

Racism Legislation & Resistance Timeline

LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

1452 & 1455 Papal Decrees Authorize Portugal to reduce non-Christians to perpetual slavery, sanctioned & promoted conquest, colonization, & exploitation of non-Christian territories	1787 – US Constitution Ratified Male slave counts as 3/5s of a man in determining representation in House of Representatives	1850 – Fugitive Slave Act Strengthens 1793 Act – helping or not arresting runaway slaves subject to fine/ imprisonment	1876–1965 – Jim Crow Laws – Cadre of laws & institutions enforces segregation; justified by Plessy v. Ferguson	1940s–1960s – Indian Termination Policy Formalizes Native American US citizenship but ends sovereignty of tribes, trusteeship of reservations & excludes Native Americans from state laws with negative effects on education, healthcare & tribal economy	1970s–2010s – Mass Incarceration War on Drugs & tough on crime policies—mandatory minimums, harsher sentences for crack v. cocaine & Three-Strikes Law—along with court fees/bonds imprison people of color at rates 3–6 times more than whites, despite similar offending rates		
1493 – “Doctrine of Discovery” Papal bull proclaims land not inhabited by Christians available to be “discovered” & exploited by Christian rulers. Effectively gives New World to Spain	1793 – Fugitive Slave Act Legalized states ability to return escaped slaves to owner, criminalized escaping & grew slave catching industry, which often didn’t distinguish between slaves & free blacks	1850 – Foreign Miners’ Tax \$20/month tax on all foreign-born miners in California. By 1852, \$3/mo tax exclusively on Chinese miners	1867 – Reconstruction Act of 1867 In reaction to black code, temporary military rule forced southern states to ratify 14th & 15th Amendments	1942 – Japanese-American Internment Executive Order 9066 enacted forces relocation & internment of over 127,000 Japanese-Americans in camps during WWII. ~62% American citizens	1964 – Civil Rights Act Outlaws discrimination based on race, religion, sex, or national origin, unequal application of voting rights		
1807 – Congress Bans Importation of Slaves in 1808 Illegal slave smuggling continues for ~52 years	1857 – Dred Scott v. Sandford SCOTUS declares slave & free Africans non-citizens. Denies rights & liberties enjoyed by whites	1868 – Treaty of Fort Laramie Treaty reserving the Black Hills in Dakotas for Native Americans unilaterally changed when gold discovered	1868 – 14th Amendment Citizenship granted men regardless of race	1965 – Voting Rights Act Outlaws poll taxes, literacy tests, & other mechanisms of minority disenfranchisement Section 5 (Preclearance) requires states & districts with history of discrimination to get clearance from DOJ before changing election rules	1965 – Loving v. Virginia SCOTUS puts an end to anti-miscegenation laws in the Commonwealth		
1823 – Johnson v. M’Intosh SCOTUS rules Doctrine of Discovery rights given to European sovereigns transferred to US	1862 – Homestead Act Allots 160 acres of Native land to any US citizen for \$1.25. Excludes blacks, Native Americans, & non-European immigrants	1870 – 15th Amendment Prohibits race-based denial of voting rights	1917 – Immigration Act of 1917 (AKA Asian Barred Zone Act) Bars all immigrants from Asia	1943 – Magnuson Act Repeals Chinese Exclusion Act & allows for Chinese immigration but maintains restrictions against property & ownership rights for Chinese until 1965	1968 – Civil Rights Act Provides for equal access to housing regardless of race, religion, or country of origin		
1830 – Indian Removal Act Relocates all Native Americans living east of Mississippi River to west of River	1864 – Ratification of 13th Amendment Abolishes slavery in the United States	1865–1866 – Black Codes State or local laws in southern states to control labor & behavior of free blacks—denies right to vote, testify against whites, serve on juries, bar from some occupations & acquiring land. Convict leasing system begins	1924 – Indian Citizenship Act Declares Native Americans citizens despite protests from them	1944 – Korematsu v. US SCOTUS declares internment of Japanese-Americans constitutional	1989 – Apology for Japanese-American Internment US government issues a formal apology, as well as \$20,000 to each survivor ~60,000		
1831–1969 – Residential School System Forces assimilation of Native American children—re-educate in white culture, economy & values. Schools run largely by missionaries	1882 – Chinese Exclusion Act Suspends Chinese immigration & bars Chinese from citizenship	1887 – Dawes General Allotment Act Forbids communally held tribal land, meant to disrupt tribal culture & force assimilation	1929–1939 – Mexican Repatriation During the depression, one million people of Mexican descent (60% US citizens) were forced or pressured to leave US	1944 – GI Bill Low cost mortgage, low interest loan to start business, free tuition, stipend while in school & 1 yr unemployment compensation—all essentially unavailable to 1 million Black GIs	2013 – Shelby County v. Holder SCOTUS declares Pre-clearance requirement in Voting Rights Act unconstitutional, clearing the way for minority voting restriction laws—voter photo ID requirement, early voting cutbacks, restricted registration & extreme gerrymandering		
1839 – Pope Gregory XVI Condemns slavery & slave trade & encouraged development of Indigenous Clergy	1888 – Chinese Exclusion Act Suspends Chinese immigration & bars Chinese from citizenship	1935 – Social Security Act Excludes domestic & agricultural workers—25% hispanic & 75% black	1948 – Universal suffrage For Native Americans	1952 – Immigration & Nationality Act Abolishes the Asiatic Barred Zone Act & relaxes immigration restrictions	2018 – SCOTUS upholds Trump Travel Ban from 5 Muslim majority countries, N. Korea & Venezuela		
COTTON GIN INVENTED	MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR	CIVIL WAR	RECONSTRUCTION ERA	WORLD WAR I	DEPRESSION	WW II	MASS INCARCERATION

RESISTANCE

1712 – 25 slaves armed with guns & clubs set fire to houses in NYC	1859 – John Brown raids Harper’s Ferry to free & arm slaves. He is executed	1895 – Hopi Resistance – 19 Hopi leaders imprisoned for resisting residential schools & moving to government assigned farming plots	1960s–1970s – Cesar Chavez’ civil disobedience won farmworkers (mostly Mexican) the right to unionize
1720 – Enslaved Africans of Charleston, SC rise up against masters & attack whites in homes & on streets	1863 – Emancipation Proclamation abolishes slavery in confederate states but not in non-rebelling slave states such as DE, MD, KY & MO	1909 – Bi-racial activists establish National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	1963 – MLK Jr. Jailed & Writes “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” – Calls for civil disobedience in face of unjust laws. Leads the March on Washington
1775 – Quakers found world’s first antislavery society, Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery (PAS). Benjamin Franklin & Thomas Paine become members	1863 – 200,000 free black men enlist & serve in Bureau of Colored Troops under white officers	1910 – National Urban League helps African Americans moving north find jobs, housing & adjust to urban life	1965 – Voting Rights Act enacted. In 4 months, 1 million black voters (1/3 of population) registered
1790s–1810 – Tecumseh & his brother unite all Indian Tribes in effort against westward expansion of settlers	1865 – Ku Klux Klan formed in Pulaski, TN; reaction to end of slavery	1915 – “The Birth of a Nation” – Silent movie credited for spreading Klan ideology and resurgence of KKK	1992 – Denny’s restaurants in US subject of class action suit for treatment of people of color
1811 – Louisiana Territory Slave Insurrection ~125 enslaved men march from sugar plantations toward New Orleans (largest slave revolt in US history)	1865 – Many northern states reject referendum to grant black men franchise. Former confederate states enact “Black Laws” severely limiting rights & liberties	1920s – Tulsa Race Massacre – Fueled by false rumors, whites destroy black business community, “Black Wall Street,” killing ~300 & rendering 8,000 homeless in 18 hours	2005 – Hurricane Katrina – Thousands outraged by US Government neglect of 9th ward – mostly African Americans
1824 – American Colonization Society acquires land in Africa (Liberia) to transport freeborn & emancipated blacks to Africa	1867–1877 – 22 blacks elected to congress during Reconstruction Era. No black senators from 1881–1967	1944 – Redlining – Realtors incite fear of people of color moving into white areas. After whites sell & relocate, realtors sell houses at inflated value to black customers. Still occurring, e.g., Long Island 2019	2013 – Black Lives Matter – Grassroots social justice movement advocates for end of violence & systemic racism towards black people
1850s–1860s – Using Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman helps slaves escape north	1876 – Battle of Little Bighorn – Lakota & Cheyenne Indians resist another broken treaty. (Custers Last Stand)	1954 – Operation “Wetback” – Removal of 1.1 million undocumented immigrants through systemic sweep of Mexican-American neighborhoods, random stops & ID checks. Reaction to Bracero Program	2017 – Thousands protest Trump Travel Ban for citizens from 7 muslim majority countries
1850 – Free blacks form vigilance committees in north to alert black communities & watch for slave hunters	1890 – Wounded Knee Massacre – Botched attempt to disarm Lakota Indians results in slaughter of ~300 (~50% women & children)		
	1892 – Ida Wells-Barnett campaigns against lynching & for women’s suffrage		