Workshop Series on The History of Racism in the U.S.

Workshop #1
Origins: The Social Construction of Race, Ethnicity and Racism

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Local indigenous people, including the Yokuts and Miwuk who understand the earth as a place for everyone, first inhabited the land where UC Merced is located. When we address diversity on this campus, we do so boldly, daring to look forward and backward, imagining diversity’s demand for the 21st century and the importance of diversity in addressing past wrongs, reaffirming humanity, and ensuring a reconciliatory path of redress for the future. The most prominent path on our campus is called Scholars Lane. By day, you can see, hear and witness the embodiment of our diversity through campus community members making their way across campus framed by the slopes and peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

-In UC Merced Diversity Statement

In addition to acknowledging the lands and its first inhabitants, we must acknowledge that much of what we know of this country today, including its culture, economic growth, and development throughout history and across time, has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their ascendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow. We are indebted to their labor and their sacrifice, and we must acknowledge the tremors of that violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact that can still be felt and witnessed today.
Land & Labor Acknowledgement Reflection

• What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this land acknowledgement?

• What is your organization doing beyond acknowledging whose land and labor allow you to live, work, and/or learn in that space?
Community Agreements

• We agree to speak for ourselves and allow others to speak for themselves, with no pressure to represent or explain to a whole group.

• We agree to listen with resilience, “hanging in” when something is hard to hear.

• We agree to consider asking a question to check out the assumption we are making rather than taking that assumption(s) as fact.

• We agree to share airtime and participate within the suggested timeframe.

• We agree to not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot or did not hear a speaker.

• We agree to “pass” or “pass for now” if we are not ready or willing to respond to a question.

• We agree that when we discuss our experience with people who are not present, we will not attach names or other identifying information to participate comments unless we have permission to do so.

• We agree this is a space of learning, that no one, even the presenter is able to know all things. We are all in a process of learning.
1. I will not check the chat until breaks, but feel free to use it to communicate with other participants.

2. Put your clarifying questions in the chat, and someone will communicate them to me.

3. I will ask for 5 volunteers to read slides.

4. Following the presentation, participants will be asked to share their reflections via chat.
Uprooting Inequity LLC

Series on The History of Racism

1. Origins: The Social Construction of Race, Ethnicity, and Racism
2. The Historical Reproduction of Anti-Black Racism
3. The Causes and Impacts of Structural Racism
4. A short history of Latino Americans
5. A short history of Asian Americans
6. History of Coalition and Conflict between Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Poor Whites
7. Towards an Equitable “Us” Society: Lessons learned and Directions Forward
1. How and why were the races constructed?

2. How and why did anti-Black racism develop in the U.S.?
1. Race, Racism and Slavery in the *Early* Colonial Era

2. Why Did Things Change? The Great Transformation

3. How Race Was Constructed

4. HOW Racism Was Developed

5. WHY Racism Was Developed

Q&A and Discussion
1. Race, Racism and Slavery in the Early Colonial Era
2. Why Did Things Change? The Great Transformation
3. How Race Was Constructed
4. HOW Racism Was Developed
5. WHY Racism Was Developed
Q&A and Discussion
Race Relations, Racism, and Slavery were very different during the Early Colonial Period (First 50-100 years of our Nation) ... than they were in the latter 150-200 years of Slavery in the U.S.
Race Relations, Racism, and Slavery were VERY Different during the First 50-100 Years (1619-1676)

1. Relations were governed by **class** rather than **race**.

2. **Racism** had not yet developed.

3. **Slavery** was neither lifelong or hereditary; **chattel slavery** had not yet developed.

4. 90% of labor was **white indentured servants**.

5. **Interracial relationships** and **mixed-race children** were not uncommon.

6. Growing communities of **free blacks**.
Chesapeake Colonies Population 1607-1750

Unfree Labor → Slavery → Forced, Bonded or Coerced Labor → Free Labor

- Indentured Servants
- "Coolie" labor
- Serfdom
- Corvée Labor
- Debt peonage/bondage
- Prison labor and contract leasing
# Indentured Servant vs. Slave Labor in Colonial Maryland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indentured to Enslaved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>45 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>11 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>1 to 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chesapeake Colonies Population
1607-1750

Early Colonial Period (1600s): 90% of Labor Supplied by European Indentured Servants

- English or Irish, poor, young
- 4-7-year contracts;
- “Freedom dues” paid at end of contract
- “Nasty, brutish, and short” Lives; treated similarly as Slaves
- Lived, worked, and socialized with enslaved Blacks (10% of labor)
- More profitable than slavery because only 40% survived

Importance of Land to 17th-18th century England and Colonial America

- Economic Prosperity
- Political Rights
- Social Status

Land
HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION
Constructing History through Primary Sources
We will be History Detectives, Looking at Primary Sources from the Colonial Period for CLUES:

1. How did Blacks and Whites of the same class get along?

2. What did a person’s social status and wealth depend on?

3. What conclusions do you draw? What patterns do you see? What surprises you?
Primary Source #1

Runaway Ad, Virginia Gazette, Feb 21, 1771

- "Twenty five Pounds Reward. RUN away from the [planter], in Cumberland County, VA, the 3rd of June last, a Virginia born Negro Man Slave named WILL…”

- “N.B. GEORGE KELLY, an Irishman, had some Dealings with the above Slave before he ran away, and I have Reason to think harboured him some Time after. Kelly ran away in August, and crossed the Roanoke River, at Jefferson's Ferry. It is probable the Slave had some Place appointed to meet him in Carolina; and if they are together, I have no Doubt will endeavor to make him pass for a Freeman”.

Source: HERB Social History for every classroom, “18th-Century Runaway Slave Advertisements,” American Social History Project. © 2021 Uprooting Inequity LLC
Runaway Ad, Virginia Gazette: July 9, 1772

- "RUN away from the [planter], in King and Queen [county], about a Fortnight ago, a NEGRO WOMAN about twenty one Years of Age; she is tall and black, and supposed to be pretty far gone with Child…"
- "At the same Time went away an indented Servant Man named JAMES BRUCE, a Seaman, from Scotland. ...it is supposed the Servant Man carried her away…"
Christian Finny, a White indentured servant woman, had her contract extended by a year, and her child bound (indentured) for 31 years by order of the 7 December 1736 Carteret County NC court because she had a "Mullato Bastard Child during her service."

She was likely the common-law wife of an enslaved Black man because she was charged with having another "Mullato" child born 10 July 1739 and another on 20 December 1743.

[Minutes 1723-47, fol.33c, fol.58, 59b-c, 62d, 151-2]
## Most Free Blacks Descended from White Servant Women

Ancestry of Traceable (~90%) of Free Black Families in Colonial NC and VA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descended from:</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Servant Women</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freed Slaves</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Over 1,000 mixed-race children were born to white women in colonial NC and VA

Early Colonial Era: Growing Free Black Community
(Photos from 1885)

- Most small farmers (50-150 acres)
- Fraternized with whites of same class.
- 5% of free population in six 1790 NC counties
- 18% of free population in one 1810 VA county.

Primary Source #4

In 1653, a Northampton County, VA court officer reported that when he presented Anthony Longo, “Negro”, with a summons, Longo had chased him away:

- “What shall I go to court for? Go about your business you idle rascal.”
- “Shit of your warrant. Have I nothing to do but go to court?”

The officer complained that Anthony continued to call him an idle rascal,

- “As did likewise his wife with such noise that I could hardly hear my own words. And when I had done reading the warrant he struck at me and gave me some blows.”

(Anthony’s wife was white)

Race relations were particularly fluid and friendly in less densely populated, “frontier” areas where Whites welcomed new neighbors regardless of race.

- In 1733, Whites in NC complained to their Assembly:
  - “some county courts were illegally binding out free Negroes and Molattoes until the age of 31”...“and they fear that some Persons will desert the settlement of those parts.”

- When the NC Legislature passed discriminatory tax laws against free African American families, white residents of Granville, Halifax and Northampton counties petitioned for the law’s repeal in 1762, describing their “free Negro and Mulatto” neighbors as:
  - “persons of Probity and good Demeanor who cheerfully contribute towards the discharge of every public duty enjoined them.”

In 1731, some members of the free mulatto Gibson family moved from Virginia to South Carolina. A member of the Commons House of Assembly complained that "several free colored men with their white wives had immigrated from Virginia." Governor Robert Johnson of South Carolina summoned Gideon Gibson and his family to explain their presence there. After meeting Gibson and his family, the Governor reported:

“I have had them before me in Council and upon Examination find that they are not Negroes nor Slaves but Free people. That the Father of them here is named Gideon Gibson and his Father was also free, I have been informed by a person who has lived in Virginia that this Gibson has lived there Several Years in good Repute and by his papers that he has produced before me that his transactions there have been very regular, That he has for several years paid Taxes for two tracts of Land and had several Negroes of his own, That he is a Carpenter by Trade and is come hither for the support of his Family.”


We will be History Detectives, Looking at Primary Sources from the Colonial Period for CLUES:

1. How did Blacks and Whites of the same class get along?
2. What did a person’s social status and wealth depend on?
3. What conclusions do you draw? What patterns do you see? What surprises you?
AGENDA

1. Race, Racism and Slavery in the Early Colonial Era
2. Why Did Things Change? The Great Transformation
3. How Race Was Constructed
4. HOW Racism Was Developed
5. WHY Racism Was Developed

Q&A and Discussion
Indentured servants started surviving their contracts:

1. **Servant Labor Less Profitable**
   had to pay servants freedom dues;

2. **Threat of Rebellion from Poor Whites and Blacks**
   increasing numbers of angry, landless, poor White men... with guns, and friendly with poor Blacks...

Also, the supply of indentured servants from England/Ireland started to dry up....
White Indentured Servitude

Labor System Shift

Racial Slavery

@ 40% survived contract

High Mortality

1607-mid century

(Transition)

Declining Mortality

circa 1650-1725

"Normal" Mortality

1720s -->

Servants begin to survive their term of service

Bacon's Rebellion, 1676
Early 1600s

Wealthy Landowning Planters

Poor, Landless Whites

Mid-1600s

Poor Blacks

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Bacon’s Rebellion (1676)

The Burning of Jamestown by Howard Pyle, c. 1905
— Peter Wood, historian
The Terrible Transformation

Indentured Servitude → Chattel Slavery:
- Race-Based
- Lifelong & Inheritable

Class-Based Society → Race-Based Society

Which required/led to:

The Legal/Social Construction of the Superior *White* vs. Inferior *Negro* RACES
**Chesapeake Colonies Population 1607-1750**

![Graph showing population growth over time with labels for White, Black, and Native American populations. A note indicating Bacon’s Rebellion (1676).]


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The Transition from a Class- to Race-Based Hierarchy

Early Colonial Period
- Elite Planters (White & Black)
- Small Farmers (White & Black)
- Landless Whites, White Indentured Servants & Enslaved Blacks

Late Colonial Period to Emancipation
- White Planters, Small Farmers, & Landless Poor
- Free & Enslaved Blacks

Racial Divide between Poor Whites & Blacks
1. Race, Racism and Slavery in the Early Colonial Era
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Q&A and Discussion
Race is not Biological—
it is a Social Construct

Specifically, a Legal Construct.
However, **RACE** being a **Social Construct**...

...doesn’t make **RACISM** any less **REAL**.
Race, Racism and Chattel Slavery Were Legally Constructed Through Laws/Codes (1670s-1850s)

1. The "Slave Code" institutionalized chattel slavery

2. The "Free Negro code" stripped rights from Free Blacks

3. **Racial distinctions**: prohibition of interracial marriage and deterrence of mixed-race children

4. "Freeborn rights" extended to poor whites on basis of **race** (vs. land ownership)
1619. “20 and odd Negroes” First Africans arrive in Jamestown

1640. VA sentences a Black indentured servant runaway (John Punch) with “servitude for natural life” (first documented slave for life)

1662. VA changes English legal doctrine so legal status of children determined by the mother, making slavery hereditary

1667. VA declares baptized Blacks can still be (kept) enslaved

1670. VA forbids free Blacks from owning (white) servants

1691. VA prohibits interracial marriages and the freeing of slaves. (First documented reference to a “white” race in VA—1681 in MD)

1705. VA passes a law barring any negro/mulatto from holding office

1723. VA strips rights from Free Blacks, incl. the right to vote & carry a gun
The White and Black Races Were Socially Constructed Through Laws

**EARLY Colonial Period:** White, Negro, and Mulatto as somewhat fluid racial categories subordinate to class status

**LATE Colonial Period:** White and Negro seen as distinct, essentialized, “natural”, God-given binary categories
But...

1. The "boxes" ("races") we group them in,
2. The characteristics we ascribe to them, and
3. The relative status we rank them by,

are socially constructed.
Since Races Are Social Constructs (Rather Than Biologically Determined):

The defined boundaries of races:

1. Change across time/history (are dynamic rather than static).

2. Differ across societies (are culturally specific rather than universal);
U.S. Definitions of Race Have Changed Over Time

1705
- White
- Mulatto: one-eighth black
- Black

1785
- White
- Mulatto: one-fourth black
- Black

1868
- White
- One-sixteenth Black
- Colored

1924
- White
- “One-Drop Rule”
- Negro

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Colonization (late 1880s): Filipinos, Hawaiians, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans become Black

1790 Naturalization Act limited naturalized citizenship to “free, white persons”:
- Armenians became White
- U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923) – Asian Indians ruled not White

Racial Housing Zoning (1950s):
- Italians, Irish, and Jews became White
The Practice of Constructing Identities Based On Phenotype Was Started by Enlightenment Europe

3000 BC

Enlightenment Europe
Late 1600s-Early 1700s

Present

Socially constructed identities:
• Ethnicity (cultural heritage)
• Language
• Religion
• Kinship

Socially constructed identities:
• RACE: categories of physical differences (phenotype) with ascribed characteristics and values

The Enlightenment ideas of the racial superiority of (European) whites and the racial inferiority of all non-white races justified imperialism, colonialism, and slavery.
Pre-Enlightenment

Romans vs. the Barbarians (300s-400s)
- Romans
- Franks
- Huns
- Saxons
- Vandals
- Visigoths

Atlantic Slave Trade (16th-19th c.)
- Oyo
- Dahomey
- Asante
- Portuguese slave traders

King Philips War (1670s)
- Wampanoag
- Nipmuk
- Pocumtuc
- Mohegan
- Mohawk

Japanese Colonization of Korea (1910-1945)
- Korean
- Japanese

Breaches of the Civic Order and Inequality:

Barbarians:
- Franks
- Huns
- Saxons
- Vandals
- Visigoths

Romans

Dahomey

Asante

Oyo

Atlantic Slave Trade

King Philip's War

Japanese Colonization of Korea

Pre-Enlightenment

Barbarians

Barbarians vs. Romans

Atlantic Slave Trade

Japanese Colonization of Korea

Pre-Enlightenment

Barbarians

Barbarians vs. Romans
Since Races Are Social Constructs
(Rather Than Biologically Determined):

The defined boundaries of races:

1. Change across time/history (are dynamic rather than static).

2. Differ across societies (are culturally specific rather than universal);
Physical Differences are Biological. But the "Boxes" (Races/Identities) We Group Them In are Socially Constructed.
Physical Differences are Biological.

But the "Boxes" (Races/Identities) We Group Them In are Socially Constructed.
Racial Binaries:
Historical ideologies of whiteness and state policies of white domination

United States, Canada

South Africa, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Southern Brazil

Racial Spectrums:
Historical ideologies of mestizaje or racial democracy

Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Northern Brazil

Racial Binaries:
Historical ideologies of whiteness and state policies of white domination

Racial Spectrums:
Historical ideologies of mestizaje or racial democracy

Racism:
Nations with histories of official racial classifications and state-sanctioned racial discrimination

Skin color Bias/Prejudice:
Nations with histories of official ideologies of “mestizaje” or “racial democracy”

The image contains a visual representation of countries and their population statistics. Here are the details:

- **Japan**: 1,411
- **Korea**: 1,822
- **Philippines**: 3,899
- **India**: 3,982
- **China**: 4,948
- **Laos**: 271
- **Thailand**: 295
- **Cambodia**: 330
- **Indonesia**: 113
- **Malaysia**: 30
- **Vietnam**: 1,980
- **Mongolia**: 21
- **Hmong**: 299
- **Nepal**: 140
- **Bhutan**: 24
- **Pakistan**: 140
- **Bangladesh**: 188
- **Myanmar (Burma)**: 168
- **Sri Lanka**: 60
Asian Americans

- Japan: 1,411
- Korea: 1,822
- Philippines: 3,899
- China: 4,948
- India: 3,982
- Laos: 271
- Thailand: 295
- Cambodia: 330
- Indonesia: 113
- Pakistan: 140
- Nepal: 519
- Bhutan: 24
- Bangladesh: 188
- Sri Lanka: 60
- Myanmar (Burma): 168
- Vietnam: 1,980
- Mongolia: 21
In other words...

Anti-black Racism and rigid, consequential, caste-like Racial categories/identities are both by-products of national ideologies of white normativity/nationalism (need to unify competing white groups)
Once constructed, state-sanctioned race and racism do not quickly fade, even once the laws are struck down

“Whites in South Africa and the U.S. benefited from defining themselves as [white], with the state reinforcing racism in varying forms of … segregation.

But once race has been so constructed, the state cannot easily dismantle its awful creation. "Social structure, types and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Once they are formed they persist" (Joseph Schumpeter).

Racial identities, ingrained through painful experience and imbedded in everyday life, do not quickly fade even if the conditions that reinforced them change".

“You know that there are no black people in Africa. Africans are not black. They are Igbo and Yoruba, Ewe, Akan, Ndebele.

…they don’t become black until they go to America or come to the U.K.”

— an unnamed Nigerian-born Playwright quoted in Isabel Wilkerson’s book, *Caste*
Physical Differences are Biological…
But the "Boxes" (Races/Identities) We Group Them In, and the Relative importance We Place on Them, are Socially Constructed.

- Africans often do not see themselves “black”, and Asians often do not see themselves as “Asian,” until they come to Europe or the U.S.

- European peoples did not see themselves as “white” until the mid-to-late 1600s.

- White colonists did not initially see themselves as “white,” and Native Americans did not initially see themselves as “Native Americans”.

- Mixed race people are “Black” in the U.S. but “mulato” in Brazil and “Colored” in South Africa.

- Many Europeans see differences among white vs. black Americans as trivial and cosmetic.
“Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white.”

SUMMARY PART 1: How and why the Black and White races were constructed

1. America was originally a class-based society; Black and White people of the same class generally got along.

2. Colonial America was home to a prosperous community of free Blacks; a few were wealthy slave owners who voted & held office.

3. Interracial marriages and biracial children were not uncommon.

4. Colonial elites faced several multiracial class rebellions.

5. Race is a Social Construct; the U.S.’ Black-White binary is arbitrary and unique to our nation.

6. "Races" are categories of privilege. Dominant groups in all societies construct categories of privilege based on perceived societal differences (race, ethnicity, religion, language, caste).
Racism is Prejudice + Power
Bias (prejudice): In-Group Favoritism and Bias against out-groups are vestigial tendencies that evolved during prehistoric times.
STRUCTURAL INEQUITY: Societal biases that have been intensified, codified, and weaponized to protect & rationalize the interests of dominant groups/elites.

TIDAL WAVE (Structural Inequity)
Racism = Prejudice + Power

WAVES: Individual Biases
Individual Bias
(individual waves)

Structural Inequity
Bias/Prejudice + Power

- Disproportionately less power, status, and representation
- Stereotyping or marginalization by popular CULTURE and POLITICAL rhetoric
- Disparities in ECONOMIC outcomes across institutions that are unexplained by economic, cultural or behavioral differences
- HISTORY of legal discriminatory policies with present-day legacies (e.g. segregation & wealth gap)

Source: Ayo Magwood of Uprooting Inequity LLC, using Tsunami Clip Art.
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Racial Binaries:
Historical ideologies of whiteness and state policies of white domination

Racial Spectrums:
Historical ideologies of mestizaje or racial democracy

Nations that intensified, codified, and weaponized biases/prejudices (waves) based on racial phenotype into racism (tidal wave)

Nations that also have biases/prejudices based on racial phenotype, but that never codified them

Christianity Was Distorted to Justify and Support Slavery and Racism

1. The Bible was distorted—by ignoring its social gospel message—to morally and religiously justify slavery (and later, segregation), perpetuate White Supremacy, and keep enslaved people subservient.

2. The Southern Baptist Convention broke away from other Baptist churches so they could continue supporting slavery.

3. This distortion of Christianity and the Bible ended up permanently affecting the way many southern White Christians understand their faith today.

“[Slavery] was established by decree of Almighty God... it is sanctioned in the Bible...”

— Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America
The more racist attitudes a person holds, the more likely he or she is to identify as a white Christian.

Eugenics (Pseudo-Science) was used to Justify and Support Slavery and Racism in the mid 1800s (post Colonial era)

Justified slavery during growing tensions between slave and free states (mid 1800s)

Justified anti-Southern European immigration (early 1900s)

Illustration from Types of Mankind (1854) by Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon.

“Relative social inadequacy of the several nativity groups and immigrant groups of the U.S.: all types of social inadequacy”, 1922. The Harry H. Laughlin Papers, Truman State University, Lantern Slides, Black Case, Section 7, 1707

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AGENDA

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2. Why Did Things Change? The Great Transformation
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5. WHY Racism Was Developed

Q&A and Discussion
WHY Was Racism Created?

Racism—the myth of racial inferiority—was “the story we told” to:

1. **Rationalize Slavery** *(Economic Interests)*

2. “**Divide and Conquer**” poor Whites & Blacks *(socio-political Interests)*
“Race is the child of *racism*, not the father”  
– Ta-Nehisi Coates
Ironically, it was not slavery but freedom—the revolutionary new idea of liberty and the natural rights of man—that led to an ideology of white supremacy. Historian Robin D.G. Kelley points out the conundrum that faced our founders:

"The problem that they had to figure out is how can we promote liberty, freedom, democracy on the one hand, and a system of slavery and exploitation of people who are non-white on the other?"
Historian James Horton illuminates the story that helped reconcile that contradiction:

"It would have been better if America had just looked the world in the eye and said, ‘We hold these people in slavery because we need their labor and we’ve the got power to do it.’ That would have been much better, because then when the power was gone, when slavery is over, it’s over. But what we said was, ‘There’s something about these people.’ By doing that, it means when slavery is over that rationalization for slavery remains”.

“Race, a story first told to rationalize deep social divisions in a society that proclaimed its belief in equality, would be carried forward into the 20th century and beyond”.

— Narrator, Race The Power of an Illusion
White Southerners currently living in counties with high historic levels of slavery are much more likely to express racist attitudes. These areas would have more need to reinforce racist narratives.


PRIOR to Civil War, Racial Stereotypes justified Slavery:

Black men as “SAMBOS”: slow-witted, childlike “darkies” who needed their kind White masters

Sources: “How Sleeps the Beast”. Cover of Jan 1, 1950 paperback by Don Tracy.
“You Can Plainly See How Miserable I Am”. “Coon card” from 1911.

Whites “doubled down” on “The Story of Racism” during the 90 Years of forced labor in 1876-1965 (“Slavery by Another Name” or “Slavery 2.0”)
PRIOR to Civil War, Racial Stereotypes justified Slavery:
Black men as “SAMBOS”: slow-witted, childlike “darkies” who needed their kind White masters

POST Civil War, Racial Stereotypes justified Lynchings and Mass Incarceration:
Black men as “BRUTES”: savage rapists and criminals

Sources: “How Sleeps the Beast”. Cover of Jan 1, 1950 paperback by Don Tracy.
“You Can Plainly See How Miserable I Am”. “Coon card” from 1911.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Systems/Incentives</th>
<th>Racial Stereotypes of Chinese Immigrants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1850s</strong></td>
<td>“depraved and vicious,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese immigrants hired to</td>
<td>“gross gluttons,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work in gold mines,</td>
<td>“bloodthirsty and inhuman”</td>
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<tr>
<td>potentially taking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>jobs from white laborers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1860s</strong></td>
<td>“sober, industrious, and law abiding”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese immigrants hired</td>
<td>“and ‘very trusty, very intelligent’”</td>
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<tr>
<td>to work on Transcontinental</td>
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<td>Railroad, which white</td>
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<td>laborers were unwilling to</td>
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<td><strong>1870s</strong></td>
<td>“criminal,” “conniving,”</td>
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<td>Chinese immigrants</td>
<td>“crafty,” and “stupid”</td>
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What other “stories” of inferiority/blame do we tell ourselves to rationalize inequity and oppression?

- Native American Genocide and Mass Land Expropriation
- Colonization of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hawaii etc.
- Japanese-American Internment
- Deportation of 1 million Mexican-American Citizens (Great Depression)
- Blocking the Immigration of Jews fleeing the Holocaust
- Increasing Poverty and Economic Inequality
- Persistent Systemic Racism and Discrimination Today
- The Gender Pay-Gap and Sexual Harassment/Violence
- Our Violation of Human Rights and Refugee Principles and Laws

When you hear a Story of Inherent Group Inferiority, start looking for the Underlying Economic/Political Interests
“Many of the European-descended poor whites began to identify themselves, if not directly with the rich whites, certainly with being white.”
— Robin D. G. Kelley, historian

“All through the late 19th century, there is this constant message hammered at poor white people. You may be poor, you may have miserable lives right now, but... the thing we want you to focus on is the fact that you are white”.
— James Horton, historian
“[T]he segregation of the races was really a political stratagem employed by the emerging Bourbon interests in the South to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land.

“Toward the end of the Reconstruction era, …the Populist Movement. …began uniting the Negro and white masses into a voting bloc”.

“To meet this threat, the southern aristocracy [constructed]… a segregated society…. That crippled and… destroyed the Populist Movement…”

“…the southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow. And when his wrinkled stomach cried out for the food that his empty pockets could not provide, he ate Jim Crow, a psychological bird that told him that no matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man”.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 25, 1965
I'll tell you what's at the bottom of it. If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you.

— Lyndon B. Johnson —
“The Southern Strategy” (late 1960s-1980s)
A Republican Party Electoral Strategy to Increase Political Support among White Voters in the South by Appealing to Racism through Indirect “Dog Whistles”

“You start out in 1954 by saying, "N*****, n*****, n*****." By 1968 you can't say "n*****"—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states' rights and all that stuff. You're getting so abstract now [that] you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is [that] blacks get hurt worse than whites”.

— Lee Atwater, Republican political strategist and Chairman of the Republican National Committee, 1981
1. The United States was originally a class-based society; anti-black racism is not “natural” and did not always exist.

2. Race is a socially constructed category of privilege that is constantly evolving (dynamic rather than static); the U.S.’ black-white binary is arbitrary and unique to our nation.

3. Racism = Prejudice + Power/Law.

4. Racism did not lead to slavery; slavery lead to racism; it was the economic interests of slavery that lead to a racial hierarchy and to racist attitudes and stereotypes.

5. Slaveowners constructed racism to:
   - Rationalize slavery (economic interests) and
   - Win the allegiance of poor whites, and divide poor whites and blacks (social/political Interests).
SUMMARY: Why Do Societies Construct Categories of Privilege and Systems of Systematic Discrimination?

1. Dominant societal groups construct **categories of privilege** based on perceived societal differences (race, ethnicity, religion, language, etc.) to justify their dominance.

2. These dominant groups often construct systems of systematic discrimination by codifying and intensifying naturally occurring societal prejudices.

3. They do so to protect economic interests, garner votes, and “divide and conquer”; thus, it is often **economic (and political) interests that are driving both social hierarchies and individual prejudice.**

4. They then tell **narratives of inherent group inferiority** to rationalize this inequity and oppression, or to scapegoat.
“[H]ow racism came to be codified in the United States… is a history that tells us something important about the contemporary moment of racial reaction.” Racism is not just a psychological proclivity, but a tool of the elite, a deliberate system of legal, political and economic control.

“As intimidating as this truth is, it is also, in some sense, empowering. Because our history makes clear that systemic racism as it developed in the United States was not an inevitability, it was a series of intentional choices. If the framework for white supremacy was deliberately built in this country, it can also be deliberately dismantled.”

— Vanessa Williamson, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute
Uprooting Inequity LLC
Series on The History of Racism

1. Origins: The Social Construction of Race, Ethnicity, and Racism
2. The Historical Reproduction of Anti-Black Racism
3. The Causes and Impacts of Structural Racism
4. A short history of Latino Americans
5. A short history of Asian Americans
6. History of Coalition and Conflict between Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Poor Whites
7. Towards an Equitable “Us” Society: Lessons learned and Directions Forward
REFLECTION: How and why the Black and White races were constructed

In the CHAT, please share some of your thoughts and reflections:

1. What are some of your biggest ideas you will take away?
2. What connections are you making?
3. Do you have any questions for me?