

The Miscegenation Hoax (1863)

Sources: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miscegenation>

<http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/miscegenation.html>

Kaplan, S. (1949, July). "The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864," *Journal of Negro History*, 34 (3), 274-343.

According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1981), *miscegenation* means "a mixture of races," especially "marriage or cohabitation between a white person and a member of another race" (728). The term was first used in an anonymous pamphlet distributed in New York City in 1863. The pamphlet claimed that the goal of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party was the "interbreeding" of "White" and African Americans in the United States. Many people thought the pamphlet, *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, was written by abolitionists who supported the idea. In February 17, 1864, a Democratic congressman denounced the pamphlet in a speech delivered to the House of Representatives. He claimed it represented the social philosophy of the Republican Party.

The actual authors of the pamphlet were an editor and reporter from the *New York World*, a pro-Democratic Party newspaper. They wrote it to use stir up racist attitudes among White voters as part of the newspaper's opposition to Abraham Lincoln's reelection campaign.

A. "The miscegenetic or mixed races are much superior, mentally, physically, and morally to those pure or unmixed,' the author proclaimed. Furthermore, he argued, the strength of the American nation stemmed "not from its Anglo-Saxon progenitors, but from all the different nationalities. . . All that is needed to make us the finest race on earth is to engraft upon our stock the negro element."

B. "It is idle to maintain that this present war is not a war for the negro . . . It is a war, if you please, of amalgamation . . . a war looking, as its final fruit, to the blending of the white and black . . . Let the war go on. . . until church, and state, and society recognize not only the propriety but the necessity of the fusion of the white and black—in short, until the great truth shall be declared in our public documents and announced in the messages of our Presidents, that it is desirable the white man should marry the black woman and the white woman the black man."

C. "[T]he solution of the negro problem will not have been reached in this country until public opinion sanctions a union of the two races. . . that in the millennial future, the most perfect and highest type of manhood will not be white or black but brown, or colored, and that whoever helps to unite the various races of man, helps to make the human family the sooner realize its great destiny."

1. According to these quotes, what is the author's attitude toward the mixing of the races?
2. According to these quotes, what is the reason for the American Civil War?
3. In your opinion, what does the purpose of the miscegenation hoax of 1863 tell us about racial attitudes in New York City at that time?
4. In your opinion, have attitudes about race in the United states significantly changed since that time? Explain your views.