

WHAT OUR RACIAL EQUITY GROUP LEARNED

After the civil war and the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation African Americans had to work hard for every step forward because of obstacles deliberately barring them.

- 1865 Jim Crow legislation circumvented the 13th Amendment.
- President Lincoln gave former enslaved men abandoned cotton plantations and the government agreed to buy the cotton, but few owners received payment and white attacks destroyed plantations remaining after the war.
- Black people were continually barred from getting an education
- An 1865 bill approved giving land to former enslaved men but it was not forcefully implemented and a later bill vetoed it.
- 1865 Booth killed Lincoln 3 days after the President said he would give free black men who served in the Union military and literate southern black men voting rights.
- 1867 The 14th Amendment granted equal protection and the 15th Amendment the right to vote but then the savagery of white supremacists escalated and state laws limited who could vote.
- The Supreme Court reversed legal measures allowing black people's rights giving the KKK full reign of intimidation.
- 1890 Mississippi denied black men the vote, the Governor closed black public schools and the newspaper had, "Political domination of the white race was threatened by the education of the Negro."
- Baltimore passed a racial zoning ordinance in 1910 that was copied across the US. Morgan College tried to move to Mt. Washington but it was stopped. Bolton Hill association passed a protective whites only agreement and all the churches endorsed it. Black people moved into white neighborhoods and had property destroyed and lives threatened. White newspapers demonized black homebuyers as "Negro Invasion" and laws criminalized them. The KKK paraded on Roland Ave in Hampden in the 1920's and had a presence there through the 1960's.
- During the 1900's white assaults on black communities flourished. The 1920 massacre in Florida killed 50 black men trying to vote. In 1921 a massacre in Oklahoma razed Black Wall Street. Military planes dropped incendiary devices on black homes and businesses. White soldiers killed black soldiers on military bases. There were 4000 lynchings from 1877 - 1950. Murderers were not convicted. Black neighborhoods were demolished to make way for federal highways, the B&O Railroad, a Gallows Hill park and Johns Hopkins Medical Institute. Segregation took many forms.
- In the 1930's the Housing Authority of Baltimore City was the government enforcer of the city's residential racial segregation including in public housing.
- Black people were left out of Social Security until the 1950's and racial disparities deprived black veterans of many of the 1944 GI bill's benefits.

- Confederate states resisted the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown vs. Education* until the 1970's and disparity of school funding continues. National Guards had to protect black students barred from entering white schools.
- The Department of Agriculture did nothing to stop land dispossession of black farmers.
- The Federal Housing Administration used restrictive covenants till 1948 to segregate people and insured homes in the suburbs.
- In 1954 Isadore Banks, a WWI veteran, owned over 1000 acres of land and helped black people with loans. He was lynched, his family fled and his land dispossessed.
- Black men were left untreated for 40 years to study the progression of disease.
- The EPA denied 95% of civil rights claims black people filed against polluters.
- In 1964 Baltimore City finally passed Ordinance 103 prohibiting racial discrimination in employment, public accommodations, education and health and welfare agencies. Of course it also said those discriminated against would be compensated.
- Legislation and Supreme Court case law laid the ground work for discriminatory and aggressive policing in 1965 and 1968.
- It took Dr. MLK's 1968 assassination and black communities erupting in 750 cities before the Fair Housing Act was signed.
- Progress in the 1970's to combat red lining was followed by Baltimore officials continuing to approve zoning codes that prevented affordable housing in some neighborhoods. Banks in Baltimore still red lined communities in 2013.
- The FBI and police killed or exiled black leaders deemed revolutionary and President Nixon's 1971 War on Drugs drove mass incarceration.
- In the 1990's black youth were injected with ½ the deadly drug Fenfluramine to study genetic origins of violence.
- Exclusionary zoning laws and resource removal impacted black neighborhoods. Baltimore closed 89 public schools between 2000 and 2020 as the city's population dropped.

We discussed many failures in the fight for racial equity because of white supremacists, white ignorance and fear, racist policies and laws, white power etc. We discussed the enormity of changing minds and hearts today and the complexity of dismantling racism in a society that has encapsulated it in every artery. We had signature drives to support legislation that aligned with our goals. We supported Black Lives Matter events and grappled with how to proceed to impact change. Turning to an expert on Baltimore's racism, Dr. Lawrence T. Brown, we read his book *The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America* and he joined our meeting. His emphasis that black lives don't matter unless black neighborhoods matter, led us to support a red lined neighborhood. You are welcome to join us!

If you wish to donate, please make checks payable to: St. Vincent de Paul Church (Racial Equity Fund on memo line), 120 N. Front St., Baltimore, MD 21202