>.
- Manring, M. M. *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998.
- Margolick, David. *Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society, and an Early Cry for Civil Rights*. London: Canongate Books Ltd., 2001.
- Nott, Josiah Clark and George Robbins Gliddon. *Types of Mankind: Or, Ethnological Researches, Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon the Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History*. London: Trübner & Co., 1854.
- O'Donovan, Susan Eva. *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- O'Flaherty, Brendan, and Jill S. Shapiro. "Apes, Essences, and Races: What Natural Scientists Believed about Human Variation, 1700-1900." Columbia University Department of Economics Discussion Paper Series. Discussion Paper #:0102-24. New York: Columbia University, 2002. Accessed August 22, 2011, <http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:113664>.
- Ransom, Roger L., and Richard Sutch. *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

- Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. “‘Everything ‘Cept Eat Us’: The Antebellum Black Body Portrayed as Edible Body.” *Callaloo*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2007): 201-224. Accessed April 26, 2011. doi: 10.1353/cal.2007.0175.
- Turner, Patricia A. *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.
- Vardi, Itai. “Feeding Race: Eating Contests, the Black Body, and the Social Production of Group Boundaries through Amusement in Turn of the Century America.” *Food, Culture & Society*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (September 2010): 371-396. Accessed August 22, 2011.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/175174410X12699432700944>.
- Williams-Forsen, Psyche A. *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Williamson, Joel. *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Woodward, C. Vann, and Charles B. Dew. *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.



Fig. 1

“Yer Bin To Dis Cadermy Eighteen Months, An’ Dunno How To Spell ‘Pork?’ Yer Nebriate, Ye!,” c. 1880. Advertising calendar. Clarence Brooks & Co. (New York). American Bank Note Co. (publisher).

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Paint, Box 2, Brooks, Clarence.



Fig. 2

“Walker, Stratman & Co., Boilers and Grinders of Bones,” 1889. Advertising card. Walker, Stratman & Co. (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Fertilizer, Box 3, Loose Trade Cards, Folder: Walker, Stratman & Company: Boilers & Grinders of Bones: Manufacturers of Fertilizers, Pittsburgh, PA.



Fig. 3
"Whoa! Aunty!," c. 1880. Postcard. N. B. Stevens (Boston, Massachusetts). Bufford,
lithographers.
Newton Free Library, © 2004-2011.
http://www.newtonfreelibrary.net/reference/tradecards/big_images/110_recto.jpg.
Accessed July 14, 2011.

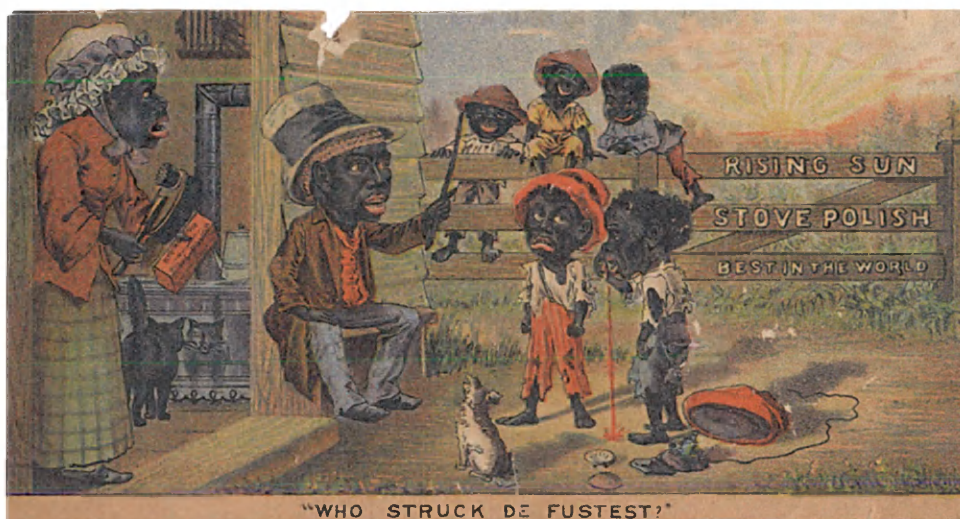


Fig. 4
"Who Struck De Fustest?," c. 1900. Advertising card. Rising Sun Stove Polish.
Morse Bros. (proprietor, Canton, Massachusetts).
Miami University Libraries. Shields Trade Card Collection.
digital.lib.muohio.edu/u/?tradecards.1745. Accessed October 29, 2010.



Fig. 5
"How would you like to be the bird on Nellie's hat?," c. 1909. Postcard. E. B. & E.
Co. (publisher).
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Special Collections.

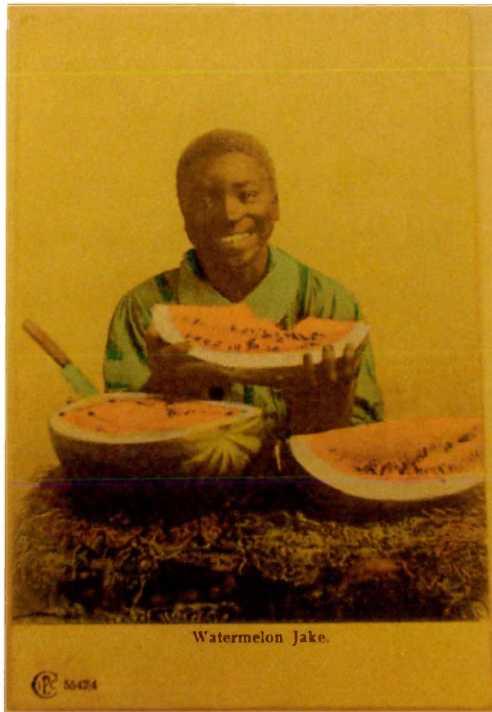


Fig. 6
"Watermelon Jake," c. 1907. Postcard. CIPC (publisher).
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Special Collections.



Fig. 7
 Anonymous. "Series of 30 Casta Paintings in Group Format," c. 1775-1880.
 Constructing Race with Images, Item #113. <http://race-in-colonial-mexico.net/colonialrace/items/show/113>. Accessed August 17, 2011.

Parents.	Children.
White father and Negro mother	Mulatto.
White father and Indian mother	Mestiza.
Indian father and Negro mother	Chino.
White father and Mulatto mother	Cuarteron.
White father and Mestiza mother	Creole — pale, brownish complexion.
White father and China mother	Chino-blanco.
White father and Cuarterena mother	Quintero.
White father and Quintera mother	White.
Negro father and Indian mother	Zambo.
Negro father and Mulatto mother	Zambo-Negro.
Negro father and Mestiza mother	Mulatto-oscuro.
Negro father and China mother	Zambo-Chino.
Negro father and Zamba mother	Zambo-Negro — perfectly black.
Negro father and Quintera mother	Mulatto — rather dark.
Indian father and Mulatto mother	Chino-oscuro.
Indian father and Mestiza mother	Mestizo-claro — frequently very beautiful.
Indian father and Chino mother	Chino-cola.
Indian father and Zamba mother	Zambo-claro.
Indian father and China-cholar mother	Indian — with frizzly hair.
Indian father and Quintera mother	Mestizo — rather brown.
Mulatto father and Zamba mother	Zamba — a miserable race.
Mulatto father and Mestiza mother	Chino — rather clear complexion.
Mulatto father and China mother	Chino — rather dark.

Fig. 8
 “Parents. Children. (Tschudi’s catalogue of ‘amalgamations in Peru’),” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 455. From Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, Am. ed., 1853, ii. pp. 162-3.

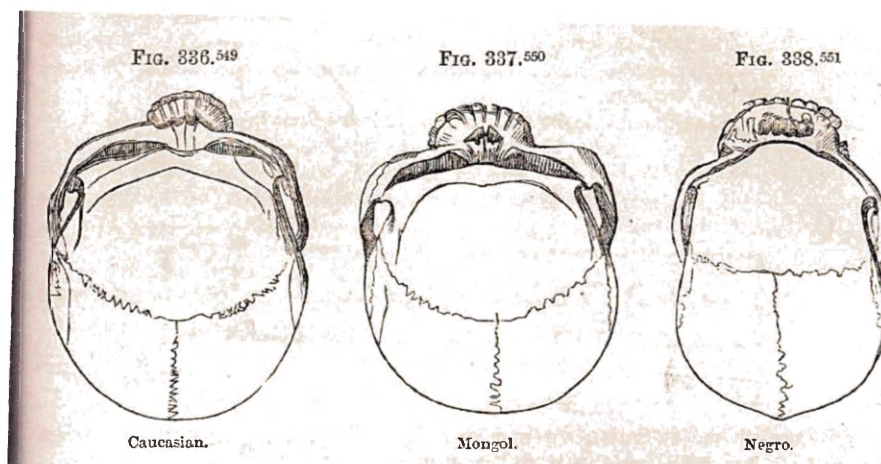


Fig. 9
 “Caucasian. Mongol. Negro.” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 457. From Martin, *Man and Monkeys*, p. 210, fig. 180.

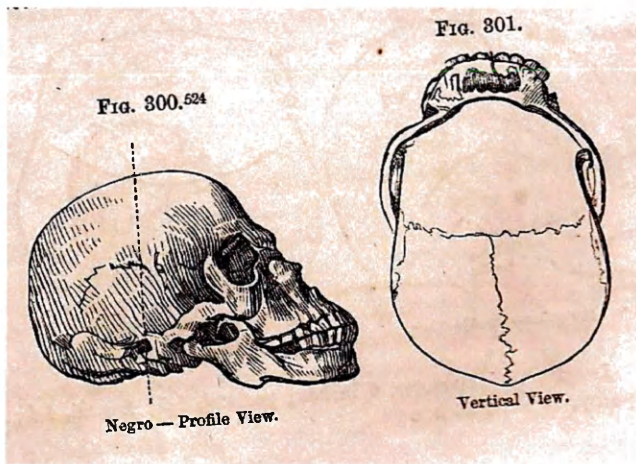


Fig. 10
“Negro — Profile View. Vertical View.” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 441.

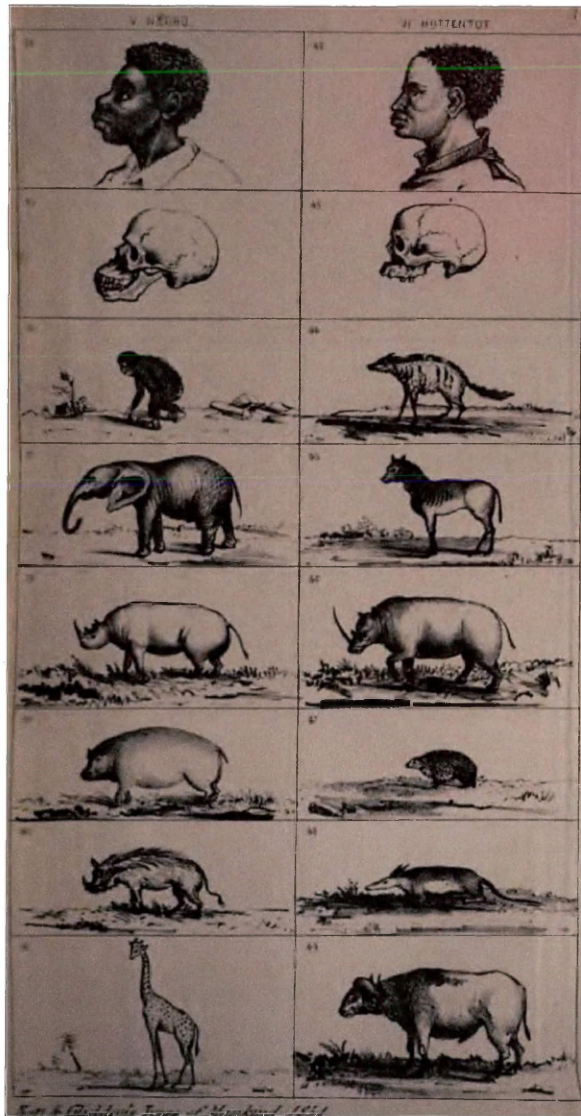


Fig. 11
“Negro and Hottentot.” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*.

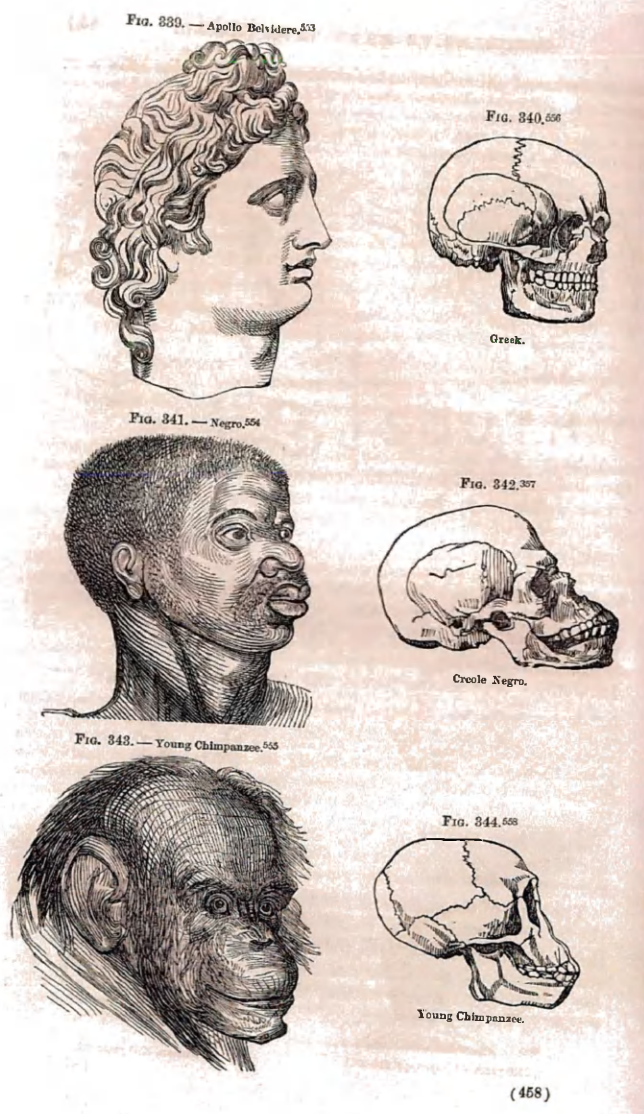


Fig. 12
 “Apollo Belvidere. Greek. Negro. Creole Negro. Young Chimpanzee. Young Chimpanzee.” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 458. From various sources (see Notes).

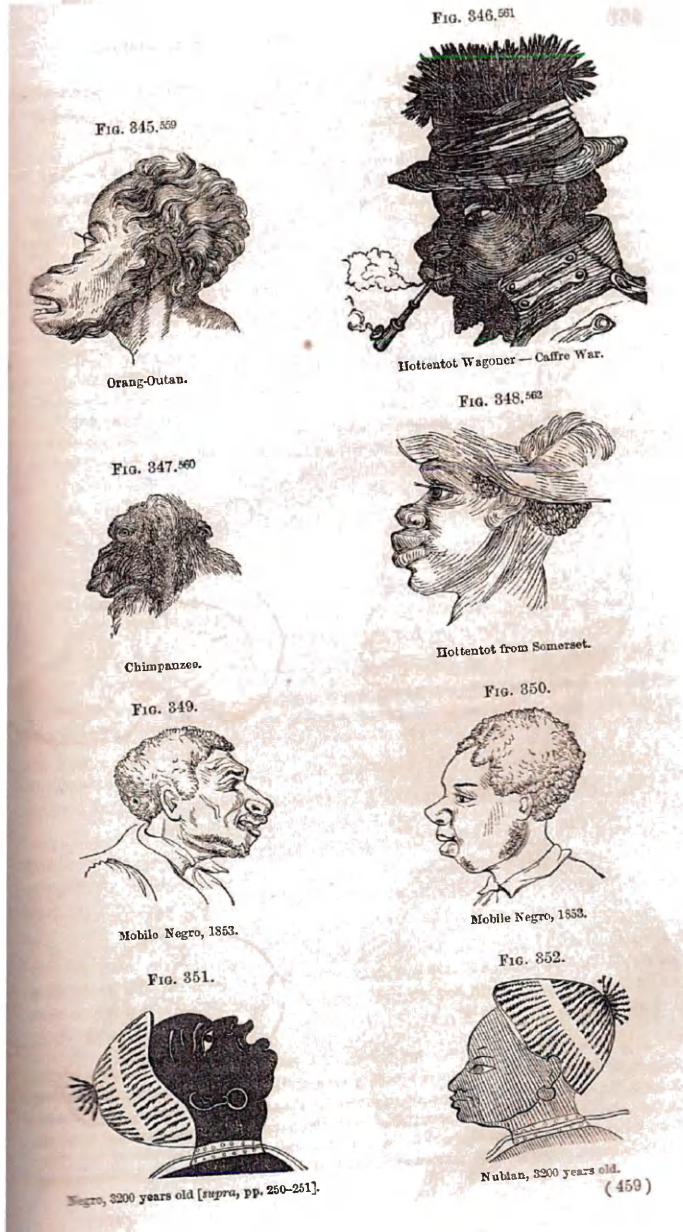


Fig. 13
 “Orang-Outan. Hottentot Wagoner — Caffre War. Chimpanzee. Hottentot from Somerset. Mobile Negro, 1853. Mobile Negro, 1853. Negro, 3200 years old. Nubian, 3200 years old.” Gliddon and Nott, *Types of Mankind*, 459.



Figs. 14 & 15
Pages from *Album*, 1876. Scrapbook. Michigan.
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Special Collections,
2011.474.

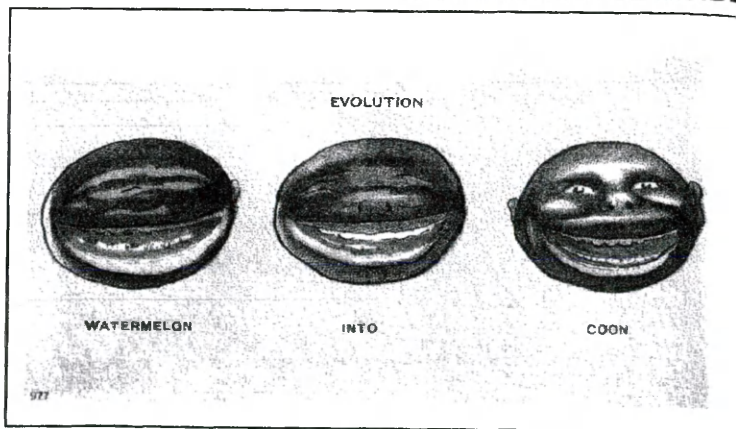


Bernhardt Wall. Bamforth. 316

Fig. 17

“I’m Your Melon Honey,” c. 1910. Postcard. Bernhardt Wall. Bamforth.

Mashburn, Joseph Lee. *Black Americana Postcard Price Guide: A Century of History Preserved on Postcards*. Enka: Colonial House, 1996. 90.

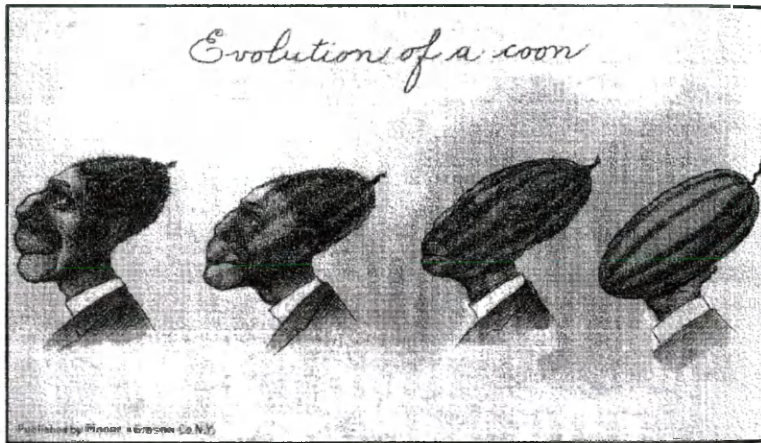


*Anonymous, #977, 1909, Evolution
“Watermelon into Coon!!”*

Fig. 18

“Evolution: Watermelon Into Coon!!,” 1909. Postcard. Anonymous.

Mashburn, Joseph Lee. *Black Americana Postcard Price Guide: A Century of History Preserved on Postcards*. Enka: Colonial House, 1996. 154.



Moore & Gibson
2, "Evolution of a coon"

Fig. 19
"Evolution of a coon," c. 1910. Postcard. Moore & Gibson Co. (New York).
Mashburn, Joseph Lee. *Black Americana Postcard Price Guide: A Century of History Preserved on Postcards*. Enka: Colonial House, 1996. 126.



Fig. 20
"A Dream of Paradise," c. 1910. Postcard. H. Horina. J. I. Austin(?).
The Authentic History Center, Michael S. Barnes, © 1999-2011. "African American Stereotypes: Chicken & Watermelon Themes."
http://www.authentichistory.com/diversity/african/chickenwatermelon/1900sc_Postcard-A_Dream_Of_Paradise.html. Accessed April 1, 2011.



Fig. 21
“Man with Cotton Boll Head,” c. 1880. Advertising card.
Mss1 P4299 a FA2, the Thornton Tayloe Perry Papers, 1852-1980, Virginia
Historical Society.



Fig. 22

'A S'wheat Girl,' 1887. Advertising card. L. P. Griffith & Co. (Baltimore, Maryland). J. H. Bufford's Sons, lithographers.

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



Fig. 23

“Grown with Williams, Clark & Co’s High Grade Bone Fertilizers,” 1883.

Advertising card. Williams, Clark & Co. (Schaufele, New York).

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Fertilizer, Box 3, Williams, Clark & Co.



Fig. 24

“Driscoll & Sheffield, Fashionable Hair Dressers,” 1883. Advertising card. Driscoll & Sheffield (Fall River, Massachusetts).

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Hair, Box 1, Driscoll.



Fig. 25

"Walker, Stratman & Co., Boilers and Grinders of Bones," 1889. Advertising card. Walker, Stratman & Co. (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Fertilizer, Box 3, Loose Trade Cards, Folder: Walker, Stratman & Company: Boilers & Grinders of Bones: Manufacturers of Fertilizers, Pittsburgh, PA.



Fig. 26

"A Kans. Bungalow," 1909. Postcard. Martin Post Card Co.

The Authentic History Center, Michael S. Barnes, © 1999-2011. "African American Stereotypes: Chicken & Watermelon Themes."

http://www.authentichistory.com/diversity/african/chickenwatermelon/1909_Postcard-Watermelon_01.html. Accessed April 1, 2011.

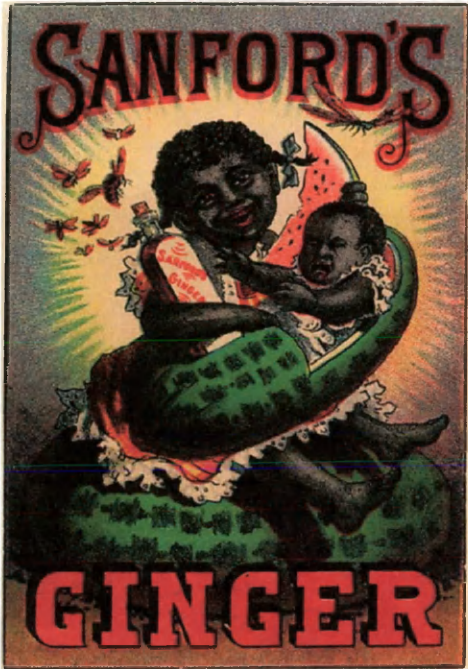


Fig. 27
"Sanford's Ginger," c. 1880. Advertising card. Potter Drug & Chemical Co. Advertising Ephemera Collection 1850s-1980s, Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, Duke University.



Fig. 28
"Chocolates," c. 1910. Postcard. Hoffman-Boaz African American Postcard Collection (1900-1933), Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Box 1, Folder: Black Children.



Curt Teich, A-18104 (DB)
"Southern Products"

Fig. 29

"Southern Products," c. 1910. Postcard. Curt Teich.

Mashburn, Joseph Lee. *Black Americana Postcard Price Guide: A Century of History Preserved on Postcards*. Enka: Colonial House, 1996. 251.



Fig. 30

"Sapolio," 1882. Advertising card. Enoch Morgan's Sons. Donaldson Brothers (printer).

Victorian Trading Cards Scrapbook, xMs P123, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/tradecards&CISOPTR=307&RER=4>. Accessed October 29, 2010.



Fig. 31
“Compliments of G. Schultze, Barber,” n.d. Advertising card. G. Schultze.
The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum
of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



*Ullman, "Happy Days" Ser. 81
1913, "I'se Right in it."*

Fig. 32
'I'se Right In It,' 1913. Postcard. Ullman Manufacturing Co. (New York).
Mashburn, Joseph Lee. *Black Americana Postcard Price Guide: A Century of History Preserved on Postcards*. Enka: Colonial House, 1996. 147.



Fig. 33
“All the Strength of the Wheat,” 1904. Advertisement. Cream of Wheat.
Roy Lightner Collection of Antique Advertisements, 1936-2006 and undated,
Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, Duke University.

Walnut Favors

Unique Table Favors. Small paper mache English Walnuts, containing favors as shown in illustrations. Our enlarged illustration at the left (containing a nigger baby) will give a very clear idea of the size and general appearance of these novel favors. Order by number if you prefer any certain kind, otherwise we will use our own judgment.

All one price, **15 cents**
3 for 40 cents **\$1.35 per dozen**

Empty Walnuts (Catalog No. 5752). 2 inches long.
 10 cents, 3 for 25c., 7bc per doz.

No. 5778

Jumbo Peanut Favors

Imitation Jumbo Peanuts, about 2 1/4 inches long. Made of paper mache. They contain various toys, but on account of the great variety it is impossible to illustrate more than a few of them. We cannot undertake to supply any certain favor, but we have one assortment for women and the other for men.

No. 5780. JUMBO PEANUT FAVORS. For Ladies. Each.....15 Cent
 No. 5781. JUMBO PEANUT FAVORS. For Gentlemen. Each....15 Cent

Or 3 favors for **40 cents**; or 12 assorted for **\$1.35** postpaid

Fig. 34

“Walnut Favors,” 1929. Advertisement.

The Authentic History Center, Michael S. Barnes, © 1999-2011. “African American Stereotypes: Products and Advertising.”

http://www.authentichistory.com/diversity/african/products/1929_Ad_Walnut_Favors_with_Nigger_Baby.html



Fig. 35

"Royal Bone Phosphate," n.d. Advertising card. Williams and Clark Co. (New York). The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Fertilizer, Box 3, Williams, Clark & Co.

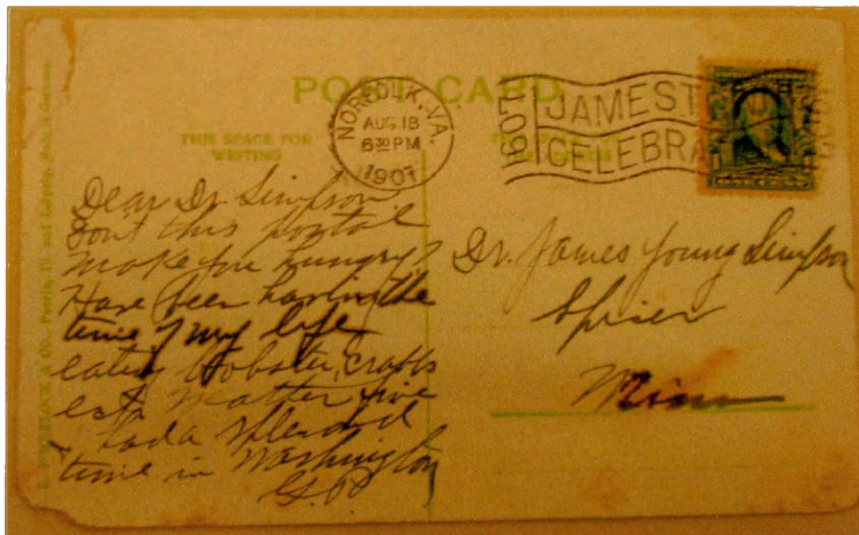


Fig. 36a, b
 “Negro Oyster Shuckers. Norfolk, Va.,” c. 1900. Postcard. C. E. Wheelock & Co.
 (Peoria, Illinois). Made in Germany.
 Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Special Collections,
 MSS.1.02, Ephemera Collection, 2010.191.

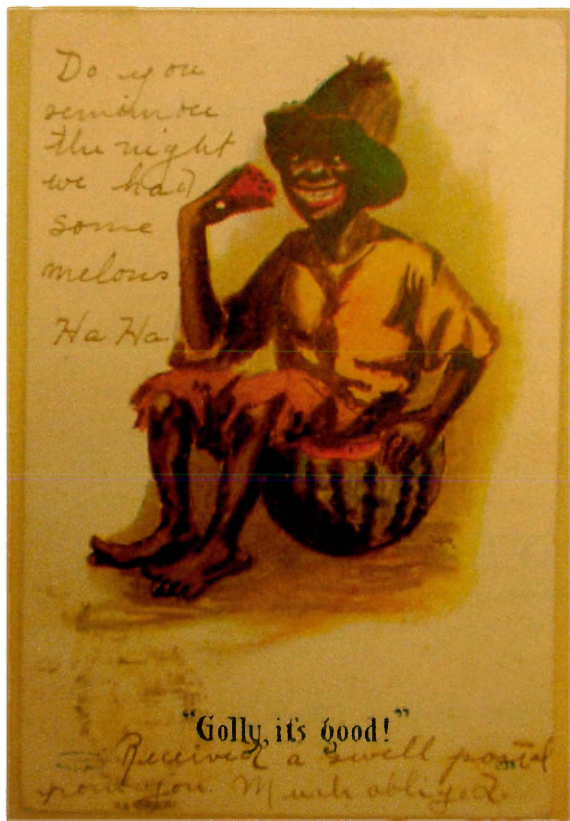


Fig. 37
'Golly, it's good!,' n.d. Postcard. A. T. F. Co.
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Special Collections,
MSS.1.05, Series 2.2, 2008.094, Racist Postcards.