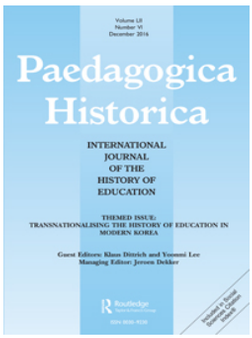

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Representations of race and racism in the textbooks used in southern black schools during the American Civil War and Reconstruction era, 1861–1876

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ABSTRACT

During the American Civil War and Reconstruction era, 1861–1876, formerly enslaved men and women demanded access to education. Aided by northern white missionaries, free blacks and some southern whites, freed men and women throughout the American South built schoolhouses, hired teachers and purchased textbooks. Some of these textbooks were specifically created for the freed people, otherwise known as freedmen's texts or textbooks. Others were the same as those that were typically used in antebellum northern common schools. This article analyses the textbooks that were used in southern black schools between 1861 and 1876. In particular, it investigates how black people were portrayed in the textbooks and to what end. Ultimately, this article finds that in both sets of textbooks, black people were portrayed as racially inferior to whites. This, I argue, was principally done to maintain white supremacy. Recognising that textbooks are reflective of societal attitudes and values, such a portrayal suggests that the white Americans of this period subscribed to the notion that mankind was naturally divided into distinct racial groups and, more significantly, that whites were the inherently superior race. It also suggests that the powerful white Americans of this period were committed to perpetuating the racial subordination of black people, both before and after the Civil War period.

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Introduction

During the American Civil War and Reconstruction era, 1861–1876, formerly enslaved men and women demanded access to education. Aided by northern white missionaries, free blacks and some southern whites, freed men and women throughout the American South built schoolhouses, hired teachers and purchased textbooks.[1] Some of these textbooks, also known as freedmen's texts or textbooks, were specifically created for the freed people. The Boston branch of the American Tract Society (ATS), an evangelical organisation focused on the distribution of religious material, published the vast majority of these textbooks between 1864 and 1866. Other textbooks were the same as those that were typically used

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[1]Ronald E. Butchart, "Black Hope, White Power: Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Legacy of Unequal Schooling in the South, 1861–1880," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 46, nos 1–2 (2010): 33–50.

in antebellum northern common schools and subsequently donated to the freed people through the assistance of northern aid and missionary societies, such as the American Missionary Association (AMA) or the New England Freedmen's Aid Society.

During the early stages of southern black schooling, literacy and numeracy took precedence over any other subject. Thus, the textbooks that were used most frequently were readers, spellers and arithmetic books. As the students progressed, additional subjects, such as geography, were introduced into the curriculum. However, due to limited funding, many schools operated without the use of any textbooks at all. In such instances, the Bible was used as a supplementary text. Indeed, Christopher M. Span argued that teachers often preferred using the Bible over other textbooks because it was widely available and usually distributed for free. "The Bible was, therefore, the preferred text, even over spellers and readers", he wrote, "because it allowed students to learn the rudiments of literacy and important moral lessons, without delay, from a uniform text."[2] Moreover, Span found that due to the former slaves' profound religious spirit, many freed people actually preferred learning from the Bible rather than from typical northern textbooks.[3]

This article analyses the textbooks that were used in southern black schools during the Civil War and Reconstruction era, 1861–1876. In particular, this article analyses the representations of race and racism contained within the pages of both northern and freedmen's textbooks. Given that "race" is a social construction used to categorise humanity and, as Helen Fox argued, "to create a bogus hierarchy of cultural, moral, and intellectual worth that has often justified unequal treatment", this article specifically investigates how black people were portrayed in the textbooks and to what end.[4]

Although textbook analyses tell us little about what was actually taught or learned in schools, they provide important insights into "the values and beliefs of the culture and historical period of which they are a part".[5] As James G. Henderson and Kathleen R. Kesson explained:

> What we teach our children embodies what we most value in society. The curriculum, in all its complexity, *is* the culture. Embedded in it are our values, our beliefs about human nature, our visions of the good life, and our hopes for the future. It represents the truths that we have identified as valued and worth passing on.[6]

Thus, this article uses the textbook as a historical and cultural artefact to examine how nineteenth-century Americans, particularly white Americans, perceived black people and their place in society.

In their studies of post-Civil War black education, historians often make reference to the textbooks that were specifically created for the freed people. Generally, these studies find that freedmen's textbooks attempted to force the freed people back into the fields and on to the plantations. As Ronald E. Butchart concluded in 2010, freedmen's textbooks "encouraged southern blacks to accept their place as field hands and domestic servants in a postwar agricultural economy dominated by southern whites".[7] Although James D. Anderson similarly

[2]Christopher M. Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862–1875* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 65.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Helen Fox, *When Race Breaks Out: Conversations About Race and Racism in College Classrooms* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 20.
[5]Eugene F. Provenzo, Annis N. Shaver, and Manuel Bello, eds., introduction to *The Textbook as Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.
[6]James G. Henderson and Kathleen R. Kesson, *Curriculum Wisdom: Educational Decisions in Democratic Societies* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice-Hall, 2004), 207.
[7]Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 125.

concluded that freedmen's textbooks attempted to "inculcate in the ex-slaves an acceptance of economic and racial subordination", he argued that it was unlikely that these books had any widespread impact, primarily because "the basic pattern of freedmen's education followed that of northern public schools".[8] Nevertheless, no study of freedmen's education has analysed the northern common school textbooks that were used in southern black schools, in spite of the fact that these textbooks were used far more frequently than freedmen's texts.[9] Moreover, while freedmen's textbooks were not used in every southern black school, they were read by thousands of black learners: between 1865 and 1866, for example, 648,000 copies of *The Freedman* were distributed by the ATS throughout the American South while in 1865 at least 36,000 copies of Lydia Marie Child's *The Freedmen's Book* were in use in southern black schools.[10] Thus, the potential impact these textbooks may have had upon shaping the ideas, beliefs and values of the black community should not go unexamined.

In line with Butchart's and Anderson's findings, this article finds that the textbooks created for the freed people reinforced negative stereotypes of southern blacks and attempted to force the freed people back into the fields and onto the plantations. This, I argue, was principally done to maintain white supremacy in the aftermath of slavery. Unlike Butchart's and Anderson's findings, however, this article also finds that northern common school textbooks were equally committed to perpetuating racial inequalities. Recognising that textbooks are reflective of societal attitudes and values, such a portrayal suggests that the white Americans of this period subscribed to the notion that mankind was naturally divided into distinct racial groups and, more significantly, that whites were the inherently superior race. It also suggests that the powerful white Americans of this period were committed to perpetuating the racial subordination of black people, both before and after the Civil War period.

Using the analytical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this article analysed a total of 22 primary-level textbooks, including 10 textbooks that were specifically created for the freed people and 12 northern common school textbooks (Table 1). For both sets of textbooks, I attempted to analyse a speller, a first and a third reader, and a lower- and higher-level geography textbook. Because most of the northern textbooks had been revised since their first date of publication, I analysed an early and revised edition in an effort to understand if and how the socio-economic context influenced the style and content.

Developed by Norman Fairclough, CDA investigates the connections between discourse, ideology, and power.[11] Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model, I analysed the text, the processes of text production, distribution and consumption, and the sociocultural context. Although there are multiple approaches to the study of language, including social linguistics and social semiotics, according to Thomas Huckin, the main purpose of CDA

[8]James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 30. See also, Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 134–6; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861–1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 174–212.

[9]Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 126; Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 126.

[10]American Tract Society, *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the American Tract Society* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1866), 15; Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 190.

[11]Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995).

Table 1. A list of the textbooks examined in this study.

Textbooks created for the freed people	Northern common school textbooks
The Freedman's Spelling Book (1866)	*McGuffey's First Eclectic Reader* (1836)
The Freedman's Second Reader (1865)	*McGuffey's Third Eclectic Reader* (1836)
The Freedman's Third Reader (1866)	*McGuffey's New First Eclectic Reader* (1857)
The Freedman (1864–1869)	*McGuffey's New Third Eclectic Reader* (1857)
Isaac W. Brinkerhoff, *Advice to Freedmen* (1864 and 1865)	Noah Webster, *The American Spelling Book* (1816)
Jared Bell Waterbury, *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen* (1864)	*Willson's First Reader* (1861)
Clinton B. Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* (1866)	*Willson's Third Reader* (1860)
Helen E. Brown, *John Freeman and his Family* (1862 and 1866)	James Monteith, *First Lessons in Geography* (1854)
Lydia Marie Child, *The Freedmen's Book* (1865)	James Monteith, *Youth's Manual of Geography* (1856)
The Freedman's Torchlight (1866)	Samuel Mitchell, *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography* (1854)
	Samuel Mitchell, *A System of Modern Geography* (1848 and 1860)
	Francis McNally, *An Improved System of Geography* (1859)

is "to show how public discourse often serves the interests of powerful forces over those of the less privileged".[12] Accordingly, CDA was the best approach for this particular study.

The origins of southern black schooling

Prior to the American Civil War, 1861–1865, almost every state in the slaveholding South had outlawed the literacy instruction of slaves. This was primarily done in an effort to curb slave unrest. Following the Stono Rebellion of 1739, an uprising that resulted in the deaths of more than 20 whites, South Carolina passed the first anti-literacy law, which made it a crime to teach slaves to read or write.[13] Subsequent anti-literacy laws, particularly during the 1830s, were incited by the 1829 publication of David Walker's anti-slavery pamphlet, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World,* as well as Nat Turner's slave rebellion of 1831.[14] Essentially, southern lawmakers feared that educated slaves would become dissatisfied with their subjugated status and attempt to overthrow the institution of slavery. As the North Carolina anti-literacy law of 1831 read:

> Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds and to produce insurrection and rebellion to the manifest injury of the citizens of this state … any free person who shall hereafter teach or attempt to teach any slave within this State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, Shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in the State having jurisdiction thereof.[15]

Some southern states also prohibited the education of free blacks. In 1800, South Carolina revised its anti-literacy law of 1740 to prohibit the education of both slaves and free blacks. This was because, as Heather Andrea Williams observed, the original statute had proved insufficient at preventing enterprising blacks from attending or conducting clandestine schools.[16] Although some slaveholding states, such as Maryland, did not impose bans upon black literacy, public opinion was nonetheless opposed to black education. As Butchart

[12]Thomas Huckin, "Critical Discourse Analysis and the Discourse of Condescension," USCB Writing Programme, http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/Huckin_Article.pdf (accessed September 19, 2015). Using Huckin's interpretation of CDA, the process of textual analysis occurred over two stages. First, I conducted an initial reading of the textbooks in order to gain a general insight into their tone and content. Second, I analysed the textbooks at the text level. This involved examining the textbooks' genre, framing, foregrounding/backgrounding, omissions and visual representations.

[13]Williams, *Self-Taught,* 13.

[14]Ibid., 13–14.

[15]North Carolina's anti-literacy law reprinted in Williams, *Self-Taught,* 206.

[16]Williams, *Self-Taught,* 13.

wrote, "Not all southern states codified prohibitions on black literacy but, even in those that did not, public opposition to African-American literacy had the effect of law".[17] Thus, at the onset of the Civil War, Eugene D. Genovese suggested that not more than 10% of the enslaved population could read or write.[18]

When the Civil War ended in 1865, the northern white public grew increasingly concerned about the implications of black freedom. Some feared that freed blacks would invade the North while others worried that the former slaves would seek revenge on those who were complicit in perpetuating racial slavery.[19] Most, however, feared that the freed people would form a permanent dependent class or become a destabilising force in society.[20] Such fears were ultimately rooted in the conflicting racial stereotypes that permeated American culture throughout the nineteenth century. Perpetuated by literature, the sciences, theatre and the press, these racial stereotypes constructed blacks as unintelligent, lazy and childlike on the one hand or uncivilised, dangerous and predisposed to criminality on the other.[21] Thus, in order to limit the perceived threat southern blacks imposed upon American society, northern aid and missionary societies actively engaged in the construction of southern black schools.[22] Modelled on the northern system of common schooling, these schools taught the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic as well as religious and moral values.

In addition to the more traditional mode of teaching, many aid and missionary workers also attempted to reform the freed people's religious practices, domestic relations, personal habits and gender ideologies.[23] Efforts to reform the freed people's domestic relations, for instance, were undertaken with particular vigour because many freed men and women were living and raising families together out of wedlock.[24] Thus, viewing such relationships as both illicit and immoral, northern white teachers and missionaries often attempted to teach the freed people the value of chastity and the sanctity of marriage. As Clinton B. Fisk, a Union Army veteran, Freedmen's Bureau officer and textbook author wrote in *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*:

> When you were slaves you "took up" with each other and were not taught what a bad thing it was to break God's law of marriage. But now you can only be sorry for the past and begin life anew, and on a pure foundation. You who have been and are now living together as husband and wife and have had children born to you, should be married according to law, as soon as possible.[25]

[17]Ronald E. Butchart, "Remapping Racial Boundaries: Teachers as Border Police and Boundary Transgressors in Post-Emancipation Black Education, USA, 1861–1876," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 61–78.

[18]Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 563.

[19]Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862–1875* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 13.

[20]Jessica Enoch, *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/o Students, 1865–1911* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 41.

[21]Anthony L. Brown, "Counter-Memory and Race: An Examination of African American Scholars' Challenges to Early Twentieth Century K–12 Historical Discourses," *Journal of Negro Education* 79, no. 1 (2010): 54–65.

[22]Although most of the teachers hired by the northern aid and missionary societies were white people from the North, black and southern white teachers also participated in large numbers. However, most of these teachers worked in independent schools that were principally supported by a combination of private tuition fees and aid from the Freedmen's Bureau. According to Butchart, most of the teachers in southern black schools between 1861 and 1876 were white people from the South. See Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 55. For an in-depth analysis of black teachers, see, for example, Williams, *Self-Taught,* 173–230; Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse,* 23–48.

[23]For a comprehensive overview of the northern teachers' cultural reform agenda, see James Paul Patterson, "The Cultural Reform Project of Northern Teachers of the Freed People, 1862–1870" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2012), 101–15.

[24]Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 31.

[25]Clinton B. Fisk, *Plain Counsels to Freedmen in Sixteen Brief Lectures* (Boston, MA: American Tract Society, 1866; repr., New York: AMS Press 1980), 31.

Such efforts ultimately represented a form of cultural colonialism or, in other words, a deliberate attempt to impose the dominant society's culture, values and way of life upon a recently liberated people.[26]

Viewing freedmen's education through the lens of cultural colonialism, this article argues that the northern aid and missionary societies' purpose for educating southern blacks was threefold. The first was to inculcate the former slaves with northern ideals and values. The second was to mould southern blacks into a reliable labour force. The third was to instil the freed people with an acceptance of white supremacy. Each of these goals served the wider aim of protecting and preserving American society. As Janice E. Hale explained:

> In a system of colonialism, the colonizer has a dual purpose for educating the colonized. The first is socialization into accepting the value system, history, and culture of the dominant society. The second is education for economic productivity. The oppressed are treated like commodities imbued with skills that are bought and sold on the labor market for the profit of the capitalists.[27]

These were the overarching goals of freedmen's education and the textbooks created for the freed people reflected these goals. Admittedly, the first two goals appear to represent a central paradox of freed people's education. On the one hand, freedmen's texts attempted to remake the former slaves along northern lines by inculcating them with northern values while on the other they worked to keep the freed people in subservience. However, the northern ideals and values promoted in the textbooks were not intended to facilitate upward mobility and economic progression. On the contrary, by promoting values such as industry and piety, freedmen's textbooks attempted to mould the former slaves into a diligent, disciplined and subservient workforce that respected the antebellum status quo.

Textbooks created for the freed people

The textbooks created for the freed people can be classified into three distinct genres: English-language textbooks, advice manuals, and instructional newspapers, the latter essentially being a combination of newspaper and textbook. Although the English-language textbooks mimicked the style of those that were used in the North, many lessons were tailored to fit the specific needs of the freed people. Lessons in *The Freedman's Spelling Book,* for instance, often attempted to define the meaning of freedom while *The Freedman's Third Reader* contained biographies about black leaders such as Phyllis Wheatley, Toussaint L'Ouverture and Fredrick Douglass.[28] Moreover, while the fundamental aim of these textbooks was to teach reading, writing and spelling, they also offered lessons in religion, morality and the social sciences. As the ATS wrote of the *Freedmen's Library*, a collection of 15 textbooks:

[26] Although, as Angela Onwuachi-Willig observed, American colonialism has often been discussed in terms of the colonisation of Native Americans, more recent studies have looked at how the United States has used the law to colonise, or "civilise", racialised groups such as blacks and Latino/as. Indeed, Onwuachi-Willig examines how marriage laws have been used to colonise black people during the Reconstruction period and in contemporary US society. See, Angela Onwuachi-Willig, "The Return of the Ring: Welfare Reform's Marriage Cure as the Revival of Post-Bellum Control," *California Law Review* 93, no. 6 (2005): 1647–96.

[27] Janice E. Hale, *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 154. Unlike other organisations, Quaker aid societies, such as the Friends' Freedmen's Association, rarely used their schools as mechanisms of social or racial control. For more information on the work of Quaker teachers, see, for example, Scot Beck, "Friends, Freedmen, Common Schools, and Reconstruction," *The Southern Friend, Journal of Quaker History* 17, no. 1 (1995): 5–31.

[28] *The Freedman's Spelling Book* (Boston, MA: American Tract Society, 1866; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1980), 78–80, 85, 89; *The Freedman's Third Reader* (Boston, MA: American Tract Society, 1866; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1980), 75, 81, 200.

> While it teaches to read and write, the series will aim to communicate also religious and moral truth, and such instruction in civil and social duties as is needed by them in the new circumstances in which they are placed.[29]

Four freedmen's textbooks served as advice manuals. These textbooks were profoundly didactic and their ultimate goal was to instruct the freed people in their duties and responsibilities as freed men and women. Helen E. Brown's *John Freeman and his Family* was the only textbook of this category that was written in the style of a fictional narrative. The remaining three textbooks, including Clinton B. Fisk's *Plain Counsels for Freedmen,* Isaac W. Brinckerhoff's *Advice to Freedmen,* and Jared Bell Waterbury's *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen*, were divided into lectures that covered topics such as work, marriage, religion and domestic life.[30]

Two freedmen's textbooks, *The Freedman* and *The Freedman's Torchlight,* were styled as instructional newspapers. A combination of newspaper and textbook, these monthly publications offered academic lessons alongside news articles. Sold at the annual rate of 25 and 50 cents respectively, instructional newspapers were not only cheaper to produce but, according to Robert C. Morris, they also appealed to the freed people's "desire to read conventional newspapers and magazines".[31] *The Freedman's Torchlight* was the only textbook created for and by black people. Published by the African Civilisation Society (ACS) in 1866, only one copy of the textbook has been located. Nevertheless, given that this copy is the very first issue, volume one, number one, it gives the reader a clear insight into the ACS's aims and expectations of black education.

One textbook, Lydia Marie Child's *The Freedmen's Book,* does not fit neatly into either of these three categories. Published by Ticknor & Fields in 1865, and at a cost of 600 dollars to herself, *The Freedmen's Book* is a compilation of biographies about black leaders, short stories, prayers and parables.[32] A total of 24 writers contributed towards the production of this textbook, 11 of whom were black. Such black authors include the renowned Fredrick Douglass, Harriett Jacobs, Charlotte Forten and George Moses Horton. The ultimate goal of *The Freedmen's Book* was to foster racial pride. As Child wrote in the preface:

> I have prepared this book expressly for you, with the hope that those of you who can read will read it aloud to others, and that all of you will derive fresh strength and courage from this true record of what coloured men have accomplished under great disadvantages.[33]

Although each of the freedmen's textbooks served a specific purpose, the overarching goal was to inculcate the former slaves with northern values, particularly piety, morality, industry, sobriety, cleanliness, frugality and the sanctity of marriage. Lessons on temperance were a particularly common feature of freedmen's textbooks. In the wake of emancipation, many northern white people worried that, if left uneducated, the former slaves would succumb to a life of drunken idleness. Thus, freedmen's textbooks often focused upon teaching the freed people about the dangers of alcohol. In particular, many textbook authors warned that excessive drinking could lead to poverty or death. As one maths lesson in *The Freedman*

[29]The ATS cited in Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 198.
[30]Helen E. Brown, *John Freeman and his Family* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1864; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1980); Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*; Isaac W. Brinkerhoff, *Advice to Freedmen* (New York: American Tract Society, 1864; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1980); Jared Bell Waterbury, *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen* (New York: American Tract Society, 1864; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1980), 5.
[31]Robert C. Morris, introduction to *Freedmen's Schools and Textbooks*, vol. 3 (New York: AMS Press, 1980).
[32]Enoch, *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, 52.
[33]Lydia Marie Child, preface to *The Freedmen's Book* (Boston, MA: Ticknor & Fields, 1865).

read, "If a man drinks thirty cents' worth of liquor in a day, how long will it take him to drink up an acre of ground worth a hundred dollars?".[34] The use of tobacco was also strongly discouraged, not least because it was perceived as a gateway to alcoholism. Smoking "causes an unnatural expectoration, and consequent loss of the fluids of the system through the salivary glands", warned *The Freedman.* "This produces thirst, which water does not quite satisfy. There is a letting down of the general rigour, and he who drinks at all is almost sure to become a drunkard."[35] Although lessons on temperance were also incorporated into the northern common school curriculum, the former slaves were deemed particularly susceptible to the vices of alcohol. As Israel P. Warren, secretary of the ATS, wrote in 1866:

> [The freedmen] have been kept by slavery in a degree of ignorance which is not common among the whites. Their knowledge of religious truth is exceedingly defective; often mixed with error. In the department of morals they need special instruction, as in relation to theft, falsehood, and unchastity. These are vices, too frequent, indeed, everywhere, but particularly rife among those long held in slavery.[36]

Given that the ATS was a religious publisher, it is not surprising that its textbooks were full of religious content. However, rather than teaching the tenets of a particular religion, ATS publications, *The Freedman* in particular, used religious stories to encourage the former slaves to accept the status quo. Although many southern blacks were living in abject poverty, freedmen's texts discouraged the pursuit of upward mobility. Instead, black learners were urged to endure hardships, physical suffering and a lack of material possessions in the name of religious devotion. "Are we willing to sacrifice all that we have of earthly good for Jesus' sake?", asked *The Freedman,* "and can we wear with joy the crown of thorns, enduring the scorn and contempt of the world, in hope of the crown of life which he will give to his faithful followers at the last day."[37] Evidently, as Jessica Enoch argued, the blatant religious indoctrination contained within the pages of ATS publications encouraged black students to "accept their lot, however unfair it might be, and focus their attention on heavenly reward".[38] In this sense, freedmen's textbooks represented a strategic attempt to perpetuate the racial subordination of southern blacks.

A second goal of the freedmen's textbooks was to mould the former slaves into a subservient labour force. Although Union victory resulted in the emancipation of some four million slaves, the northern and southern economies were still reliant on black labour. As Donald Spivey wrote, "Blacks faced a neo-slave system when the Civil War ended. Cotton still had to be picked, tobacco fields needed to be tended, and menial labour was required for the industries of the New South."[39] Moreover, due to the racial stereotypes that permeated nineteenth-century American culture, particularly through the blackface minstrel shows, scientific theories of race and sentimental literature, many northern white men and women believed that southern blacks were a lazy race that would only work under duress.[40] Thus, freedmen's textbooks frequently stressed the value of industry. In *Plain Counsels for Freedmen,* Clinton B. Fisk advised his readers that work was more than just a means to an

[34] *The Freedman* 5, no. 8 (August 1868).
[35] *The Freedman* 4, no. 3 (March 1867).
[36] ATS, *Fifty-Second Annual Report*, 17.
[37] *The Freedman,* 4, no. 3 (March 1867).
[38] Enoch, *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, 46.
[39] Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868–1915* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), ix.
[40] Patterson, "The Cultural Reform Project of Northern Teachers," 101–15.

end: it was a virtue in and of itself. "I was myself brought up to hard work from my very childhood, and I am not speaking to you upon a matter that I know nothing about", he wrote. "No, my friends, I love work, and nothing would be a greater punishment to me than enforced idleness. I would rather work ten days than to be idle one day."[41]

Lessons on industry were not just designed to entice the freed people to work; they were designed to entice the freed people to do a certain type of work. As one lesson in *The Freedman* demonstrates:

> I wonder why Susan does not work, and earn an honest living. It is, I think, because she is lazy. I can think of no other reason; for there is surely work enough to be done, if one has a will to do it. She could wash and iron, or sew, or clean house, or go errands, or bake cakes, or hoe corn, or sell fruit. She could not do nice work; but plain, coarse work she could have in plenty.[42]

One questions the value of education if Susan could not do "nice work". As Christopher Span argued, southern blacks "were in school to become something more than a cotton picker or menial laborer for another's profit".[43] Evidently, northern whites and southern blacks did not share the same goals or vision of black freedom.

Some freedmen's textbooks even encouraged the freed people to continue working for their former masters. "Do not think, that in order to be free, you must fall out with your old master, gather off your bundles and trudge off to a strange city", wrote Fisk in *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*. "This is a great mistake. As a general rule, you can be as free and as happy in your old home, for the present, as any where else in the world."[44] Due to mounting poverty and financial hardships many freed people did return to work on the plantations.[45] However, when a freed person was fortunate enough to secure paid labour outside of the plantation, the style of work was often no different from what he/she had been doing in the cotton fields. In 1865, a news article in *The Freedman* reported that many former slaves had found employment in the government. "To see them work under the new *regime*, one would not see any apparent change: they are the same subdued and humble race of yore", observed the writer. "They are under the surveillance of a 'gangman' selected from their number; the old term 'overseer', like all Southern institutions, having become or is fast growing obsolete."[46]

Not all of the textbooks created for the freed people attempted to perpetuate the racial subordination of southern blacks. As previously mentioned, Lydia Marie Child's *The Freedmen's Book* and the ACS's *The Freedman's Torchlight* both attempted to foster racial pride and uplift.[47] This was particularly evident in the choice of vocabulary used to teach literacy in *The Freedman's Torchlight:* "free", "life", "live", "now", "thank", "God", "good", "right", "learn", "land", "made", and "slaves".[48] For more advanced readers, these words were used in sentences such as "I am free and well", "I will love God", "God made all men free", "We should learn to read and write and be good", and "We will stand up for the union, now and forever".[49] However, due to limited funding, it is unlikely that the ACS succeeded in publishing many issues beyond the first.[50]

[41]Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*, 45.
[42]*The Freedman* 2, no. 12 (December 1865).
[43]Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 43.
[44]Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*, 12.
[45]Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 6.
[46]*The Freedman* 2, No. 12 (December 1865), emphasis in original.
[47]Lydia Marie Child's *The Freedmen's Book* often offered conflicting interpretations of black freedom. For a more detailed analysis of these interpretations, see, Enoch, *Refiguring Rhetorical Education,* 53–70.
[48]*The Freedman's Torchlight* 1, no. 1 (January 1866).
[49]Ibid.
[50]Patricia Young, "Roads to Travel: A Historical Look at The Freedman's Torchlight – An African American Contribution to 19th-Century Instructional Technologies," *Journal of Black Studies* 31, mo. 5 (2001): 671–98.

The third and final goal of the freedmen's textbooks was to promote and maintain white supremacy. One of the ways in which the textbooks attempted to achieve this goal was through the strategic juxtaposition of contrasting black and white characters. In *John Freeman and his Family*, for example, the white characters of Miss Horton and Lieutenant Hall were characterised as intelligent, industrious, pious and generous while the black characters of Prince and Clarissa Freeman were portrayed as lazy, ignorant and degraded by slavery. Prince, who served as a coachman during times of slavery, typified the stereotypical image of the lazy black man because he preferred to spend his days "lounging under the shade of a tree smoking his pipe" rather than working.[51] Clarissa, on the other hand, was more than willing to engage in paid labour and she earnestly conveyed this willingness to Miss Horton. However, in spite of her childlike eagerness to please the white teacher, Clarissa was unable to keep a clean and tidy home, a hallmark of nineteenth-century female domesticity.[52] Although Miss Horton happily shared her homemaking tips with Clarissa, this lesson reinforced the notion that formerly enslaved women were degraded by slavery and unable to live up to the domestic ideals prescribed for white women.

Other textbooks promoted white supremacy by positioning northern white men as saviours of the black race. A lesson in *The Freedman's Spelling Book*, for instance, included a short story about a white Union soldier who had just returned from war. "It was sad to see men die in battle", read one of the sentences, "but it was to make us free."[53] Similarly, in *Advice to Freedmen,* black learners were informed that their freedom came at the cost of white men's "treasure and precious blood". "Let these sufferings and sacrifices never be forgotten when you remember that you are not now a slave but a freedman", concluded author Isaac W. Brinkerhoff. [54] Evidently, as Williams pointed out, ATS publications "sought to instil African Americans with a sense of obligation and loyalty to northern white men".[55]

Given that most of the freedmen's textbooks were written and published a mere two to three years after Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, it is not surprising that they paid little attention to the issue of racism. Although some textbooks acknowledged that southern whites were often prejudiced towards blacks, the former slaves were invariably tasked with eliminating this prejudice. "White people have old, strong prejudices", wrote Clinton B. Fisk, "and you should avoid everything you can which will inflame those prejudices … If you are bent on being good and kind, and return soft answers to hard words and good for evil, you will have few troubles with white men."[56] A critique of slavery was also notably absent from several of the freedmen's texts. On the contrary, Helen E. Brown actually presented an idyllic image of the slave system, which only served to insult those who were forced to endure it. As she wrote of Prince and Hattie Freeman's enslaved experience:

> While they were on the plantation she and Prince had lived together as easy and happy a way as slaves could live. Their work was light, their master and mistress kind, and at dusk they were usually at liberty to lead the dance on the green, to sit and chat lovingly by the fireside.[57]

[51] Brown, *John Freeman and his Family*, 71.
[52] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1966): 151–74.
[53] *The Freedman's Spelling Book*, 22.
[54] Brinkerhoff, *Advice to Freedmen*, 7.
[55] Williams, *Self-Taught,* 136.
[56] Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen,* 14.
[57] Brown, *John Freeman and his Family*, 65.

Admittedly, some textbooks acknowledged the hardship of slavery. In *The Freedman's Third Reader,* for instance, the writer admitted that "the most painful part of the history of Africa is that which belongs to the slave-trade".[58] However, this textbook blamed Europeans, rather than Americans, for the perpetuation of slavery.

Northern common school textbooks

During the antebellum period, a campaign for free public schooling, known as the common school movement, emerged in the northern states of America. Although a diverse range of elementary schools, including public schools, private schools, church schools and charity schools, were available to most northern white children by the early 1830s, there was no unified school system.[59] This meant that, as Carl Kaestle found, "school sessions were brief, facilities were crude, and teachers were only a few steps ahead of their pupils".[60] Thus, in an effort to create a "unified and improved school system", nineteenth-century educational reformers called for tax-supported elementary schools, increased school spending, longer school terms, and the establishment of teacher training institutions.[61]

Growing immigration and rapid urbanisation, particularly in the Northeast, also stimulated increased calls for free public schooling. As Diane Ravitch explained, during the mid-nineteenth century, "The population of cities increased, as did the proportion of immigrants who were neither English nor Protestant. Along with these changes went a rise in social tensions as cities began to experience poverty, slums, crime, intemperance, and related ills."[62] School reformers looked to the common school as a means of rectifying these social issues. By implementing a curriculum that emphasised reading, writing and arithmetic as well as religious and moral instruction, the common school not only worked to provide a rudimentary education to the masses of school-aged children but also served to maintain social order and "Americanise" the growing and expanding immigrant population. Although common schools were not intended to serve the black population, some northern black children had limited access to education during the antebellum period.[63]

Prior to the common school movement, uniform textbooks were virtually absent from northern elementary schools. Instead, students used textbooks that were chosen by their parents, if they used textbooks at all. This caused many problems for the overworked teachers who, as Kaestle observed, struggled "to group children for instruction, or to plan lessons".[64] Accordingly, common school reformers called for the uniformity of textbooks, not only to meet the practical needs of struggling teachers and educational reform but also to impart the ideals and values perceived as necessary to maintain social stability during a period of increasing social change.[65] Although the introduction of uniform textbooks occurred gradually, by 1860 most northern common schools, particularly those in urban areas, were

[58] *The Freedman's Third Reader*, 227.
[59] Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983), 62.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., ix.
[62] Diane Ravitch, "American Traditions of Education," in *A Primer on America's Schools,* ed. Terry M. Moe (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2001), 8.
[63] Hilary Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 12–14.
[64] Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 134.
[65] Ibid., 135.

using uniform textbooks.[66] However, given that northern common schools were intended to serve the white, rather than black, population, the textbooks created for these schools were done so with white children in mind.

During the early years of southern black schooling, northern aid and missionary societies dispatched donations of these textbooks to the southern black schools under their care. Nathan H. Hill, for instance, a Quaker teacher in North Carolina, regularly received textbooks, as well as other supplies, from his sponsoring organisation, the Friends' Freedmen's Association.[67] Depending on the financial capabilities of the local black community, these textbooks were either distributed gratuitously or sold for a nominal fee. Occasionally, teachers were instructed to purchase textbooks themselves and then sell them to their students. Not surprisingly, few black students could afford to pay for books or other classroom materials. As one black teacher explained to an AMA official, "I do not see how I can pay for them. If I should get them I could not sell but a very few of them … I see a very few able to buy books. As you know my salary is very low. I cannot afford to pay for them myself."[68] When public school systems were introduced in the South during the late 1860s and early 1870s, southern black schools continued to rely on northern publishers for textbooks. Selected and paid for by state boards of education rather than northern aid and missionary societies, the content of these textbooks remained more or less the same as those created during the antebellum period with one important exception: due to mounting pressure from the Catholic Church, textbooks created after the Civil War became increasingly secular and contained "significantly fewer Biblical materials".[69]

Representations of race and racism were not particularly evident in the northern common school readers or spellers examined in this study. Reflecting the aims of public schooling, these textbooks were, however, full of religious and moral lessons. Although nineteenth-century common schools were non-sectarian, they were Protestant in character and, in spite of the objections made by the Roman Catholic Church, many schools taught lessons from the Bible, hymns, and prayers.[70] *Willson's Third Reader,* for example, was divided into four parts: "Stories from the Bible", "Moral Lessons", "Zoology", and "Miscellaneous". Parts one and two of this reader were designed to provide religious and moral instruction while parts three and four were intended to foster the students' interest in reading. The religious and moral sections were not unique to this particular reader and author Marcius Willson acknowledged in the prefatory note that "no parts have been spared to give *all* the Readers [levels 1–6] not only a moral, but a *Christian* influence".[71]

[66]Ibid.

[67]See, for example, George Dixon to Nathan Hill, March 21, 1867 and April 12, 1867, Nathan H. Hill papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[68]Michael P. Jerkins to Edward P. Smith, December 18, 1869, American Missionary Association archives, Amistad Research Centre, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

[69]For state textbook policies after the Civil War, see, for example, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the year ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), 195; Samuel S. Ashley, *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, for the year 1869* (Raleigh: M. S. Littlefield, State Printer and Binder, 1869), 29; Ward McAfee, *Religion, Race, and Reconstruction: The Public School in the Politics of the 1870s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 39.

[70]Ravitch, "American Traditions of Education", 11; McAfee, *Religion, Race, and Reconstruction,* 60.

[71]Marcius Willson, preface to *The Third Reader of the School and Family Series* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860), emphasis in original. For religious lessons in *Willson's First Reader,* see, for example, Marcius Willson, *The First Reader of the School and Family Series* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1861), 42, 54, 73, 80. For religious lessons in McGuffey's readers see, for example, William H. McGuffey, *McGuffey's New First Eclectic Reader for Little Children* (New York: Clark & Maynard, 1857), 56.

Like many of the textbooks specifically created for the freed people, northern common school readers and spellers actively promoted the value of industry. Unlike freedmen's textbooks, however, lessons on industry did not attempt to subordinate northern white schoolchildren or relegate them to a life of menial labour. On the contrary, northern common school textbooks extolled the virtue of industry on the basis that it would lead to wealth and prosperity. As Noah Webster wrote in his *Blue-Backed Speller,* "One effect [of industry] is to procure an estate. Our Creator has kindly united our duty, our interest and happiness; for the same labor which makes us healthy, cheerful, and gives us wealth."[72]

Interestingly, and in stark contrast to the textbooks specifically created for the freed people, the threat of poverty was used to promote industrious behaviour. "Idleness will bring thee to poverty", wrote Webster, "but by industry and prudence thou shalt be filled with bread."[73] Similar lessons were virtually absent from the freedmen's texts, which, as previously discussed, often encouraged the former slaves to accept a life of poverty in favour of being rewarded in the afterlife.

Although freedmen's textbooks also promoted the value of industry, the connection between industry and wealth was rarely explored. Instead, freed men and women were often warned that hard work might not result in financial reward. As J. B. Waterbury advised in *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen,* "Don't fall into the mistake of some, that freedom means idleness. Free people have to work, and some of them have to work very hard even to get their bread."[74] In addition, both northern and freedmen's textbooks promoted conflicting messages of wealth and happiness. On the one hand, the textbooks created for the freed people advised their readers that money did not buy happiness. As one lesson in *The Freedman* read, money "won't buy off sickness; it won't buy off sorrow, it won't buy off death".[75] On the other hand, northern common school textbooks explicitly equated poverty with misery and prosperity with happiness. "The idle boy is almost invariably poor and miserable", one lesson in *Willson's Third Reader* instructed, "the industrious boy is happy and prosperous."[76]

Representations of race and racism were extremely pervasive in northern geography textbooks, especially in the lessons about Africa and the African people. Although the African continent was often described in favourable terms, largely due to its fertile land and plentiful natural resources, the African people were invariably described as uncivilised, unintelligent, barbaric and violent. As Francis McNally wrote in *An Improved System of Geography*, "The inhabitants [of Africa] are numerous negro tribes, all in an extremely barbarous condition, and subject to the most degrading species of despotism."[77] Likewise, in Samuel Mitchell's *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography,* the Abyssinian people were described as "rude and brutal" savages: "At their feasts they eat raw flesh, streaming with blood, cut from the animal while yet warm".[78] On other occasions, Africans were portrayed as simple and childlike.

[72]Noah Webster, *The American Spelling Book: Containing the English Language for the Use of Schools in the United States*, 19th ed. (Philadelphia: Johnson & Warner, 1816), 166.
[73]Ibid., 64.
[74]Waterbury, *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen*, 5.
[75]*The Freedman* 3, no. 2 (February 1866).
[76]Willson, *Willson's Third Reader*, 68.
[77]Francis McNally, *An Improved System of Geography: Designed for Schools, Academies and Seminaries* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1859), 83.
[78]Samuel Mitchell, *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography: Designed for the Instruction of Children in Schools and Families*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Cowperthwait, Desilver & Butler, 1854), 137.

"The negroes are cheerful in their disposition", wrote McNally, "and music and dancing of a rude character are prevailing amusements."[79] By reinforcing negative racial stereotypes, many scholars have argued that lessons such as these fuelled racial prejudice in American society.[80]

Whites, by contrast, were portrayed as morally and mentally superior. Frequently described as civilised, industrious and intelligent, many geography textbooks categorised mankind into a strict racial hierarchy that positioned whites at the top and blacks at the bottom. In the 1860 edition of *A System of Modern Geography,* for instance, Samuel Mitchell divided mankind into five racial categories: "European or Caucasian, Asiatic or Mongolian, American, Malay, and African or negro".[81] In this instance, the term "American" was used to describe Native Americans. As Mitchell wrote:

> The European or Caucasian is the most noble of the five races. It excels all others in learning and the arts, and includes the most powerful nations of ancient and modern times. The most valuable institutions of society, and the most important and useful inventions have originated with the people of this race.[82]

The 1848 edition of this textbook also included a frontispiece illustration entitled "Stages of Society", which demarcated mankind into four stages of civilisation: barbarous, savage, civilised and enlightened, and half-civilised. Unsurprisingly, whites were placed in the "civilised and enlightened" category while blacks were placed in the "barbarous" category and Native Americans were considered "savage".[83] Although lessons such as this were ultimately designed to maintain white supremacy, Ken Montgomery argued that they were also used to justify European and American imperialism:

> This compartmentalization of humanity according to notions of consanguinity … helped to justify modern imperialism, colonialism and nation-state formation, which were predicated on assumptions that those with supposedly superior blood (i.e. "superior races") had a moral imperative to impose and maintain order and control over the supposed impure and ignoble blood of others.[84]

Although there is much debate surrounding the extent to which students may or may not be influenced by textbook content, it would be naive to think that lessons about race or civilisation did not influence the thinking and ideology of the students who engaged with them.[85] Indeed, in her guide for third-level instructors, Helen Fox confessed that many of her understandings about race were shaped by college textbooks. Referring to an anthropology lesson that divided mankind into five races, much like the lesson in Mitchell's geography

[79]McNally, *An Improved System of Geography,* 83.

[80]See, for example, Jonathon Zimmerman, "Brown-ing the American Textbook: History, Psychology, and the Origins of Modern Multiculturalism," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2004): 46–69; Anthony Pellegrino, Linda Mann, and William B. Russell III, "To Lift as we Climb: A Textbook Analysis of the Segregated School Experience," *High School Journal* 96, no. 3 (2013): 209–31.

[81]Samuel Mitchell, *A System of Modern Geography,* revised ed. (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler & Co., 1860), 41. This lesson was also in the 1848 edition of Mitchell's textbook. See Samuel Mitchell, *A System of Modern Geography,* revised ed. (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., 1848), 41.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Mitchell, *A System of Modern Geography* (1848), 2.

[84]Ken Montgomery, "Banal Race-Thinking: Ties of Blood, Canadian History Textbooks, and Ethnic Nationalism," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 41, no. 3 (2005): 313–36.

[85]For debates and questions surrounding the impact of textbook content, see, for example, Jesus Garcia, "The Changing Image of Ethnic Groups in Textbooks," *Phi Delta Kappa* 75, no. 1 (1993): 29–35; James D. Anderson, "Secondary School History Textbooks and the Treatment of Black History," in *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future,* ed. D. C. Hine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 253; Ruth M. Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), viii.

textbook, Fox wrote, "I was certain that this idea was correct … because it was presented to us as scientific, and therefore unassailable".[86]

Few of the geography textbooks examined in this study made any reference to racial slavery. However, when the subject arose, the issue was often presented as a southern, rather than a national, problem. "What do the Planters of the Southern States Own?", asked James Monteith in *First Lessons in Geography.* "Large plantations cultivated by slaves."[87] In *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography*, Samuel Mitchell also presented slavery as a distinctly southern problem by writing that the inhabitants of the South were mostly planters or slaves.[88] Although slavery had been abolished in the North since the early nineteenth century, and both of these textbooks were published in 1854, lessons such as these completely downplayed the North's role in the perpetuation of racial slavery.

Some geography textbooks also discussed, to some degree, the slave trade. However, the blame for inciting the slave trade was often placed entirely upon the African people. As one lesson in *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography* read:

> Africa, for more than three hundred years past, has furnished slaves to the people of various parts of the earth. Millions of these unhappy beings have been carried away from their country and friends and doomed to laborious servitude in foreign lands.[89]

In another lesson in the same textbook, readers learned that Africans were a warlike people who often sold their prisoners of war into slavery.[90] While there is some truth in this, Mitchell did not make any reference to the white slave traders who operated within the United States until the slave trade was abolished in 1807.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Civil War, black people throughout the American South actively engaged in the construction of freedmen's schools. However, due to limited financial resources, the former slaves were often reliant on northern benevolence for the provision of qualified teachers, financial aid and classroom resources. But while the freed people looked to schooling as an opportunity for social, political and economic advancement, the white population, in both the northern and southern states, often perceived freedmen's education as a means of maintaining social control and white supremacy. The textbooks created for the freed people reflected these aims. That is not to say that there were not several white teachers who dedicated their life's work to educating and elevating the former slaves. There were. However, for the most part, these men and women were in the minority.[91]

Although the textbooks used in northern common schools during the antebellum period were not designed with the freed people in mind, they were nonetheless focused on promoting the superiority of whites and the inferiority of blacks. This goal was particularly relevant during the antebellum period, not only because it was the age of American imperialism and

[86]Fox, *When Race Breaks Out*, 12.
[87]James Monteith, *First Lessons in Geography, or, Introduction to "Youth's Manual of Geography"* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1854), 36.
[88]Mitchell, *An Easy Introduction to the Study of Geography*, 48.
[89]Ibid., 148.
[90]Ibid., 135.
[91]For a fully comprehensive analysis of the work and motivations of freedmen's teachers see Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People.*

such lessons worked to justify the oppression of certain peoples, but also because it was the age of racial slavery. While slavery had been abolished in the North since the early 1800s, it was the dominant economic system in the South until 1863 and both the northern and southern economies were heavily reliant upon slave labour.

Although textbook analyses tell us little about what was actually taught or learned in schools, an analysis of the textbooks used in southern black schools during the Civil War and Reconstruction period clearly demonstrates that nineteenth-century white Americans not only perceived black people as inherently inferior but that they were committed to perpetuating white supremacy, both before and after black freedom. Combined with disenfranchisement, white paramilitary violence, restrictive labour contracts and a variety of discriminatory Jim Crow laws, the manipulation of curricular materials was just one of the ways in which white Americans worked to keep southern blacks at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Ultimately, an increased awareness of how the school curriculum can be used to further the agenda of a particular race or class is vital for future curriculum planning and educational policy, not only within the context of the American South, but at a worldwide level also.

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