

Is There an American Negro Race?

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The study recently made to answer this question consists primarily of a detailed morphological description and analysis of a sample of one hundred adult male Negro skulls of the T. Wingate Todd collection of Western Reserve University. The crania represent the earliest (1919-1921) acquisitions to the collection, mainly from the post-World War I period when the Cleveland Negro population consisted to a large extent of immigrants from the Deep South.

A comparison with West African Negro data clearly demonstrated the predominately West African origin of the slave population. On a morphological basis in which 66 observations were used, the sample was divided into a phenotypically unmixed group of 76 crania which proved to be typically Sudanid, and a mainly Sudanid-British White hybrid group of 24 crania which exhibited various degrees of hybridization.

During the analysis of the data it became apparent that a study such as this one must be made on a varietal rather than a subspecific (Sudanid-British White-Walcolid rather than a Negroid-Caucasoid-American Indian) level. Since subspecies are only to a somewhat lesser extent polytypical than species, it is difficult to find morphological traits typical of all Negroids, Caucasoids, or Mongoloids. On the other hand, when comparisons are made on a varietal level, the results become meaningful in a historical sense, and morphological, metrical, indicial, and genotypic seriological data confirm each other.

A comparison with morphological data on 116 adult male crania of Southern Indians of the Walcolid variety, the element that was involved in the mixture, demonstrated conclusively that the Amerind ancestry of the American Negro is negligible, and could be ruled out entirely for this sample.

Measures of variability, as indicated by the standard deviations of the means of measurements and indices of various series and sub-series and the curves of morphological observations, clearly demonstrate not only that the Total American Negro but also the Full American Negro series are more variable than the Walcolid American Indian series in nearly every respect.

The American Negro hybrid sample is too small to warrant drawing any valid conclusions, except that you do get a reassortment of morphological characteristics. Since the reassortment of such traits is an established fact and since the 300 years available for mixture constitutes too brief a time span, it would be scientifically unsound to accept the interpretation that a new specifically American Negro variety or race has emerged as a stabilized entity. The application of the morphological method to a larger statistical sample of American Negro crania promises to provide a useful tool for future research in the field of hybridization. To return to our initial query, the answer is definitely negative if we de-

fine a race as a stabilized variety. The only way in which the Negro of the United States could be considered as constituting a race would be to designate it as a secondary or hybrid race or define the "race" as an inbreeding population irrespective of heterogeneity of origin.