

F Your Racist History***

E103: *Hate Sells...and We're Buying*

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Show Notes

It is no secret that slavery rests at the foundation of American capitalism and is often synonymous with the sugar, tobacco, and/or cotton plantations that fueled the Southern economy. What many may not know is that slavery also rests at the foundation of many notable corporations. From New York Life to Bank of America, Brooks Brothers to Aetna, many companies have benefitted from slavery. Some of the companies even acknowledged their involvement in slavery and offered apologies in an attempt to reconcile their tainted history but, is an apology enough? What about products like Aunt Jemima that use racist imagery, sports teams with stereotypically racist mascots, or tobacco companies who aggressively market menthol cigarettes to people of color? In this episode of *F*** Your Racist History*, we explore racism and its infiltration of American consumerism.

EPISODE SCRIPT

Introduction

In 1893, executives at Pearl Milling Company in St. Joseph, Missouri, initiated a casting call for their new brand of self-rising pancake mix. They needed a mascot. And, they wanted a living, breathing embodiment of the brand's namesake, Aunt Jemima, an 1875 minstrel character.¹ In other words, they needed a jovial, overweight Black woman to fit the part of a Southern slave "Mammy."

In response, a formerly enslaved woman from Kentucky named Nancy Green, who was working as a servant for a Chicago judge at the time, auditioned for the role. Pearl Milling Company loved Green. She was in her fifties, sported impressive culinary skills, and also had the background to portray the company's Black "mammy" stereotype.

They set her up in a booth at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair; to the delight of large crowds, Nancy Green, who donned a white apron around her full shape and a red bandana around her head, cooked pancakes, sang songs, and regaled white fairgoers with tales from her childhood in Southern slavery.

Like Pearl Milling Company's new pancake mix, Nancy Green as "Aunt Jemima" was an instant success, but not everyone was happy with the characterization. Critics at the time thought such a portrayal so soon after the legal end of slavery was inappropriate and perpetuated black stereotypes, and that the company was cashing in. But, this was the beginning of the Jim Crow era in the United States, when most Americans were lapping up nostalgia over slavery and the Old South. Popularity of the pancake mix continued to grow, and in 1925, Quaker Oats purchased the Aunt Jemima brand.

Fast Forward to June 2020, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Amid the protests over Floyd's killing besieging the nation, an old forgotten video resurfaced online and went viral. It was a 4-minute montage of over 100 years of racist Aunt Jemima advertising, and people were outraged.

¹ BlackExcellence.com, "Aunt Jemima: It Was Never about the Pancakes," Medium, February 1, 2018, <https://medium.com/@blackexcellence/aunt-jemima-it-was-never-about-the-pancakes-14a48a6523d>.

Quaker Oats responded quickly. Their vice president, Kristen Kroepf, announced the retirement of the brand soon after on June 17. In her statement, she says:

“Aunt Jemima’s origins are based on a racial stereotype. While work has been done over the years to update the brand in a manner intended to be appropriate and respectful, we realize those changes are not enough.”

The decision to remove the racist branding then started a ripple effect: other brands like Cream of Wheat, Uncle Ben’s Rice, and Land O’ Lakes Butter announced their intentions to reevaluate their own branding decisions, all of which included racist stereotypes of Black or Indigineous people.

Heated debate among consumers ensued; some hailed the decisions as a step towards anti-racism and equity in marketing, others argued it marked an erasure of American history without acknowledging the harm it caused. And (no surprise) there were some who completely pushed back on the idea that the racialized images were even racist at all.

David Pilgrim, the curator of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia in Big Rapids, Michigan, says that with brands like Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben’s, “we still live in the residue of Jim Crow. It might not be as harsh, but there are still remnants of the ugly days.”²

Ugly days, indeed. What is our longstanding obsession with faulty and racist nostalgia? Better questions: why have these racist marketing tactics been so successful, and why do we remain loyal to these brands as consumers despite their despicable histories and practices?

It’s simple: we’re willing to forget what truly happened in our history because we want it to feel cleaner and more respectful than it really was. And, it’s hard to admit that maybe we are also complicit in the marginalization and dehumanization of other human beings through our buying habits and which companies we choose to support. But, the truth is, racism is ingrained in more

² Emily Heil, “After Aunt Jemima Was Retired, Companies Are Rethinking Uncle Ben, Cream of Wheat and Mrs. Butterworth’s,” *Washington Post*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2020/06/18/after-aunt-jemima-was-retired-companies-are-rethinking-uncle-ben-cream-of-wheat-and-mrs-butterworth-images/>.

than just the business marketing practices of the 20th century. The belief in white supremacy is the foundation of American Capitalism, and it all started with something called the Triangle Trade.

This is episode 3 of *F*** Your Racist History: **Hate Sells...and We're Buying.***

The Triangle Trade

Molasses. Rum. Slaves (harvest, drink, repeat).

Maybe you remember something about this from school, most likely you don't (if you were even taught it at all), but that's the basic construction of the Triangle Trade that built America's early colonial economy. It worked like this:

The British colonies in the West Indies (more commonly known today as the Caribbean) were rich in sugar plantations. And, they decided they needed slaves to plant, harvest, and process the sugar cane. The production of sugar was one of the most brutal and dangerous types of work for enslaved people; they often lost limbs and suffered debilitating injuries at every stage (not to mention the severe mistreatment they endured from slave owners). This, of course, bolstered the need for plantation owners to bring in even more enslaved people. They also found that refining sugar produced a more sought after byproduct: molasses. The sugar alone was not profitable; molasses was the real moneymaker.

Ships carried millions of gallons of molasses from the West Indies to the coast of New England, where distilleries then processed it into rum. The rum, in turn, would be placed into large casks and transported to the African coast where it would be traded for more slaves.

Ships hauling enslaved people would then transport them to America's Southern colonies, and the whole vicious cycle would begin again.

This transatlantic slave trade continued to expand throughout the late 1600s, and by the early 1700s, the American colonies were booming because of it.

By the eve of the American Revolution in 1776, the American colonies had become wealthy and self-sufficient enough to declare independence from England. Key to their healthy economy? The Triangle Trade and slavery.

Slavery and Profit in Antebellum American Business

It's often said the South was the epicenter for American slavery, and in many cases this is certainly true. Historian Ronald Bailey has noted, however, that "one of the greatest travesties in the study of U.S. History is the suggestion that only the South benefited directly and substantially from slavery."

Something else that would have been difficult for white Americans to achieve without the exploitation of Blacks as slaves? The industrialization of America's North. As we just learned, rum was made with molasses derived from Southern slave-grown sugar cane. But, Americans also smoked slave-grown tobacco in their pipes. And American textiles were made with slave-grown cotton.

In fact, after the United Kingdom ended the international slave trade in 1807 with the signing of the Slave Trade Act, the use of Southern U.S. slave-grown cotton in the Northern textile industries soared.

Beginning in 1790, the United States (and enslaved peoples) produced 1.5 million pounds of raw cotton, meaning that's how much total U.S.-produced cotton entered the market. That same year, Eli Whitney³ invented the cotton gin, and as a result, the following year, *35 million* pounds of cotton hit the U.S. market. That's over a 2,000-percent increase in less than one year. If you look more closely, the explosion of the Northern American textile industry also followed along with the staggering growth of cotton from the South. In 1790, Northern textile industries used five million pounds of raw cotton. In 1865, they used 433 million pounds.⁴

³ The cotton gin might have been invented by Catherine Green, but because she couldn't obtain a patent on account of her sex, Eli Whitney rebuilt it and patented himself. History.com Editors, "Cotton Gin and Eli Whitney," HISTORY (A&E Television Networks, February 4, 2010), <https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/cotton-gin-and-eli-whitney>.

⁴Ronald Bailey, "The Slave(Ry) Trade and the Development of Capitalism in the United States: The Textile Industry in New England," *Social Science History* 14, no. 3 (1990): 373, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1171357>.

According to the BBC, “By some estimates, New York received 40 percent of U.S. cotton revenue through money its financial firms, shipping businesses, and insurance companies earned.”

But, it wasn't just raw products and the revenue produced on the literal backs of enslaved people that Northern companies profited from; it was also the enslaved people themselves that generated money for them.

Slaves needed clothes on their backs (though let's not forget that sometimes enslaved people were forced to pick cotton completely naked as a form of punishment); American clothier Brooks Brothers started their company in the early 1800s by selling “top-of-the-line” clothing to slave owners and white traders who needed to outfit their slaves.⁵

On Brooks Brother's long ‘History and Heritage’ page on their website, nowhere does it mention this little historical backstory.

But, they do say, “As the country's oldest clothing retailer, Brooks Brothers is proud to uphold the same traditions and values for nearly two centuries.”⁶ Let's hope not.

Many well-known American insurance providers and banks also cashed in on slavery and the slave trade.

Aetna, who is now a health insurance provider, initially sold policies to slave owners to insure the lives of their slaves; when an enslaved person died, a slave owner collected the fiscal value of the person, and then some.

The company issued a statement that was published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 2000:

⁵ Edward Ball, “Retracing Slavery's Trail of Tears,” *Smithsonian* (Smithsonian.com, October 21, 2015), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/>.

⁶ “Brooks Brothers | about Us,” www.brooksbrothers.com, n.d., <https://www.brooksbrothers.com/about-us/about-us>.

“Aetna has long acknowledged that for several years shortly after its founding in 1853 that the company may have insured the lives of slaves. We express our deep regret over any participation at all in this deplorable practice.”⁷

And, yet, there is no mention of this on Aetna's website.⁸

Predecessor banks that formed the Fortune 500 companies Bank of America, New York Life, and J. P. Morgan also accepted enslaved people as collateral for loans and insured them as property at the time.⁹

And, if a slave owner defaulted on a loan, the banks would seize their slaves. Then what would they do with them, I wonder?

In 2001, the State of California passed legislation requiring insurance companies to hand over company records pertaining to policies insuring enslaved people prior to 1865. New York Life provided documents showing their parent company, Nautilus Insurance Company, had sold 508 policies insuring the lives of enslaved people in the 1840s. According to New York Life's website, they only sold these policies for a short time between 1846 and 1848, and it accounted for less than 5-percent of their business.¹⁰ However, a New York Times article from 2016 said the policies accounted for a third of total policies between 1845 and 1848, and the company paid the equivalent of \$232,000 in claims before voting to discontinue the practice in 1848.

After the City of Chicago passed an ordinance in 2002 requiring companies to disclose whether or not they or a predecessor had profited from the institution of slavery, Bank of America scrambled to minimize damage to their public image. Company representatives testified in front of the Chicago City Council that although the president of one of their predecessor companies was, in fact, a slave trader, he in no way received funding for that endeavor from the bank. (*Hmm*—what was his salary used for then?) Bank of America's historical records reportedly show only two such policies that insured slaves were ever sold. Oddly enough, the link to the

⁷ Print, “Aetna Apologizes for Slave Insurance,” Los Angeles Times, March 11, 2000, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-mar-11-fi-7637-story.html>.

⁸ “Our Company History | Aetna,” www.aetna.com, n.d., <https://www.aetna.com/about-us/aetna-history.html>.

⁹ “SLAVERY ERA INSURANCE REGISTRY LAWS.” Ct.gov, 2012, www.cga.ct.gov/2012/rpt/2012-R-0072.htm.

¹⁰ “Common Questions,” www.newyorklife.com, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.newyorklife.com/newsroom/common-questions>.

Bank of America report, conducted by the Heritage Research Center, which detailed these findings, has been inactive online for some time.

J. P. Morgan, a major provider of investment banking and financial services, though? They actually owned slaves. A lot of them. In 2005, they admitted that between 1831 and 1861, their two predecessor banks accepted nearly 13,000 enslaved people as collateral. When slaveowners defaulted on these loans, the banks confiscated and ended up owning over 1,250 enslaved people.

What was J. P. Morgan's atonement for profiting from slavery? They pledged \$5 million to a Louisiana scholarship fund for African-American students. Seems money can buy anything for those who have it, including rubber-stamped redemption.

I'll point out that most, if not all, of the revelations about these companies came as a result of either the Chicago city ordinance or a rash of class-action lawsuits filed in the early 2000s seeking reparations from these companies for their involvement and profit from the institution of slavery.¹¹

To date, *none* of these companies have made direct reparations to communities or people of color, and, in general, the discussion around reparations for Black Americans affected by slavery remains a divisive issue in American business and politics.

Fighting For the Lost Cause

If you listened to episode two of *F*** Your Racist History*, 'The Racist History of American American Law Enforcement', you'll know very little changed by way of attitudes toward people of color in this country after the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery. How did this affect newly freed Black people trying to start new lives and businesses?

Spoiler alert: it hasn't been pretty, easy, or seamless.

¹¹ Robert F. Worth, "Companies Are Sued for Slave Reparations (Published 2002)," *The New York Times*, March 27, 2002, sec. New York, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/27/nyregion/companies-are-sued-for-slave-reparations.html>.

The Southern economy, after the Civil War, was completely destroyed. Reconstruction turned into a nightmare for Southern whites and (of course) they took their frustrations out on Blacks.

While four-million newly freed Black people were searching for a new path for their lives, an entire population of destitute, war-wearied, and humiliated former Confederates detested their new freedom. For many freedmen and women at the time, a career in agriculture seemed a logical choice, but getting a piece of the land they and their ancestors had toiled on proved to be much harder than anticipated.

There were efforts to break up abandoned and confiscated plantations into smaller lots for freed Black farmers. Northern abolitionists and local freed Blacks did this on St. Helena Island and Port Royal in South Carolina in 1863 with relative success.¹²

“Forty acres and a mule” was another proposal devised under the Freedmen’s Bureau Act of 1865 to parcel and redistribute large Southern plantations to help facilitate the rise of the independent Black farmer, but it never came to fruition. Why? Once again, racism. The U.S. government found it difficult to square with the reality of redistributing land from white people to Black people.

The Lost Cause

A white supremacist tome called *The Lost Cause*, was then published in 1866, and it was an attempt to repaint the image of the Old South. It spelled out in no uncertain terms a justification for the former Confederate cause; it portrayed slavery as a “necessary evil” that protected and nurtured enslaved people (instead of the horrific reality that it truly was). Plantations altered their facades to embody this message, reforming their outward appearance to match the mythology, for the new influx of Northern patrons interested in indulging in Southern nostalgia. Instead of images of brutality, cruelty, and dehumanization, visitors to plantations were often met by well-dressed Black workers, now in “service” rather than slavery, called “auntie” and “uncle” to appear as though these former slaves were a welcome part of the family. Even in 2021, plantation tours in the American South still sell whitewashed history to eager tourists and promote destination weddings on the grounds of old slave quarters.

¹² Reynolds Bruce J., “The Pursuit of Independent Farming and the Role of Cooperatives” (, 2003), <https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/RR194.pdf>.

Racist Advertising

Racist imagery has long been used to appeal to a white sense of nostalgia. A longing for “the good old days” of the American South was encapsulated by brands using images of Black slave stereotypes.

American companies cashed in on these stereotypes in large brand marketing campaigns.

In addition to Aunt Jemima’s adaptation of an old, Black, Southern mammy that appealed to the nostalgic white consumer looking for gentle reminders of a “simpler time,” Uncle Ben’s instant rice and the Cream of Wheat breakfast porridge brand mascots also emulated the so-called ‘gentle, old house slave’/non-threatening Black man stereotype. Juxtapose these seemingly docile figures against stereotypes of threatening freed Black men as rapists and abusers of white women, as depicted in D. W. Griffith’s famous film about the Ku Klux Klan, *The Birth of a Nation*, and it’s no surprise white people clung wholeheartedly to these feel-good images they created for themselves. Fear (it turns out) is a powerful tool; it’s almost as powerful as nostalgia and ambivalence. It whitewashed past treatment of previously enslaved Black people, particularly the efforts made following the Civil War to prevent freedmen from becoming financially independent.

Debt Slavery

After 1865, the majority of newly freed slaves didn’t have a cent to their names. They were often left with no other option than to enter into labor agreements with the same white people who had previously enslaved them. This practice created a new system of tenant farming, referred to as “sharecropping.”

Here is the basic gist of how sharecropping (or the more accurate term, “debt slavery”) worked: a plantation owner would agree to allow Black (and sometimes poor white) farmers to live on and work an allotted acreage of their land. To pay for rent, equipment, and other expenses, the farmer agreed to pay the plantation owner with a portion of his crop. They signed a contract to this effect, which most freed Blacks couldn’t read because antebellum literacy laws made it a crime to teach enslaved people to read or write until 1865.

What became the norm, however, is at the end of the harvest season, plantation owners would produce a list of infractions, fines, or unforeseen costs that meant the farmer essentially owed more money than their crop yielded. If (and usually *when*) this happened, there was a clause in the contract that said sharecroppers automatically signed on for another year, and the same broken record would play again, and again, and again for the Black farmers.

This was also a common conundrum for Blacks in servant positions. Colloquially nicknamed “servitude,” many formerly enslaved servants signed contracts that kept them in the same jobs and living in the same primitive shantys they inhabited during slavery. They would receive penalties for things like their dogs barking too loud on a Sunday morning, or missing work because of illness, and at the end of the year, they would owe their “employer” money. It essentially turned into a system of financial enslavement; if you were indebted to them, the plantation owner owned you until you could pay them off (and usually no one ever could).

So, what about Black people who tried to start their own businesses in early America?

Black Businesses

It’s nearly impossible to start a business while living in poverty. Aspiring Black entrepreneurs had trouble securing loans; in addition to outright refusal by some banks to lend to anyone who wasn’t white, racist lending practices also meant hefty collateral and higher interest rates for Black consumers.

It often took formerly enslaved people and their children years (if they were lucky) to secure enough capital to start their own independent business ventures. But, it did happen, and by the turn of the 20th century, Black-owned businesses were finding their footing.

Madam C. J. Walker, born Sarah Breedlove, is often credited as becoming the United States’ first Black female millionaire. A child of slaves, she did it by creating a successful business for her line of Black hair care, known as the ‘Walker System’ in 1905.

Madam Walker learned her technique from the leading Black hair care specialist at the time, Annie Malone, another Black female entrepreneur who also became a millionaire. These Black

women found plenty of space for their personal products in the market as almost all health and beauty products on the market at the time were marketed to white women.

The entire mainstream beauty industry in the early 1900s focused on eurocentric (i.e. white) standards, and department stores built their cosmetics departments to suit. Because department stores wouldn't feature cosmetics for Black women, Madam Walker resorted to door-to-door sales to market her products. When she gained enough capital, she opened brick and mortar storefronts of her own that employed mostly women of color.

The success of her stores, however, also made her a target. But Madam Walker did not let it stop her from speaking out on behalf of Black women in business. She paid her success forward; she donated money back to the Black community via the YMCA, the Tuskegee Institute, schools for Black girls and women, and various community church organizations.

At a convention for the National Negro Business League in 1912, Walker declared:

"I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there, I was promoted to the washtub. From there, I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there, I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations. I have built my own factory on my own ground."¹³

Booker T. Washington founded the National Negro Business League in 1900 with the intention of helping Black men and women succeed in business. In a speech given at one of its first conventions, Washington said:

"At the bottom of education, at the bottom of politics, even at the bottom of religion itself there must be for our race, as for all races an economic foundation, economic prosperity, economic independence."¹⁴

His organization was open to anyone, regardless of race, as long as they were in good standing within their community. Together with the following organizations, Booker T. Washington looked

¹³ A'Lelia Bundles, "Madam C.J. Walker: Business Savvy" (eJournalUSA, February 2016), https://photos.state.gov/libraries/amgov/30145/publications-english/Black_Women_Leaders_eJ.pdf.

¹⁴ "National Negro Business League," Loc.gov, 2021, <http://memory.loc.gov:8081/ammem/amrlhtml/dtnegbus.html>.

to ensure some semblance of equality in business: the National Negro Bankers Association, the National Negro Press Association, the National Association of Negro Funeral Directors, the National Negro Bar Association, the National Association of Negro Insurance Men, the National Negro Retail Merchants' Association, the National Association of Negro Real Estate Dealers, and the National Negro Finance Corporation.

Today, the National Negro Business League is known as the National Business League and continues to help Black-owned businesses in America.¹⁵

In the tradition of Booker T. Washington, entrepreneur and author Fawn Weaver started whiskey brand Uncle Nearest in 2017 to honor a talented Black man overlooked in our history books, and she has strived to use her success to help support other Black-owned businesses. A multi-award winning enterprise run by an all-female leadership team, Weaver's company is named after Nathaniel 'Nearest' Green, a once enslaved Black man who taught a young Jack Daniel how to make whiskey. As the first master distiller of Jack Daniel's now-famous Tennessee Whiskey, Green perfected the Lincoln County distilling process. This unique method of filtering whiskey through sugar maple charcoal was first introduced in Tennessee by enslaved people like Nearest Green. His legacy lives on, not only as a brand name called Uncle Nearest Whiskey, but through his family of Black entrepreneurs.

Today, his great-great-granddaughter, Victoria Eady Butler, is Uncle Nearest's master blender and the first Black female master blender in recorded history.¹⁶ The company has created initiatives to encourage more people of color to enter the spirits industry and help other small Black-owned brands thrive. In June 2020, in partnership with Brown-Forman's Jack Daniel Distillery, Uncle Nearest unveiled plans for the Nearest Green School of Distilling at Motlow State Community College in nearby Tullahoma, Tennessee. The two companies also launched an apprenticeship program to allow Black distillers to shadow experts in the industry. Uncle

¹⁵ The National Business League Inc, "National Business League, Nation's First Black Business Organization Turns 120 Years Old," [www.prnewswire.com](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-business-league-nations-first-black-business-organization-turns-120-years-old-301123502.html), September 3, 2020, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-business-league-nations-first-black-business-organization-turns-120-years-old-301123502.html>.

¹⁶ "Nearest Green Distillery," Distillery Trail, February 28, 2018, <https://www.distillerytrail.com/directory-distillery/listing/nearest-green-distillery/>.

Nearest has also separately launched the Black Business Booster program, which is dedicated to helping ten Black-owned spirits companies with successful business strategies and capital.¹⁷

A quick note about the use of ‘uncle’ here. It is not comparable to the use of ‘uncle’ in a brand like Uncle Ben’s because Nearest’s family were involved with its founding, naming, and are still involved to this day. He was not exploited by white marketers who made him into a caricature of himself to make a buck.

Racist Mascots

Earlier episodes of *F*** Your Racist History* primarily explored American racism and its impact on Black and Jewish communities, but as you probably already know (or you should, and this podcast is here to help if you don’t), Native Americans have also experienced numerous atrocities and injustices at the hands of white settlers, the United States Government, and Capitalists. They have not been spared from racist depictions or advertising in American culture.

Native American portrayals in Western films, corporate advertising, anti-littering public service announcements, and especially as sports team mascots present Indigenous peoples of the Americas as a one-dimensional warrior race.

In 2005, the American Psychological Association “called for the immediate retirement of all American Indian mascots, symbols, images and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations.”¹⁸ Their research shows these images are particularly harmful in schools and college environments because they are centers of learning; they also claim the mascots are “undermining the educational experiences of members of all communities—especially those who have had little or no contact with Indigenous peoples.”¹⁹ In essence, the incorrect and racist representation of an entire culture stimulates ignorance. Now, imagine that happening thousands of times over the centuries and in our classrooms and on our television and film screens.

¹⁷ Sara Clemence “This Founder Is Helping Essential Workers and Black Business Owners--and Making Inspired Whiskey” Inc.com, 2021, <https://www.inc.com/magazine/202102/sara-clemence/uncle-nearest-whiskey-fawn-weaver-best-in-business-2020.html>

¹⁸ “American Indian Mascots,” *Https://Www.apa.org*, 2011, <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots>.

¹⁹ “American Indian Mascots,” *Https://Www.apa.org*, 2011, <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots>.

Opponents of Native American mascot removal say these images are meant to show respect to the communities as depictions of courage and resilience, but Native Americans by and large disagree.

One of the most recognizable examples in recent years is that of the National Football League team the Washington Redskins. After years of community members and Native American rights groups calling for the removal of their caricatured American Indian logo and demeaning team name, owners finally rebranded the organization in the wake of nationwide protests following the murder of George Floyd and other young Black men.

The same happened when the Atlanta Braves and the Cleveland Indians Major League Baseball teams dropped the use of their racialized logos and team traditions.

And you know what happened after they rebranded and stopped promoting racist stereotypes?

Nothing. Some people, addicted to nostalgia, complained. But the sky didn't fall. The teams didn't fold. Players went on playing. Team owners continued to make money. And fans kept watching, as if it really didn't matter much if their favorite team once had a racist mascot or not.

This is also interesting, however. While the removal of racist imagery that promotes stereotypes is certainly a positive step for society, how quickly we were able to move on from it without truly addressing the harm it caused generations of people is not. Maybe there is a lesson in this. Redemption without accountability is just more white privilege.

Modern Marketing to People of Color

What about modern marketing practices? Aside from the aforementioned Aunt Jemima, Cream of Wheat, and Uncle Ben's, there are more recent examples of covert racism in advertising than we can count.

Play the clip.

“We don't smoke that s***. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the black, and the stupid.”

- R. J. Reynolds, tobacco company executive (brands include: Newport, Camel, Winston, and Pall Mall)²⁰

[That was Winston cigarettes advertising model Dave Goerlitz talking about what he was told by a company executive from R. J. Reynolds, one of the world's largest tobacco companies, which includes brands like Newport, Camel, Pall Mall, and Winston. Goerlitz later became an outspoken anti-smoking advocate.]

For decades, white advertising executives targeted Black youth with menthol-flavored cigarette advertisements, with some brands placing over 70-percent of their marketing budgets towards that demographic. Ads have even included voicing support for America's Black History Month. Beginning in the 1950s, white advertisers began placing Black and brown people in the forefront of cigarette ads, a place most brands had typically reserved for white models. Visions of Black musicians, athletes, business professionals, and happy couples suddenly appeared front and center with a menthol cigarette in hand. This aggressive advertising strategy by tobacco companies worked; a 2016 study found that 85-percent of Black smokers preferred smoking menthols, compared to just 29-percent of white smokers.²¹

Various groups have lobbied for a ban on menthol and other flavored cigarettes and tobacco products, including the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Black People). Recently, the NAACP got their wish. The Food and Drug Administration announced in April of 2021 that they were taking steps toward enacting the ban. In response, NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson said, "[it] is long overdue to protect the health of African Americans and to reduce the deleterious impact of menthol smoking and tobacco use overall on America's health."

Modern companies supporting more blatant white supremacy with their advertising dollars is another big issue all together. For example, television advertising slots on Fox News' *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, whose host regularly makes bigoted comments and seems to support outright white supremacist views.

²⁰“Dave Goerlitz,” Internet Archive, 1991, https://archive.org/details/tobacco_uzj52b00.

²¹ “TOBACCO COMPANY MARKETING to AFRICAN AMERICANS” (, n.d.), <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0208.pdf>.

Fox News has come out and said “any reasonable viewer arrives with an appropriate amount of skepticism about the statements [Tucker Carlson] makes.”²² Essentially, they’re saying the public should not believe one of their top hosts, but to keep tuning in despite the fact he makes racist statements. Advertisers continue to buy primetime slots which support Carlson’s air time and legitimize his bigoted remarks. Although recent outrage has caused some brands to pull their advertising from the show, they are sometimes slowly lured back by its high ratings.

As is so often the case in Capitalism, profit margins trump principles and common human decency.

There are, however, people fighting back against this under-the-table support of white supremacist and extremist media.

Sleeping Giants, an activist organization, was founded in 2016 to call out companies that do just that—support racism. They started a Twitter page with the intention of holding companies accountable that chose to advertise with organizations like Breitbart News, a far-right media company that has been infecting conservative readers with Tucker Carlson-esque “news” since its inception in 2007. Sleeping Giants believe that by applying social pressure, “we” (as in we as a society) can create real and lasting impact in eliminating practices by companies that support racism. It works, too: because of pressure from groups like Sleeping Giants, Breitbart lost over 90-percent of its advertising revenue during their push.²³

And then there are the not-so-covert ways that advertisers (directly and indirectly, or perhaps even inadvertently) support the notion of white supremacy. For example, Dove (a large consumer soap brand) released a television commercial in 2017 that, in its opening few frames, depicted a Black woman lifting up her shirt to reveal a white woman beneath it, while a bottle of Dove’s body wash was visible. This was reminiscent of old soap ads that attempted to demonstrate that soap worked so well, it “turns Black white” (this cringeworthy tagline is from a

²² David Folkenflik, “You Literally Can’t Believe the Facts Tucker Carlson Tells You. So Say Fox’s Lawyers,” NPR.org, September 29, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/29/917747123/you-literally-cant-believe-the-facts-tucker-carlson-tells-you-so-say-fox-s-lawyer>.

²³ Nandini Jammi, “I’m Leaving Sleeping Giants, but Not Because I Want To,” Medium, July 13, 2020, <https://nandoodles.medium.com/im-leaving-sleeping-giants-but-not-because-i-want-to-d9c4f488642>.

Cooks Lightening Soap ad from 1905). The Dove commercial was pulled after #BoycottDove started trending on Twitter. The company's response?

"An image we recently posted missed the mark in representing women of color thoughtfully. We deeply regret the offense it caused."²⁴

But, what about the harm it caused?

Are Apologies Enough?

"We regret our company's involvement in this deplorable practice."

"We deeply apologize for contributing to the hurt of the African American community."

"Our company is deeply committed to fighting for racial justice."

"We're doing our best to educate ourselves and learn."

The "I'm sorrys" are profuse nowadays, and coming from seemingly every corner of American industry.

George Floyd's globally-publicized murder in 2020 forever changed the social landscape. It did something to the public consciousness. Average people felt empowered to say, "this is wrong, racism is systemic, and the perpetrators must be held accountable."

Companies that resisted change for years suddenly did a 180-degree turn. They asked for forgiveness, released statements, and promised their support for communities of color. Bank of America pledged \$1 billion to companies working towards social justice and "\$5 million over three years to institutions and programs involved in the preservation of African-American history."²⁵ New York Life has loudly touted their efforts to right past wrongs by sponsoring two

²⁴ "Dove on Twitter," Twitter, 2009, <https://twitter.com/Dove/status/916731793927278592>.

²⁵ "Bank of America Discloses Research on Slavery Ties," Bizjournals.com, 2005, <https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2005/08/22/daily24.html>.

PBS documentaries on Slavery and the effects of Jim Crow, as well as being a founding donor to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.²⁶

While it's easy to applaud these companies for these declarations and donations, real and lasting change has yet to be seen. More importantly, they have not addressed the generations of trauma they caused to Black and brown Americans because of their past practices.

There is actually a larger issue at play here that no amount of apologies or donations to scholarship funds can fix. There are so *many* American companies who have profited from systemic racism (and continue to do so). The entire economic system of the United States was founded to protect the financial interests of white men by dehumanizing everyone who was not a white man. We've changed our laws, made progress and reforms, and yet problems like predatory lending and housing discrimination, racist marketing tactics, and generational racial wealth gaps still plague this nation.

Many of the companies that for centuries profited from things like racism, slavery, and the dehumanization of Americans seem to now simply be paying lip service to protect their profit margins in the long term for company shareholders. While there have been companies who have genuinely pivoted from supporting racism in the past to countering it, namely foundations like those started by Ford and Kellogg, others, like Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Aetna, hope a simple apology will make their past racist activities go away, or that a rebrand might conceal them.

That's exactly what Corrections Corporation of America, or CCA, one of the oldest and largest for-profit, private prison companies in the country, did in 2016, after getting a slew of bad press.

In 2010, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit claiming that low staffing levels at one of CCA's correctional facilities in Idaho led to high levels of violence among inmates. An FBI investigation followed and found that the company had been falsifying their staffing records. Then in 2015, *Mother Jones* reporter Shane Bauer went undercover as a prison guard for four

²⁶ Berkman, Eric T. "1st Circuit Kicks Ex-Employee's Race-Bias Claim to Arbitration." *New England In-House*, 2021, newenglandinhouse.com/2021/04/28/1st-circuit-kicks-ex-employees-race-bias-claim-to-arbitration/. Ongoing suit- former partner/employee Ketler Bosse is suing NYL for racial discrimination. There is not a resolution yet but something to keep an eye on.

months in one of CCA's prisons in Louisiana and wrote a scathing exposé in 2016 about his experience and observations. Following Bauer's report, and after the Justice Department sent out a memo indicating it wanted to phase out private prisons, CCA simply changed their name to CoreCivic and coined a happy new slogan: "Better the Public Good."²⁷ Yet, CoreCivic is still in the business of making profit from incarcerating a disproportionate number of Black and brown people, and they contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain immigrants at our nation's southern border, such as at the T. Don Hutto Detention Center in Texas. This facility has a long, troubled history under CoreCivic's ownership. It now holds women seeking asylum during their immigration proceedings, and a March 2021 report by Grassroots Leadership and the Texas Law Immigration Clinic revealed that CoreCivic delivers poor service and subjects the detained women to unacceptable conditions ranging from lack of adequate food and medical care to sexual abuse to forced labor.²⁸ So much for civility and the public good.

Companies like McDonald's, Wendy's, Victoria's Secret, Sprint, and American Airlines all benefit from the for-profit prison system, as well; they rely on cheap prison labor so they can stamp a "made in America" label on their products without paying inmates Federal minimum wage. This just perpetuates slavery by another name and bolsters the prison-industrial complex.

Amazon and IBM have helped keep those prisons full by providing Artificial-Intelligence facial recognition technology to police which has led to false identification of suspects and the wrongful imprisonment of people of color. Recently, both companies bowed to social pressure. Amazon placed a moratorium on police use of this technology, and IBM pledged to stop development of facial recognition technology altogether and announced a \$100 million technology asset donation to historically Black colleges and universities.²⁹

²⁷ Amanda Haggard, "CCA's Rebranding as CoreCivic Part of PR Strategy," Nashville Scene, January 19, 2017, <https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/pith-in-the-wind/article/20849623/ccas-rebranding-as-corecivic-part-of-pr-strategy>.

²⁸ "New Report: ICE's Contract with CoreCivic to Detain Immigrants at Hutto Flouts Federal Law," Grassroots Leadership, March 25, 2021, <https://grassrootsleadership.org/releases/2021/03/new-report-ice-s-contract-corecivic-detain-immigrants-hutto-flouts-federal-law>.

²⁹ Andrew Witherspoon and Dion Rabouin, "Fortune 100 Companies Commit \$3.3 Billion to Fight Racism and Inequality," Axios, 9AD, <https://www.axios.com/fortune-100-companies-donations-racism-inequality-f2a53d37-e587-44f9-ab30-8efc0c088111.html>.

Let's take a final look at the case of Aunt Jemima. After Quaker Oats announced their decision to retire the brand name in June 2020, they removed the face of the jovial Black woman from their packaging (which had previously been used to replace the face of a jovial Black mammy). In February 2021, they revealed their new name, er, their original name: Pearl Milling Company. *How nostalgic.*

They also updated their website. Before the branding change, Aunt Jemima's website had a fairly extensive timeline that included Nancy Green, the former enslaved woman who inspired the Aunt Jemima image at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Now? Their history has been scrubbed clean of any and all mention of the women who helped build the famous brand.

PepsiCo, Quaker Oats' parent company, did however pledge \$1 million to empower and uplift Black girls and women. The initiative is part of a five-year investment of more than \$400 million to "uplift Black business and communities, and increase Black representation at PepsiCo."

Most of the companies we have talked about in this episode also don't include their historic connections to slavery and racism on their company history pages, and companies that are forced to admit it, like J. P. Morgan, simply hemmed and hawed about it, dropped a press release, and then buried it. How *are* these companies addressing their pasts as they move forward, beyond just giving out donations? Certainly, from the recent testimony of company executives to the U.S. Congress, it appears not by changing their practices much in the future.

Modern companies working toward authentic change do exist, but they are few and far between, although the pressure is mounting for more companies to do better. In addition to the important work of Sleeping Giants, the nonprofit civil rights advocacy organization Color of Change has multiple ongoing campaigns to affect social change; they work to defund white supremacist organizations. They even have an ongoing campaign demanding reparations from J. P. Morgan Bank for profiting from slavery.

Then there are companies without problematic histories who are intentionally taking a stand for racial and social justice causes, like Ben and Jerry's ice cream company. They started a foundation that actively works towards dismantling oppressive systems and use 75-percent of

their profits to support grant programs and small grassroots movements;³⁰ If you're curious about who they've given money to, their website lists them all. They have 54 pages of organizations listed from just 2020 alone.

If one thing has become abundantly clear, it's that people—*us*—have the power to force change for the better. Most long-running companies and government institutions do not change on their own until we make them change. The first step: we educate ourselves on the reality of our unjust past and don't let it be swept under the rug, forgotten, or repeated.

³⁰ “What We Do - Ben & Jerry’s Foundation.” *Ben & Jerry’s Foundation*, 24 Apr. 2021, benandjerrysfoundation.org/about/what-we-do/.

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- Nathan 'Nearest' Green was an enslaved man that taught Jack Daniel how to make whiskey. He was the first master distiller of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey.
- The Lincoln County Process, unique filtering of bourbon through sugar maple charcoal, was brought to Tennessee by enslaved people.
- Today Nearest Green is a Black-owned business with an all-female leadership team.
- Victoria Eady Butler, Green's great-great-granddaughter, is the brand's master blender and the first female African American master blender in history.
- <https://www.inc.com/magazine/202102/sara-clemence/uncle-nearest-whiskey-fawn-weaver-best-in-business-2020.html>

Here's What Companies Are Promising to Do to Fight Racism. (August 23, 2020). *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/companies-racism-george-floyd-protests.html>

- In the wake of George Floyd's murder and the protests to end police brutality, many companies responded. This article details what they had committed to do as of August 2020. *Follow up needed to see if they actually have stuck with their promises.*
- Companies like Nike, Twitter, Target, General Motors, the National Football League recognize Juneteenth as a holiday. (Some after public pressure)
- IBM promised to "no longer offer, develop or research facial recognition technology, citing potential human rights and privacy abuses."
- Estee Lauder (which owns Clinique, Bobbi Brown, Aramis, Aveda, DKNY, Jo Malone, La Mer, MAC, Micheal Kors, Origins, Smashbox, Tom Ford Beauty, Tommy Hilfiger, and Too Faced) promised to mirror its leadership roles with the population of the US, increase recruits from HBCUs, and increase its purchases from Black-owned businesses.
- NASCAR banned Confederate flags
- PepsiCo said it would increase its number of Black people in management positions by 30% and increase their supply purchases from Black-owned businesses.
- BET (owned by Viacom CBS), started a \$25 million social justice initiative called Content for Change.
- Walmart, CVS, and Walgreens said they would stop locking up things like Black hair care products. Walmart also pledged to invest \$100 million over the next five years to create a Center on Racial Equity.
- Warner Media "on-air advertising to Color of Change, a nonprofit civil rights advocacy organization, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. The company

also announced it was giving \$500,000 to its content innovation program, OneFifty, to support the development of issue-focused shows from underrepresented communities.” HBO Max, owned by Warner Media, also placed historical context on “Gone With the Wind.”

- *There are more examples, but most are tech/newer companies.*

Thomas, Z. (2019, August 28). The hidden links between slavery and Wall Street. BBC News; BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-49476247>

- Enslaved people built the wall of ‘Wall Street’
- Non-slave countries and regions often did business with areas reliant on slavery.
- “By some estimates, New York received 40% of US cotton revenue through money its financial firms, shipping businesses, and insurance companies earned.”
- Colonialism thrived because of slavery and the triangle trade became very profitable.
- Many banks started selling securities to help fund plantations.
- Insurance policies insuring enslaved people, slave ships, etc. were offered.
- “JP Morgan was not alone. The predecessors that made up Citibank, Bank of America and Wells Fargo are among a list of well-known US financial firms that benefited from the slave trade.”
- Brooks Brothers, like many clothing suppliers across the globe, used slaved grown and processed cotton to create their wares.
- Domino’s Sugar processed slave-grown sugar cane.
- Modern accounting bases its depreciation models on plantation owners that “lowered the recorded value of slaves over time as a way to keep track of costs.”
- “Just 50m (160ft) from the sign marking the city's slave market, New York's stock market was formed.” How’s that for symbolism?

Davis, J. F. (2017). Selling whiteness? – A critical review of the literature on marketing and racism. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 34(1-2), 134–177.

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- Ads from colonial times through the 1800s (*I would argue that it carried on longer*) “typically portrayed people of colour in negative stereotypical manners such as servile, subhuman, dirty, poor, criminal and uncivilised. By contrast, whites were visually associated with high character, civility and positions of authority.” This is sometimes known as commodity racism. An example: “One of the most famous images from this collection shows a white and black girl in a soap advertisement with the white girl suggesting that the black girl can rid herself of her dark skin by washing with a certain brand of soap.” *This is not unlike an overt version of the Dove commercial from a few*

years back (2017?) that showed women of color using Dove products and then turning into white women. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zklrbVycAeM>

- Aniphromorising Black and Brown people as beasts and apes served as a means to dehumanize them.
- “marketers may act in bad faith by producing demeaning or stereotyped images which distort or damage the reputation of the represented groups.”
- Prior to the Civil War, Black people were depicted primarily as commodities- i.e. slavery, and sold in the classifieds
- After the Civil War, purposefully derogatory and stereotyped images were often used in the sale of products- Cream of Wheat, Uncle Ben’s, etc.
- Black women depicted as Jezebels or mammies
- In ads since the 1960s Black models have typically been in the background and used more for ‘everyday products’ instead of luxury items. The stereotype of Black women has persevered and typically Black women are depicted in ‘sexier’ ads. Tokenism became popular as well so brands/tv shows etc. could say they were diverse without actually being diverse.
- “Moore, Williams and Qualls (1996) indicated that marketing aimed at minority consumers tended to focus on products like menthol cigarettes and 40-ounce bottles of malt liquor but questioned whether such targeting was motivated by racism or by consumption data concerning the black consumer market. Other studies looked at marketing practices related to nutrition, indicating that black and Hispanic youth were disproportionately targeted and depicted in promotions for unhealthy products like candy, soft drinks and fast food through media advertising and signage in local stores and restaurants, thereby contributing to obesity, diabetes and other health disparities among children of color”
- “residential segregation and the marketing of subprime mortgages among black, Hispanic and Asian consumers in the 100 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States, concluding that housing segregation, aggressive marketing of risky mortgages, lax regulation and collapse of the housing price bubble led to disproportionate foreclosures among blacks and Hispanics in the 2000s.”
- Anti-racist campaigns-
 - 2005- ‘Stand Up, Speak Up’ Nike Europe
 - The 1980s- Black pop culture icons started appearing in ads
- “six types of multicultural marketing practices in marketing organizations in an effort to advance multicultural marketing theory. Among these were commercial multiculturalism – where multicultural marketing approaches are fully integrated into a marketer’s strategic and managerial approaches and problems of cultural difference are believed to be solved via private consumption, and critical multiculturalism – which recognizes power, privilege, and oppression within and between ethnic groups and raises questions about how multicultural marketing practices might be improved to foster inclusiveness and diversity”

Shabbir, H. A., Hyman, M. R., Reast, J., & Palihawadana, D. (2013). Deconstructing Subtle Racist Imagery in Television Ads. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 123(3), 421–436.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1798-8>
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- See list pg. 20-25

In order to understand the brutality of American Capitalism you have to start on the plantation, by Matthew Desmond

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html>

- Most modern management and accounting techniques were perfected on plantations.
 - “When an accountant depreciates an asset to save on taxes or when a mid level manager spends an afternoon filling in rows and columns on an Excel spreadsheet, they are repeating business procedures whose roots twist back to slave-labor camps.”
 - “Meticulous bookkeepers and overseers were just as important to the productivity of a slave-labor camp as field hands. Plantation entrepreneurs developed spreadsheets, like Thomas Affleck’s “Plantation Record and Account Book,” which ran into eight editions circulated until the Civil War. Affleck’s book was a one-stop-shop accounting manual, complete with rows and columns that tracked per-worker productivity. “

Bailey, Ronald. "The Slave(ry) Trade and the Development of Capitalism in the United States: The Textile Industry in New England." *Social Science History* 14, no. 3 (1990): 373-414..
 doi:10.2307/1171357.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/1171357?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- “The trade formed a perfect circle. Owners of slaves carried slaves to South Carolina, and brought home naval stores for their ship-building; or to the West Indies, and brought home molasses; or to other colonies, and brought home hogsheads. The molasses was made into the highly prized New England rum and shipped in those hogsheads to Africa for more slaves. Thus, the

- rum-distilling industry indicates to some extent the activity of New England in the Slave Trade.” (p.2)
- Per Lorenzo Green’s *The Negro in Colonial New England*: “the effects of this slave trade were manifold. On the eve of the American Revolution it formed the very basis of the economic life of New England; about it revolved, and on it depended, most of her industries. The vast sugar, molasses, and rum trade, shipbuilding, the distilleries, a great many of the fisheries, the employment of artisans and seamen, even agriculture-- all were dependent on slave traffic.” The author of the paper says he would argue this could be extended to include New England’s textile industry, which relied on slave-grown cotton.
 - Thesis: “The commercial and industrial activity related to the slave trade were essential ingredients in the process of industrialization in the United States, particularly in textiles. Moreover, beyond the era of the slave trade, slave-produced cotton played a pivotal role in the expansion of interregional trade. This division of labor among regions laid the basis for a national economy that emerged between 1815 and 1865,” (p. 2)
 - Three factors of the slave trade’s role in the rise of industrial capitalism in the US:
 - Africa supplied the bulk of the workers during European expansion into the Americas.
 - New England merchant’s integral involvement in the slave trade.
 - “Critical dependence” of New England’s trade system on the “slavery-based economies of the West Indies.” (p.3)
 - “Molasses and rum became the “customary currency” by which the colonists could obtain a variety of goods both domestic and foreign to ship to the West Indies or other colonies.”
 - “The fact is that the economy of New England and colonial commerce were bound to a West Indies economy dependent on slavery and the slave trade. Had there been no slavery, the West Indies trade would not have been as substantial. And had there been no substantial West Indies trade, there would have been much less trade for New England and the mainland colonies. The result would have been a much narrower field and a markedly slowed pace for the economic movement of the colonies toward political independence and industrial capitalism in a developing United States.” (p.12)
 - Maritime commerce fed the shipbuilding industry. American-made ships made up most of the trade vessels in the Atlantic.
 - 96% of the ships in the West Indies trade and 93% of the ships in the Coastwise trades were made in America. 44 percent of the ships carrying African enslaved were American-built with British ships making up the rest. Ship merchants in America were making a fortune off of slave-trade-dependent economies.
 - Slave-grown cotton became a huge commodity in the United States national economy between 1790 and 1865.

- “One of the great travesties in the study of U.S. history is the suggestion that only the South benefited directly and substantially from slavery. The benefits from what we are calling the slave trade to the North and to the U.S as a whole were far from indirect.” (p.15)
- The Industrial Revolution in the US and the rise of textiles is directly linked to the rapid expansion of cotton production in the south.
 - “Industrial use of raw cotton increased from 5 million pounds in 1790 to 433 million pounds in 1860.” (p.17)
- “Thus, it is necessary to stress both the accumulation of capital derived from direct participation as slave traders and the accumulation of capital and expansion of commerce and manufacturing in economic sectors directly dependent on the slave trade.” (p.25)
- Quote from W.E.B DuBois, “Somebody in each era must make clear the facts with utter disregard to his own wish and desire and belief. What we have got to know, so far as possible, are the things that actually happened in the world.” (p.29)

<https://www.investopedia.com/the-history-of-lending-discrimination-5076948> - History of Lending Discrimination. This article has some solid sources.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/reconstruction-rebuilding-south-after-war/> - PBS on Reconstruction

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/reconstruction-sharecropping-and-changes-southern-economy/> - PBS on Sharecropping

<https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racial-justice/2020/06/17/879104818/acknowledging-racial-stereotype-aunt-jemima-will-change-brand-name-and-image> - NPR on Aunt Jemima name change.

<https://www.thewrap.com/sports-teams-dumped-racist-names-mascots-indians-redskins/> - This article details 15 teams that have dropped mascots with racist Native American imagery.

<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/06/29/aunt-jemima-quaker-oats-rebrand>

- This article contains the thoughts of the descendants of Lilian Richards, a long-time portrayer of Aunt Jemima, on the rebrand.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/food/2020/06/21/aunt-jemima-changes-quaker-oats-racial-stereotypes/3233423001/>

<https://www.wkyt.com/2020/06/18/kentucky-woman-who-portrays-aunt-jemima-reacts-to-brand-being-retired/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2020/06/18/after-aunt-jemima-was-retired-companies-are-rethinking-uncle-ben-cream-of-wheat-and-mrs-butterworth-images/>

- “David Pilgrim, the founder and curator of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, notes that the images on these products stand out for being so out of step with modern times. ‘Most of the harsh images of African Americans were replaced decades ago,’ he said. ‘But I call this the residue — we still live in the residue of Jim Crow. It might not be as harsh, but there are still remnants of the ugly days.’”
- “Chambers says some white people might greet the news defensively, and he allowed that many people have “irrational” attachments to certain brands. “If you tell me a brand represents stereotypes and racism, then I might read that as an attack on me,” he says. “And I’m like, ‘I’m not racist.’”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/12/countrywides-racist-lending-practices-were-fueled-by-greed/250424/>

- In 2011, Bank of America settled a lawsuit with the DOJ over their subsidiary Countrywide Financial for selling higher interest rates and fees to black and latino homebuyers than they did to equally qualified white customers.
- They paid \$335 million to settle claims

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/09/this-land-was-our-land/594742/> - The Great Land Robbery

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/RR194.pdf> - Paper on independent black farming and cooperatives after the end of the Civil War.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/06/30/fact-check-aunt-jemima-model-didnt-create-brand-wasnt-millionaire/3241656001/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/28/aunt-jemima-uncle-ben-racism-advertising-branding>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/> - Smithsonian article called “Retracing Slavery’s trail of Tears.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/27/nyregion/companies-are-sued-for-slave-reparations.html> - 2002 class-action lawsuit filed against several major corporations suing for reparations because they profited from slavery.

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots> - American Psychological Association
page on Native American mascots