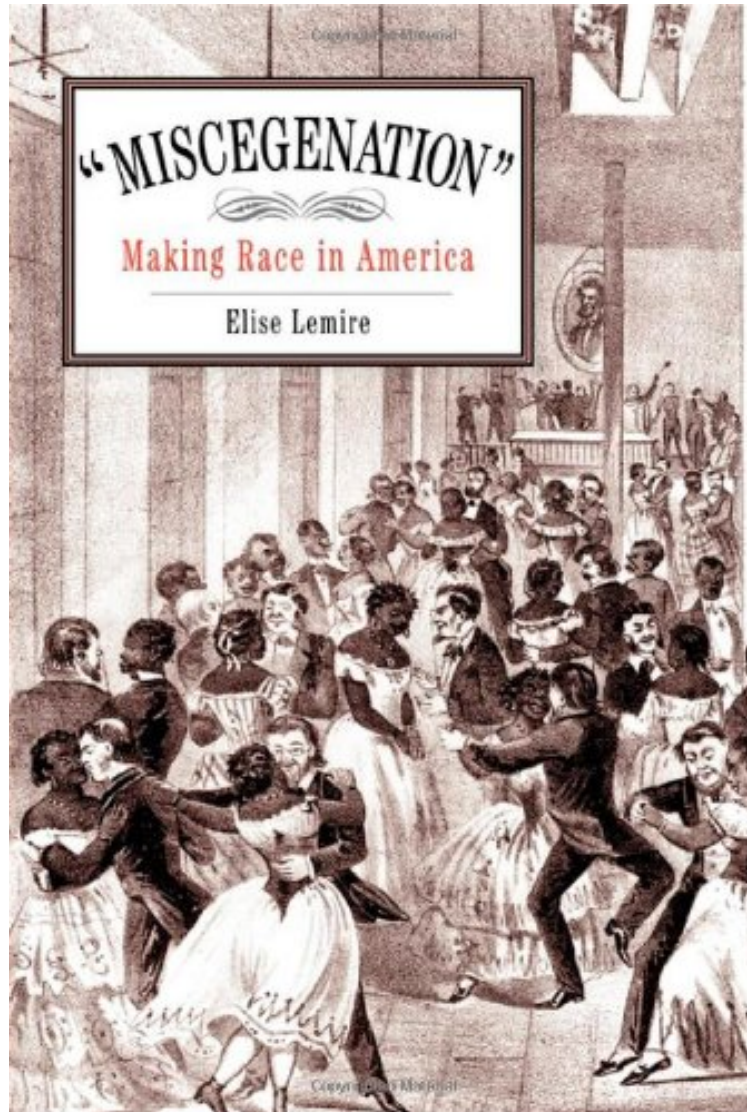


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"Miscegenation": Making Race in America

Elise Lemire

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#1526265 in Books University of Pennsylvania Press 2009-05-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x .49 x 5.981, .75 #File Name: 0812220641216 pages | File size: 15.Mb

Elise Lemire : "Miscegenation": Making Race in America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised "Miscegenation": Making Race in America:

2 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Thorough but difficult to readBy ddsharperMeaning absolutely no offense towards the author, I found this book too difficult to read, and impossible to complete. Generally, I say nothing, unless I can offer a great review, but because of the importance of this topic, and because of the recurrence of miscegenation as an agenda to destroy the black race, I had to comment. I think the book should be purchased, mainly due to the fact that is offers great information, but at the same time, seemed, at every pass, to be trying to make points,

that in my non-academic mind, were hard to discern. Perhaps it is a sign of the times. The average reader wants a kind of conversational prose, versus the academic analysis of history, like that written in 'Lies my teacher told me'. I would like to read this information in a rearranged and less academic tenor, and perhaps I will be able to understand the take-away message. That being said, it is obvious that this author spent countless hours of research before penning the tome, and blood, sweat and tears in writing it. I think those in the ivory towers of America are torn between satisfying the erudite requirements and critical eyes of their colleagues, and thus many are forced to produce work that is opposite the concept of low hanging fruit. If you are an academic type, I am sure this book will give you what you need, but if you are like me, an average Joe, you will labor to complete the book, in my opinion. I'd suggest checking out the preview before taking this on, or checking it out for yourself, since I could be wrong.

In the years between the Revolution and the Civil War, as the question of black political rights was debated more and more vociferously, descriptions and pictorial representations of whites coupling with blacks proliferated in the North. Novelists, short-story writers, poets, journalists, and political cartoonists imagined that political equality would be followed by widespread inter-racial sex and marriage. Legally possible yet socially unthinkable, this "amalgamation" of the races would manifest itself in the perverse union of "whites" with "blacks," the latter figured as ugly, animal-like, and foul-smelling. In *Miscegenation*, Elise Lemire reads these literary and visual depictions for what they can tell us about the connection between the racialization of desire and the social construction of race. Previous studies of the prohibition of interracial sex and marriage in the U.S. have focused on either the slave South or the post-Reconstruction period. Looking instead to the North, and to such texts as the Federalist poetry about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, Edgar Allan Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," and the 1863 pamphlet in which the word "miscegenation" was first used, Lemire examines the steps by which whiteness became a sexual category and same-race desire came to seem a biological imperative.

"Lemire opens new paths of inquiry into the invention of race and of whiteness, as well as into the history of love and sexual desire in the United States." Martha Hodes, New York University "This is an exciting book. Lemire convinces the reader that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed an often shrill argument for intra-racial, as opposed to inter-racial, coupling in the northeastern United States. Making love across the racial divide between black and white thus came to appear as a contradiction in terms, since only making miscegenation was possible." Werner Sollors, Harvard University "The sexualizing of race and the racializing of sex have shaped U.S. society in powerful and destructive ways. Lemire's brief, well-researched, and thoughtful book illustrates how key components of this protean process became part of the worldview of nineteenth-century white society." Choice About the Author Elise Lemire, Associate Professor of Literature at Purchase College, State University of New York, is the author of *Black Walden: Slavery and Its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts*, also available from the University of Pennsylvania Press.