

## Racism in Our History

- 1619-1620 Africans are brought to the Jamestown colony at the beginning of the slave trade, which brings millions of Africans to America. Legal trade ends in 1808 but illegal trade continues until 1860.
- 1637 New England colonists massacre 500 Native Americans in the Pequot War. This is the first massacre of indigenous people by English colonists.
- 1662 Virginia enacts a law stating that if an Englishman begets a child of a “negro woman” the child will take on the woman’s status, that of a slave. This law made slavery hereditary.
- 1680 Early colonial laws refer to Christians or Englishmen, rather than whites. Around the time of the Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, a new law begins to appear, separating Black slaves from European indentured servants. Slavery becomes permanent and heritable for Negroes, and Black people are punished more harshly for crimes.
- 1789 The Constitution of the United States protects slavery and the slave trade in 12 different places without ever mentioning the word. Slaves are called “other persons.” All rights and privileges of life under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights exclude slaves and Indians. Specific civil and political liberties of free Africans are left up to each state.
- 1790 Congress, in its first session enacts the Naturalization Act of 1790. The law specifies that only free white immigrants are eligible for naturalized citizenship under this law. First generation immigrants from Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa are expressly denied civil rights, the right to vote, and therefore the right to own land. Also excluded are Native Americans, and by state laws, most free Africans. The 1790 Naturalization Act was not taken off the books until 1952 with the McCarran-Walter Act.
- 1830 The Indian Removal Act, the first act initiated by President Jackson calls for the voluntary or forcible removal of the Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations from the southeastern states. The territory of Oklahoma is set aside as “Indian Territory.”
- 1848 The United States and Mexico sign the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty promises to protect the lands, language, and culture of the Mexicans living in the ceded territory. Mexicans are given the right to become U.S. citizens if they choose to remain in their homes. Congress refuses to pass Article X of the treaty, which would protect the ancestral land titles of the Mexican peoples. Instead Congress substitutes it with a “Statement of Protocol” which protects those lands according to the laws of the United States. Under the implementation of this “Protocol”

Mexicans have to prove in U.S. courts, speaking English, and with U.S. lawyers, that they have a legitimate title to their own lands. The “Statement of Protocol” thus becomes the legal basis for the massive U.S. land theft from Mexicans in conquered territories.

- 1857 300-400 Californian Indians are massacred in Petaluma under the excuse that someone took a cow. In 1860, after the massacre of 200 Indians in Eureka, one man boasts of killing 60 Indian infants with his hatchet.
- 1857 The U.S. Supreme Court decides the Dred Scott Case. Dred Scott was a slave who followed his owner to a free state and then sued for his freedom. The Court said that Scott was still a slave, that the Constitution specifically excluded Blacks from rights of citizenship, and that no African American had rights that white men were bound to respect.
- 1862 During the height of the Civil War, Congress passes the Homestead Act allotting 160 acres of western (i.e., Indian Land) to “anyone” who could pay \$1.25 an acre and cultivate it for five years. European immigrants (who could scrape together \$200) and land speculators bought 50 million acres during the Civil War. During the Civil War Congress gave 100 million acres of Indian Land free to the railroads.
- 1865 The 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery.
- 1866 The Civil Rights Act of 1866 is passed by Congress over Johnson's presidential veto. All persons born in the United States are now citizens.
- 1868 The 14th amendment (civil rights) includes the due process clause guaranteeing life, liberty, property, and equal protection under the law to all citizens.
- 1869 The 15th Amendment, guaranteeing the right to vote to all (male) citizens regardless of race, color, or servitude.
- 1875 The Civil Rights Act of 1875 is passed by Congress. The Act guarantees that everyone, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, is entitled to the same treatment in “public accommodations.”
- 1877 The Hayes Tilden compromise removes federal troops from the South, leaving blacks totally unprotected from white violence and Reconstruction officially ends. The southern economy is still based on black labor now called “sharecropping,” a form of agricultural semi-slavery. Northern industries, banks, and merchants are the main beneficiaries of the sharecropping system. This also marks the beginning of 50 years of intense repression and the denial of all political, civil, and educational rights that African Americans had struggled for, and won to some extent, during Reconstruction.
- 1883 The United States Supreme Court strikes down the Civil Rights Act of 1875 as unconstitutional.
- 1882 Congress enacts the Chinese Exclusion Act preventing Chinese immigrant workers from coming to the United States. In this Act the Chinese become the first nationality to be barred expressly by name.
- 1885 Whites riot against Chinese in Rock Springs, Wyoming, killing 28 and wounding many more, driving many away from their homes.

- 1886 Apache warrior Geronimo surrenders to the U.S. Army. His surrender marks the defeat of southwest Indian Nations.
- 1893 The annexation of Hawaii started with an 1875 reciprocity treaty that linked the two countries. Sugar plantation owners from the United States came to dominate the economy and politics of the islands. When Queen Liliuokalani moved to establish a stronger monarchy, Americans under the leadership of Samuel Dole deposed her in 1893. The administration of President Benjamin Harrison encouraged the takeover and in 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii at the urging of President William McKinley. Hawaii was made a territory in 1900, and Dole became its first governor.
- 1896 Supreme Court rules in the Plessy v. Ferguson case that "separate but equal" facilities are constitutional (legal). Segregation is allowed by law.
- 1898 Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines are acquired by the United States after the Cuban, American, and Spanish War. Cuba, although independent, becomes a protectorate of the United States.
- 1922 Citing the 1790 Naturalization Act, and using science to support their decision, the Supreme Court holds in Ozawa v. the United States, that Japanese immigrants are not eligible for citizenship because they are not white.
- 1924 The Johnson-Reed Immigration Act sets restrictive quotas from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Oriental Exclusion Act virtually bars all Asian immigration stating that those who are ineligible for citizenship according to the 1922 Supreme Court case decision are therefore ineligible for immigration. Filipinos are the only Asian grouping exempt from the Act.
- 1924 The Indian Citizenship Act extends citizenship and voting rights to all American Indians. Some Indians, however, do not want to become U.S. citizens, preferring to maintain only their tribal membership.
- 1930 The United States deports over 400,000 Mexican and Mexican Americans, over 65% of them who are U.S. citizens (It is estimated that the number may be as high as 1 to 2 million people).
- 1942 Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans living in the California, including those who are U.S. citizens.
- Mid 1960's The FBI, under J. Edgar Hoover sets up the COINTELPRO Counter Intelligence program to destroy the Black liberation movement.
- 1965 Malcolm X is assassinated after the FBI infiltrates the Nation of Islam to promote opposition to Malcolm.
- 1965 The Immigration Act of 1965 liberalizes immigration for people from Asia, Latin America, and Africa but subsequent implementation of the law ties immigration procedures directly to foreign policy.
- 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated.
- 1973 Federal and State police launch military assaults on the American Indian Movement (AIM) and traditional Indians of the Lakota Nation at Wounded Knee.

- 1978 Congress passes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act which promises to "protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise" traditional religions, "including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites."
- 1992 Los Angeles police officers accused of beating African-American motorist Rodney King are found not guilty
- 1998 The dragging death of James Byrd in Jaspers, TX
- 2000-2007 The number of hate groups targeting immigrants (particularly Latinos) increases by 50% . At the same time anti-Latino violence increased by 35% between 2003-2006, according to the FBI and California officials.
- 2001-present An intensification of the persecution and deportation of immigrants.
- 2003 Hurricane Katrina hits the United States through Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama showing racism's ugly face as most of those adversely impacted are African Americans and people of color.
- 2005 Passage of the H.R. 4437 [109<sup>th</sup> Congress] Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act, which is introduced by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI). This bill sends the country into a spin due to its broad anti-immigrant scope.
- 2007 Black men account for 45 percent of male inmates in prison despite making up about 13 percent of the total population.
- 2007 There are 55,000 Latinos doing prison time in the United States in 1985. That figure increases by more than 400 percent in 20 years, a substantially steeper rate of increase than for whites or blacks. Currently, there are more than 450,000 Latinos in U.S. prisons or jail.