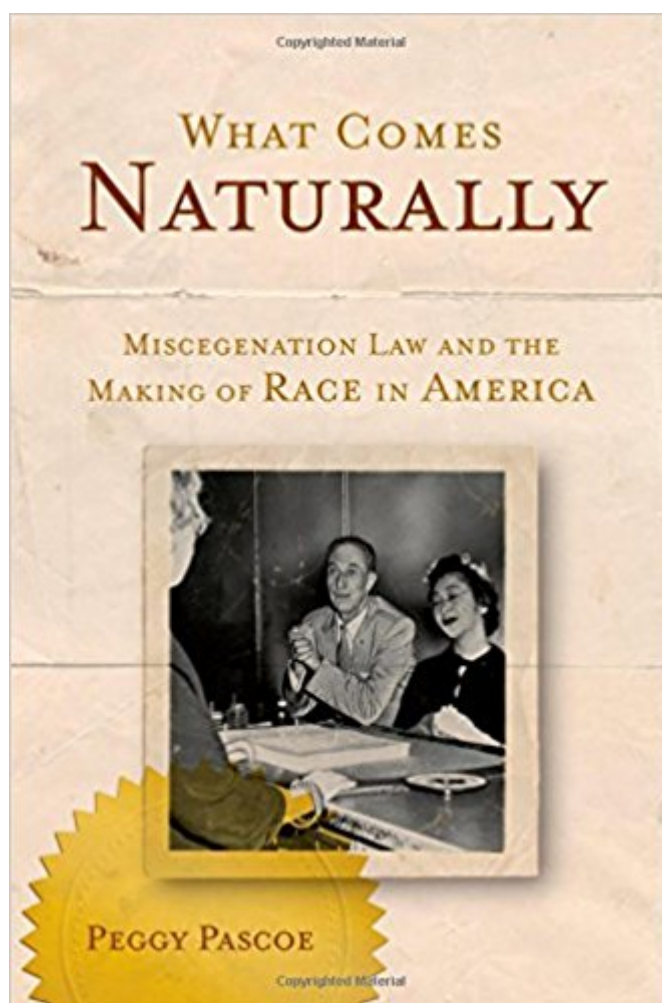


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What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law And The Making Of Race In America



Synopsis

A long-awaited history that promises to dramatically change our understanding of race in America, *What Comes Naturally* traces the origins, spread, and demise of miscegenation laws in the United States--laws that banned interracial marriage and sex, most often between whites and members of other races. Peggy Pascoe demonstrates how these laws were enacted and applied not just in the South but throughout most of the country, in the West, the North, and the Midwest. Beginning in the Reconstruction era, when the term miscegenation first was coined, she traces the creation of a racial hierarchy that bolstered white supremacy and banned the marriage of Whites to Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and American Indians as well as the marriage of Whites to Blacks. She ends not simply with the landmark 1967 case of *Loving v. Virginia*, in which the Supreme Court finally struck down miscegenation laws throughout the country, but looks at the implications of ideas of colorblindness that replaced them. *What Comes Naturally* is both accessible to the general reader and informative to the specialist, a rare feat for an original work of history based on archival research.

Book Information

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"Enormous breadth and depth...*What Comes Naturally* is a wonderfully written and copiously documented book that will appeal to both scholars and laypeople."--*The North Carolina Historical Review*
"Highly original and important....The writing is admirably accessible, while the analyses and arguments are deeply nuanced....*What Comes Naturally* is an outstanding work of politically engaged research conducted by a creative and gifted scholar."--Mark Kessler, *Law and Politics*

Book Review "This compelling history of the United States miscegenation law demonstrates its centrality to maintaining white supremacy in the century following the Civil War. Pascoe...weaves a fascinating story out of significant court cases, including *McLaughlin v. Florida*, an often overlooked 1964 case in which a co-habiting white woman and black man were successfully defended....Showing how marriage law can reinforce discrimination based on what is considered 'natural,' this timely argument also has relevance for the current debate over gay marriage."--The New Yorker "Pascoe's study of the race-making work of marriage prohibitions will be regarded as the definitive book on the history of miscegenation law in the United States for the foreseeable future. Her unprecedented attention to Western states' bans on intermarriage of whites with multiple categories of racial 'others' make this a newly comprehensive and remarkably revelatory treatment of a subject that scholars thought they knew."--Nancy F. Cott, author of *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* "A masterwork of erudition and consequence, *What Comes Naturally* reveals the hegemonic power of miscegenation through its naturalizing of race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship and their claims to purity, property, morality, and legitimacy."--Gary Y. Okihiro, author of *Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States* "What Comes Naturally is a sweeping, provocative and compelling reexamination of the three-centuries of law concerning interracial marriage in the United States. Peggy Pascoe argues that property and power rather than the desire for racial purity propelled the creation of the body of legislation that stood at the center of racial discrimination against people of color. This book challenges much of what we know, or rather, much of what we think we know about race and marriage in America."--Quintard Taylor, University of Washington "It would be hard to overestimate Pascoe's impact on the fields of U.S. History and American Studies. In this accessible, engagingly written and deeply nuanced picture of the economic, social, and ultimately political stakes in race thinking and miscegenation law, she brings together the individual stories, the different regions of the country, and the larger questions of nation-building and nation-formation. She exposes the eager, obsessive, and completely inconsistent categorizing of people into 'races.'"--Sarah Deutsch, Duke University "Peggy Pascoe's book offers the distinctive pleasures of a large and fully imagined and beautifully researched work of history. *What Comes Naturally* explores the complexities and contradictions of a largely lost world--an almost inaccessible world for most people living in the America of the early 21st century--in which the power to use marriage laws to promote and to reinforce racial subordination was legitimate throughout much of the United States, even as couples across the country continued to insist on their right to marital freedom."--Hendrik Hartog, author of *Man and Wife in America, A History* "An uncannily timely history of laws against miscegenation...in the United States...[A] good

book that recounts a fascinating history."--The New Republic"A comprehensive, accessible, and finely-crafted history of miscegenation law."--Alexandra Street Press"[Pascoe's] readable, meticulous, engaging, and comprehensive history of contingent and contested intercultural social constructions and interconnections of gender, race relations, personal identity, and the law should become a long-standing reference." --Law and History Review

Peggy Pascoe is Beekman Professor of Northwest and Pacific History at the University of Oregon.

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