



**Timeline of Racism in the United States**  
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**Doctrine of Discovery, 1493** The Doctrine of Discovery is a law that was created by European monarchies in the mid fifteenth century to legitimize land colonization outside of Europe. The law stated that upon "discovery" Native peoples had lost "their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations," and only retained a right of "occupancy" in their lands.

**Jamestown Colony, 1607**

Creation of the first permanent British settlement in the Americas. The land that was colonized was called Tsenacommacah by the Paspahegh tribe who were part of the Powhatan Confederacy. Despite initially being dependent on the Paspahegh people for survival, the British completely annihilated the Paspahegh within 3 years through warfare and infectious disease.

**Beginning of the US Slave Trade, 1619**

African slaves were first brought to Jamestown Virginia in 1619 after being captured from a Spanish slave ship by Dutch traders. 350,000 enslaved people were imported into the Thirteen Colonies and the U.S. The United States could not have developed economically as a nation, in large part through the tobacco and cotton industries, without enslaved African labor.

**Bacon's Rebellion, 1676**

An armed rebellion where more than 1,000 Virginians of all races and classes rose up in arms against the governor of Jamestown VA due to the subordination they faced by the aristocratic government, high taxes, and voting restrictions. Jamestown was burnt to the ground. The strong alliance between white indentured servants and Black slaves rising up against their conditions was terrifying to the ruling class, who responded by hardening the racial caste system of slavery in order to divide the people and prevent further uprisings.



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### **Virginia Slave Codes, 1705**

The Virginia Slave Codes solidified white supremacy into law. The law differentiated treatment of white servants and Black slaves, equating the terms “Negro” and “slave”, imposing harsh physical punishments or murder only for Black people, establishing separate courts for whites and Blacks, prohibiting Blacks from owning arms, establishing new property rights for slave owners, and more. White servants were now allowed to acquire land, join militias, carry guns and other rights not afforded to slaves.

### **Clinton-Sullivan Expedition, 1779**

The Clinton Sullivan Expedition was a military campaign during the Revolutionary War which had the goal of defeating the Loyalists and destroying the 6 nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. General John Sullivan carried out a scorched earth campaign throughout the Finger Lakes region, methodically destroying over 40 Haudenosaunee villages and almost all of their crops and winter storage food.

### **Invention of the Cotton Gin, 1793**

The Cotton Gin, invented in 1793, allowed southern cotton plantations to grow rapidly, increasing the demand for slave labor and solidifying slavery as a cornerstone of the US and global economy.

### **Indian Removal Act, May 28th, 1830**

A law signed by President Andrew Jackson that forced Southern tribes, including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek, Seminole, and original Cherokee Nations to relocate west of the Mississippi in order to use their ancestral homelands in the Southeast to expand the cotton industry. By 1837 46,000 Native American people were removed from their land east of the Mississippi, opening 25 million acres of land to white settlement and to slavery. It led to the Trail of Tears in 1838, the forced and brutal migration of the Cherokee Nation to Oklahoma.



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### **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, February 2, 1848**

The treaty ended the brutal and devastating Mexican-American War in favor of the United States. It added an additional 525,000 square miles to United States territory, including the land that makes up all or parts of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. The war and the takeover of Mexico's land were conducted under the assumption of Manifest Destiny, the idea that the U.S. had the natural right to rule North America from coast to coast and bring Protestant Christianity to "backward" regions.

### **Dred Scott Decision, 1857**

Dred Scott was an enslaved black man who sued his owners for his own freedom. Scott's suit had basis in existing law, which prohibited slavery in free states, including cases where enslaved blacks traveled to free states for their owner's business. The supreme court ultimately ruled that blacks whose ancestors were brought to the US and/or sold as slaves were not US citizens and did not have the legal rights, including the right to sue for one's own freedom. The case is viewed as an indirect cause of the civil war.

### **The Chinese Exclusion Act, May 6th, 1882**

The Chinese Exclusion Act was a United States federal law signed by President Chester A. Arthur that prohibited immigration of all Chinese laborers. It was the first law implemented to prevent a specific ethnic group from immigrating to the United States. The act also led to heavy policing of the US-Mexico border in an attempt to prevent Chinese Laborers in Mexico from immigrating to the US. The act was repealed in 1943.



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### **Creation of the first Native American Boarding School, 1860**

In the United States, Native American Boarding Schools were developed to forcibly assimilate Native peoples into Euro-American culture, English language speaking, and Protestant Christianity. Schools forced native children to cut their hair, wear Euro-American clothing, speak English, adopt western cultural and family structures, and prohibited contact with their families and communities. The Carlisle Industrial Indian Boarding School, created in 1879, is famous for its founder's motto "kill the Indian, save the man." In 1978 Indigenous parents gained the legal right to deny their children's placement in off-reservation schools.

### **Japanese Internment Camps, 1942 - 1945**

Japanese Internment refers to the US government's forced deportation and relocation of 110-120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, 62% of whom were US citizens, between 1942 - 1945, during World War II. Camps lacked adequate housing, plumbing, and healthcare and were often located in harsh desert climates in the mid and south west. Those who were interned also lost property and employment, which compounded the impact of existing US laws that prohibited people of Japanese ancestry from owning land and businesses. The term "Internment Camp" has been criticized as a euphemism for Concentration Camp.

### **The Great Migration, 1910**

The Great Migration was a mass movement between the years of 1910 - 1970 of six million southern blacks in the primarily rural, southern US states to primarily urban areas of the northern, midwestern and western states to escape the oppressive social and economic conditions in the Jim Crow South. The migration was also a reaction to southern racist terrorism; during the overlapping period of 1882-1968, over 3,500 lynchings took place.



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### **Redlining in Federal Housing, 1938 - 1968**

In 1938, the United States created the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA's charge was to make homeownership accessible to whites while explicitly denying homeownership to blacks through the process of redlining. Redlining color-coded neighborhoods based on the racial and ethnic makeup of an area, offering favorable loans to white neighborhoods (green and blue) and denying loans in black, multiracial, and non-white neighborhoods (red). Redlining was as a official government policy ended in 1968 but continues today as banks and government housing agencies disproportionately deny loans to people of color.

### **Mass Incarceration and The Drug War, 1971- Present**

Mass Incarceration refers to the imprisonment of poor people of color, specifically blacks and latinos, for minor, non-violent drug crimes at rates disproportionate to their use of drugs, which are consistent across race. In 1971, in the wake of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Richard Nixon declared The War on Drugs, which evolved the term "criminal" into a synonym for poor people of color, thus justifying incarceration. The US currently incarcerates 2 million people and and holds nearly 5 million people on parole.

### **NAFTA/CAFTA, 1994/2004 - Present**

The North American Free Trade Act, signed between the US, Canada and Mexico, and the Central American Free Trade Act, signed between the US, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, are two trade deals that have significantly benefited the US, Canada and US corporations at the expense of farmers, laborers, and small and mid-sized business owners in Mexico and Central America. In Mexico, NAFTA has driven over 2.5 million people out of work; at the same time, undocumented migration from Mexico to the US has doubled from 2.9 million people to 5.9 million people. The effects of CAFTA, as well as similar Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) in Colombia, Panama and Korea, follow the same course as NAFTA.