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THE CONDEMNATION OF BLACKNESS

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RACE, CRIME, AND THE MAKING OF  
MODERN URBAN AMERICA

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example, would now be analyzed and interpreted as definitive proof of blacks' true criminal nature. Such empirical evidence could then justify a range of discriminatory laws, first targeting blacks, then punishing them more harshly than whites.<sup>90</sup> It is important to note that Shaler did not at this point add criminality to his list of black facts to study, like disease and death, though within ten years he did, following a decade of the highest number of lynchings of black people in American history.<sup>91</sup>

As the twentieth century approached, it was left to others to justify this latest trend in racial terror, targeting black criminality for the newest statistical proof of black savagery and pouring racial crime statistics into the foundation of modern race-relations discourse. In the meantime, Shaler saw the handwriting on the wall even if he could not yet read it all. "It is clear that we are in the midst of a great darkness, which can be illuminated only by patient inquiry." Those who are best equipped to save the nation by helping to lead us in the "composition of our ideal society," Shaler concluded, are those who are interested in the Negro Problem and have data rather than just words to share with us.<sup>92</sup>

## WRITING CRIME INTO RACE:

RACIAL CRIMINALIZATION AND  
THE DAWN OF JIM CROW

With the 1896 publication of Frederick L. Hoffman's *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, a tour de force in the annals of post-emancipation writing on the Negro Problem, statistical data on black criminality secured a permanent place in modern race-relations discourse in the United States for the first time. *Race Traits* was the first book-length study to include a nationwide analysis of black crime statistics, making it arguably the most influential race and crime study of the first half of the twentieth century. In his tone and in his findings, Hoffman, an actuary and statistician for Prudential, the insurance giant based in Newark, New Jersey, presented his work as innovative and essential. "Crime, pauperism, and sexual immorality are without question," he proclaimed, "the greatest hindrances to social and economic progress, and the tendencies of the colored race in respect to these phases of life will deserve a more careful investigation than has thus far been accorded to them."<sup>1</sup> Hoffman's rise to prominence, and the making of *Race Traits* and its intriguing aftermath reveals how racial criminalization linked to crime statistics helped usher in the age of Jim Crow.

Picking up where others had left off, Hoffman's pioneering statistical analysis of black criminality was embedded within a broader analysis and explanation of increasing black mortality rates as previously observed by former census superintendent Francis A. Walker.<sup>2</sup> In Hoffman's path-breaking formulation, crime was a major factor in the high mortality rate and was presented as a key finding in the black disappearance literature. Hoffman's emphasis on the innate self-destructive tendencies of black people, now a quarter-century removed from slavery, fueled his unequivocal argument that blacks' social and economic conditions, still largely attributed to white control, had absolutely nothing to do with black criminality. To drive this point home further, Hoffman touted his status

as a northern-based race-relations expert. He highlighted data from the urban North, specifically Philadelphia and Chicago, to demonstrate that black criminality was as high in the racially liberal North as it was in the emerging Jim Crow South. The timing of the publication of *Race Traits*—the year the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed white superiority and signed off on segregation as the law of the land in *Plessy v. Ferguson*—coupled with the book's novel use of the statistical method and its cogent writing made the book the "most influential discussion on the race problem to appear in the late nineteenth century."<sup>3</sup> As it happened, Walker contributed to the immense success of Hoffman's study as an officer of the American Economic Association, the most prestigious social science organization in the nation, which published the book in its journal.<sup>4</sup>

The success of *Race Traits* also resulted from the way Hoffman marketed himself as a foreigner. His credibility was doubly secured by his unfamiliarity with American race relations and his reliance on data rather than words, as Harvard scientist Nathaniel S. Shaler had so presciently advised. "Being of foreign birth, a German, I was fortunately free from a personal bias which might have made an impartial treatment of the subject difficult," Hoffman wrote, emphasizing that he had limited his analysis to the "exclusive use of the statistical method" and had "in every instance" simply given the facts. "In the field of statistical research, sentiment, prejudice, or the influence of pre-conceived ideas have no place. The data which have been brought together in a convenient form speak for themselves. From the standpoint of the impartial investigator, no difference of interpretation of their meaning seems possible."<sup>5</sup> Given that nearly all race-relations writers of the late nineteenth century—self-identified experts on the Negro Problem—were tied to or associated with ideological positions rooted in the sectional conflicts of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, Hoffman claimed that as a new arrival he had no blood on his hands.

Hoffman was indeed a German immigrant to the United States, landing at Castle Garden in New York City in 1884 as a jobless, penniless nineteen-year-old unable to speak English. Although he may have appeared to be one of Europe's huddled masses, he was in fact from an upper-middle-class family with Anglo-Saxon blood coursing through his veins. He would have received a university education in his homeland but for the untimely death of his father and his mother's insistence that he immediately begin working at the age of fifteen. Shortly thereafter, Hoffman made his way to the United States in hope of making a mark on the

world. He arrived just as the *Atlantic Monthly* was publishing Shaler's first article on "The Negro Problem."<sup>6</sup> Although it would take roughly eight years for Hoffman to publish his own seminal article on the subject and another four to position himself as its foremost authority, by 1896 he was far from being the "impartial investigator . . . free from personal bias" he then claimed to be.

Hoffman traveled extensively throughout the United States during the first ten years after his arrival, trying to find his stride in the business world. Numerous dead-end and temporary jobs sent him to several cities and states in the Midwest, the Northeast, and the Deep South. As an avid reader of U.S. history and travel literature and a frequent visitor to museums, historical societies, and monuments, Hoffman became engrossed, biographer F. J. Sypher notes, in the "landscape, the people, and the culture around him." On his first trip south in 1887, traveling from St. Louis down the Mississippi River aboard the *City of New Orleans*, he was captivated by the Southland's beauty, noting in his diary that he had passed through a "veritable gateway to Paradise" upon reaching Natchez, Mississippi. He instantly fell in love with "the oleanders and magnolias, and especially the orange trees, which reminded him of holiday times in Germany, when his parents would receive oranges from southern Italy." But as any American well knew and Hoffman was quick to learn, when it came to race relations the postbellum South could be as brutal as it was beautiful. On the riverboat Hoffman witnessed, in his own words, the "truly horrible brutality practiced upon the negro deck hands."<sup>7</sup> Perhaps struck by the blatant contrast between his experience as a white immigrant who had never been the victim of racial violence while working in or freely traveling across the nation, he was no longer free of the taint of American racism. What was he to make of it?<sup>8</sup>

Hoffman would spend most of the next eight years, from 1887 through much of 1894, living in no fewer than six southern towns and cities in Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia, experiencing southern culture, planting southern roots, and learning southern race relations. During a period of unemployment in 1888, he made a monthlong visit to the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, where he was first introduced to black mortality research conducted by a local physician.<sup>9</sup> Eugene R. Corson's study, "The Future of the Colored Race in the United States from an Ethnic and Medical Standpoint," first given as a lecture at the society then revised and published in 1893, after the 1890 census data were published, noted higher rates of deaths from disease among southern blacks

than among whites. This was a crucial finding, Corson maintained, given that the whites in his study lived under the same environmental conditions as the blacks. The difference, he argued, was the physical inferiority of blacks. Hoffman's reading of Corson's lecture was a life-altering experience. "This discussion laid the foundation of a lifelong interest in the mortality aspects of the so-called negro problem," he later recalled.<sup>10</sup>

More watershed moments in Hoffman's coming-of-age-in-the-South story soon followed. In the summer of 1891, in Atlanta, Georgia, Frederick Ludwig Hoffman married Ella George Hay. Reared in a "thoroughly Southern family," Ella was the daughter of a Confederate soldier and the granddaughter of a plantation slave owner.<sup>11</sup> The newlyweds quickly settled down in Hampton, Virginia, where Hoffman became familiar with Hampton Institute's program of black industrial education and racial accommodationism. By 1892 Hoffman had fully immersed himself in the "Negro question," expressing his private thoughts on the "worthlessness of certain negroes" and imbibing the racially conservative views of Frances Morgan Armstrong, a Hampton administrator and the daughter-in-law of Hampton's founder, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong.<sup>12</sup> Unlike her father-in-law and southern white progressives in general, Armstrong seriously questioned whether industrial education by itself was enough to correct blacks' racial defects. After the general died in 1893 she continued his work, "but without believing in its merits," according to Sypher.<sup>13</sup> Armstrong's private repudiation of industrial education for blacks, which she expressed to Hoffman, suggests that her beliefs were more in line with racial Darwinists. Hoffman, ever the quick student, learned much from Armstrong, who became his close adviser and confidant and a major influence on his writing of *Race Traits*.<sup>14</sup>

His residence in Hampton and his relationship with Armstrong marked the beginning of the end of Hoffman's neophyte years as a southerner and as a stranger to American race relations. A series of professional and intellectual developments during his last years in the South inspired Hoffman to combine his budding talent as a statistician in the insurance industry with his budding passion for shaping future race relations. In 1890 Hoffman wrote to Ella that he had come to realize his professional purpose in life. He saw in government statistics an effective means by which to expose problems in society and to help guide reform.<sup>15</sup> Although he was concerned at that time with industrial conditions among the white working class in northern mill towns, his interest shifted to the Negro Problem during his residence in Hampton. In 1892 he began corresponding

with government officials, including Carroll D. Wright, a highly esteemed economist, census official, and commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Labor, in order to collect statistical data on blacks' economic, social, and health conditions. His first published article, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," appeared in the April 1892 edition of *The Arena*, a Boston-based progressive journal. Hoffman's article was the fourth entry on the Negro Problem published by the journal subsequent to Shaler's three 1890 articles.<sup>16</sup>

In "Vital Statistics," Hoffman expanded on Walker's thesis that previous investigators had overestimated the "future colored population." Rather than analyze unreliable birthrate data as others had—the records were spotty and poorly kept—Hoffman turned to mortuary reports for eight southern cities.<sup>17</sup> He found that on average blacks died at nearly twice the rate as whites. Although environmental conditions were a factor for all groups living in poverty, the "two main causes" of high mortality among blacks were consumption and venereal diseases, which he linked to their "inferior constitution" and "gross immorality [Hoffman's italics]." The data, including statistics from the U.S. Army during the Civil War, clearly showed that more blacks than whites died of tuberculosis. In all these cases blacks and whites faced the same external conditions, according to the U.S. surgeon-general from whom Hoffman quoted directly in an 1889 report, demonstrating that the difference was the result of "a race proclivity to disease and death."<sup>18</sup>

In the expert opinion of the nation's foremost medical authority and Hoffman, health care discrimination plus the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of racial oppression apparently had nothing to do with black health and mortality disparities.<sup>19</sup> Although Hoffman liked to declare otherwise, it seems the data did not speak for themselves since there was more than one way to interpret them. As for venereal disease mortality, Hoffman had no actual data. Instead, he asserted that "any physician who practiced among the colored people" would attest that as many as 75 percent of them were "cursed" with a sexually transmitted disease. He followed up the anecdotal evidence with more death tables, showing that, across the board, black babies and black women died at higher rates than their white peers. From his perspective, every statistic or expert testimony was scientific proof of inferiority and degeneration. "Thus we reach the conclusion that the colored race is showing every sign of an undermined constitution, a diseased manhood and womanhood; in short, all the indications of a race on the road to extinction."<sup>20</sup> In his first article,

Hoffman was on his way to shaping racial statistics into a powerful, full-blown narrative of black self-destruction, racial decay, and the futility of reform. He asked rhetorically, why waste the nation's resources on a "vanishing race"?

With the forces of logic, reason, and statistics on his side, Hoffman appeared to foreclose the possibility of seeing blacks' situation any other way. Yet within the following year, in 1893, he presented a completely opposite interpretation of a high mortality problem among whites. In their case he blamed society and called for economic intervention. Suicide, the most literal act of self-destruction any individual can commit, was on the rise in the United States, and Hoffman collected mortality statistics to prove it. "Suicide and Modern Civilization," also published in *The Arena*, was, according to Hoffman, "the first time . . . the [suicide] statistics for American states and cities" had ever been presented.<sup>21</sup> Across the country, especially in the urban North where state and county agencies kept the best records, suicides had risen dramatically since the 1860s.<sup>22</sup> Massachusetts, the epitome of America's Puritan past and industrial future, recorded over 900 suicides in the last half of the 1880s, compared to 394 "self-killings" in the first half of the 1860s, a 130 percent increase. Connecticut's rising suicide rate, Hoffman found, was even more startling, growing 216 percent over a similar period. Always striking in its grandeur, New York City held the dubious honor of being the suicide capital of America in the late 1880s, recording 1,188 suicides that represented a 52 percent increase over the 1870s. Philadelphia and Baltimore had far fewer suicides but saw the rate of "voluntary destruction" increase by roughly 70 percent over the same period. If every suicide and attempted suicide were actually recorded, Hoffman wrote in a dire tone, "the army of those who seek in suicide a relief from earthly troubles would assume alarming proportions." The "plain but impressive language of statistics" had given "a picture of the darkest side of modern life." The stresses and strains of modern civilization were to blame, Hoffman wrote, and had contributed to increasing rates of insanity and brain diseases. According to an expert Hoffman cited, these individuals were victims not of "their own vices," but "of the state of society into which the individual is thrown." Hoffman agreed, insisting that the "total amount of misery and vice prevailing in a given community" was a manifestation of something fundamentally wrong in society. "The study of statistics of suicide, madness, and crime is one of the utmost importance to any society when such abnormal conditions are on the increase," he wrote in a

plea for reform. "When such an increase has been proved to exist, it is the duty of society to leave nothing undone until the evil has been checked or been brought under control." The "health of the people" must come before the "wealth of the people." Hoffman concluded that "We must be far from truly civilized as long as we permit to exist, or accept as inevitable, conditions which year after year drive an increasing army of unfortunates to madness, crime, or suicide. . . . It is the diseased notion of modern life—almost equal to being a religious conviction—that material advancement and prosperity are the end, the aim, and general purpose of human life. . . . It is the struggle of the masses against the classes."<sup>23</sup>

Hoffman interpreted whites' self-destructive behavior as a consequence of a diseased society, not of a "diseased manhood and womanhood." White criminality was a response to economic inequality rather than a response to a "race proclivity." On the white side of the color line, it would take nothing short of "emergency measures" to save modern civilization from itself.<sup>24</sup>

Hoffman's emergent advocacy was bidirectional. On the one hand, he interpreted the data on black mortality as a race problem, a call to do nothing. On the other hand, he interpreted the data on white mortality as a social problem, a call to do everything possible—to "leave nothing undone." Taking one extreme position, then the other, Hoffman was becoming an outspoken partisan in debates about America's future well before he began writing *Race Traits*. Historian Lundy Braun writes that "he shared with other Progressive-era reformers . . . a faith in the expertise of middle-class professionals" to influence "the culture of knowledge production in the United States," and to "shape policies of the state and civil society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."<sup>25</sup> His tremendous influence in these areas was defined in part by his choice, and the decisions of many others, to see blacks' problems as uniquely their own, just as he chose to see whites' "struggle for mastery" as society's problem. In a society where the ideology of white supremacy was ascendant, Hoffman saw no inconsistency in his thinking. In his earliest writings he was not a social Darwinist in the sense that he thought helping the weak was antithetical to social progress and nature's plan; the problem was helping a race of people outside the pale of civilization who had, according to his interpretation of the latest data, proven themselves to be permanently inferior to all whites, including European immigrants like himself. "The city negro brought into direct competition with the white race has usually but one avenue out of his dilemma—the road to prison

or to an early grave," he wrote in an article following the suicide report.<sup>26</sup> In this racial Darwinist formulation, permanent racial inequality and premature death among blacks was a scientifically sound solution to the Negro Problem, and a progressive means to economic equality among whites through a more effective use of social resources.

In relation to the recurrent economic depressions of the late nineteenth century and related immigration and labor problems among whites, Hoffman's career was propelled by his attempt to outflank late-nineteenth-century racial liberals with novel racial statistics. Nondiscrimination laws in the 1880s forced insurance companies to offer blacks the same benefits for the same premiums that were guaranteed to whites. Prudential balked at the new laws and hired Hoffman in 1894 because of his expertise in the field of black mortality. The company wanted him to prove on actuarial grounds that discriminating against blacks was justifiable. "Prudential and Hoffman aimed to turn the racial fantasy of the extinction hypothesis into hard scientific numbers that could be deployed" for the purposes of profit and prejudice.<sup>27</sup> It was in this context that Hoffman made his most original contribution to the analysis of new racial demographic data by zeroing in on black criminality. Two years later he would elevate it to the national stage of race-relations discourse in an effort to silence northern racial liberals who had not yet been swayed into accepting black inferiority through biological evidence, such as small brains and diseased bodies.

Hoffman's decision to focus explicitly on black criminality was likely influenced by his encounter with a debate between two prison doctors on why black convicts died in prison at much higher rates than white convicts.<sup>28</sup> In the February 3, 1894, edition of *The Medical News*, R. M. Cunningham, a former Alabama prison physician, reported that "the negro mortality was three times greater than white," based on examination of "some 2,500 convicts" over several years ending in 1890.<sup>29</sup> Although, according to Cunningham, the site of investigation was a first, since no comparative racial study and explanation of mortality differences among prisoners had hitherto been attempted, the results confirmed previous research. The "well-known facts" of blacks' physical deficiency and asymmetrical development—their small thoracic regions versus their large stomachs and penises—predisposed them to diseases such as tuberculosis. "All one has to do is to see 300 or 400 negroes naked in a large bath-house, and then step through a door and see 75 or 100 white men in the same condition, to convince him of the correctness of

this view." The statistical fact of black men dying in prison was written into the observed evidence of inferiority found in the body. Like life in the army, prison life was supposedly free of racism, eliminating it as a factor in the mortality differences. "This is certainly true at the place whence the foregoing statistics were obtained." That 85 percent of the prisoners were black, when before emancipation 99 percent of Alabama's prisoners were white, and that more than five times "as many negroes as whites [were] committed for crime" had nothing to do with discrimination. According to Cunningham, Alabama's laws were "impartially administered so far as race is concerned."<sup>30</sup> These disparities were also observable in northern prisons, where racial equality was a given, he explained as yet another proof that blacks were at the root of their own demise.

In rebuttal, M. V. Ball, a prison doctor at Eastern State Penitentiary, which housed Philadelphia's convicted felons, wrote that Cunningham's data were accurate but his interpretation was all wrong. Black prisoners were indeed far more likely than whites to die of tuberculosis in a Pennsylvania prison, as in other northern prisons, but the causes were related to childhood poverty, unsanitary living conditions, and poor hygiene. "In the early years are sown the seeds of tuberculosis," Ball wrote, "which require but the confinement of prison to mature and develop." He added that mortality statistics did not generally "take into account social distinctions," therefore masking the effects of poverty on populations that disproportionately suffered from it. Ball cited as an example data from the New York Board of Health "for various tenement districts" that revealed that childhood mortality rates among struggling Italian immigrants were similar to those of struggling blacks, and were much higher than for the city in general. "Make the conditions favorable for the negro from childhood up, and then first can we say that" blacks are more disease-prone. "The criminal nature of the negro must be viewed in the same light," Ball continued. Before ascribing the overrepresentation of blacks in Pennsylvania's prisons or in Georgia's or in Mississippi's to their inferiority, racial prejudice must be taken into account. "In the South, where lynch-law is most commonly dealt out to the negro, we might attempt to ascribe this greater criminality to lack of fair treatment, and prejudice on the part of the white man; but in the North we are supposed to be exempt from this accusation." Although Ball hesitated to say that northern racism was potentially as important to assessing black criminality as southern racism, he was certain that the current state of

statistical analysis left much to be desired. "In criminal statistics, as in medical statistics, we do not compare classes." Until we do, he concluded, "I would refer the differences" to environmental conditions rather than to "physical distinctions." "Until the sociological factor is studied and taken into account, the so-called hereditary and racial characteristics as witnessed in the adult are liable to lead to wrong conclusions."<sup>31</sup>

If there was one moment when Hoffman, the young, ambitious, German-born statistical maven, had to step back and either reconsider his interpretation of racial statistics or charge ahead, fortifying his ideas with more forceful language and emphasis, this was the moment. This debate did not begin as his fight, but it most certainly ended that way when he published a rejoinder to Ball's article in the September 22, 1894, issue of *The Medical News*. Hoffman attacked Ball's every point with no fewer than twelve proofs of counter-data and counter-testimony. Most of the data and expert opinions he cited were recycled from his 1892 article, but this time his language was far more pointed and expressive, revealing a strong desire to eliminate any possible reason for interpreting the data in social terms or in a manner similar to his own position on white suicide and criminality. His strongest and most consistent argument against Ball was to unequivocally assert the total absence of racism and discrimination as determinative of the health and welfare of blacks in American society. Because "the negro is placed under exactly the same conditions, social and economic, as the white race," there was no way to explain the mortality and criminality differences other than their "race proclivity to disease and death." "Any city in the South will show that year after year, for the past twenty years," blacks died at rates 25 percent to 100 percent higher than whites. Records from the army presented similar data as "proof so convincing that it will be hardly necessary to add anything further in support of the theory of distinct race characteristics." Moreover, the surgeon-general, "a recognized authority," Hoffman continued, had come to the same conclusion "in such an emphatic manner."<sup>32</sup> Even the British troops in the West Indies outlived blacks in an environment where blacks had an advantage, "as life in the West Indian Islands is to the negro a paradise on earth, being an out-door rural life, with little manual labor," he wrote, echoing Shaler's words about Haiti and Jamaica.<sup>33</sup> Back in the United States, actuarial data "by all the life-insurance companies" confirmed that blacks on average died ten to twelve years younger (in their early twenties) than whites. With their economic incentive to seek healthy clients regardless of race and to per-

form routine "medical examination[s]," Prudential Insurance company's 50 percent higher payout to the beneficiaries of black policyholders was yet "another proof of the permanency" of racial difference. Hoffman continued, writing in an arrogant tone to show that Ball had missed or had refused to acknowledge what was plain for all to see: "Need more proof be brought forward to maintain the assertion that the negro and the white man differ fundamentally. . . . I could quote authority after authority to prove that such is really a fact."<sup>34</sup>

That Hoffman felt compelled to go to such lengths to refute Ball, given that it was not his research that had been directly challenged, demonstrates how passionately he believed that demographic evidence was the smoking gun for which so many racial scientists and race-relations writers, such as Shaler, had been looking.<sup>35</sup> But this was not just about one individual's pursuit of scientific certainty in solving the Negro Problem. Hoffman's was not the only voice of white absolution for the sins of America's founding fathers and mothers, nor was his the only voice speaking of black degeneracy, black savagery, and black extinction in the 1890s. He kept extremely good company in this regard, from scientists to academics to journalists to religious leaders to American statesmen.<sup>36</sup> Rather, this was about how one individual could make a difference in redefining a "scientific" problem and in pushing the boundaries of conventional knowledge and understanding into new research areas. At this time social scientists were attempting to raise their academic profile by becoming professionalized, by founding academic journals, and by adopting empirical methods to give their findings the veneer of scientific certainty like those of their senior colleagues in the natural sciences.<sup>37</sup> With a real knack for spotting emerging statistical trends in the United States and with a little help from his European counterparts, Hoffman identified key areas of demographic research, sometimes based on entirely new data that others had not yet noted or had only casually considered.

With black crime, like white suicide, Hoffman took Cunningham's and Ball's lead into the realm of black prison and arrest statistics and put himself on the cusp of yet another original contribution. Left with one final proof in order to dismiss all of Ball's interpretations, Hoffman cited a French physician's 1889 study that tied the physical differences between West Indians and "the white man" to "distinct social aptitudes," noting that "a similar study of the negro criminal in this country *would* lead to similar conclusions."<sup>38</sup> This was Hoffman's first published comment on

“the negro criminal,” demonstrating his dedication to searching for the data and to filling what was an obvious void in debates about the scientific origins of black disease, death, and self-destruction. A far more robust and pioneering crime analysis was to follow in the book. In the meantime, Hoffman haphazardly noted, without citing dates or using tables, wide racial disparities in Chicago arrest rates and Pennsylvania prison rates.<sup>39</sup> Unlike work on black mortality, the large-scale study of black criminality from the statistical standpoint was mostly uncharted territory.<sup>40</sup>

Anecdotal, anthropological, and journalistic assessments of black criminality had informed nineteenth-century popular opinion and social practices.<sup>41</sup> Colonial laws targeted unsupervised gatherings of enslaved men and women and conspiring free blacks to ensure against black uprisings. Antebellum blacks were often subject to discriminatory policing even as they suffered violence periodically at the hands of native-born white and immigrant mobs in northern cities.<sup>42</sup> Since nine out of ten blacks were enslaved until the late nineteenth century, the scientific measure of black criminality first awaited freedom, then reliable data. As late as 1893, as indicated by the absence of any mention of blacks in one of the first textbooks on what would later be considered American criminology, *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes* by University of Chicago social scientist Charles R. Henderson, quantitative research on black criminality had not yet begun.<sup>43</sup> Given how much Hoffman seemed to delight in pioneering the compilation and presentation of vital statistics on a national scale, he probably consulted Henderson’s book before proceeding with his own study. The likelihood is further demonstrated by noting just how tightly drawn was the intellectual circle that encompassed Hoffman, Henderson, and others. In the second edition of *The Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes*, Henderson wrote on “the Negro factor” for the first time and cited Hoffman’s *Race Traits*, which had been published in 1896, three years after the first edition.<sup>44</sup>

Another important report on the national crime situation that lacked statistical data on black criminality appeared the same year as Henderson’s first edition, and Hoffman likely read it. The report was written by his colleague at the U.S. Bureau of Labor, Carroll D. Wright, from whom Hoffman had obtained data before writing his first race article.<sup>45</sup> Wright linked crime to unemployment and the exploitation of unskilled and uneducated workers. His only reference to African Americans was a slim mention in a discussion of general trends in industrial nations in the

nineteenth century where, he argued, crime rose as a natural consequence of the transition from feudalism to wage labor and from slavery to freedom.<sup>46</sup> It seems likely that Hoffman noted the absence of vital statistics on black crime in Wright’s article, then studied Wright’s argument that preventing white crime required better protection of the white working-class against the ravages of economic depressions in the industrial marketplace. “The shutting down of the mines of Pennsylvania, or the reduction of work therein,” Wright wrote, “throws large bodies of men out of employment. . . . Crime is the result, and the criminal statistics swell into columns that make us believe that our social fabric is on the verge of ruin.” Wright’s evocative language reflects the growing compassion of many American social scientists who, in the wake of a national recession in the 1890s, began to argue against social Darwinism. They were also arguing against the emerging biological determinism of European criminal anthropology, which was gaining popularity due to the efforts of its foremost promoter, Cesare Lombroso, an Italian prison inspector.<sup>47</sup> On the origins and solution to white criminality, Wright may have influenced Hoffman directly, given the tone and tenor of his suicide article.

Wright and Hoffman shared the same school of thought.<sup>48</sup> Society and the government had a responsibility, both argued, to protect the health and welfare of the white citizenry; otherwise crime, disease, and death were inevitable results. As Wright put it, “The health of the workers of a community is essential to their material prosperity, and the health of a community has much to do with the volume of crime.” Within the general population, among Anglo-Americans and new European immigrants, the problems of disease, death, and self-destruction were rooted in industrialization and modern civilization. Harry Vrooman expressed similar views and was also a contributor to *The Arena*. A socialist writer and organizer of the Progressive Labor party, Vrooman argued that “the whole problem of crime, as to-day expressed in society, is summed up in the problem of poverty; we have churches enough, schools enough, moral sentiment enough, to regenerate the world in a decade, were it not for the awful pressure brought to bear on nine tenths of the human race, which all but forces them to be vicious.” Moreover society owed the “the great army of unfortunates” not just economic security, but “goodwill” that encouraged “respect [for the ethical code]” and an obligation “to sustain . . . the social order.” In other words, sympathy and compassion for working-class white Americans were as important as living wages and humane working conditions. Vrooman took his analysis one step further



by attributing part of the blame for "Bowery crimes," a reference to a New York City immigrant slum, and "wage slave[ry]" to "Northern greed" during the Reconstruction period. Under "negro domination," he wrote, a "black horde of practical savages" controlled by "Yankee plutocrats" plundered the South.<sup>49</sup> Notwithstanding the challenge to universal white economic mobility posed by free black labor, Hoffman, Wright, and other progressives believed that at the nexus of crime and whiteness there was only a class problem. There was no race problem.

Ball agreed entirely with the conclusion that race was not the determinant factor in white mortality and white criminality, but he believed the same held true for blacks. In response to Hoffman's latest entry in what had turned into a nearly yearlong debate in the pages of *The Medical News*, Ball insisted for the second time, though much more forcefully, that mortality and crime statistics in and of themselves could not be trusted. "Figures in themselves mean nothing; they must be carefully analyzed and studied in connection with social conditions." Without taking into account a host of known "sociologic factors," statistics were an insufficient basis upon which to "draw conclusions" and could easily become misrepresentations of reality. Repeating a cliché, Ball wrote, "There are three kinds of lies, someone has said, 'white lies, black lies, and statistics.'"<sup>50</sup>

From Ball's perspective, the statistical lies told by Hoffman, Cunningham, and others had little to do with the actual mortality and prison data, which he admitted were not in "dispute." There was no doubt that more blacks than whites died of tuberculosis and went to prison, but explaining why was the essential problem. Ball rejected the racial meaning Hoffman obsessively gave to the statistics. He balked at Hoffman's omission of other kinds of demographic data that showed rates of mortality among the Irish and Italians living in impoverished neighborhoods of the urban North as similar to rates among blacks. According to Ball, even the 1890 census data, when read with a different interpretive lens, showed that "foreign-born whites and the children born of foreigners have the same death-rate as the colored, because they often dwell in the same surroundings and are under the same economic conditions."<sup>51</sup> Even when mortality differences seemed to point to racial differences, Ball found not biology, but more subtle environmental influences related to housing and hygiene. The extreme housing differences between whites of the "wealthy classes" and blacks "who live in the alleys back of their mansions" accounted for huge disparities in mortality.<sup>52</sup>

In regard to crime statistics, environmental factors, such as the misconduct and biases of criminal justice officials, were similarly as determinative, Ball continued. "All law-breakers are not sent to prison, and the more influential the criminal, the less likelihood of conviction. The police-court investigation in New York City shows us that morals cannot be determined by the number of arrests, and that the most disorderly element in New York City was most exempt from police interference."<sup>53</sup> Ball was citing the findings of the Lexow Commission of 1894, the first blue-ribbon investigation of police corruption and violence in American history, which made headlines at the same time his article appeared. According to historian Marilyn Johnson, the New York State Legislature launched an investigation of the New York Police Department after a series of high-profile corruption scandals. The investigation "produced more than ten thousand pages of testimony that detailed multiple cases of police graft, vice protection, racketeering, and election fraud." The investigation was nicknamed the "Clubbers Brigade" to highlight the connection between corruption and brutality by police officers, a hundred of whom appeared before the commission to explain their equal number of assault convictions. Like Ball, a lawyer for the commission noted the discriminatory effects of police misconduct. "Those in the humbler walks of life were subjected to appalling outrages. . . . They were abused, clubbed and imprisoned, and even convicted of crime on false testimony by police and their accomplices. . . . The poor, ignorant foreigner residing on the great East Side of the city has been especially subjected to a brutal and infamous rule by the police."<sup>54</sup> For Ball, then, the circumstances affecting disease and criminality among the "poor, ignorant foreigner" were likely to be as "active in the negro." Moreover, the tendency to compare blacks to the "whole white race with its four or five social divisions" exaggerated the racial distinctiveness of blacks, rendering invisible the commonality of "poverty and ignorance" among various subgroups. Such a method is "not scientific," he unequivocally asserted to Hoffman. "Thus, before we can call characteristics racial and dependent upon distinct organic differences, we must eliminate the sociologic factor."<sup>55</sup>

But Hoffman hardly looked back as he wrote *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*. In this full-length treatise on the racial deterioration of black people in America published two years later, he never explicitly acknowledged Ball's warnings. While he made a few veiled references to the environmental argument of "some authors," he insisted that the evidence of race deterioration was "indisputable" and that "no

difference of interpretation . . . seems possible." With the notable addition of more mortality data, which he claimed had never been published or had "never been duly considered by those who believe so firmly in the all powerful effect of the 'milieux,'" much of the book was an expanded version of his previous articles.<sup>56</sup>

What was new in the book, however, was of no minor consequence. His major innovation was in presenting for the first time a statistical "study of the negro criminal." Whereas in slavery it was a "well-known fact that neither crime [nor] pauperism" existed, he began, in freedom the latest data positively proved otherwise. The 1890 census, according to Hoffman, showed 24,277 "negro criminals" out of the nation's 82,329 total prisoners, about 30 percent, and nearly three times the number of black men and women in the general population (12 percent). Although black men constituted more than 90 percent of all "colored prisoners" (just over 22,000), both sexes were most likely to be incarcerated for violence, "the most serious of all crimes." Out of nearly 7,000 men imprisoned for homicide, just over a third, 2,512, were black men. Black women made up nearly six in ten female prisoners convicted of murder, representing 227 women prisoners out of 393.<sup>57</sup> For rape, "the most atrocious of all crimes," black men composed 41 percent of convicts. For property offenses, arson ranked at the top among black men and women as a proportion of the total, at 46 percent and 61 percent respectively. Hoffman thus praised the "wisdom" of insurers in "restricting the amount of fire insurance obtainable by colored persons."<sup>58</sup> If the information in the book spoke for itself, as Hoffman frequently claimed, it seemed at times to have been too soft-spoken. The message apparently was worth repeating: black criminality justified black proscription.

Regarding lynching, for example, Hoffman interpreted press accounts of rape as justifying mob violence even as he admitted that there was no statistical evidence to link the two. "The evidence on this point is not such as would recommend itself to an investigation of this kind, in which official data are the main reliance," he wrote.<sup>59</sup> Instead he supplemented "newspaper evidence" with "the opinion of those most competent to judge," including the Virginian historian Philip Alexander Bruce, whose influential 1889 book *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman* was one of the most heavily cited postbellum race studies. Bruce, quoted by Hoffman, described the rape of white women by black men as "indescribably beastly and loathsome," without peer in the "whole extent of the natural history of the most beastial [sic] and ferocious animals."<sup>60</sup> Although

Bruce claimed to be impartial, dispassionate, and free of a personal connection to slavery, his book in general and his chapter on black criminality in particular represented the standard repackaging of proslavery beliefs for a postbellum audience.<sup>61</sup>

By relying on such experts, Hoffman combined crime statistics with a well-crafted white supremacist narrative to shape the reading of black criminality while trying to minimize the appearance of doing so. Thus the innovative and enduring significance of Hoffman's crime analysis was not only in presenting the data for the first time, but also in setting the terms and shaping the frame of analysis. Table after table of arrest and prison statistics from cities across the nation, such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Louisville, and Charleston (SC), and from states including New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Hoffman proclaimed, all "confirm the census data, and show without exception that the criminality of the negro exceeds that of any other race of any numerical importance in this country." When "the negro learns to respect life, property, and chastity, until he learns to believe in the value of a personal morality operating in his daily life, the criminal tendencies . . . will increase."<sup>62</sup>

Although anecdotally black criminality had already become a popular measure of black progress and potential among postbellum writers, in Hoffman's seminal statistical formulation it secured a more fundamental and permanent role in future race-relations discourse. It was now nearly impossible to read black crime statistics as symptomatic of the failed promises of racial equality in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction or, as Ball had suggested, to see crime beyond race as a sociological consequence of economic and social inequality in the industrial age. The construction of an avenue along which such thinking might have traveled was postponed indefinitely. Even suicide among blacks, according to Hoffman and in contrast to suicide among whites, was strictly viewed as pathological: "in most cases, to escape the consequences of his crimes."<sup>63</sup> Ultimately, by framing black criminality as a key measure of black inferiority in the same way that his peers and predecessors had done through anatomical measurements and mortality data, Hoffman wrote crime into race and centered it at the heart of the Negro Problem.

In *Race Traits* Hoffman brilliantly tied black criminality to a repudiation of abolitionists' and neo-abolitionists' claims that with freedom, education, and moral training blacks would gradually achieve equality with whites.<sup>64</sup> He framed black behavior as impervious to civilizing influences

by wedding increasing crime trends to the dramatic increase in black schools and churches over the three decades after slavery:

I have given the statistics of the general progress of the race in religion and education for the country at large, and have shown that in church and school the number of attending members or pupils is constantly increasing; but in the statistics of crime and the data of illegitimacy the proof is furnished that neither religion nor education has influenced to an appreciable degree the moral progress of the race. Whatever benefit the individual colored man may have gained from the extension of religious worship and educational processes, the race as a whole has gone backwards rather than forwards.<sup>65</sup>

This was a powerful indictment of nascent liberal efforts for racial equality at the dawn of the Jim Crow era. Not only did Hoffman state that education and religion were a waste of time and money, but he also implied that they were harmful to the goals of racial uplift. The charge that black education by itself was a stimulus to crime would follow in the wake of *Race Traits*.<sup>66</sup>

It is entirely possible that, given the time Hoffman had spent at Hampton Institute, he owed some credit to Frances Morgan Armstrong for emphasizing the futility of black education.<sup>67</sup> "Unfortunately, for the negro," she stated, "the course of the race is influenced by those who have filled his mind with false ideals, who commencing with 'forty acres and a mule,' have ended with the prospect of an education in colleges or industrial schools." General Armstrong, with whom she disagreed, fit this description perfectly. The black crime problem, as diagnosed statistically by Hoffman and subsequent writers, undoubtedly struck a blow at the optimism of the liberal northerners who were major supporters of industrial education in the South and challenged their faith that education was the key to solving the Negro Problem.<sup>68</sup> From this point forward, white philanthropic and reform efforts on behalf of racial advancement would be evaluated to varying degrees by black crime statistics.

Hoffman's book was exceedingly influential across the nation, especially among leading students of American demography.<sup>69</sup> "The national white consensus emerging at the turn of the century," notes historian David Levering Lewis, "was that African Americans were inferior human beings whose predicament was three parts their own making and two parts the consequence of misguided philanthropy."<sup>70</sup> Hoffman played no

minor part in building this consensus. Historian George Fredrickson writes that *Race Traits* "became a prized source of information and conclusions for anti-Negro writers for many years to come," in part because of its practical value.<sup>71</sup> Despite the few articles he had written as a new-minted southerner, Hoffman was a relative unknown to the vast world of race punditry prior to *Race Traits*. By 1896, however, he had remade himself in print as a foreign-born resident of New Jersey with no obvious past or association with the South. He worked as a statistician for one of the largest insurance companies in the country—an ostensibly polemic-free line of work. In the tradition of an Alexis de Tocqueville he marketed himself as a clear-eyed, plainspoken, unbiased foreign observer of American race relations and demographic trends. Unlike Shaler Hoffman had no obvious baggage to disclaim, but like him, Hoffman sought to transcend sectional strife by winning northerners to southerners' points of view. He reminded his readers that "racial inferiority was the keynote of the pro-slavery argument," which had been falsely "explained away" by the abolitionists.<sup>72</sup> With data and reason rather than passion and emotion, Hoffman tried to remove the stain of southern depictions of "black beasts," dressing up black criminality for the North. His citing of northern crime statistics and his use of *Chicago Tribune* lynching statistics were subtle ways of drawing northerners' attention to their own color-blind evidence that revealed the growing specter of black migrants "for whom," he wrote, "vice and crime are the rule and honesty the exception."<sup>73</sup>

In 1896 Hoffman sounded a national call to action. "Today, more than ever, the colored race of this country forms a distinct element and presents more than at any time in the past the most complicated and seemingly hopeless problem among those confronting the American people." The migration of blacks to "all sections of the country" was resulting in their increased population in "all the large cities," a fact heretofore unrecognized, Hoffman wrote, since "these tables, I believe, are the first to present with a considerable degree of accuracy the massing of the colored population of northern and western cities." The danger awaiting these cities due to this migration was cumulative. First, the rate of black population growth in large cities was faster than the rate for whites. Second, blacks "crowded into a very few wards," thereby creating segregated neighborhoods resulting in an "Africa" in the city. Finally, the black neighborhoods in northern cities were "as a rule . . . the most undesirable sections of the cities." In Philadelphia's "Africa" or Chicago's, New York's,

Boston's, or Cincinnati's, wrote Hoffman, "the colored population is found to be living in the worst section of the city" where "vice and crime are the only formative influences." The time was now for "individual states" and the "nation at large" to take heed of this "most serious aspect" of the Negro Problem—its northern population growth. This increasing presence of "undesirable characters" with their "evil effect" on northern cities was "a serious hindrance to the economic progress of the white race." "In the plain language of the facts brought together," Hoffman warned, "the colored race is shown to be on the downward grade, tending toward a condition in which matters will be worse than they are now."<sup>74</sup>

The fact that northern city leaders already blamed much of their crime on the slum communities of the foreign-born meant that warnings about the criminal tendencies of impoverished black migrants would have sounded more familiar than alarmist. Even the muckraking housing reformer Jacob Riis, author of an 1890 classic study of New York tenements and slum life, emphasized the common criminality of impoverished immigrants and blacks. According to Riis, "As the Chinaman hides his knife in his sleeve and the Italian his stiletto in the bosom, so the negro goes to the ball with a razor in his bootleg."<sup>75</sup> When Hoffman announced that Chicago's "Italians, Polanders and Russians" lived under conditions "without question more severe" than blacks, and blacks still showed the "most decided tendency towards crime in the large cities," he unequivocally marked the black urban migrant as a criminal of exceptional measure. On this one crucial point, Hoffman seemed to directly answer Ball's earlier criticism that poverty trumped race because the Irish and Italians showed similar death rates when compared to blacks in similar conditions. "Of the various nationalities enumerated," Hoffman wrote, "the Irish and Italians show a percentage of arrests decidedly above the average, yet small when compared with that of the colored element."<sup>76</sup>

In a milieu where environmental or sociological explanations of the criminality of native-born and foreign-born whites were ascending alongside the gradual segregation of northern blacks, Hoffman helped to legitimate the further isolation of blacks as a dangerous race with exceptional problems.<sup>77</sup> Historian and criminologist Jeffrey Adler observes that, as black migration to Chicago gradually increased in the next decade, "Chicagoans of European extraction, including both recent migrants and old-stock native-born Americans, often felt a powerful bond of racial solidarity," including a shared fear of blacks as criminals. Most "white city dwellers" in Chicago and "other northern cities," Adler



Figure 2-1 "A Downtown 'Morgue'" appeared in Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* to draw attention to the evil of New York's saloons that fueled crime and death rates. The large number of working-class white men of sordid appearance and likely immigrant origin pose a sharp contrast to Hoffman's marking of the black man as an exceptional threat. Photo by Richard Hoe Lawrence, c. 1890, Museum of the City of New York, The Jacob Riis Collection (Riis 162)

writes, "believed that African Americans were violent and deviant," and the whites sought various public policy measures to seal themselves off from them.<sup>78</sup> The first modern race-relations expert to evince the statistical connections between black migration to the North, urbanization, and criminality, Hoffman helped to certify the nationalization of the Negro Problem. He smartly anticipated that these three factors taken together would shape, to varying degrees, race-relations discourse into the next century and beyond.

The impact of Hoffman's ideas was detectable immediately following the book's publication. Among white reviewers, the reception ranged from

adulation and critical acclaim to mixed praise.<sup>79</sup> All agreed on Hoffman's exceptional talents as a statistician, and all noted the significance of blacks moving to the urban North, spreading vice, crime, and disease in their wake.<sup>80</sup> In one of social science's premier northern journals, a white reviewer acclaimed that *Race Traits* was a pioneering achievement. It was a "most thorough and painstaking compilation" by a "competent" statistician to "deal with the vital and social statistics of the negro race in the United States," exclaimed Miles Menander Dawson, a New York actuary and a frequent reviewer of insurance-related publications. Thoroughly convinced by Hoffman's findings, Dawson summarized every section of the book without a single critical comment. No other race committed as much crime as blacks, wrote Dawson, despite the facts that about the same percentage of black children attended school as whites and almost the same percentage of blacks and whites were active Christians. "Even in northern cities, where abundant opportunities are given," Dawson noted, blacks are so inefficient that "comparatively few engage at skilled labor."<sup>81</sup> Hoffman's persistent efforts to render racism invisible were paying off.

Before launching into his own inspired denunciation of blacks, Frederick Starr, a white anthropologist at the University of Chicago and a proponent of Lombrosian criminology, praised Hoffman for being an "unbiased foreigner" instead of a "prejudiced observer"—a recognition of the stakes of post-racialism at the dawn of Jim Crow.<sup>82</sup> Starr's review, "The Degeneracy of the American Negro," was caustic, exhibiting the passion that Hoffman had perhaps intended to ignite. Starr's own summary of the "astonishing results" of "criminality in the two races" proved that Hoffman had unambiguously made his point to some of his white peers. "Conditions of life and bad social opportunities cannot be urged in excuse," Starr wrote, because immigrants' conditions "are fully as bad as for the blacks but their criminality is much less. *The difference is racial* [Starr's italics]." Starr reiterated Hoffman's conclusions in his own unequivocal terms: "What can be done? Not much. . . . Less petting and more disciplining is needed; fewer academies and more work-benches. Recognition of white men and black men is fundamental. The desire to turn bright black boys into inefficient white men should cease. It is imperative that we demand honesty toward the negro and decency from him. But we may expect the race here to die and disappear; the sooner perhaps the better."<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, the linking of crime to the folly of academic training reinforced an idea that Shaler had joked about in his 1884 article: A "little colored girl" had once said that "you can't get clean corners

and algebra into the same nigger." She was right, Shaler added, noting that it was even "difficultly effected in our own blood. The world needs *clean corners*, it is not so particular about the *algebra* [Shaler's italics]."<sup>84</sup> In the near future, new evidence of black criminality would help to shape debates about the state of black education in America.

Not all white readers or critics of Hoffman's work, like Ball, unconditionally embraced his racialism even as they agreed that his data were sound. A notable exception was biologist Gary L. Calkins of Columbia University. This was somewhat ironic, given how much the first generation of American social scientists modeled natural scientists, and how much ideological support they drew from biologists in asserting the constitutional inferiority of African Americans.<sup>85</sup> Calkins described the book as an "admirable work," noting that Hoffman's logic was "convincing" and that his data clearly pointed to the "downward" trajectory of the race. But he was far from convinced by Hoffman's all-encompassing racial analysis, arguing that "racial difference" might account for some of the disparities between whites and blacks but "that it accounts for all . . . is hardly proved by the facts produced." The health-related disruptions of migration and urbanization make no racial distinctions, he argued. "Nor must it be forgotten that a race suddenly thrown upon their own resources under entirely new conditions, as were the negroes after their emancipation, must necessarily suffer change of circumstances, regardless of race tendencies." Likewise, their immorality, "which is constantly increasing," he added, "could" be viewed from the same perspective.<sup>86</sup>

Such initial cautions by white researchers such as Calkins and Ball gradually found greater currency among northern progressives when they began, somewhat half-heartedly, to apply their immigrant environmentalism to African Americans as the Great Migration era approached. For the moment, however, dissent was small by comparison to the attitudes of many whites who were already animated by thoughts of southern "black beasts" and who fully embraced Hoffman's empirically based, race-neutral depiction of a nationwide black crime problem.<sup>87</sup> For the moment, the bulk of the questioning of the new crime data and its racial interpretations was left to a new cohort of black scholars, reformers, and journalists.

These middle-class and elite black women and men were young; many had never been enslaved, and some had received first-rate educations at the most elite institutions in the nation.<sup>88</sup> Ironically, they were members

of the generation captured by the 1890 census, the census that many scientific racists had eagerly anticipated would prove the race's inferiority once and for all.<sup>89</sup> Historian Glenda Gilmore calls them the race's "best men" and "best women" because they used their pedigrees and talents as personal testimonies to the race's infinite capacity for citizenship and excellence.<sup>90</sup> They considered themselves "their own best argument," writes historian Deborah Gray White, against the charge of racial inferiority.<sup>91</sup> Not all of them actively desired to be antiracist leaders, but those who did included Mary Church Terrell and the women who founded the National Association of Colored Women in 1896, and W. E. B. Du Bois and the men who launched the American Negro Academy in 1897.<sup>92</sup> Although they were hardly of one perspective or position on the Negro Problem—1895, for example, marked the rise of Booker T. Washington, the white-appointed accommodationist leader of the race—they tended to explain their circumstances quite differently than whites did, if for no other reason than that they overwhelmingly asserted their hopefulness, their humanity, and their inalienable rights to freedom and fairness.<sup>93</sup> "The present seems dark to the negro and that there is an increasing discontent, is perfectly evident, still I am far from despairing of his success in the future," wrote William Saunders Scarborough, a professor of classical languages at Wilberforce University, the first black author of a Greek college textbook, the first black member of the Modern Language Association, and a founder of the American Negro Academy. "If the South and North, white and black, will unite on lines of justice and humanity to man, the race question will work out its own solution with the least friction and best results."<sup>94</sup> Notwithstanding much intra-racial class and gender friction, many elite black men and women, in the words of historian Kevin Gaines, "sought to refute the view that African Americans were biologically inferior and unassimilable by incorporating 'the race' into ostensibly universal but deeply racialized ideological categories of Western progress and civilization."<sup>95</sup>

Ida B. Wells was the first of this generation of black scholars and reformers to link the language of civilization with statistics to defend the race against charges of criminality. She published her first two pamphlets, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892) and *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892-1893-1894* (1894), at the same time that Hoffman authored his first articles. Although neither cited the other's work, Hoffman must have been aware of Wells's work and her British antilynching

campaigns of 1893 and 1894 by the time he published *Race Traits* in 1896.<sup>96</sup> In 1892 Wells was a primary school teacher, a journalist, and an antiracist activist in Memphis who lost three close friends in a triple lynching after they defended their grocery store against a mob of white men intent on burning it to the ground.<sup>97</sup> This was not an uncommon occurrence. Professional and entrepreneurial blacks were frequent targets of mob violence in the South, especially when their commercial activities weakened the grip of white business owners who systematically exploited blacks. For Wells, the tragedy and personal loss were extremely difficult to accept, especially when the local white press applauded the violence. That she had long borne witness to white journalists' usual justifications for lynching as the only way to handle black criminals and "Negro rapists" left her no option but to speak truth to power. In the preface to *Southern Horrors*, she wrote, "Somebody must show that the Afro-American race is more sinned against than sinning, and it seems to have fallen upon me to do so. The Afro-American is not a bestial race. If this work can contribute in any way toward proving this, and at the same time arouse the conscience of the American people to a demand for justice to every citizen, and punishment by law for the lawless, I shall feel I have done my race a service."<sup>98</sup>

Historians of Wells's life and times credit her for inventing "forceful new arguments" and for being a "point of origin" in "American critical thought on lynching and racism."<sup>99</sup> Gail Bederman writes that Wells turned the Anglo-Saxon "discourse on whiteness, civilization, and manliness" on its head by redefining lynching as an act of barbarity by white men who "burned innocent black men alive for the 'crime' of sleeping with willing white women, while they themselves brutally and boldly raped black women."<sup>100</sup> In 1892 Wells's printing press was destroyed by arsonists; threatened with mortal harm, she left the South forever. She became a statistic, one of the soon-to-be-counted and much-discussed black migrants, first landing in New York, frequently visiting Philadelphia to draw support from the city's resourceful black religious and education leaders, and eventually settling in Chicago for the remainder of her life. There, after the turn of the century, she led a call for progressive-style crime prevention and outreach among young black men who suffered the triple burdens of labor-market discrimination, the stigma of criminality, and segregation from white- and immigrant-only social welfare agencies.<sup>101</sup>

Like almost everyone else in the twentieth century, Wells later witnessed and responded to the ubiquitous referencing of black crime statistics in all

manner of race talk, which she had less to do with in the 1890s than did later black social scientists such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Kelly Miller, Monroe N. Work, Richard R. Wright, Jr., Sadie T. Mossell, and Anna Thompson.<sup>102</sup> In comparison to Hoffman, Wells neither identified herself as a statistician nor focused on the 1890 census. Still, her method for compiling lynching statistics was the same as Hoffman's. In preceding him by two years, she was doubtless one of the first race-relations writers, black or white, to analyze the *Tribune's* lynching data. Though an overwhelmingly white-on-white American tradition of vigilante "justice" from the colonial period to the nineteenth-century Old West, lynching had only become a racist blood sport in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>103</sup> On average in these two decades, "one person was lynched every other day, and two out of three were black." At the start of the twentieth century, lynchings fell to one every four days, but 90 percent of the victims were African Americans.<sup>104</sup> Like Hoffman, Wells was keenly aware of how her personal identity mattered to the reception of her study, proclaiming that her research had come strictly from white newspaper sources. "Out of their mouths," she boasted defiantly in the opening pages of *A Red Record*, "shall murderers be condemned." The heart of her condemnation was her meticulous reading, one by one, of press accounts of just over eleven hundred black men, women, and children who were "hanged, shot and roasted alive from January 1st, 1882 to January 1st, 1894," of whom 31 percent were actually "charged with rape."<sup>105</sup>

Her research findings defied most whites' understanding of lynching (and even, to a lesser extent, the way some elite blacks viewed the matter). Before Wells, few white people questioned the claim that the "majority" of lynchings in the country were, as Hoffman put it, "undoubtedly" the results of rape committed by black men.<sup>106</sup> Wells's aim was to debunk the myth that nearly every lynching of a black man represented a statistic of a ravaged white woman. She also wanted to challenge the emerging idea that any evidence of black criminality in the North was obvious proof of black inferiority, since many whites claimed that northern racism did not exist. In her retelling of northern press accounts, she highlighted how northerners contributed to the lynching craze and the scapegoating of black suspects by fabricating their own stories of black predators in their midst. In Philadelphia, for example, she told of an attractive and "well educated" white girl from a "good family" who had been stealing from her parents for some time. When a shadow of suspicion fell on the girl, she lied to the "daily papers" that a "colored man" had "gagged" and

"bound" her and had stolen the money. In Cleveland, a mother and grand mother conspired to have a black handyman disposed of by accusing him of "outrag[ing]" their four-year-old child. A preliminary hearing produced no evidence, but revealed that the women had concocted the scheme to avoid paying him a season's worth of wages.<sup>107</sup>

Wells's most provocative findings involved the rape or attempted rape of black women by white men. Of the dozen or so cases she cited, most took place in the South, but a few were from the Midwest and the Northeast. Typically a white man or a "gang" of whites sexually attacked a young black woman. If the men were arrested, they were either acquitted or served minor sentences (far less than the many years similarly convicted black men received if they were lucky enough to make it to prison). None of them fell prey to a lynch mob. In Nashville, for example, Pat Hanifan "outraged a little colored girl," received a six-month jail sentence, and then became a city detective. In Baltimore "a gang of white ruffians assaulted a respectable colored girl" who was out with her escort. Her date was held down while she was raped. All were acquitted. "Colored women," Wells wrote bitterly, "have always had far more reason to complain of white men in this respect than ever white women have had of Negroes."<sup>108</sup> In *A Red Record*, Wells exposed the enduring sexual violence perpetrated against black women, begun in slavery, and the unacknowledged hypocrisy of the lynching hysteria.<sup>109</sup> She exposed the double bind of racial and sexual exploitation manifested in the figurative and literal dehumanization and destruction of black bodies.<sup>110</sup>

Given Wells's total repudiation of white supremacists' explanations for lynching and black criminality, it is easy to imagine Hoffman's incredulity when he came upon her work. It is not easy to imagine that he never knew of her work. He was extremely well read, curious, and thorough in his attempts to draw upon experts on topics of interest to him. That Hoffman probably ignored Wells's work is suggested by the fact that Robert Porter, one of his peers and the superintendent of the 1890 census whose signature appeared on the title page of the report on crime in the nation, publicly commented on the success of Wells's British campaign.<sup>111</sup> Although Wells's efforts created a storm of national controversy and an international scandal, for the most part she was not taken seriously by mainstream white race-relations writers like Hoffman, who from the beginning dominated the social scientific discourse on black criminality. Race and gender explain much of the "deafening silence," according to her biographer. Wells fit into no neat categories. She was a "kind of political

exile." She was too bold as a female public figure, too outspoken in criticizing white women reformers for accepting lynching as a "necessary evil," too proud of her race to condone the conservative accommodationism of Washington-type black male leaders, and ultimately too unladylike and provocative in her sex talk for black club women. Her unequivocal antiracism may have marginalized her the most.<sup>112</sup>

Other black men and women of Wells's intellectual acumen and personal commitment to race work were slightly less marginal by comparison to Wells because they either believed that some blacks had racial tendencies toward criminal acts or because some, as racial uplifters, were more willing to traffic rhetorically in the high-value currency of black criminality so as to be taken seriously by whites.<sup>113</sup> But regardless of their gender or their class elitism or their rhetorical strategies, the first generation of professionally trained black social scientists, the vast majority of them men, were generally ignored by their white counterparts.<sup>114</sup> They were also few in number.<sup>115</sup> As one historian notes, in the early years of mass freedom "scholarly speculation among African-Americans was a luxury as rare as Mississippi snow."<sup>116</sup> From the 1890s until the 1920s, except when their words conceded, corroborated, or confirmed that blacks committed too many crimes—no matter their typically nuanced framing of the problem as primarily a symptom of industrial capitalism plus racism—"most white practitioners of racial science were able to silence the opposition of black thinkers."<sup>117</sup> Historian Davarian Baldwin explains that "the innovative Black scholarship on race relations was different enough from most ideas within the traditional organizational structure of" the field of sociology "that the work was systematically illegible, illogical and hence invisible."<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, black scholars responded to Hoffman's book with a mixture of ambivalence, sharp criticism, and restrained outrage. Neither W. E. B. Du Bois, the first black Harvard-trained social scientist and the first black academic to gain national attention as a race-relations expert, nor Kelly Miller, a pioneering black mathematician whose quantitative training and interest in the Negro Problem led him to launch a sociology department at Howard University, accepted Hoffman's prediction or Starr's endorsement of their race's impending disappearance.<sup>119</sup> In his review, Du Bois called it an "absurd conclusion" based on the "unscientific use of the statistical method."<sup>120</sup> Although Miller first conceded that the book was the "most thorough and comprehensive treatment of the Negro Problem, from a statistical standpoint," rivaling in its ability to

"awaken" scientific interest in blacks what Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had done to arouse "sentiment and generous feelings" for the race, he then agreed with Du Bois that Hoffman's conclusion was really a smokescreen for "a priori considerations."<sup>121</sup>

Miller's 1897 review, the first published paper of the American Negro Academy and itself a bestseller among African Americans, dissected the book chapter by chapter, allowing none of Hoffman's arguments to escape scrutiny. For example, he discounted Hoffman's entire treatment of the North as proof positive of blacks' hereditary shortcomings, arguing that social "captivity" and "isolation" were far more characteristic of the conditions facing the "Northern Negro." Blacks in the North were "completely submerged," he wrote. Their crime was primarily determined by their "social degradation." Not questioning the data but reversing Hoffman's statistical logic, Miller said that the census "nowhere" proved "any connection between crime and race but between crime and condition."<sup>122</sup> Northern black crime rates, from Pennsylvania's prisoners to Chicago's arrestees, were "six to eight times greater" per capita than whites because of racial discrimination.<sup>123</sup> "The criminal outbreak under the circumstances is only natural." If whites were to "exchange places" with blacks, then "the same story would be narrated of" them.

To be sure, Miller did not discount "this high criminal record" as simply a myth or a product of statistical sophistry. On a very basic level, he accepted Hoffman's charge of excessive criminality as partly the responsibility of blacks to fix. This was one of the earliest indications of the powerful rhetorical and ideological currency of black crime statistics even among African Americans. It is important, however, to note—for this was a point frequently ignored by Miller's white peers—that to admit that blacks played a role in the crime problem was not to concede racial inferiority but to insist that everyone had a part to play in the solution. Ultimately, Miller saw the problem in universal terms, both historical and sociological, that he believed held true for all groups: "The Jews in Egypt labored under circumstances remarkably similar to those of the American Negro" as they struggled to survive amid their own moral and physical "degeneracy" in the wilderness of freedom for forty years after emancipation. "Luckily for the Hebrews, there were no statisticians in those days. Think of the future which an Egyptian philosopher would have predicted for this people! And yet out of the loins of this race have Sprung the moral and spiritual law-givers of mankind. We should not be discouraged because the Negro does not make a bee-line from Egyptian



bondage to the Promised Land beyond Jordan. . . . If all the misdeeds of any people or individual were brought to light, the best of the race would be injured and the rest would be ruined."<sup>124</sup>

Along similar lines, Du Bois found much of Hoffman's data "interesting and valuable," but considered his interpretations highly suspect. There was no inherent reason why Hoffman had to emphasize "the bad as typifying the general tendency" of the race. Clearly the statistics showed mixed results: "increasing intelligence and increasing crime" as well as more wealth and more poverty. "Such contradictory facts are not facts pertaining to 'the race' but to its various classes, which development since emancipation has differentiated." Like Miller, Du Bois suggested an alternative reading of the data in both universal and antiracist terms. It was "natural" among "all races," he wrote, to experience in a "single generation" more material progress than moral progress. After all, the "dazed freedman" could comprehend the urgency of work "much easier" than how to rebuild the family life and moral foundation destroyed by slavery. The "younger generation" only turned to crime in the face of "dogged Anglo-Saxon prejudice" by which they were "subjected to different standards of justice" than "white malefactors." "To comprehend this peculiar and complicated evolution, and to pronounce final judgment upon it, will take far greater power of analysis, niceness of inquiry, and delicacy of measurement than Mr. Hoffman brings to his task."<sup>125</sup>

Du Bois's superior education, including a Harvard Ph.D. plus three semesters at the University of Berlin—the crème de la crème of academic training in the social sciences—prepared him to see the irony in Hoffman's German background and his "unscientific use of the statistical method." Turning the tables on Hoffman, the former student of Max Weber pointed out that in Hoffman's "own German fatherland" high death rates matched or exceeded those of blacks in the United States.<sup>126</sup> Were residents of Munich also headed for race extinction? What of Montreal, Naples, Belfast, Budapest, Breslau, and Madrid, which "all have shown within a few years, death rates equal" to or in excess of "American Negroes in cities"? Was illegitimacy among the inhabitants of Rome, Munich, Stockholm, Paris, and Brussels the beginning of the end of morality among Europe's elite races, given that their rates of out-of-wedlock childbirths were higher than the "Negroes of Washington [D.C.]"? The bottom line, argued Du Bois, was that the study of black life needed much more investigation at the local level and "from particular points of view."<sup>127</sup>

This was precisely Du Bois's point in "The Study of the Negro Problem," an address delivered at a meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in the fall of 1897, several months after his review appeared.<sup>128</sup> By this time Du Bois was an assistant instructor at the University of Pennsylvania and was conducting the first-ever book-length sociological investigation of an American city. The study was "a breakthrough achievement," the seminal text on urban sociology, not soon to be matched by the research of the nation's inaugural sociology department at the University of Chicago, founded in 1892.<sup>129</sup> It seems an unlikely coincidence that his groundbreaking study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, was launched about the same time Hoffman's book was making headlines since, as Du Bois recalled many years later, he was brought to Philadelphia to conduct research to investigate the "theory" that the city "was going to the dogs because of the crime and venality of its Negro citizens."<sup>130</sup> Having already completed the fieldwork at the time of the annual meeting—835 hours of interviewing in 2,500 households, the life histories of 10,000 men, women, and children—Du Bois told his white peers that the "manifest and far-reaching bias" of race-relations writers should no longer substitute for the pursuit of a "reliable body of truth," that "deep, fierce convictions" must no longer guide the "uncritical study of the Negro." Systematic investigation of facts must supplant widely held opinions based on "faith [rather] than of knowledge."<sup>131</sup> "Intensive studies" should be conducted in "limited localities" by "competent and responsible agents." The use of "any general census," he warned finally, was likely to lead to "dangerously misleading" conclusions.<sup>132</sup>

Without naming names, Du Bois paused to highlight Hoffman's work as a case in point. The "foreigner's views, if he be not exceptionally astute, will depend largely on his letters of introduction"; like American pseudo-experts whose credibility is secured only by "birthplace and parentage," he will "fail" to capture the complexity of the Negro Problem and will "succumb to the vulgar temptation" to turn any "little contribution" into "general conclusions as to the origin and destiny of the Negro people in time and eternity. . . . Thus we possess endless final judgments as to the American Negro emanating from men of influence and learning, in the very face of the fact known to every accurate student, that there exists to-day no sufficient material of proven reliability, upon which any scientist can base definite and final conclusions as to the present condition and tendencies of the eight million American Negroes; and that any person or publication purporting to give such conclusions simply makes

statements which go beyond the reasonably proven evidence."<sup>133</sup> Unsurprisingly, given its dramatic rise as a national topic of discussion and debate, Du Bois singled out black criminality as a research area that was thoroughly awash in myth, stereotype, and ignorance. "It is extremely doubtful," he complained, "if any satisfactory study of Negro crime and lynching can be made for a generation or more, in the present condition of the public mind, which renders it almost impossible to get at the facts and real conditions."<sup>134</sup>

On that cool November day in Philadelphia, as Du Bois instructed a mostly white audience of social scientists and reformers on how to study the Negro, he may have found himself uncertain about how his own ongoing intensive study of Philadelphia's black criminals would be received by the public. By suggesting that no real knowledge could be ascertained for several years to come, he appeared to be hedging against his own contribution to reifying in white people's minds that too many blacks had "criminal tendencies." Even as he critiqued the "final judgments" of his white supremacist peers, he knew that eight months earlier he himself had verged perilously close to being guilty as charged.

Du Bois's March 5, 1897, speech "Conservation of the Races," delivered at the inaugural meeting of the American Negro Academy, put crime at the forefront of the Negro Problem.<sup>135</sup> Before the racial gifts of the American Negro—"our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideals"—could be realized in that "broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men" without inequality, we must seek unity and purification, Du Bois told an august gathering of Talented Tenthers, the upper crust of the educated black elite. "Weighted with a heritage of moral iniquity from our past history, hard pressed in the economic world by foreign immigrants and native prejudice, hated here, despised there and pitied everywhere; our one haven of refuge is ourselves." But eight million people can rise to greatness only by first being "honest, fearlessly criticizing their own faults, zealously correcting them." We must put an end, he continued, to political corruption, materialism, crime, and immorality. We must be "united to keep black boys from loafing, gambling and crime; united to guard the purity of black women and to reduce the vast army of black prostitutes that is today marching to hell." Members of the black vanguard must "bravely face the truth, not with apologies, but with solemn earnestness." Wagging a proverbial finger at poor southern blacks, his words nearing a crescendo, Du Bois stated that "a note of warning" should echo "in every black cabin in the

land" that "unless we conquer our present vices they will conquer us; we are diseased, we are developing criminal tendencies, and an alarmingly large percentage of our men and women are sexually impure."<sup>136</sup>

Many historians see "Conservation" as a remarkable demonstration of Du Bois's youthful embrace of racial essentialism, a view that all blacks were endowed with the same special gifts only needing to be unlocked from the inside, part antidote to Hoffman's charge of self-destructive race traits. Lewis observes that Du Bois later looked back on this perspective as "something of an embarrassment."<sup>137</sup> What has not received the same attention in this speech, however, are Du Bois's earliest thoughts on black criminality. These profoundly significant ideas occupied a central place in his initial engagement with the race-relations discourse. The crime problem was so important to him at the outset of his scholarly and activist career that in his coming-out speech before his black mentors and esteemed peers, he recommended making crime fighting their top priority: "We believe that the first and greatest step toward the settlement of the present friction between the races—commonly called the Negro problem—lies in the correction of the immorality, crime and laziness among Negroes themselves, which still remains as a heritage from slavery. We believe that only earnest and long continued efforts on our own part can cure these social ills."<sup>138</sup>

The fact that Du Bois was still writing *The Philadelphia Negro* is crucial to capturing the complexity and tensions in his early crime analysis. This was an experimental period in Du Bois's intellectual development.<sup>139</sup> As a twenty-nine-year-old budding social scientist, he tried to approach the race problem by resisting preconceived conclusions. The "difficulties of studying so vast and varied a subject are so large that the first work to be done should be rather of an experimental or preliminary nature," he wrote two months after the "Conservation" speech in a letter to Carroll D. Wright, the census official who had worked with Hoffman years before and was now seeking Du Bois's expertise for an economic report on black southerners.<sup>140</sup> Du Bois was, after all, setting out to practice what he preached against in Hoffman's work.

But Du Bois could not entirely expunge his personal views from his own scholarship, a limit he recognized and fully admitted in the opening pages of *The Philadelphia Negro*.<sup>141</sup> From "Conservation" to the American Academy of Political and Social Science address to the final Philadelphia report, there is an unmistakable tension between his elitist sensibility and Victorian concern about individual moral accountability, and his

professional view of crime as a “tangible phenomena of Negro Prejudice.” In *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois did not hesitate to moralize against the young black gamblers and prostitutes of Philadelphia’s corrupt Seventh Ward, or to wage a full-scale rhetorical attack on the immorality of poor black southerners.<sup>142</sup> In Du Bois’s early writings, in Hoffman’s writings, and in the writings of many others who succeeded them, the data and discourse on black criminality at this founding moment masked the full range of ideological differences among many white and black race experts. When the statistical reality of black criminality was first making its way along the information railway of the industrial age, the critique of racism and the critique of racial inferiority were constantly overlapping. As numerous scholars have emphasized in their studies of racial uplift ideology, more often than not black elites’ intraracial appeals for unity and progress in the Progressive era depended on one-sided jeremiads against poor and disreputable blacks.<sup>143</sup>

Contemporaries could hear or read in these statements the same condemnation of blackness, if that is what they chose to do. For example, among Hoffman’s many proofs of crime and immorality as race traits, he wrote, “That an immense amount of concubinage and prostitution prevails among the colored women of the United States is a fact fully admitted by the negroes themselves.”<sup>144</sup> He also cited evidence from the groundbreaking book *Hull House Maps and Papers*. The fact was “so forcibly brought out” by Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, Hoffman wrote, that wherever large numbers of blacks lived in the urban North, “houses of ill-fame and dives of the lowest order abound.” Compiled by two white liberal pioneers of the settlement house movement, *Hull House Maps* was a proto-Compstat analysis, mapping vice and crime in Chicago’s slum communities for the ultimate purpose of community-based crime prevention.<sup>145</sup> Context made all the difference in how both black and white experts expected their crime analyses to be interpreted and understood.

Du Bois claimed that *The Philadelphia Negro* was first and foremost a seminal study of the history and sociology of a black community in the urban North. It was the first of many local “intensive,” systematic investigations of the facts and real conditions of black life in America. “The world was thinking wrong about race, because it did not know,” Du Bois wrote years later, reflecting on his initial scholarly engagement with race-relations discourse. “The ultimate evil was stupidity.”<sup>146</sup> *The Philadelphia Negro* was the first step in his multistep knowledge program to end the Negro Problem. With this purpose in mind, Du Bois produced an

unprecedented in-depth analysis of the class structure of black Philadelphia. Considering the whole as greater than the sum of its parts, the four classes he identified—the “aristocracy of the race” (12 percent), the “hard-working, good-natured people” (52 percent), the “poor and unfortunate” (30 percent), and the “submerged Tenth (6 percent)” —amounted to a powerful rebuttal to the sweeping negative generalizations against all blacks, especially the charge of criminality. Du Bois saw the problem of black criminality much like the way Hoffman had characterized white criminality, as an “unfortunate” consequence of economic conditions. “We have here the [statistical] record of a low social class, and as the condition of a lower class is by its very definition worse than that of a higher, so the situation of the Negroes is worse as respects crime and poverty than that of the mass of whites.” In the wake of a “period of financial stress and industrial depression,” he continued, black and white crime both increased, but less so for whites “by reason of their richer and more fortunate upper classes.”<sup>147</sup> Even his use of the term *submerged* shifted partial responsibility away from this “lowest class of slum elements” by implying that these individuals were oppressed by means other than just their own behavior.

Within this frame of analysis, Du Bois intended for crime to be seen as “a phenomenon that stands not alone, but rather as a symptom of countless wrong social conditions.” In an unflinching chapter-long investigation of the serious crimes of the “submerged Tenth,” Du Bois described mostly young black men who typically stole or assaulted others; who tended to be “ignorant,” southern-born, repeat offenders; and who lived “in such [an] environment that they find it easier to be rogues than honest men.” Yet all of the lawlessness did not alter his assessment that racism was the “vastest of the Negro problems.” He reminded readers that since the colonial period these “perpetrators” had been subject to all the handicaps of being poor and black defendants in the criminal justice system. He redefined race traits as temporary deficiencies rooted in the moral debasement of slavery. He linked emancipation and northern migration to the universal experience of displacement and strain, like the wilderness period for the Hebrews of the Old Testament. He emphasized ongoing, not simply historical, acts of white discrimination in every sphere of black life. Beyond the “ordinary,” all of these were aggravating causes of black criminality. According to Du Bois, they were the factors that made black people’s crimes both excessive and peculiar. Otherwise, the heart of the Negro Problem was not crime but the exclusion of black

people from within the "pale of nineteenth-century Humanity." In the work's final pages, he wrote:

We have, to be sure, a threatening problem of ignorance but the ancestors of most Americans were far more ignorant than the freedmen's sons; these ex-slaves are poor but not as poor as the Irish peasants used to be; crime is rampant but not more so, if as much, as in Italy; but the difference is that the ancestors of the English and the Irish and the Italians were felt to be worth educating, helping and guiding because they were men and brothers, while in America a census which gives a slight indication of the utter disappearance of the American Negro from the earth is greeted with ill-concealed delight. . . . This is the spirit that enters in and complicates all Negro social problems and this is a problem which only civilization and humanity can successfully solve.

As was commonly expressed on the white side of the color line, Du Bois wanted Philadelphia's black crime problem to be greeted as a cause for concern and intervention rather than as a celebration of internecine genocide.<sup>148</sup>

Far less noted by historians was Du Bois's initial linking of crime fighting to racism.<sup>149</sup> Even in "Conservation," Du Bois did not simply wag a finger at black criminals and prostitutes, though the tone and tenor of his rhetoric suggested otherwise. He combined his primary call for an anti-crime self-help solution with a secondary call for whites to end racism. "We believe that the second great step toward a better adjustment of the relations between races," he stated, is the color-blind recognition and rewarding of talent in the "economic and intellectual world." In *The Philadelphia Negro*, he tipped the balance toward equal responsibility, calling for a dual approach to the crime problem: "The Duty of the Negroes" was to first make every effort "toward a lessening of Negro crime" in spite of racial oppression; "[t]he Duty of the Whites" was to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in spite of "intermingling" with a "race so poor and ignorant and inefficient as the mass of the Negroes."

That the Negro race has an appalling work of social reform before it need hardly be said. Simply because the ancestors of the present white inhabitants of America went out of their way barbarously to mistreat and enslave the ancestors of the present black inhabitants gives those blacks no right to ask that the civilization and morality

of the land be seriously menaced for their benefit. . . . But if their [whites'] policy in the past is parent of much of this condition, and if to-day by shutting black boys and girls out of most avenues of decent employment they are increasing pauperism and vice, then they must hold themselves largely responsible for the deplorable results.<sup>150</sup>

From "Conservation" to *The Philadelphia Negro*, even as he thought out loud and committed words to the page, the two sides of the problem were approaching inseparability in Du Bois's mind.<sup>151</sup> The complications in his own thoughts thus led him to doubt what the "public mind" was able or even willing to comprehend that November day before the American Academy of Political and Social Science.<sup>152</sup>

Du Bois's admonition against Hoffman's brand of racial analysis, two years before the final publication of *The Philadelphia Negro*, seems to have been his attempt at saying that it was possible to criticize bad behavior among blacks without eliminating racism as a major factor and passing final judgment on the inferiority of the entire race. Elsewhere during this period he would begin to express his personal despair over the tendency of whites to simplify the race problem and to see in the struggle and "strivings of the Negro People" justification for prejudice. In one of his most famous essays, first published in the August 1897 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, midway between his "Conservation" speech and his American Academy of Political and Social Science address, Du Bois first described his own sense of living behind the veil, of being defined by others as a "problem."<sup>153</sup> "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." He then linked the racialized oppression of black people in America to an enduring conundrum:

A people thus handicapped [by centuries of enslavement and degradation] ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But alas! While sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair. Men call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defense of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the "higher" against the "lower" races. . . . But the facing of so vast

a prejudice could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed in an atmosphere of contempt and hate.<sup>154</sup>

Here, before *The Philadelphia Negro* was finished, was the first articulation of the self-fulfilling prophesy of racism, poverty, crime, and inequality in modern America. Still, the Philadelphia study was Du Bois's most important scholarly contribution, an exegesis of this most complicated phenomenon. He opened the *Souls of Black Folk*, his most widely read publication—in which he intoned that “the problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the color-line”—with a reprint (and slight revision) of the 1897 *Atlantic Monthly* essay. For many years to come, in numerous reports, essays, speeches, and editorials, he would press his two-pronged solution to the crime problem, shifting emphasis and blame ever so slightly to suit the biases and “stupidity” of his audiences.

Immediately following the completion of *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois's tendency to move back and forth between emphasizing the need for self-improvement and emphasizing an end to racism, depending on the complexion of the audience, is perfectly illustrated by an article and a speech he gave in the same year. The article, “The Negro and Crime,” appeared in the May 18, 1899, issue of the *Independent*, a northern liberal magazine. In responding to an earlier article in the publication that had blasted blacks for their vices (“the negro is the mongrel of civilization”), Du Bois firmly insisted that the history of slavery and the emancipation experience went a long way toward explaining the “Negro criminal class”—“it is astounding that a body of people whose family life had been so nearly destroyed . . . should in a single generation be able to point to so many pure homes.” He then listed and explained four additional causes in the order of their significance: convict leasing, discrimination in southern courts, mob violence, and “the drawing of the color-line.”<sup>155</sup>

By contrast, a few months later he delivered a speech, “The Problem of Negro Crime,” at the Atlanta Negro Historical Society. According to a caption accompanying the January 1900 reprint in the *Bulletin of Atlanta University*, the address was “handled in such a way to make a deep impression upon those who heard.” Du Bois began by asserting that the strictest test of the “Negro's progress is that of his criminal record.” Citing the 1890 census, he said, “despite, then, all the discrimination and all other excuses that might be brought there can be no reasonable doubt but that the Negroes of this land furnish two or three times as many

criminals proportionately as the whites.” In his usual way, he linked crime to the natural disruption of the emancipation period and concluded with five self-help recommendations: “establish better homes”; “educate our children”; inculcate a faithful and honest work ethic regardless of how menial the job; associate with “decent people” only; and unite with white Georgians to open a juvenile reformatory to keep young people from the “prison and chain gang.” Herbert Aptheker, who first collected and assembled Du Bois's voluminous body of work, observes that around 1904 Du Bois “rejected” the views he expressed that day. In an October 1940 address, Du Bois publicly reflected on his change of perspective at that time.<sup>156</sup>

Still, despite all the moralizing and data crunching about black criminals, Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro* was “shamefully neglected.”<sup>157</sup> The book never came close to attracting as large an audience as Hoffman's *Race Traits*. It did not become a nonfiction bestseller. It did not turn race-relations discourse on its head. Although it was reviewed in a few academic periodicals, it was ignored by the *American Journal of Sociology (AJS)*.<sup>158</sup> No mention of the book appears in that journal until 1903, when it was listed among texts used at Hampton Institute as part of a survey of sociology curriculums around the country.<sup>159</sup> Nearly a decade passed before it was first cited in the footnotes of an *AJS* article.<sup>160</sup> As late as the 1930s, not even the University of Pennsylvania's sociology department officially acknowledged, as historians Thomas Sugrue and Michael Katz write, “the most significant research in the history of the department.”<sup>161</sup> It neither influenced a generation of sociology students nor garnered Du Bois critical praise and scholarly adulation befitting his accomplishment. It was an ominous sign, no less clear than in Ida B. Wells's case, of the outcome for a black race-relations expert or reformer who refused to let racism off the hook.

To be sure, Du Bois's Philadelphia research helped secure his next position at the historically black campus of Atlanta University. But in Lewis's assessment, he became a “scholar behind the veil.” He wrote and supervised thirteen major research studies between 1898 and 1910, unmatched by most peers in quantity and quality, most of them cutting-edge reports that dissected all aspects of black life in the South. Du Bois nevertheless became an increasingly marginal figure to northern research foundations that repeatedly passed him over to fund white race experts who did not have a tenth of his training or experience.<sup>162</sup> Only with historical hindsight culminating around the centennial anniversary of *The Philadelphia*

*Negro's* publication have Du Bois's scholarly contributions been posthumously recognized within the academy. A 1991 appraisal of his work in the *American Economic Review* notes that "the extent of descriptive and statistical detail in Du Bois's studies is rarely matched even today."<sup>163</sup> Reflecting on the legacy of his exclusion from the "white car of scholarship," historian Ira Katznelson writes that American social science and history have suffered "intellectual conformity and normative bankruptcy" by failing to include the "first rate work" of Du Bois and other black scholars "relegated to the outer limit or edge of social standing."<sup>164</sup>

Du Bois's work was not totally unappreciated by white race-relations writers of his day. A review in the *American Historical Review*, the leading journal of historians, praised Du Bois for his candor. "He is perfectly frank, laying all necessary stress on the weaknesses of his people, such as their looseness of living, their lack of thrift, their ignorance of the laws of health, the disproportionate number of paupers and criminals among them as compared with the whites." The anonymous reviewer's only criticism was that some of his conclusions were overly optimistic that the Negro Problem could be solved in social terms. Du Bois had not sufficiently considered the saliency of racial inferiority. Speaking for the profession, the reviewer concluded, "We believe that separation is due to differences of race more than of status."<sup>165</sup> Du Bois's crime rhetoric did draw attention, but not exactly in the ways he had intended.

In September 1899 Walter Willcox, one of the most influential economists of his generation and the chief statistician of the United States Census Bureau, delivered one of his most widely quoted papers, "Negro Criminality," before the American Social Science Association meeting in Saratoga, New York.<sup>166</sup> The New England-born professor from Cornell University, promising a "fair-minded, clear-sighted and outspoken position," asked his audience to reconsider their ideas about racial bias in the nation's criminal justice system. Reminding them of familiar southern examples of racism, such as juror discrimination and sentencing bias, he asked whether the same arguments could hold true in the North. "Does it take less evidence to convict a Negro here, or is a Negro's sentence for the same offense likely to be longer? Such claims have never to my knowledge been raised." He then cited the latest prison data that showed that black prisoners in the North had higher per capita rates of incarceration than in the South (69 versus 29 of every 10,000 residents). In light of the numbers, there was not an obvious answer to his question other than the presumption among these good-hearted northern academics that

northern racism could not explain the difference. So as to be clear, he stated: "These facts furnish some statistical basis and warrant for the popular opinion, never seriously contested, that under present conditions in this country a member of the African race, other things equal, is much more likely to fall in to crime than a member of the white race."<sup>167</sup> In other words, what many already believed to be true was now proven.

Willcox then cited the opinions of "representative Negroes" from the July 1898 annual Negro Conference at Hampton Institute. "The criminal record of the colored race in all parts of the country," Willcox quoted, "is alarming in its proportion." Like Booker T. Washington's annual Tuskegee conferences, Hampton's annual gatherings were intended to show southern moderates and northern philanthropists the benefits of industrial education as a worthy movement for black self-help or, as the *New York Times* noted in its coverage, "the aim in regard to each [topic discussed] was to find the faults for which the negro was responsible and to see how to supply the lack or find the remedy."<sup>168</sup> Given African Americans' own testimonies, then, racism was less the problem than racial inferiority. Considering that slavery "was never established" in the North, and that across the region the percentage increase of blacks going to prison was even greater than in the South, Willcox argued that the national black crime problem could no longer be ignored. "In these figures, one finds again some statistical basis for the well-nigh universal opinion that crime among the American Negroes is increasing with alarming rapidity." In a final attempt to dispel any remaining doubt about his conclusions, he read Du Bois's note of warning in "Conservation" and said, "I may quote the concession of the Negro who is perhaps doing as much as any member of his race to throw light upon its present condition."<sup>169</sup>

At the dawn of the Jim Crow era, writing crime into race became the latest trend among race-relations writers across the country. Hoffman's innovation of using crime statistics had helped to overcome the long-sought-after scientific goal of credibility within racial scientific discourse. Many of Hoffman's predecessors, who had once struggled to distance themselves from the charge of proslavery bias while objectively acknowledging the "feral state" to which blacks had returned since freedom, welcomed the "new scientific study of the negro." G. Stanley Hall, for example, a pioneering Harvard psychologist, founder of the *American Journal of Psychology* in 1887, and one of Shaler's mentors, described this period as a terrific opportunity to embrace the new social science research because it was a "more solid and intelligent basis" on which to end the sentimental notion

of racial equality. Racial “differences are coming to be better understood,” he wrote, “so that what is true and good for one is often false and bad for the other.” As “an abolitionist both by conviction and descent,” Hall instructed black people to stop “sympathiz[ing] with their own criminals” and to “accept without whining pathos and corroding self-pity [their] present situation, prejudice and all.”<sup>170</sup> With a growing body of evidence of the excessive crime rates of black people everywhere they could be counted—despite, or because of, the underlying social, political, economic, and racist realities underlying those statistics—the idea of black criminality quickly became a fundamental measure of black progress and potential in modern America.

Hall’s racialized vision of crime prevention—a call for a separate solution to crime among blacks—was emblematic of how the idea of black criminality shaped the thinking of many white reformers, including neo-abolitionists and progressives, in this era. White criminality was society’s problem, but black criminality was black people’s problem. Such thinking contributed to discriminatory social work approaches and crime-fighting policies in black communities, with devastating consequences, including the worsening of social conditions. Among whites, struggling neighborhoods were considered a cause of crime and a reason to intervene. Among blacks, they were considered a sign of pathology and a reason for neglect. Against the grain, Du Bois called crime “a sinister index of social degradation and struggle.”<sup>171</sup> Black criminality, he insisted, should be solved using “the very remedies which the world is using on all submerged classes” with “goodness,” “beauty,” “truth,” and “faith in humanity.” Such differences between Du Bois’s vision and Hall’s reflected the malleability of the concept depending on one’s racial ideology.<sup>172</sup>

Still, the idea flourished even as some raised doubts about the accuracy of the census crime data as a source for comparing the criminal tendencies of different groups. One of the first academics in the United States to have “statistics” attached to his title, the pioneering University of Pennsylvania professor Roland P. Falkner, believed that comparative analysis “should be thorough, systematic and reasonable.” More than a scientific issue, he wrote, “it is a matter of the gravest practical importance” since “popular interest” in crime is chiefly concerned with “the greater criminality of the foreign-born and colored elements as compared with the native and white.” He argued that the census would have been more accurate if it had reported the total number of prisoners received during the year versus the population on a single day. The new method, he proposed, was

able to account for new offenders who had served a short sentence but had been released before the census enumeration. It also avoided double-counting prisoners with sentences of one year or more. Falkner pointed out that by measuring new commitments instead of population, sentencing bias would have been eliminated. “If one class receives longer sentences than another, or commit classes of crimes for which longer sentences are given it will appear unduly magnified in the census report.” Falkner concluded that the 1890 census had distorted the criminal tendencies of different groups. Blacks were shown to have committed more crimes than their total share and immigrants fewer.<sup>173</sup>

Falkner anticipated many of the criticisms of early prison and police data made by late-twentieth-century scholars. But, as social science historian Lawrence Rosen has pointed out, these limits were not generally “obvious to the criminologists and criminal statisticians of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century.” Their “uncritical generalizations,” therefore, have to be understood in the historical context in which they informed early-twentieth-century popular and public policy understandings of criminality.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, historian Daryl Michael Scott warns contemporary scholars that too frequently social science “studies written prior to World War II have been interpreted not in light of the intellectual and political debates that prompted those research projects, but in connection with proposals and policies that originated during Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society.”<sup>175</sup> Significant doubts about the accuracy, reliability, and interpretive use of crime statistics for comparisons of racial groups did not emerge among white social scientists until the 1920s and 1930s in the midst of a nationwide campaign to standardize arrest statistics, culminating in the *Uniform Crime Reports*.<sup>176</sup>

In the meantime, Willcox acknowledged Falkner’s doubts about the census data in a footnote. He agreed that prison statistics “exaggerated the criminal tendencies of Negroes” but felt that this distortion was offset by the fact that comparing prisoners to “persons of all ages” tended to “understate the true criminality of a race.” This was a weak defense since age distortion—population inflation due to the inclusion of children and the elderly—impacted all races, which he also admitted. The sentencing distortion still adversely singled out blacks. Willcox nevertheless “[brought] the facts home” by ending his statistical proof of black criminality with a quotation from Du Bois.<sup>177</sup>

Black race-relations writers often contributed to the crime discourse with the intent of challenging white supremacists’ interpretations.<sup>178</sup> As

Du Bois's and Wells's works demonstrate, black crime experts often used crime data and racial violence as symptoms of oppression to focus precisely on the "conditions of life" in the North and South that many white race-relations writers often dismissed. At times, however, they also unwittingly contributed to the writing of crime into race.

Monroe N. Work, for example, a graduate student at the University of Chicago and soon to be its first black sociologist, answered the challenge to the race posed by Hoffman's research.<sup>179</sup> Complementing Du Bois's Philadelphia findings, Work launched his own intensive five-month study of black criminality in Chicago from November 1897 to May 1898, which was published in late 1900. Focusing primarily on arrest statistics since 1872, he confirmed the then well-known trend that black criminality was proportionately highest in the North and was increasing.<sup>180</sup> He also found that black Chicagoans were arrested on average six times more frequently than immigrants. Written in a dry, clinical voice more characteristic of empirical reports today, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago: A Social Study" was nearly devoid of antiracist tones and must have confirmed what many readers of the *American Journal of Sociology* believed to be true. In a somewhat incoherent final section, however, Work disagreed with Hoffman's "position that the negro is retrograding" by countering that blacks were "making progress in civilization." If the "hypothesis of his social advancement" was true, the graduate student tentatively suggested, the black man's crime is due to his "transitional state from a lower to a higher plane" and the "economic stress" accompanying it. Work observed that 75 percent of Chicago blacks "had, or gave, no occupation" at the time of their arrests compared to 38 percent of whites. In addition to economic factors that increased black criminality, Work added the causes of crime "common to all races" and "the race characteristics peculiar" to blacks.<sup>181</sup>

In comparison to Du Bois, Wells, Kelly Miller, and the future work of Richard R. Wright, Jr., whatever nod to racism Work intended by his final comments could not have been very convincing. Like other black writers, he mistook white social scientists' ability to cite white criminality as a symptom of the ravages of the industrial economy and modern civilization—"common" causes—as an invitation to apply the same logic on their side of the color line. Ultimately, the crime research and especially the intra-racial appeals for moral betterment by many black writers and reformers often achieved the opposite effect, reifying the ten-

dency among most whites "to believe the worst about Negro character and prospects."<sup>182</sup>

The premium placed on the work of black writers whose crime discourse explicitly confirmed white supremacists' beliefs and practices was on full display in the reception of William Hannibal Thomas's 1900 book, *The American Negro: What He Was, What He Is, and What He May Become*. The Ohio-born black missionary, educator, and journalist in the postbellum South based his study on twenty-five years of personal observations. His methodology alone should have made his work marginal by the standards of the audience for whom he claimed to be writing, especially since he dismissed the reliability of existing data to measure the "actual crime instinct in the negro."<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, the book was, according to the author, an indispensable "contribution to American sociology." Speaking directly to "American white people," Thomas gave his readers more justification for depicting the race as criminal than any "accurate" statistic could ever have accomplished by itself. His most recent biographer writes that Thomas's "list of negative qualities of Negroes seemed limitless."<sup>184</sup> Unmatched in his racist rhetoric by any other black writer of his day, Thomas insisted that the majority of blacks were mentally retarded, "savage[s] at heart," and amoral—"unable practically to discern between right and wrong." Most "negroes" were an "intrinsicly inferior type of humanity" who preferred a "low order of living" and whose history was a "record of lawless existence, led by every impulse and passion." Equating the sum of black humanity to apes, Thomas wrote: "Really, the inferiority of the negro in mind, morals, judgement [sic], and character is such that there is no doubt that some very plausible confirmatory evidence of the justness of the simian theory of human origin might be derived from a close inspection of his demeanor."<sup>185</sup>

Controversial and attacked by the vast majority of African Americans of every ideological perspective, *The American Negro* was hailed by many whites as the most authoritative treatise to date on African American inferiority.<sup>186</sup> Even before the manuscript had been accepted for publication by the Macmillan Company, Franklin H. Giddings, one of the founding fathers of American sociology, the founder of Columbia University's sociology department, and the third president of the American Sociological Association, wrote in his reader's report that the book was the most complete, detailed account of the American Negro ever published: "As a sociological study it is one of the most valuable things to [be] put in the



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hands of genuine students of American [sic] conditions that I know of."<sup>187</sup> As news of its forthcoming release hit the market, the book was hailed not only for its thorough treatment, but for its objectivity as well. The writer "presents his subject without an atom of the sentimentality which has so often proved a blemish in many books otherwise most excellent," announced the *New York Times* book review section a month before the book's release.<sup>188</sup>

More impressive still was the fact that the author was a black man. After the book appeared in print, the *New York Times* gave it another rave review: "Mr. Thomas is probably, next to Mr. Booker T. Washington, the best American authority on the negro question" because of his race and his enlightened perspective on his own people. "No white man has ever so far as we can remember, arraigned the freedman with such scathing denunciation of his faults and vices" as Thomas. "Such a jeremiad, delivered by one belonging to the very race against which it is hurled, carries unmistakable conviction of the writer's sincerity and knowledge whereof he speaks." Thomas's observations lead to a "mental vision" of a "sinister and terrible figure still to be dealt with in our social economy." Finally cutting to the book's most damning observation, the unsigned review noted that there was nothing whites could do to help, "since the most ignorant and degraded examples of freedmen are to be found in the North, where they have enjoyed every advantage around them unrestricted. What better proof of racial incapacity is needed?" Without a fundamental change in the "negro's" nature, the situation was nearly hopeless.<sup>189</sup>

Thomas's observations, like Hoffman's data, revealed as much about the hardening of racial categories in the new century as they attempted to explain why crime was a growing problem in black communities.<sup>190</sup> The inseparable linking of the two social categories of race and crime was not inevitable; it was the conscious result of several writers' attempts to expand definitions of blackness beyond physical traits, historical association with slavery, and nineteenth-century romanticization of blacks as a child race. White or black writers who could marshal crime statistics from government data with alarmist predictions about the future of the race in urban places, especially northern cities, plus tie in a compelling narrative of the historical and biological factors that made American Negroes fundamentally different from American whites, and finally repudiate charges of racism, were sure to be noticed by many.<sup>191</sup>

In the same vein as the *New York Times*, C. C. Closson, a white reviewer for the *Journal of Political Economy*, praised Thomas as a candid and courageous black writer. Recommending the book, Closson wrote that despite some of Thomas's tendencies to exaggerate, "unfortunately, there is probably too much of truth in the picture."<sup>192</sup> Although the *American Journal of Sociology* never reviewed Du Bois's sociological treatise, it did review Thomas's. Ironically, the reviewer, Richard R. Wright, Jr., a theology student at the University of Chicago and a pioneer black Social Gospeler on the city's South Side, panned the book for highlighting only the worst elements of the race. "His book is as fair a characterization of the race as a detailed description of the slums and dens of vice of Chicago would be of the whole city," he wrote.<sup>193</sup> It may or may not have been considered a mistake by the journal to give Wright the opportunity to denounce the book. But in light of the high praise it received among whites Wright's review likely corroborated, for some at least, a sense that Thomas's study stood alone against a rising tide of black "sentimentality." Putting Du Bois in the ranks of those with a "rosy faith in the negro's prospects," one critic jointly reviewed *The Philadelphia Negro* and *The American Negro*, giving the edge to Thomas. "Professor Du Bois's statistics are worthy of careful study," but "they are a little weak in the pages devoted to showing that the negro is not so criminal as he is popularly represented to be."<sup>194</sup> That Du Bois was even compared to Thomas—two "negroes" of equal talent—was a sign that his credibility among white social scientists was in free fall. Du Bois nonetheless pointed out that the enthusiastic reception of Thomas's "virulent criticisms" was not at all surprising. "Mr. Thomas's book is a sinister symptom" of the times, witnessed in "the exigencies of the book market" and the "more or less unconscious Wish for the Worst in regard to the Negro," he explained. "If the Negro will kindly go to the devil and make haste about it, then the American conscience can justify three centuries of shameful history; and hence the subdued enthusiasm which greets a sensational article or book."<sup>195</sup>

The excitement surrounding *The American Negro* revealed just how quickly black criminality had captured the nation's imagination after 1896. To be sure, southern rhetoric about black criminals—racist justifications for lynching, convict leasing, prison farms, and chain gangs—preceded Hoffman's book. But in the wake of new national crime statistics, especially northern prison and arrest data from Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York, southern claims of blacks' criminal nature were finally

exorcized of the ghost of their Confederate past. In the wake of the new crime discourse, Shaler's call for the scientific "union of endeavor on the part of those of North and South, of ex-slaveholder and ex-abolitionist alike" was finally being answered, even from the pen of a black man.<sup>196</sup>

Southern white writers wholeheartedly welcomed the new lines of communication as an important step toward national reconciliation. Thomas Nelson Page's 1904 book, *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem*, was one of the earliest and most explicit attempts in the new century to convince northern readers that white southerners were not inherently any more racist or violent toward blacks than northerners were. Page was a descendant of the Virginia planter class and a popular fiction writer of the Old South. He explained that "deep racial instincts are not limited by geographical bounds"; the increasing numbers of northern lynchings and mob attacks on "wholly innocent" and "unoffending Negroes" were proof of that. Southerners only appeared more brutal, reasoned Page, because of the "greater number of Negroes in that section."<sup>197</sup>

Page effectively used population and crime statistics the same way a Prudential Insurance statistician had in 1896: where blacks are, crime will follow. The ex-chief of the Census Bureau, Willcox, had helped clear the way for Page's argument by showing that black criminality in the North was increasing at a higher rate than in the South. Clearly, Willcox argued, a racially biased southern criminal justice system could not explain higher black criminality in the racially liberal North.<sup>198</sup> Either the North was not as tolerant of blacks as federal policy and some northern writers had made it appear, Page added, or black criminality brought out the worst in everyone. To argue the latter, Page relied on "the most remarkable study of the Negro which ha[d] appeared." Referring to Thomas's book, he ominously boasted:

His chapter on this subject will be, to those unfamiliar with it, a terrible exposure of the depravity of the Negroes in their social life. . . . Unfortunately for the race, this depressing view is borne out by the increase of crime among them; by the increase of superstition, with its black trail of unnamable immorality and vice; by the homicides and murders, and by the outbreak and growth of the brutal crime which has chiefly brought about the frightful crime of lynching which stains the good name of the South and has spread northward with the spread of the Negro ravisher.<sup>199</sup>

With his northern readers at full attention at the "frightful" thought of more "Negro ravishers" and more northern lynchings—based convincingly on the "depressing view" of an "open-minded" black expert and increasing crime rates—Page made black criminality a rallying cry for national reconciliation. In his view, the fact that both sections of the country were vulnerable to being "drag[ged] down" by the "debased" Negro threatened the nation's future and whites' racial supremacy. "No country in the present state of the world's progress can long maintain itself in the front rank," he wrote, "and no people can long maintain themselves at the top of the list of peoples if they have to carry perpetually the burden of a vast and densely ignorant population." With ten million Negroes within its borders, the South needed understanding, not repudiation, from the North.<sup>200</sup>

Two years earlier, in 1902, Thomas Dixon, Jr., a southern lawyer, minister, and playwright, wrote a best-selling novel similarly focused on nationalizing white southerners' views on black criminality.<sup>201</sup> According to a reviewer, *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden* was meant to justify white supremacy to northern readers by presenting as "vividly as possible the faults and crimes current among the Negroes of the South."<sup>202</sup> At the book's climax, a black man was burned at a stake for having raped and murdered a white woman. "Plainly the design is that the reader," a reviewer wrote, "shall exclaim in his indignation, 'I too would have helped to do the same, under the same circumstances!'"<sup>203</sup> The "circumstances" portrayed by Dixon gave the book's eye-catching title its significance, implying that there was no possibility of changing black people's brutal nature through philanthropy and education. By Dixon's rendering, then, the outlook was grim if northerners continued to try to elevate Negroes to the same level as whites. The two grand themes found in *The Leopard's Spots*—national unity and black retrogression—reached hundreds of thousands of Americans through its print run of nearly one million books.<sup>204</sup>

Dixon's work, with its commercial success, and Page's book, which followed shortly, demonstrated the increasingly popular appeal of thinking about black criminality and white responses on a national scale. Dixon's other bestseller, *The Clansman*, which was adapted for the big screen and became one of the first motion picture blockbusters as *The Birth of a Nation*, put the lynching of a black rapist at the heart of a national narrative about exterminating the danger within.<sup>205</sup> The general

recognition of this trend in popular culture and social scientific thought inspired a major roundtable at the 1907 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Madison, Wisconsin. Some of the most prominent sociologists in the country gathered to hear and discuss Alfred Stone's paper, "Is Race Friction between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?" Stone, a southern sociologist and a Mississippi plantation owner "who controlled the lives of hundreds of black tenants," wanted his northern colleagues to be very clear about one thing.<sup>206</sup> Race prejudice was inevitable, but it was not a southern white phenomenon or a northern white aberration, he stated. It was the natural "antipathy" of whites, "an inherited part of his instinctive mental equipment," to the presence of a fundamentally different and inferior race. "The proposition is," Stone continued "too elementary for discussion, that the white man when confronted with a sufficient number of negroes to create in his mind a sense of political unrest or danger, either alters his form of government in order to be rid of the incubus, or destroys the political strength of the negro by force, by evasion, or by direct action."<sup>207</sup>

Stone's paper only implied a connection between black criminality and black inferiority as a source of race friction. Apparently stating that explicitly might have been too elementary, since four of the eight sociologists who published responses to Stone's paper—Walter Willcox of Cornell University, U. G. Weatherly of Indiana University, J. W. Garner of the University of Illinois, and Edwin L. Earp of Syracuse University—interpreted black criminality as the center of the problem. Willcox referred to it as a "rough index of race friction." Weatherly spoke of it as one of the most obvious indications of black inferiority: "Patience and toleration toward [the black man] are difficult when the facts that come most to the attention of the average white are those of crime, unthrift, and political corruption." Garner tied black criminality to migration and urbanization, while Earp, expressing the most liberal interpretation, saw it in relation to a lack of economic opportunities.<sup>208</sup> In a subsequent review of Stone's conference paper after it had been repackaged in *Studies in the American Race Problem* along with others of his essays (and Willcox's "Negro Criminality"), Frank Blackmar, a University of Kansas sociologist, praised the book for "being the most valuable contribution yet appearing on the race problem in the United States." Impressed by the race-relations interpretations of his esteemed northern colleagues, Blackmar added, "Owing to his ignorance, superstition, indolence, childish nature, and racial characteristics," the black man "is his own worst enemy."<sup>209</sup>

This roundtable discussion, published in the May 1908 issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*, crystallized the way in which African American criminality had gradually helped to bridge deep divisions over the meaning of black freedom since the end of slavery and Reconstruction, opening new lines of communication between the North and the South in search of a national solution to the race problem. In light of the conclusions reached at the Wisconsin meeting, Lewis writes, a "grim truth" emerged that "the march of science and industry tended to exacerbate race relations in the North as well as the South."<sup>210</sup> Two months later, in this "climate of national victimizing," New York feminist writer and evolutionary theorist Charlotte Perkins Gilman offered her own "suggestion on the Negro Problem." Since the problem was "the question of conduct" or preventing those "who are degenerating into an increasing percentage of social burdens or actual criminals," she recommended state-run forced labor camps.<sup>211</sup>

The race writers who conducted major studies or seminal works with a new emphasis on crime as *the* Negro Problem at the dawn of the Jim Crow era identified the transition from slavery to freedom as the origin of the problem. Frederick Hoffman argued that it was a "well-known fact" that crime did not exist during slavery, but in freedom, and especially in large cities, blacks were being reduced by their inferiority and immorality to "the anti-social condition" that "before many years will be worse than slavery." Walter Willcox insisted that slavery had not built up moral capital in black people; therefore they were unprepared and irresponsible in freedom. W. E. B. Du Bois believed that crime was a normal result of a "vast and sudden change like that of emancipation," especially for those "unable to adjust themselves to the new circumstances." William Hannibal Thomas noted that slavery had effectively restrained the "abeyant passions of [negroes'] undisciplined nature." Thomas Nelson Page observed that slavery had civilized the "savage from the wilds of Africa." It was precisely the blacks who had not grown up in slavery, whom he called the "new issue," who were fueling black crime rates. Thomas Dixon, Jr., like Page, pointed out that crime was an immediate consequence of the loss of southern whites' control during Reconstruction.<sup>212</sup> While it is obvious that these writers did not all agree about whether slavery had bred crime—Du Bois called crime a "heritage of slavery"—or had restrained it, they did agree that the present situation represented a sharp break from the past.

Many white race-relations writers hoped to blaze a research trail to solve the Negro Problem by writing crime into race. In the process, they also hoped to save the nation by using black criminality as a rhetorical bridge to heal deep sectional divisions and distrust rooted in the postbellum era. These writers saw vital racial statistics as a pathway to certainty and serenity. Beginning with Hoffman, they wanted their fellow Americans to see the indisputable evidence of black criminality as the key to binding the nation together in a campaign to keep the "negro" in his place.

Although the notion of black people as a race of criminals was pervasive and ubiquitous, the future was not all bleak. Some white race experts were not entirely convinced despite the new crime statistics. Like most black scholars and reformers, they resisted the temptation to completely dismiss "conditions of life" and racism as factors in the crime problem. M. V. Ball had been among the first northern whites to call the racialization of crime statistics into question, just as Ida B. Wells had been among the first southern black women to do the same. Even the popular science writer and Harvard scholar Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, who had done as much as any northern race-relations expert in the post-bellum period to call for statistical investigations of black inferiority, balked at the new crime data. "The statistics of crime are not in such form as to make it clear in what regards they depart from the averages of the white population," he wrote in a 1900 *Popular Science Monthly* article. Even the most horrifying crimes, Shaler believed, were not "peculiarly common among the blacks." Given that of five million black men "probably not one in ten thousand" was guilty of rape, and given that rapes by white men tended to be underreported, Shaler was "inclined to believe that, on the whole, there is less danger to be apprehended from them in this regard than from an equal body of whites of the like social grade."<sup>213</sup> Shaler's speculation that white men were as guilty (if not more so) of rape as black men was surely perceived by some whites as an act of racial treason. Wells's work might have influenced him.

Seeing the arc of the discourse after nearly twenty years had passed from Shaler's first article on "The Negro Problem," the self-described racial liberal took an optimistic view of "the future of our American negroes." Though still a "half-savage people" and an "unexplored race," Shaler remained hopeful that over time, through industrial training and with the "masterful race's" help, blacks could become "valuable citizen[s]." That black people actually had the inherent capacity for citizenship, in Shaler's assessment, was a repudiation of the racial Darwinism of Hoffman and

many others, and spoke to the shifting winds of the discourse among northern liberals. Du Bois's efforts, like Wells's, it seems, were not totally in vain. A dim light was beginning to shine on northern racism. "Sambo," Shaler wrote, was deprived "of opportunities in all the higher walks of life" in the North *and* the South. "In this matter there are but two courses open to us—one of folly, the other of wisdom. We may leave the black people to work out their own salvation as best they may, to lie as a mass at the bottom of our society. . . . Or we may set to work" with knowledge and strength to meet the great challenge ahead.<sup>214</sup>

Although Shaler passed from the world a few years later, in one of his last articles he renewed his call to solve the Negro Problem and to save the nation. But this time, well into the Progressive era, he was insisting that a rising cohort of racial liberals pursue a middle ground between racial research and racial reform:

A necessary part of the work of true emancipation of the negro is a careful inquiry into the history and former status of the people. Such an inquiry, placed and kept in good hands, is a necessary preliminary to sagacious action. It may serve to unite the men of all parts of the country in a work that so nearly concerns us all. There is not, nor is there likely to arise, a situation that so calls for intelligent patriotism as this we are sorely neglecting. We may go far away and rear an empire with our armies; but if we leave these, our neighbors, without a fair chance to develop the good that is in them, we shall have lost our real opportunity for great deeds—mayhap we shall fix among us evils that in the end will drag us down.<sup>215</sup>

*Social Knowledge and Chicago Reform* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 188-189.

73. Shaler, "The African Element in America," 670.

74. Francis A. Walker, "The Colored Race in the United States," *Forum* 11 (September 1891): 502, 504, 506; Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 245-246; William Darity, Jr., "Many Roads to Extinction: Early AEA Economists and the Black Disappearance Hypothesis," *History of Economics Review* 21 (1994): 48.

75. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 246-255.

76. Shaler "The African Element," 670, and "The Negro Problem," 698; Emory R. Johnson, ed., "The Negro's Progress in Fifty Years," *AAAPSS* 49 (September 1913): 1-266.

77. Walker, "The Colored Race in the United States," 502-503.

78. The 1870 and 1890 figures were "partly estimated" (*Ibid.*, 503).

79. *Ibid.*, 504, 506.

80. Darity, "Many Roads to Extinction," 48.

81. Walker, "The Colored Race in the United States," 507-508, 509.

82. Vernon J. Williams, *From a Caste to a Minority: Changing Attitudes of American Sociologists toward Afro-Americans, 1896-1945* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989); Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind, African American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); John David Smith, "A Different View of Slavery: Black Historians Attack the Proslavery Argument, 1890-1920," *The Journal of Negro History* 65:4 (1980): 298-311.

83. Shaler, "Science and the African Problem," 41-43.

84. By the 1890s, there was a clarion call for greater use of the statistical method in explaining rates of birth, death, disease, suicide, and crime. Though many scholars across different fields embraced the new positivism, there were radical differences in the interpretation and application of statistical findings. The French sociologist Émile Durkheim helped to establish the sociological approach, creating a vision of suicide as a social problem rather than as a "highly individual and personal one"; see *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (1897, reprinted New York: Routledge, 1952). Twentieth-century American sociologists promoted progressive reform measures to alleviate social problems caused by economic and political friction. The British statistician Francis Galton established the eugenic approach, looking at the same problems through statistics, but attributing them to the inferiority of various population groups. Since their inferiority was inheritable, their diseases and crimes were symptoms of their racial inferiority. The eugenics solution was the better breeding of better types of mankind. Eugenists promoted policies that gave a reproductive advantage to so-called superior races, such as the Anglo-Saxon. In the hands of a progressive or a eugenicist or a racial Darwinist, the same statistics were defined very differently as either a social or a racial problem, and they were used to promote very different solutions (Zuberi, *Thicker Than Blood*, 81-82). On Galton's statistical innovations, see Stephen M. Stigler, *The History of Statistics: The Measurement of Uncertainty before 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

85. Richard Mayo-Smith, "Statistics as an Instrument of Investigation in Sociology," *Publications of the American Economic Association*, 10:3 (1895):103-104; Darity, "Many Roads to Extinction," 47.

86. Richard Mayo-Smith, "Statistical Data for the Study of the Assimilation of Races and Nationalities in the United States," *Publications of the American Association of the American Statistical Association* 3 (1893): 429-449. Unlike Shaler, Mayo-Smith was calling for more statistical research on the assimilation of the foreign-born, which he tentatively concluded seemed to be going well: "The process of assimilation is going . . . on very effectually and rapidly" (449). The "colored population," however, was "a peculiar element in the American population," in "many respects an inferior race," and its future prospects were not so clear (433).

87. Zuberi, *Thicker Than Blood*, 81.

88. Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*; Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

89. Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: The Philadelphia Negro and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 24.

90. Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World*, 1-61; David M. Oshinsky, "Worse than Slavery": *Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 31-54.

91. Shaler, "Negro since Civil War," 38.

92. Shaler, "Science and the African Problem," 44.

## 2. WRITING CRIME INTO RACE

1. Frederick L. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* (New York: American Economic Association, 1896), 217-234.

2. Francis A. Walker, "The Colored Race in the United States," *Forum* 11 (September 1891): 501-509.

3. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1971, reprinted with a new introduction, Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1987); Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

4. *Race Traits* was also published by Macmillan in the United States and by Swan Sonnenschein in Britain; see, F. J. Sypher, ed., *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2002), 90.

5. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, v, 310.

6. On Hoffman's determination, see Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 68.

7. *Ibid.*, 39, 42, 43. Sypher makes no comment on the apparent inconsistency between Hoffman's apparent sympathy with the black ship workers and his later beliefs. This seems to be Hoffman's earliest encounter with the color line.

8. As a white immigrant in the South, the exploitation of black workers helped make his own *passage* possible. I italicize *passage* here to mark Hoffman's journey as an instance of passing as a white immigrant with extremely limited finances and

even less social standing in a way that even the most prosperous black person typically could not. Fares were affordable for poor white travelers like Hoffman because of the underpaid, brutalized black workers aboard riverboats such as the *City of New Orleans*. And white immigrants in the South escaped most of the nativist violence found in the North, given the stakes of hyper-polarization of whiteness and blackness in the postbellum South. Hoffman could easily identify with being a worker aboard a ship; he frequently worked aboard various water vessels as a means of getting by and traveling the country. He never mentioned being brutalized. For more on southern travel on riverboats, see Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 191; Andrew Karhl, "The Cultural Currency of Leisure: African American Beaches and Resorts in the Jim Crow South" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2008), 84-87.

9. Corson received his education from Cornell University (Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 248).

10. This recollection comes from Hoffman's unpublished autobiography, "Life Story of a Statistician," written around 1919. Hoffman added, "In a large measure it [Corson's lecture] formed the basis of all my subsequent interest in statistics, medicine, and related sciences." This is a surprising claim given that Hoffman went on to have a forty-year career at Prudential as a highly respected national and international health expert on cancer and tuberculosis. He was also known for his expertise in occupational hazards, homicide, and suicide, garnering the reputation as the "dean" of American statisticians; see Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 7. Sypher adds that Hoffman's comment on Corson's influence was an "overstatement, since his diaries and correspondence show unmistakably that his interests in 'statistics, medicine and related sciences' antedate this event" (86). That Hoffman credited his earliest work on black criminality and mortality for launching his career demonstrates how much professional success and acclaim he achieved early-on as a result of *Race Traits*.

11. Until her marriage to Hoffman, Ella had never lived without black "servants"; see Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 49, 69.

12. *Ibid.*, 70-71, 86-87.

13. *Ibid.*, 87.

14. Frederick and Frances quickly became lifelong friends and "maintained an extensive correspondence" for many years. In late 1893 the Hoffmans named their second-born child Frances Armstrong Hoffman; she died before reaching six months of age. Three years later, their third child was born in Newark, New Jersey, and was also given the name Francis Armstrong Hoffman. See Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 70-71, 74, 76, 87.

15. *Ibid.*, 65.

16. Frederick L. Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," *The Arena*, April 1892, 539-542. N. S. Shaler, "The Economic Future of the New South," *The Arena*, August 1890, 257-268; "The African Element in America," *The Arena*, November 1890, 660-673; "The Nature of the Negro," *The Arena*, December 1890, 23-35.

17. Hoffman claimed that he could not "secure reliable [birth] data from a single State or city." Mortuary reports, on the other hand, were abundant and reliable,

yielding "considerable statistical material of great value"; see Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," 532-533.

18. *Ibid.*, 537.

19. M. V. Ball, "Correspondence: Vital Statistics of the Negro," *The Medical News*, October 1894, 392-393; "Correspondence: The Mortality of the Negro," *The Medical News*, April 1894, 389-390.

20. Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," 534, 537, 538-540.

21. Frederick L. Hoffman, "Suicide and Modern Civilization," *The Arena* 7 (1893): 680-695. To Hoffman's credit, Émile Durkheim's pathbreaking study of suicide in Europe did not appear until 1897, even after *Race Traits*. Hoffman went on to have a long publication record, spanning decades, on American suicides.

22. *Ibid.*, 687. The rising trend coincided with the Second Industrial Revolution. In most cases the suicide rate increase outstripped the rise in the general mortality rate and the overall population rate.

23. *Ibid.*, 683, 686-691, 694.

24. The term "emergency measures" comes from *The Arena* editor, B. W. Flower, in an editorial that appeared a few months after Hoffman's suicide article, "Emergency Measures Which Would Have Maintained Self Respecting Manhood," *The Arena* 3 (1894): 822-826. Flower's editorial was a response to the 1893 economic depression, as well as a critique of the nation's growing military budget alongside massive unemployment. "The unheeded cry for work . . . has resulted in driving numbers of men, women and children to drink, crime, suicide, and immorality. And these irreparable calamities might have been averted had our nation appreciated the importance of maintaining the manhood of her citizens and holding their loyalty by bands woven of love and wisdom" (823). Hoffman's article and Flower's editorial were linked by a shared reformist agenda on behalf of the white "masses" to correct the imbalances of laissez-faire capitalism at the end of the Gilded Age and the dawn of the Progressive era.

25. Lundy Braun, "Spirometry, Measurement, and Race in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 60:2 (2005): 167. According to some scholars, Hoffman was a social Darwinist rather than a progressive in his views of the government's role in assisting the struggling white masses. Paul Finkleman writes that Hoffman "was no progressive, at least in the modern sense of the word." Finkleman argues that Hoffman rejected government regulation of health care for American workers, believing instead that "Americans should rely on private enterprises"; see Finkleman, "Introduction: On Reading and Understanding Scientific Racism: A Brief Introduction of the Work and World of Frederick L. Hoffman," in Frederick L. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* (1896, reprinted Clark, New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, 2003), iii. In his early writings such a view is not clearly supported and was probably not yet set in stone. Hoffman's biographer writes that Hoffman "campaigns ardently for governmental regulation of health conditions," though his mature ideas "oscillated" between "self-reliance" and regulation; see Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 72. Both Sypher and Finkleman seem to agree that Hoffman "believed in the fundamental inferiority" of blacks (Sypher, *Frederick L. Hoffman, His Life and Works*, 72; Finkleman, "Introduction"). On

Hoffman as a racial Darwinist, see, Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 251; Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 86-90; Vernon J. Williams, *Rethinking Race: Franz Boas and His Contemporaries* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 37-38. Haller writes that his work "reflected a summation of the century's medical and anthropological accumulations concerning racial relations in America"; John S. Haller, Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 62. Though I agree with Haller's statement I think he and others miss the innovative dimensions of Hoffman's work. Its broadest dimensions were most certainly grounded in the standards of racial Darwinist thought; his evocation of the Negro Problem and his focus on mortality certainly attest to this. But his emphatic use of his foreign identity to transcend the sectionalism of the period, his amazing ability to compile statistical data from far-ranging sources (comparable to Durkheim's accomplishment the following year), his coupling of northern statistics with southern ones, a real first among race-relations experts, and finally his attention to black crime statistics in particular, when all put together, were a show of real genius and innovation for someone who truly wanted northerners to be sympathetic to southerners' racial worldview.

26. Frederick L. Hoffman, "Correspondence: Vital Statistics of Negro," *The Medical News* 65:12 (1894): 323.

27. Megan J. Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary: Life Insurance and Frederick L. Hoffman's *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*," *Public Health Reports* 121 (January-February 2006): 91.

28. William Darity, Jr., "Many Roads to Extinction: Early AEA Economists and the Black Disappearance Hypothesis," *History of Economics Review* 21 (1994): 50-54.

29. R. M. Cunningham, "The Morbidity and Mortality of Negro Convicts," *The Medical News* 64:5 (1894): 113.

30. *Ibid.*, 115. For a comparison of Cunningham's claim of Alabama's race-neutral prisons to a recent historian's assessment, see Mary Ellen Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 113, 116.

31. Ball, "The Mortality of the Negro," 389, 390.

32. Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of Negro," 320, 321.

33. *Ibid.*, 321. For the third straight time, Hoffman claimed to present original data on mortality, first with black health statistics in 1892, then with white suicide in 1893, and now with the "first attempt to present in tabular form the mortality for a number of West Indian colonies."

34. *Ibid.*, 322-323. Hoffman came closest to directly engaging Ball's analysis when he showed that native and foreign whites in Boston, Massachusetts, Providence, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C., lived on average ten years longer than Boston's blacks. The data were limited, uneven, and awkwardly presented, since he had no "Colored" data for Providence and Washington, and no "Foreign" data for Boston. He also admitted that "the Irish population shows some similarity in its

mortality to the negro population," but not enough data were available, so "a consideration of this point would be inadvisable."

35. Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary," 6.

36. Mark Aldrich, "Progressive Economists and Scientific Racism: Walter Willcox and Black Americans, 1895-1910," *Phylon* 40:1 (1979):1-14; Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (1963, reprinted New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*; Baker, *From Savage to Negro*; Rayford Logan, *Betrayal of the Negro* (1954, reprinted London: Collier, 1969).

37. Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

38. Author's italics, Dr. A. Corre, "Le Crime en Pays Creoles," (Paris, 1889), quoted in Hoffman, "Vital Statistics of Negro," 323.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Prior to the late 1860s, the vast majority of black people, as enslaved men, women, and children, were generally subjected to plantation punishment for their real or perceived transgressions rather than being punished according to the policies and practices of criminal justice agencies. As David Oshinsky observes for antebellum Mississippi, criminal justice "was meant for white folk alone. Slaves 'had no rights to respect,' wrote one authority, 'no civic virtue or character to restore, no freedom to abridge.' Slaves were the property of their master, and the state did not normally intervene. In the words of one Natchez slaveholder, 'Each plantation was a law unto itself'; Oshinsky, "Worse Than Slavery": *Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 6. For more evidence on the absence of blacks in prisons of the antebellum South, see Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World*, 6; Edward L. Ayers, *Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 61.

41. Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and the Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

42. Leslie Patrick-Stamp, "Numbers That Are Not New: African Americans in the Country's First Prison, 1790-1835," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119 (1995): 95-128; Mary Frances Berry, *The Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of American Justice: Episodes of Racism and Sexism in the Courts from 1865 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).

43. H. H. Powers's AAAPSS review noted that a textbook of this nature anticipated a large audience that did not yet exist. Yet he expected one was "certain to develop rapidly in the near future"; see H. H. Powers, "Review of *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes* by Charles R. Henderson," AAAPSS 4 (January 1894): 174. Powers's prediction was right; a reviewer of the second edition (1901) referred to the first edition as a "pioneer work"; see Samuel W. Dike, "Review of *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes*, by Charles R. Henderson," *American Journal of Theology* 6:3 (1902): 640. Another reviewer of the second edition called the text "comprehensive" and "the only work in English covering the entire field"; see J. E. Hagerty, "Review of *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and*



*Delinquent Classes* by Charles R. Henderson," AAAPSS 19 (January 1902): 136-137. Slavery had, of course, minimized the need for thinking criminologically about the vast majority of blacks, even though free blacks in the colonial and antebellum eras were often defined as a race of dangerous criminals. The real need arrived with emancipation, and the tools to statistically track black criminality arrived with the 1890 census, the first clear picture of blacks born outside of slavery.

44. To Henderson's credit, he did not take Hoffman's 1896 interpretation as the last word on the matter, though like Hoffman he did emphasize that the primary causes of black criminality were "racial inheritance, physical and mental inferiority, barbarian and slave ancestry and culture"; Charles R. Henderson, *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes*, 2nd ed. (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co, 1901), 247. Henderson added that social factors had contributed to black criminality, especially in the North, noting economic discrimination, trade union exclusion, and racial prejudice. Henderson credited the earliest work of two pioneering black social scientists, W. E. B. Du Bois and Monroe N. Work, whose statistical research on northern black criminality had been published in 1899 and 1900 respectively, following the path blazed by Hoffman's *Race Traits*; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899, reprinted Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd, 1973); Monroe N. Work, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago: A Social Study," AJS 6 (September 1900): 204-212.

45. Hoffman continued to consult Wright for unpublished census data, which he used in *Race Traits*, 43.

46. Carroll D. Wright, "The Relation of Economic Conditions to the Causes of Crime," AAAPSS 3 (May 1893): 100.

47. Cesare Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, ed. and trans. Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter (1876, reprinted with a new introduction, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1996), 151-175; Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Gross, *Colored Amazons*.

48. Wright "kindly furnished" Hoffman with data again as he wrote *Race Traits*. By then, Wright had become acting U.S. census superintendent; see Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 43.

49. Harry Vrooman, "Crime and the Enforcement of Law," *The Arena* 65 (April 1895): 263-274. On Vrooman, see Ross E. Paulson, *Radicalism and Reform: The Vrooman Family and American Social Thought, 1837-1937* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968).

50. Ball, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," 392.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.* So did the fact that small white ethnic enclaves of poor people lived in a variety of housing from dilapidated buildings to tenements "conducted on sanitary principles." In Philadelphia, Ball observed that a model tenement occupied by blacks returned mortality rates of 10 per 1,000 compared to rates of 40 per 1,000 among blacks and whites who resided in a "court" behind the same tenement. Italians on a nearby street in the "rag-pickers district" died at a rate of 45 per 1,000.

53. *Ibid.*, 393.

54. Marilyn S. Johnson, *Street Justice, A History of Police Violence in New York City* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 52, 55.

55. Ball, "Vital Statistics of the Negro," 393.

56. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 37, 49, 50, 59, 60, 85, 310.

57. For a pioneering gendered analysis of the crimes of violence committed by black women, see Gross, *Colored Amazons*. For a seminal discussion of violence among blacks during the late nineteenth century, see Roger Lane's *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). Although Gross pays far greater attention to the interplay between real and imagined crimes committed by black women (particularly in press accounts), both she and Lane are primarily interested in describing and analyzing real crime and its consequences. Gross states, "Ultimately, this book seeks to understand how black female crime functioned in the lives of the perpetrators as well as in that of the society" (3).

58. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 221. For more on the actuarial implications of Hoffman's book and the ways in which Prudential "and other insurers" used statistical explanations as a cover for excluding black clients because "to sell insurance policies at equal rates or for equal benefits across racial lines would offend" whites, not because they were too great a financial risk, see Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary," 3.

59. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 229.

60. Philip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman, Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia* (1889, reprinted Williamstown, Mass.: Corner House Publishers, 1970), 84; Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 231.

61. Bruce, v, vi, 77-92.

62. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 228, 234.

63. *Ibid.*, 140-141. The evidence amounted to eighteen cases of black suicide about which Hoffman claimed to have personally "collected the facts."

64. *Ibid.*, 238, 311.

65. *Ibid.*, 236. The logic of this followed from the frequent references Hoffman and many others made to the West Indies as a signpost for what black people did with freedom.

66. John Roach Straton, "Will Education Save the Race Problem," *The North American Review* 170 (June 1900): 785-801; Booker T. Washington, "Education Will Save the Race Problem, A Reply," *The North American Review* 171 (August 1900): 221-232; W. E. B. Du Bois, "Notes on Negro Crime, Particularly in Georgia," *Atlanta University Studies* 9 (1904); James K. Vardaman, "A Governor Bitterly Opposes Negro Education," *Leslie's Weekly*, February 1904, 104.

67. The views of Hoffman and Morgan also mark a generational shift toward a less hopeful view of the Negro Problem emblematic of the late 1890s, in contrast to Nathaniel Shaler and his support of Morgan's father-in-law and Hampton's founder, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong.

68. Straton, "Will Education Save the Race Problem"; Gary Calkins, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* by Frederick L. Hoffman," *Political Science Quarterly* 11:4 (1896): 754-757.

69. Kelly Miller, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, by Frederick L. Hoffman," *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers* 1 (1897); Frederick S. Starr, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, by Frederick L. Hoffman," *The Dial* 22 (January 1897); Miles M. Dawson, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* by Frederick L. Hoffman," *AAAPSS* 5 (September-December 1896); Calkins, "Review of *Race Traits*"; Du Bois, "Notes on Negro Crime"; Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*; Baker, *From Savage to Negro*; Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary"; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1886-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 368.

70. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 276.

71. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 249.

72. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 311.

73. *Ibid.*, 217, 285.

74. *Ibid.*, 1, 13-15, 17, 31, 319, 329.

75. Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (1890, reprinted Boston: Bedford Books, 1996), 162. See also Adler, *First in Violence*, 121, who indicated that "some observers blamed immigrants or ho-boes" for the city's violence, but most Chicagoans blamed blacks for "much of the city's violence." The newspapers Adler cites, however, are all from or after 1906, a decade after publication of Hoffman's book. In those ten years, dozens and dozens of major studies on black criminality in the urban North were written.

76. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 225.

77. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 255.

78. Adler, *First in Violence*, 122, 124, 318 fn. 10.

79. That the race of the reviewer mattered was not a new development. Throughout the nineteenth century, African American religious leaders, educators, and journalists had wielded their pens mightily in defense of the race against slavery's defenders and scientific racists. In the 1890s a new but small cohort of black scholars and leaders emerged; see Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind, African American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Book, 1978); T. Thomas Fortune, *Black and White* (1884, reprinted Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company Inc., 1970); Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors. Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York: New York Age Print, 1892), reprinted in *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997); *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States: 1892-1893-1894* (Chicago, 1894), reprinted in *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997).

80. Dawson, "Review of *Race Traits*"; Starr, "Review of *Race Traits*"; Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary"; Braun, "Spirometry, Measurement, and Race."

81. Dawson, "Review of *Race Traits*," 142, 147, 148.

82. Starr, "Review of *Race Traits*," 17. For his views on the application of Cesare Lombroso's criminal anthropology in North America, see "Study of the Criminal in Mexico," *AJS* 3:1 (1897): 13-17.

83. Starr, "Review of *Race Traits*," 18.

84. Shaler, "The Negro Problem," *Atlantic Monthly* 54 (1884): 709.

85. Davarian L. Baldwin, "Black Belts and Ivory Towers: The Place of Race in U.S. Social Thought, 1892-1948," *Critical Sociology* 30 (2004): 406.

86. Calkins, "Review of *Race Traits*," 754-755, 756.

87. Wolff, "The Myth of the Actuary," 2; Beatrice Hoffman (no relation), "Scientific Racism, Insurance, and Opposition to the Welfare State: Frederick L. Hoffman's Transatlantic Journey," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 2:2 (April 2003): 150-190.

88. Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

89. One response of the scientific racists, including Hoffman, was to attribute black elites' educational accomplishments to the fact that many had white blood in their veins. They also discredited the achievements of these men and women, mocking their academic success. During a series of lectures in France in the 1860s, anthropologist Carl Vogt, known as "the Darwin of Germany," for example, said of Lille Geoffroy, the celebrated black engineer and mathematician and member of the French Academy, that his talent would be totally unremarkable if he were white. Among anti-Darwinians, Vogt noted, Geoffroy was commonly cited as "proof" of the Negro's intellectual capability. "The fact is that the mathematical performances of . . . [Geoffroy] were of such a nature that, had he been born in Germany of white parents, he might perhaps, have been qualified to be a mathematical teacher in a middle class school or engineer of a railway; but having been born in Martinique, of colored parents, he shone like a one-eyed man among the totally blind . . . Besides [he] was not a pure black but a mulatto"; see Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 187. Biographical background on Vogt from J. MacGregor Allan, "Review of *Lectures of Man: His Place in Creation and in the History of the Earth* by Carl Vogt," *Anthropological Review* 7:25 (1869): 177. For a recent spin on attributing black's "unremarkable" success to skin color rather than merit, see Geraldine Ferraro's comments about Senator Barack Obama at Katherine Q. Seyle and Julie Bosman, "Ferraro's Obama Remarks Become Talk of Campaign," *New York Times*, March 12, 2008.

90. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

91. Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 87-109.

92. *Ibid.*, 7-8 (manuscript version of *Too Heavy a Load*); Moss, *The American Negro Academy*; Alford A. Young and Donald R. Duskins, "Early Traditions of African American Sociological Thought," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 447; Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 168-169.

93. For more on the direct tie of Washington's leadership to white support, see Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901*

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 324, and *The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 5.

94. W. S. Scarborough, "The Race Problem," *The Arena*, October 1890, 560. For more of Scarborough's writing along these lines, see "The Negro Question from the Negro's Point of View," *The Arena*, July 1891, 219-22; and "Lawlessness vs. Lawlessness," *The Arena*, November 1900, 478-483. For biographical information, see Michele Valerie Ronnick, "William Sanders Scarborough: The First African American Member of the Modern Language Association," *Publication of the Modern Language Association* 115: 7 (2000): 1787-1793. Scarborough was also a member of the American Negro Academy, "delivering ten papers before the society between 1884 and 1896" (Moss, *The American Negro Academy*, 17).

95. Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership and Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) xiv; S. P. Fullinwider, *The Mind and Mood of Black America* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1969), 3-5. For an excellent discussion of the initial conflict between black elite women and men, and between club women and the masses of women, in response to the new discourse of criminality and sexual immorality, see White, *Too Heavy a Load*, 1-43.

96. It is impossible to prove that Hoffman knew of Wells's publications, but she drew international attention from British dignitaries and reformers and journalists of international repute, many of whom accepted her brilliant claims that white Americans were perverting their Anglo-Saxon heritage and expressed their outrage to American officials, conducted their own independent investigations, and threatened to divest from American businesses in lynching states. By 1894, after her second tour abroad and before she published her second pamphlet, while Hoffman still remained in the South, white journalists across the South were condemning her. The *Memphis Commercial*, for example, wrote that her campaign "had 'done more to intensify the bitterness of race-prejudice' among whites than any other event in the past ten years"; Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 105, 84-120; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization, A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 53-76.

97. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 75-79.

98. Royster, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, 50.

99. Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 56; Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 85.

100. Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 58, 61.

101. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 74-75.

102. Marlon B. Ross, *Manning the Race: Reforming Black Men in the Jim Crow Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

103. The *Colored American Magazine* stated in 1902 that Wells was "without doubt the first authority among Afro-Americans on lynching and mob violence" (quoted in Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 124). For more on Wells's pioneering use of statistics, see Laura M. Westhoff, *A Fatal Drifting*

*Apart: Democratic Social Knowledge and Chicago Reform* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 196-207.

104. Lynching data from Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, 84; for more on the origins of anti-black lynching, see Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House, 2002), vii-viii.

105. Royster, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, 82, 120.

106. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 231. On the same page, Hoffman also wrote that "the rate of increase in lynchings may be accepted as representing fairly the increasing tendency of colored men to commit this most frightful of crime."

107. Royster, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, 126-128. Wells's pioneering research exposed a hidden pattern and practice among whites who covered their crimes by corking their faces or falsely accusing black men. Black sociologist Monroe N. Work would systematically detail such instances in his annual almanac of black facts; see Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book: An Encyclopedia of the Negro* (Tuskegee: Negro Year Book Publishing Co., 1931), 289-292, and *Negro Year Book* (1938), 147. Katheryn K. Russell, Barry Glassner, and Michael Moore in his award-winning documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (MGM, 2002) have also examined the political and cultural significance of black scapegoating in the late twentieth century; Katheryn K. Russell, *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and Other Macroaggressions* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things: Crime, Drugs, Minorities, Teen Moms, Killer Kids, Mutant Microbes, Plane Crashes, Road Rage, and So Much More* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). As recently as May 2009, a white Philadelphia suburban mother Bonnie Sweeten, faked her and her daughters kidnapping by accusing two black men of carjacking them, see "Abduction Hoax Ends at Disney World; Girl Safe," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 28, 2009; "The Big Black Lie," and "Mother in Bogus Kidnap Probed for Theft," *Ibid.*, May 29, 2009.

108. Royster, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, 126-130.

109. Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom, Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 33-34.

110. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 114-119.

111. U.S. Census Bureau, *Census Bulletin: Convicts in Penitentiaries: 1890*, no. 31 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1891), 1.

112. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 104-110, 118-120. Her most recent biographer notes that Wells was "more militant than all of the reform figures" who were prominent in the early twentieth century; Paula J. Giddings, *Ida: A Sword among Lions* (New York: Amistad, 2008), 6-7.

113. Williams B. Thomas, "Black Intellectuals' Critique of Early Mental Testing: A Little Known Saga of the 1920s," *Journal of American Education* 90:3 (1982). Davarian Baldwin states that "Reformers rejected the idea that the race was inherently devoid of virtue but also worried that perhaps some behaviors ascribed to the entire race did actually exist within the 'lower classes'"; Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, The Great Migration, and Black*

*Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 59; Tukufo Zuberi, "Deracializing Social Statistics: Problems in the Quantification of Race," *AAAPSS* 568 (March 2000): 184.

114. Ross, *Manning the Race*, 408 fn. 2; Jacquelyne Johnson Jackson, "Black Female Sociologists," in *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. James E. Blackwell and Morris Janowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 267-295.

115. Moss, *The American Negro Academy*; Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, xiv; on their growth in the 1920s, see Thomas, "Black Intellectuals," 258-292.

116. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 169.

117. Vernon Williams, Jr., *The Social Sciences and Theories of Race* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 26.

118. Baldwin, "Black Belts," 405.

119. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*; Young and Duskins, "Early Traditions of African American Sociological Thought."

120. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies*, by Frederick L. Hoffman," *AAAPSS* (January 1897): 132-133.

121. Kelly Miller, "Review of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, by Frederick L. Hoffman," *American Negro Academy Occasional Papers*, no. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1897).

122. *Ibid.* With reference to the South, Miller did raise the issue of discrimination as a factor that exaggerated incarceration and arrest rates among southern blacks. To avoid the "charge of slander," he quoted a "distinguished [white] Virginian" who found pervasive racial discrimination in courtrooms, particularly among white juries.

123. *Ibid.* Miller applies the laws of large and small numbers, saying smaller population distorts true criminality. "It is hard to see how 'race traits' could account for this discrepancy."

124. *Ibid.*

125. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Review of *Race Traits*," 132.

126. Editorial note in *Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois in Periodicals Edited by Others, vol. 1, 1891-1909*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1982), 279.

127. Du Bois, "Review of *Race Traits*," 130-132.

128. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 193.

129. *Ibid.*, 202; Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 103; Zuberi, "Deracializing Social Statistics," 86; Ira Katznelson, "Presidents' Address: Du Bois's Century," *Social Science History* 23:4 (1999): 459-474; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Black North: A Social Study," *New York Times*, December 1, 1901.

130. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1940, reprinted New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1984), 57-58.

131. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 190-191; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *AAAPSS* 11 (1898): 10.

132. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," 19.

133. *Ibid.*, 15.

134. *Ibid.*, 16.

135. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of the Races," *Occasional Papers* 2 (American Negro Academy, 1897), reprinted in David Levering Lewis, ed., *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 25-26.

136. *Ibid.* It is not known whether Hoffman's study and language shaped Du Bois's speech or slipped into his subconscious. But even beyond the influences of his own independent research, by his choice of words if nothing more, an infectious temptation to conflate ideas about black mortality, criminality, and morality seems to have been spreading.

137. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 174, Guterl, *The Color of Race*; Thomas C. Holt, "The Political Uses of Alienation: W. E. B. Du Bois on Politics, Race, and Culture, 1903-1940," *American Quarterly* 42 (June 1990): 301-323; Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind*.

138. DuBois, "Conservation," 26-27. Sociologists, criminal justice, and black studies scholars have paid closer attention to Du Bois's crime research; see Shaun L. Gabbidon, "W. E. B. Du Bois: Pioneering American Criminologist," *Journal of Black Studies* 31:5 (2001): 581-599; Zuberi, "Deracializing Social Statistics"; Lawrence D. Bobo, "Reclaiming a Du Boisian Perspective on Racial Attitudes," *AAAPSS* 568 (March 2000): 186-202. See also the article by philosopher Lucius T. Outlaw, "W. E. B. Du Bois on the Study of Social Problems," *Annals* 568 (March 2000): 281-297; Marlon B. Ross, *Manning the Race: Reforming Black Men in the Jim Crow Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2004): 149-162.

139. Thomas C. Holt, "W. E. B. Du Bois's Archaeology of Race: Re-Reading 'The Conservation of Races,'" in *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: The Philadelphia Negro and Its Legacy*, ed. Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 62.

140. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," *Bulletin of the Department of Labor* 14 (January 1898): 1-38. In his letter to Wright, Du Bois also noted that "both the preliminary and the main work must of course be strictly limited in scope; great care must be taken to avoid giving offence to white or black, to raise no suspicions and at the same time to get definite accurate information"; see W. E. B. Du Bois to Carroll D. Wright Esq., May 5, 1897, in *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, vol. 1, 1877-1934*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (1973, reprinted Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 41-43.

141. "Convictions on all great matters of human interest one must have to a greater or less degree, and they will enter to some extent into the most cold-blooded scientific research as a disturbing factor" (Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 3).

142. Lane, *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia*, 148-161; Holt, "Archaeology of Race"; Lewis, *Biography of a Race*; Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 164-169; Young and Duskins, "Early Traditions of African American Sociological Thought," 460.

143. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*; Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); White, *Too Heavy a Load*.

144. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 181. Hoffman provided no citation for this statement and presented no statistics on black prostitution. Instead he measured non-marital sex and prostitution by illegitimacy. And illegitimacy, he claimed, was yet another "inadequately treated [area] by those who have written on the subject of negro morality" (235). According to the "health office" of Washington, D.C., between 1879 and 1894 the average rate of illegitimate childbirths was 2.92 for white women and 22.49 for black women. "That under a civilized government," Hoffman wrote, "one-fourth of the children of one race should bear 'the bar sinister' is a fact which is fraught with far-reaching consequences" (236).

145. Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910, reprinted New York: New American Library, 1981), 101-102; Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 223-224.

146. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, 58.

147. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 282-283.

148. *Ibid.*, 236-268, 282-286, 387, 392-397.

149. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 148-149, 173. Thomas Holt briefly mentions Du Bois's critique of the criminal in "Political Uses," 303.

150. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 389-394, 396-397.

151. David Levering Lewis writes, "Behind the moralizing and the stern admonitions to black people to behave like lending-library patrons, the book would speak calmly yet devastatingly of the history and logic of poverty and racism" (Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 189-190). Roger Lane agrees that Du Bois emphasized racism as a major factor in crime and immorality, but criticizes him for it. He writes that Du Bois "shrank from the dismal implications of his own findings" and "systematically, if unconsciously, minimized the relative extent of black crime in the city." Du Bois, he explains, was unprepared by his elitism and his European training to confront the reality before him. "The ominous suggestion that criminal behavior was actually on the rise was perhaps too bleak for Philadelphia's black leaders [including Du Bois] to face, certainly to admit or discuss openly. The situation was especially acute in the fearful 1890s" (Lane, *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia*, 149). According to Lane, all the indicators of black pathology in the late twentieth century were in operation by this moment: overcrowded and female-headed households, domestic violence, ownership of weapons, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and epidemic vice. Had Philadelphia's black elite, "who advised Du Bois," faced up to and fought these "conditions in the city itself," Lane writes, the "fear and hatreds" that followed might have been averted (153-160). "The late twentieth century, moreover, has greatly intensified not only the traditional white contempt for black," he writes in the epilogue, "but also the kind of racial fear first felt in Philadelphia during the late 1890s" (171).

152. In *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois uses "unconscious prejudice" and the "half-conscious actions of men and women" as references to the state of mind of "white people" (396-397).

153. Du Bois described this article as his "national debut" (Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 198).

154. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Strivings of the Negro People," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1897.

155. Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois in Periodicals Edited by Others, vol. 1, 1891-1909* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1982), 57.

156. Aptheker, ed., *Writings, vol. 1*, 67-68. As a southern sequel to *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois's clearest, dual-sided statement on black criminality is found at W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Relation of the Negroes to the Whites in the South," AAAPSS 18 (July 1901): 121-140. With an increasing focus on racism, variations on his crime discourse are notable in several additional publications (with a heavy emphasis on the South) until 1910, when as editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine, he put down his scholarly pen for an activist sword; see W. E. B. Du Bois, "To Solve the Negro Problem," *Collier's Weekly*, June 18, 1904, 14, reprinted in Aptheker, ed., *Writings, vol. 1*, 223.

157. David Levering Lewis, "Review of W. E. B. Du Bois, *Race and the City: The Philadelphia Negro and Its Legacy*, by Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds.," *Journal of American History* 88:1 (2001): 227.

158. The two favorable reviews by the *Academy of American Social and Political Science* and *The Journal of Political Economy* had little measurable impact on Du Bois's academic stature; see Percy N. Booth, "Review of *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* by W. E. B. Du Bois," AAAPSS 15 (January 1900): 100-102; Katherine B. Davis, "The Condition of the Negro in Philadelphia," *The Journal of Political Economy* 8:2 (1900): 248-260.

159. Of the many universities surveyed, Hampton is the only one that listed Du Bois's book in its curriculum; see Frank L. Tolman, "The Study of Sociology in Institutions of Learning in the United States, IV," *AJS* 8:4 (1903): 531-558.

160. W. I. Thomas, "The Mind of Woman and the Lower Races," *American Journal of Sociology* 12 (March 1904): 442.

161. Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: "The Philadelphia Negro" and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 19.

162. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 343-385.

163. Thomas D. Boston, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Historical School of Economics," *The American Economic Review* 81:2 (1991): 305.

164. Katznelson, "Presidents' Address," 467-469.

165. "Review of *The Philadelphia Negro*, by W. E. B. Du Bois," *American Historical Review* 6:1 (1900): 162-164.

166. Mark Aldrich states that Willcox was "the most important economic demographer of the Progressive era," a leading figure in the American Economic Association and the American Statistical Association. He had been a student of Richard Mayo-Smith at Columbia University, a pioneering force in the adoption of statistical analysis in the United States. Willcox's reach crossed the color line and included a broad spectrum of those with varying racial views, including Carroll D. Wright, Alfred Stone, Frederick Hoffman, Mississippi Governor James K. Vardaman, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Aldrich argues, along with John Stanfield and William Darity, that Willcox produced and supported "ostensibly objective statistical studies . . . to justify and rationalize the oppression of

black Americans" (Aldrich, "Progressive Economists and Scientific Racism," 1-14); see Walter Darity, Jr., "Many Roads to Extinction: Early AEA Economists and the Black Disappearance Hypothesis," *History of Economics Review* 21 (1994): 47-64; Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, 89-90; John H. Stanfield, *Philanthropy and Jim Crow in American Social Science* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1967), 23.

167. Walter F. Willcox, "Negro Criminality," in Alfred Stone, *Studies in the American Race Problem* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1908), 444.

168. Among the other "faults" discussed, one participant corroborated the "health and high rate of mortality" problems presented in Hoffman's book and another spoke of the "spread of vicious tendencies" in the "crowded tenements" of New York; see "Colored Man's Chances: Lessons from the Convention of Representative Negroes at Hampton, Virginia," *New York Times*, July 25, 1898.

169. Willcox, "Negro Criminality," 444, 446.

170. G. Stanley Hall, "The Negro in Africa and America," *Pedagogical Seminary* 12 (1905): 358, 363, 368. Also see Gossett, *Race*, 154.

171. Du Bois, "Black North."

172. Illustrative are papers from the panel on the "The Race Problem at the South" during the America's Race Problems conference at the fifth annual meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, April 12-13, 1901. The panel participants were Hilary A. Herbert, former secretary of the Navy, George T. Winston, the white president of North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and W. E. B. Du Bois. In his introductory remarks, Herbert said, "The Negro's prospects for improvement, his development since emancipation, his industrial conditions, his relation to crime, the scanty results of the system of education that has been pursued, how that system can be bettered—all these questions as they exist to-day are before you for debate"; see "America's Race Problems," AAAPSS 18 (July 1901): 100. The speeches were published consecutively in the same journal issue by author's name, under separate subtitles (95-140). See also Du Bois, "To Solve the Negro Problem."

173. Ronald P. Falkner, "Crime and the Census," AAAPSS 9 (January 1897): 43, 44, 62-66. According to Michael Katz and Thomas Sugrue, W. E. B. Du Bois, *Race, and the City*, Falkner was the first to teach statistics at Penn (19).

174. Lawrence Rosen, "The Creation of the Uniform Crime Report," *Social Science History* 19:2 (1995): 220. While sociologists and statisticians in more recent decades may all uniformly recognize the logical and/or mathematical mistakes of their predecessors, they can not change the past. The real-time consequences of these past errors shaped what was possible for African Americans as the subjects of sociological investigations and the objects of social welfare reform.

175. Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 42.

176. Rosen; "The Creation of the Uniform Crime Report," 215-238; Edwin H. Sutherland and C. C. Van Vechten, Jr., "The Reliability of Criminal Statistics," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 25 (1934): 10-20; Khalil G. Muhammad, "Policing Racial Crime Statistics: *Uniform Crime Reports, 1930-1940*." Paper pre-

sented at the annual Warren Susman Graduate History conference, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., April 1998.

177. Willcox, "Negro Criminality," 446-447.

178. All of them followed after Wells and Du Bois with the exception of Monroe N. Work and Fannie Williams. Along with Franz Boas they were part of the process of shifting the discourse toward emphasizing cultural inferiority rather than race; see Work, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago"; James S. Stemons, "Increase of Crime among Negroes," *Colored American Magazine* 13 (July 1907): 66.

179. Williams, *Social Science and Theories of Race*, especially chapter 7.

180. Work computed the ratio of black arrests to the black population in Chicago to assess the relative criminality of blacks in the North versus the South. At a ratio of 1:3 in 1897, Chicago topped the list with a far higher ratio than the southern cities he examined: Washington, D.C. (1:6.3), Richmond (1:9.7), and Charleston (1:13.5 for the year 1890). Chicago also trumped New York (1:7). Work did not include Philadelphia. Work, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago," 211, 222.

181. Work, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago," 223. By his ambiguous use of "race characteristics peculiar to him," it is not clear whether he meant innate criminal tendencies or racism. The ambiguity may have been a deliberate effort to satisfy the editorial demands of the journal.

182. J. Shadrach Shirley, "The Growth of the Social Evil among All Classes and Races in America," *Colored American Magazine* 6 (February 1903): 259-263; Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 256.

183. William Hannibal Thomas, *The American Negro: What He Was, What He Is, and What He May Become* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), x-xix.

184. John David Smith, *Black Judas: William Hannibal Thomas and The American Negro* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 181.

185. Thomas, *The American Negro*, 109-116, 120, 129, 134, 139. Thomas's book was part of the cultural and intellectual landscape that made it possible for a Zaire man named Ota Benga to be exhibited in a cage at the Bronx Zoo in 1905 as an "African Pygmy" who proved the human evolutionary link to primates, see Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 72.

186. For a discussion of the controversy and backlash surrounding the work, particularly among African American leaders such as Booker T. Washington and Francis Grimke, see Smith, *Black Judas*, 191-234. Also see Richard R. Wright, Jr., "Review of 'The American Negro,'" *AJS* 6:6 (1901): 850-852; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Storm and Stress in the Black World," *The Dial* 30 (April 16, 1901): 262-264.

187. Franklin H. Giddings to Macmillan Company, October 10, 1899, Macmillan Papers, quoted in Smith, *Black Judas*, 167. Smith notes that Giddings's review was the only one of three that was positive and recommended publication. One reviewer, William Z. Ripley, was himself the author of a standard text of scientific racism, *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899). His complaints and those of the third in-house reviewer were largely about style and the total lack of scientific evidence. The publisher, however, moved forward with publication after insisting on revisions (167-173).

188. *New York Times*, January 12, 1901, BR1.

189. "The Negro Arraigned," *New York Times*, February 23, 1901.
190. William Patrick Calhoun, *The Caucasian and the Negro: They Must Separate. If Not, Then Extermination* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan, 1902), 6; Guterl, *The Color of Race*; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
191. With Thomas's success, even the actual statistics did not matter. Du Bois offered a comment in his review of Thomas's *The American Negro* that is suggestive of the pressure some black writers may have succumbed to when trying to get their antiracist ideas noticed. Du Bois wrote that Thomas's book was first published in 1890 as a pamphlet. "The pamphlet was a defense of the Negro, with severe criticisms on the whites, and laid down the thesis that land owning and education—both industrial and higher—would solve the Negro problem." In the rewrite, according to Du Bois, there was "added a denunciation of the Negro in America unparalleled in vindictiveness and exaggeration" (Du Bois, "The Storm and Stress in the Black World," 263). Of course, Thomas may have simply revised his interpretations in light of the new crime and immorality discourse. Whatever the cause, his book became a widely quoted source for many white writers.
192. C. C. Closson, "Review of *The American Negro* by William Hannibal Thomas," *Journal of Political Economy* 10:2 (1902): 316.
193. Influenced by the Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while working closely with the African Methodist Episcopal minister Reverdy C. Ransom, Wright applied Christian principles of serving the needs of the least of God's children before leaving Chicago. By 1905, Wright was a doctoral sociology student at the University of Pennsylvania. He would eventually become a major force in the African Methodist Episcopal church, editing the *Christian Recorder* and becoming president of Wilberforce University; see Terrell Dale Goddard, "The Black Social Gospel in Chicago, 1896–1906: The Ministries of Reverdy C. Ransom and Richard R. Wright, Jr.," *The Journal of Negro History* 84:3 (1999): 227–246.
194. "Book Notes," *Political Science Quarterly* 17:3 (1902): 547.
195. Du Bois, "The Storm and Stress in the Black World," 262–264.
196. Frances Kellor, "The Criminal Negro: A Sociological Study," *The Arena* 25:1–5 (January–May 1901): 59–68, 190–197, 419–128, 510–520.
197. Thomas Nelson Page, *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 102. Describing Page, I. A. Newby writes: "As much as any individual he contributed to the crystallization of Southern mythology concerning the Old South and the Negro"; see I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900–1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 68.
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199. Page, *The Negro*, 82–83, 84.
200. *Ibid.*, 296; Florette Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900–1920* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 263.
201. Henri, *Black Migration*, 228.
202. W. H. Johnson, "The Case of the Negro," *The Dial* 34 (May 1, 1903): 301. Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1875–1900* (New York: Doubleday Page, 1902).

203. Johnson, "The Case of the Negro," 301.
204. Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, 106.
205. Michael P. Rogin, "The Sword Became a Flashing Vision': D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*," in *Ronald Reagan, the Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 191–197; Jacqueline Najuma Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 33, 230.
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207. Alfred Holt Stone, "Is Race Friction between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?" *AJS* 13:5 (1908): 678, 687, 693.
208. W. F. Willcox, "Discussion of the Paper by Alfred H. Stone, 'Is Race Friction between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?'" *American Journal of Sociology* 13:6 (1908): 820, 824, 828, 833; Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 372.
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210. Lewis, *Biography of a Race*, 373–374.
211. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," *AJS* 14:1 (1908): 79–81.
212. Hoffman, *Race Traits*, 217, 285; Willcox, 448–449; Du Bois, "The Black North," 11; Thomas, *The American Negro*, 213; Page, *The Negro*, 57, 96; Williamson, *A Rage for Order* 98.
213. Shaler, "The Negro since the Civil War," *Popular Science Monthly* 57 (1900): 36–39.
214. N. S. Shaler, "The Future of the Negro in the Southern States," *Popular Science Monthly* 57 (1900): 154, 155.
215. *Ibid.*, 156. With his call for historical research, Shaler seemed to be backpedaling on his earlier faith in statistical data as an unproblematic method of racial science.

## 3. INCRIMINATING CULTURE

1. Kellor was also the first American criminologist to study white female criminality in a series of articles published in the *American Journal of Sociology*; Frances A. Kellor, "Psychological and Environmental Study of Women Criminals, I," *AJS* 5 (January 1900): 527–543; "Psychological and Environmental Study of Women Criminals, II," *AJS* 5 (March 1900): 671–682.
2. Frances Kellor, "The Criminal Negro: A Sociological Study," *The Arena* 25: 1–5 (January–May 1901): 59–68, 190–197, 419–128, 510–520, and *Experimental Sociology: Descriptive and Analytic: Delinquents* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1901).
3. E. Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 58–66.
4. All were cited in her bibliography. Jane Addams, *Hull House Maps and Papers* (New York: T. W. Crowell & Co., 1895).