

Appendix C

A Brief History of Major Ethnic Groups in Washington

One way to begin to better understand people of color and the origins of racism in the United States is to study our history. Most of us have a poor understanding of the history of our country, and the history that we do know has been presented from a Western European perspective. To help begin this process, we have provided a few paragraphs regarding the history of people of color in Washington. In actuality, our history is much richer than these few pages would show, and we caution that this is only a starting point.

African American

One of the first African Americans to settle in the state, pioneer George Washington Bush, arrived in Washington in 1845. Although slaves were occasionally held in Washington state, Bush was able to legally purchase and own property in Washington, unlike in Oregon. When the Donation Land Act of 1850 limited ownership claims to Whites, Bush's friends in the Territorial legislature petitioned Congress, and made him the only African American to receive a Donation Land Grant in Washington. However, similar efforts by his friends to let him vote were overruled. It is said that Bush financed the westward journey of some of his White Missouri neighbors and provided hospitality to many pioneers.

The number of African American settlers in Washington grew slowly, and those who came were primarily only able to find work in coal mining. It was not until World War II that African Americans came to the Pacific Northwest in large numbers. A variety of industrial jobs opened up for African Americans for the first time once available White workers had been absorbed by the war effort. African Americans were recruited from the Southern states to work in wartime shipbuilding, airplane and aluminum manufacture, and construction of the plutonium production plant at Hanford.

As African Americans built their communities, churches played an important role. "The church was the first organization that the majority in each community gathered around and supported. Traditionally the center of social life, the identity of the Black community is rooted here. Long an affirmation of its organizers, the church was independent of White domination and largely defined by its members' ideas of how religion should be expressed. Since the eighteenth century, organized religion has been the strongest institution in the Black community in America," states Esther Hall Mumford (1989), historian and author of several books on Seattle's African American history. Community meetings, socials, and musical and literary programs were held in churches. In addition, churches raised funds for Black colleges and gave scholarships to local

students. Black Baptists started the city of Ronald's first school in 1890, which taught both African American and White children. Churches further provided meeting space to civil rights groups such as the Congress for Racial Equality and the Black Panther Party. Members of clergy have often been the most articulate and visible in civil rights campaigns.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the nonviolent approach to advocating for civil rights, exemplified by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave way to a more militant form of resistance. Fueled by impatience and a thwarted sense of justice, a younger generation demanded immediate access to Constitutionally granted rights and privileges. Mumford notes that not all of their actions were productive or progressive, and in the latter part of sixties, Seattle had one of the highest firebombing and sniping rates in the United States. The Seattle Black Panthers was the second chapter organized in the nation in 1969. While they were eyed as outlaws by much of the public, the Black Panthers established a free clinic, statewide sickle-cell anemia testing program, prison visitation programs, tutoring programs, and a free breakfast program for poor children which they operated for more than a decade. They also pressed for expanded opportunities for African Americans in the construction trades and fought for an increase in African American faculty and an Equal Opportunities Program for low-income students at the University of Washington.

African American women have a history of high involvement in the labor market. Until the 1970s, African American women were more likely to work outside their homes than women from any other group in Washington (Mumford, 1989). These women were usually confined to working in the homes of the more affluent, keeping boarders, or taking in ironing and sewing. In the 1960s women limited their ambitions to nursing, teaching, or secretarial services, but even these traditionally women's jobs were hard to obtain. Mumford notes that beginning in the late nineteenth century several Black women came to Washington with the credentials and experience necessary to teach, but were generally not able to obtain these positions in Seattle until after World War II.

African Americans are now represented in a much broader range of jobs in Washington than at any other time in the state's history. However, the progress has come at a high price. Many African Americans deal with work environments where they encounter the use of racial epithets, discrimination in promotions, or a constant discrediting of their ideas. Many who receive this treatment report elevated blood pressure and the need for extended psychological counseling and therapy due to the stresses and harassment on their jobs. This stress has also been identified as a probable cause of the prevalence of hypertension among African Americans. Yet many stay in these environments because they feel well-paying jobs for Blacks are few and far between (Mumford, 1989).

Often overlooked in classroom curricula are the African American influences on American speech and language, culture, and ideals of personal freedom and democracy. Claude M. Steele (1992) discusses how this lack of value contributes to the disidentification of African American students with school, contributing to low performance. As one Washington teacher states, "How can a Black child be proud when the only contribution of their people they see in history class is slavery?"

“Waiting for a Miracle”

The following excerpt from the article “No Need to Wait for a Miracle” by Dr. James Comer of the Yale University Child Study Center is included in the African American Think Tank’s Strategic Plan, titled “Education of African American Children in the State of Swashington: A Call to Arms.” The Strategic Plan cites Dr. Comer in response to the often asked question: “How have other racial and ethnic groups come to this country and succeeded when African Americans have not after all these years?” Dr. Comer States:

Black Americans have experienced four devastating shocks, the effects of which are even now not fully understood. The first was the disruption of a close-knit African kinship structure that was at the core of all political, economic, and social functioning. The second shock was the middle passage and the brutality of the slave trade. The third shock was two-and-a half centuries of slavery with its imposed dependency, inferior status, and no opportunity for improvement. The fourth—release of slaves into a hostile environment in both the North and the South—stripped African Americans of what little protection slave masters provided them as valued property, leaving them neither slaves nor citizens.

Even after the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866 made blacks citizens, private and public institutions and individuals denied blacks rights and opportunities. Efforts to enter the political and economic mainstream were blocked through violence and subterfuge. Without cultural cohesion and access to society’s primary political, economic, and social structures, African Americans remained a despised caste group and permanent scapegoats. Blacks were denied the knowledge, skills, contacts, power, and information that could only be gained through interaction with mainstream political and economic networks.

As a result, huge disparities in investment in black and white education took place at every level—as much as 25 times more was spent on primary and secondary education for whites. Through such devices as local tax-based school funding, huge disparities still exist. Today’s postindustrial information economy requires a higher level of education and social development. Because of past underinvestment in black education, blacks have suffered first and most.

Since effective civil rights legislation was not enacted until the mid-1960s, it has been necessary to move from uneducated and unskilled to highly educated and highly skilled in just one generation rather the three generations available to other immigrant groups. African Americans whose experiences supported adequate development and who were prepared to handle racial antagonisms without behaving self-destructively were able to make the transition and now have more opportunity than ever. The most marginalized group of blacks, however, is on a downhill course that accelerates with each new generation.

The argument that these many complex structural forces could be overcome by school integration and other civil rights legislation in 30 years—with no significant economic power—is patently unrealistic. It is simply an effort to avoid taking responsibility for the illegal, irresponsible, and immoral acts imposed on African Americans in the past and the present and their effects. The United States is a corporate entity, and for present-day citizens to deny responsibility for past acts is like inheriting a fortune from a late uncle but denying responsibility for his debts.

If we can limit the "scapegoating" of blacks and the denial of their ability, what is needed to improve education will become less of a mystery. Good public schools can be produced by adequate tax bases and staff trained to create effective organizations that support the development of children and promote learning. Under improved educational conditions, more black students can be prepared to become adequate workers, family members, and citizens. However, to expect the schools to do this alone is indeed "waiting for a miracle."

Source: Comer, J. (1998). No need to wait for a miracle. *Focus*, 26(4), 3-4.

Asian and Pacific Islander

Washington's Asian and Pacific Islander community is made up of 25 to 30 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own culture and issues and together speaking more than 100 languages and dialects. Seventy percent of Washington's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population is either an immigrant directly from the Pacific Rim Asian countries or is a secondary migrant from other states (Asian/Pacific Islander Think Tank, 1998).

Asian immigration before 1965 came primarily from Hawaii, China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands. In the 19th century, Asian immigrants filled the labor needs of growing industries on the West Coast, including railroad construction, mining, farming, lumber, and canning. In 1882 the Chinese became the first group in U.S. history to be legally barred from becoming citizens because of their race through the Anti-Chinese Exclusion Act, which set the stage for other exclusionary policies. The Japanese government was strong enough to be able to compromise with the United States through the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08, which halted the emigration of laborers to the United States, but continued to allow wives, children, and parents of Japanese to emigrate. In 1917 the Asiatic Barred Zone prohibited immigrants from a region that stretched from Japan to India, and the 1924 Immigration Act prohibited the immigration of all Asians. Because the Philippine Islands were a U.S. territory, Filipinos were U.S. nationals who could freely migrate between U.S. territories, unaffected by the Immigration Act until the Philippines were made a commonwealth in 1934, which enabled the U.S. government to place a quota on Philippine immigration of 50 per year.

Immigration laws had profound impacts on the demographic structure of Asian American communities. Early immigrants from China and the Philippines were predominantly single males, the majority of whom remained unmarried due to antimiscegenation and Chinese exclusion laws. The lack of a family life caused these unattached immigrants to depend on one another, and built solidarity among people of the same ethnic group. The short period of time over which Japanese women were allowed to join men already in the United States led to the majority of families marrying and having children at roughly the same time. These uniform age cohorts have formed distinct generations that have continued through today.

The denial of their naturalization rights led to political weakness in Asian immigrant communities. Asians in the United States were often physically assaulted, their homes burned or bombed, and they were driven out of their jobs and communities by exclusionists. Asian Americans built support networks by forming community organizations. Chinese groups were generally organized as family associations or district associations composed of members who came from the same districts in China, and provided protection, shelter, employment assistance, and loans to members. Japanese groups also organized based on members who were from the same prefecture in Japan; they fought discriminatory and restrictive laws passed against the Japanese, supported state and U.S. Supreme Court cases that impacted Japanese people, promoted better relations between Japanese and White communities, and supported Japanese language schools, baseball leagues, entertainment, and cultural performances. Filipinos supported each other by forming extended families wherein single Filipino men were adopted as

“uncles” into existing families presided over by Filipino women who functioned as surrogate mothers, sisters, and aunts to the men. Sharing food and lodging helped these families to survive the Depression. United Filipino forces were often successful in starting labor unions and fighting off exclusion efforts against owning or leasing land.

A century of racist policy of discrimination and exclusion culminated in the internment in concentration camps of Japanese residents in the United States, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. Removed from their homes and businesses, these Japanese Americans were never charged with a crime, and no documented cases of sabotage have ever been attributed to them. When Congress passed legislation in 1988 to apologize and pay monetary compensation to those interned, some groups argued that no monetary compensation should be paid until Japan pays American Prisoners of War—illustrating a misunderstanding of the difference between imprisoning captured enemy soldiers and imprisoning a country’s own citizens and permanent residents without charges.

The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act gave equal quotas of 20,000 to all countries outside the Western Hemisphere and favored immigration of professional classes. Currently, there is a tremendously long waiting list for many Chinese, Filipino, Indian, and other Asian immigrants wanting to enter the United States, while quotas for many European nations are never filled.

Since the change in immigration law in 1965, there have been three major chains of Asian immigration. One chain, largely Chinese and Filipino, has come to join family members who were earlier immigrants. The second chain is largely from the professional classes, who come for job opportunities. The third chain is made up of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and other Southeast Asian countries, who began to enter in 1975, following the Vietnam War and the rule of the Khmer Rouge. Many Southeast Asian refugees were forced to flee their native countries because they had close ties to the United States as former governmental officials or were civil and military employees of the United States during the Vietnam War. They often must deal with the traumas of war, which are exacerbated by loss of country, family, culture, language, job, status, and respect.

The broad classification used in the United States today of “Asian or Pacific Islander” combines the largely Chinese American and Japanese American communities that have been established in the United States for many generations and experienced greater opportunities for adjustment, with largely Southeast Asian communities who have arrived more recently and are dealing with greater family and social disruption. Statistics on Asian and Pacific Islanders are thus likely to be skewed and reflect the experience of larger, more established Asian communities, contributing to “model minority syndrome.” The danger of model minority syndrome is that it denies adequate attention to the various communities that need assistance, resources, and programs. In the classroom, it may contribute to perceptions that a quiet Asian child understands a lesson, when in fact the child may not understand English or may be having emotional difficulties.

Hispanic

Hispanics represent the largest ethnic minority in Washington. A rapidly growing population, especially in Eastern Washington in the last 20 years, Hispanics are now the majority in Franklin County. Many families who have moved to Washington stay in the area. Others follow the crops, going back to homes in Texas or Mexico in the winter, challenging teachers to find ways to track children's progress across schools.

The Northward Movement which brought Mexicans to the United States happened in a similar manner to, and for many of the same reasons, that pioneers in the Ohio Valley ventured Westward. Spanish conquistadors of the 16th and 17th centuries first settled a network of Spanish-speaking communities, which make up modern-day El Paso, Tucson, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, and several other cities. Founded before English-speaking settlers were present, these cities served as stepping stones for the nation's Anglo explorers. In 1846 the United States declared war on Mexico, which ended in dispossessing Mexico of one-third of its national territory. Mexicans living in this territory then became U.S. citizens.

With newly installed railroads and Mexico's Revolution of 1910, peasants and small artisans rebelled and fled to Texan and Californian communities where Anglos needed them as laborers in cotton fields, citrus groves, and lumber camps. During the Great Depression, federal and state governments pushed nearly half a million Mexicans back to Mexico, but most citrus workers had a chance of staying because no one else would pick fruit—people believed that the spraying of orchards caused tuberculosis among the workers.

As the economy improved, these Mexicans and their descendents slowly became the core of a “vast army of roving workers forced to migrate in pursuit of a livelihood” (Gil, 1989). Mexican labor was identified as the most important factor in the success of cotton in Texas, even while workers were being exploited. Low wages impelled Mexican Americans to follow cotton and other crops into the Rocky Mountain states. Railroads and mines also employed many Mexican laborers.

From the Rocky Mountain states, Mexican Americans began to find their way to Eastern Washington. Housing was scarce, so migrants often lived in tent cities—as many still do today. In 1942, the “bracero” (guest worker) program began, which was a war-time agreement between the United States and Mexico that filled the vacuum of labor left by those gone to war or working in war-related industries. The highly popular program was extended until 1964, during which 4.6 million braceros entered the United States.

In the 1960s, Mexican Americans began moving from rural to urban areas in an attempt to gain increased purchasing power and leave behind a poverty-ridden way of life, finding jobs in the military and other government agencies. Increasing activism among Hispanic farmworkers and urban youth brought attention to the disparities and disadvantages, and led to the creation of civil rights groups such as El Centro de la Raza in Seattle. Non-Mexican Latinos also began to arrive

in large numbers in Washington, spurred by economic and political strife in their own countries, some of which was a result of the U.S. government's unsuccessful attempts to intervene and promote democratic leadership.

There are different rates of assimilation operating in each immigrant family. Adults may remember the low wages, lack of jobs, political instability, or other reasons why they migrated and hold a strong but cautious hope for a better life in the United States. Second and third generations may be more militant on behalf of change and civil rights in the United States. Immigrants often are concerned that their children will lose their Hispanic identity, which is compounded if American-born children lose their Spanish-speaking ability. Conflict can also arise from cultural differences, such as when the value placed on the expression of social deference and respect by children toward adults or between adults is undermined by the egalitarianism in American society.

Native American

Native Americans impacted the development of the United States in countless ways. Their political concept of federalism shaped the U.S. Constitution, their agricultural practices and medicines aided in the survival of early European settlers, and their environmental conservation left the land rich with resources.

The “discovery” of America by Europeans had a devastating effect on the indigenous population. Historian James W. Loewen (1995) notes that within three years, diseases wiped out between 90 percent and 96 percent of the American Indians of coastal New England. The decimation of entire tribes by disease continued westward and left American Indians politically weak and outnumbered, subject to war and assimilation.

In recent years, after many Native cultures and languages were lost due to a long history of colonization, armed struggle, and forced assimilation, many Native peoples have been actively seeking ways to preserve and revitalize their cultural heritage and establish their distinctness from the dominant American cultural orientation (Van Hamme, 1996). The 1989 passage of Public Law 101-477 legitimized Native American cultures and languages and supported the rights of the people to practice, promote, use, and develop their languages.

In addition, tribes are increasingly asserting their unique rights to govern themselves. Yet, the nature of tribal sovereignty is ill-understood, leading to proposals such as the Washington Republican Party resolution seeking “to terminate all such non-republican forms of government on Indian reservations.” No other nation has such a relationship with its aboriginal tribes, where they are semi-independent tribal nations, with their own laws, territory, and culture.

These unique rights are based on treaties or other agreements between the United States and the tribes. Treaties were first used with tribes to obtain land, peace, and allies in the Revolutionary War. When the federal government began to push tribes into reservations or force them to assimilate, tribal leaders agreed to give up millions of acres of land in exchange for specific

rights, especially fishing and hunting rights and access to religious sites. By agreeing to give up land in treaties, tribal leaders made sure they kept the right to govern themselves, take care of their land, and decide as a community what is important, stated Theresa Rapida, Associate Professor of Public Administration at Portland State University (Thompson, 2000).

In addition to fishing and hunting rights, through the trust responsibility and treaty obligations the federal government has the permanent obligation to financially support Native American education at the level required by the tribe. In the 1800s, this education was provided with the goal to assimilate Native Americans, that is, “to take the ‘Indian’ out of the Indian” (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Native children were sent away to boarding schools, where their traditional languages and religions were banned. In a display at the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribal Center, Ceara Jones of the Suquamish Tribal Oral History Project describes her experience: “We stayed there for three years. We were just kids, you know. They (our parents) said we had to go or else they would go to jail. That's what they used to tell us. And we would cry, ‘We don't want to go back, we don't want to leave home.’ They would tell us, ‘You will go or else we go to jail.’ There were some around two, three, four, five years old. They had these long rooms for our girls and there were sometimes five to 50 kids in one room.”

Native Americans are still feeling the effects of being raised in the environment of these boarding schools. John McCoy, Director of Governmental Affairs at the Tulalip Tribes, asserts: “So then they come back to the reservation and they’re expected to function, and they have kids. One of the things you don’t learn in boarding school is parenting skills or family unit skills. Those are lost.”

Other methods of attempting to assimilate Native Americans were through the General Allotment Act, which allowed non-natives to purchase and settle tribal lands, further breaking up tribal life. In the 1950s, Congress moved to terminate its relationship with more than 100 tribes and paid Native Americans to dissolve their tribal units. They also attempted to relocate Native Americans into large White urban cities, where it was hoped they would lose their culture and language since they would be removed from the source.

Against the backdrop of the increased activism of the American Indian Movement, the government began to move to strengthen tribal governments. Tribes have been tapping into the modern legal system since the 1970s, making great strides toward having their rights recognized and respected. “A lot of the conflicts over zoning, over gaming, over fishing, they are conflicts because tribes had these rights, but they never attempted to assert or exercise them,” explains Alan Parker, Director of the Northwest Indian Applied Research Institute at Evergreen State College and a Chippewa Cree (Thompson, 2000). Terminated tribes are seeking, and some have won, recognition from Congress. In addition, Native American communities are increasingly utilizing the parent advisory committees required by federal Native American education funding programs to advocate for changes in the way their children are educated.