

The History of Racism in America

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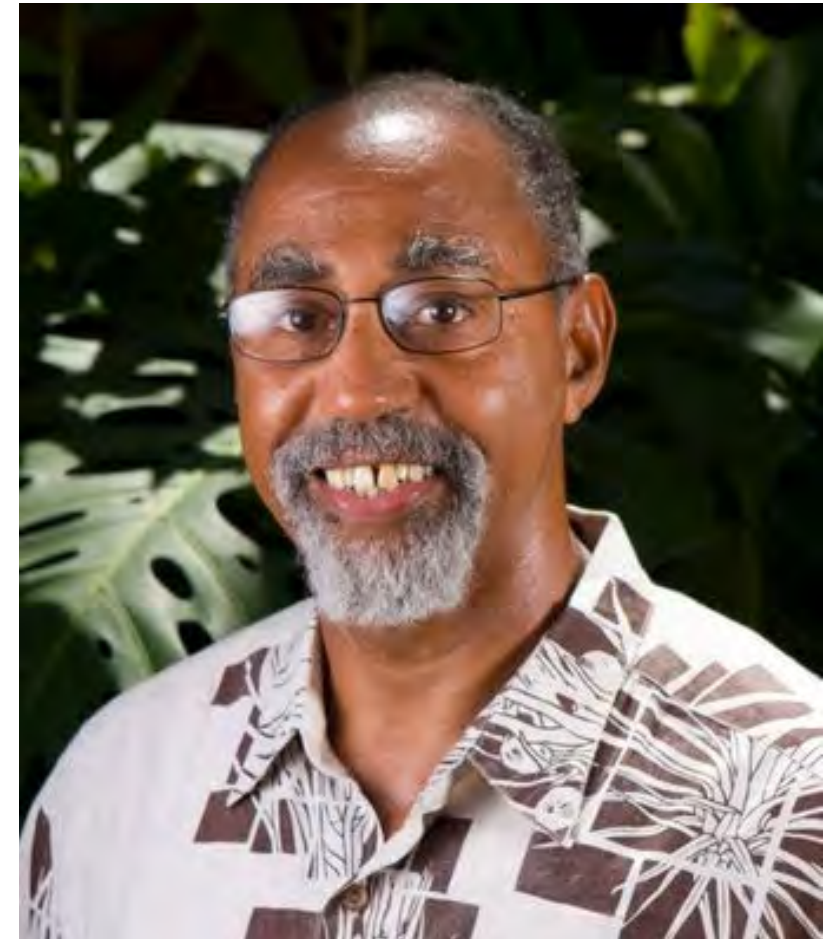
Contemporary thinking about racism has been dominated by Critical Race Theory

Initially developed by legal scholars such as Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw, Richard Delgado and Charles Lawrence

It's basic argument is narrow: that racism is structural rather than just inter-personal

White supremacy is real and maintains power through the law

It will be possible to end racism by dismantling the legal structure that supports it



Mis-credited with creating the 'Cancel Culture', Critical Race Theory has also inappropriately become the umbrella term used to cover all discussions of race in America

More appropriately, CRT has been attacked from both the Right (because of its contesting legally mandated White supremacy) and classic Liberalism (because of its challenge to freedom of speech)

In his book “Stamped from the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America”, Ibram X. Kendi defines racism as:
the belief the one race is superior to another in any way

Kendi’s formula:

Racist belief argues that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society

Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing

Racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups

Systemic racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist beliefs that produces and normalizes racial inequities

Racist policy and racist policymakers create racist power



The history of American racism seen through the lives of five people



Cotton Mather, 1663-1728

Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963)

Angela Davis (b.1944)

Kendi's analysis: three responses to race

Racist/Segregationist:

Believes the White race is inherently superior to the Black race, and the racial hierarchy must be maintained by law and custom

Assimilationist:

Believes the White race is inherently superior to the Black race, and Blacks must become as much like Whites as possible to win acceptance

Anti-Racist:

Believes that all racial groups are equal in all the ways they are different, and public policy must be changed to foster social and economic equality

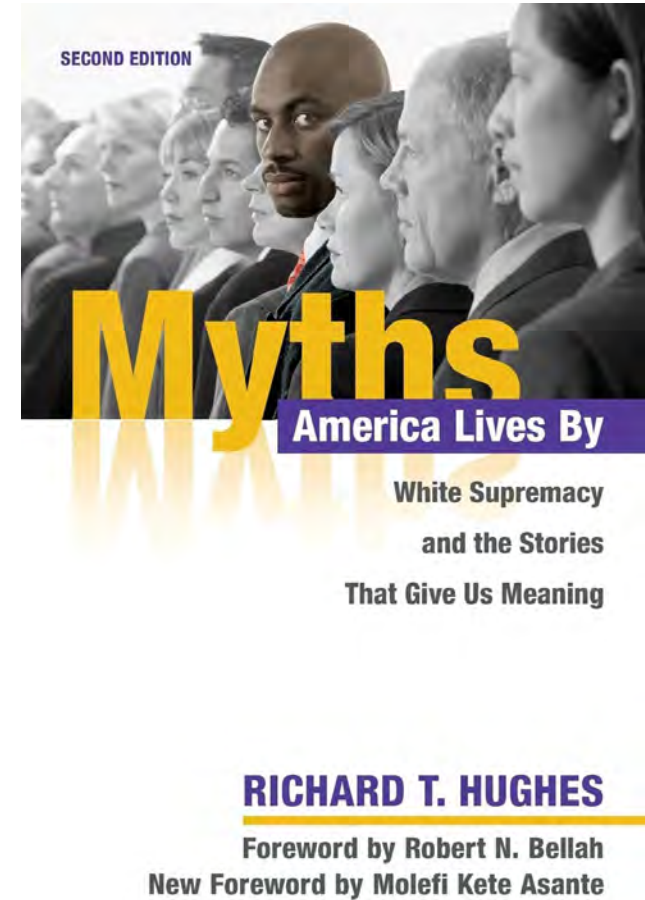
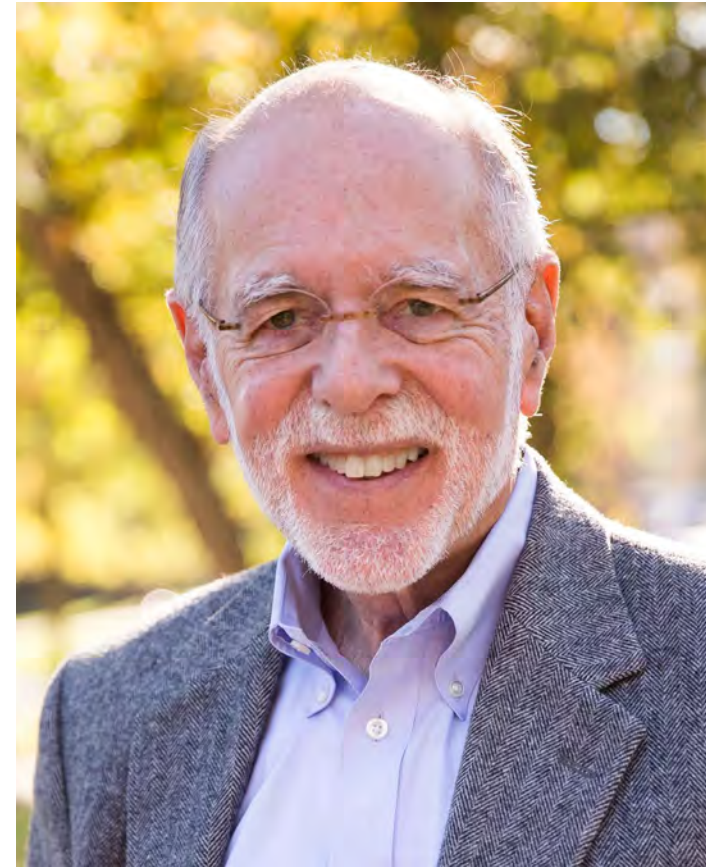


“Myths America Lives By”, Richard Hughes

The Myth of the Chosen Nation:
The Colonial Period

The Myth of Nature's Nation:
The Revolutionary Period

The Myth of the Christian Nation:
The Early National Period



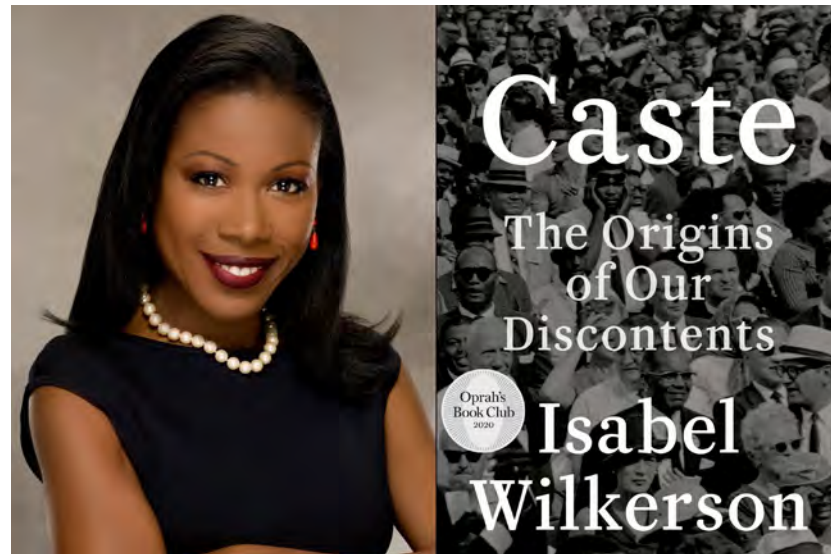
The Myth of the Millennial Nation: The Early National Period

The Mythic Dimensions of American Capitalism: The Gilded Age

The Myth of the Innocent Nation: The Twentieth and Twenty-
First Centuries

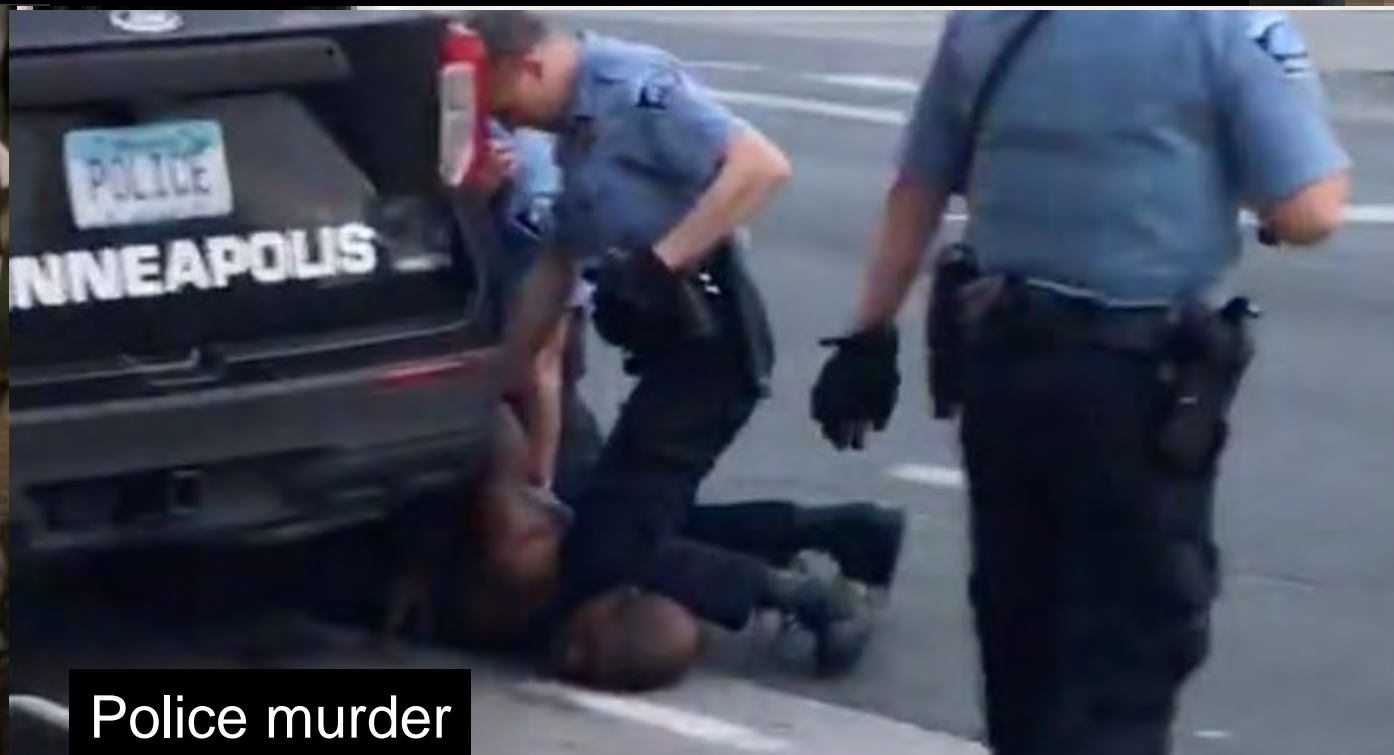
In “Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent”

Isabel Wilkerson details the eight pillars of a racist society



1. Divine will: the cursed descendants of Shem
2. Heritability: one's status is permanently set by race; one can neither earn nor wed one's way out
3. Endogamy: control of marriage and mating, allowing it only within one's race
4. Purity versus pollution: contact with the inferior race will defile the superior race
5. Occupational hierarchy: certain professions are exclusively reserved for the superior race, and other labor is restricted to the inferior race; as late as the 1930's only 5% of African American men had white collar jobs
6. Dehumanization and stigma: slaves were stripped of their identity and dignity, forced to labor without proper nourishment, had no control over their own bodies or families; un
7. Terror and cruelty for enforcement and control: a White could inflict almost any act of violence or cruelty against a Black without any consequence of justice
8. Inherent superiority versus inherent inferiority: mandatory deference to the superior race

It's uglier than you think: Racism in America



Separation and interment of Latinx families

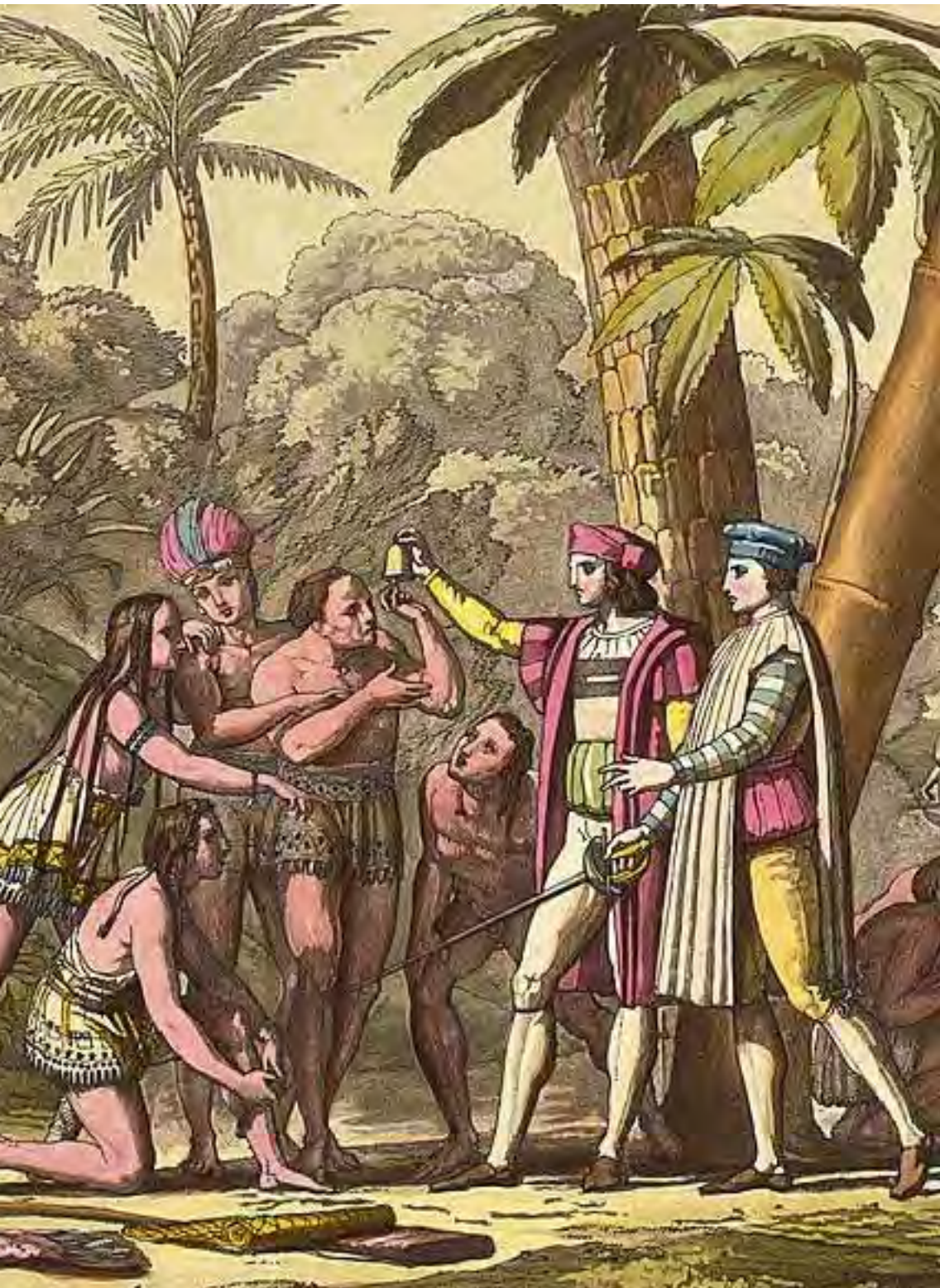
Police murder

Human beings have always separated themselves from others with a tribalism or clanism based on ethnicity, geography, language, religion and culture



slaughtered Canaanites and created purity codes to keep themselves separate

Such differentiation was always about power and used as the basis for justifying political and economic exploitation



Greeks and Romans separated themselves from those without ‘reasoned speech, well ordered social polity and the technological ability to transform nature’: as deficient barbarians

Europeans believed in natural explanations and biblical stories to give meaning to human differences, such as Sarah and Isaac as the progenitors of the Jews and Hagar and Ishmael progenitors of the Arabs

Medieval Christians dismissed infidel Muslims and barbarian Germans and Vikings as inferior, deserving to be destroyed and conquered

In the Age of Exploration, the pitiable backwardness of non-European and non-Christian ‘heathens’ justified colonization and slavery

Adding race to the equation changed
how some people dominated others



Yet, the idea of race is a modern invention

The Portuguese invented race with Prince Henry's inauguration of the African slave trade in the 1440's

Medieval Islamic and Italian Christian slave traders were not racist

They enslaved Africans, Arabs, and Europeans without reference to race

The Portuguese writer Gomez de Zurara in 'The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea' (1453) grouped all Africans into a single race... to justify the lucrative slave trade... he wrote, they lived,



'like beasts, without any custom of reasonable beings... They had no unders

As Kendi writes, the root problem of racism has always been the self-interest of those in power to justify the pre-existing racist policies of those in power

This idea of race was carried to the Americas by Columbus to justify colonization and enslavement of Native Americans



Columbus described Native Americans as timid, uncivilised and cannibalistic, possessing neither cities, weapons or ‘idols’ (religion)

Domination was justified because they were without culture, lacking cities and mastery of nature, so it was appropriate to enslave and civilize them, and convert them to Christianity

Later Spanish and Portuguese colonizers used race as a justification for enslaving indigenous peoples, labeling them a single race: Indians

The consequence was genocide, as literally millions died from disease, malnutrition and exhausting, tortuous forced labor

So soon the European masters preferred importing Black African slaves

The Spaniard Alonso de Zuazo contrasted the beastly race of Blacks as “*strong for work, the opposite of the natives, so weak who can work only in undemanding tasks.*”

North American European colonists' desire for land resulted in unending conflict with the Indigenous Peoples



In Virginia, the colonists and Algonquian Native Americans under King Powhatan were constantly at war

The marriage of colonist John Rolfe to the Algonquian Princess Pocahontas in 1614 temporarily ended the fighting

Rolfe wrote the marriage was “for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ an unbelieving creature.”

Pocahontas, travelled to London where she charmed English society

Warfare broke out again in 1622 with the Great Massacre, continuing for decades

The conflicts ended only when the Indigenous People had been pushed off their lands into

A common colonial attitude was that Native Americans “*had no nobility or virtue at all*”

The Middle and New England Colonies saw a similar pattern

Colonial settlers made treaties and cooperated with Native American tribes, until westward expansion dictated the Indigenous Peoples forfeit their land

King Philip's War (1675-1678) pitched the New England colonists against the Narraganset and Wampanoag tribes

Ten towns were destroyed, the New England economy was decimated and 10% of military aged men were killed

But the Indigenous could not ultimately resist European military power, and hundreds were publicly executed and enslaved, and they were left landless in New England and the Middle Colonies



As the all colonies came under royal control by the early 18th century, the task of fighting the Indigenous and taking their land became the responsibility

Yet through the middle of the 17th century,
few people anywhere thought in terms of race

Europeans were just beginning to have
a national consciousness

In England, one would self-identify
as a Yorkshireman or Cornish

In France as Burgundian or Norman

In Spain as Castillian or Catalonian

In Africa as Zulu, Maasai or Yoruba

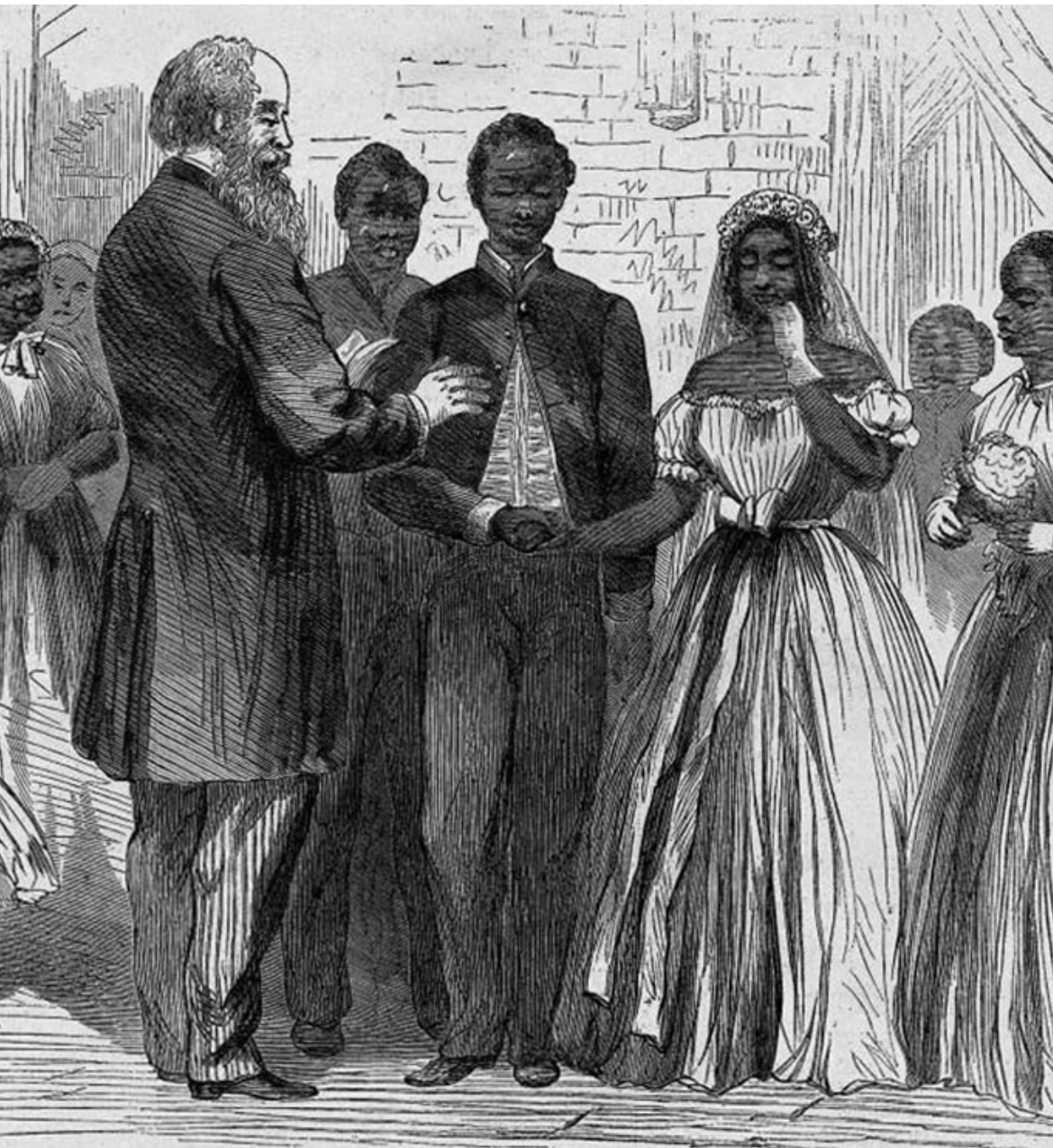
In China as Han, Manchu or Hui

No one self-identified as Black, or
White or Asian

Race as a category for people was one of which few even knew



Until well into the 17th century, most labor in the colonies was provided by indentured servants or slaves



European indentured servants contracted voluntarily to labor for a set number of years in exchange for the cost of passage to America

The percentages of the population that was indentured went from 25% in Massachusetts to 75% in Virginia and Maryland

On August 20, 1619 the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia

Until about 1660, the condition of indentured servants and African slaves was similar

The worked side by side in the fields, in the trades and on the wharves

Most of the African slaves were freed after a given time of service

In some Virginia counties over a third of the Blacks were free in 1660

This began to change in the late 17th century

The English kings Charles II and James II wanted to profit from the slave trade

The Royal African Company, founded in 1660, forced a monopoly on transporting enslaved people to North America

With the king supporting the slave trade, England's colonies began to put servitude on a more certain level

Legislation was passed in Virginia in 1670 stating that non-Christians arriving in the colony by ship were to be enslaved for life

Other laws were enacted in the colonies legally establishing different legal criteria for White indentured servants and Black slaves solely on the basis of race

Intermarriage between Blacks and Whites was forbidden in Virginia in 1690 and other colonies quickly followed suit (not repealed until 1967)



Europeans became involved in the lucrative African slave trade, racist ide



As early as 1578 the Englishman William Best declared Black Africans deserved enslavement because of Noah's curse on Ham's son, *'May Canaan be a slave of Shem.'*

God willed that Ham's son and *'all his posteritie after him should be so blacke and loathsome, that it might remain a spectacle of disobedience to all the worlde.'*

This notion of racial blackness being a curse from God was well used by slave owners into the mid-19th century

It lingers in the minds of some racists into the 21st century

In 1735, the Swedish zoologist Carl Linnaeus gave the idea of racism a scientific patina in his book Systema Naturae

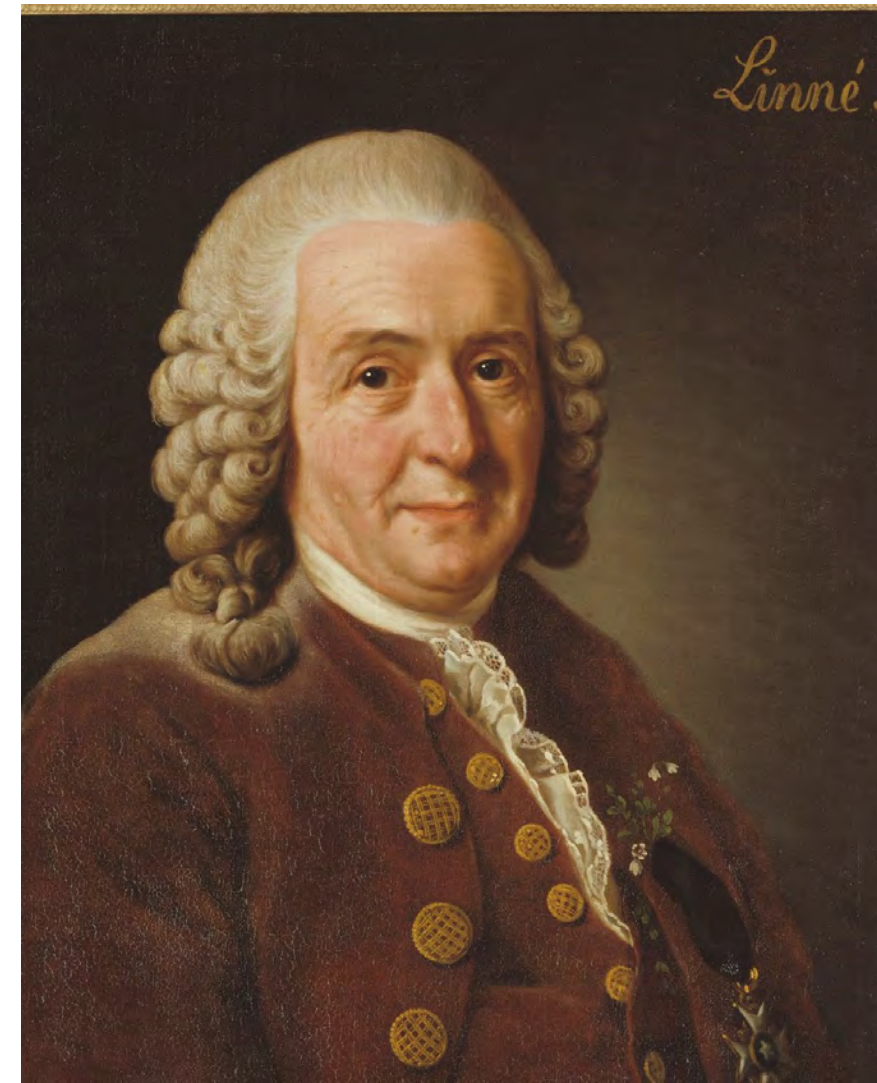
He color coded four races: White, Yellow, Red, Black, giving each a geographical home and a hierarchy of superiority

Homo sapiens europaeus: *‘Vigorous, muscular. Flowing blond hair. Blue eyes. Very smart, inventive. Covered by tight clothing. Ruled by law.’*

Homo sapiens asiaticus: *‘Melancholy, stern. Black hair; dark eyes. Strict, haughty, greedy. Covered by loose garments. Ruled by opinion.’*

Homo sapiens americanus: *‘Ill-tempered, impassive. Thick straight black hair; wide nostrils; harsh face; beardless. Stubborn, contented, free. Paints himself with red lines. Ruled by custom.’*

And at the bottom, Homo sapiens afer: *“Sluggish, lazy. Black kinky hair. Silky skin. Flat nose. Thick lips. Females with genital flap and elongated breasts. Crafty, slow, careless. Covered by grease. Ruled by caprice.”*



But the real driver of the colonial Atlantic slave trade was the economics of mercantilism

The primary goal of English political/social policy was to increase military power and economic wealth

Colonies existed to create wealth, and importing slave labor maximized profits

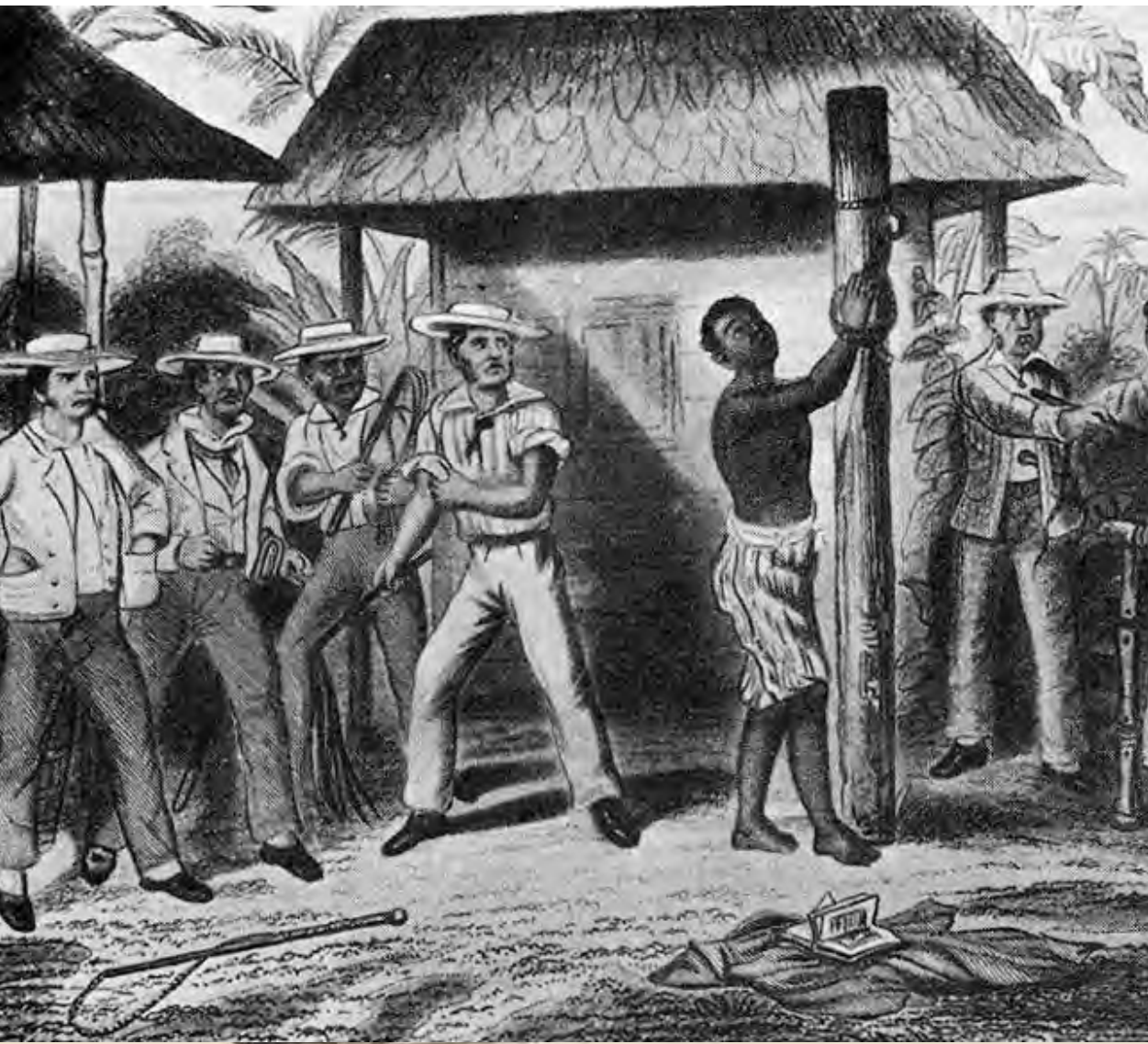
Moral justification was grounded on racist attitudes: Black Africans were inferior to European Whites, so enslavement and exposure to European values was better for them



Between 1626 and 1860, over 470,000 Black Africans were forcibly transported to the United States and sold into chattel slavery

The slave based economy was soon creating fabulous wealth...
and not just in the South

Slave Codes



There were no standard English slave laws; each colony developed its own, usually based on on that of Barbados

The codes covered these areas:

Movement restriction: a required pass or badge; enforced by slave patrols

Trade and commerce restriction: a slave's independent ability to buy, sell or trade goods was strictly regulated

Prohibitions on large group gatherings

Education restrictions: some colonies forbade teaching slaves to read

Marriage restrictions: allowed only with master's permission

Punishment of slaves: proscribed what could be done; but slave owners were rarely punished even for killing their own slaves

In reality Black slaves had no rights, their owners could do whatever they wished

Barely a protest from Christian pulpits in either England or America

Some clergy—particularly new arrivals from England—protested against the denial of common humanity and White resistance to the evangelization of enslaved people. But the vast majority of clergy remained silent about both slavery and the new idea of racism.

Individual Christian protests were rare and not capable of turning back the expanding institution of slavery, as huge profits were made from rice and tobacco, as well as from leasing slaves to work for others.

The churches in the British colonies, regionally based and divided into competing denominations, were no match for the economic lure of the fortunes to be made in the African slave trade.



In time the entire fabric of the colonial economy was dependent on slave labor, and fortunes were to be made



Not just planters, but those who bought and sold slaves and those hired slaves (paying the owner) to work in their shops and small businesses, all lived off the labor of others

But it was mostly the planters who reaped fortunes from the work of their slaves

In 1780 seven of the ten richest Americans in the nation were rice planters in and near Charleston, South Carolina

Over farming tobacco led to an economic depression in the 1780's and some projected slavery would no longer be viable

Yet the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 opened an entirely new labor intensive cash crop

Millions of acres of land were cleared and the demand for slaves skyrocketed

The North was equally complicit in supporting slavery and reaping economic benefits from it



There were tens of thousands of slaves in Northern colonies and later in Northern states

Rhode Island was the first colony to ban slavery in 1652, but it actually continued there until 1843 and lingered in other northern states until the 1850's

New England sea captains and sailors, mostly from ports in Rhode Island, transported African slaves to America

Boston, Providence, New York and Philadelphia bankers financed the slave trade, the Southern economy and the expansion of slavery to the West

Northern textile mills, employing thousands of free Whites, depended on slave-generated cotton coming from the plantations of the South

Cotton was the primary commodity shipped from New York and New England harbors

In 1700 Black slaves were about 20% of New York City's population

They worked alongside freed slaves as domestic servants, artisans, longshoremen and skilled laborers

On April 6, 1712 a group of Black slaves rebelled, attacking Whites with guns, hatchets and swords, killing nine

70 slaves were arrested and eventually 21 were burned at the stake and one executed on a breaking wheel

Slaves were after required to carry a pass in public, prohibited to gather in groups larger than three, and discouraged to marry

Owners who wanted to free their slaves were required to pay a tax of 200 pounds, far more than the actual cost of a slave



The New York Conspiracy of 1741



New York had the largest slave population of any American city except Charleston, SC

There was strong economic competition between Black slaves and poor Whites

A series of fires set Manhattan ablaze in the spring of 1741

Rumors spread that they had been set by Black slaves conspiring with poor Whites to overthrow and murder the White elites

161 Blacks and 20 Whites were arrested and tried, with over 100 were executed or exiled

The executions were public, either by hanging or burning at the stake

Racism, used to justify slavery and the colonization and enslavement of Native Americans, was built into the founding documents of the United States of America

The Declaration of Independence, although containing the imperative language that grounded all social justice movements in American history, was sexist and racist, ignoring slavery and women's rights as well as calling Native Americans "merciless savages"

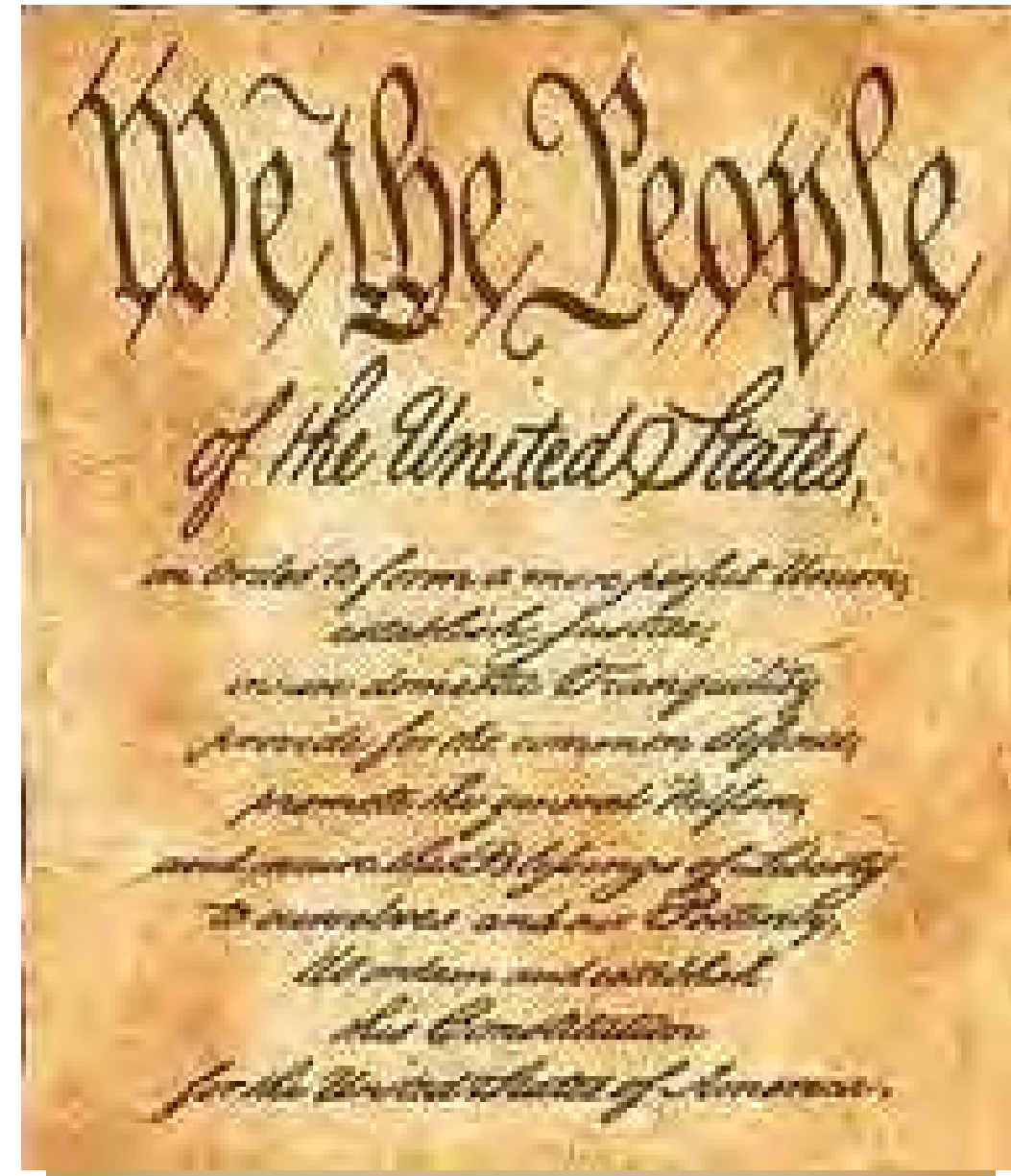
The Constitution of the United States protected the liberty of only White men

For purposes of representation and taxation Black slaves were counted as $\frac{3}{5}$ of a person

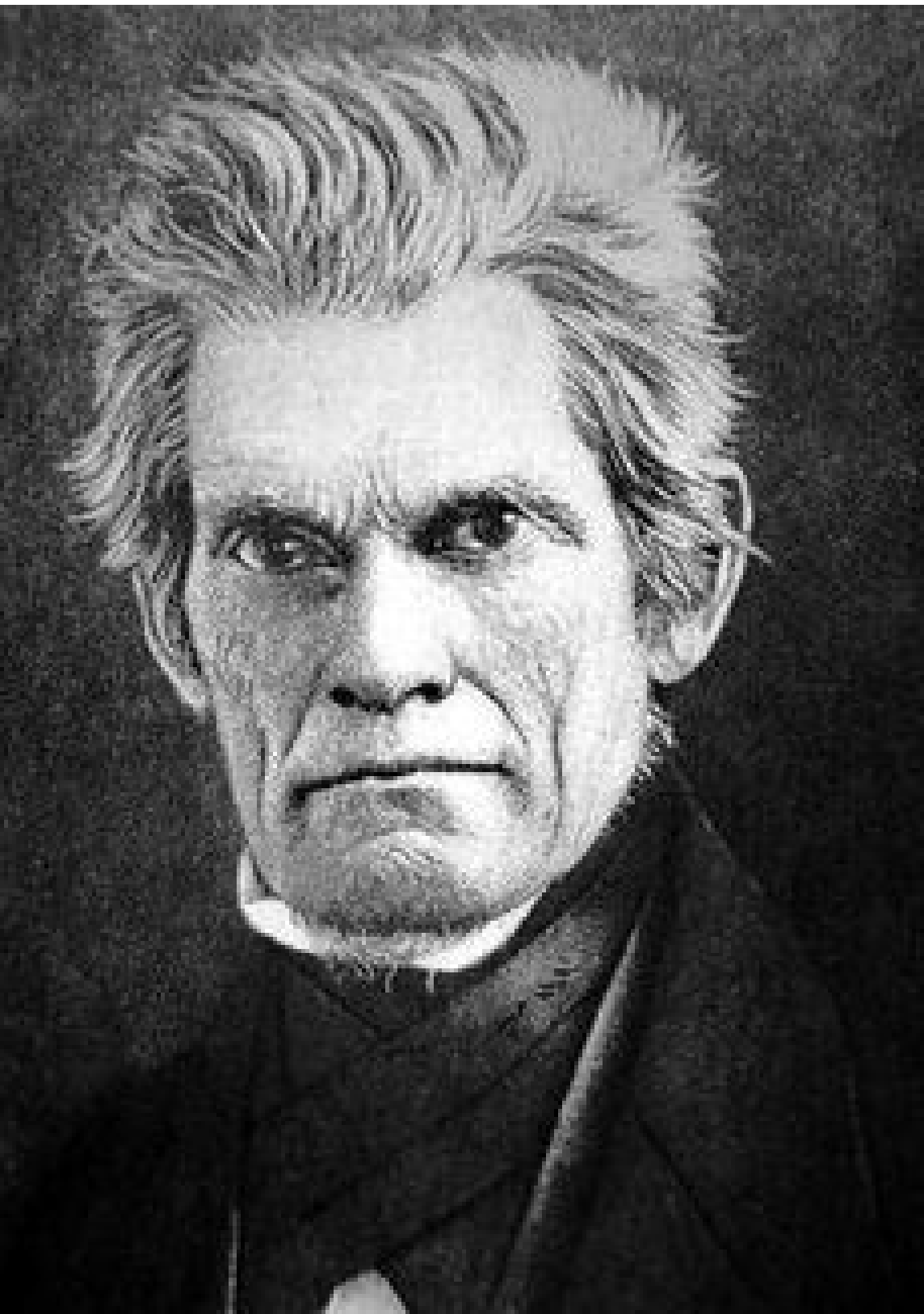
The right to import slaves was protected

Fugitive slaves from the South, if captured in a Northern free state, must be returned to their owner

The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited the right of American citizenship "to aliens being free white persons."



The fruit was the creation of a racist nation



Slavery is ‘a positive good’

Ten American Presidents owned slaves: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, Taylor and Johnson

Nearly half of all members of Congress between 1789 and 1863 were slave owners, including Henry Clay (owned 60 slaves) and John C. Calhoun (owned dozens of slaves, so many the exact number is unknown)

Calhoun’s iconic speech on the Senate floor on February 6, 1837:

“I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good. I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved.”

The majority of Justices of the Supreme Court between 1789 and 1860 were slave holders

Chief Justice Roger Taney of Maryland (1834 to 1864) represented the complexities of American attitudes toward slavery

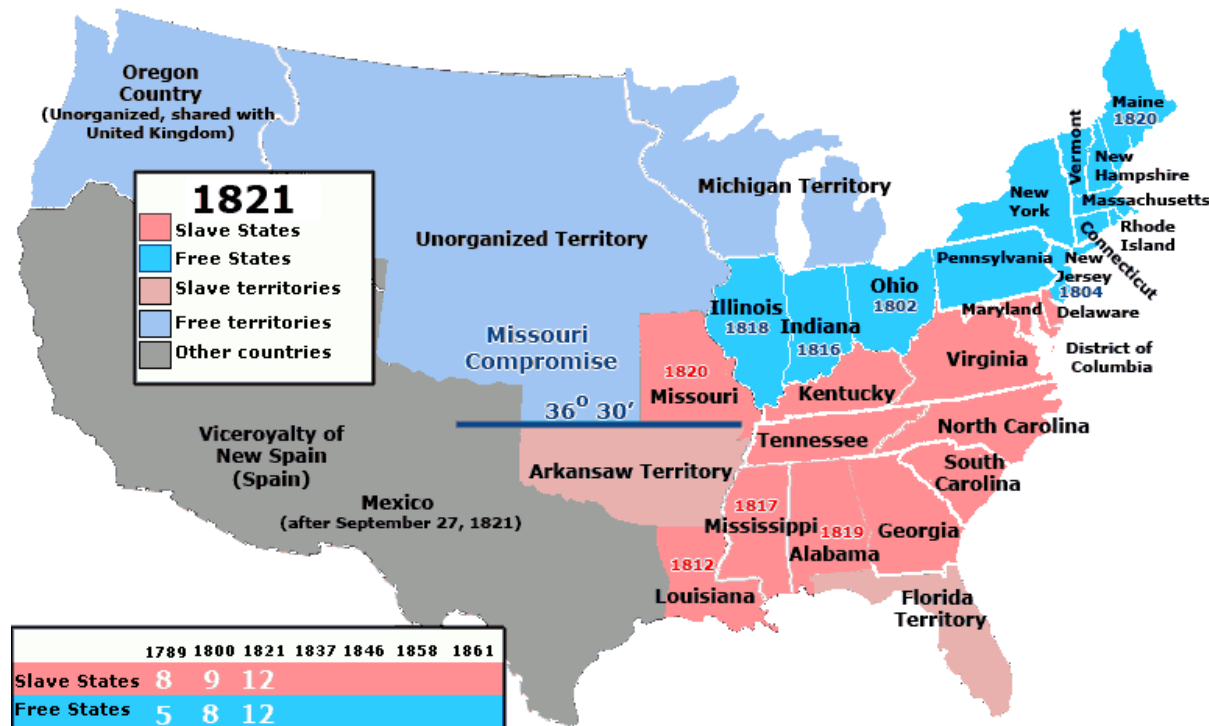
Although he freed his own slaves and paid a pension for those too old to work, he uncompromisingly supported the institution and legality of slavery

Roberts v. City of Boston (Massachusetts) in 1850 found no constitutional impediment to racially segregated schools

Dred Scott v. Sanford (Missouri) in 1857 declared that all blacks—slaves as well as free—were not and could never become citizens of the United States



Major Congressional legislation



The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 required all states to arrest and return runaway slaves

The four Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798

Residency requirement for American citizenship extended to fourteen years

Allowed the President to imprison or deport aliens deemed dangerous or unfriendly

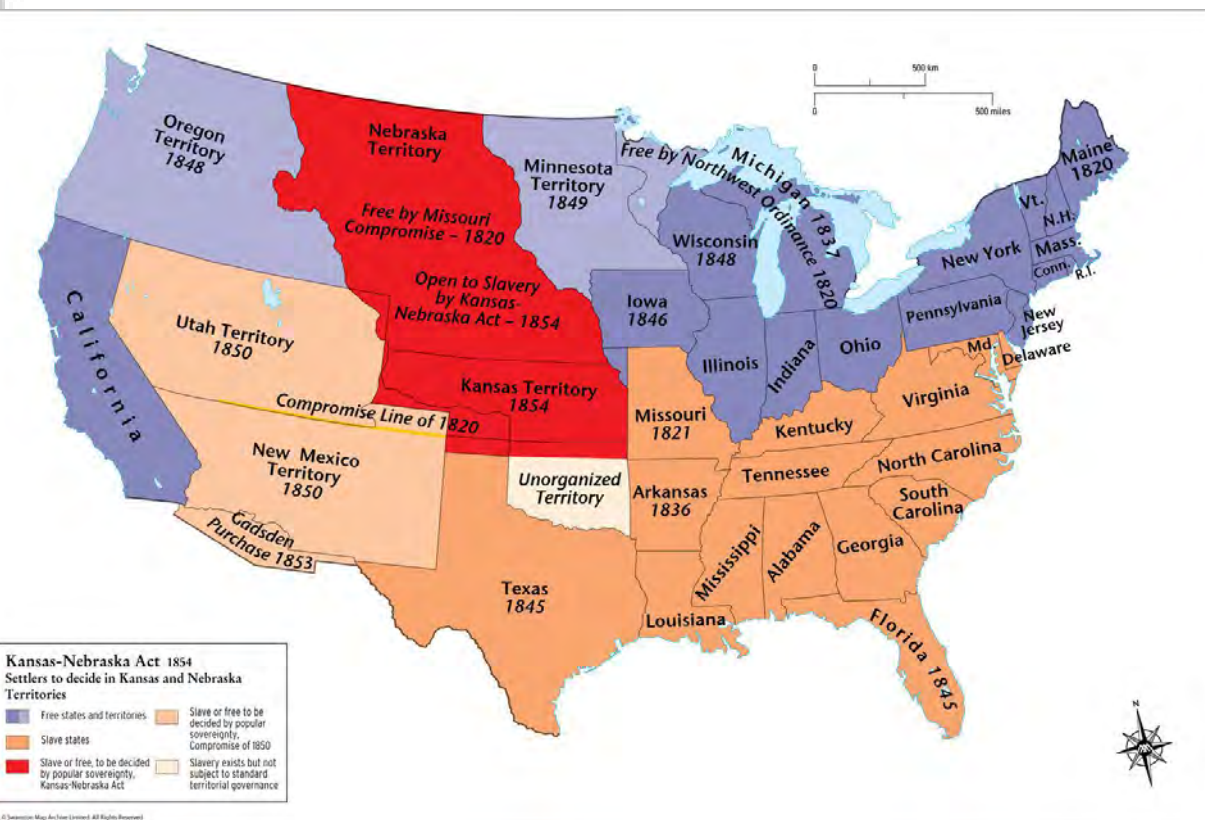
The Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves of 1807

The domestic slave trade greatly increased

The Missouri Compromise, 1820, prohibited slavery north of 36/30 degrees longitude

Kept the balance between free and slave states

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854, repealed the Missouri Compromise allowing slavery on the basis of “popular sovereignty”



Racist attitudes and legislation were equally and unrelentingly focused on Indigenous people

Economics continued to be the driving force

The new nation needed more land to fuel its economic and population growth

Thomas Jefferson, the man who claimed that according to “*Nature and Nature's God, ... all men are created equal*”, argued that the American government should “*pursue [the Indians] to extermination, or drive them to new seats beyond our reach.*”



President William Henry Harrison, asked, “*Is one of the fairest portions of the globe to remain in a state of nature, the haunt of a few wretched savages, when it seems destined by the Creator to give support to a large population and to be the seat of civilization, of science, and of true religion?*”

Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the forcing of over 46,000 Native Americans from their homeland



‘The Trail of Tears’ beginning in 1831
forcibly removed several Southeastern
tribes east of the Mississippi

It is estimated nearly 4000 died of
malnutrition, exposure and disease



The new nation's imagination was captured
by the idea of '*Manifest Destiny*':

God had destined the United States to stretch from sea to sea



The influential publisher Horace Greely summed up the attitude of White Americans toward Indigenous People,

“These people must die out—there is no help for them. God has given this earth to those who will subdue and cultivate it, and it is vain to struggle against His righteous decree.”

Armed conflict continued in the West through the 19th century, until all Native Americans were forced into reservations. Surviving Native Americans were denied equality under the law, and were treated as wards of the state.

While assimilation and full citizen rights were offered during the 19th century, Native Americans remained among the most disadvantaged groups in the United States.



For some Americans our ‘better angels’ led to
an abolitionist movement in the early 19th century

The initial impetus came from Evangelical
Christians in the Second Great Awakening

They were inspired by the words of St. Paul:

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer
slave or free, there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28*

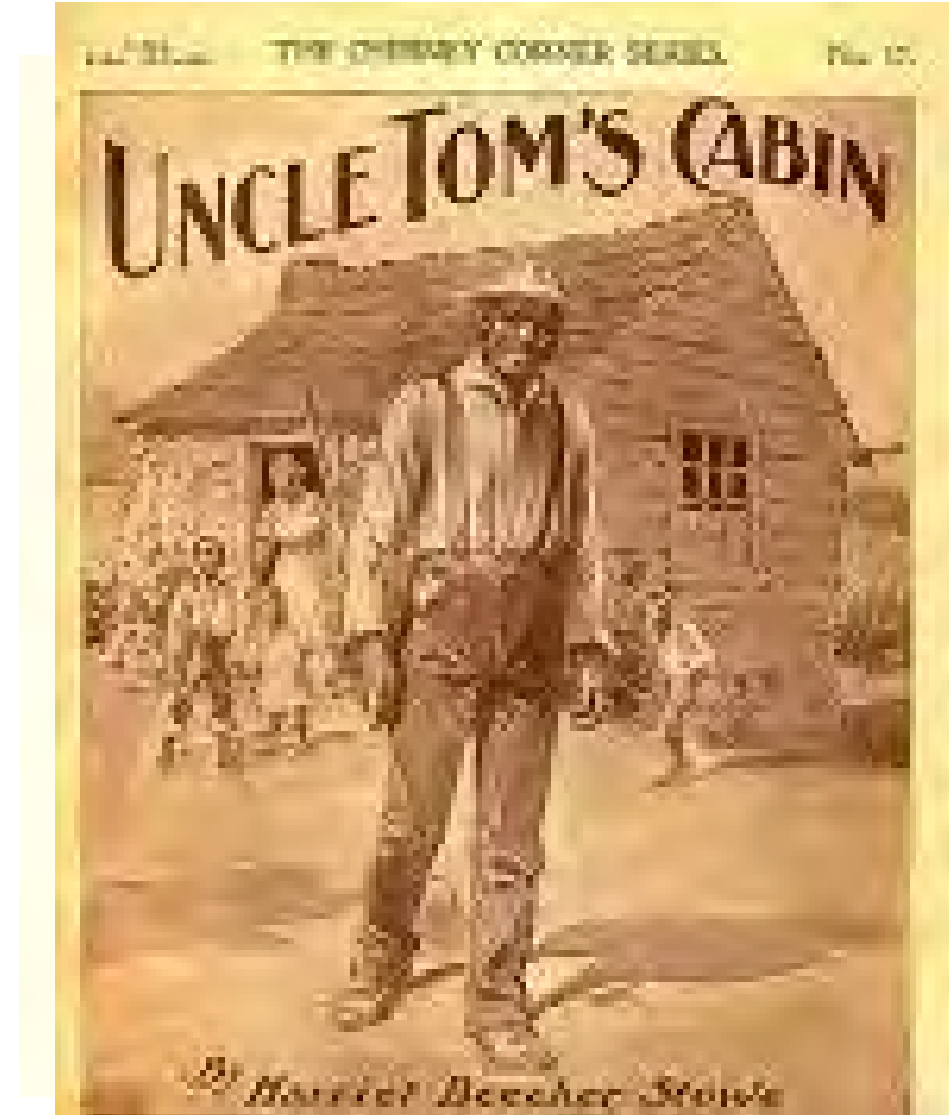
Charles Finney, founded Oberlin College in 1833 as
the first racially integrated coed college in America

The Beecher family was in the forefront

Father Lyman Beecher founded Lane Seminary in
1832, which began training preachers whose clear message was you can’t love Jesus
and support slavery

Son, Henry Ward Beecher, America’s “Prince of the Pulpit” at Plymouth Church of
the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, preached many sermons calling for abolition which were pri

Daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, published Uncle Tom’s Cabin in 1852, and it
became the best selling book in history, with over 2 million copies sold by 1857



Other Christians were equally outspoken abolitionists



Wm. Lloyd Garrison, who founded The Liberator in 1831, and was a totally uncompromising abolitionist

"The source of Garrison's power was the Bible. From his earliest days, he read the Bible constantly and prayed constantly. It was with this fire that he started his conflagration."

John Jay Chapman

Arthur Tappan, published The Emancipator
Co-founded with Garrison the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833

His homes were attacked by anti-abolitionist mobs in 1831 and 1834

John Brown believed he was called by God to lead a violent insurrection to overthrow slavery and free all American Blacks

His attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in 1859 with a band of Black and White insurrectionists failed, and Brown was hung

But the passions he aroused fueled the momentum leading to the Civil War

Freed slaves provided powerful abolitionist leadership



Freed slaves were the movement's most significant voices



Born Isabella Bomfree in Ulster County, New York in 1797, she was sold four times before she was 30 and subject to harsh labor and violence from some of her owners

She ran away in 1827 and had her freedom bought by abolitionists

Settling in New York City, she was caught up in revivals sweeping the state, and quickly won notoriety as a charismatic preacher

Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she was soon on a national circuit preaching against slavery at abolitionist rallies

Embracing suffragism and temperance as well, she gave a famous 'Ain't I a Woman' speech at a women's rights conference in 1851

And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

The greatest abolitionist speaker was Frederick Douglass

As a boy, he was a house slave of a Baltimore family, whose mistress secretly taught him to read and write

He fled north at the age of twenty, and eluding slave catchers he settled in Massachusetts

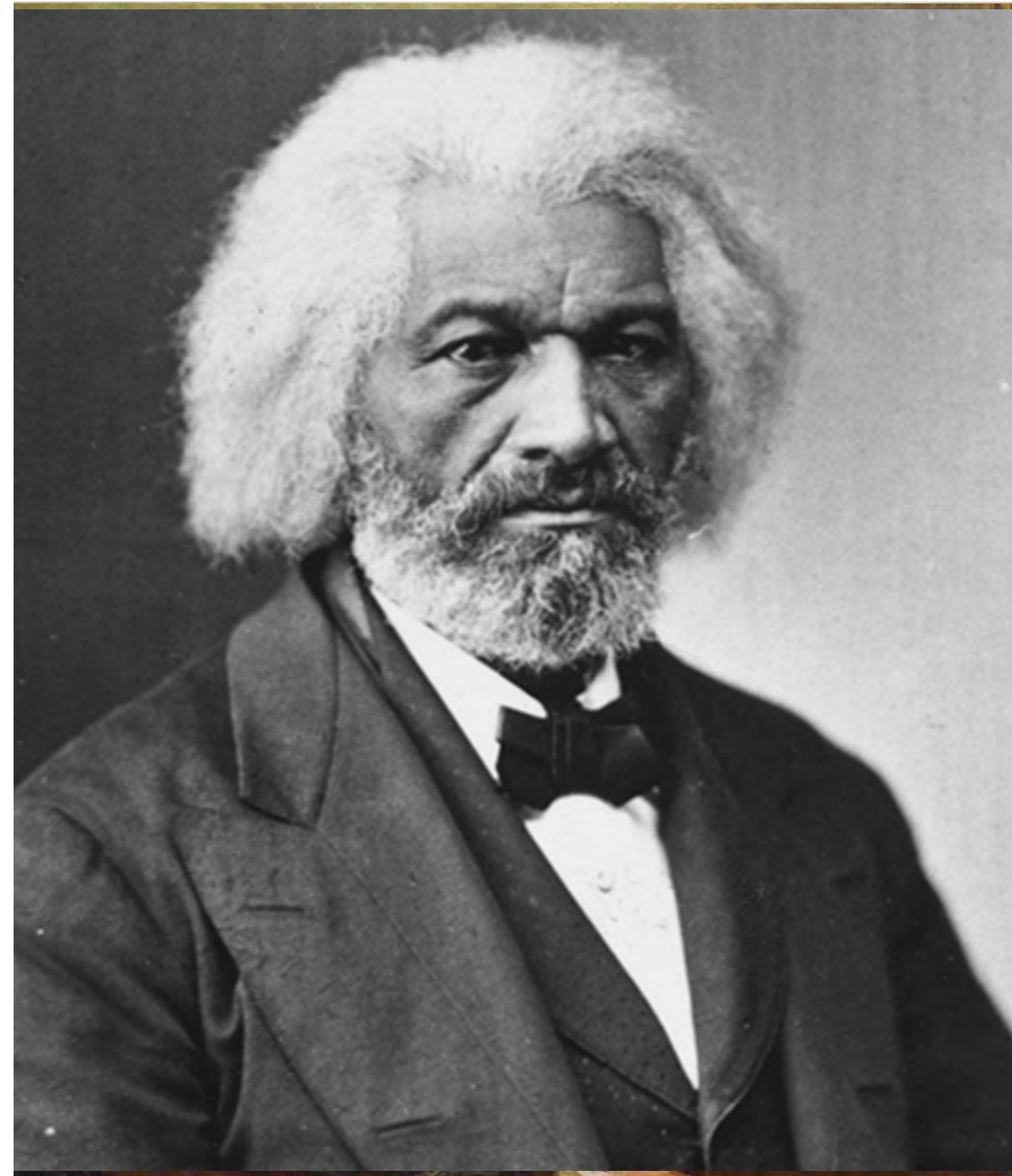
Asked to describe his experiences at an anti-slavery conference in 1841, his poignant eloquence catapulted him onto a national stage

From that point on, in spite frequent heckling, insult and violence from racist audiences, he was the leading abolitionist speaker in America

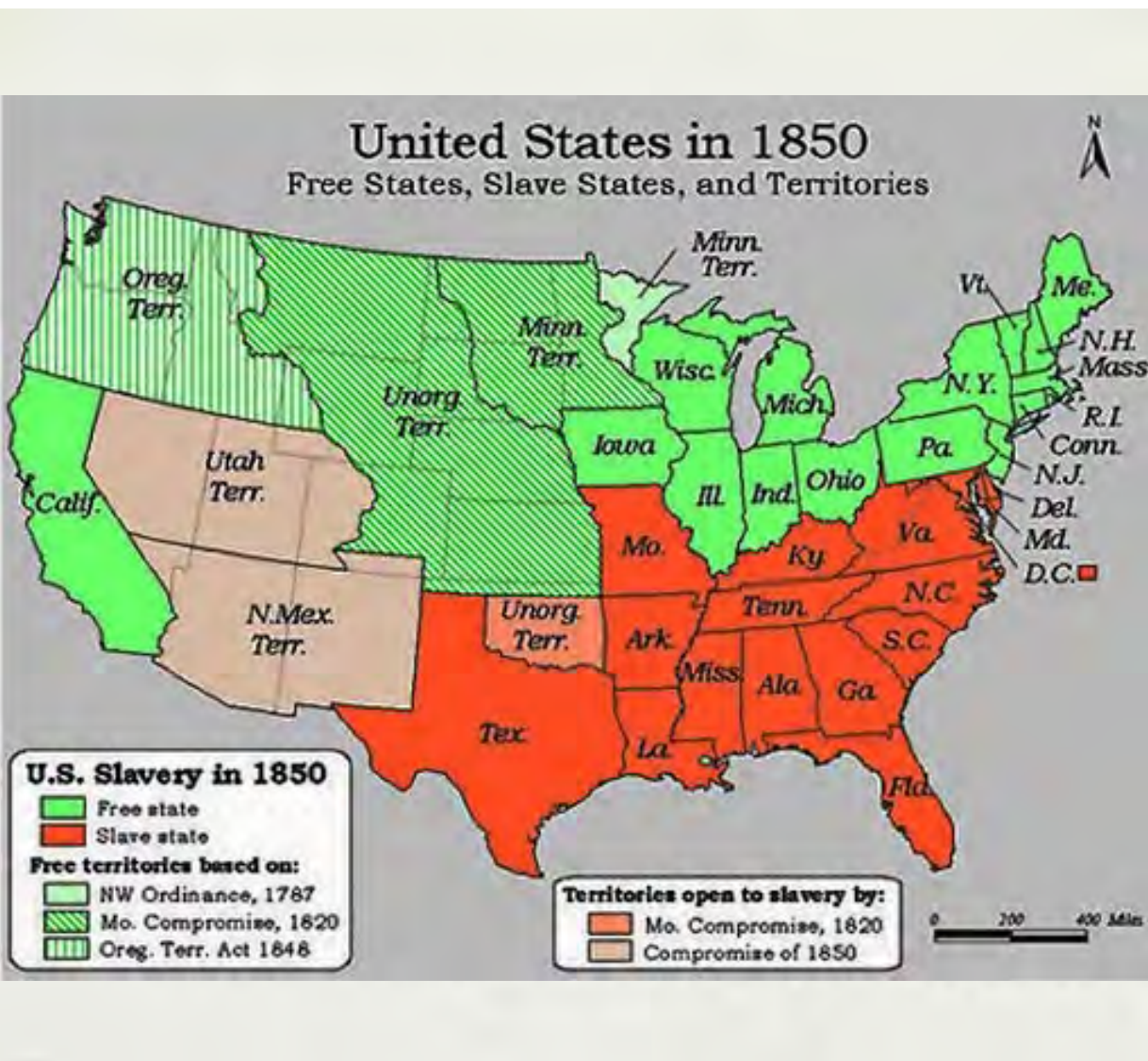
Eventually settling in Rochester, New York, he continued his abolitionist activities

During the Civil War he consulted with Abraham Lincoln, advising him to bring Blacks into the Union Army

After the war he advocated for full civil rights for former slaves, and later served in several federal government positions, including ambassador to Haiti



Other Americans focused on compromise and the gradual elimination of slavery



Many harbored racist feelings and were not in favor of integration of the 'races'

Most Northern states, concerned mostly about economic opportunities for Whites, instituted gradual emancipation laws

The American Colonization Society founded in 1816 wanted to send Blacks back to Africa

By 1860, 12,000 Blacks had gone to Liberia

By the 1840's American political life turned on the conflict pitting 'Free-Soilers' against slave holding Southerners

"Free-Soilers," demanded that the Western territories, eventually to become states, must be reserved for White settlers and closed to Black slaves

They were often as racist as John C. Calhoun, and were not interested in abolishing slavery in the Southern states, only preventing it from expanding

Slave resistance took many forms

Violent Rebellion

There were thirty-two slave uprisings in North America between 1741 and 1858

The most fearsome was that of the preacher Nat Turner in Virginia in 1831

51 Whites were killed, leading to hysteria and fierce backlash by slave holders

Escaping to the North or to Mexico

Ordinary acts of sabotage were common

Breaking tools, feigning illness, starting fires, destroying crops, slowing work

Several known instances of poisoning their masters

Slaves made Christian faith their own, the ground of both solace and resistance



Leading up to the Civil War, another ugly bigotry gripped America: Nativism



Nativism is a political policy supporting the interests of native people against those of immigrants

After 1845, Nativists (those who were descended from Colonial Americans) became alarmed by the huge influx of Irish

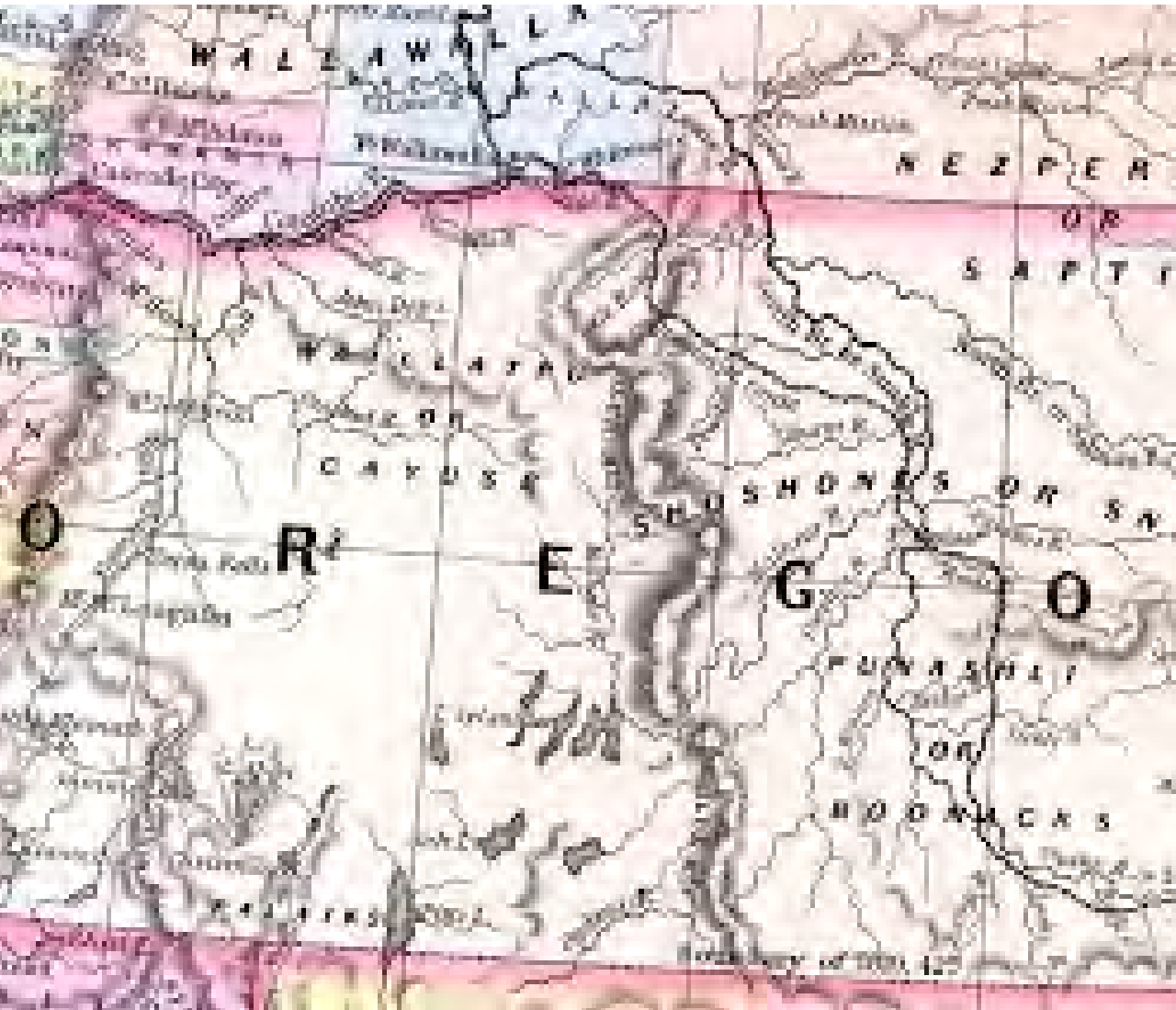
They rejected the Irish because they came from an alien culture: Roman Catholicism

Nativists attacked and burned Catholic churches and convents in Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts

Nativist and Irish gangs fought pitched battles in many American cities

The Native American, or No Nothing Party, won 52 seats in the House of Representatives in 1854, held 8 Senate seats by 1858, and won 20% of the Presidential vote in 1856

The same psychology that fueled Nativism led to deep racism in the Northern states



Even with laws of abolition, the reality of slavery lingered in Northern states until the 1850's

In Northern cities legislation dictated segregation of the races: Blacks were forced to live in segregated areas, attend segregated schools and allowed to work only at the most menial jobs

Social intercourse with a sense of equality was as rare in the North as in the South

Oregon was actually admitted to the Union in 1859 with a constitution that forbade Black people from living, working, or owning property in the state; the provision was not repealed until 1926

The enigma of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party

The Republicans were opposed to abolition

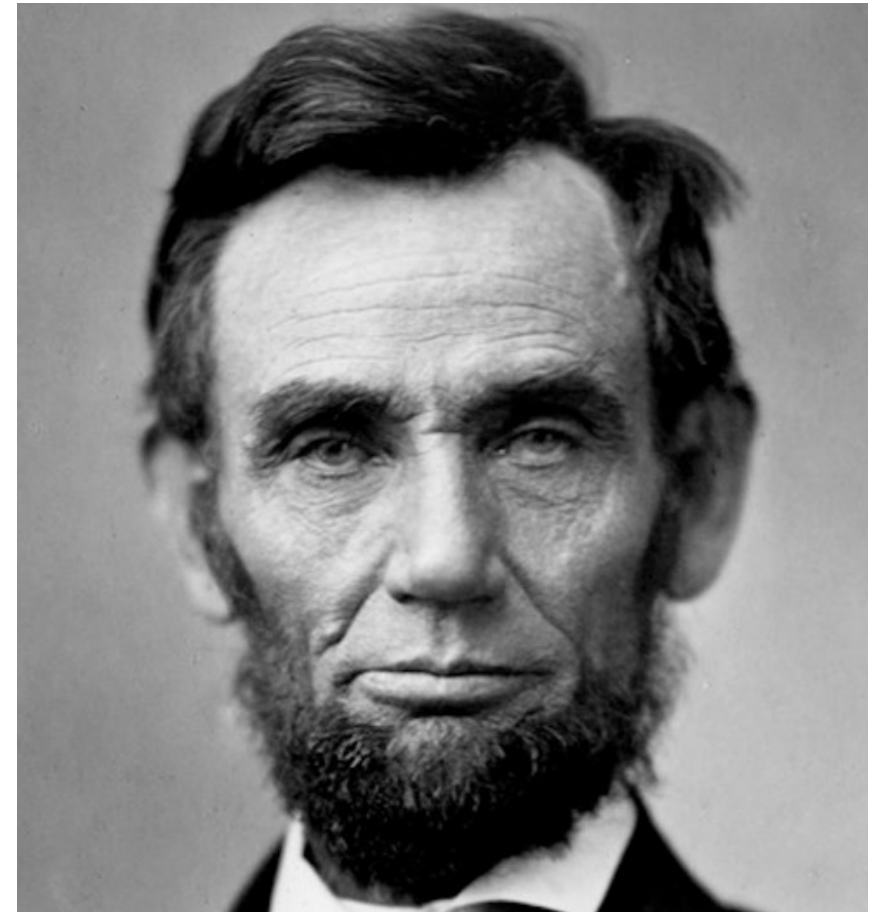
Their goal was to end slavery in any new states to secure economic opportunity for White farmers, tradesmen and merchants by eliminating competition from slaves

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was functionally a Free-Soiler

He supported gradual emancipation and opposed the expansion of slavery into new states primarily on the ground it would stifle White economic development

Yet the exigencies of the Civil War led him to change his mind

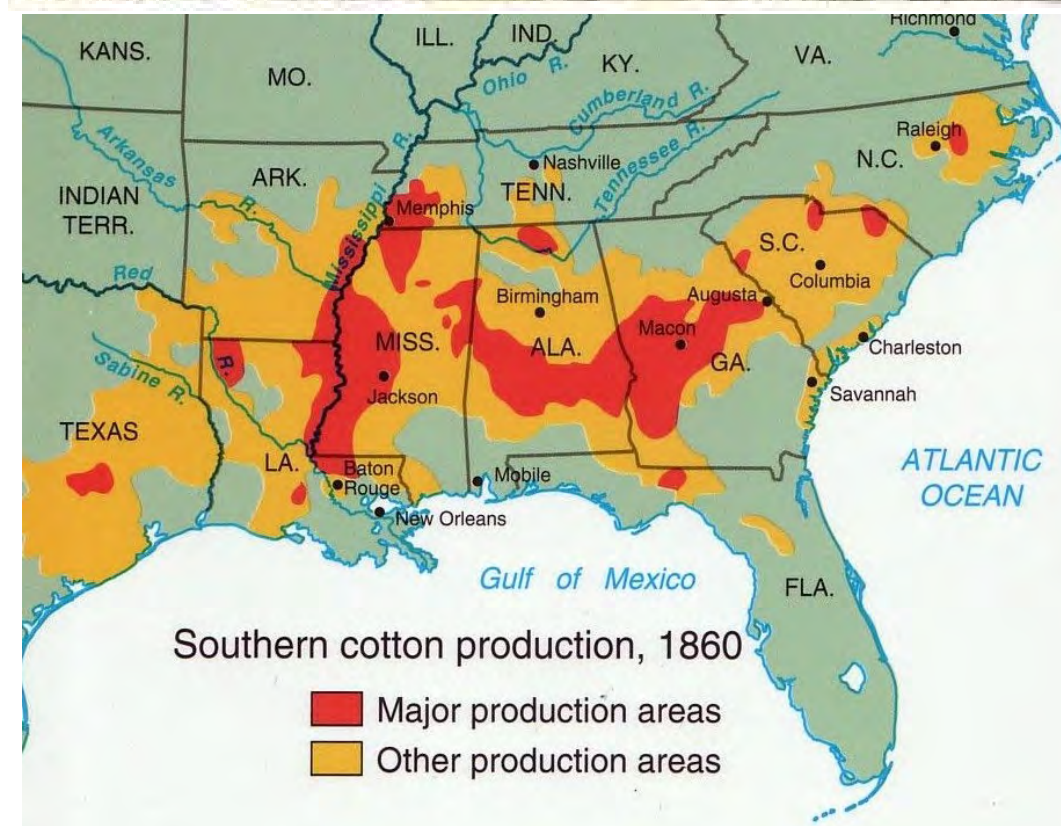
He would eventually embrace both the inclusion of Blacks in the army and full emancipation because of military and political expediency



Why the American economy was driven by dual racism against Bl

As Richard Hughes has written, If we “begin with the most basic distinction in political economy: the distinction between capital and labor,” we quickly realize that “enslaved people were both.” Their value on the eve of the Civil War “was equal to all of the capital invested in American railroads, manufacturing, and agricultural land combined.”

“Likewise, capitalism makes no sense apart from vast tracts of land on the North American continent, stolen from their original owners, which became the ground upon which enslaved people toiled.”



Time for a five minute break



The Civil War created both opportunity and terror for Black Americans

At first, Black Americans were not allowed to enlist in the Union Army for two reasons:

- A 1792 federal law prohibited Blacks from bearing arms

- President Lincoln was afraid it would cause border states to secede from the Union

Free Blacks were allowed to enlist in 1862

- Several Black regiments were formed, with White officers

- Black troops received less than half the pay of White soldiers

Union conscription in 1863 led to draft riots

Because of its economic ties to the South, New York City never fully supported the war

- Working class Whites, mostly Irish, feared freed Blacks would take their jobs

- Irish American rioters targeted Blacks, burning their homes and institutions, wantonly murdering over 100 Black men, women and children



On January 1, 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation

13th Amendment

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

It freed only slaves who were in Confederate States in rebellion against the Union

Slaves in Missouri, Kentucky, Delaware and Maryland remained in bondage

It had two powerful consequences:

It's moral implications prevented France and Britain from supporting the South

It allowed the Union Army to recruit freed Black slaves; over 180,000 joined

More than anything else, it sealed the defeat of the Confederacy

Lincoln understood this, writing; *'the emancipation policy, and the use of colored troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion.'*

It laid the groundwork for the 13th Amendment in 1865 abolishing all slavery

'Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.'

Reconstruction: the attempt to build a new American society

Lincoln's assassination put Reconstruction on shaky ground

President Andrew Johnson was a Southern sympathizer

Racism was deeply entrenched in the North

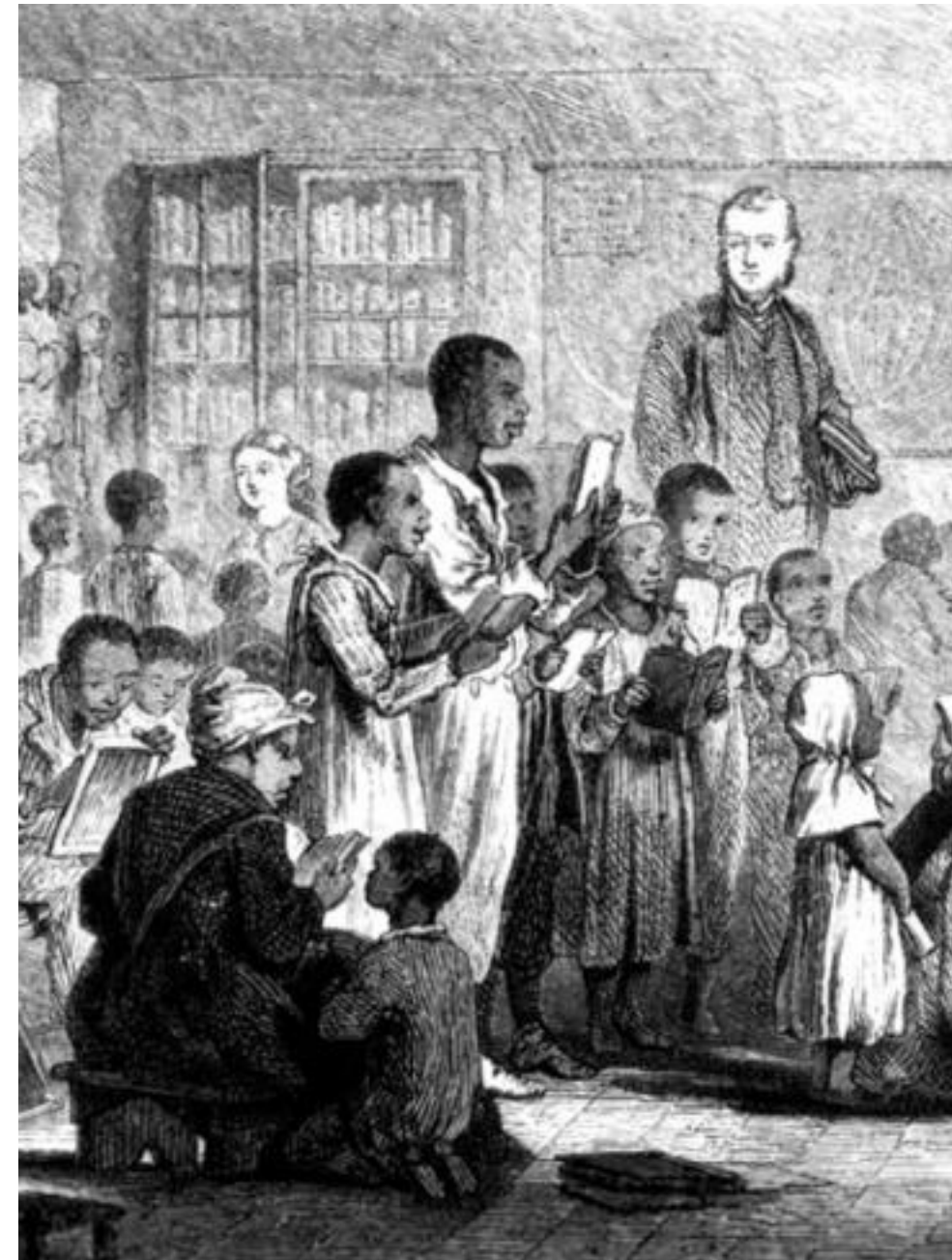
Still, the 'better angels' in Congress passed laws to institute radical change

In 1865 the Act to Establish a Bureau for the Relief of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands

It built hospitals all through the South and provided medical care to over a million freed slaves

Over 21 million rations of food were distributed to impoverished Blacks and Whites

It's greatest success was in education, as more than 1000 schools were established, as well as many teacher training institutions including those which became Fisk, Howard and Clark Atlanta Universities



By the end of 1865, Congress took control of Reconstruction



Led by the radical Republicans Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 defined all persons born in the United States as national citizens, who were guaranteed equality under the law

Congress next approved the 14th Amendment which put birthright citizenship into the Constitution

It forbade states to deprive any citizen of equal protection from the law

The federal government would guarantee every citizen's equality under law from state violation

The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 divided the South into five military districts

They outlined how new state governments were to be established, based solely on manhood suffrage regardless of race

Federal troops occupying the Southern states brought order through force of arms, temporarily ending White violence against Blacks

Radical Reconstruction: 1867-1877

By 1870 all the former Confederate States had re-entered the Union

They were required to ratify the 14th Amendment, adopt new state constitutions disqualifying former Confederate officials from holding public office, and guarantee black men the right to vote

Nearly all Southern States were controlled by the Republican Party, made up of...

Carpetbaggers from the North, looking for profit

Scalawags, upcountry non-slave holding Whites

African Americans, who pressed for the elimination of the racial caste system and the economic uplifting the freed slaves

16 African Americans served in Congress, including two in the Senate, over 600 in state legislatures and hundreds more in local offices

Republicans created the first state funded public school systems in the South, outlawed racial discrimination in public transportation and accommodations, and strived to elevate the economic condition of freed slaves



Economic stability and personal safety for Blacks was unrealized



The promise of '40 acres and a mule' offered by William Sherman was spoiled when President Johnson ordered land in federal hands be returned to its owners. Freed slaves had little choice but to work on plantations for white owners, either for wages or as share croppers.

Blacks remained propertyless and poor.

The political revolution generated violent opposition from White Southerners.

Secret White supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan targeted Republicans and Black community leaders for beatings and assassination.

In 1870 and 1871 Congress passed three Enforcement Acts giving the federal government rights of African Americans, especially members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The administration launched a legal and military offensive that crushed the Klan.

Grant's Presidency (1868-1876) brought advancement and setbacks

The 15th Amendment (1870) prohibited states from restricting the right to vote because of race

The Civil Rights Acts of 1875 guaranteed rights for Blacks in public and civic life

But attitudes were shifting in the North

There was widespread dismay at the perception of political corruption of Southern Republicans
A latent racism emerged in the North as the Republican party moved to a far more conservative political position

Many believed the intent of Reconstruction to raise up Blacks was a mistake

Even Northern Republicans called for letting the most talented Southerners (racist former slave holders) back into government

In 1873 in the 'Slaughterhouse Cases' the Supreme Court gutted the 14th Amendment

It allowed private businesses and landowners to discriminate against Blacks

Slaughterhouse Cases (1873)



The court offered a narrow definition of the 14th Amendment.

- ✓ It distinguished between national and state citizenship.
- ✓ It gave the states primary authority over citizens' rights.
- ❖ Therefore, the courts **weakened civil rights enforcement!**

The end of Reconstruction

13th Amendment

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

14th Amendment

Section 1. No state may abridge the privileges and immunities of any of its citizens, or deny them due process of law or equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. When any state denies the right to vote at any election to any of its male citizens, it shall be so represented in the Senate and House of Representatives as if the number of its representatives were increased by one for every ten persons who are denied the right to vote.

15th Amendment

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

After the election of 1876, Republicans had political control in only LA, SC and FL

The Republican presidential candidate Rutherford B. Hayes needed disputed returns from those states to win the election

In negotiations, Hayes agreed to recognize Democratic control of the Southern states in return for their certifying his presidency

Democrats immediately began to put a new racial system in the South

Called 'Jim Crow' after a popular minstrel routine mocking Blacks, its foundations were:

The disenfranchisement of Black voters; a rigid system of racial segregation; the relegation of African Americans to low-wage agricultural and domestic employment; and both legal and extralegal violence to crush any who resisted

The Republican Party and the federal government simply turned a blind eye

Yet even though flagrantly violated, the Reconstruction amendments remained in the Constitution, 'sleeping giants' in the words of Charles Sumner

The racism that gripped American in the late 19th century ran deep and broad

Southern states, initially with slave codes and later with Jim Crow laws, became obsessed with the question: Who is white?

In 1790, Congress had passed a law declaring: “Only free White citizens who have, or shall migrate into the United States, are eligible to become naturalized citizens.”

Socially, White was defined as ‘accepted as equals of Americans of Anglo-Saxon or Germanic stock, the dominant ruling class’



In 19th century America, Irish, Italians, Jews and Greeks were socially and sometimes legally considered to be non-White, occupying a ‘third class’ between White and Black

In 1890 in New Orleans, eleven Italians were publicly lynched by a White mob

No legal action was taken against the murders, just as it had been and continued to be for Whites who lynched Blacks

A new ideal for assimilation emerged: the American 'Melting Pot'

Nativists had two fears about the 'New Immigrants':

They lacked the political, social, and occupational skills needed to assimilate into American culture

Many were socialists, anarchists and communists who would promote a destabilising political radicalism

Yet a new vision for assimilation captured the American imagination assuaging anxiety concerning immigration

The melting pot is a monocultural metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming more homogeneous, with the different elements "melting together" into a harmonious whole with a common culture

Rooted in the ideas of the American philosopher John Dewey, who believed, 'Democracy and the one, ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity are to my mind synonymous.'



Public education would be the crucible in which all American children would learn to embrace the

Children would become responsible citizens through learning civics, social studies, American history and English literature

One problem: **Black Americans were socially, politically, economically and legally excluded**

The North won the Civil War...but the South won the peace



Neither the military victory nor the federal laws granting emancipation and equal rights to freed Blacks solved the great underlying problem: Racism

The majority of White Americans in both the North and the South felt they were superior to Blacks and rejected equality

Having the need to justify their defeat, Southerners began to craft a new narrative about the 'Lost Cause'

It depicted the Civil War as an epic clash between two civilizations:

The genteel South with a superior society based on “veracity and honor in man, chastity and fidelity in women” against the rapacious North “materialistic, grasping for

Like tragic heroes, Southerners had waged a noble but doomed struggle to preserve their superior civilization, their chivalry and military skill winning victories against overwhelming odds before finally succumbing the Northern industrial might

The Southern task became celebrating and glorifying the 'Lost Cause'

Part of the lie was the insistence by former Confederate leaders like Jefferson Davis that the war was not about Slavery but States Rights

Monuments to its heroes were placed in nearly every Southern city and town

No where was the myth of goodness and chivalry greater than about Robert E. Lee



Far from being a noble Christian gentleman, Lee was a fierce task master often pushing his slaves beyond the limits of their endurance

In 1859 Lee had three of his slaves, including a woman, receive fifty lashes on their backs, and then ordered his overseer to wash their torn flesh with brine

The 'Lost Cause' narrative found support in the North, where after ten years there was no will to sustain the expense of Reconstruction

The false narrative was used to justify the imposition of Jim Crow laws in the South, enforcing segregation and relegating Blacks to inferior status

‘Jim Crow’ laws legalized segregation in the South

State legislatures, were no longer controlled by carpetbaggers, scalawags and free Blacks but by the Antebellum White elite

In the late 1870’s they began to pass laws requiring the separation of Whites and ‘persons of color’ in schools and public transportation

Segregation was extended to parks, cemeteries, restaurants, theaters, hospitals in an effort to prevent any contact between Whites and Blacks as equals

Needless to say, the facilities provided for Blacks were vastly inferior



Beyond segregation, the laws were meant to disenfranchise and deprive Southern Blacks of the political and economic gains they had made during Reconstruction

Legislation was passed to determine who was a person of color

Most Southern states adopted the ‘one drop rule’: a Black is any person with any known African Black ancestry

In time, the ‘one drop rule’ became the nationally accepted standard

In the late 19th century, racism and bigotry received support from ‘science’

The first came from the pseudo ‘science’ of Eugenics

Eugenics is a set of beliefs and practices that has the goal of improving human genetic quality

It’s proponents claimed certain groups were superior and should be promoted, while other groups were inferior and should be suppressed

Louis Agassiz, a professor of zoology at Harvard University in the mid 19th century popularized the concept in America

He promoted the idea of Polygenesis, that each race had an independent evolutionary source and was endowed with unequal attributes

He wrote that Blacks were innately and culturally inferior to Whites



Southern racists used its ideas to support racial segregation and in the 20th century p

Even though its science has been proven totally bogus, it was used to support Jim Crow misogyny laws and remains a tenant of White supremacy into our century

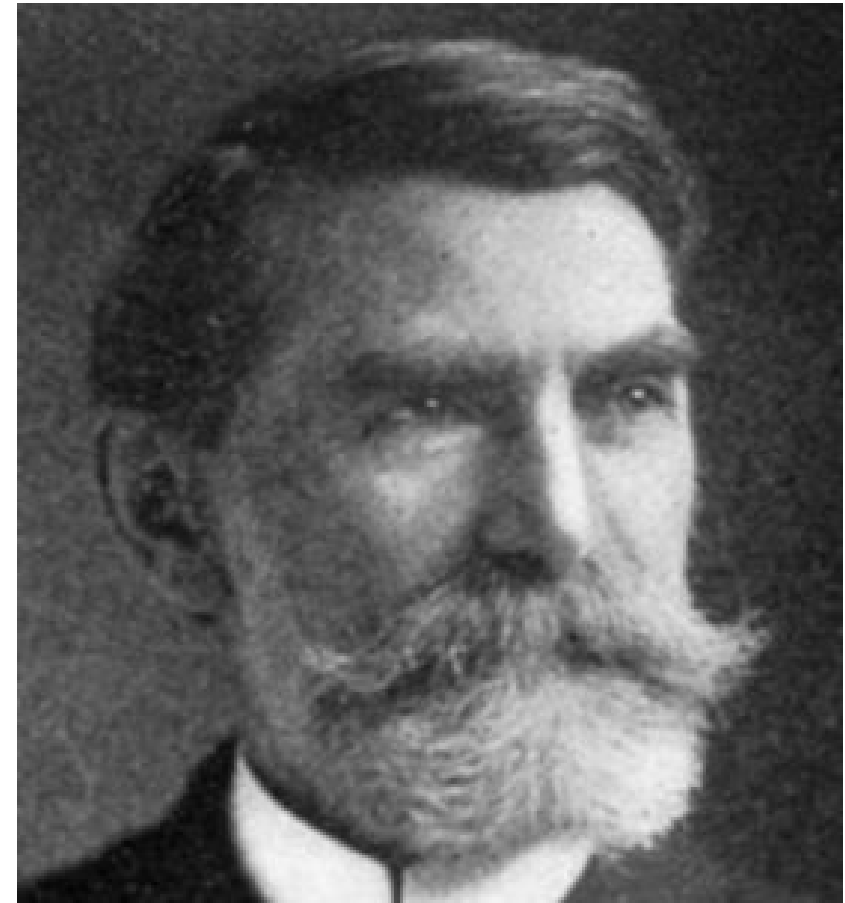
The second came from ‘Social Darwinism’

A social theory developed by Herbert Spencer, based on Darwin’s argument that in nature evolution is driven by the ‘survival of the fittest’

The principal of ‘survival of the fittest’ also applies to cultures, classes and races

Some, like Andrew Carnegie, claimed it as a defense of Capitalism

‘Survival of the fittest’ resulted in the concentration of business and vast wealth in a few hands



Others, like Josiah Strong in his book ‘Our Country’, used it to champion White

The White Anglo-Saxon race already proven to have ‘unequalled energy, the great

‘Nothing can save the inferior race but a steady and pliant assimilation.’

Other minorities were objects of prejudice, bigotry, discrimination and violence

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

White mob violence against minorities did not discriminate:

Against Asians...

Against Latinx...

Against Native Americans...

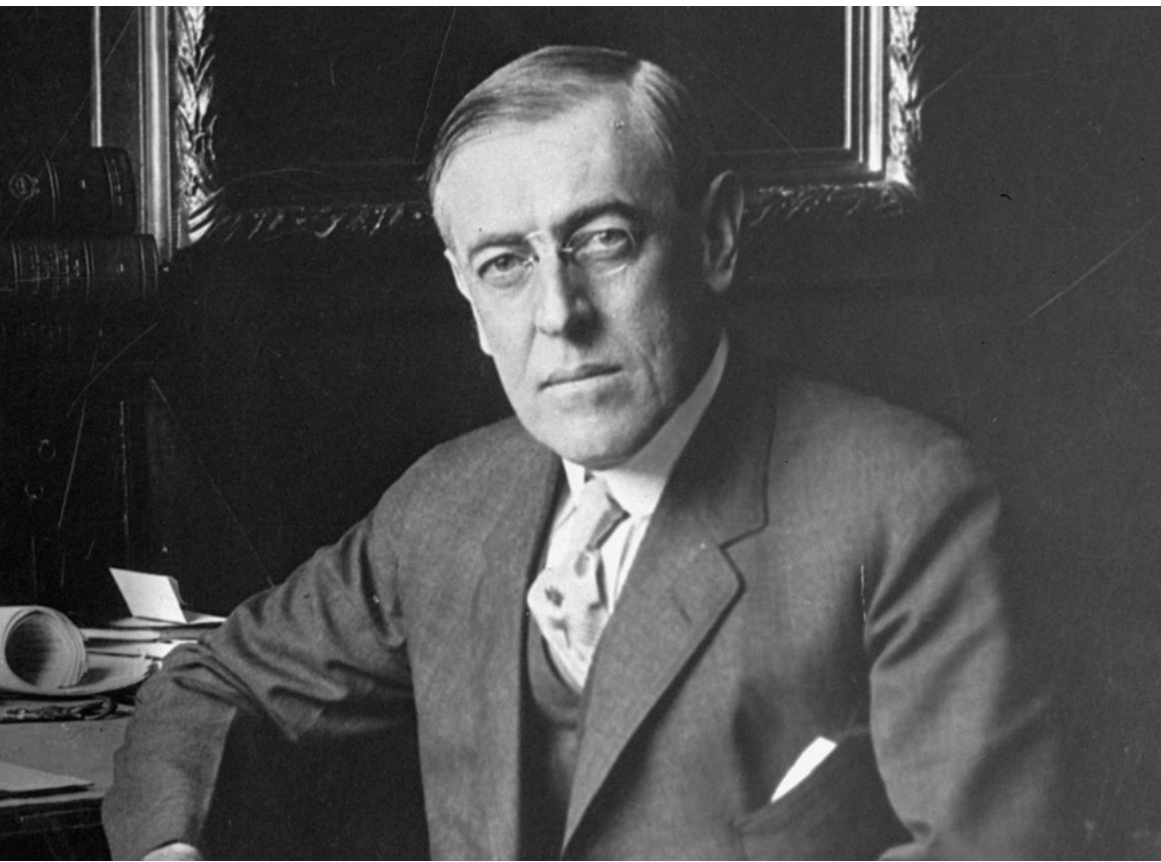
The federal government continued its policy of Native American removal

By the end of the century all Native American tribes had been forcibly relocated on reservations

The U.S. army committed genocide at Wounded Knee, SD in 1890, slaughtering nearly 300 men, women and children of the Lakota Sioux



The entrenchment of Jim Crow created a racial caste system



In 1883 the U.S. Supreme Court declared parts of the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional, including the prohibition of racial discrimination in inns, transportation and places of entertainment

In 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson* the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a Louisiana statute that required railroads to provide “equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races”

Until the mid 20th century in the judicial system, the principle of states rights trumped federal rights

The combination of poll taxes, literacy tests and residency requirements systematically disenfranchised Black voters

By 1910, less than .05% of eligible Blacks were registered to vote in many states

Those unregistered to vote could not sit on juries or run for public office

In 1912 the racist Southerner Woodrow Wilson was elected President, and began to segregate

Jim Crow terror

With White supremacy being challenged throughout the South, many Whites sought to protect their former status by threatening African Americans who exercised new rights. The Ku Klux Klan reemerged with power, leading in the maintenance of Jim Crow laws with violence.

Blacks who broke the codes risked their homes, their jobs, even their lives.

Whites could physically beat, or even kill African Americans with impunity.

Blacks had little recourse against these assaults because the Jim Crow criminal justice system was all-white: police, prosecutors, judges, juries, and prison officials.

Lynchings were public murders by mobs, often with police acquiescence.

Between 1882 and 1968 more than 4000 Blacks were lynched by White mobs, mostly in Southern small towns where Blacks and Whites competed economically.

Lynchings were often festive events for White Southerners, with children attending and postcards made for observers to send to friends and relatives.



Black voices emerged in response to racist America



Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) called for Black improvement and assimilation into the dominant White culture

He built the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama into the premier Black educational institution

He urged Blacks to abandon efforts to win full civil rights and political power and instead cultivate industrial and agricultural skills to gain economic security

They should accept discrimination now because their accumulation of wealth and culture would eventually win White acceptance

“Among a large class, there seemed to be a dependence upon the government for a position for themselves, but wanted the federal officials to create one for them.”

“I have begun everything with the idea that I could succeed, and I never had much patience with the multitudes of people who are always ready to explain why one cannot succeed.”

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931), like Washington, was born a slave



As part owner and editor of the *Memphis Free Speech* she began an anti-lynching campaign in 1892 after three of her friends were lynched

In spite of threats of violence, she traveled throughout the country lecturing against lynching, calling on Black Americans to defend themselves if legal protection was wanting

Eventually settling in Chicago, she organized Black women's suffrage groups, and served on the executive committee of the NAACP until becoming disenchanted with its elitism

A Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give.

I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked. I felt if I could take one lyncher with me, this would even up the score a little bit.

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) rejected Washington's model

He called on American Blacks to achieve academic success and work for civil rights

He earned a Ph.D. from Harvard, and taught for many years at Atlanta University

DuBois believed that because of the depth of racism in America, change would only come through agitation, and he co-founded the NAACP in 1909 to organize systematic protest of segregation



In his seminal works 'The Souls of Black Folks', 'Black Reconstruction' and 'The Crisis' he struggled with the “twoness” of being

One ever feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

Disgusted with unrelenting racism in the United States, “a land whose freedom is to us a mockery and whose liberty a lie”, he moved to Ghana in 1961

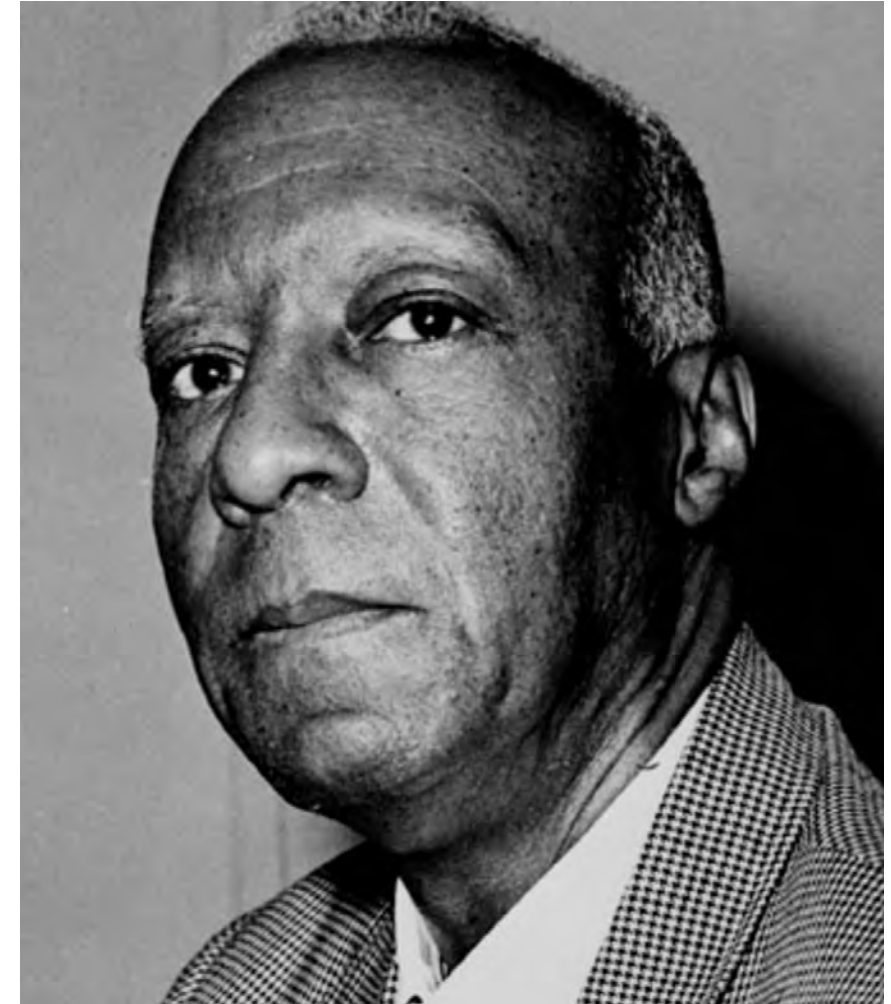
A Philip Randolph (1889-1979) fought racism through labor organizing

He founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925

It was the first labor union for Black workers

Initially was part of the American Federation of Labor, but because of flagrant racism in AFofL unions, Randolph later moved it to the Congress of Industrial Organizations

By the 1930's Randolph was the most powerful and effective Black lobbyist in Washington



The threat of public protests, coupled with his lobbying, led Franklin Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802 in 1941, barring racial discrimination in federal bureaus and the defense industry; in 1948, the same tactics led Harry Truman to issue Executive Order 9981 banning segregation in the armed forces

Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within. Freedom is never granted; it is won. Justice is never given; it is exacted.

A racist nation



The first half of the 20th century was the nadir of race relations in America

American popular culture was thoroughly racist

The openly racist film ‘The Birth of a Nation’, a box office smash and widely felt to be a masterpiece, was even shown in the White House

Blacks were denigrated, usually portrayed as hapless buffoons, inferior to Whites

The Klu Klux Klan reached its peak influence and had millions of members in the North: it taught that discrimination against Blacks, Jews and Catholics was morally good
White racism was fiercest among the working class

‘No matter how bad things get for me, I’m not on the bottom’

‘Even the most successful Black is lower than me’

All major societal institutions reflected and supported the oppression of Blacks

The Immigration Law of 1924, banning Asians, and severely restricting southern and eastern Europeans was enacted to ‘preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity’

A myth persisted in American culture that the United States was a haven for the world's poor and downtrodden

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Yet time and again Congress passed laws, upheld by the Supreme Court, restricting immigration and the road to citizenship of non-Whites

A 1917 law blocked almost all Asian immigration for those living between Afghanistan and the Pacific Ocean



In *Ozawa vs. the United States*, the Supreme Court found Takao Ozawa, a Japanese immigrant, ineligible for citizenship even after living in the United States for 20 years

In a unanimous decision, the Court argued, the nation's Founders intended citizenship *'only to those whom they knew and regarded as worthy to share it with them, men of their own type, white men.'* This was in 1922.

Asians, Latinx and Native Americans dictated public policy at every

The Immigration Law of 1924, banned Asians to 'preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity

Fear of the 'Yellow Peril', that America would be overwhelmed by immigrant and Black birth rates

2016 wasn't the first time fearful Whites thought of a wall to block immigration

At times it led to violence and murder, against Asians, Latinx and Native Americans

Perhaps the greatest indignity was the internment of Japanese Americans at the beginning of World War II

120,000 Japanese American men, women and children were forced to live in prison camps



American segregation laws become a model for others

In June, 1934 a group of Nazi bureaucrats gathered in Berlin to create new law codes

Their goal was to lay the groundwork for the legal separation between pure Aryan Germans and impure German Jews

They looked to one place for inspiration: the United States

The Nazi Herbert Kier had compiled a table of US race laws and was confounded by its depth and breadth, believing the US had gone far overboard

The Nazi hardliner Roland Freisler disagreed:

“This jurisprudence would suit us perfectly. I am of the opinion that we need to proceed with the same primitivity that is used by these American states. Such a procedure would be crude but it would suffice.”

The bitter fruit of their work became the Nuremberg Laws which laid the groundwork for the Holocaust

Hitler himself had nothing but admiration for America’s legal segregation and immigration restrictions, a model for his program of racial purification



There was a lie at the very heart of American society



There was no greater myth than that of the American Dream

Popularized by James T. Adams, “a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable...regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.”



But as Ta-Nehisi Coates reflected, “I have seen that dream all my life. It is Memorial Day cookouts, block associations, and driveways. The Dream is treehouses and the Cub Scouts. The Dream smells like peppermint but tastes like strawberry shortcake. And for so long I have wanted to escape into the Dream to fold my country over my head like a blanket.”



Coates goes on, “But this has never been an option because the Dream rests on our backs, the bedding made from our bodies.”

Yet following World War II,
cracks begin to appear in monolithic American racism



The NAACP, under the leadership Walter White, Roy Wilkins and Thurgood Marshall initiated lawsuits and held demonstrations to highlight racial injustice and secure equal rights

A major cultural breakthrough came in 1948 when Jackie Robinson integrated baseball

The major legal victory was in 1954 when in Brown vs. the Board of Education SCOTUS struck down 'separate but equal' segregation

A further ruling in 1955 to end segregation in public education 'with all deliberate speed' gave Southern states the freedom to ignore it

James Farmer founded CORE, and used non-violent civil disobedience to fight racial discrimination in Northern cities

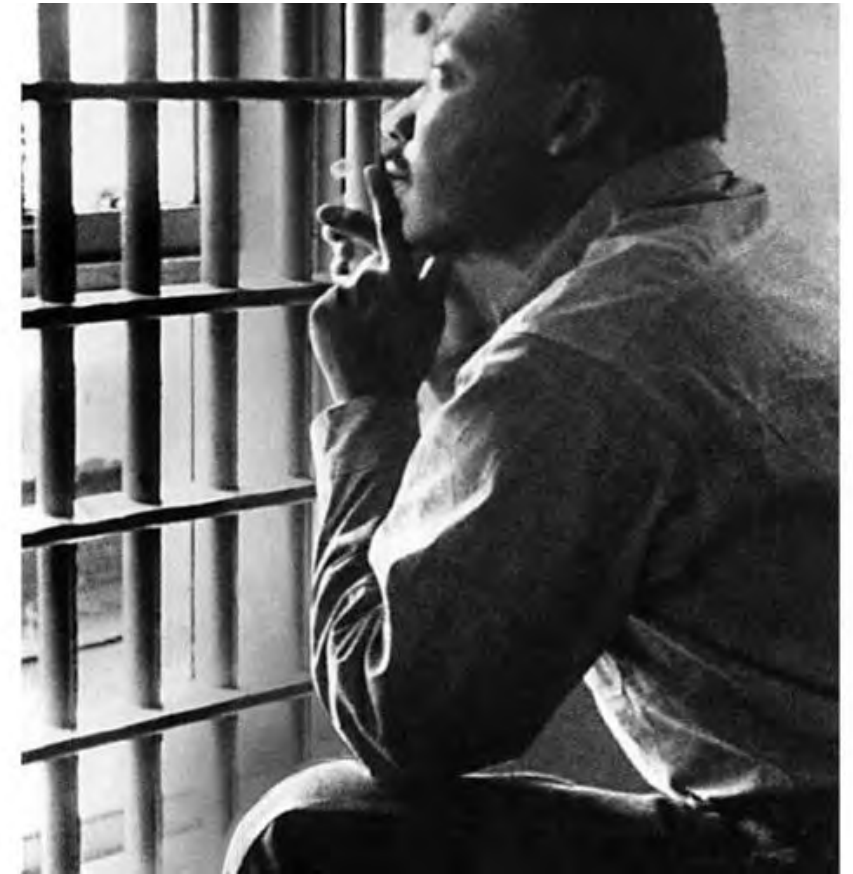
As the 1950's passed into the 1960's, the Great Migration changed the political formula in the U.S. by creating a huge block of Black urban voters in the North giving the Democratic Party the will to pass civil rights legislation

Civil rights protests gained national attention

In December, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a White man, sparking a bus boycott led by Martin Luther King

M.L. King founded the SCLC to give structure to non-violent local protest movements

In 1960 Black college students staged a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, NC igniting similar movements in over 60 Southern communities



In 1961, Freedom Rides on buses crossing the South were initiated to integrate public

The rides proved that militant but non-violent protesters could challenge Southern segregation

Televised clashes in Birmingham in 1963 between SCLC protesters and brutal White police won widespread sympathy in the North

Those incidents coupled with M.L. King's widely read 'Letter From a Birmingham Jail' eventually led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Continuing protests kept pushing for change



Mass protests culminated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August, 1963

Over 200,000 people participated, hearing M.L. King's 'I Have a Dream' speech

He linked Black aspirations to the 'sleeping giants' of traditional American political values in the 'promissory note' of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution

The voter registration campaign in the rural deep South in 1964 led to the murders of

The march from Selma to Montgomery led by M.L. King led directly to the Voting Rights Act of 1965

The emergence of Black militancy with the Black Panthers call for 'Black Power' a

After King's assassination in 1968, militant Black groups became the subject of both an intense federal and local government repression

Much had been gained: the legal segregation of Jim Crow was ended
But racism and discrimination still deeply stained American society

Carol Anderson has written, “for every action of African American advancement, there's a reaction, a backlash,” often orchestrated by “the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies.”

Claims that Black gains had resulted in ‘reverse discrimination’ against Whites was effective in preventing new civil rights laws for the remainder of the 20th century



In the Regents of the University of California v. Bakke in 1974, the Supreme Court

Two other legal decisions in 2013 changed the landscape

Schuette vs. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action upheld a Michigan referendum banning affirmative action at publicly funded state universities

Shelby County vs. Holder invalidated Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, allowing states to alter voting rules, resulting in voter suppression

In the new century, hope for Black advancement was followed by more White backlash

In the 21st century many Black leaders turned to public office rather than public protest

John Lewis and other politicians created the Congressional Black Caucus, to work for continuing civil rights legislation

The election of Barrack Obama to the presidency in 2008, led to the hope that America had entered a post-racial era



However, the backlash of White voters electing Trump president, and the open racism

In spite of all the advances that have been made in the past seventy years, the subordinate status of Blacks who remain in racially segregated [communities](#) where housing, public schools, and health care services are inferior, is unchanged

Yet issues of race again took center stage



Police brutality against Black Americans became headline news and led to widespread protests

The deaths in police custody of the unarmed Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Freddie Gray sparked protest, but the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin by a White civilian, followed by his (George Zimmerman) acquittal on murder charges led to outrage

In response, the Black Lives Matter movement was founded online in 2013

In 2014, Donald Trump tapped into the racist fears of voters about losing White pr

Trump's racist policies, including the border wall, the splitting of Hispanic families at the border and the abandonment of DACA, played directly into his base support

Trump's refusal to condemn White supremacist groups fueled racist agitation

Further tragedy in 2020 brought unparalleled support for racial equality



The deaths of unarmed African Americans Ahmaud Arbery at the hands of White vigilantes, and Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks by the police, led to widespread moral revulsion and anger across America

Public protests, loosely organized by Black Lives Matter, took place in hundreds of locations

The New York Times called it the largest protest movement in American history, with over 23 million Americans of all races participating

American leaders in sports, the arts, business, education and politics condemned racism and called for an end to all racial discrimination

A widespread movement to remove Confederate monuments and the names of Confederate leaders on institutions took place in almost every Southern city

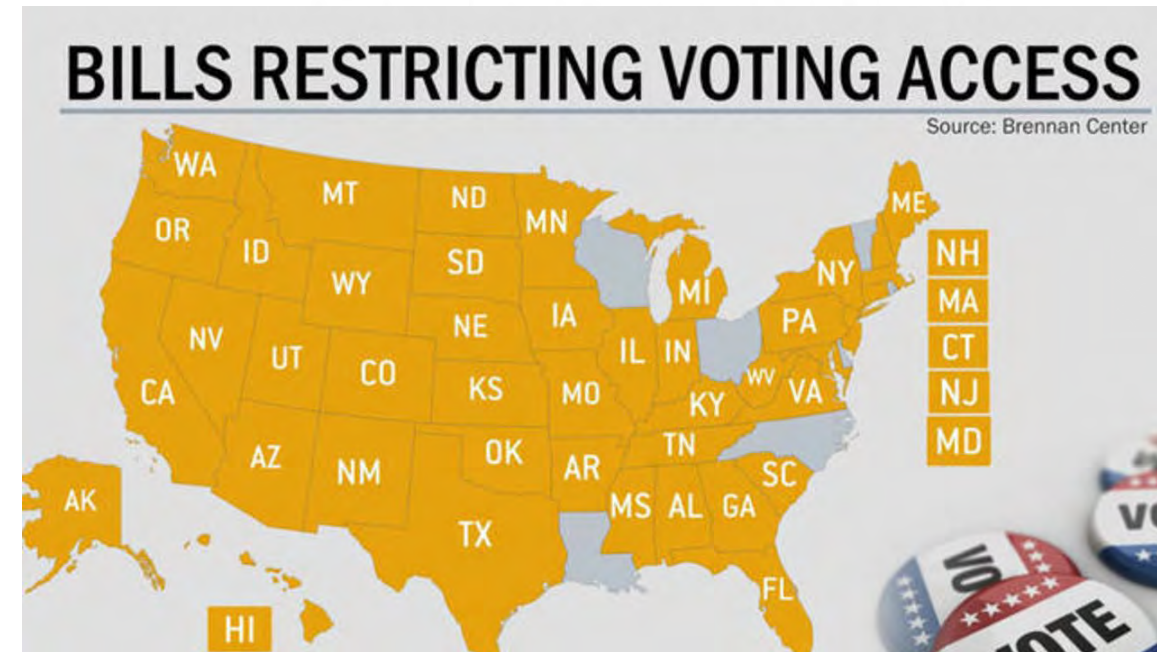
A serious call to defund and/or reimagine policing became a reality in many cities

And yet again the White backlash was strong and persistent

During the 2020 presidential election
Trump once more exploited White fear

Although Biden's margin was 7 million votes,
74 million Americans voted for Trump

Republican legislators introduced bill to
restrict voting rights in 45 states



Multiple state legislatures passed
redistricting maps to protect Republican
office holders

Local school board meetings were
disrupted, board members threatened
and educators fired because of misplaced
anger at the teaching of CRT



The ongoing national struggle with COVID-19 brought out a barely latent racism against Asians

Advocacy groups say they've seen rising prejudice against Asians since the coronavirus pandemic

Some view comments from former President Trump and his allies describing COVID-19 as the “China virus” and “kung flu” as particularly damaging

Nearly 3,800 “hate incidents” against Asians across the country between March 2020 and February 2021 have been reported

The worst was the targeting of Asian women in the massage parlor murders in Atlanta

The White police captain casually reported that the White killer simply had ‘a really bad day’.



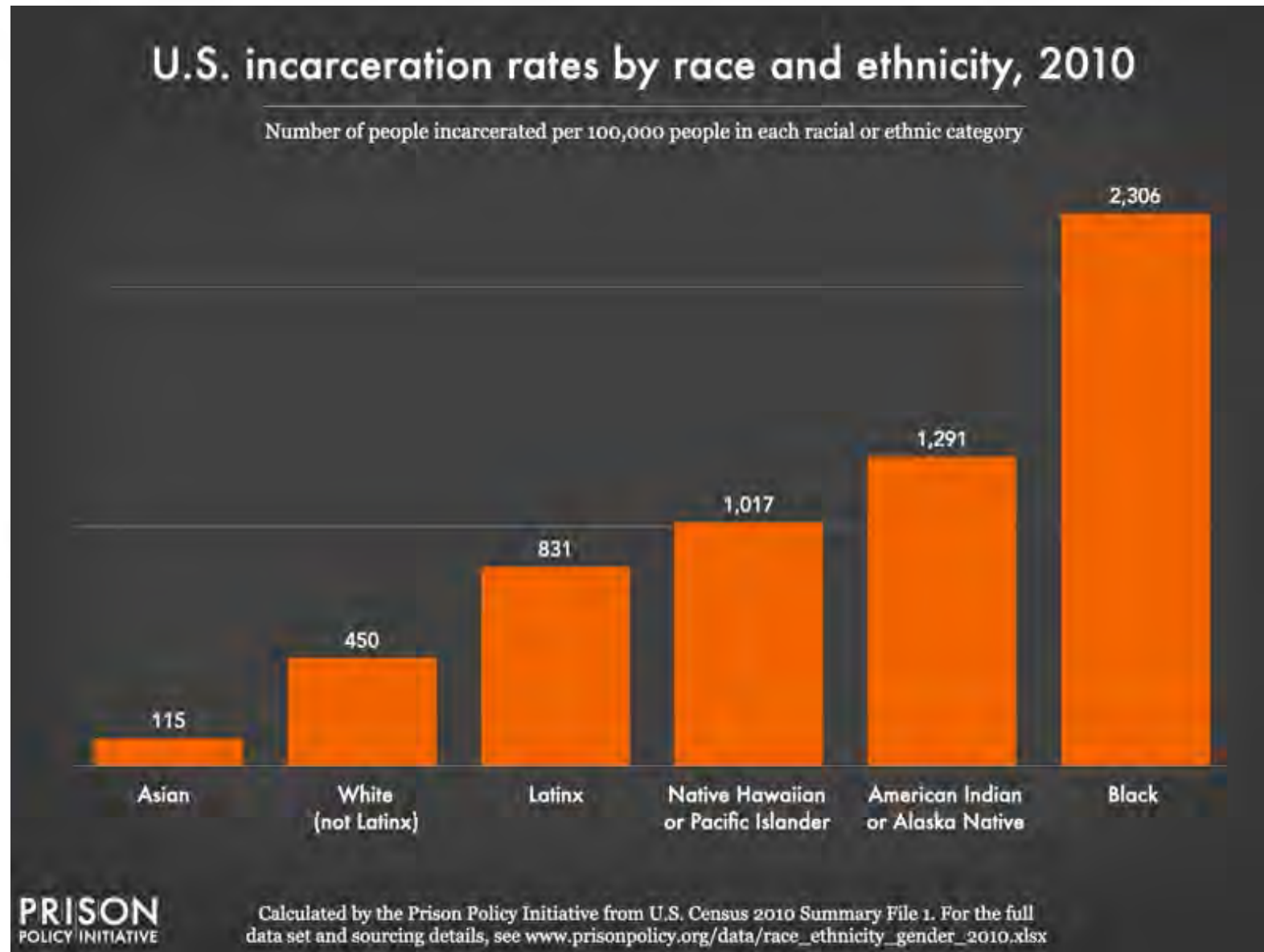
The truth is:



Racism is woven deeply into the very fabric of American society

White privilege extends through every aspect of American society

In employment, housing, education, lending, and government



Economically:

In employment

Income

Poverty rates

Home ownership

Wealth accumulation

Health Care:

Insurance

Life expectancy

Rates of incarceration

A recent study comparing social conditions for Black Americans

in 2018 with those in the Kerner Report of 1968, concluded they are worse today

“Today’s educational segregation, real estate steering, predatory banking, health care discrimination and “community” policing amount to daily forms of systemic racialized oppression that low-income white people do not experience.”

Elliott Currie in A Peculiar Indifference, the Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America

White fragility: the psychological root of racism

White Americans, regardless of their circumstances, embraced the racist principal that no matter what befell them, they were still superior to Blacks

For generations, they could take for granted their inherited rank in America's racial hierarchy and the benefits that accrued from it.

That began to change dramatically in the last decades of the 20th century for blue collar, working class White Americans



“The change in demographics, the erosion of labor unions, the perceived loss of status, the fears about their place in the world, and resentment that the kind of security their fa

As Russell Baker wrote in the NY Times, *“In the span of a few cruel years, he has seen his comfortable position as the ‘in’ man of American society become a social liability as the outcasts and the exploited have presented their due bills.”*

Rising immigration and the ascendance of a Black man as president made for an inversion of the world as many had known it, making them susceptible to the calls to “ta

The depth of American racism

By adulthood most Americans have been exposed to a culture with enough negative messages about African-Americans and other marginalized groups that as much as 80 percent of white Americans hold unconscious bias against black Americans

According to the Harvard sociologist David R. Williams, the bias is so automatic that it kicks in before a person can process it



“All racial ethnic minority groups are stereotyped more negatively than whites,” Williams said. “Blacks are viewed the worst, then Latinos, who are viewed twice as negatively as Asians. There is a hierarchy of rank.”

Isabel Wilkerson writes, ‘If the lower-caste person manages actually to rise above caste, the rise is more than economic. The malaise is spiritual, psychological, emotional.’

The Christian response

...entile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you

Galatians 3:28

*Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,
and respect the dignity of every human being?
I will with God's help.*

The Baptismal Covenant



So where do we begin?

As Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has said,
“We wrestle against Principalities and Powers. This demands Spirit work. We need to name the evil of racism.”



Because racism has a spiritual core that manifests itself psychologically, intellectually and emotionally in individuals, as well as systemically in ‘the evil structures of this world’, all work of racial healing must be supported, upheld and nurtured by disciplined spiritual formation:

Naming the evil of racism through understanding our nation’s history and how it has impacted us

Committing to the practice of spiritual disciplines that will enhance racial healing

Becoming actively engaged in ministries of dismantling racism

“The Church has the habit of avoiding Jesus like the plague. We have to open our hearts to Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospel. Then the Church will find its soul, not White supremacy.” Michael Curry

Comments or Questions?

