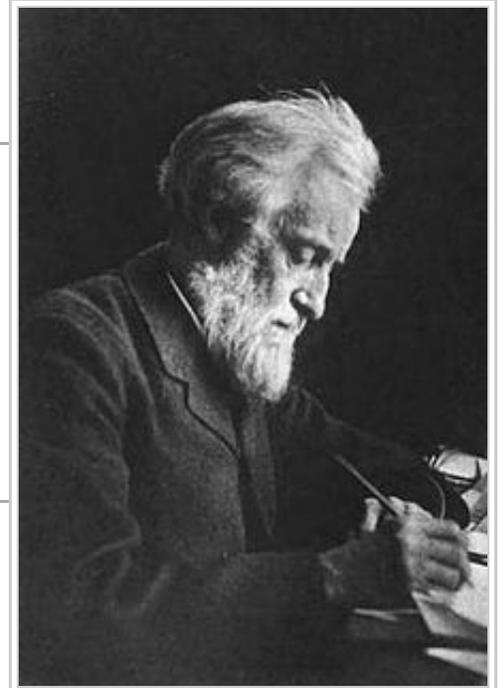


Nathaniel Shaler

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Nathaniel Southgate Shaler (February 20, 1841, Newport, Kentucky – April 10, 1906, Cambridge, Massachusetts)^[1] was an American paleontologist and geologist who wrote extensively on the theological and scientific implications of the theory of evolution.



Nathaniel Southgate Shaler

Contents

- 1 Biography
- 2 Works
- 3 See also
- 4 References
- 5 External links

Biography

Born in 1841, Shaler studied at Harvard College's Lawrence Scientific School under Louis Agassiz. After graduating in 1862, Shaler went on to become a Harvard fixture in his own right, as lecturer (1868), professor of paleontology for two decades (1869–1888) and as professor of geology for nearly two more (1888–1906).^[2] Beginning in 1891, he was dean of the Lawrence School.^[1]

Shaler was appointed director of the Kentucky Geological Survey in 1873, and devoted a part of each year until 1880 to that work. In 1884 he was appointed geologist to the U.S. Geological Survey in charge of the Atlantic division.^[3] He was commissioner of agriculture for Massachusetts at different times, and was president of the Geological Society of America in 1895.^[1] He also served two years as a Union officer in the U.S. Civil War.^[3]

Early in his professional career Shaler was broadly a creationist and anti-Darwinist. This was largely out of deference to the brilliant but old-fashioned Agassiz, whose patronage served Shaler well in ascending the Harvard ladder. When his own position at Harvard was secure, Shaler gradually accepted Darwinism in principle but viewed it through a neo-Lamarckian lens. Shaler extended Charles Darwin's work of the importance of earthworm soil bioturbation to soil formation^[4] to other animals, such as ants.^[5] Like many other evolutionists of the time, Shaler incorporated basic tenets of natural selection—chance, contingency, opportunism—into a picture of order, purpose and progress in which characteristics were inherited through the efforts of individual organisms.

Shaler was also an apologist for slavery and an outspoken believer in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. In his later career, Shaler continued to support Agassiz's polygenism, a theory of human origins that was often used to support racial discrimination.^[citation needed] In his 1884 article, "The Negro Problem", published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Shaler claimed that black people freed from slavery were "like children lost in the wood, needing the old protection of the strong mastering hand," that they became increasingly dominated by their "animal nature" as they grew from children into adults, and American slavery had been "infinitely the mildest and most decent system of slavery that ever existed."^[6]

In his later career, Shaler served as Harvard's Dean of Sciences and was considered one of the university's most popular teachers. He published scores of long and short treatises in his lifetime, with subjects ranging from topographical surveys to moral philosophy.

Works

- Geological Survey of Kentucky* (6 vols., Frankfort, 1876–82)
- Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Kentucky* (1 vol., Cambridge, 1876)
- Thoughts on the Nature of Intellectual Property and its Importance to the State* (Boston, 1878)
- Illustrations of the Earth's Surface; Glaciers* (with William M. Davis; 1881)

- *A First Book in Geology* (1884)
- *Kentucky, a Pioneer Commonwealth* ("American Commonwealth Series," 1885)
- *The Story of Our Continent* (1892)
- *The Interpretation of Nature* (1893)
- *The United States of America* (2 vols., 1894)
- *The Individual: Study of Life and Death* (1900)
- *The Citizen: A Study of the Individual and the Government* (1904)
- *The Neighbor* (1904)
- *Man and the Earth* (1905)

See also

- *Bully for Brontosaurus*

References

- ↑ ^{**a**} ^{**b**} ^{**c**} ^{**T**} Rines, George Edwin, ed. (1920). "Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate". *Encyclopedia Americana*.
- ↑ George P. Merrill and Eleanor R. Dobson (1935). "Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate". *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- ↑ ^{**a**} ^{**b**} ^{**T**} "Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate". *Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography*. 1900
- ↑ Darwin, Charles (1881). *The formation of vegetable mould through the action of worms, with observations on their habits* (http://darwin-online.org.uk/EditorialIntroductions/Freeman_VegetableMouldandWorms.html). London: John Murray.
- ↑ Shaler, N. S., 1891, The origin and nature of soils, in Powell, J. W., ed., USGS 12th Annual report 1890-1891: Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, pp. 213-45
- ↑ Shaler, N.S., "The Negro Problem (<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=atla;cc=atla;rgn=full%20text;idno=atla0054-5;didno=atla0054-5;view=image;seq=0702;node=atla0054-5%3A18>)", *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1884, p. 697-698.
- ↑ "Author Query for 'Shaler'" (http://www.ipni.org/ipni/advAuthorSearch.do?find_abbreviation=Shaler). International Plant Names Index.

External links

- Works by Nathaniel Shaler (<http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Shaler+Nathaniel+Southgate>) at Project Gutenberg
- *The Autobiography of Nathaniel Southgate Shaler* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=e90KAAAIAAJ>) at Google Books

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nathaniel_Shaler&oldid=568802823"

Categories: Botanists with author abbreviations | 1841 births | 1906 deaths | American paleontologists | Soil scientists | Harvard University alumni | Harvard University faculty

This page was last modified on 16 August 2013 at 14:29.

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.