

Penn & Slavery Project Abstracts, 2017-2024

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Fall 2017

Caitlin Doolittle

This [report](#) summarizes the foundational aims of the Penn and Slavery Project in probing Penn’s complex relationship with slave-holding and the resultant wealth that funded the university. It provides detail into the lives of the twenty Penn trustees of the 18th century known to have owned one or more slaves at some point in their life, including Benjamin Chew, Joseph Reed, William Masters, William Plumstead, Robert Morris, William Bingham, Thomas Willing, Benjamin Franklin, Caspar Wistar, and Isaac Norris. The report highlights some of the contradictions these men’s lives held—some as slaveholders and later abolitionists. The wealth and widespread influence that led to the University’s establishment relied on the institution of slavery.

Keywords: trustees, complicity, extreme wealth, institutional ties, Benjamin Chew, Joseph Reed, William Masters, William Plumstead, Robert Morris, William Bingham, Thomas Willing, Benjamin Franklin, Caspar Wistar, and Isaac Norris

VanJessica Gladney

This [report](#) outlines the connection that several early trustees of Penn had with slavery—including Benjamin Franklin, John Inglis, and Isaac Norris—and establishes a framework of complicity for evaluating this relationship. Complicity, then, goes beyond simple ownership and toward understanding deeper connections to the institution of slavery and profits gained from the labor of enslaved people. Additionally, the report highlights that the University’s claim to founding in 1740—and thus to being the first university—ties it to George Whitfield, a man with direct connections to the institution of slavery in colonial America, who thus avidly fought to overturn anti-slave laws in Georgia. Whitfield began construction on a church that became home to the university’s first classes nearly a decade later. In aligning its founding with George Whitfield, the university aligned itself with the institution of slavery.

Keywords: George Whitfield, Arch street, original campus, Robert Smith, Carpenter’s Company, founding date, Benjamin Franklin, John Inglis, Isaac Norris

Dr. Alexis Broderick Neumann

This [report](#) provides a summary of the Penn and Slavery Project’s key research findings from 2018. First, Penn’s medical school was the foremost site for the education of southern doctors and the proliferation and professionalization of racist science. Theories of biological racial difference that were conceived of and disseminated at Penn served initially to bolster the institution of slavery, and later undergirded Jim Crow and the continued subjugation of people of color. Individual Penn alumni and faculty not only

owned slaves, but conducted medical experiments on enslaved people, and served as Confederate hospital directors. Second, enslaved people lived and labored in, around, and on Penn's campus. Slavery was fully legal in Pennsylvania for the first several decades of Penn's existence. The gradual abolition act passed in 1780 ensured that slaves lived and worked in Pennsylvania for another generation. The influence of Quakers and abolitionists in the state did not change the fact that Philadelphia was a major port city which was deeply enmeshed in the slave trade. Third, financial backing for the University was funneled through slaveholding trustees, donors and the profits made off of slave-produced goods. Penn actively and knowingly recruited, solicited, and supported slaveholder wealth. Over two thirds of Penn's 18th century trustees owned slaves. William Smith, the first Provost of the university—a position we would now refer to as President—owned an enslaved person during his tenure as Provost. The Trustees solicited large donations from slaveowners. They went where the money was (the slave South and the Caribbean); they targeted slaveowner wealth purposefully and systematically.

Dillon Kersh

This [report](#) evaluates Penn's proximity to slavery by exploring the contradictory presence of slaveholders and abolitionists among its early trustees. While trustees such as Edward Tilghman Jr., James Tilghman, and General James Potter owned several slaves and came from slaveholding families, other trustees such as Caspar Wistar, George Bryan and, in his later years, Benjamin Franklin were ardent abolitionists. Caspar Wistar served as President of the Society for Abolition, while George Bryan, then President of Pennsylvania, authored the 1780 Gradual Abolition Act. Benjamin Franklin owned slaves early in life before opposing the institution in his final years, epitomizing the contradictory nature of Penn's trustees. Ultimately, Penn's financial roots were in slave wealth, while its intellectual branches spanned abolitionist thought, complicating the school's connection to slavery.

Keywords: College of Philadelphia trustees, slave-holding, gradual abolition, Society for Abolition; tax records

Brooke Krancer

This [report](#) synthesizes archival resources including family papers, wills, and tax records to investigate the slave-holding of four early trustees of the University of Pennsylvania: William Allen, John Cadwalader, William Bingham, and Thomas Cadwalader. Their wills indicate that William Allen freed his slaves upon his death, while John Cadwalader left them to his wife and children. Tax records show that William Bingham and Thomas Cadwalader both owned two enslaved people. In light of this information, this report recommends that the University of Pennsylvania acknowledges its trustees' history of slave ownership, as it undoubtedly funded early university activities, hold open conversations with the Penn and broader Philadelphia community, provide scholarships to descendants of enslaved people, and dedicate an institute to studying slavery.

Matthew Palczynski

This [report](#) analyzes the proximity to slavery that four early trustees of the College of Philadelphia had, including James Logan, William Plumsted, William Masters, and Charles Pettit. Plumsted and Pettit each held one enslaved person in bondage, while William Masters had thirty-four enslaved people working on his plantation. Additionally, the report highlights that William Plumsted and William Masters, both

founders of the College, petitioned the King of England in 1741 to send resources and funds to stave off a potential slave rebellion in the city. The report culminates with a call for additional research to be done on James Logan's estate, the enslaved people that Plumsted and Pettit owned, and the 1741 petition.

Spring 2018

Caitlin Doolittle

This [report](#) complicates an understanding of “complicity” and urges readers to resist comparing Penn’s involvement with the institution of slavery to that of other universities. The report primarily exposes the direct link between the University’s fundraising efforts and slaveholding. The university sent William Smith, its first provost, on a fundraising trip to South Carolina in 1771. Smith solicited donations from many of South Carolina’s wealthy and slaveholding elite. Over 98 people donated to the university, including Henry Middleton, who enslaved a recorded 199 people and Gabriel Manigault, who enslaved 300 people on his estate and traded slaves a documented 11 times. The following year, the University sent Dr. John Morgan—the founder of the medical school who owned at least one enslaved person—to Jamaica to continue raising funds for the university. These funds were both inextricably linked to wealth amassed from slaveholding and essential to ensuring Penn’s continued existence.

Carson Eckhard

This [report](#) explores the many ways Penn benefitted indirectly and directly from slavery, specifically exploring research from Penn affiliates that heavily influenced pro-slavery rhetoric in the antebellum period. The report first notes that Hugh Williamson, who graduated from Penn’s 1757 class, played an important role in crafting the 3/5 compromise. It then focuses on Penn’s medical school—the medical school placed advertisements throughout the South and its graduates became prominent racial pseudoscientists and leaders in the medical field. Josiah Clark Nott (MD 1827), for example, extensively published his theories on racial difference, often referencing Samuel Morton (BA College, 1820) who was a Penn Medicine professor from 1839-43. Morton amassed a collection of 867 human skulls which remain at the Penn Museum, and taught a course on racial difference at the medical school. The report also describes Samuel A. Cartwright and Charles Caldwell, who received medical training from Penn. Both men advanced beliefs that slavery was natural. This report importantly highlights that the contributions these pseudoscientific ideas of racial difference helped provide a scientific rationale to pro-slavery rhetoric employed by the Confederacy.

Keywords: Hugh Williamson, Josiah Clark Nott, Samuel Morton, Samuel A. Cartwright, Charles Caldwell, Morton Collection.

Fall 2018

Archana Upadhyay

This [report](#) describes how the Wistar and Horner museum acquired cadavers and medical specimens in the nineteenth century, under the leadership of William Edmonds Horner, Professor of Anatomy and Dean of the Medical Faculty, and his assistant Joseph Leidy, who was also later appointed Professor of Anatomy.

Upadhyay reviewed the Museum's 1850 specimen catalog and found 23 human specimens labeled as "negro," "black," or "African," as well as significant contributions to the collection made by Hugh Lenox Hodge, a lecturer and professor of Obstetrics and the Diseases of Women at Penn from 1828-63. Primarily, the report describes how Penn Medicine alum Dr. William G. Craghead sent Hodge the remains of a 35-year-old enslaved woman in 1849. Craghead removed her reproductive organs, and later sent her entire abdominal cavity preserved in alcohol to Hodge at Penn, where faculty member Dr. John Neill dissected it further and placed it in Hodge's specimen collection. It is unclear if this specimen was given to the Wistar collection, used for teaching, or something else; however, this report provides insight into the depth of Penn's faculty and alumni network and how it was used to procure the bodies of enslaved people and bolster the development of racial pseudoscience.

Keywords: human specimens, Wistar museum, William Edmonds Horner, Hugh Lenox Hodge, reproduction; medical school; cadavers

Dillon Kersh

This [paper](#) sought to examine information around Penn's land holdings, details about Caesar—a man enslaved by Ebenezer Kinnersly documented to have performed labor on Penn's campus, and the Tilghman family. Three Tilghman family members were also university trustees: James Tilghman, his son William Tilghman, and Edward Tilghman Jr. While documents provide evidence that James Tilghman enslaved at least 51 people in his lifetime, little is known about their lives. Kersh also found evidence that Edward Tilghman Jr. personally enslaved people and brought two enslaved people—Nanny and her daughter Hagar—to Pennsylvania with him from Georgia. In addition to being a trustee of the university, William Tilghman also elected Chief Justice of Pennsylvania (1805-27); his professional opinions of slavery affected the entire state of Pennsylvania. The report also provides detail about the lives of some of the people William Tilghman and his family enslaved, including a woman named Milly and a man named George. Finally, the report discusses Perkasio Manor and Norristown Farm and Estates, the two largest land parcels owned by Penn. From at least 1776-1788, Penn received rent payments from Norristown derived from the profits of enslaved labor.

Keywords: Tilghman family, Pennsylvania judge, Chief Justice, land holdings, Norristown Farm and Estates, Perkasio Manor, trustees

Brooke Krancer

Krancer's [report](#) investigates Benjamin Rush, a prominent figure in the early medical school frequently hailed for his abolitionism. The report explores Benjamin Rush's teachings about race, focusing on the 1785 archived notes from a Penn student named Samuel Poultney. The notebook detailed content from Rush's lectures. In one, Rush performed a dissection on the body of a Black girl about sixteen years of age; it is likely she or her family did not or could not consent to this anatomization. Additionally, Rush taught his students theories about Black people being unable to contract yellow fever; he used these beliefs that people of different races were differently susceptible to disease to build public health interventions. While Rush was an abolitionist and published writing with rhetoric condemning racial hierarchies, he also warned against interracial marriage and promoted harmful theories about biological differences. This nuance is important—even those academics considered progressive at the time advanced ideas in medicine that have deadly consequences.

Keywords: anatomy, yellow fever, public health, Benjamin Rush, biological difference, dissection, abolitionism, Samuel Poultney, Scotland, University of Edinburgh

Anna Lisa Lowenstein

This [report](#) focuses on John Cadwalader, a trustee of the university from 1779-86 and who attended the college from 1751-58, though never officially graduated. Cadwalader enslaved a documented 107 people and amassed large amounts of wealth as a result. Lowenstein analyzed preserved records including a personal estate inventory that lists each of Cadwalader's enslaved people by name and age. The report provides detail about these records and includes an appendix of each person, personal notes, monetary values, and any family ties. The report also examines Cadwalader's will and other documents dated after his death to explore the fates of the people he enslaved after his death. He mandated that some of the people he enslaved be given to his wife and children and manumitted one enslaved person and his family. This report highlights Cadwalader's direct involvement with the institution of slavery, more completely painting a picture of Penn's complicity and provides some insight into the lives of the people he enslaved.

Key words: trustee, John Cadwalader, William Tilghman, estate papers, James Sampson

Samuel Orloff

Orloff's [report](#) studies Perkasio Manor, one of the University's most significant properties gifted to the University by Thomas Penn in 1759, and its connections to slavery. Reports from appraisers deemed the property unprofitable, and the land unworkable—the report explains that because of this, it is unlikely that the labor of enslaved people was used at Perkasio Manor. The university instead hoped to sell the property in part because assessors William Coxe (trustee 1759-71) and Francis Allen (Vice Provost 1775-9) described tenants as mistreating the property. Thomas Penn did not consent to the sale. This happened in conjunction with Provost Smith's and John Morgan's efforts to raise funds from wealthy slaveholders to keep the university out of a financial crisis. The report concludes that the unimproved state of the land, lack of enslaved people in the Rockhill and Hilltown townships in 1780, and financial position of the tenants of the property mean it was unlikely that there was a direct connection between Perkasio Manor and the institution of slavery.

Key words: Perkasio Manor, William Coxe, Francis Allen, Thomas Penn, landholdings

Ashley Waiters

This [report](#) focuses on the four brothers of the Feltus family and Peter Custis Jr.—Penn undergraduate students whose families profited greatly from the labor and exploitation of people they enslaved. The report shows how the institution of slavery made it possible for these men to attend Penn in the mid-nineteenth century; the wealth their families held allowed them to fund an education in Pennsylvania from their homes in the south. The report describes how the Feltus brothers both brought their pro-slavery ideology to Penn and influenced how their peers thought through the Zelosophic Society and courses. Peter Custis Sr. was an 1807 graduate of Penn’s medical school; he left his plantation and enslaved people to his wife and children when he died in 1842. This legacy enabled Peter Custis Jr., his son, to attend Penn. At the time, the wealthy elite—many of whom built their wealth through slavery—made Penn their home; it was an institution that allowed them to thrive. Recognizing this implicates Penn in the pervasive diffusion of anti-Black sentiment throughout the United States.

Keywords: Feltus family, Peter Custis Sr., Peter Custis Jr., Zelosophic Society, ideology

Spring 2019

Ashley Waiters

This [report](#) investigates the Philomathean Society—the first student organization at Penn—and its support for the institution of slavery.

Brian Anderson-Wooten

This [report](#) describes the university archives’ misidentification of a “Dr. Wilson” by tracing documented by Dr. Nathan Mossell, the first African-American graduate from the medical school. Mossell’s written records referenced Dr. Wilson as both a medical student and janitor at Penn, who later worked as a pharmacist and medical provider in Philadelphia’s historically Black 7th ward. The university archives identified Wilson as Albert Monroe Wilson, a man already known to be a janitor at Penn. However, Anderson-Wooten’s research shows, for many reasons, that Albert Wilson cannot be the same person Mossell refers to. Instead, this project identifies this person as James Henry Wilson, an African-American doctor and pharmacist in the nineteenth century, who received medical education at Penn, but was not granted a degree by the institution. By prioritizing learning directly from Dr. Mossell’s files, this methodology was able to highlight the archive-driven erasure of a prominent Black medical provider in Philadelphia and reassert Dr. Wilson’s role in history.

Keywords: James Henry Wilson, Nathan Mossell, Albert Monroe Wilson, archival error, history production, archive

Fall 2019

Zarina Iman

This [report](#) summarizes the activities of Jamaican enslavers who donated to Penn in the late 18th century. In one 1772 trip to Jamaica, John Morgan, the co-founder of Penn Medical, raised £4,357 in sterling from 277 donors; this report focuses on 30 donors who donated over 30 pounds. These men consisted of enslavers and slave traders, such as Thomas Hibbert, who transported 3,358 enslaved people to Kingston, Jamaica. The report describes the harsh labor conditions enslaved people worked under on sugar plantations, as well as the consequences many faced for attempting to run away or stage revolts. The report also documents the interracial relationships and children that donors had with enslaved women. The report closes by contemplating why donors in Jamaica would donate to Penn, which may indicate deeper relations between slave wealth and higher education in early America.

Keywords: Penn donors, John Morgan, Jamaica, slave trade, maroon communities, slave revolts, interracial relationships

Tandra Mitchell

This [report](#) examines the political activities of early trustees of the University of Pennsylvania in relation to the 1780 Gradual Abolition Act. The Gradual Abolition Act was the first abolition legislation passed in the colonies, and gradually abolished slavery and slave importation into Pennsylvania. Two early trustees voted on the Act: George Bryan and John B. Bayard. George Bryan worked alongside the famous abolitionist Anthony Benezet to persuade voters of abolition all three times the bill was presented to the Assembly. John B. Bayard, on the other hand, abstained from voting on each of these three occasions. This report reveals that Bayard was a slave-owner, and owned 21 enslaved people on Bohemia Manor in Cecil County, Maryland. This report expands the definition of complicity to slavery to encompass the political activities of the University and its members.

Keywords: Gradual Abolition Act 1780, trustees, General Assembly, slave owning, complicity

Nate Coonts

This [report](#) examines the medical school's history as a major site developing and disseminating racial pseudoscience that remains present in the medical field today. Specifically, it studies how Penn professors' lectures influenced the graduating doctors' theses and postgraduate work, highlighting how racial pseudoscience propagated through medical education. The report details disseminated work from John Ramsay McDow, who received his M.D. from Penn in 1855, and William Stump Forwood, who received his in 1854. McDow's thesis heavily cited lectures from Penn professors Samuel Morton and Joseph Leidy, who spent their careers teaching racial difference. These ideas were used to justify enslavement. Forwood wrote a series of arguments referencing Leidy's lectures that expanded upon ideas of biological difference among races, and found prominence in medical circles around the country. Together, these examples highlight that Penn's medical education was built upon racial pseudoscience—professors propagated such beliefs through the curriculum. Medical school graduates not only held such beliefs to be true, but went on to publish and disseminate racial pseudoscience across the country; McDow and Forwood had flourishing careers upholding these ideologies. The report thus details how Penn played a role embedding systemic racism into medical thought and medical practice.

Keywords: medical curriculum, education, John Ramsay McDow, William Stump Forwood, Joseph Leidy, Samuel Morton, race science, racial pseudoscience, medical thought, biological difference justification

Spring 2020

Zarina Iman

This [report](#) documents Penn trustees involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Synthesizing information from the University Archives, the national “Slavery Voyages” database, and the archives for the Pennsylvania Gazette, this report reveals that 12 early trustees imported slaves. Of those, 6 left a significant paper trail in the form of financial records, travel logs, and advertisements for the sale of enslaved people and capture of runaways alike. These six trustees were William Plumstead, Charles Willing, Thomas Willing, Robert Morris, William Coxe, and Samuel McCall. They arranged voyages from West Africa, Portugal, Barbados, and Jamaica to import hundreds of enslaved people to Philadelphia in the 1740s – 1770s. Robert Morris, Charles Willing, and Thomas Willing formed the Willing, Morris & Company slave trading organization and were among the most prolific importers of enslaved people in Philadelphia. This report also analyzes the rhetoric of trustees’ advertisements selling enslaved people, which highlighted the youth, strength, disposition, and immunity to disease of the captives. This report recommends future research focus on the lives of the enslaved people and the runaways, many of whom were members of the ship’s crew.

Keywords: slave trade, runaway slaves, advertisements, Caribbean

Sabrina Palacios

This [report](#) examines the enslaved people and enslaved labor that sustained early campus life at the University of Pennsylvania. Account Books from the University Archives indicate that the tradesmen hired to construct buildings for the university all owned enslaved people. Further research revealed that John Coats, the brickmaker, would use enslaved labor under harsh conditions to prepare his bricks. This report also uses memoirs by and eulogies of early Penn students, combined with family history reconstructed from wills and state documents, to interrogate whether students from slave-owning families brought enslaved people to campus. In addition to students, this report studies faculty at the university owning enslaved people, including Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Chew, and Philip Syng. Finally, this report compares building descriptions from 18th century insurance to designs of enslaved quarters in Philadelphia to understand how the architecture of the university dormitories may have accommodated enslaved laborers. The report connects this work to previous research by the author on Caesar, the enslaved man that university trustee Ebenezer Kinnersley owned and had work on the university’s early campus as a Janitor. This report speculates that Caesar lived on campus in the students’ dormitory, and that the role of Janitor may have been filled by other enslaved people through the university’s early history.

Keywords: enslaved labor, university life, dormitories, architecture, tradesmen

Tandra Mitchell

This [report](#) explores the political activities of early trustees and faculty of the University of Pennsylvania in relation to slavery. In 1779, Pennsylvania and Virginia each sent four commissioners to assess the boundaries of the Mason-Dixon Line, which partitioned the colonies into “free” and “slave” states. This report uses information from the University Archives and Trustees Minutes to demonstrate how two members of the University of Pennsylvania—Provost and Professor of Natural Philosophy, Reverend John Ewing, and Trustee and Professor of Astronomy, David Rittenhouse—were among the commissioners Pennsylvania sent to extend the Mason-Dixon Line. These political actions of members of the University of Pennsylvania challenge the idea that the university was not involved with slavery.

Keywords: Mason-Dixon Line, trustees, Pennsylvania politics, free states, slave states

Spring 2021**Mary Neal**

This research [paper](#) details the way in which enslavement and the extraction of Black labor changed over time. It examines enslavement and emancipation in the lives of Lewis Meredith Jiggitts, who graduated from the medical school in 1818, his family, and the people they enslaved. The paper describes how Jiggitts’ status as a prominent physician and Penn graduate enabled his election to the North Carolina House of Representatives following his graduation from Penn. The family later moved to Mississippi, where they continued to extract labor from formerly enslaved people even after emancipation. This paper documents the ways in which wealth and privilege, or the lack thereof, compounded over time.

Keywords: Lewis Meredith Jiggitts, medical school, public office, wealth accumulation, labor extraction

Sophia Nichols

The medical school at the University of Pennsylvania had close ties with the South; the university had far more ties to movements against the abolition of slavery than once believed. This [paper](#) underscores a key set of case studies to provide insight into Penn’s role in anti-abolitionist Philadelphia. It first describes an instance of mob-based violence targeting abolitionists: May 17, 1838 when thousands of hostile anti-abolitionists broke into Pennsylvania Hall. The 1808 Penn graduate and then-mayor, John Swift, willfully dismissed requests for protection and aligned his government’s priorities in support of the mob. A Penn student, David Blount Hamilton, was part of the mob, and played an active role in violently countering what he saw as the existential threat of abolitionism. The paper then examines Marmaduke Kimbrough, an 1860 medical school graduate who attended abolitionist meetings to violently assert white supremacist norms. It also discusses Robert Earp Randall, an 1853 Penn graduate and lieutenant in the Union army, who participated in white supremacist and anti-abolitionist violence without consequence. It then provides details about the 40 Penn medical students who were part of the so-called “Medical Student Secession” as well as the minimal social and political consequences this display held.

This series of case studies presents a more robust picture of Penn and Philadelphia in the context of anti-Black and anti-abolitionist violence, highlighting the prevalence of racist sentiment within the school and how it manifested through the city.

Fall 2022

Lindsey Randall

This [report](#) summarizes the grave-robbing conducted by prominent professors at the College of Philadelphia such as William Shippen Jr. to procure anatomical specimens, as well as the Black community's resistance and protests against this violence. The paper synthesizes archival records of Philadelphia newspapers such as the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, *Pennsylvania Journal*, and *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, in addition to letters between William Shippen Jr. and his son, to investigate instances of grave-robbing by Shippen. Shippen and his students stole bodies from potters' field, the communal burial ground of the Philadelphia almshouse, which housed bodies of Black Philadelphians as well as sailors and other members of society. In response to the encroachment on their burial grounds, Black Philadelphians and sailors together mobbed Shippen's house, after previous attempts at petitioning the city council for protection failed. Black Philadelphians also patrolled the burial grounds at night, and after several altercations with Shippen and his students, succeeded in driving the professor out of teaching.

Keywords: William Shippen Jr.; grave robbing; College of Philadelphia medical school; potter's field; Philadelphia almshouse

Spring 2024

Ethan Moses

This [report](#) examines the racial teachings and publications of Samuel George Morton, who graduated medical school from the College of Philadelphia in 1820 and subsequently served as a professor of anatomy from 1830. Morton's publications, including *Crania Americana* in 1839 and *Crania Aegyptiaca* in 1841, popularized the theory of craniology, or the study of skull size to support racialization. Morton argued that physical features such as cranial size and facial angle could identify different racial groups and proved white supremacy. This report also follows the careers of Morton's students from Penn Medical—Samuel J. Oakford (1846) and Abram Ormsbee Blanding (1848)—to establish how Morton trained students in racial science. Further, Morton's clinical teachings at the Philadelphia Almshouse Infirmary relied on the study of poor, Black Philadelphians to advance medical knowledge. This report spans sources from the University of Pennsylvania Archives, the Library of the College of Philadelphia, and the Smathers Library Special Collections in the University of Florida to untangle the theories and distribution of Morton's racial science.

Keywords: Samuel Morton, craniology, Philadelphia Almshouse, racial science

Kayla Cotter

This [report](#) traces the life of Dr. James Norcom, who graduated from Penn Medical in 1799 and was the fictive “Dr. Flint” in Harriet Jacobs’ autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). By consulting the State Archive of North Carolina, as well as numerous newspapers—including *the Raleigh Register*, *North State Whig*, *Roanoke Advocate*, *Wilmington Journal*, *etc.*,—this report traces Norcom’s career as a physician-enslaver and politician. Norcom’s degree from Penn Medical offered him professional, social, and political networks that ultimately provided him ownership over Harriet Jacobs, who documents her sexual assault at the hands of Norcom in her autobiography. This report also highlights Norcom’s relationship with Dr. Benjamin Rush, the first Dean of the medical school of the College of Philadelphia, and his robust political life in North Carolina to demonstrate how Norcom’s professional acclaim, bolstered by his medical degree from Penn, overshadowed his violent treatment of Harriet Jacobs and the dozens of enslaved people he owned.

Keywords: James Norcom, Harriet Jacobs, autobiography, sexual assault, Benjamin Rush, North Carolina

Samah Sharmin

This [paper](#) discusses the racial medicine published by Southern graduates of Penn Medical in the mid-nineteenth century to unravel the epistemology of medical studies in the Antebellum Era. Specifically, it uses medical journals, lectures, and dissertations, as well as professional correspondence, to examine how Northern medical schools trained Southern doctors, who then established schools in the South to perpetuate a racist medical system that supported and benefitted from the enslavement of Black bodies. By focusing on three southern Penn Medical graduates—Dr. Paul F. Eve, Dr. Daniel W. Brickell, and Dr. William E. Brickell—this paper probes the racist logic in gynecology and epidemiology that simultaneously upheld distinctions between Black and white bodies while also developing universal surgical techniques on Black bodies. Ultimately, this paper calls for a deeper investigation into the history of race and medicine by medical institutions to build trust with marginalized communities and combat contemporary health disparities.

Sachin Chadha

This [report](#) traces the Neill family’s generational connections to Penn Medicine, focusing on John Neill, who received his MD from Penn in 1807, and his son, Hollingsworth Neill (MD, 1874). Both of these men practiced medicine in Philadelphia—archived documents exemplify the pseudoscientific ideas underlying their practices. John Neill was a prominent physician, professor, and publisher at Penn, and the report describes two of his important publications. The first, “Case of Hermaphroditism” paints a picture of the disregard and medical violence inflicted upon the body of a Black individual through anatomical study. The second work, “The Compendium” was designed to bring together a comprehensive array of medical concepts; medical professionals across the country learned from and praised Neill’s work, and it receives praise even today. Yet, the work extensively references pseudoscientific crania studies and uses language and comparisons to reassert, and naturalize, racial hierarchies. Finally, the report describes Hollingsworth Neill’s 1874 medical thesis, which consists of dehumanizing descriptions of human anatomy that work to further enforce white racial superiority. Both Penn Medicine graduates, these

members of the Neill family helped systematize and cement racist medical thinking through their work, and Chadha's report shows how such ideas were disseminated via Penn's medical education system.

Keywords: John Niell, Hollingsworth Neill, medical racism, crania studies, medical education, Compendium