

## Josiah Henson and Visual Culture in the Atlantic World

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In a paper titled “In Our Glory: Photography and the Black Life,” bell hooks proposes that “The camera was the central instrument by which blacks could disprove representations of us created by white folks.”<sup>1</sup> While photography has only been around since the invention of the daguerreotype in January 1839 by Louis J.M Daguerre, its impact in the United States and the Atlantic World has been immense. In an era of scientific racism and segregation after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, photography offered many Black Americans and Canadians the opportunity to document their existence in the historical record and proclaim an identity not based on prejudice and pseudo-science. This essay argues that analyzing the nineteenth-century visual culture of Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B Du Bois and Josiah Henson illustrates the nuanced ways photographs and illustrations were utilized in the broader campaign for social and political equality. First, this paper examines how visual culture worked to create and circulate legal, political and social identities by analyzing the examples of Truth, Douglass and Du Bois. Next, this paper uses their examples as the groundwork to examine the visual culture of Henson, arguing that an analysis of Henson’s photographs and illustrations demonstrates how visual culture was utilized to claim an identity uncircumscribed by race and racialized sight lines.

While a relatively new field, black visual culture in North America has been a rich and extensive research area for Historians. Early research in the field focused largely on Du Bois’ perception and use of photography, with David Lewis and Deborah Wills analyzing the three 363 photographs Du Bois compiled for the “American Negro” exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exhibition in *A Small Nation of People: W.E.B Du Bois & African American Portraits of Progress* (2003).<sup>2</sup> In their essays, Lewis and Wills argued that Du Bois photographs utilized in the Paris exposition “offered a provocative challenge to the blatantly stereotypical images of African Americans as inferior, unattractive, and unintelligent. Their photographs served as evidence that Black Americans were as multifaceted as anyone else, and they played an important role in making the black experience visible.”<sup>3</sup> Shawn Smith expanded on Du Bois’ understanding of photography in *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B Du Bois, Race and Visual Culture* (2004), arguing that Du Bois’ American Negro Exhibit functioned as a “counterarchive” that challenged nineteenth-century “race science” through visual evidence.<sup>4</sup>

Since then, the field has expanded to include the insights of other social reformers and intellectuals alongside a deeper analysis of black visual culture. In *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (2012), editors Maurice Wallace and

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<sup>1</sup> Shawn Smith, “Looking at One’s Self through the Eyes of Others” W.E.B. Du Bois’s Photographs for The Paris Exposition of 1900,” in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice Wallace and Shawn Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 276.

<sup>2</sup> David Lewis and Deborah Willis, *A Small Nation of People W.E.B. Du Bois & African American Portraits of Progress* (New York: Amistad, 2003), 23-24.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis and Wills, 51.

<sup>4</sup> Shawn Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 2-3.

Smith analyze the various ways in which nineteenth and early twentieth century Black Americans viewed, conceptualized and used photographs to enjoy new political identities and social positions.<sup>5</sup> Examining applying the theories of Douglass in numerous case studies, Wallace and Smith argue that photography offered Black Americans an opportunity to create and distribute a new identity that was not based on racial norms.<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer examine the ways in which Black American's enslavement, emancipation and freedom were represented and debated in photographs in *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* (2012). Analyzing Douglass, Truth and Charlotte Forten's use of photography, Willis and Krauthamer argue that in the antebellum period, photography played a key role in abolitionists' anti-slavery arguments and the broader campaign for social and civic equality.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, in the years after slavery was abolished, photography continued to empathize the subjects' refinement, economic success, skill and achievement.<sup>8</sup> This essay aims to expand on the work by these Historians by examining the visual culture of Henson in relation to the famous examples of the era. While Henson might not have written on visual culture in the same manner as the famous intellectuals of the era, his photographs and illustrations convey a similar sentiment expressed by Sojourner, Douglass and Du Bois and exemplify the nuanced ways photography was utilized to construct identity in the Atlantic world.

The mid to late nineteenth century was a period of profound uncertainty for many free Black Americans. Before the Civil War, to be free and black was to be a social and legal anomaly. Society in the United States had long equated blackness with lifelong servitude.<sup>9</sup> However, even after the end of the Civil War and the establishment of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, the situation had not improved. As Willis and Krauthamer point out, while the 'peculiar institution' may have officially been destroyed in 1865, new forms of legalized exploitation, oppression and segregation rose to take its place.<sup>10</sup> While slavery had been abolished, the general public still largely equated Black Americans as inferior to whites.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, in the broader campaign for social and civil equality, many prominent black writers and orators embraced visual culture as a means to and create and circulate identities that were not based on stereotypical racial norms. In the antebellum years, photography played a significant role in framing anti-slavery arguments. Abolitionists publicly circulated images of black abolitionists in order to inform the public of the cause, provide hope and inspiration to those fighting and to diffuse a black identity for the general public that conveyed notions of self-worth, dignity, beauty, intellectual achievement and leadership.<sup>12</sup>

For instance, the visual culture of Sojourner Truth exemplifies the identity many Black Americans created for themselves. In a famous photograph (Figure 1), Truth is pictured wearing a polka-dot dress and a leather apron. Truth faces forward and gazes towards the camera,

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<sup>5</sup> Maurice Wallace, and Shawn Smith, "Pictures and Progress" in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice Wallace and Shawn Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 5.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> Deborah Willis, and Barbara Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 28.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, 140.

<sup>9</sup> Willis and Krauthamer, 28.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 28.

displaying notions of pride and accomplishment in her actions as an abolitionist and women's rights activist. As Willis and Krauthamer note, Truth has a picture of her grandson, James Caldwell, on her lap.<sup>13</sup> Caldwell had enlisted in the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War, and its placement in the photo implies that Truth was proud in her grandson fighting in the conflict. Selling various portraits of her likeness for her political cause, this photograph demonstrates how Truth used the medium as a vehicle for crafting an identity that existed outside racial stereotypes. As Margaret Washington writes "Gazing past the camera in earnest, straight-faced solemnity, reflecting the perilous times and enormity of her mission, she also smiled slightly in some photos, exuding warmth sagacity, strength and intelligence. Her face, her bearing, and her powers of communication gave this African woman a certain star quality and appeal."<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, Douglass wrote considerably on how photography could be utilized as a catalyst for social and political change. His lectures "The Age of Pictures," "Lectures on Pictures," "Pictures and Progress," and "Life Pictures" stressed photography's power in creating and distributing new identities that were not based on stereotypical racial norms through self-representation.<sup>15</sup> As Douglass states, portraits uniquely enable us to "see our interior selves as distinct personalities as though looking in a glass," and from this "power we possess of making ourselves objective to ourselves," arises the potential for "self-criticism out of which comes the highest attainments of human excellence."<sup>16</sup> As such, from Douglass' perspective, portraits enable us to see ourselves from an outside perspective allowing for self-representation, contemplation and evaluation.

Writing in the era when scientific racism began to enter the mainstream consciousness in the Atlantic World, Douglass believed that the accessibility of the technology meant that anyone would be able to gain a portrait of themselves, regardless of social class. As Douglass states, "The humblest servant girl may now possess a picture of herself such as the wealth of kings could not purchase fifty years ago."<sup>17</sup> While the levelling of social hierarchies was viewed as important, Douglass additionally saw that the new medium would be able to help remedy the distorted representations of black individuals in popular culture.<sup>18</sup> In an 1849 review of *A Tribute for the Negro*, Douglass wrote "Negros can never have impartial portraits, at the hands of white artists. It seems to us next to impossible for white people to take the likeness of black men, without most grossly exaggerating their distinctive features."<sup>19</sup> Douglass continually castigated the racist representation of black people. "The negro is pictured with features distorted, lips exaggerated-forehead low and depressed- and the countenance made to harmonize with the popular idea of Negro ignorance, degradation and imbecility."<sup>20</sup> By criticizing the way in which white illustrators commonly depicted black individuals, Douglass emphasized how photography could be used to fix the problem of racist representation.

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* 30

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Wallace and Smith, 5.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* 6.

<sup>18</sup> Laura Wexler, "'A More Perfect Likeness' Frederick Douglass and the image of the Nation," in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice Wallace and Shawn Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 20.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* 21.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

Analyzing a photograph of Douglass taken between 1847 and 1852 (Figure 2) illustrates how he utilized visual culture to create an identity for himself that transgressed stereotypical racial norms. With an expressive gaze and fashionable clothes, Douglass frames himself as a highly regarded orator or public intellectual. As Willis and Krauthammer suggest, Douglass' daguerreotypes from this era offer a sense of how he viewed himself- "confident, handsome and vigorous."<sup>21</sup> A striking photo, Douglass would follow a similar formula in the portraits of him for the next forty years.<sup>22</sup> Various other portraits convey a similarly sharp and pointed demeanour with a focused gaze, suggesting the intensity in which carried out his mission for social and political equality.<sup>23</sup> As Hill suggests, Douglass chose to photograph himself in a similar manner repeatedly in order to challenge racial discrimination and to create an identity that distinguished him as equal to the white population.<sup>24</sup> Much like Truth, Douglas' theories and photographs show how visual culture was utilized to construct and diffuse identity that challenged scientific racism in the Atlantic World.

In addition to the voices of Truth and Douglass, Du Bois understood and utilized photography as an activist tool. A sociologist and civil rights leader, Du Bois coined the term "double consciousness" in *The Souls of Black Folk* to explain why Black Americans were discriminated and disenfranchised in the American South.<sup>25</sup> Utilizing visual terms, Du Bois describes double consciousness as "the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others."<sup>26</sup> For Du Bois, Black American subjectivity in the nineteenth century was mediated by a "white supremacist gaze," in which offensive images of blackness produced by the popular press influenced and supported the notion that they were inferior to the white population.<sup>27</sup> Much like Douglass' opinion on the power of portraits, Du Bois felt that the white supremacist gaze could be disrupted by images of Black American's that were "produced through the eyes of others."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, from Du Bois' perspective, visual culture produced outside the white-dominated popular press would be able to create and spread a new identity of Black Americans not built from racist stereotypes.

Du Bois put his theories of visual culture and identity to the test in the 1900 Paris Exhibition. Under the direction of Thomas Calloway, Du Bois assembled a collection of 363 photographs split up into four volumes entitled *Types of American Negroes, Georgia, U.S.A* (Volumes 1-3) and *Negro Life in Georgia, USA*.<sup>29</sup> The final collection contains a wide variety of images, from single and group portraits to interior pictures of Black American run stores and businesses.<sup>30</sup> As Lewis and Willis state, Du Bois' photographs contained "homes business, churches and communities that defied the image of blacks as improvised, lazy and ignorant... the

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<sup>21</sup> Willis and Krauthamer, 29.

<sup>22</sup> Ginger Hill, "'Rightly Viewed' Theorizations of Self in Frederick Douglass's Lectures on Pictures," in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice Wallace and Shawn Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 48.

<sup>23</sup> Willis and Krauthamer, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Hill, 48-49.

<sup>25</sup> Shawn Smith, *Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others*, 274. Marcy Dinius, *The Camera and the Press: American Visual and Print Culture in the Age of the Daguerreotype* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 208.

<sup>26</sup> Shawn Smith, *Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others*, 274.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 275.

<sup>30</sup> To see the full collection of photos, see: "African American Photographs Assembled for 1900 Paris Exposition," *Library of Congress*, accessed November 24, 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/anedub/dubois.html>.

photographs Du Bois chose exemplified dignity, accomplishment and progress”<sup>31</sup> In Du Bois’ only public comment about the exhibit, he stated that visitors would see “several volumes of photographs of typical Negro faces, which hardly square with conventional American ideas.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is clear that Du Bois utilized visual culture to challenge race science and diffuse a Black American identity that conveyed espoused equality, dignity and intellect.

With the views and examples of Truth, Douglass and Du Bois in mind, examining various photographs and illustrations of Henson further illustrates how visual culture was used to construct and circulate identity in the Atlantic World. Illustrated for the frontispiece for his 1858 autobiography, Henson’s portrait (Figure 3) is striking in its similarities to the famous portraits of Douglass, despite not being a photograph. In the engraving, Henson faces forward, meeting the reader with a confident gaze. The high level of confidence is matched by Henson’s suit jacket and bowtie, suggesting his status as a highly regarded orator or public intellectual. Henson is not a subject of pity or sympathy in his past life as a slave but is instead forming his image as a gentleman in the Atlantic World. As this image was designed for the frontispiece of the 1858 autobiography, it demonstrates how Henson aimed to portray black identity in the Atlantic World to a public that long equated blacks for slavery. As Henson remarks in the conclusion of *Truth Stranger Than Fiction. Father Henson's Story of His Own Life* (1858) “We look to the school, and the possession of landed property by individuals, as two great means of the elevation of our oppressed and degraded race to a participation in the blessings, as they have hitherto been permitted to share only the miseries and vices, of civilization.”<sup>33</sup> While currently fighting to demonstrate equality through the establishment of the Dawn Settlement and the British-American Institute, Henson also aimed to display equality to the public through the illustration.

While Henson’s visual culture continued to convey notions of self-worth and dignity after the 1858 illustration, the identity he constructed in photographs and illustrations shifted alongside the ongoing public perception that he was the main inspiration for “Uncle Tom” in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1851 novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Although the association that the two were one and the same began as early as 1853 after the publication of *The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the idea did not fully captivate the public mind until after the Civil War.<sup>34</sup> As Winks points out, in public lectures after the end of the Civil War, Henson was repeatedly introduced and applauded as the “original” Uncle Tom.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, later autobiographies make direct statements that Henson is the “original” Uncle Tom in their titles.<sup>36</sup> The earlier 1858 edition did not make the same connection.<sup>37</sup>

With that in mind, the illustration of Henson in the frontispiece of the 1881 edition of his autobiography conveys a different identity compared to the earlier 1858 illustration. (Figure 4) While Henson still meets the reader his eyes, the resolute facial expression from the earlier 1858

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<sup>31</sup> Lewis and Willis, 13.

<sup>32</sup> Shawn Smith, *Photography on the Color Line*, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Josiah Henson, *Truth Stranger Than Fiction. Father Henson's Story of His Own Life* (Cleveland, Ohio and Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1858), 171-172.

<sup>34</sup> Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Montreal, Kingston, London and Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 190.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> For instance, the title of the 1881 edition of Henson’s autobiography is: *An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson ("Uncle Tom"). From 1789 to 1881*. For an in-depth look at the saga around Henson’s association with Uncle Tom see *ibid.*, 187-193.

<sup>37</sup> The title of the 1858 edition of Henson’s autobiography is: *Truth Stranger than Fiction: Father Henson’s Story of His own Life*.

illustration is lost. In its place, Henson has a more sombre appearance, appearing to be in deep thought over his role in the abolitionist movement or the Dawn Settlement. Henson's outfit has changed as well, instead of the suit giving the impression of a gentleman, Henson is wearing what appears to be a plain overcoat. Alongside the beard and facial expression, Henson gives the appearance of a father figure who is contemplating his experience as a slave, and his role in the current battle for social and civic equality. As Willis and Krauthamer point out, in the period following the Civil War, portraits of elderly former slaves and younger men and women testified to "black American's survival and resiliency in the wake of slavery, and in the face of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century segregation and violence."<sup>38</sup> While Henson's identity may have shifted away from the gentlemen scholar à la Douglass, the image still conveys him as dignified, steadfast and free.

A similar identity can be seen in a photograph of Henson taken roughly in 1876 at the London School of Photography. (Figure 5) A black and white portrait, the photograph portrays Henson sitting in a chair, meeting the viewer with a heavy gaze that suggests reflection over the challenges and hardships in his life, without painting him as a subject of pity. The clothes and style of facial hair appear to be same as the 1881 illustration, giving Henson the identity of an elderly father figure with a wealth of knowledge from his life's experience. Additionally, the back of the photograph (Figure 6) illustrates the intensified association that Henson and Uncle Tom are one and the same, with the caption of "Rev. Josiah Henson, Better Known as Mrs. H. Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom."<sup>39</sup> Probably shot and sold during the fundraising efforts to make up the lawsuit debts from the controversy surrounding the British-American Institute,<sup>40</sup> the front and back of the photograph was likely designed to present Henson as the elderly Uncle Tom figure to drum up support for his speeches, due to immense popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* throughout the British Isles.<sup>41</sup> Overall, the photograph conveys an identical identity compared to the illustration from the 1881 edition of the autobiography, and it is possible that this picture served as the inspiration for the drawing.

While the identity of Henson as the elderly father figure persists in other photographs, the solemn facial expression does not. In another portrait photograph taken in 1876, but this time in Boston, (Figure 7) Henson is pictured once again sitting in a chair facing the camera, meeting the viewer directly with a confident gaze. While Henson has the same clothes and facial hair style, his smile and uplifting facial expression creates a more optimistic atmosphere compared to the previous photographs and illustrations examined. While still conveying notions of intellect and leadership, the uplifting mood in the photograph gives the impression that it symbolizes a celebration of Henson's life and achievements. As Willis and Krauthamer point out, in the decades following the Emancipation Proclamation, "countless black women and men embraced photography as a means of documenting their own existence and celebrating their freedom."<sup>42</sup> While by no means "voiceless," compared to various other Black Americans and Canadians, Henson's photographs, including this one, symbolize him carving out a place for himself in the historical record as a survivor of slavery, a proud father and community leader.

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<sup>38</sup> Willis and Krauthamer, 130.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. Josiah Henson, better known as Mrs. H. Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom," *Library of Congress*, accessed November 24, 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010647933/>.

<sup>40</sup> Jared Brock, *The Road to Dawn: Josiah Henson and the Story that Sparked the Civil War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2018), 232-233.

<sup>41</sup> Winks, 184-186.

<sup>42</sup> Willis and Krauthamer, 130.

Lastly, the photograph of Henson and his second wife Nancy holds a similar message. (Figure 8) The portrait photograph appears to have been taken in a studio and depicts Henson sitting in a chair with his right arm resting on a table. Nancy is standing directly to his left, with her right arm on his shoulder. Both are confidently staring at the viewer, conveying notions of self-worth, dignity intellectual achievement and leadership. While still displaying the identity of the knowledgeable father figure, Henson's face is more expressive much like Figure 7, capturing the connection between the two. As Henson writes in the 1881 edition of his autobiography, Nancy was “an estimable woman... She has made me an explement wife, and my cup has indeed run over with God’s mercies.”<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the continued perception that Henson is Uncle Tom is present, as the caption of the photo states, “Rev. Josiah Henson and Wife. The original “Uncle Tom.” Dresden, Ont.”<sup>44</sup> Overall, while unique compared than the photographs and illustrations analyzed earlier, the photograph paints the same identity for Henson.

However, the location of the image within Reverend Daniel Dana Buck’s *The Progression of the Race in the United States and Canada* demonstrates the photograph’s use in the broader fight for social and political equality. An evangelist from Chicago, Buck travelled throughout the United States and Ontario, conducting interviews and compiling photographs, aiming to create a record of African American achievement and progress to kick off the extension of civil rights.<sup>45</sup> In a similar manner to Du Bois, Buck utilized visual culture alongside his biographical text in order to circulate a black American identity that was not based on prejudices and stereotypes. As Buck writes in the frontispiece “I hope this book will carry out the purpose for which it has been planned. I have made an effort to bring before the public the business people of our race... We hope this work will bring about more union between the two races.”<sup>46</sup> While the photograph of Josiah and Nancy is just one example of the evidence utilized in Buck’s book, its presence illustrates the use of visual culture to challenge intolerance and portray a version of Black American and Canadian identity to the public that is not built from racialized stereotypes. As Reid-Maroney states, “There is no single narrative of progress in the book, but there is an urgent energy around Buck’s effort to include a full range of human experience and multiple ways of representing African American and African Canadian Life.”<sup>47</sup> Much like Douglass and Du Bois, for Buck, the photograph became a key site through which this identity of progress and equality could be produced and propagated.

The legacy of Henson in Canada illustrates the power that visual culture has in creating and transmitting identities. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, Canada Post released a stamp of Henson in honour of his life as a slave and his work in the Dawn Settlement and the British American Institute.<sup>48</sup> (Figure 9) The stamp portrays an elderly Henson gazing directly at the viewer. In the background, numerous individuals, presumably Black Canadians, are pictured

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<sup>43</sup> Josiah Henson, *An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson ("Uncle Tom")*. From 1789 to 1881 (London: Schuyler, Smith, & Co., 1881), 198.

<sup>44</sup> “Rev. Josiah Henson and wife; The original "Uncle Tom", Dresden, Ont.,” *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*, accessed November 24, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-e468-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>45</sup> Nina Reid Maroney, “Intellectual History and the Visual Archive: Reading Photographs of the Reverend Jennie Johnson (1868-1967),” in *Women in the “Promised Land” Essays in African Canadian History*, ed. Nina Reid-Maroney, Boulou Ebanda de B’béri (Toronto and Vancouver: Women’s Press, 2018), 125.

<sup>46</sup> D.D. Buck, *The Progression of the Race in the United States and Canada* (Chicago: Atwell Printing and Binding Co., 1907), vii.

<sup>47</sup> Reid-Maroney, 126.

<sup>48</sup> Brock, 139

walking towards the “North Star,” shining brightly in the night sky in the top right of the illustration. While significant in being the first Black Canadian on a stamp,<sup>49</sup> the illustration illustrates the power of visual culture in influencing the collective memory of Canada and the Atlantic World. Henson’s gaze and pose suggest his status as the father figure for Black Canadians through his role in the Dawn Settlement and British American Institute. The background of the illustration supports these notions, as Henson’s location and prominence imply that he is watching over the black population as they settle in Canada. Beyond the identity of Henson, the illustration perfectly encapsulates the status of Black Canadian history among the public. While Henson is likely to be known by members of the public, the faceless and nameless individuals behind him often go on unnoticed, despite having similarly rich stories.

In conclusion, examining the photographs and theories of Truth, Douglass, Du Bois and Henson illustrates the nuanced ways visual culture worked to create and distribute identities in the Atlantic World. The various photographs and illustrations of these individuals pushed back against stereotypical racial norms diffused in part through the white-dominated public press. While Henson may not have written on photography in a similar manner to the famous examples utilized in this paper, analyzing his visual culture conveys similar notions of self-worth, dignity, beauty and leadership that challenged nineteenth-century race science through its existence and viewership. In the case of Henson, the identity created through visual culture that challenged stereotypical racial norms was that of a knowledgeable father figure, and much like the identities crafted by Douglass and Truth in their photographs and illustrations, Henson’s has lived on long past his time.

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*



**Images**



Figure 1: A portrait of Sojourner Truth Source: *National Museum of African American History & Culture*

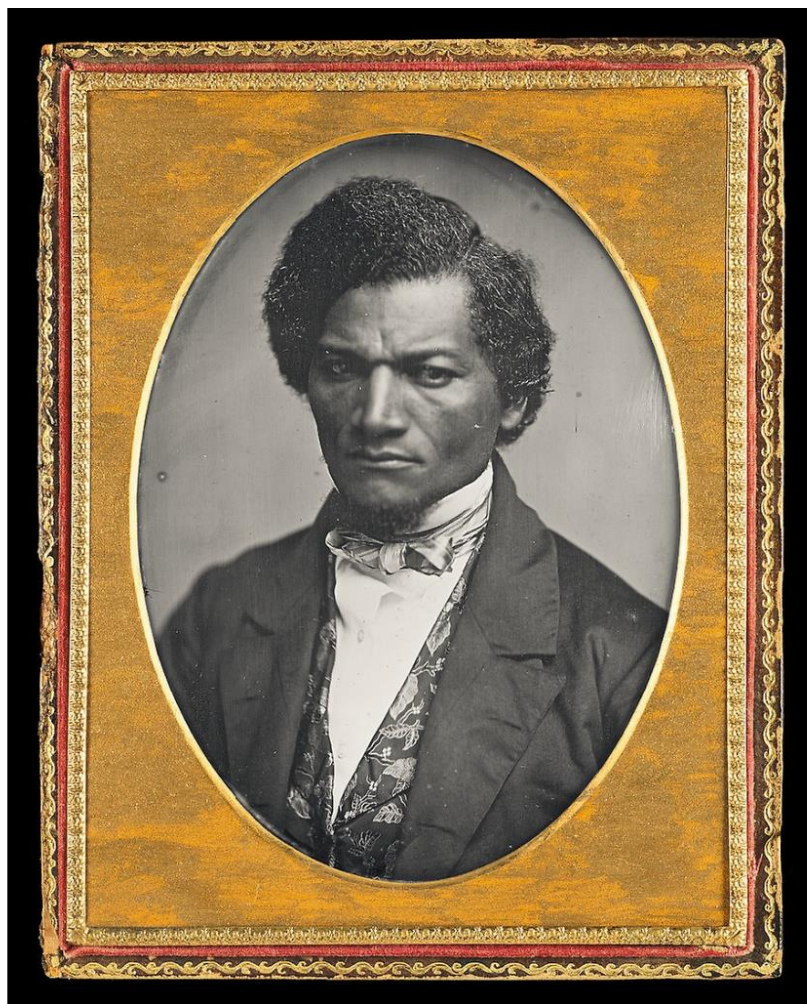


Figure 2: A daguerreotype of Frederick Douglass taken between 1847 and 1852. Source *Art Institute of Chicago*.

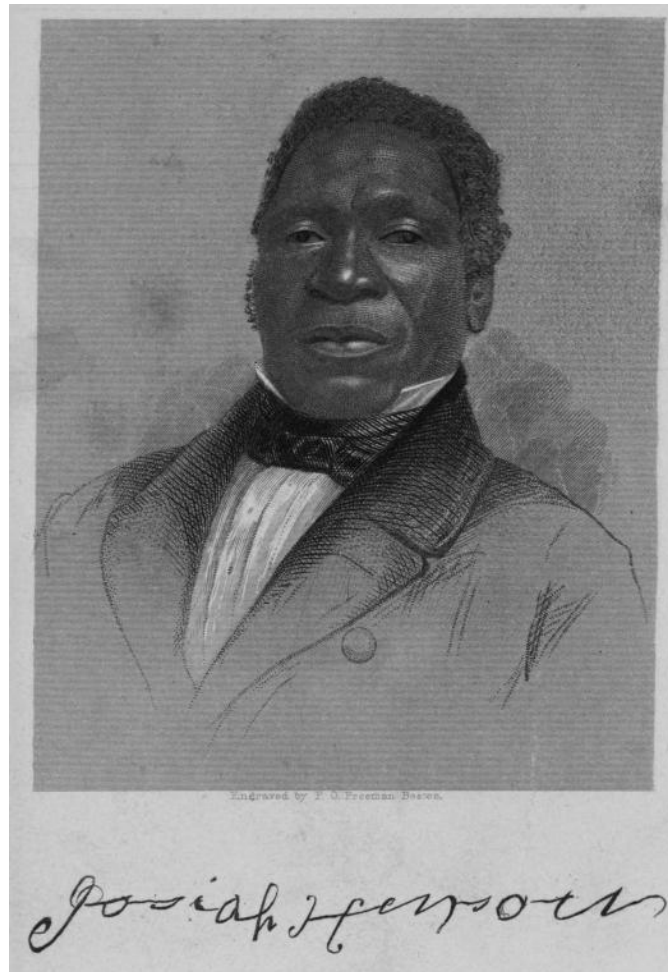


Figure 3: An illustration of Josiah Henson taken from the frontispiece of the 1858 edition of his autobiography. Source: *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*.

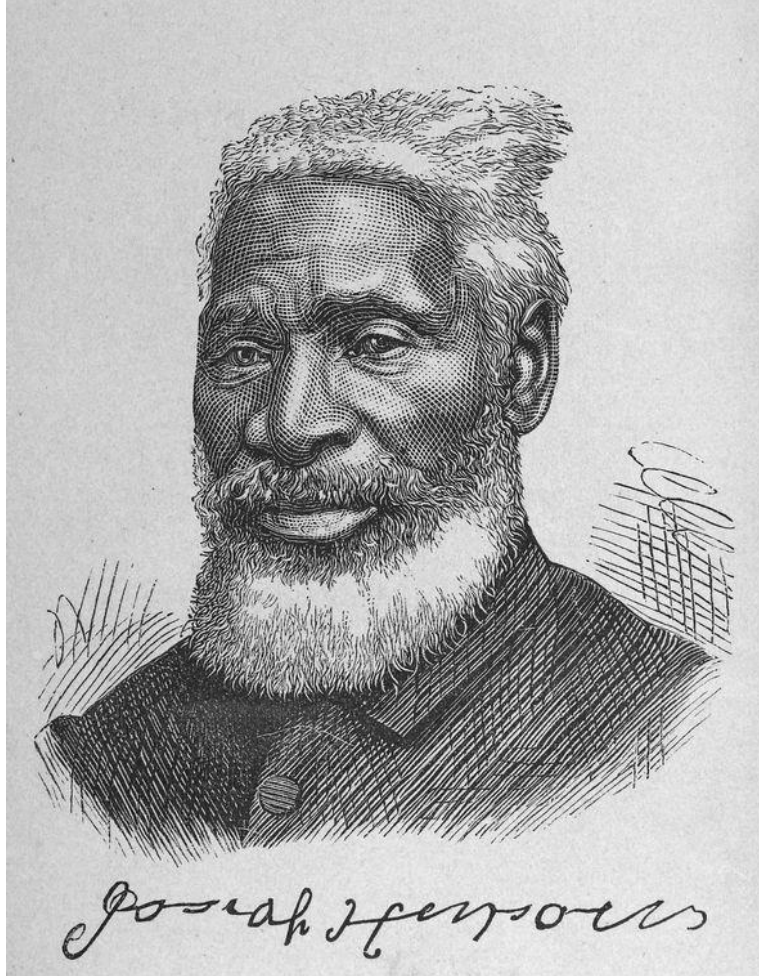


Figure 4: An illustration of Josiah Henson taken from the frontispiece of the 1881 edition of his autobiography. Source: *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*.

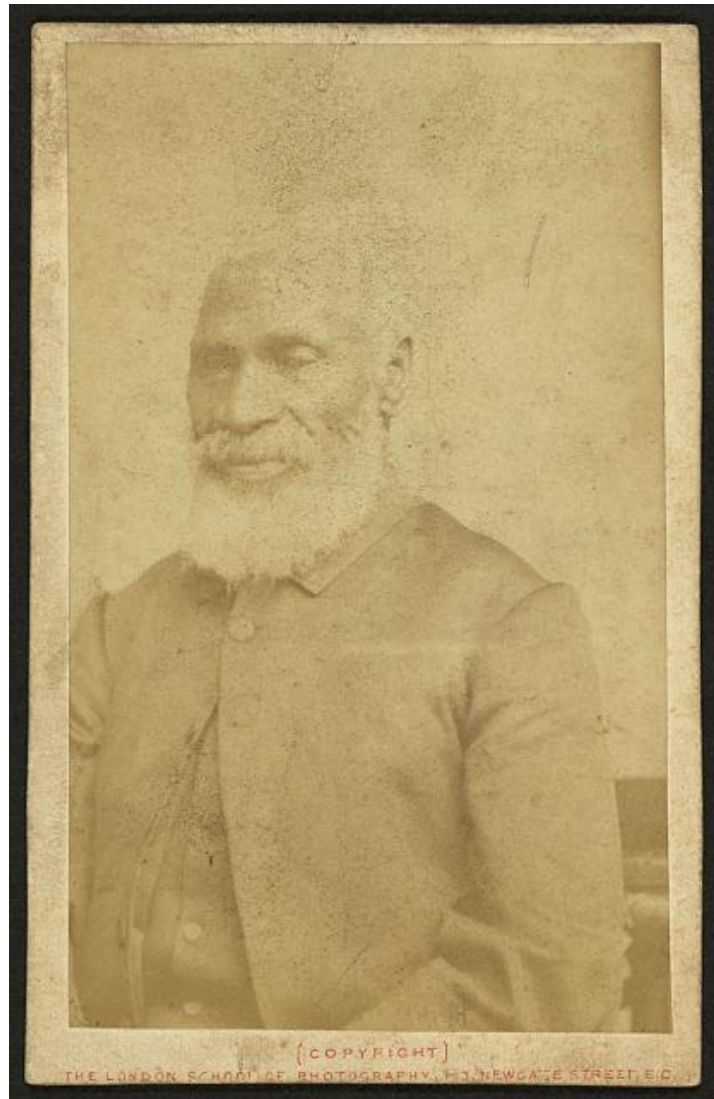


Figure 5: A portrait of Josiah Henson taken in London, England in 1876. *Source: Library of Congress.*

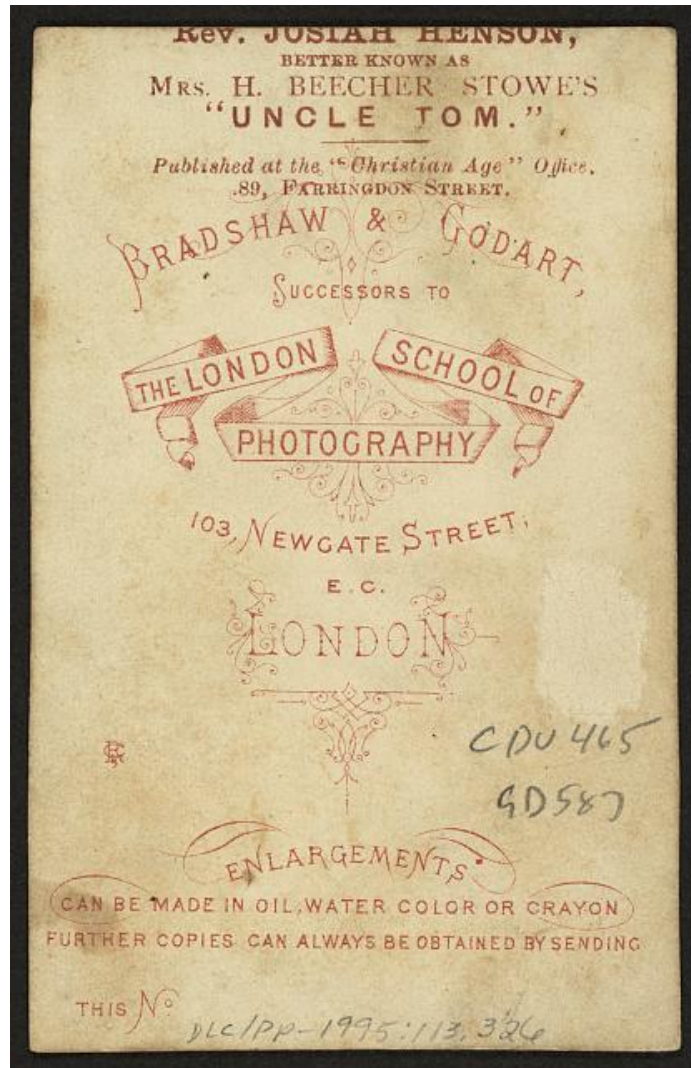


Figure 6: The back of 1876 Photograph. Source: *Library of Congress*.

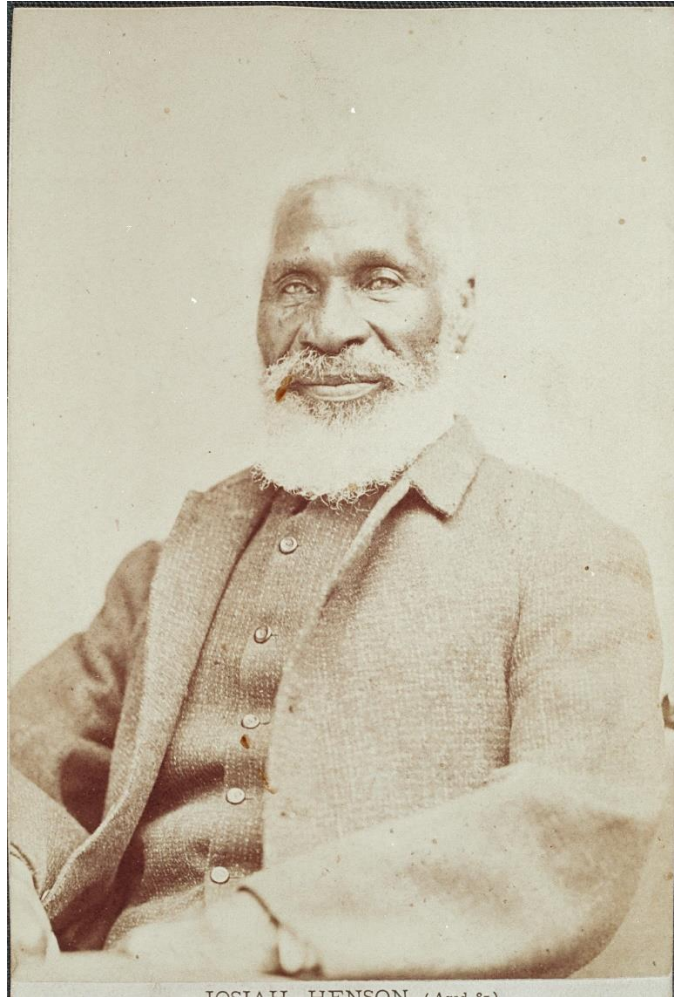
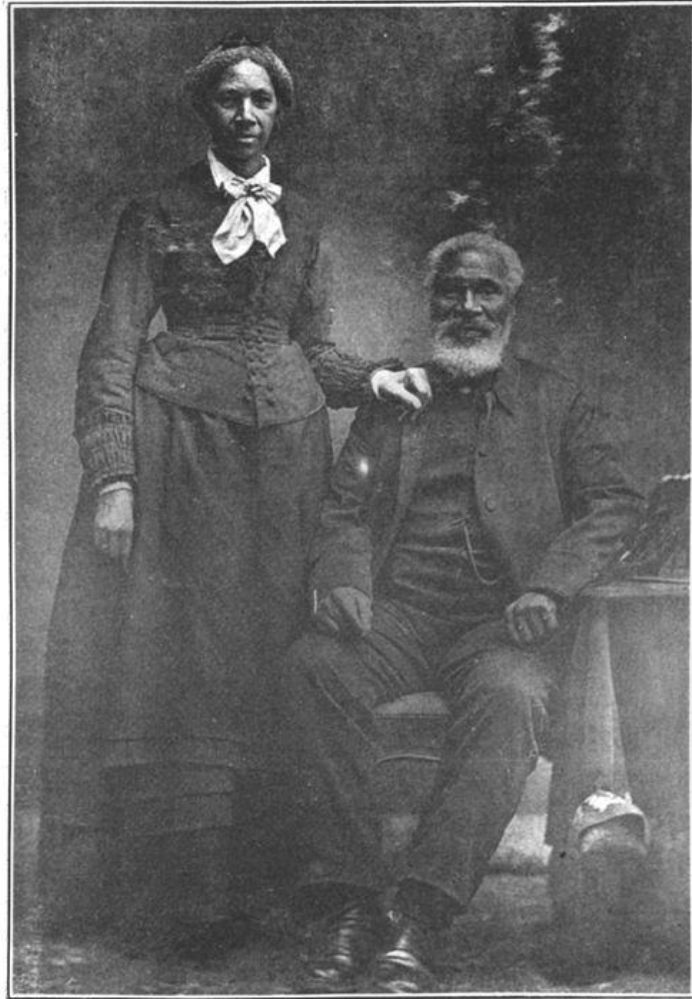


Figure 7: A Portrait of Josiah Henson taken in Boston, 1876. Source *Harvard Library*.



REV. JOSIAH HENSON AND WIFE.  
The original "Uncle Tom." Dresden, Ont.

Figure 8: A portrait of Josiah Henson and his second wife, Nancy Henson. Source: *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*.



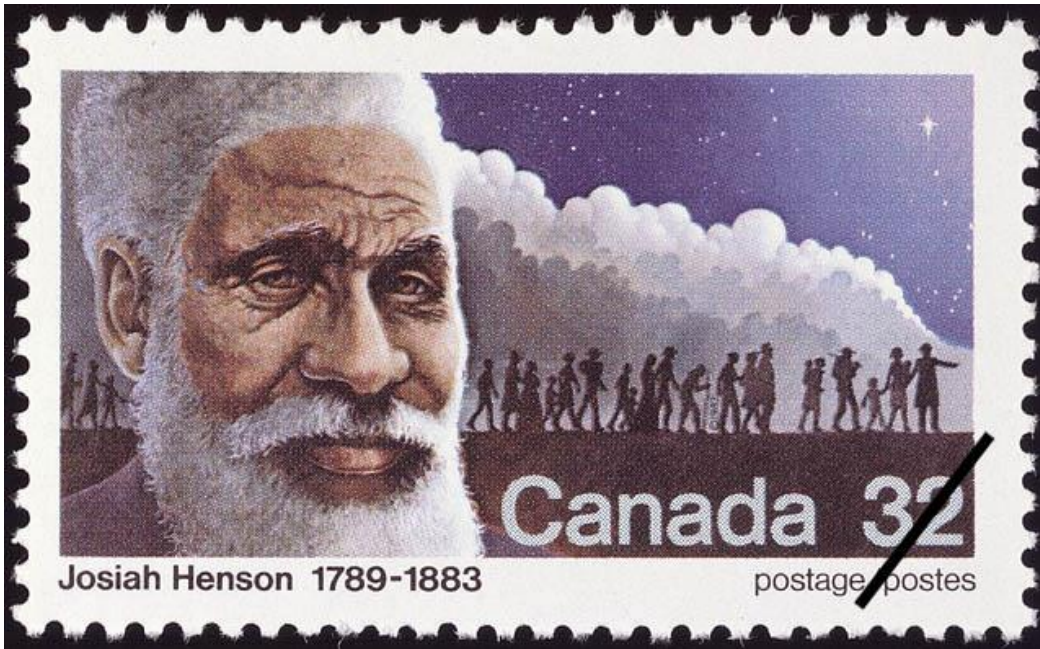


Figure 9: The 1983 Stamp of Josiah Henson. Source *Canadian Postage Stamps*

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