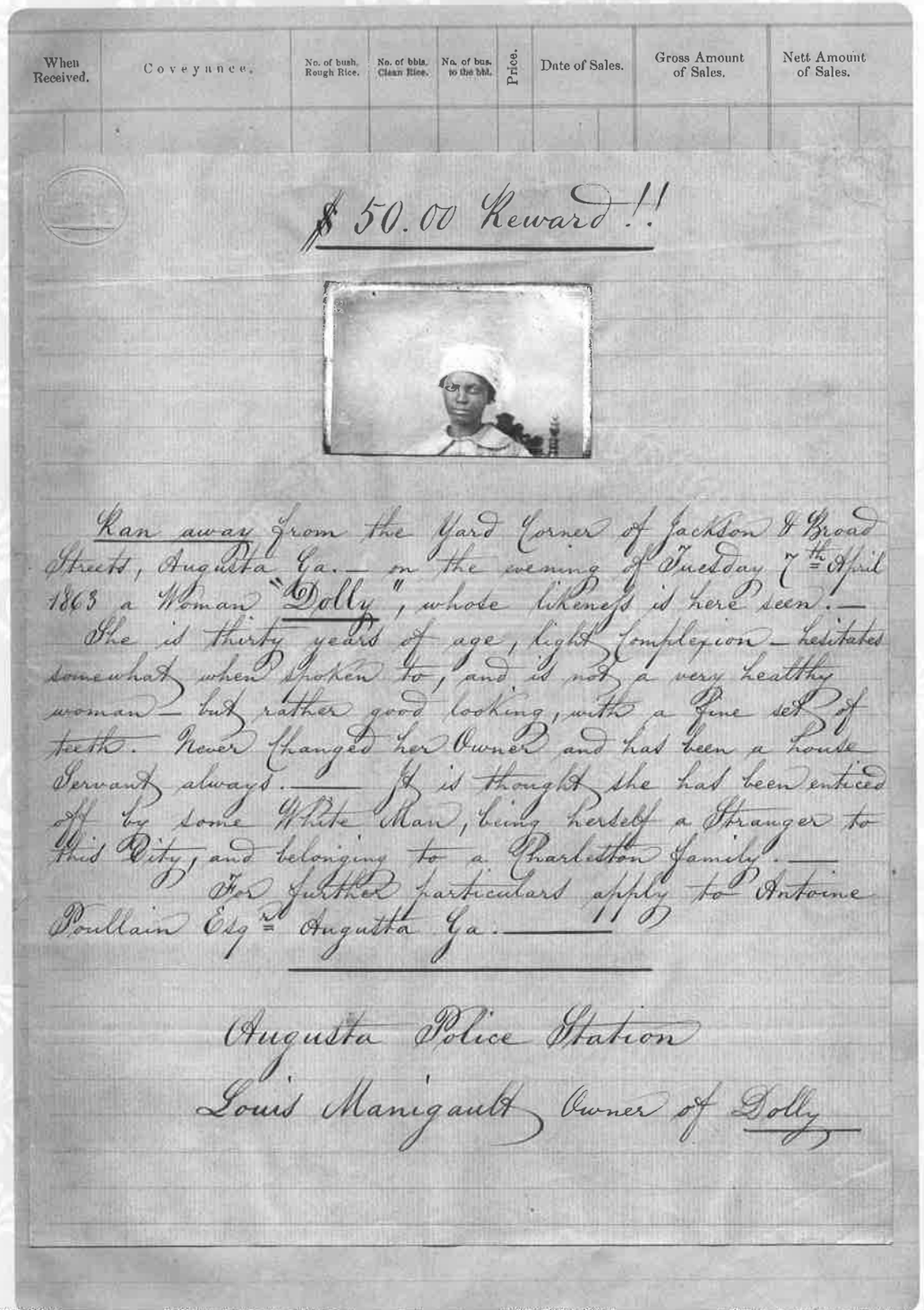

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$ 50.00 Reward !!

Ran away from the Yard Corner of Jackson & Broad Streets, Augusta Ga. on the evening of Tuesday 7th April 1863 a Woman "Dolly", whose likeness is here seen.—
She is thirty years of age, light Complexion—hesitates somewhat when spoken to, and is not a very healthy woman—but rather good looking, with a fine set of teeth. Never changed her Owner and has been a house Servant always.—— It is thought she has been enticed off by some White Man, being herself a Stranger to this City, and belonging to a Charleston family.—
For further particulars apply to Antoine Poullain Esq. Augusta Ga.——

Augusta Police Station
Louis Manigault Owner of Dolly

Introduction

A Very pleasing feature of our pictorial relations is the very easy terms upon which all may enjoy them. The servant girl can now see a likeness of herself, such as noble ladies and even royalty itself could not purchase fifty years ago. Formerly, the luxury of a likeness was the exclusive privilege of the rich and great. But now, like education and a thousand other blessings brought to us by the advancing march of civilization, such pictures, are placed within easy reach of the humblest members of society.

Frederick Douglass,
"Pictures and Progress," 1863

Envisioning Emancipation explores the ways in which black people's enslavement, emancipation, and freedom were represented, documented, debated, and asserted in a wide range of photographs from the 1850s through the 1930s. We see these images as historically situated representations, created usually by the photographers and subjects, but sometimes by other interested parties as well. We also view them as powerful images with enduring meanings and legacies. To recall the words of Frederick Douglass: "the servant girl can now see a likeness of herself" in the ambrotype of the "washerwoman" on the cover of this book. We can also read this portrait as a symbol of patriotism and beauty. The young woman is believed to have worked for the Union army as a laundress.[1] Perhaps to show her appreciation for the army's help in obtaining her freedom, she has pinned a miniature American flag to her dress.

Photographic likenesses became available in America soon after the Frenchman Louis J. M. Daguerre (1787–1851) announced in January 1839 that he had successfully fixed an image on a silver-coated copper plate. Only a few months later the daguerreotype had arrived, and U.S. newspapers were publishing accounts of experiments with the process. Early photographers, who were from widely varied backgrounds, produced results that were also varied, culturally, commercially, and aesthetically. Low prices—between twenty-five cents and a dollar—made daguerreotype portraits accessible to all classes of American society, unlike the popular but expensive miniature portraits in oil or watercolor. After the mid-1850s, photography studios began experimenting with other technologies. The ambrotype, also known as a "collodion positive" (1852–mid-1870s), replaced the daguerreotype's copper plate with a glass one.[2] The tintype was adapted from this process and remained popular from 1854 to 1900 because of its short exposure time.

The photographs in this book trace the technical developments of the medium and also suggest the multiple ways in which Americans, black and white, engaged the prevailing controversies over slavery and black people's freedom in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, these images record the presence of black people who have too often been ignored and erased from the historical record. In that context, these photographs are important historical sources that can inform the thinking of readers and scholars about the intertwined histories of slavery, freedom, and photography.

We cannot overlook the cost of these images. Free blacks who could afford to pay for their likenesses posed for ambrotypes and tintypes. Although the cost was beyond the reach of enslaved men, women, and children, they were often photographed by their owners to identify them as human property or by others who categorized them as objects of scientific scrutiny. Taking these differences in circumstance and purpose into account will enhance awareness and appreciation of the complex significance and meanings of these images. By considering the ways in which slavery and freedom were represented in photographs and also the people presented in them, this book contemplates the question, what did freedom look like?

This project emerged from our respective interests in the history of photography, beauty, slavery, and memory. Our earliest conversations centered on a cropped portrait on a "runaway poster" (discussed later in this chapter) of an enslaved woman named Dolly, who freed herself by running away from her master. Dolly's image has been widely reproduced in histories of slavery but has rarely been the subject of analysis or discussion. Why did Dolly's master, a prominent Georgia and South Carolina planter named Louis Manigault, have that picture taken? Why did he save her picture after she ran away in 1863, a signal year midway through the Civil War? What did we, as scholars and writers, see when we looked at Dolly's image nearly 150 years after the war's end and slavery's demise? Over time, as we each proceeded with our own research projects, we found ourselves repeatedly coming back to conversations about photographic representations of slavery and freedom and the ways in which these photographs functioned simultaneously as historical sources of information, as visual representations of particular ideas and interests, and as sites of memory that sustain a sense of connection to the earliest generations of the black freedom struggle. The images presented in this book span the period from the prewar 1850s through the 1930s, when the Works Progress Administration (WPA) instituted an oral and photographic history project of sorts that focused on the lived experience of slavery through the words of the survivors. All of these images reveal the different ways in which black Americans positioned themselves and were posed by others to address prevailing questions about the meaning of black freedom in America.

Slavery and Photography

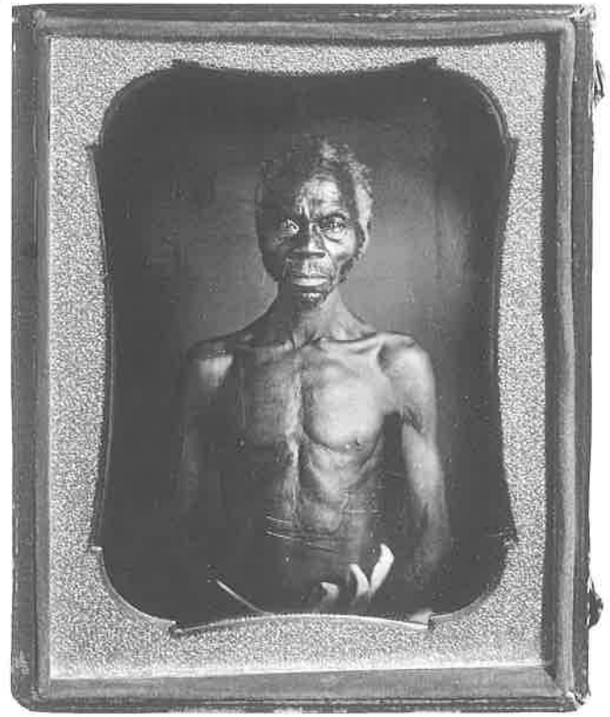
We begin with a discussion of images from the 1850s, produced in a time of tremendous, inflammatory, and often violent controversies over slavery and the place of free black people in the United States. Americans, white and black, had long recognized the fundamental contradictions between the nation's professed ideals of individual liberty and equality on one hand and its abiding legal and social commitment to the institution of chattel slavery and the attendant racial ideology of black inferiority and white supremacy on the other. This paradox was embodied most notably by Thomas Jefferson, who owned well over a hundred slaves when he authored the enduring lines of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Three-quarters of a century later, in 1852, at a public Fourth of July ceremony in Rochester, New York, Frederick Douglass confronted the contradiction head-on with the rhetorical question: "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license . . . your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery."[3]

The intensifying national conflict over slavery and black freedom played out through competing campaigns of photographic imagery.[4] Slavery's defenders employed visual imagery, especially photography, to illustrate and advance their arguments that blacks were less than human, with limited intellectual ability,

stunted morality, and an overall incapacity for freedom. Proponents of slavery and its bedrock ideology of black inferiority used these images to reinforce existing paradigms of racial difference and legitimate the ownership of black people as property. Photographs of enslaved people defy easy categorization because they are both the record and a relic of the brutal racism and domination at the core of chattel slavery. Images of enslaved women and men provide compelling and haunting documentation of individuals otherwise lost to the written historical record. Yet the history of such photographs is firmly embedded in the dynamics of exploitation and dehumanization that lay at the core of slavery.

Perhaps some of the best-known and most painful images of enslaved women and men are those created under the direction of Louis Agassiz, a Swiss-born and Harvard faculty zoologist. In 1850 Agassiz traveled to Columbia, South Carolina, at the invitation of Robert Wilson Gibbes, a prominent physician who taught at South Carolina College and also treated both elite white patients and the black people they held in slavery. During his time in South Carolina, Agassiz visited colleagues, delivered a series of lectures at the college, and spent his evenings at dinners hosted by families of the slaveholding gentry. He was, however, most excited about the opportunity to examine African-born slaves. Columbia's black population, nearly double the white population, included a small number of African-born women and men, and Gibbes located at least five and made them available for Agassiz to examine. "I took him to several plantations," Gibbes wrote, "where he saw Ebo Foulah, Gullah, Guinea, Coromantee, Mandingo and Congo negroes." After studying their bodies, Agassiz believed he had the physical evidence to support his theories of polygenesis—the separate human origins of Africans and Europeans—and racial hierarchy. He was, Gibbes wrote, satisfied "that they have differences from other races." Gibbes subsequently arranged for Joseph Thomas Zealy, an established daguerreotypist in Columbia, to photograph these enslaved African men and their American-born daughters in order to document Agassiz's findings. Once the images were made, Gibbes carefully wrote a label for each daguerreotype, noting names, specific African ethnic group or country, and American owners. Each photographed subject was thus identified as both a person and a specimen.[5]

One set of the Agassiz images consists of pictures of two women, Delia and Drana, stripped to the waist. Their dresses have been opened and pulled down to reveal their naked breasts. The women's exposed bodies are not presented as objects of sensual desire but as evidence of their debased condition—though, in the context of black women's enslavement, the line between the two motives was never sharply drawn. Stripped bare, their bodies, specifically their breasts, and by implication their health and reproductive history and capacities, were displayed



"Portrait of Renty, Congo, Plantation of B. F. Taylor, Esq."

Photographer: Joseph T. Zealy
1850 • daguerreotype

(Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 35-5-10/53037)

"Portrait of Jack (Driver), Guinea, Plantation of B. F. Taylor, Esq."

Photographer: Joseph T. Zealy
1850 • daguerreotype

(Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 35-5-10/53043)

"Portrait of Delia, American born, daughter of Renty, Congo"

Photographer: Joseph T. Zealy
1850 • daguerreotype

(Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 35-5-10/53040)

"Portrait of Drana, country born, daughter of Jack"

Photographer: Joseph T. Zealy
1850 • daguerreotype

(Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 35-5-10/53041)

for scientific scrutiny. Their photographic exposure mimicked the way in which enslaved women were stripped, prodded, probed, and examined in public slave markets. The daguerreotypes of Delia's and Drana's unclothed torsos convey, in the words of Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, "the pornography of their forced labor and of their inability to determine whether or how their bodies would be displayed."[6]

Delia and Drana could not control or openly object to how Zealy posed them and Agassiz viewed their living bodies or photographic representations. Art historian Lisa Gail Collins likens Zealy's studio to the scientist's laboratory and the camera to an "instrument of dissection," suggesting that Delia and Drana were required to stare directly at the camera and thus at Zealy, as well as subsequent viewers, to facilitate their presentation as scientific specimens.[7] The interest in documenting racial types allowed the setting aside of social conventions that forbade an enslaved person to look directly, eye to eye, at a white person. Yet having Delia and Drana meet the eye of the camera and viewer did not in fact place them on an equal footing with white people, because it departed from the standard approach to portrait photography. According to Alan Trachtenberg, mid-century photographers directed their subjects to stare off into the distance rather than directly at the camera, contemplating serious or pleasurable thoughts, depending on the preferred facial expression. Thus the pictures of Delia and Drana present carefully composed images of black women's bodies and faces that were designed to demonstrate their inherent racial difference and inferiority. We cannot know what Delia and Drana saw or thought when they looked at the camera and its operator. To men like Agassiz and Gibbes, taking photographs of Delia and Drana represented the advancing of scientific and technological knowledge. For Delia and Drana, however, having to undress in Zealy's studio and sit in front of his camera was yet another instance of bodily subjugation and exploitation. Today, these images stand out as painful historical relics of slavery's brutal and often sexual degradation and exploitation of black women's bodies. Yet these images are also important historical sources that prompt consideration of the lives of these specific women whose bodies were placed on display, as well as all the women and men whose bodies were controlled by their owners.

While the Agassiz/Zealy images confront the viewer with stark representations of slavery's physical, emotional, and sexual violence, our research also led us to consider another type of image in which enslaved women figure prominently. In the antebellum period, it was not uncommon for slaveholders to have pictures made of an enslaved woman holding the slaveholder's child. In this genre of photography, examples of which can also be found in Brazil and other slave societies, a black woman, or even a young girl, is often pictured with a white child in her arms or on

her lap, functioning as a human brace to hold the child steady. In other examples, such as the image titled "Father, Daughters, and Nurse," a black woman is positioned alongside older children and their father. The inclusion of a slave in these portraits of white children and families signaled the family's wealth and, like fancy clothes or jewelry, was a mark of status.[8] The presence of a black nurse also reflected the sentimentality slaveholders projected onto the black women who worked in their homes: the stereotypical "mammy," the stern but loving caretaker and devoted slave/servant, present as "a favored doll or pet, as a record of a treasured possession."[9] A viewer could see that the black subject was well dressed, suggesting that she was also well cared for—a counterweight to abolitionist arguments.

Unlike the images of Delia and Drana, photographs of female domestic workers did not aim to present an ostensibly objective documentation of racial typology. Yet enslaved women's presence in these images necessarily distinguishes them from other types of portraiture. In the nineteenth century, portraits were meant to highlight the sitter's individuality and confirm his or her personhood in what Alan Sekula describes as a "*private* moment of sentimental individuation."[10] In the so-called mammy photographs, however, black women were presented not as self-defined individuals but as implicitly bound to both the white child and its family as an object of subordination, however beloved. Working together, white photographers and slaveholders produced images that aimed to present slavery as an appropriate, beneficial, and benign institution based on a natural racial hierarchy. Such images create a visual narrative of the romantic myth of mutual obligation and affection, captured in that rhetorical image favored by slaveholders of the "family, white and black."[11] These pictures thus offer what Jacqueline Goldsby describes as "a *subjectively construed* interpretation of reality, one that is imposed upon us *formally*—through composition, framing, lighting, exposure, angle."[12] When we look at these images today, nearly a century and a half after slavery's demise, we see black women's physical presence, but we can also see their vulnerability to exploitation, violence, and sexual abuse, as well as the erasure of enslaved women's and girls' labor and the countless acts of sale, gift, and bequest that ruptured enslaved people's marriages and families.

What about images in which enslaved women sit alone, unaccompanied by white children or adults? At first glance these may appear more like traditional portraiture in which the individual presents herself to the camera and viewers. Although it is possible that some enslaved people had pictures made for their own possession, it is more likely that slaveholders also orchestrated the production of these images. Indeed, having favorite slaves pose for pictures was yet another way to assert control over black people's bodies and lives. Slaveholders sometimes used these images to illustrate their beneficence, as the owner of Louisa Picquet's mother

"Father, Daughters, and Nurse"

Photographer: Thomas Martin Easterly • c. 1850 • daguerreotype, hand-colored

(J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 84.XT.1569.1)

"Nursemaid with her charge," Arkansas

Photographer unknown • c. 1855 • ruby ambrotype, sixth plate, hand-colored

(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-5251)

did in 1859. Louisa Picquet, who was born in Columbia, South Carolina, around 1830, was separated from her mother, Elizabeth Ramsey, and her baby brother and sold to a New Orleans man when she was about thirteen. Picquet eventually obtained her freedom upon her master's death. Her mother and brother wound up in Texas, where they remained in bondage. When Picquet contacted A. C. Horton, her mother's owner, to inquire about purchasing her, he scoffed at the offer, insisting that despite Elizabeth Ramsey's advanced age she remained an able-bodied laundress and cook. To prove his point, Horton had Ramsey and her son dress in "their best possible gear" and pose together for a photographer to produce a picture that would "impress [the viewer] with the superior condition of the slave."[13] This picture has unfortunately either not survived or not yet been located and identified. Like the images of Delia and Drana, it was designed to supply visual evidence of the natural order and orderliness of slavery.

If mastery included the power to create and command images, we are left with the question of what these pictures meant to the women they represented. As archaeologist Maria Franklin reminds us, photographs would have been shared and available for viewing in slaveholders' homes.[14] The enslaved subjects of these images—who would not have commissioned the photographic session or posed in clothing of their own choice—would certainly have encountered the images and thought about them while living and working in their masters' households. In one carte-de-visite,[15] a young woman sits in a simple chair against a plain backdrop. Her hair is covered with a scarf, in a manner customary among enslaved women in the Southeast and possibly reflective of African traditions. Her hands are folded in the lap of her voluminous skirt, and she stares directly and stonily at the photographer and viewer. Hers is not a contemplative or reflective pose. Rather, she appears uncomfortable, possibly resigned, masking her inner self. A notation on the back of the image (which could have been made by the photographer at the time of processing the photograph or at a later date) identifies her simply as "A southern slave, Va. 1861."

Another carte-de-visite of an enslaved woman appears on a handwritten "Wanted" notice composed by Louis Manigault, a wealthy and prominent slaveholder, about a woman named Dolly, who freed herself by running away from his home in Augusta, Georgia, in April 1863, a few months after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. At the top of the page, we see a carte-de-visite image of Dolly. She sits in an ornate chair against a plain backdrop, and, as is common in photographs of enslaved women, her head is wrapped in a white kerchief. The image is cropped just below her shoulders. Was she sitting alone or holding one of the young Manigault children in her lap? She looks directly ahead and returns the viewer's gaze with her own stern look.

Woman wearing a headwrap

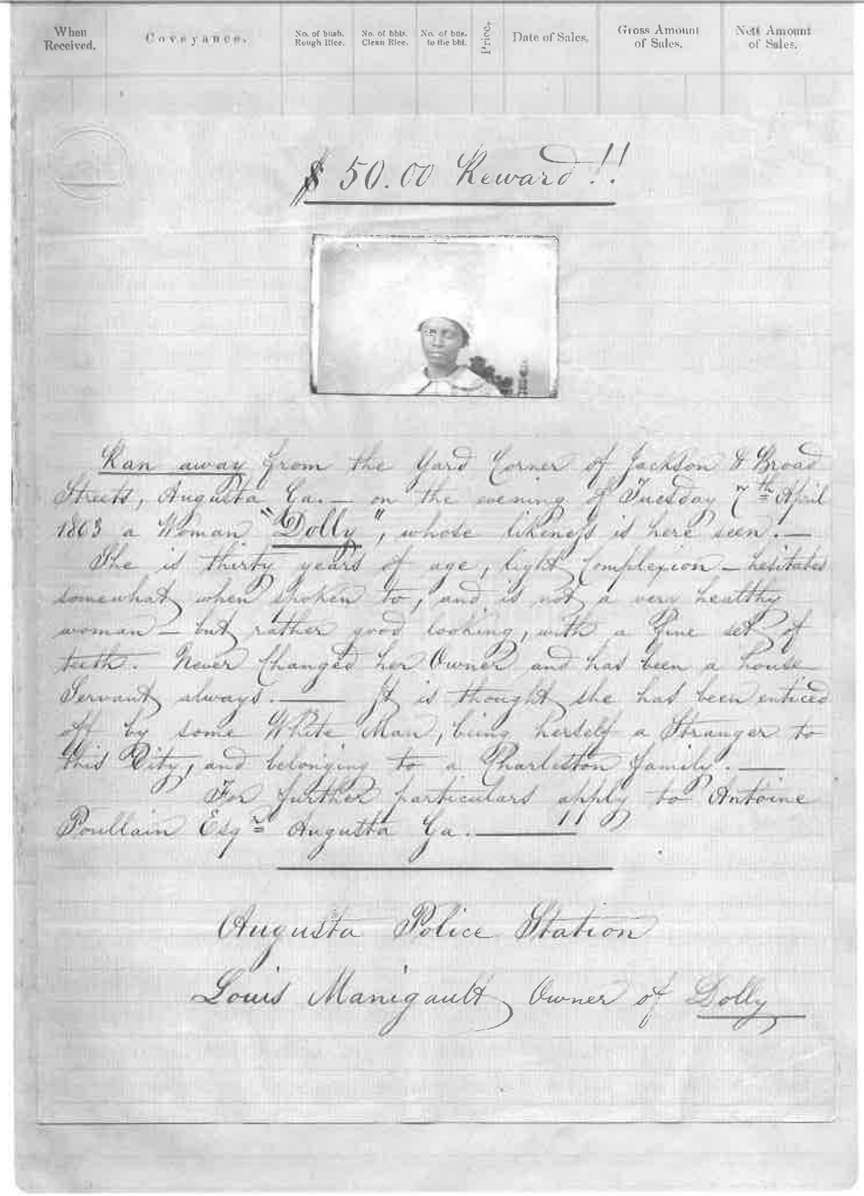
Photographer unknown

1861 • carte-de-visite

(Randolph Linsly Simpson African-American Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, JWJ MSS 54)

As part of Manigault's account of Dolly's escape, the image functions as a component of his narrative of mastery, identifying her as stolen property that should be located and returned. Like the neatly hand-printed labels that Zealy affixed to his daguerreotypes of Renty, Jack, and Delia, Manigault's written notice classified both Dolly and her photograph as property. Dolly's face appears at the top of the notice as a form of documentation, displaying the missing item. The photograph is not a portrait of a young woman but visual confirmation of Manigault's ownership.[16]

Dolly was, in Manigault's estimation, "rather good looking"; she possessed a "fine set of teeth" and "hesitates somewhat when spoken to," making her, depending on one's interpretation, either shy or appropriately subservient. This detailed written assessment of her body and demeanor reinscribed Manigault's claims to Dolly's physical body by making clear his power to look at and inspect her and also make her available for public display and scrutiny in writing and visual imagery. It is also indicative of his own fixation with her body and beauty. Manigault explained that he had owned Dolly since her birth; she had "never changed owner" and had always worked as a house servant.[17] By suggesting her physical fragility and limited geographic knowledge of the surrounding area, Manigault's version of Dolly's life securely anchored her in his patriarchal household, both as property and as an



"Dolly"

Photographer unknown • c. 1863 • carte-de-visite and manuscript page

(University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, Manigault Papers, no. 484, vol. 4)

Reward notice for a runaway female slave from the plantation journal of Louis Manigault.

enslaved woman who lived and worked in close proximity to her master. Unable to believe or unwilling to acknowledge publicly that Dolly could have imagined herself free from his control, Manigault surmised that she had been "enticed off by some White Man."[18] Other documentation raises the possibility that she had in fact fled with a free black man who had been courting her.[19] Louis Manigault offered fifty dollars to the person who captured and returned her, but Manigault never saw Dolly again.

From her perch on the top of the page, Dolly haunts the archives, her photographic presence always reminding us of her bodily absence from Manigault's plantation and possession. Like so many other images of enslaved and freed black people, the picture of Dolly confirms her existence but reveals precious little about her life. What did she envision when she planned her escape? What did she see around her when she stepped outside her master's yard and closed the gate behind her? When we look at her picture, we see her life in slavery, but we also recognize that the picture is a testament to her liberation. Dolly's picture, with its mysteries and unanswered questions, is one image of what freedom looked like.

Representing the Appeal

Slaveholders' and scientists' images of enslaved women and men stand in stark contrast to the ways in which black people represented themselves in the 1850s. Portraits commissioned by free black men and women, as well as images created by sympathetic white abolitionists, convey self-worth, dignity, beauty, intellectual achievement, and leadership.

In the decade before the Civil War, free black men and women lived on dangerous ground. In a society that had long equated blackness with lifelong and heritable servitude, to be free and black was to be a social and legal anomaly. The dangers free black people faced became even greater in 1850 with congressional approval of the Fugitive Slave Law. The law reinvigorated the Fourth Article of the U.S. Constitution and also a 1793 law governing the return of fugitive slaves, as property, to their owners. Placing the weight of the national government behind slaveholders' efforts to capture runaway slaves, the 1850 law held the state governments responsible for seizing and restoring runaways to their owners. It also criminalized and imposed stiff penalties for assisting fugitives or impeding their capture and arrest.[20] For free black people in the northern states, especially those, like Douglass, who had liberated themselves by escaping from slavery, freedom was ever more precarious.

It was during this period that many free black Americans set their sights

Portrait of Harriet Tubman (c. 1820–1913)

Photographer: H. B. Lindsley
c. 1864 • photograph

(Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries)

on Canada and Liberia as places where they could safely distance themselves from the threat of kidnapping and (re)enslavement. Images of black Americans who emigrated to Liberia thus add another dimension to the picture of black freedom. Photographic portraits depict men and women as refined and prosperous entrepreneurs and political leaders. Comfortable settings and reflective, thoughtful gazes, however, coexist with the understanding that freedom might be assured only through voluntary exile.

Photographic portraits commissioned by noted orators, activists, and leaders like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth advanced their antislavery campaigns in multiple ways. Photographs of Sojourner Truth are perhaps the best-known nineteenth-century photographic images of a black woman. Truth, born in 1797 in upstate New York, gained her freedom in the late 1820s when the laws of New York State finally abolished slavery. Historians Margaret Washington, Carla Peterson, and Nell Irvin Painter have written magnificently detailed histories of Truth's life and career as an antislavery and women's rights orator and activist.[21] As these scholars note, Truth's personal history of enslavement in New York stands as a powerful reminder that slavery was always a national issue.

Truth understood very well the economic and political power of creating and circulating her photograph. Having initially supported her abolitionist activities by selling the narrative of her life story, Truth later sold carte-de-visite and cabinet card portraits for thirty-three and fifty cents each.[22] "I am living on my shadow," she wrote, and eventually the images were distributed with the caption "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance."[23] She posed in a number of photographic studios. One Randall Studio portrait taken in Detroit, Michigan, around 1870 is a cabinet card of a seated Truth, her hands crossed in her lap as she gazes directly at the camera. As historian Nell Painter notes, "Sometimes she is dressed in the Quaker-style clothing that feminists and antislavery lecturers wore to distinguish themselves from showily dressed actresses, their less reputable colleagues in female public performance."[24] Truth posed in front of various backgrounds and with different props, such as books, flowers, and knitting, that identified her as middle-class, sophisticated, and respectable. She, like Douglass, appreciated the potential of photography, and because a receptive audience was eager to buy her pictures, she posed for at least fourteen.[25]

Like Douglass and other abolitionists, white and black, Truth crafted an image of herself that suggested her visions of the future—specifically, a future in which slavery and racism did not stigmatize and constrain all black Americans. She had, of course, engaged in the ultimate act of self-fashioning by changing her name from Isabella to Sojourner Truth when she embarked on her vocation as an itinerant preacher and orator.

Reflecting on that name, art historian Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw wrote:

> Africans that arrived on slave ships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were given new names as they were sold into slavery. It was not until a slave was freed that he/she was able to name him/her-self. This practice of self-naming may be found in the case of Isabella Dumont, who as a free woman became Sojourner Truth. . . . Truth was able to sell a reproduction of her body in order to sustain its source. In this manner the formerly enslaved woman was able to achieve an ironic sort of control over the sale of the representation of her selfhood.[26]

Truth's image has been engraved on the public mind since the 1860s. She used photography to construct a new image of herself as a free woman and as a woman in control of her image. Similar modes of self-representation are found within many of the portraits in this book.

Frederick Douglass, too, used images of himself to enhance his arguments against slavery and racism. Douglass's enthusiasm for photography stemmed in large measure from his frustration with widespread racist imagery and caricature. Indeed, he decried the prevailing depictions of black people by white artists: "Negroes can never have impartial portraits at the hands of white artists. It seems to us next to impossible for white men to take likenesses of black men, without most grossly exaggerating their distinctive features."[27] Literary studies scholar John Stauffer observes that abolitionists, black and white, especially prized photography because it allowed them to translate their aspirations into material reality: "Their desire to transform themselves and their world fueled their interest in images, which helped to make visible the contrast between their dreams of reform and the sinful present."[28] Photography, Douglass maintained, offered black people of all backgrounds, including the "servant girl," the opportunity to craft their own versions of themselves.

During the early years of the Civil War, abolitionists continued to employ photography to help force the question of slavery to the center of attention in the North. When the fighting began in 1861, many northerners, including President Abraham Lincoln, maintained that the principal aim of the war was to restore the Union, not to end slavery. Though the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 signaled a clear shift in the meanings and consequences of the war, many white northerners remained skeptical at best about the prospect of recognizing some four million enslaved black people as citizens of the United States. In New York City, white working-class antipathy toward the war and the Emancipation Proclamation was stoked by rigid federal draft regulations. Federal law required all eligible men to enter a draft lottery but exempted those white men who could either hire a substitute or pay a $300 fee. Free black men, who were not considered citizens of the United States, were also exempt. Shortly after the July 1863 lottery began in New York, white workers unleashed a wave of bloodshed and destruction, first taking aim at military and government buildings but then quickly setting their sights on black people and symbols of black freedom. Draft rioters assaulted a black fruit vendor and a young boy on the city streets and then advanced on the Colored Orphan Asylum, located on Fifth Avenue between Forty-Third and Forty-Fourth streets. On that July day, 233 children were in the building's classrooms, nursery, and infirmary when a mob of white men, women, and children, wielding clubs and bats, looted and burned the orphanage.[29]

Middle-class northerners, too, worried about what emancipation and black freedom might mean. They feared that newly freed black southerners would refuse to remain in agricultural labor, sparking a national economic upheaval; and they speculated that freed black people would seek bloody revenge against whites.

Prominent white abolitionists hoped to temper such anxieties by hiring photographers to reimagine the lives of those men, women, and children after bondage, and specifically by circulating images of young children who had been freed by the Union army in 1863. In photographic studios in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans, the children were usually posed in formal Victorian dress, though some appeared in tattered work clothes. These photographs were intended to show the detrimental effects of slavery and promote the education of freed children and adults. Regarding these cartes-de-visite, historian Mary Niall Mitchell says, "As members of the first generation of African Americans to grow up in the former slaveholding republic, the black child—freedom's child—represented the possibility of a future dramatically different from the past, a future in which black Americans might have access to the same privileges as whites: landownership, equality, autonomy."[30]

These mesmerizing photographs of freed children still have resonance—and so do their captions: "Isaac and Rosa, emancipated slave children from the free schools of Louisiana," "Rebecca, a slave girl from New Orleans," and "Virginia slave children rescued by Colored Troops—as we found them and as they are now." Mitchell's impressive research on these photographs offers the most comprehensive study of their effect on both southern and northern audiences. The images evoked a new and emerging class of freed blacks through such studio props as an American flag, furniture, and clothing. Public sentiment was stirred by the juxtaposition of children posed without shoes, wearing ragged clothes, and images of the same children wearing neatly pressed, undamaged jackets, dresses, shoes, and pants. These before-and-after photographs represented the formerly enslaved children as worthy of being liberated and made them appear attractive to a northern audience.

Mitchell's argument also connects the sale of these photographs to the sale of the black human form on the auction block. This reading is persuasive when one looks at the images of the light-skinned children and reflects on their "desirability" as presented there.[31] Northern viewers' fascination with these images is evidenced in the large number of them in private and public collections today. These "neatly dressed 'emancipated slave children' who were attending school . . . presented education as the means to transform young former slaves into models of discipline and propriety [and, furthermore,] eradicate slavery's effects, producing instead industrious young people with the desires of free market consumers."[32] One wonders if the children in these images had any inkling of the complex ideas behind their poses and the use of props such as the flag to depict an idealized vision of American freedom constructed primarily by white reformers and photographers.

"As we found them"
("Virginia slave children rescued")

Photographer: Peregrine F. Cooper
1864 • carte-de-visite

(Courtesy of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, 1982:1347:0001)

These before-and-after photographs "civilized" the emancipated children and made them appear worthy of sympathy to a northern audience.

"As they are now"
("Virginia slave children rescued")

Photographer: Peregrine F. Cooper
1864 • carte-de-visite

(Courtesy of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, 1982:1347:0002)

Photographs recorded the presence of the black soldier and the black worker in the American South and now help a twenty-first-century reader to reimagine the landscape of black people's desire to be active in their own emancipation. Even if many white northerners and politicians repeated that the war's principal aim was to save the Union, free and enslaved black people insisted otherwise. In the earliest weeks of the war, enslaved people expressed a keen understanding of the war's potential to advance their quest for freedom. On May 23, 1861, barely one month after the war began, three enslaved men in Virginia ran away from their master, Confederate colonel Charles K. Mallory. They fled to Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, and presented themselves to Union general Benjamin Butler. The following day, a Confederate officer arrived and demanded that Butler return the three slaves under the provisions of both the U.S. Constitution and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Butler, a Massachusetts lawyer, refused, claiming that the men were "contraband of war" because they had been used as laborers to build enemy (Confederate) fortifications. He then hired the men to work as laborers for the Union. During the summer of 1863, self-liberated slaves flocked to Union camps, hoping for similar protection. By the end of the summer, Congress endorsed Butler's policy of harboring and hiring fugitive slaves rather than returning them to their Confederate owners.[33]

Photography documented the quest for freedom among free and enslaved black Americans. By the 1860s photography had become a booming business; some 3000 Americans worked as photographers, capturing a wide range of black and white sitters in portraits that emphasized racial features, class attitudes, gender roles, and personal achievement. Many of these photographed subjects were soldiers; others were enslaved men, women, and children and newly freed blacks who worked as teamsters, chimney sweeps, carpenters, blacksmiths, artisans, bricklayers, seamstresses, shoemakers, washerwomen, cooks, gardeners, and midwives. White and black Americans worked as studio and itinerant photographers during the war in Washington, D.C., New York City, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, Concord, and New Bern, North Carolina, among other cities. They included Henry P. Moore, Peregrine F. Cooper, Charles Paxson, E. H. & T. Anthony, Timothy O'Sullivan, Mathew Brady & Company, Alexander Gardner, Samuel A. Cooley, Ball & Thomas Studios, and the many others whose work appears in this book.

Some traveled great distances to photograph soldiers in military camps, while others preserved the memories of the war through souvenir photographs and other

"Contraband Yard"

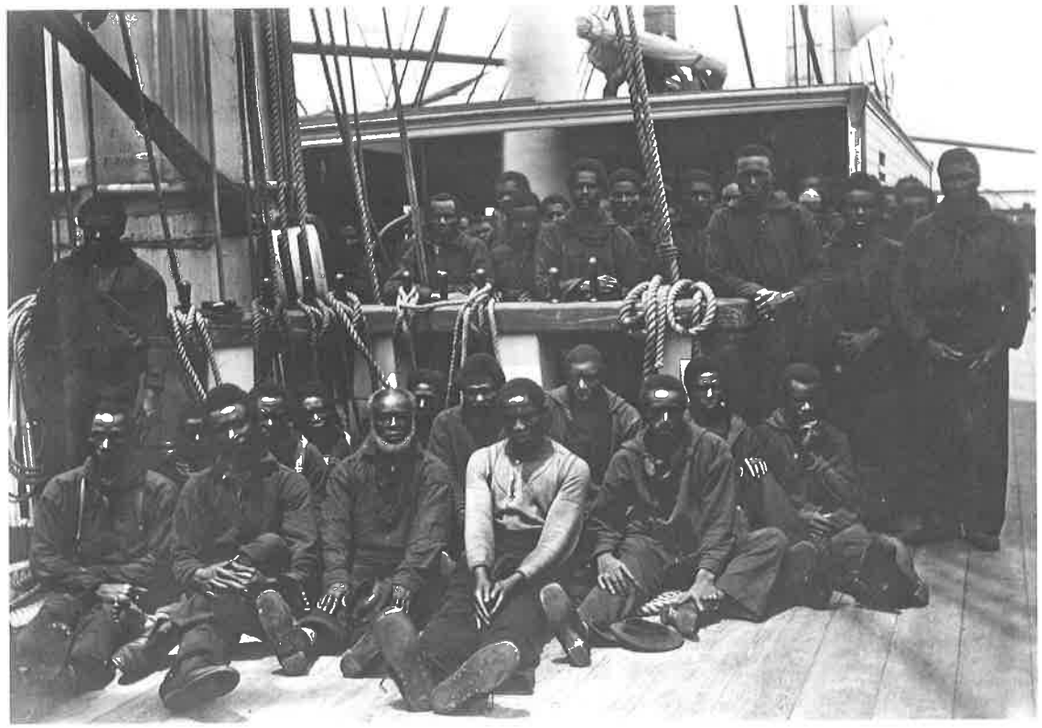
Photographer: J. W. Taft, Oak Gallery • no date • carte-de-visite

(Randolph Linsly Simpson African-American Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, JWJ MSS 54, folder 498)

A large group of people in various styles of dress are shown under trees and behind houses. The tag "Contraband Yard" is written in ink on the side.

types of visual memorabilia in their home studios. They provided a curious public with full-length and three-quarter-length portraits of black soldiers standing in front of flags, holding their weapons and gear. Several images show white soldiers posing with their black cooks and servants. Still others depict black soldiers and white officers in campsites, guarding weapons, sitting in front of tents and bunkers, and laboring in the fields. These souvenirs offered loved ones hope and an awareness of the plight of the soldiers, highlighting their bravery and service to a nation that had not yet recognized them as full citizens. The images speak to the depth of black soldiers' commitment to their enslaved brothers and sisters and to their country.

Henry P. Moore's "Contrabands aboard the U.S. Ship *Vermont,* Port Royal, South Carolina, 1862–63," is an especially engaging image precisely because



"Contrabands aboard the U.S. Ship *Vermont*, Port Royal, South Carolina"

Photographer: Henry P. Moore • c. 1862–1863 • albumen print

(Boston Athenaeum, AB54S M00.h. [no. 2])

of the ways in which it reflects a particular moment in the history of black freedom during the Civil War and also evokes the longer history of the African diaspora. In this image some thirty-four black men are gathered on the deck of a Union warship. The men, identified collectively as "contrabands," had liberated themselves by running away from their masters and gaining refuge with Union forces. Dressed in Navy-issued clothing, they sit around the ship's mainmast, looking at Moore and his camera. The image highlights both enslaved men's engagement with the war and the prevailing political debates over slavery and Union war policy. And yet it does not present a picture of black empowerment in freedom. Instead, like many Civil War–era photographs of black refugees, it renders their transition from slavery to freedom as an orderly and peaceful change rather than a monumental reordering of society. The men in this image are seated on the ship's deck; they do not assume positions of authority or control in relation to the vessel and its weapons, its white crew and officers (who are not pictured), or the viewer. In this regard, the image is suggestive of the Middle Passage and the 12 to 14 million African captives forced into the holds and onto the decks of slaving vessels. Black men's freedom is figured against a back story of captivity, dislocation, and death.

Legacies of Emancipation

Freedom did not occur instantaneously with the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, or with the war's end and the subsequent ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. Rather, freedom unfolded over time and space and was informed as much by memories of the past as by expectations and visions for the future. Portraits of former slaves interviewed for the Slave Narratives collection of the WPA and pictures of "slave reunions," for example, remind us that only the institution of slavery died in 1865. The people who had been enslaved survived through the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Images of slaves and their freeborn descendants suggest the durability of cultural traditions across the generations, such as the patterns of quilts made by black women and girls in Gee's Bend, Alabama.

Photographs also documented the work of black men and women in turpentine and logging camps and laying tracks for the railroads. Called "convict laborers," they had in effect been forced into another form of slavery.

Even with the rise of new forms of legalized exploitation, oppression, and segregation, the medium of photography galvanized African Americans into documenting their own existence and celebrating their freedom. Across the country black people visited photographic studios or the makeshift tents of itinerant photographers. African American photographers helped to re-image and reimagine their black sitters. The photographs range from Buffalo soldiers posing outside a campsite, family portraits, and newly built schools to leaders of the Reconstruction era and campaigners for higher education, such as Booker T. Washington and Mary McLeod Bethune. Photographs of students on the campuses of Howard University, Hampton, Tuskegee, and Bethune-Cookman exemplify the promise of the future for freed blacks.

Photography documented the promise and hope of emancipation through the subjects' framing, poses, and dress. Their clothing and gazes highlighted their sense of racial pride. Props such as the American flag—whether draped inside the home or over a horse—called attention to the patriotism of this new class. Mirrors and books encouraged viewers to speculate about the sitters' beauty and access to

knowledge. Images of parades and Emancipation Day celebrations throughout the South chronicled liberation and raised political awareness among the current generation and those that followed.

The photographic images collected in this book are compelling in large measure not only because they offer us a visual record of the history of slavery and emancipation but because they also foster an affective sense of connection to the past. Scholars and theorists of photography have discussed the medium's power to elicit and shape viewers' emotional responses by evoking milestones from birth to death. Photographs of enslaved and free black people allow us to contemplate not only the history of slavery and emancipation but also our continued ties to that history and its legacies. As literary scholar Marianne Hirsch notes in her work on photography, family, and memory, photographs can provide an especially meaningful sense of connection over time and place for people whose lives were "shaped by exile, emigration and relocation."[34] In the African American context, the commodification of people and the dehumanization and degradation implicit in chattel slavery worked to exclude and erase countless black women, men, and children from the written historical record. Photographs of enslaved and emancipated black people, therefore, stand out, not only as critical historical records and relics that help us understand the past but also as vital images that confirm our ties to forebears whose names and lives we do not know. This photographic archive thus serves as a type of "family album," allowing contemporary readers to envision a collective history that recognizes the range and complexity of the black experience in slavery and freedom.

This reading of photographs made during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and from the dawn of the twentieth century through the early thirties, investigates how black pride and identity were posed and reconsidered by photographers and their subjects. In the following chapters we construct a narrative that exposes a broader visual history of America, from the mid-1840s to the mid-1930s, through photographs, letters, newspaper accounts, and legal documents. Fashioning this history through the eyes of a photo historian and an African Americanist forced us to leave our comfort zones and explore new territories, which resulted in expanding our research and finding new ways to tell this story to a wider audience. The photographs represent the range of processes available to image-makers over this period, from daguerreotypes and ambrotypes to cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards to stereographs and larger albumen and silver gelatin prints. Some have been published in other volumes on the black experience in America, but many have not; taken together, these selected images open up a new discussion of how celebrations are formed, monuments are experienced, memory is preserved, and work, family, and friendships are honored.

Studio portrait of young woman with hat, standing at a gate

Photographer unknown • no date • tintype

(Cheryl Finley, private collection, Ithaca, New York)