The Untold History of Race

"Our nation was born in genocide, and embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles of racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population."

- *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A shared understanding of history – as it actually occurred – is critical to a functioning democracy.
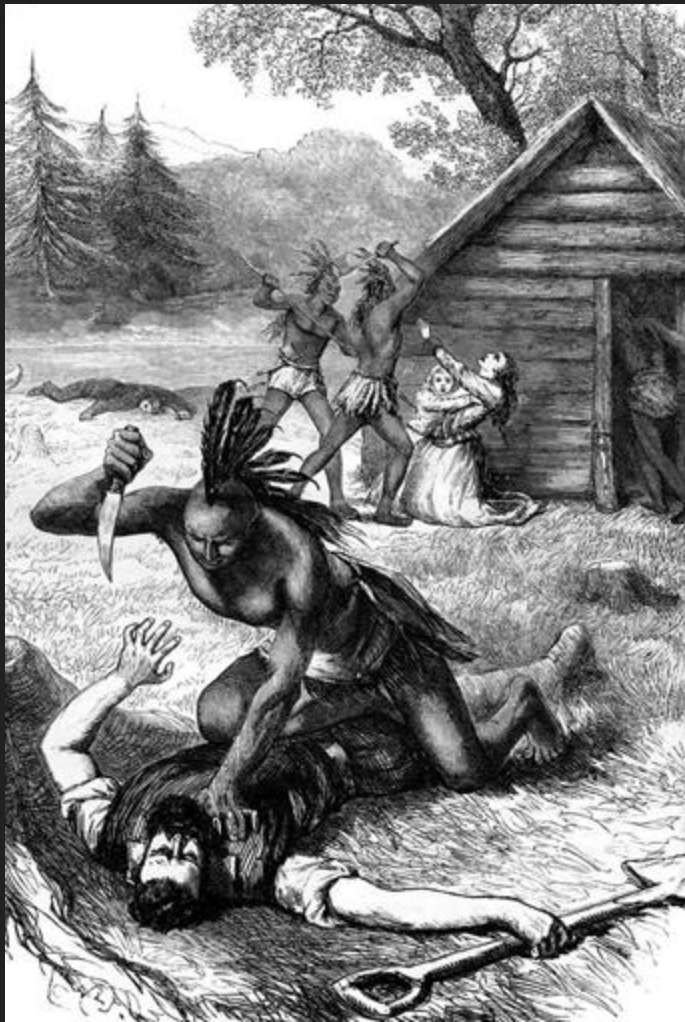
European settlers of the Americas committed what is probably the largest genocide in world history.

The settler mentality embraced a belief that they had a natural right – granted by God – to take New World lands from the "inferior" indigenous peoples.

White Christians have used Biblical passages to justify white supremacy.

The dominant American culture has portrayed indigenous people as villains in the story of American settlers.

"Indian giving" may be the most ironic phrase of all-time – the U.S. government broke 135 out of 135 treaties with Native tribes.

White supremacy grew in part out of the genocide of indigenous people, and its justification.

Abolitionist John Brown was not the "crazy man" that our cultural mythology has described.

"if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I submit; so let it be done!"
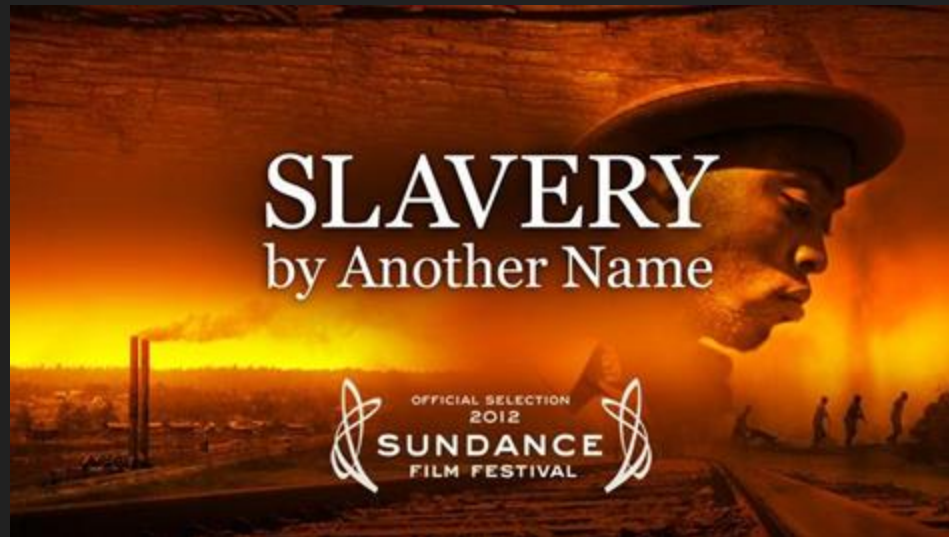
- John Brown's final speech before execution

Constitutional democracy was a myth – but not a reality – until the enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But, in 2013 the Supreme Court effectively eviscerated the Voting Rights Act in Shelby County v. Holder.

At the end of Reconstruction, three developments reflect white efforts to wrest back control:
1) Suppression of Black voters
2) Black Codes creating segregation (Jim Crow)
3) The Supreme Court functionally overturns the 14th Amendment in <u>Plessy v. Ferguson</u>, which creates the "separate but equal" era.

At the same time, although the 13th Amendment outlaws "slavery," in the South, we get slavery by another name. Contract labor and sharecropping takes its place.

SLAVERY
by Another Name

OFFICIAL SELECTION
2012
SUNDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL

These Black contract laborers were treated worse by their corporate owners than their enslaved ancestors had been, because the companies could not sell or mortgage them for value.

The use of violence as terrorism -- lynchings – was central to shaping White Supremacy in America from the 1870s through the 1940s (and, in some cases, like Emmitt Till, even later)

BLACK MASSACRES

Detroit 1943
New York 1863
Chicago 1919
Washington 1919
Springfield 1908
East St. Louis 1917
Philadelphia 1985
Tulsa 1921
Memphis 1866
Wilmington 1898
Elaine 1919
Atlanta 1906
Charleston 2015
Vicksburg 1874
Clinton 1875
Eufaula 1874
Slocum 1910
Camila 1868
Colfax 1873
Rosewood 1923
Ocoee 1920
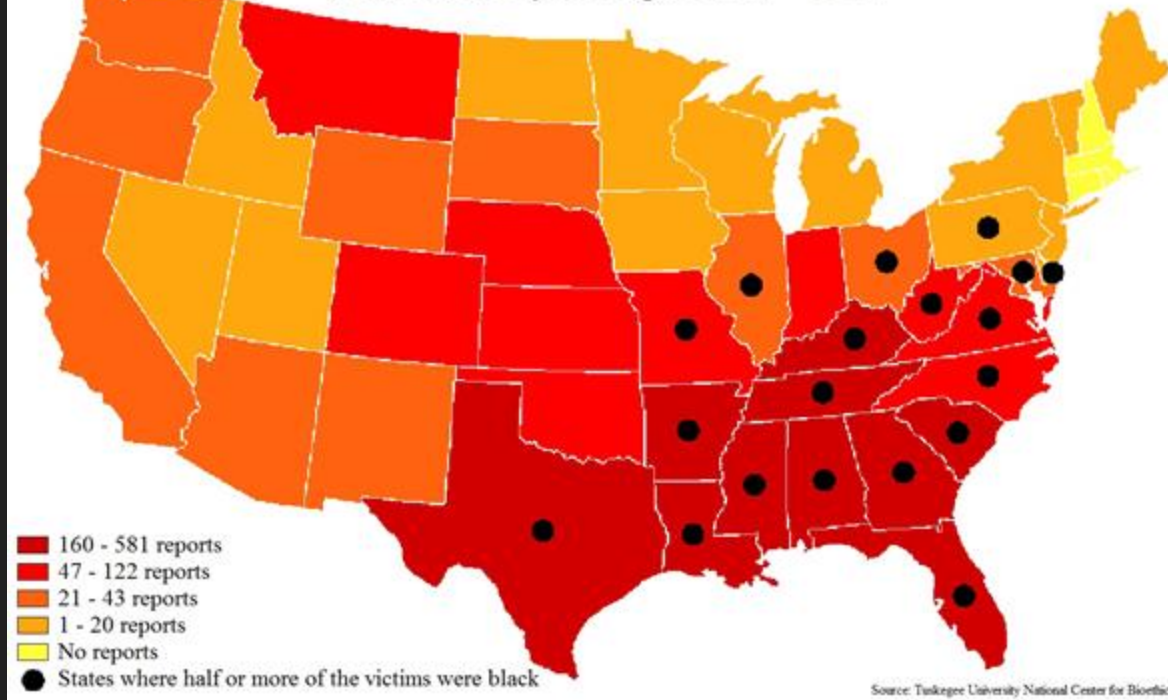Opelousas 1868
St. Bernard Parish 1868
Thibadaux 1887
New Orleans 1866

Black massacres occurred often in places where Black communities gained significant political or economic power.

The trauma of those massacres has lasted for generations.

Victims of Lynchings 1882 - 1968

160 - 581 reports
47 - 122 reports
21 - 43 reports
1 - 20 reports
No reports
● States where half or more of the victims were black

Source: Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics

Racist political violence was not limited to the South, and Blacks were not the only victims.

Southern planters reached an alliance with Western ranchers to oppose anti-lynching laws.

"What's the matter? It's the same distance!"

The myth of meritocracy dominates American culture: it teaches that people of color can succeed only when the game is rigged against whites.

The loss of manufacturing jobs combined with heightened standards for academic achievement in the labor market has led to tremendous resentment among blue-collar workers. This has led both to: 1) the opioid epidemic; and 2) the myth that affirmative action/DEI has stolen the jobs of white blue-collar workers.

Today, a high percentage of white Americans believe that discrimination against whites is greater than discrimination against Blacks.

We are still divided by the same ideas that divided us in the post-Reconstruction era. Being against DEI is the new version of supporting segregation or exclusion.

Any gain by Blacks is now portrayed as a loss to whites – the zero sum game.

The federal government played a vital role in creating and exacerbating the current Black-white wealth gap.

Americans look at reparations for African-Americans differently than they look at reparations for any other group in the world (such as Germans paying reparations to Jewish families).