

HISTORY FROM A BLACK PERSPECTIVE: As summarized from *STAMPED*  
(2020) by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

By Marcia Bailey  
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Europeans settling in North America thought of Africans as needing to be tamed, civilized and Christianized. However, racism is really based on economic self-interest.

Laws limiting behaviors and property ownership for Blacks started around 1700. Jefferson believed slaves were naturally inferior; they counted as 3/5 of a person. The 1807 Transatlantic Slave Trade Act outlawed bringing slaves from Africa and the Caribbean and instituted a breeding program to produce more slaves for plantations.

Lincoln was against slavery because it made it harder for poor whites to get jobs. He pledged not to challenge slavery if elected, but when that happened, slaveholders, who didn't trust Lincoln, panicked, and states seceded. Slaves who joined the Union army in 1861 were returned to the South, in 1862 they were kept in the army, and in 1863 Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation.

After emancipation, Black successes were followed by steps backward. Movies, such as *Tarzan* and *Birth of a Nation* which portrayed Blacks as savages, scared white people. For World War II Blacks had the "Double V Campaign", victory against racism at home and fascism abroad, but after the war, racism persisted unabated.

In 1948 and 1954 respectively, the Supreme Court outlawed "whites only" real estate and segregated schools. With racial discrimination outlawed, the backlash shifted the fight for civil rights (fairness) to a fight for freedom (the right just to live). Johnson passed the Voting

Rights Act of 1965, the most effective antiracist legislation ever passed by Congress.

Nixon played into White fears by using the words “ghetto”, “undesirables”, and “dangerous elements” which morphed into “thugs”, later becoming the “southern strategy”! Without using the words “Blacks” or “Whites”, he spread the racist message. Whites watched *Rocky* representing a very powerful Black man: Muhammad Ali, while Blacks watched *Roots*, a story about a part of history Whites didn’t want to acknowledge.

Ronald Reagan became President using law and order and the southern strategy, then started the War on Drugs, which assigned maximum punishment for marijuana use. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act was passed, which sentenced offenders to 5 years for 5 grams of crack in the city, mostly populated by Blacks, and 500 grams in the suburbs, mostly populated by Whites. Unemployment sent Blacks and the poor to jail in huge numbers.

A period of positive and negative racial incidents included: Rodney King’s beating by LA police being filmed, George H W Bush appointing Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, and Clinton’s “three strikes and you’re out” causing the largest increase ever of the US prison population, mostly for nonviolent drug offenses by Blacks. These were followed by the OJ trial, the Million Man March, the banning of Affirmative action in California, and the One Million Women March.

In 2000 scientific evidence showed that the races are 99.9% the same genetically, dispelling the biological basis for race. Nevertheless, the push and pull of racist and antiracist events continued: George W Bush blamed school failure on Black children, teachers, and public schools, ignoring racism; Hurricane Katrina revealed the racist structure of our

society; Obama ran for President; and Black Lives Matter was founded in response to vigilante and Police killings of unarmed Blacks.

The saga of White and wealthy privilege persists, but the problems are woven into the policies more than into the people. Black history continues to involve some forward progress followed by huge setbacks.