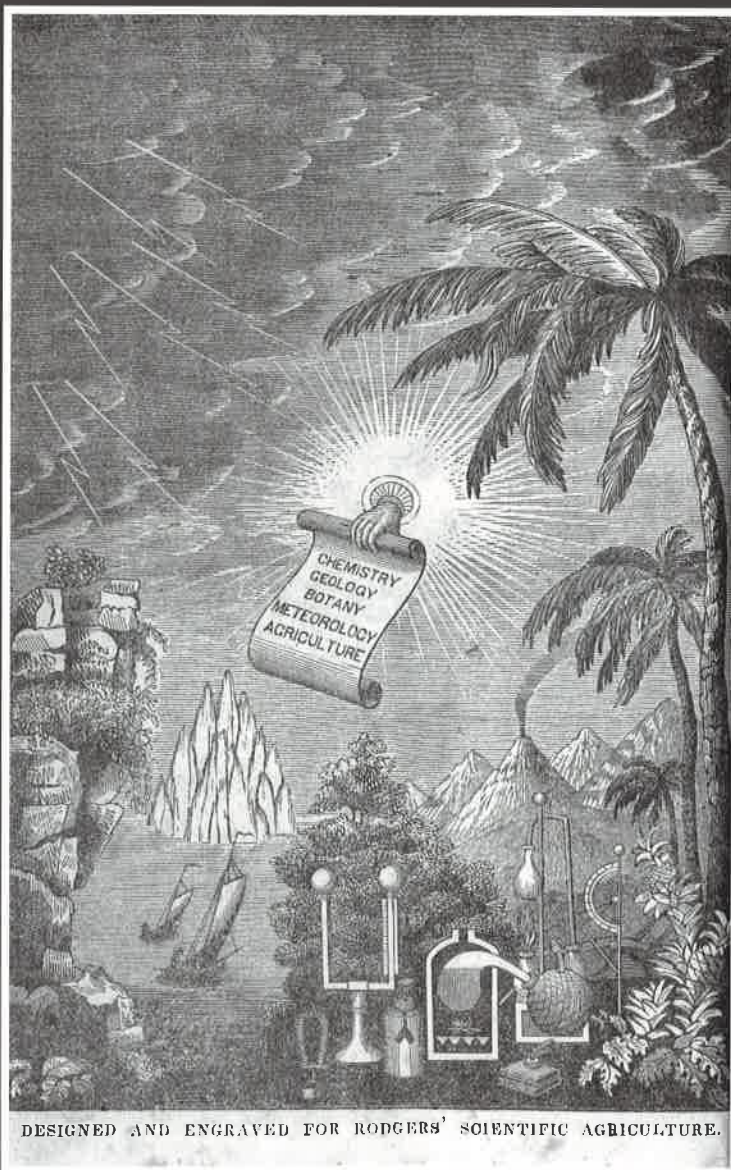


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environment is subordinate to a theoretical argument about identity creation.

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Remember Me to Miss Louisa: Hidden Black-White Intimacies in Antebellum America. By Sharony Green. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015. xx, 199 pp. Cloth, \$36.00. Paper, \$24.95.)

Sharony Green is several paragraphs into describing a remarkable document—an 1847 letter from an enslaved woman, Lucile Tucker, to her master, Rice Ballard—when she hits upon something. “Though Ballard could be ruthless,” she writes, “Tucker saw something unorthodox in him and asked for her freedom” (p. 40). This bears repeating: she “saw something unorthodox in him.” To consider that insight—from a self-supporting woman who remained enslaved, hoping from within the awful circumstances of her life that her request might not go unheeded—is to remember in a profoundly empathetic way that slavery’s diversity of forms allowed its victims to probe its facade for cracks.

Green’s new book, *Remember Me to Miss Louisa*, delves deep into one particular crevice. Despite its expansive title, the book only glances at most forms of interracial intimacy, focusing primarily on African American women in Cincinnati and New Orleans whose masters freed and subsequently supported them, presumably on the basis of their relationships with each other. Green hopes to show how intimacy, the kind of “emotional and physical closeness” that allows both parties “to reap some benefit,” complicated race relations in both slavery and freedom (p. 8).

This is an enticing subject, and Green’s fine archival research has uncovered evidence that Ballard, despite much inattention, “cared” enough for a woman he freed to inquire after her and send her money (p. 52). And Green shows that African American women “maneuvered strategically” to get what they could out of slavery (p. 64).

But intimacy is hard to demonstrate and so are intimacy’s consequences. Because the men Green examines did not say why they supported their former slaves, much of the book’s argument comes down to whether or not black women spoke “confidently, even assertively” to white men (p. 84). If they did, then this might indicate intimate discourse. In Tucker’s letter, was her description of emancipation as “a matter I desire to have arranged as soon as possible” an assertion of right, as Green argues (p. 39)? Does reading the line, as Green does, as “I *deserve* to have arranged” (p. 38, emphasis added), elevate the letter to evidence of “intimacy” or does it remain merely a polite request to someone with power? (Green helpfully reproduced several letters here so that readers can decide for themselves.) Much depends on an indeterminate *desire*; other misreadings are scattered throughout the book. And how can one possibly evaluate Green’s contention that nineteenth-century America’s “restlessness . . . was due in part to Southern white men who quietly invested themselves in black women and children” (p. 34)?

The book’s evidence will not stretch so far. The fascinating final chapter tracks the mixed-race children of two white brothers; the other chapters consider two men and one woman (along with the people who participated in relationships with them)—an insufficient source base to demonstrate that cross-racial, and, crucially, cross-class, networks of support were, as Green argues, “prevalen[t]” (p. 11). What if these relationships were as unorthodox as Tucker perceived them to be?

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Measuring Manhood: Race and the Science of Masculinity, 1830–1934. By Melissa N. Stein. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. 354 pp. \$94.50.)

This readable book traces the interplay of race and sex as co-constitutive categories over more than a century in the United States, demonstrating their intense and complex im-