

Penn Medicine and the Afterlives of Slavery Project (PMAS)

Institutional History Timeline

1619 - First shipment of enslaved Africans reaches North America

1762 - The [first human dissection](#) at the University of Pennsylvania was performed on a Black man who committed suicide.

1765 - Penn Medical School is [founded](#) by Dr. **John Morgan** and Dr. **William Shippen**

- America's first and oldest medical school, from the colonial period
- Dr. William Shippen accused of body-snatching

1766-1768 - Dr. **Benjamin Rush** studies at the University of Edinburgh

- Owned an enslaved person (freed after 10 years), **William Grubber**

1769-1813 - Dr. **Benjamin Rush** holds [several key positions](#) at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

- Member of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society
- Advocated that leprosy caused blackness (blackness as disease)
- Also thought Black people could not feel pain

1782 - Dr. **Caspar Wistar** graduates with a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, goes to the University of Edinburgh to pursue medical education.

1785 (April 13) - The "[dissection of a negro](#) girl of Mr. Jones" possibly dissected in Dr. Rush's medical course

1789-1792 - [Wistar instructs](#) in chemistry and other medical subjects at the College of Philadelphia

1792-1808 - Wistar served as an adjunct professor of anatomy, midwifery, and surgery at Penn's Medical School

1793 - Philadelphia **Yellow Fever** outbreak

- Benjamin Rush did not think that Black people could contract the disease, reached out to Reverend **Richard Allen** to enlist the help of Philadelphia's African American communities to care for the diseased, that community came to be similarly impacted by Yellow Fever

1796 - Dr. [Charles Caldwell](#) graduates, published *Phrenology vindicated, and Antiphrenology Unmasked* (1838), Believed slavery was natural, supported Samuel Morton's claims about phrenology

Early 19th century - [Wistar Institute](#) is established.

1808-1818 - Wistar chairs the Department of Anatomy at Penn Medical School

1808 - [John Peter Mettauer](#) (1787-1875) of Prince Edward County, Virginia graduated from Penn's Medical School, Founds **The Prince Edward Medical Institute**, affiliates with Randolph-Macon College in 1847, operated until 1861

1814 - [William Edmonds Horner](#), Earned his MD from the University of Pennsylvania, Appointed as curator of Wistar collection, held many positions in the Department of Anatomy, Assisted by **Joseph Leidy**

1820 - [Samuel George Morton](#) graduates with MD from the University of Pennsylvania, Continues medical study at the University of Edinburgh.

1827 - [Josiah Nott](#) (1804-1873) graduates from the University of Pennsylvania with MD, worked as an anatomy demonstrator and lecturer until 1829 under Dr. **William Edmonds Horner** and Dr. **Philip Syng Physick**."

1834 - **Josiah Nott's** earliest publication, [The Mulatto a Hybrid-Probably Extermination of the Two Races If the Whites and Blacks Are Allowed to Marry](#).

1837 - Dr. **Mettauer** performs the first successful [vesico-vaginal fistula operation](#) on a white woman (before **J. Marion Sims**).

1839-1843 - **Samuel George Morton** is appointed to a Professorship at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Advanced *polygenesis* theories through craniometry

1839 - **Samuel G. Morton's** [Crania Americana](#) first published while he is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania; would later go on to influence Confederate Secretary of State John C. Calhoun and impact policy decisions at the national level, Identifies 3 distinct races and ranks their intelligence

1840 - **Morton** teaches a course on racial difference at Penn

1844 - **Josiah Nott** publishes [Two Lectures on the Natural History of the Caucasian and Negro Races](#), Advances arguments of polygenesis

1844 - **Samuel Morton** [retires](#) from his Professorship at Penn; begins correspondence with southern Secretary of State John Calhoun

1847 - Dr. **Mettauer** publishes his [surgical experiments](#) on a 20 year old enslaved woman, vesico-vaginal fistula in the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*

1851 - Penn sent [lecture advertisements](#) to newspapers across the country, focusing their efforts on southern, slave-holding states, Majority of Penn medical students hailed from the American South

1854 - **Josiah Nott** publishes *Types of Mankind*, Published in Philadelphia

1861 - [Alexander Stevens](#), Vice President of the confederacy, in his "Cornerstone" speech, draws upon the racialized biological scholarship of Penn doctors to justify secession

1882 - Nathaniel Mossell is the first African American student educated in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania

1906 - **W.E. B. Dubois** publishes [*The Health and Physique of the Negro American*](#), report of a social study made under the direction of Atlanta University, together with the Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, on May the 29th, 1906, Argues that “race” is not a scientific concept

1947 - **Wilton Krogman** comes to Penn as a Professor of Medicine and Anthropology

1950s-1970s - [**Dr. Albert Kligman's**](#) dermatological experimentation on Philadelphia prisoners.

1966 - Krogman brings the Samuel Morton Skull Collection to the Penn Museum

1980s - **Janet Monge** becomes “Keeper of the Physical Anthropology collections” at the Penn Museum, Morton Skull Collection is used in undergraduate teaching.

2017 - Fall- Penn and slavery Project founded by Professor Kathleen Brown