Samuel Morton Encyclopedia Article

Samuel Morton

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Samuel Morton

1799-1851

American physician who was a pioneering physical anthropologist. Morton earned medical degrees from the Universities of Pennsylvania and Edinburgh. He wrote anatomy and pathology texts and was active in the Philadelphia Association for Medical Instruction and Academy of Natural Sciences. His most significant studies focused on craniology. He measured one thousand human skulls from around the world and published books in which he asserted the differentiation of five races. Slavery advocates embraced Morton's ideas as scientific support for racism.