

# “It is a very small article”: Mixed-Race Families in Antebellum America

**Findings:** Mixed-race families were a fairly common reality for powerful men in antebellum America. My summer research in personal papers, letters, and newspapers suggests that some men, perhaps in response to family dynamics, worked against racial oppression, while others regarded it as natural and inevitable—but not properly applicable to their lovers and children.

**Problem:** My access to the experiences of the black partners in these relationships is limited. To substantively examine the relation of affection and institutional racism, I need their testimonies.

**Response:** Using these findings to begin a larger project on family construction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with an emphasis on women’s experience within networks of obligation and affection.