

GENTRIFICATION

WHEN DID YOU BECOME GAY?

APPROPRIATION VS. APPRECIATION

WELFARE

WHITE PRIDE

WHAT ARE YOU?

MODEL MINORITY

RACE CARD

CODE WORDS

FEMINISM

**WHAT I HEAR
WHEN YOU SAY**

VIEWING GUIDE

WHITE PRIDE



AN INTRODUCTION TO **WHAT I HEAR WHEN YOU SAY**

Deeply ingrained in human nature is a tendency to organize, classify, and categorize our complex world. Often, this is a good thing. This ability helps us make sense of our environment and navigate unfamiliar landscapes while keeping us from being overwhelmed by the constant stream of new information and experiences.

When we apply this same impulse to social interactions, however, it can be, at best, reductive and, at worst, dangerous. Seeing each other through the lens of labels and stereotypes prevents us from making authentic connections and understanding each other's experiences.

Through the initiative, What I Hear When You Say (WIHWYS), we explore how words can both divide and unite us and learn more about the complex and everchanging ways that language shapes our expectations, opportunities, and social privilege. WIHWYS 's interactive multimedia resources challenge what we think we know about race, class, gender, and identity, and provide a dynamic digital space where we can raise difficult questions, discuss new ideas, and share fresh perspectives.

WHITE PRIDE

“ What is the difference between White Pride, Gay Pride and Black Pride? Two of those come from being powerless and trying to gain power within a power structure. And one is celebrating an existing power structure.

Whitney Dow, Filmmaker



def·i·ni·tion
WHITE
adjective

(of human beings) belonging to a group marked by slight pigmentation of the skin, often of European descent.

What do you hear when someone says, “White pride?” Join Comedian, Jes Tom; Filmmaker, Whitney Dow; and Activists and Musician, Daryl Davis as they explore the history, significance and consequences of the idea and expression of “White pride.”



View the full White Pride episode

<http://pbs.org/what-i-hear/web-series/white-pride/>

A QUICK LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF RACE AND WHITE IDENTITY

The term “race” as we use it today, emerged during the height of European expansion and colonization in the 17th century. Among the earliest appearances in print was a 1684 article by French physician and philosopher, François Bernier, “A new division of the Earth by the different species or races which inhabit it.” The article defined a hierarchy of four races and appeared shortly before Louis XIV’s Code Noir [Black Code] in 1685 that regulated the triangular slave trade and established harsh controls over enslaved Africans.^{1 2 3}

The first known legal prohibition of marriage based on racial categories was enacted in the colony of Virginia in April 1691, as part of "ACT XVI. An act for suppressing outlying slaves." This was also the first use of the term "White" as a legal category that separated the English and Europeans from Africans and Native Americans. The marriage prohibition remained in force until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967. ^{4 5 6}

In the mid-18th century, Swedish botanist and zoologist, Carolus Linnaeus, presented a model of biological classification (taxonomy) that linked humans with primates and introduced the scientific label *Homo sapiens*. He was also the first to suggest "scientific" subdivisions of the human species, including *H. americanus*, *H. africanus*, *H. europaeus*, and *H. asiaticus*. ^{7 8 9 10}

The first U.S. census was enacted by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson in 1790 and required residents to define themselves as one of five categories: ¹¹

Free White male of 16 years and upward

Free White male under 16 years

Free White female

All other free persons

Slave

The Naturalization Act of 1790 (1 Stat. 103) provided the first rules for granting United States citizenship and limited naturalization to immigrants who were "free white persons" of "good moral character." ¹²

In 1795, German physician and scholar, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, attempted to develop a system of racial classification based in 'scientific' observation. He defined five races and labeled light-skinned people of European and Russian origin, Caucasians, because he believed their ancestors came from the Caucasus mountains. Blumenbach also concluded that Linnaeus was wrong and that human races are superficial variations on a single species with equal capacity for intellectual and cultural achievement. ^{13 14 15}

The Dillingham Commission was established as part of the Immigration Act of 1907 to investigate the effects of immigration on the United States. Cornell University economist, Jeremiah Jenks, and anthropologist, Daniel Folkmar, were commissioned to examine “whether there may not be certain races that are inferior to other races... to show whether some may be better fitted for American citizenship than others.” Their research was collected in *A Dictionary of Races of Peoples* that classified immigrants in racial terms and was used by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officials until the 1950’s. ^{16 17}

The 1940 Census sorted the racial identity of American residents according to the following classification system: ¹⁸

“Write “W” for white; “Neg” for Negro; “In” for Indian; “Chi” for Chinese; “Jp” for Japanese; “Fil” for Filipino; “Hi” for Hindu; and “Kor” for Korean. For a person of any other race, write the race in full.

Mexicans - Mexicans are to be regarded as white unless definitely of Indian or other nonwhite race.

Negroes - A person of mixed white and Negro blood should be returned as Negro, no matter how small a percentage of Negro blood. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction [...]

Indians - A person of mixed white and Indian blood should be returned as an Indian, if enrolled on an Indian agency or reservation roll, or if not so enrolled, if the proportion of Indian blood is one-fourth or more, or if the person is regarded as an Indian in the community where he lives.

Mixed Races - Any mixture of white and nonwhite should be reported according to the nonwhite parent. Mixtures of non-white races should be reported according to the race of the father, except that Negro-Indian should be reported as Negro.”

In the 2010 Census defined “White” as:

“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. The White racial category includes people who marked the “White” checkbox. It also includes respondents who reported entries such as Caucasian or White; European entries, such as Irish, German, and Polish; Middle Eastern entries, such as Arab, Lebanese, and Palestinian; and North African entries, such as Algerian, Moroccan, and Egyptian.” ¹⁹

DIG DEEPER | BACON'S REBELLION AND THE INVENTION OF "WHITE" AS A RACE

"I think there is an inherent tension between how we see ourselves as individuals and how we understand our relationship to our history in this country."

- Whitney Dow, Filmmaker

The idea of "race", as we know it today, developed during the height of European expansion when colonizers were encountering unfamiliar cultures and landscapes, and scientists were developing new systems to catalogue and classify the complex natural world.(1)

The ruling classes in Western Europe profited from these developments, but they also wrestled with the fact that their existing power structures were being tested by their rapidly expanding colonial empires. In the midst of these challenges, the emerging theories of human classification based on racial groups provided a template around which new, more profitable social systems could be organized.(2)

NEW CHALLENGES IN THE NEW WORLD

In the earliest years of colonial America, social status and rights were determined primarily by religious affiliation and material wealth (especially property ownership).(3) In this new land, servants, indentured workers, minor landowners, and slaves--regardless of their skin color--often had more in common with each other than with plantation owners or government officials and soon found that they could challenge the traditional power structure and forge new opportunities by banding together in common cause.(4)(5)

As the colonies expanded and populations increased, so too did skirmishes and rebellions by the middle and lower classes against wealthy landowners and the political leadership. The simmering, civil unrest finally reached a boiling point in 1676, when an uprising in Virginia captured the capital city, Jamestown.(6) This event, known as Bacon's Rebellion, marked a dramatic turning-point in colonial history and has influenced the definition and significance of racial identity in America through today.

BACON'S REBELLION AND THE DANGER OF SOLIDARITY

In the 1670s, small property owners in Virginia were growing increasingly frustrated with the European governing class who they felt was interfering with and undermining their opportunities in their new home.

Among the most contentious issues was the ongoing conflict with Native American communities. Farming tobacco, the primary crop, was labor intensive and damaging to the soil. Landowners wanted to completely eradicate Native American communities within the colonies in order to protect their own properties and workforce against raids and expand their farms into the more fertile tribal lands.(7)(8)

Nathaniel Bacon was among the landowners who were unsuccessfully petitioning Virginia's governor to enact more aggressive policies against local tribes.(9) Taking matters into his own hands, Bacon organized a militia consisting of hundreds people, including landowners, free Black and White farmers, freemen, indentured servants, and enslaved Black laborers, and they began violently attacking tribal communities on their borders, including Native American allies.(10)

The colonial government opposed the militia, but lacked the forces to contain them. Meanwhile, Bacon was expanding his ranks by offering freedom to both White and Black indentured servants and slaves who joined the cause.(11) A ship arriving in England from Virginia reported that Bacon had "proclaim'd liberty to all Servants and Negro's [sic]" and another declared "most of the servants flock to [Bacon] and he makes their master pay their wages." (12)

To appease the militia, the local government implemented a number of sweeping reforms known as Bacon's Laws that limited the powers of the governor and restored voting rights to both White and Black landless freemen.(13) Despite this, the conflict with government forces escalated, and on September 19, 1676, Bacon and his militia marched on the colonial capital, Jamestown, and burned it to the ground.

A month later, Bacon died of a fever contracted during battle, and the rebellion soon collapsed, but the damage was already done. Bacon's Re-

bellion demonstrated to the colonial government that poor Whites and poor Blacks could be united in a cause. What would prevent the poor from uniting to fight them again?

“The events in Jamestown were alarming to the planter elite, who were deeply fearful of the multiracial alliance of [indentured servants] and slaves. Word of Bacon’s Rebellion spread far and wide, and several more uprisings of a similar type followed. In an effort to protect their superior status and economic position, the planters shifted their strategy for maintaining dominance. They abandoned their heavy reliance on indentured servants in favor of the importation of more black slaves.”(14)

- Michelle Alexander, Legal Scholar and Author 2010

THE AFTERMATH OF BACON’S REBELLION

Prior to the uprising, both White and Black freemen had legal rights, could own property, could participate in public life, and if they owned property, were entitled to vote. Indentured servants were the dominant labor force, and once they had worked off their “indenture” they were entitled to to join the free residents of the colony, regardless of race. Chattel slavery—lifelong slavery where the individual is perceived as property—existed but was less common. (15)

Following the Rebellion, landowners decided to ensure against another uprising (and maximize their profits) by shifting from indentured labor to chattel slavery. There was no longer a worry about losing labor after a period of indenture, and the percentage of free laborers would be kept in check.(16) Laws were also enacted establishing that slavery was to be passed through the maternal line, so children of an enslaved mother would be born into slavery and owners could expand their workforce by forcing enslaved women to reproduce.(17)

THE INVENTION OF THE “WHITE” RACE

Soon after Bacon’s Rebellion, the Virginia government began, for the first time, to pass laws along “racial” lines. In April 1691, the first legal prohibition of marriage based on “race” was enacted in North America.

This policy marked a critical moment, not just because it shifted the criteria by which this new society was organized, but because it is the the first known legal application of the term and concept of “White” as a social category.(18)

Those who became ‘White’ had previously been referred to in law by their country of origin “‘first as ‘British and other Christians’ then ‘British and other freeborns.’”(19) This construction of a legally recognized “White” race soon superseded class, wealth, and religion and became the definitive measure that distinguished the legal rights and “personhood” of English and some Europeans from Africans and Native Americans.

The creation of a “White” race became a way to distance laborers of European descent from their African or Native American peers. “White” Americans were soon offered higher social status in the colonies with legally codified “white-skin” privileges (later referred to as a “racial bribe”).(20) The social elevation of poor Whites was most often achieved by stripping rights from African-Americans, regardless if they were free, indentured, or enslaved.

For example, “masters” were now prohibited from abusing indentured or enslaved White laborers, but were allowed to use, abuse, or sell indentured or enslaved Black people, so long as they did not set them free.(21) Existing free African-Americans were forbidden to own any weapons and were no longer allowed to hold office, strike a White person (even in self-defense), or give testimony in court against a White person.(22)

New and increasingly ruthless race-based policies continued to be introduced for both free and enslaved “Blacks” as the population of enslaved Africans and Americans of African descent rapidly increased throughout the 18th century, especially in the south.

The Legacy of the Construction of Race

From the perspective of wealthy landowners and the governing class, this new racial hierarchy was a success. (23) Following the introduction of a legally recognized "White" race and the mass enslavement of African-Americans, there were no further rebellions by poor Whites against the wealthier classes. (24)

"Many of the European-descended poor whites began to identify themselves, if not directly with the rich whites, certainly with being white. And here you get the emergence of this idea of a white race as a way to distinguish themselves from those dark-skinned people who they associate with perpetual slavery." (25)

- Robin D.G. Kelley, Chair of the History Department
at New York University, 2003

This new system of social control---created in colonial North America, founded on the establishment of the White race, and enforced by European Americans from every social class--became the model for agrarian settlements across the colonies. Chattel slavery was eventually abolished after the Civil War, but the arbitrary racial divisions that made slavery possible have endured.

"When the negro slave had supplanted the indentured servant upon the plantations of the colony, a vast change took place in the pride of the middle class. Every white man, no matter how poor he was, no matter how degraded, could now feel a pride in his race. Around him on all sides were those whom he felt to be beneath him, and this alone instilled into him a certain self-respect." (26)

- Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Princeton Historian, 1910

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

“What is there to be proud about just because you’re white?
What is there to be proud about just because you’re black?
Nothing. ... it’s what we do with ourselves, that gives us that
sense of pride.”

- Daryl Davis, Musician and Activist

Humans have always found ways to arrange ourselves into communal groups, but the modern concept of “race” that emerged in the 1600s was unique. It was presented as part of a natural and universal order, despite being an arbitrary classification system adopted to maximize profits and minimize rebellion.

When “White” as a racial category was introduced into the legal landscape in 1691, the definition of this and every other race were rooted in a need for social control, not in science, shared heritage, or even geography (European ancestry was no guarantee of “Whiteness”).

What White or Black is has been ambiguous from the beginning and remains so today. Is it determined by melanin in our skin, nationality, culture, politics, dogma, ancestry (on the maternal or paternal side)? Or can the “White” race be defined using the 2010 U.S. Census criteria? Any of the original peoples of Europe such as Irish, German, and Polish; Middle Eastern peoples, such as Arab, Lebanese, and Palestinian; North African peoples, such as Algerian, Moroccan and Egyptian; or anyone who chooses to identify themselves as White or Caucasian.

Whatever “White” is, it has its foundations in the dynamic of “inclusion and exclusion”. It was created for the purpose of enslaving hundreds of thousands of people, and since then has been used to reinforce privilege, status, and power. When individuals and communities challenge “White Pride” it’s primarily because of the role of “Whiteness” in the context of our country’s divisive history.

Challenging “White Pride” does not mean that people who are categorized as “White” are expected to dismiss or disparage their heritage and

cultural traditions. The strength of our country is rooted in sharing and celebrating our diverse experiences. Throughout the year, people from every background come together to participate in each other's traditions at big events like St. Paddy's Day parades, Oktoberfest, Diwali, Italian Festivals, and Chinese New Year as well as small gatherings that commemorate and honor those that came before.

For many African-Americans commemorating ethnic heritage and cultural tradition is more complicated because ancestors' customs, beliefs, names, and countries of origin were erased by the slave trade. For the generations that followed, culture and identity had to be newly forged through community, creativity, and shared struggle. For the African-American community, "Black Pride" is a way to honor collective experiences, amplify marginalized voices, and challenge the myth of White supremacy that divides all of us.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- What does it mean to be "White"?
- What does "White privilege" mean to you? When have you encountered White privilege?
- How has the meaning of White as a race changed throughout history? What does it mean to be White today?
- In what ways is "White pride" the same as or different from "Gay pride" and "Black pride"?
- Why is celebrating White pride controversial but celebrating St. Patrick's Day, Oktoberfest, or St. Anthony's Day is not?
- How would you respond to someone who identifies strongly with the idea of White pride but insists they are not racist? Is it possible to support White pride without supporting White supremacy?



Hear different perspectives on the Topic, White Pride
<http://pbs.org/what-i-hear/topics/white-pride/>

LEARN MORE

TWO TOWNS OF JASPER

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/twotownsofjasper/>

In Two Towns Of Jasper, two film crews, one Black and one White, set out to document the aftermath of the horrific murder of James Byrd, Jr., a Black man, by following the subsequent trials of the local men charged with the crime.

WELCOME TO LEITH

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/welcome-to-leith/>

Welcome to Leith chronicles the attempted takeover of a small town in North Dakota by notorious White supremacist Craig Cobb.

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER HATEWATCH

<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch>

Hatewatch is a blog that monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right.

VOICES FROM THE EPISODE | WHITE PRIDE



Jes Tom
Comedian

Has performed in all five boroughs of New York City and a number of colleges
Has collaborated with rapper Awkwafina, punk band PWR BTTM and spoken word duo DarkMatter
Created solo show FRESH OFF THE BANANA BOAT which sold out at Dixon Place's HOT! Festival



Whitney Dow
Filmmaker

Creator of The Whiteness Project
His film Two Towns of Jasper won numerous awards including a Peabody Award, duPont Award, and an Anthony Radziwill Documentary Achievement Award
Exhibited at The Met, MoMA, Smithsonian



Daryl Davis
Activist & Musician

Chuck Berry's go-to pianist
Published author on race
Appeared on Letterman Show, GMA, CNN for his efforts to improve race relations with members of the Maryland Ku Klux Klan

Visit pbs.org/whatihear for a detailed Viewing Guide on every topic.

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